"THE RICH GIRL AND THE POOR BOY": BINARY OPPOSITIONS IN YEŞİLÇAM MELODRAMAS

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ABSTRACT

"THE RICH GIRL AND THE POOR BOY": BINARY OPPOSITIONS IN
YEŞİLÇAM MELODRAMAS

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This thesis is an attempt to analyze the binary oppositions between the "rich" and the "poor" as well as the "good" and the "evil" in the 1960s' Yeşilçam melodramas. It analyzes the narrative structure of Yeşilçam melodramas which interweave fiction with certain embedded social values and argues that a number of cooperating and contending discourses interanimate each other in the form of binary oppositions in Yeşilçam narratives. The cinematic representation of the lower and upper class is analyzed, underlining how the relation between the two was constructed by Yeşilçam melodramas. The study focuses on the symbolic world established by Yeşilçam narratives through the use of common meanings attributed to characters (e.g. *delikanlı* and *züppe*), values (e.g. honesty, modesty, ostentation and artificialness) and places (e.g. *meyhane* and coffeehouse).

Keywords: Yeşilçam melodramas, representation, binary oppositions, social hierarchies, the good, the evil, the rich, the poor.

ÖZ

"ZENGİN KIZ VE FAKİR OĞLAN": YEŞİLÇAM MELODRAMLARINDA İKİLİ
KARŞITLIKLAR

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Bu çalışma 1960'larda çekilmiş Yeşilçam melodramlarındaki "zengin" ve "yoksul" ile "iyi" ve "kötü" arasındaki ikili karşıtlıkları analiz etmeye yöneliktir. Burada, Yeşilçam melodramlarının kurgu ile yerleşik sosyal değerleri örerek oluşturdukları anlatısal yapı analiz edilmiştir ve Yeşilçam anlatıları tarafından ikili karşıtlıklar şeklinde kurulmuş, birbirleriyle işbirliği ve çatışma içinde yer alan bir dizi söylem ortaya konmuştur. Bu çalışma, 1960'ların Yeşilçam melodramlarının, karakterlere (delikanlı ve züppe gibi), değerlere (dürüstlük, alçakgönüllülük, gösteriş ve yapaylık gibi) ve mekanlara (meyhane ve kahvehane gibi) ortak anlamlar yükleyerek oluşturduğu sembolik dünya üzerine odaklanmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yeşilçam melodramları, temsil, ikili karşıtlıklar, sosyal hiyerarşiler, iyi, kötü, zengin, yoksul

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to analyze the narrative structure of 1960s' Yeşilçam[1] melodramas so as to show that there is a social value in these movies although they have usually been regarded as an intellectually unproductive territory. This study will argue that Yeşilçam melodrama is *heteroglot*[2] and that, in the symbolic world created by these movies, different discourses interanimate each other in the form of binary oppositions and also interweave fiction with certain embedded social values. This thesis will focus on the cinematic representation of lower and upper class, underlining how the relation between the two was constructed by Yeşilçam melodramas. It will be argued that Yeşilçam's representation of the poor and the rich reversed the order between the "high" and the "low" embedded in the class society. Here the primary aim is to analyze two basic and interrelated oppositions between "the rich" and "the poor" and "the good" and "the evil" represented by the Yeşilçam melodramas. I will try to examine these oppositions via a number of sub-oppositions. My aim is to analyze the symbolic world

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[1] Yeşilçam (literally means green pine) is the name of a street in Beyoğlu, Istanbul, where the majority of the film production companies gathered. However, the name Yeşilçam has been used in a broader sense, representing the Turkish popular cinema in general. It also refers to a specific system of production and distribution of the commercial movies, which dominated the Turkish cinema sector especially between the 1950s and 1980s. Yeşilçam was at the center of the discussions on the issues of national cinema and identity for its mimicry, plagiarism and so-called underdevelopment comparing to the Western cinema.

[2] This issue will be taken up with reference to Bakthin's conceptualization of heteroglossia. Bakthin argues for novel that it is a system of languages that mutually interanimate each other (1990). I will try to adapt his claim to Yeşilçam melodramas in the sense that there are different contending and cooperating discourses within these movies.

established by Yeşilçam narratives through the use of common signification by attributing agreed meanings to certain characters such as "*delikanlı*," and "*züppe*," values such as "honesty," "modesty," "ostentation," and "artificialness," and places such as "*meyhane*," and "coffeehouse."

This study focuses on the 1960s, which was the heyday of Yeşilçam melodramas. 13 movies[3] are selected, the list of which can be found in the Appendix. The movies selected for analysis represents the relation and opposition between the upper and lower class with different stories. I have randomly selected 30 movies from the archive of the 1960s cinema, watched them and then selected 13 of them for analysis on the basis of the place given to the tension between the lower and upper classes. Although I seek to make a number of generalizations throughout the study, I should also mention that there are exceptional Turkish melodramas which might not fit these generalizations. However, here I will try to underline general tendencies which dominated most of them in the 1960s, as I take for granted that these tendencies determined a common trajectory for most Yeşilçam melodramas.

The first and foremost challenge that this thesis has encountered is the lack of relevant Turkish literature. In Turkey, everyone has inevitably seen a Turkish melodrama either in movie theatres or on TV. Melodrama's influence can also be observed in serials and soap operas as they often use melodramatic elements. Despite their popularity, there are only a few scholarly studies on Yeşilçam melodramas. When we look at the Western experience with the genre of melodrama, we see that until the 1960s, it had been regarded in predominantly pejorative terms in the relevant world literature, as a "low" form of artistic representation in contrast with realism and tragedy, which were thought to be cornerstones of "high" culture. "As

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[3] Although I have chosen 13 movies to focus on, I should mention that my observations about the narrative structure of Yeşilçam melodramas are not limited to these movies. Since I have seen many Turkish melodramas so far, it has been inevitable for me to invoke my personal knowledge about them. Besides, it has also been impossible not to be inspired by my personal encounter with Yeşilçam. Therefore, certain generalizations I will make shall not be restricted to these 13 movies but shall be enriched by the invocation of my memory. Here my mental impressions about Yeşilçam, which have been retained and revived, shall serve as reminiscence for this study.

drama, [melodrama] represented debased or failed tragedy, in fiction it constituted a fall from the seriousness and maturity of the realist novel" (Gledhill; 1992: 5).

However, by the beginning of the 1960s, melodrama received significant attention by cultural and film studies. The rise of the genre coincided with the Western film criticism's opening up to neo-Marxist approaches, which re-considered the relations between "high" and "low" cultures, in other words, "high art" and "popular culture." It was after significant French structuralist effect that melodrama became a serious object of study in the world. The European intellectuals (especially the French and the British) re-evaluated the Hollywood cinema in the post-war period, questioning the hierarchical opposition between "high" and "low" art. According to the European intellectuals, Hollywood was fascinating in the sense that it promoted a cathartic and commodified system, contrary to the high art, and it was able to reproduce popular stories and stars, successfully covering the realm of "popular" and "tradition." It was Hollywood's anti-elitist investment that drew the attention of the European intellectuals, giving fresh impetus to the rise of the genre.

In Britain and France, the left had been fascinated by Hollywood's popularity in the 1920s and this fascination was revived under a new film criticism in France after the Second World War. In Britain, the 1960s witnessed that the appeal towards Hollywood became political as a negative movement against English elitism, following the application of the French film theory to the American popular culture, first and foremost to Hollywood. The British and French intellectuals established shifting relations with Hollywood with a fascination of cathartic cinema on the one hand, and a critical stance of imperialist cinema on the other (Mulvey; 1994). However, no matter how these stances have changed in the course of history, melodrama has been taken seriously since the 1960s as a separate subject in cultural studies.

Unfortunately, this is not the case with the Turkish literature. Despite few recent efforts to analyze the genre, Turkish intelligentsia and scholars

have usually ignored Yeşilçam melodrama, which is still conceived in pejorative terms. As previously stated, there is an insufficient number of studies on this issue due to the widespread belief that what Yeşilçam produced was worthless. The same perspective regards Yeşilçam melodramas as a degenerated representation, which is overcharged with plagiarism and mimicry. Not only intelligentsia but also certain movie directors believe that Turkish melodrama does not deserve attention as a serious object of study. The tendency to disregard the heyday of Yeşilçam is related with the discussions on "high" and "low" culture. Most studies either focus on periodization of the Turkish cinema or are just descriptive; which is why an attempt to carry out an analytic study has required painstaking observation and imagination. Thus I hope that such an analysis might be a considerable contribution to Turkish cultural studies.

It should be noted that poverty and richness which will be analyzed in this thesis are urban phenomena. In other words, this study will not focus on rural stories - which are known as "*köy filmleri*" (village movies) in the literature - but urban movies, which narrate the stories of the characters from lower and upper classes living in big cities. In addition, the issue of migration from rural areas to big cities – represented by "*göç filmleri*" (migration movies) - which was one of the most popular themes for Yeşilçam, will not be separately discussed. In other words, the scope of this study covers the cinematic representation of the upper and lower classes living in big cities, regardless of their origin. This study will deal with the urban rich and poor and also how Yeşilçam constructed their lives in relation with each other.

I will ask two main questions in this thesis: Which specific place did Yeşilçam occupy in the genre of melodrama pioneered and dominated by Hollywood? How did Yeşilçam represent the oppositions between the "good" and the "evil" and the "rich" and the "poor"? Under these two basic questions, there will be a number of minor questions such as: How is the signification of melodrama as a genre constructed? From which popular traditions did melodrama inherit its stylistic and narrative templates? What are the general characteristics of Hollywood melodramas? What are the similarities and

differences between Yeşilçam and Hollywood melodramas in terms of their significations? How did the cultural tension created by the Turkish modernization project influence Yeşilçam's representation of the poor and the rich? Why did Yeşilçam melodramas use the opposition between the "rich" and the "poor" so often? How did Yeşilçam narratives construct its symbolic world in representing the rich and the poor? Which signs and symbols did Yeşilçam melodramas use to represent these oppositions? How were the meanings of the good, evil, richness and poverty fixed by the Yeşilçam melodramas?

In an attempt to find answers to these questions, this study will begin with presenting the historicity and characteristics of melodrama as a genre and then those of Hollywood melodramas as the dominating national cinema in the world. The place of Yeşilçam melodramas in the genre will also be shown.

Then, the cultural tension created by the Turkish modernization project as a site of material and symbolic transformation will be briefly mentioned. At this point, it should be noted that this study does not aim to cover overall cultural implications of the Turkish modernization project, but intends to underline the crisis of cultural disorientation which the Turkish society has undergone since the very beginning of the Westernization efforts. The traumatic consequences of these efforts will be discussed in a brief manner in an attempt to develop a specific perception about the cultural sphere which Yeşilçam melodramas have borrowed its symbols. It will be asserted that Yeşilçam developed a peculiar understanding of the struggle between the rich and the poor with reference to these symbols.

Yeşilçam melodramas used both the reservoir of collective symbols embedded in the memory of the Turkish society and imported narratives and techniques of the cinema as an artistic form of expression. Therefore, here Yeşilçam narrative will be treated as a hybrid representation composed of elements drawn from different languages and discourses. From such a perspective, it will be shown that Yeşilçam melodramas based their

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narratives on the representation of two poles, namely the "rich" and the "poor" and the "good" and the "evil." This study adopts a principle of analysis requiring that the symbolic system of Yeşilçam melodramas can be examined as a set of binary oppositions. In this analysis, I have been inspired by Wright's (1975) groundbreaking study on the American Western cinema, which undertakes a structural analysis of the Western movies with reference to Lévi-Strauss' analysis of tribal myths. In the relevant world literature, melodrama has been regarded as a myth-making genre. As a matter of fact, it is accepted that the genres of popular cinema such as melodrama, comedy and horror all utilize the inheritance of popular myths in developing their own narrative structure (Abisel; 1999). Therefore, it is taken for granted that there are certain similarities between the narrative structure of popular myths and melodramas. Developing a less metaphysical way to justify a binary analysis of the Western than Lévi-Strauss' methodology who claims that the binary structure of myths derives from the structure of human mind (an idea which is borrowed from linguistics), following Saussurian analysis, Wright argues that the symbolic meaning is inherently diacritical, dividing the world into two mutually exclusive sets, those it refers to on the one hand and those it does not refer to on the other. He also asserts that, therefore, both tribal myths and the Western as modern myths used the binary structure as it forces the symbolic meaning to be general and easily acceptable. Here I will try to adopt a similar view to Wright's, arguing that Yeşilçam melodramas also utilized this structure in its representation of the richness and poverty. The significance of this binary structure derives from its simplicity to give meaning to complex social processes, which I shall underline as a prominent feature of Yeşilçam melodramas in the following chapters.

In this study, I will finally try to show what Wright says about myths may also be told about Yeşilçam melodramas:

> If a myth is popular, it must somehow appeal to or reinforce the individuals who view it by communicating a symbolic meaning to them. This meaning must, in turn, reflect the particular social institutions and attitudes that have created and continue to

nourish the myth. Thus a myth must tell its viewers about themselves and their society (1975: 2).

Thus, I will try to develop an interpretation of symbols created by Yeşilçam in an attempt to understand the underlying myth which was nourished by popular traditions and assumedly collective signification of the Turkish society. As it is impossible for us to know either how the poor imagined the rich or vice versa in the 1960s, we cannot defend an argument that Yeşilçam represented the realities of the country. Besides, this study will neither deal with the political economy of Yeşilçam nor present a detailed socio-economic dynamics of the Turkish popular cinema. Here this thesis merely aims to explore the symbolic world of Yeşilçam, resonating with certain tensions embedded in the Turkish society. Thus, we can make an *assumption* here: Yeşilçam's perception of the poor and the rich *must* have inherited certain collective and mnemic symbols about the imagination of the two. Therefore, we cannot leave these movies behind us by accusing them of mimicry, plagiarism or low quality. There is a historical fact that they captured the hearts of millions; which is why the significance of this study lies in the tears flew from the eyes of these millions at the 1960s' movie theatres and on today's TVs. Yeşilçam melodramas served as the trigger of collective grief in the past; and I hope that they will give us important clues about the imagination of certain important concepts such as goodness, evil, richness and poverty today. As Wright says, they *must* tell us something about our society and ourselves.

CHAPTER II

MELODRAMA AS A GENRE

This chapter seeks to explore the characteristics of melodrama as a genre in a historical context. The emergence of melodrama and its development as a hybrid genre will be briefly mentioned. Later, main narrative characteristics of Hollywood melodrama, as the dominating national cinema in the world will be presented. This chapter aims to underline general features of melodrama in order to present a framework for discussion on Yeşilçam melodramas.

2.1 The Definition of Melodrama as a Genre

The term "genre" refers to a class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content and technique. This definition also applies to filmic genres, which refer to movies telling similar stories with similar characters and conditions through the methods of repetition and variation. Therefore, genre movies are restricted to the conventions agreed by both the producers and audiences; their narrative structure and main characters are constant and well defined, portraying an orderly world. In addition, the flow of events in genre movies is predictable, avoiding from any surprises. Tension and suspense are created by common and agreed methods, which are the same almost in every movie that belong to a particular genre. Each genre

has its own methods and templates to tell its stories (Abisel; 1999). Therefore, these rules also apply to melodrama as a genre.

In dictionaries, melodrama is simply defined as a romantic dramatic composition with music interspersed and also a dramatic form that does not observe the laws of cause and effect and that exaggerates emotion and emphasizes plot or action at the expense of characterization. The term is derived from the Greek word "melos" which means "song," juxtaposed with "drama" which literally means a composition in prose or verse presenting in dialogue or pantomime a story involving conflict or contrast of character.

Although each genre has its own common stylistic and narrative templates, we cannot consider them universal or constant. These rules change from one country to another and from period to period. Since culture is subjected to change as time passes, the rules of artistic genres also alter in line with the changes that cultures undergo. Therefore each genre produces its own peculiar examples in different countries, reflecting dominant tendencies on the one hand and distorting the mainstream on the other. Therefore, both similarities and differences are important to this thesis.

2.2 Historicizing Melodrama

Elsaesser states that any discussion of the melodramatic films has to start from its antecedents. In tracing the genealogy of melodrama as a cinematic mode of expression, he identifies two contradictory tendencies:

> Two currents make up the genealogy. One leads from the late medieval morality play; the popular gestes and other forms of oral narrative and drama, like fairytales and folk-songs... Perhaps the current that leads more directly to the sophisticated family melodrama of 40's and 50's, though, is derived from the romantic drama, which had its heyday after the French Revolution and subsequently furnished many of the plots for operas, but which is itself unthinkable without the 18th century sentimental novel... (Elsaesser; 1985: 167)

Similarly, Gledhill (1992) also identifies two cultural trajectories, which gave way to the emergence of melodrama, as the "inheritance of bourgeois" and "popular traditions." There was a contradiction between these two tendencies in the sense that the former derived a non-psychological conception of the person which stressed the public and the exterior. However, the latter was unthinkable without the stress on private feelings and interiorized codes of morality and conscience (Elsaesser; 1985). Therefore, according to Gledhill (1991), a tension is posed between the two, since the former stressed the public but the latter underlined the private. Therefore, melodrama emerged as a hybrid form, derived from heterogeneous sources and composed of elements of different and even incongruous kinds.

We can say that in the Western world melodrama was first seen as a form belonging to the bourgeoisie, constituting an ideological weapon against a feudal aristocracy. In their groundbreaking studies on the genre of melodrama, Elsaesser (1985), Brooks (1976) and Gledhill (1992) note that melodrama in the contemporary sense operates in the secular world of bourgeois capitalism. In the eighteenth century, there was a "European bourgeoisie, struggling for ascendancy over a decadent aristocracy, or two hundred years later, a bourgeoisie 'decaying from within' in Eisenhower's America" (Gledhill; 1992: 14). These writers agree that the conditions for the emergence of melodrama were created during the 18th century in the wake of toppling of aristocracy by the revolutionary bourgeoisie fighting for establishing its own cultural hegemony.

Therefore, melodrama is usually seen as a fallen bourgeois tragedy. In his study *Modern Tragedy*, Williams (1992) argues that the bourgeois appropriation changed the aesthetics of tragedy, contributing to the emergence of melodrama. Since the hero of the Greek tragedy, according to Williams, did not represent an individual but a membership of a group, representing the visible hierarchies of the society, however the bourgeois appropriation eliminated the Greek hero's rank and emphasized the individual instead. According to Gledhill,

A sentimental dramaturgy emerged, demanding a new kind of spectatorial response of recognition and identification with familiar characters in affecting circumstances... Sentimentalization, stress on the individual, appeals to the personal, all supported the shift in the social terrain of bourgeois fiction and drama from feudal and aristocratic hierarchies to the 'democratic' bourgeois family – arena of personal, moral and social conflict, and support of the triad, heroine/villain/hero, which became a dominant dramatic structure from thereon (1992: 17).

Meanwhile, the link of the melodramatic genre to the popular traditions was constituted by sophisticated *mise en scéne*, demanding earlier performance shows like pantomime. Due to the Western tradition of the prohibition on spoken dialogue, the use of music and excessive usage of décor and elaborate costuming also paved the way for a hybrid form. Music constituted another non-verbal meaning and the use of placards with explanatory information contributed to the development of melodramatic *mise en scène* and reinforced the connection of the genre to the Western popular traditions such as pantomime, dumb shows (Gledhill; 1992). In addition, since theatrical performances which increasingly became commercial wanted to attract more audiences, they gave way to a transmutation between different modes and genres:

Melodrama arose to exploit these new conditions of production, becoming itself a site of generic transmutation and "intertextuality." Based on commerce rather than cultural monopoly, melodrama multiplied through translation, adaptation, and, in the absence of copyright laws, piracy. Literary and dramatic classics – including Shakespearean tragedies, popular fiction, Romantic poetry and operatic libretti, newspapers and topical events, police journals and penny dreadfuls, paintings and etchings, popular songs and street ballads all provided material for melodrama (Gledhill; 1992: 18).

Therefore, melodrama as a cinematic form of expression received this inheritance from its predecessors. Melodrama as a form was already saturated with a wide range of meanings and symbols when it was taken up by the cinema. All silent cinema had to use the melodramatic mode not only

because of the re-introduction of popular forms but also the requirements of expression in a non-verbal language. Thus,

> ...nineteenth-century melodramatic theatre laid institutional and aesthetic foundations from which cinema would draw – specifically: techniques for 'cinematic' narration; a 'studio'-type system of generic production; and a model of circuit distribution" (Gledhill; 1992: 22).

Long after the era of silent movies, the rise of contemporary melodrama as a cinematic form took place in the 1950s in Hollywood and this wave affected other national cinemas worldwide. However, as Elsaesser (1985) underlines, it should not be forgotten that there are certain melodramatic traditions outside the puritan-democratic worldview: A number of Catholic countries such as Spain, Mexico used melodramatic view for their stories based on atonement and redemption. In addition, Japanese melodramas have been considered "intellectual" as they reach a transcendence and stylistic sublimation outdone only by the very best pieces of Hollywood.

2.3 General Narrative Characteristics of Hollywood Melodramas

In order to understand the genre and the place Yeşilçam occupied in this genre with its similarities and differences, we should first focus on the melodramas produced by the United States movie industry, namely Hollywood. National cinemas of other countries imported stories, narrative templates and production system of Hollywood melodramas, paving the way for the rise of Americanization of the genre. However, the adaptation of American melodramas did not necessarily mean that other national cinemas failed to produce their own melodramatic perspectives. Although Hollywood was not the only national cinema that has produced the genre, it has always occupied a special space in contemporary film theory as it provided a catalyst for sketching a theoretical terrain:

Hollywood was not only a culturally and economically dominant cinema produced by the culturally and economically dominant United States, but also the 'primal scene' of modern mythologies. Its myths were specifically American, historically and ideologically, but it also exported the glamour of America and its Utopian modernity, simultaneously recycling narrative patterns, aspirations and personifications that were close enough to folk tradition to be familiar to most moviegoing audiences (Mulvey; 1994: 121).

The stylistic and narrative structure of Hollywood melodramas include certain fixed patterns, which can be summarized as follows:

the indulgence of strong emotionalism; molar polarization and schematization; extreme states of being, situations, actions; overt villainy, persecution of the good and final reward of virtue; inflated and extravagant expression; dark plottings, suspense, breathtaking peripety (Brooks; 1995: 11-2).

Melodrama can be seen as a symbolic drama, which portrays the calamities that encompass people. The important point is that melodrama is too moralistic in its portrayal. Melodrama's morality derives from a system of spiritual values based on binary oppositions. Like many other popular narrative, melodrama also sees life as a field for struggle between the good and the evil (Hauptman; 1992).

Another useful definition giving us important clues of the signification of the Western melodramas comes from Rahill as follows:

Melodrama is a form of dramatic composition in prose partaking of the nature of tragedy, comedy, pantomime, and spectacle, and intended for a popular audience. Primarily concerned with situation and plot, it calls upon mimed action extensively and employs a more or less fixed complement of stock characters, the most important of which are suffering heroine or hero, a persecuting villain, and a benevolent comic. It is conventionally moral and humanitarian in point of view and sentimental and optimistic in temper, concluding its fable happily with virtue rewarded after many trials and vice punished.[4]

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[4] Rahill, Frank (1967), *The World of Melodrama*, London: Pennsylvania Press, p. 14, quoted in Hauptman; 1992: 281

The above definition might be accepted as a general formula for most of the melodramatic narratives produced not only by Hollywood but also by different national cinemas. In addition, the plots generally involve similar elements such as family relations, forced marriages, ill-fated lovers and the villains demonstrating their social and economic power by sexual aggression against the heroine. Thus,

> …the element of interiorization and primarily ideological conflicts, together with the metaphorical interpretation of class conflict as sexual exploitation and rape is important in all subsequent forms of melodrama, including that of the cinema... Complex social processes were simplified either by blaming the evil composition of individuals or by manipulating the plots and engineering coincidences and other *dei ex machina*, such as the instant conversion of the villain … (Elsaesser; 1985: 168-9)

The simplification of complex social processes by melodrama is considered as an anti-intellectual stance:

> The persistence of melodrama might indicate the ways in which popular culture has not taken note of social crises and the fact that the losers are not always those who deserve it most, but has also resolutely refused to understand social change in other than private contexts and emotional terms. In this, there is obviously a healthy distrust of intellectualization and abstract social theory – insisting that other structures of experience (those of suffering, for instance) are more keeping with reality. But it has also meant ignorance of the properly social and political dimensions of these changes and their causality, and consequently it has encouraged increasingly escapist forms of mass entertainment (Elsaesser; 1985: 170).

The simplification is also accompanied by interiorization of the social. However, in melodrama, internalization should not be seen as the complexity of the interior. In other words, the melodrama does not use introspection to reflect the social complexities, conversely, it simply disregards the exterior dynamics. In doing this, basic elements of the interior, the human psychology, mental and emotional states, fluctuations etc are also ignored. Hence melodrama should not be seen as a form which disregards the exterior for the sake of the interior since it basically refuses to focus on them.

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According to Brooks (1995), there is no human psychology in melodrama in the sense that the characters have no interior depth. Consequently, it would be delusive to seek an interior conflict in these movies, because they exteriorize conflict and psychic structure. However, exteriorized conflict is not socially constructed in melodrama. The melodrama does not deal with conflict as a historically constructed phenomenon but as intrinsic to nature without any causes.

In parallel to this, it should also be noted that despite the lack of interior depth, melodramatic identities involve excess of expression. The excess of the exterior displaces the interior complexity.

Another important point is that the Hollywood melodramas subordinate verbal effects to the visual ones; in other words, characters are made secondary to staging, lightning and narrative actions (Gledhill; 1991). According to Elsaesser:

> If it is true that speech in the American cinema loses some of its semantic importance in favor of its material aspects as sound, then conversely lighting, composition, décor increase their semantic and syntactic contribution to the aesthetic effect. They become functional and integral elements in the construction of meaning. This is the justification for giving crucial importance to the *mise en scéne* over intellectual content or story-value (1985: 174-5).

Then if we look at the organization of décor and symbolization of objects we see that American melodramas tell the stories of the middle-class families and used a claustrophobic iconography confined in middle-class homes. Melodrama is iconographically fixed by the claustrophobic atmosphere of the bourgeois home and small town setting. The emotional pattern is marked by panic and latent hysteria, reinforced stylistically by a handling of private space (Elsaesser; 1985).

In addition, there is a tension between melodrama and realism, which both operate on the same terrain, namely the world of the bourgeois capitalism. Brooks suggests that this tension arises from a contradictory

demand for a mythic significance grounded in the real world. According to Brooks (1995), the secularization of the bourgeois revolution through which the individual became the center of all social and political arrangements undermined the legitimacy of a world order based on the sacredness of aristocracy, religion and their institutions. He claims that this is the displacement of the mythic meanings by the bourgeois revolution for which melodrama offers compensation.

The consequences of such displacement have of course been revolutionary in both public and private spheres. Gledhill argues that this shift open "an existential gap in terms of meaning and personal motivation" (1991: 208). In other words, the individual of this secular system as a newly emerging actor on the center of all social and political arrangements is forever doomed to embody within himself a rationale which must be capable of understanding and answering of all the questions emerged due to this "existential gap." Therefore, the existential shift caused by the bourgeois revolution paved the way for the emergence of new signs and significations due to individual's attempt to give meanings to the new secular order, the king of which is this time the individual himself. However, it can be argued that no radical change can be free of the remnants of the displaced. Therefore, although the novelties brought by the bourgeois revolution are revolutionary, the ghosts of the remnants are still here to encounter our Rational Man. It is this ground where the melodrama operates. Brooks argues that the historical task of the melodrama is to make present "moral occult… the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth… the realm of meaning and value" (Brooks; 1995: 5). According to him,

> [The moral occult] bears comparison to unconscious mind, for it is a sphere of being where our most basic desires and interdictions lie, a realm which in quotidian existence may appear closed off from us, but which we must accede to since it is the realm of meaning and value. The melodramatic mode in large measure exists to locate and to articulate the moral occult (Brooks; 1995: 5).

Therefore, the field of melodrama is between the two worlds: the displaced one and the newly emerging one. Melodrama is on the one hand tied to the conventions of realism but it on the other hand rises as a response to distrusting those of Enlightenment, that is to say, the conventions of representation brought by the new secular order:

> Melodrama sets out to demonstrate within the transactions of everyday life the continuing operation of Manichean battle between good and evil which infuses human actions with ethical consequences and therefore with significance (Gledhill; 1991: 209).

In order to understand how moral occult functions in melodramatic field, Mulvey's conceptualization of "collective fantasy' would be useful:

> …a concept of 'collective fantasy' which is neither a reworking of ideology nor a reflective theory of historical representation. Furthermore, the 'symptomology' of collective fantasy or the repressed of a social formation would not depend on any essential or ahistorical concept of the human psyche. This kind of 'collective fantasy' would be evidence of the presence of psychic symptoms within the social, traces of unassimilated historical traumas. On the other hand, certain narrative structures, psychic scenarios and character figurations do persist; myths and narratives from traditional Western culture are recognizable, under new names and in new shapes and forms in Hollywood cinema (1994: 126).

It can be argued that if relevant psychic structures keep them alive some popular narratives outlive the historical conditions that gave rise to them. The narrative structures inhabited by two ill-fated lovers, heroes, heroines, femme fatales, evil men etc can be observed in many popular tales, fairytales, legends etc. Through the tradition of storytelling, a gallery of "collective fantasy" is created the symbols and values of which were defined hundreds years ago (Mulvey; 1994). For example, Bakthin summarizes the narrative plotting of the Greek romance as follows:

> There is a boy and a girl of marriageable age… They are remarkable for their exceptional beauty. They are also exceptionally chaste. They meet each other unexpectedly… They are confronted with obstacles that retard and delay their union. The lovers are parted, they seek one another, find one another, again they lose each other… (1990: 87-88)

Therefore, both Brooks' account of "moral occult" as a sphere where our most basic desires and interdictions lie, and Mulvey's above-mentioned account of "collective fantasy" determines a trajectory for melodrama to follow. The signification of melodrama touches unspeakable, unobservable but shared psychic structures. Therefore, it is no surprise that people's reaction to melodramatic stories is to weep, desire or shudder. Mulvey calls the images and stories of popular cinema as mnemic symbols inscribed in collective culture (1994). In these stories and images, we can find out the "traces of unassimilated historical traumas" in Mulvey's terms or "the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth" in Brooks' terms.

In this chapter, I have first given a literal definition of melodrama as a genre and then tried to historicize the development of melodrama as a hybrid form. The popular traditions from which melodrama as a cinematic form inherited its narrative structure were mentioned. We have seen that not only Yeşilçam melodramas, but also the melodramatic genre is itself influenced by different traditions before it was taken up by cinema. Hollywood melodrama also benefited from its predecessors and interweaved the cinematic forms of expression with narrative templates it borrowed from popular traditions. Therefore melodrama might be considered a modern form but the resources through which it established its narrative structure dates back to myths and early popular traditions.

CHAPTER III

YEŞİLÇAM MELODRAMA IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This chapter aims to analyze the historicity of Yeşilçam melodramas. First, a brief history of Turkish popular cinema will be given. Then, the narrative characteristics of Yeşilçam and Hollywood melodramas will be discussed in order to underline the similarities and difference between them. The historicity of Yeşilçam melodramas will also be discussed in relation with the Turkish modernization process and the cultural tension caused by it. Finally, I shall try to develop a path so as to read the cinematic representation of the rich and the poor in a more general context of modernization.

3.1. A Succinct History of the Turkish Popular Cinema

The history of the Turkish cinema is often categorized under five periods: 1) Muhsin Ertuğrul period (a director and actor of municipal theater of Istanbul), which is also known as theatre players' period between 1922 and 1938. 2) Filmmakers' Period between 1938 and 1952. 3) The transition period between 1952 and 1963 4) New Turkish Cinema and Popular Movies' Period between 1963 and 1980. 5) The recent period since the 1980s (Onaran 1994 & Özön 1995). This periodization is accepted valid in the Turkish film studies. This study focuses on the 1960s as the phase of the

Turkish popular movies, which falls under the fourth period in the above-mentioned periodization.

The first period was under the overwhelming influence of Muhsin Ertuğrul, who has always been criticized harshly for his insufficient cinematic expression and overemphasis on stage acting. His theatre-based understanding of cinema, in fact, considerably affected the Turkish cinema until the 1950s. During the transition period, Ertuğrul's cinema was still effective as a variety of new directors continued to make movies in line with his understanding. Besides, the burdens of the Second World, for example censorship and economic crisis, exacerbated the conditions of the filmmaking in Turkey. Therefore, it was the 1950s that the Turkish cinema underwent a revival as for the first time newcomers of filmmaking "begun to think in cinematic terms and tried to use the cinematic language" (Özön; 1995: 9). It was again these years where significant directors like Ömer Lütfi Akad began to shoot films and the two important stars of Turkey, Ayhan Işık and Belgin Doruk were introduced to the Turkish audiences. Due to the state censorship and embargo of the World War, the Turkish cinema market was closed to European cinema, and therefore Turkey imported many Egyptian movies in this period, which had significant impacts on the development of Turkish cinema. Then the Turkish cinema market experienced a boom between 1960 and 1975. Both the number of the movies and audiences sharply rose. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by influential directors who paved the way for the development of a national cinema, such as Lütfi Akad, Atıf Yılmaz, Halit Refiğ, Metin Erksan, Zeki Ökten and Yılmaz Güney. However, it should also be noted that 1968 was an important year for the introduction of television which has always been the strongest rival of the cinema sector. During the 1960s, the prevailing genre was melodrama, whose meaning was widened in the 1970s to include all "family movies" against the invasion of soft-porn movies. Yeşilçam melodramas drew large amounts of audiences and marked the heyday of the Turkish cinema in this period. Melodramas were useful for Yeşilçam since they were inexpensive and easy to make. After 1980's crisis, Yeşilçam turned to new growing video market. The rise of "arabesk" and

"individualistic" issues took place in the wake of the 1980 coup d'etat. The important point is that both state funding and the production companies have neglected to invest in infrastructure since the very beginning of the Turkish cinema. The invasion of US movies in the market and insufficient capital invested in the sector have both dealt a blow to Yeşilçam's development. However, this study refuses to see Yeşilçam as an "underdeveloped" cinema but a peculiar kind having its own dynamics, rules, narratives, templates etc. Although we must accept that "For all third world countries, film is an imported form of communication," (Armes; 1989: 3), here I shall treat the Western cinema as a "source" rather than an "ideal," setting the standards of perfection in cinema. Throughout its history, Yeşilçam has suffered an identity crisis marked by an ambivalence, which this study shall deal with not as an insufficiency but a primordial characteristic by its very nature.

As I mentioned above, the period between 1960s and mid-1975 was the most productive years of the Turkish popular cinema. The 1960s began with the military intervention, which according to many historians, opened new horizons especially for artists and intellectuals. The establishment of the Turkish Cinémathèque, which was the center of the discussions on the issue of national cinema, and the introduction of a variety of cinema periodicals like *Yeni Sinema* (New Cinema) took place in this period. The most important feature of this period was that the cinema sector was active with its regional distributors who maintained connection between Yeşilçam and the demands of the audiences. This period also witnessed the beginning of a debate about the Turkish national cinema. A group of critics who gathered around the movie journal *Yeni Sinema* (New Cinema) argued that Yeşilçam failed to develop a genuine national cinema since it was very much associated with plagiarism. Therefore, melodramas are left to be forgotten as the shame of the Turkish popular cinema. The insufficient interest by scholars in these movies dates back to this period.

3.2 The Place of Yeşilçam Melodramas in the Genre:

3.2.1 Similarities and differences

Here I will try to discuss the differences and similarities between Hollywood melodramas, which dominate the Western tradition, and Yeşilçam melodramas as one of the examples of hybrid Third World Cinema. Following Sarıkartal (2002), Indian melodramas which significantly affected Yeşilçam will also be mentioned. It should be noted that I will not try to discuss all dimensions of the Third World cinema and its relations with the Western traditions as "center" and "periphery," since such an analysis is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis.

In the previous part, I have tried to underline the common trajectory of the Western melodramas, particularly that of Hollywood, which was imported by the Eastern cinema industries. However, the development of the melodrama as an expressive code followed a different path in the so-called Third World countries of the East, including Turkey. Although we know that the Turkish cinema industry adapted many Hollywood stories and imported the narrative structure and signification of Hollywood, there are also certain peculiarities, thanks to the collective "mnemic" symbols and the "moral occult" inherited from the Turkish cultural history.

Due to the importation of the genre as a cinematic mode, there are many similarities between Yeşilçam melodramas and the mainstream. The use of moral polarization between the good and the evil, the personification of the goodness and badness, simplification of complex social processes, strong emotionalism which led to excessive and hysterical usage of body and voice (the plasticity of dubbing), the lack of interior depth in characters but a high morality in terms of symbolic values are among the common features between these two. However, the plagiarism of Yeşilçam was not a simple issue. Although the narrative templates were similar in many senses, there were considerable technical and stylistic differences between the two. Due to the variations from the Western style of editing, lighting, dubbing, shooting

etc, most of the adaptations from the Western melodramas were forced to create a different cinematic language and visual regime. For example:

> To save time and money, shot/reverse-shot and other point-of-view shots were avoided as much as possible. This meant the domination of front shots: characters mostly performed facing the camera and did not turn their backs to it. This made full identification impossible and gave way to empathy instead. When a Hollywood film shows a box, it says 'This is a box'. Yeşilçam, on the other hand, attempted to achieve the same statement but could not help saying 'This is supposed to be a box, but actually it's only an image which represents a box (Erdoğan; 1998: 266).

Yeşilçam melodramas developed a truly hybrid genre since they imported the main narrative templates from the West but also used popular traditions as well. In order to understand the differences between the melodramas of Hollywood and Yeşilçam, we should take a look at the Indian melodramas. During the World War II, Turkey imported many Indian and Egyptian melodramas, which significantly influenced its national cinema sector as much as Hollywood did. In terms of their historical development and the cultural sources they used, there are important similarities between the Indian and Turkish melodramas. As a matter of fact, three main points can describe the main differences between Hollywood and Indian melodramas: the development of narratives, extreme need for stronger emotionalism when compared to emotionalism of Hollywood and the widespread usage of elements of "performance" such as singing, dancing and fighting (Thomas; 1985). In addition, Vasudevan also states that the Indian melodramas did not follow the Western aesthetic but resorted extremely to comedy, singing, dancing etc[5]. Sarıkartal (2002) believes that melodramas of Yeşilçam and India resemble in this respect.

In addition, both in India and Turkey, the tradition of melodrama was significantly affected by popular theatre. In India, the Parsi theatre considerably influenced the melodramatic cinema. The Parsi troupes, which

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[5] Vasudevan, Ravi (1989), "The Melodramatic mode and the Hindi commercial cinema," in *Screen* 30/3, pp. 29-50, quoted in Sarıkartal; 2002

traveled around the country, eclectically combined traditional narrative and performance styles with the elements of the Western theatre, particularly the British one. The *tuluat* troupes, popular in Istanbul during the same period, resembled the Parsi troupes in this sense, which were known for their role in the emergence of the melodramatic film tradition. Both groups coalesced their tradition with that of the West but the difference was that the *tuluat* troupes interacted with the French and German theaters. Adopting simple narrative structures, they contributed to the rise of a hybrid melodramatic film traditions in India and Turkey (Sarıkartal; 2002).

Yeşilçam's oldest sources were said to be *Ortaoyunu*, *Karagöz* and *Tuluat*. According to And (1983), the popular theatre does not refer to any written text and does not attempt to be realistic. Dancing, singing and comic elements are incorporated into the popular theatre, which uses stereotypical character figurations. Furthermore, popular theatre essentially has mimicry of actions, people, events and even objects, antagonism between two people, music and dance, improvisation of the players due to the lack of any written text and non-illusionistic form of representation which does not have any concern to be realistic. These features were adopted by Yeşilçam melodramas, which determined its own trajectory separating itself from the mainstream Hollywood. Similarly, main features of the *tuluat* were male and female protagonists, the comic and the wise man, which were also used by Yeşilçam melodramas. In addition, Oran (1996), the scriptwriter of many melodramas, says that Yeşilçam adapted the tales of Keloğlan, which "symbolizes the struggle of an ordinary person against the upper classes" (Alangu; 1990: 183). As we all know, the struggle between the lower class and upper class is very often re-presented in Yeşilçam melodramas. In addition, Çalışlar states,

> *Tuluat* represented a mixture of *Ortaoyunu* and Western understanding of staging, décor and costume design… The repertoire of *Tuluat* theatre combined the adaptations of Western plays, primarily melodramas, with improvisation, entertainment, dancing and singing with, in the form of comedy… The established characters of *tuluat*, namely,

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Kavuklu, *Pişeka*r, *Sirar* and *Zenne* corresponded to the main characters of the Western plays, especially melodramas[6].

Hence, the peculiarities of Yeşilçam melodramas stemmed from the popular traditions whose heritage was welcomed by both the movie directors and audiences. However, there are other important points of difference between melodramas of Yeşilçam and Hollywood, thanks to Turkey's own experience of modernization. First of all, as previously stated, in the Western world, melodrama is regarded as a bourgeois form. In the beginning, the Western melodrama registered the "struggle of a morally and emotionally emancipated bourgeois consciousness against the remnants of feudalism" (Elsaesser; 1985: 168). Besides, Hollywood often told the stories of middle class families. However, Yeşilçam melodramas' favorite subject was the stories of the lower class in contradiction with the upper class. In Hollywood, we do not see Yeşilçam's exploitation of binary oppositions between traditional/modern and rural/urban. Consequently, unlike Hollywood's domestic middle class stories, immigration from rural to urban areas, transition from one class to another and unexpected meeting of members of the lower and upper classes were the favorite subjects for Yeşilçam melodramas.

In addition, although both Hollywood and Yeşilçam subordinated characters to narrative, Yeşilçam did not make verbal expressions secondary to the visual regime. At this point, the heritage of the two is different. While Hollywood focused on visual effects to create spectacular *mise en scéne,* Yeşilçam embraced the strong oral tradition. This was of course also due to the insufficiency of infrastructure in the Turkish cinema sector. However, the inevitableness of an underdeveloped visual regime due to insufficient amount of money invested in the cinema sector cannot be regarded as the only reason. The economy of the cinema sector forced the movie directors to reduce the costs of the movies but the strong oral tradition also has significant implications on the trajectory of Yeşilçam. The traditions of

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[6] Çalışlar, Aziz (1995), *Tiyatro Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, pp. 650-51, quoted in Sarıkartal; 2002: 75-76

miniature, shadow play (*Karagöz*) etc were revived by these movies (Erdoğan; 1998). As previously stated, we can make an assumption that mnemic symbols of the popular oral tradition awaking the collective memory of the society provided rich sources for these movies.

3.3 Reading the Historicity of Yeşilçam in the Turkish Modernization Process

First of all, it should be noted that this study by no means attempts to cover all social and cultural aspects of the Turkish modernization process. However, I believe that certain tensions embedded in the Turkish modernization process in particular should be mentioned here so as to address the cultural tension between the elite and the ruled, which assumedly contributed to the development of the narrative structure of the Turkish popular cinema. Since I will mainly deal with a number of binary oppositions used in the narrative structure of the Yeşilçam melodramas which were used to represent the struggle between the rich and the poor, we confront with certain overcharged and ambiguous concepts such as modernization, class, high and low, the dominant and subaltern etc. I shall neither attempt to define these concepts nor endeavor to present an overall picture of the relevant contexts and discourses. However, in order to deal with the opposition between the upper and lower classes, we *must* take a glance at the tensions inscribed in Turkey's modernization history. In doing this, I shall dismiss other main discussions such as post-colonialist debates, "center" and "periphery" discussions and national identity issue etc unless we have to think about these issues in association with the cultural sphere. In looking at the chief characteristics of Turkey's modernization process in the context of the cultural representations, we can hope to find useful insights to back my analysis of the Yeşilçam melodramas in the Chapter 4 and 5. I shall try to take a look at the transformation that the cultural sphere underwent due to the modernization project.

In reading the Turkish modernization history, the concepts of the "original shock"[7] and "trauma"[8] will be used so as to define the primordial characteristics of the process. With the use of these concepts, I hope to develop a specific perception that Turkey's cultural sphere is hit by an ontological crisis the implications of which we can observe in the narrative of Yeşilçam melodramas. The original shock might be accepted as the beginning of the up-to-down, monist and repressive cultural modernization project of the Republic, which deprived many people not only a multicultural identity but also the means to speak up within their cultures. Together with Turkey's failure in developing political or social agencies to represent the ones who cannot speak up and the very dynamics of the class society itself, this cultural transformation has brought about traumatic consequences. One of these consequences, which I shall deal with in this thesis, was at the symbolic level of collective memory. Before going into detail, it should be noted that here I use the term shock as a sudden or violent disturbance of the mind and emotions. Therefore, the original shock of the modernization process has paved the way for specific collective mental images, imaginations and expressions towards the developments brought by the modernization. In addition to the very dynamics of a class society, this cultural transformation has created spheres of chronic crisis and discomfort due to the violent disturbance at symbolic level caused by the monist policies of the Republic. Therefore, the implications of this shock might be regarded as traumatic in the sense not only that they eroded the collective memory of the history but also displaced the mechanisms of cultural expression. Therefore, it might be argued that the displacement exacerbated the sense of spiritual deprivation for the groups who are also destitute of material wealth.

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[7] Here, the term "original shock" has been used as a derivative of the Freudian term of "shock of origination" which is "identified in the mythological scene of murder of the father, which provides the sons with a reserve of shared guilt that henceforth ties them to a communal 'law.' … a shock that is never 'really past' an act of symbolic violence through which the group comes to have the experience of existing together " (Robins & Aksoy; 2000: 205).

[8] The word *trauma* literally means an experience that produces psychological injury or pain and also the psychological injury so caused. Therefore the adjective form of this noun, *traumatic*, signifies something psychologically painful. In this thesis, I prefer to call both the Turkish modernization and its far-reaching consequences as "*traumatic*."

This excessive sense of bereavement paved the way for transcendental mechanisms for protection, which were often used by the narrative structure of Yeşilçam melodramas.

3.3.1 Cultural Tension Caused by the Turkish Modernization Process

The Turkish modernization process is seen as a project for establishing a nation state from the remnants of the cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire. The major goal of this project was first to establish an ideal of homogenous nation and then to reach the social and economic level of the Western civilization. According to Özbek (2002), the societies, which possess a "Grand Tradition" in their past such as India, was luckier in establishing their nation states than the ones which lacked it such as the African countries since the latter had to adhere to a monist and pro-Westernization cultural politics. Modern Turkey reshaped its traditions by disregarding its Grand Ottoman tradition and defined its past by turning a blind eye to the multicultural structure of Anatolia. Thus, the official history of Anatolia was written by taking the "Turkish" elements into consideration as if other never existed.

> A number of revolutions were made which rendered the pro-Westernization cultural project possible aiming to reach the level of contemporary states; the measures taken brought about significant results considering the Republic's path towards establishing a 'universal' culture; … the traditional popular culture was re-shaped … via such institutions as people's houses (*halk evleri*) and the village institutes (*köy enstitüleri*). However, such implementations were monist as in the example of Indonesia, where an opposition between the elite and the people was observed, rather than establishing a pluralist cultural policy respecting all regional, class and ethnical differences (Özbek; 2002: 40).

Tekelioglu defines the Turkish modernization project as a compulsory and up-to-down process, as it was produced and controlled by the cultural

elites (1995). This up-to-down process inevitably promoted the opposition between the elites and ordinary people as mentioned by Özbek and attempted to transform multi-cultural Anatolia into a center of purified and idealized culture (Robins & Aksoy; 2000).

> This programme of purification was directed against the multicultural legacy of the Empire, intended to eliminate the communities of identification that were increasingly perceived as compromising the cultural unity of the new Turkish nationalism. The old complexity of religions, ethnicities and languages was replaced by the modern and uniform space of the monochrome Republic. … The imagined community of new Turks had its more or less traumatic origins in acts of cultural repression and the silence of a cover up (Robins & Aksoy; 2000: 207).

The Republic's cultural repression led to a traumatic imagination of a new Turkish culture, which as a matter of fact did not exist but was carried to a symbolic level. In this symbolic level, there have always been sources of tensions and discomforts, which have become visible in political, social, economic or cultural spheres from time to time. What becomes visible in fact what the Turkish modernization process wants to make invisible. Therefore, the story of modern Turkey could better be told in terms of the erosion of the imagined community of 'new Turks.' This erosion brings the very traumatic opposition between the elite/ordinary people to light; in other words, rises again the opposition between the rulers and ruled, the upper and the lower or the dominant and dominated. It is from the perspective of these polarizations I will try to analyze the cultural representation of this traumatic reaction towards modernization. In addition, the re-invention of the tradition by the Turkish modernization project also paved the way for the hybrid cultural forms which resisted the change on the one hand but also embrace the practices initiated by the modernization attempts on the other (Özbek; 2002). Yeşilçam movies and the Arabesk culture were the best examples for this.

3.4 The Place of Social/Class Hierarchies in Yeşilçam Melodramas

Yeşilçam has never been impartial in its famous dispute between the rich and the poor, a popular theme not only for melodramas but also comedies. In 1960s, Yeşilçam movies gave their support to the poor in this quarrel, not only touting the values of the lower class extravagantly without any fear of exaggeration or disproportionate representation, but also creating its own map of meanings, signs and symbols, which, in some way, created a 'recasted' realism for the world of poor.

During the 1960s when the melodrama was the most popular genre in the Turkish cinema, Yeşilçam melodramas both re-presented and re-modeled the socio-economic differences between the upper and lower class. This re-presentation and re-modeling created a mutual relation between the Yeşilçam melodramas and its audiences. The world of poor - their values, beliefs, life styles, the difficulties they encountered - was on the scenes from the perspective of the Yeşilçam directors, which was nourished by both the realities of the country and the widespread romantic-populist discourse about the poor as the "victims of life."   However, on the other hand, the portrayal of Yeşilçam melodramas has affected the perspective and imagination of the poor about the world of rich as well.

In an attempt to contextualize the place of social/class hierarchies in Yeşilçam melodramas, I will first try to put the issue in a set of historical circumstances within the context of Turkish modernization. These historical circumstances that I will try to describe are related to the imagination of the Turkish society as a classless formation. It can be argued that ideological, cultural and institutional structures of Turkey were corporatist, as an antithesis of neoliberal understanding, which use "competition" rather than "negotiation" as the dynamic of policy-making (Parla; 2001).

As Parla (2001) and Mardin (2004) argue, the political history of Turkey following the Ottoman Empire, espoused organic and functional

groupings based on a common set of interests which overpassed the class divisions. Corporatism sees the society as an organism comprised of organs harmoniously complementing each other and thus rejects both the individualism of liberalism and the existence of social classes. It argues for a communal definition of society along with organic bonds, which bring the citizens together under a classless formation (Parla; 2001). From the very foundation of the Republic, the up-to-down modernization process led by the rulers embraced corporatist policies underlining solidarity among different class formations. Furthermore, Mardin (2004) argues that the bases of solidarist thought can be traced back to the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire. The implications of the corporatist understanding of society can be seen in Yeşilçam's representation of upper and lower classes.

It can be stated that Yeşilçam melodramas created its own lower class, defined its values and specified a peculiar relation between the lower and upper classes. The characters from the lower class and their values played the leading roles in these movies. Everything else was defined in either cooperation or contradiction with the world of poor. Although there was a basic opposition between the poor and the rich, the life style of the upper class was defined in a negating way in contrast with that of the lower class. Therefore, in these movies, we can see the gaze of Yeşilçam's poor in the center, evaluating the rest of the world from a specific angle. Here my endeavor would not be to display how these movies fit the realities of the lower class, which would definitely be a meaningless effort, but to understand how this angle worked and how Yeşilçam represented and recasted them through its symbolic mappings,[9] which is why in the Chapter 4 and 5 I will

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[9] Here I will base my argument in Voloshinov's (1973) account of ideological sign. First of all it should be underlined that cultural studies are closely tied to the problems of philosophy of language. This point is very important to this thesis since it will mainly deal with how Yeşilçam constructed its narrative language, creating a symbolic world of its own. Therefore, I believe that Yeşilçam melodramas must be regarded as "ideological products," in the sense that they did not simply existed as a part of a reality but also reflected and refracted another reality. However, it is not possible for us to see the degree of refraction since, in Bakhtinian terms, since we confront with both the angle of refraction of authorial discourse (in this case, that of the movie directors) and another angle in the consciousness of the audiences (1990). Therefore, it is not my attempt to see the degree of refraction but stress that there *is* refraction indeed. In physics, the refraction is defined as the change of direction of a ray of

focus on the symbols and relations between these symbols constructed as binary oppositions.

There is a well-known assumption that Yeşilçam melodramas served the official ideology of the modernization project, which claimed a monist and classless formula for the Turkish society. For example, according to Maktav, until the 1970s, Yeşilçam portrayed its own "model of society," which was backed by both the Republican People's Party's principle of populism and the Kemalist ideology. He argues that in these movies, there was an indistinct background behind the characters as a Turkish nation all classes of which were fused into each other. This background represented Yeşilçam's own model of society where the rich and the poor peacefully coexisted. He also adds that the Republican People's Party (CHP) defended the idea that a Turkish society where all classes were necessary for each other and came together under a number of common interests must be established for the happiness and welfare of the country. According to Maktav, Yeşilçam was inspired by this idea which was very productive for its scenarios. Therefore Yeşilçam developed its rich and poor characters within such a background (2001).

Although we cannot deny that Maktav's argument was significant since attracts our attention to the relation between the official ideology of the CHP and Yeşilçam's own modeling of the conflict between the rich and the poor, this study seeks to underline another point, which I believe lacking in Maktav's argument. Asserting that Yeşilçam stories were totally shaped by the hegemonic ideology is to miss a significant point since these movies cannot be seen as a mere reflection of the ongoing conflicts and ideological discourses in the society. If lower class is deprived of speaking about or even understanding the political and economic dynamics behind its material and spiritual deprivation, this does not necessarily mean that they do not give any meaning at all to these political and cultural processes. Maktav's argument seems to embrace a popular phantasm that Yeşilçam's discourse was

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light in passing obliquely from one medium into another. Here our principal medium is the lenses of Yeşilçam melodramas.

completely incorporated by the dominant ideology. The conflict between the rich and the poor was not shaped in the form of a "class struggle." The poor, and the Yeşilçam movies which used the perspective of the poor, saw these conflicts through a different glass, distorting the angle which resulted in the refraction of the ongoing dynamics. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the symbolic mechanisms of this refraction. For Yeşilçam melodramas, we can defend a similar argument with Meral Özbek who studied on the issue of *Arabesk*:

> The story of arabesk tells also a specific story about the "Westernization" of the so-called Third World, and understanding arabesk is crucial to comprehending the contradictions and ambivalences of the project and the process of Turkish modernity... One was of thinking about arabesk is to see it as a metaphor for popular identity – for the responses of the urbanizing popular classes to the capitalist modernization process in Turkey (Özbek; 1997: 212).

If we consider Yeşilçam melodrama in the same way offered by Özbek, we should taken account its specificity pertaining to its attitude against Westernization. According to Yavuz (2002), the semiology of Turkish modernization can be seen as a metonymic Westernization. Metonymy can be defined as the substitution of a fragment with the whole. Yavuz (2002) gives examples from Tanzimat novels that "playing piano" and "speaking French" were two main features of the Westernized characters. These two characteristics represented the Westernized life style in Tanzimat novels and symbolized how the West was perceived. Therefore this metonymic understanding, which refuses to consider modernization as a whole process, can also be observed in Yeşilçam's representation of different classes. As we will discuss in Chapter 5, the life style of upper class is metonymically represented along with attributed symbols such as whisky, home party and private cars. Turkish modernization regards Westernization as a "fragment" rather than an complete process. Besides, the modernization is also regarded as a burden, the price of which is harming national/moral identity (Bora; 2002). Therefore, as I previously stated, Turkish society has considered modernization as a painful and traumatic experience.

Futhermore, in her analyis of the famous "crying child" poster, Gürbilek gives us important clues about how Turkish society considered its position in relation with the modernization and the West:

> The face of the child doesn't tell us the pain itself, but a peculiar feeling of being subjected to pain without deserving it. Despite his innonce, this child is mistreated and punished. He is the victim of an unfair law. ... He also represents resistance. Rather than a sense of terrifying or a deep desperateness or hatred which will express itself sooner or later, he represents protected honor at all costs. He is deeply wounded, ... but he resists the world which mistreats him ... Everthing seems to be upside down. The pain which he is subjected to in his childhood becomes the resource of honor, virtue and goodness (Gürbilek; 2001: 39).

In order to further discuss this issue, a brief theoretical background on how the state of poverty is considered should be given. For this thesis, the state of poverty is not merely an economic situation. Although poverty literally means the state having little or no money, goods, or means of support, it also refers to a "whole way of life," with its own map of meanings, symbols, values and cultural practices. Poverty does not only mean material deprivation but also refers to the ways of dealing with it. Therefore, the state of poverty includes both material and spiritual deprivation.

The poor "subject," who is both a subject in itself and the subject of a class formation as well, is not the "Subject" of the modernization with a capital "S." The subject with a small "s" is a "fact" of the modernization due to the capitalist dynamics but it is neglected by the "fiction" of modernity, which sees the deprived subjects and their cultures as an anomaly. S/he is historically banned from modernization's myth of inner intellectual development. S/he cannot acquire modern instruments of such development, which would help him/her to express or show himself/herself more skillfully.

Especially in Turkey, the political culture of poverty does not involve active political participation. Compared to some other underdeveloped countries which are also hit by chronic economic crises together with radical social consequences - let's recall recent discussions on the difference

between Turkey and Argentina -, Turkey's lower class has failed to develop its own political agencies to express themselves in the political arena. Therefore, if the political culture does not allow the lower class to express itself, the consequences become more traumatic. Moreover, some subjects are incapable of expressing themselves properly even if they are given the chance to speak up. Therefore, no matter how difficult to hold a conversation with these singular voices, this would never mean that the scholars of cultural studies could not talk with them. There might be certain fields, cultural spheres, where this voice can be heard, at least can be talked with. It is important at this point to underline that I talk about a *possibility* of conversation as I previously stated that I do not take for granted a direct relation between the reality and its cultural representation. The *possibility* I would like to underline here stems from the fact that the cultural representation is nourished by the realities and the popular traditions, which are also historically constructed. However, we should always keep in mind the issue of refraction so as not to be trapped by an idea of a linear relation between the reality and representation. In this study I believe that the symbolic world of Yeşilçam melodramas can give us important insights about the ways through which the poor deal with material poverty and spiritual deprivation. The symbolic mechanism which Yeşilçam used provides us with an opportunity to hear the low voices of the poor since it increases the volume of their singular, broken-up and patched speech. To take this argument one step further, it can be argued that in order to understand the poverty, one should look not only at how it is historically constructed but also at how it is interpreted by the ones who experience it.

The material and spiritual deprivation of the poor people are intrinsic to the class society. In class societies, there are always rich and poor; ruler and ruled as well as dominant and subaltern. Hierarchies such as the one between the higher and the lower are distinctive in the sense that they grant some people with respected status but make others destitute of mechanisms of social and self-respect. Having one positive quality, for example a high status job, is a source of not only social respect but also self-confidence and

self-development. However, the poor, who are deprived of or excluded from such esteemed opportunities, lack confidence in society, which, they believe, will never listen to them due to their low status.

> Class society takes away from all the people within it the feeling of secure dignity in the eyes of the others and of themselves. It does so in two ways: first, by the images it projects of why people belong to high or low classes – class presented as the ultimate outcome of personal ability; second, by the definition the society makes of the actions to be taken by people of any class to validate their dignity – legitimizations of self which do not, cannot work and so reinforce the original anxiety. The result of this, we believe is that the activities which keep people moving in a class society, which make them seek more money, more possessions, higher-status jobs, do not originate in a materialistic desire, or even sensuous appreciation, of things, but out of an attempt to restore a psychological deprivation that the class structure has effected in their lives. In other words, *the psychological motivation instilled by a class society is to heal a doubt about the self rather than create more power over things and other persons in the outer world* (Sennett & Cobb; 1972: 170-71, original emphasis).

Following these words about "psychological deprivation," we can reach notable arguments on Yeşilçam melodramas. But first of all it should be added that according to Erdoğan (2002), in Turkey's social formation, the most striking outcome of the firmly-established social and cultural hierarchies imposed by the capitalist axiomatic on the poor is the fear of losing personal honor or the concern for self-respect due to the stress on the protection of honor. What makes the poverty critical is not only ever growing and deepening social inequalities and extreme material destitution but also the symbolic violence created by these upon the existence of poor. In other words, the poor are subjected to a symbolic violence threatening their self-respect and personal honor; which is why the ontological crisis of security which the poor experience is also about the discursive, symbolic and emotional reproduction. Therefore, the crisis of security should not be considered as a mere physical problem.

However, the problem is not only how to deal with this symbolic violence, but also is that all social processes of gaining self-respect or self-

confidence which Erdoğan underlines are defined with the language of "others," that of the dominant. Therefore, in order to survive in a society, the subaltern in both material and spiritual deprivation also has to find tactical ways to protect their egos. However, the mechanisms of inner development with which this symbolic violence can be fought by increasing the self of security are also constructed under the terms set by others. In other words, sublime values, such as honor and dignity, are defined by the dominant language. A person without a high-status job, for example a janitor, has to find another mechanism to increase the sense of security. Therefore,

> For the worthiness granted a person, and that he sometimes accepts as his own, is not an abstraction all-internal to the self, nor a purely relative issue of different personal abilities, but stems from the social value placed on his labors … Feeling that you are a legitimate actor in the world, that is, whether in concert with or opposition to others, has value (Sennett & Cobb; 1972: 264-65).

In order to see the worthiness granted a person, this worthiness should be seen and measured. Therefore, the social dynamics of dignity and honor are visible, as a demonstration. Therefore, when people look at each other, they can judge one another by appearances, which give every possible clue about their social status. Therefore the poor are the ones whom think that they are not seen by "others" or they are refused to be seen due to a sense of disgust. This ocularcentric relation between different classes has significant implications on the symbolic universe of the poor. If you do not have something worthy to display, to demonstrate, to be measured, or to be proud of under the terms of the dominant, then you have to stress what cannot be seen, what cannot be measured by material criteria and what cannot be gained by increasing one's social status. That is why, "The affective economy of the poor oscillates between nothingness and inner beauty" (Erdoğan; 2002: 48). Similarly, in Yeşilçam melodramas, the most important mechanism to sublime the world of lower class seemed to be transcendentality in the sense that Yeşilçam's poor are equipped with the most precious values in their quarrel with the rich:

The poor heroes of the popular Turkish movies are 'transcendental heroes' because they live 'another life beyond the poverty' although they are poor. This state of transcendentality made the audiences see the poverty not as a problem but as a 'value.' Meanwhile, the richness was not seen acceptable as long as the rich character harmed the poor one and the moral norms were always identified with the poor lives (Maktav; 2001: 165).

Referring back to the "crying child" poster, it can be argued that Turkish society attempted to love and embrace its "ill fate" in contradiction with the Western world. Gürbilek (2001) states that Turkish people saw this state of childhood as a domestic feature and regarded it as a virtue. She also states that this can be interpreted as an attempt to deal with its own underdevelopment and to transform its ill fate into a loveable process, which, in fact, makes it deficient in the eyes of the West. Following Gürbilek, one can argue that this was the reason why Yeşilçam usually used the same mechanism in its narratives, equalizing the sense of deficiency with innocence. Whatever we may call them, the subaltern, the poor or the ruled, is immature and takes its strength from this state of underdevelopment. The tension between the idea of "immature society" and the West has provided fruitful resource - which Gürbilek describes as a "national/melodramatic spiritual supply" (2001; 64) - not only for Yeşilçam melodramas in the 1960s but also *Tanzimat* literature in earlier times and, *arabesk* music and movies later in the 1980s. In the following two chapters, I will deal with the symbolic mappings through which these ideas were represented by Yeşilçam.

This interpretation provides us with a significant basis to evaluate the symbolic universe of the Yeşilçam melodramas because these movies might show how the poor deal with the lack of self-security. I shall later analyze the narrative structure of the movies so as to understand which maps of meanings are used to secure the presence of the subaltern ego in Yeşilçam melodramas. This basis shall constitute my perspective towards the question of representation of different social classes.

The Turkish modernization process is itself a trauma and has significant traumatic effects on the Turkish society. The Yeşilçam melodramas captured the hearts of the most of Turkish people particularly in the 1960s when they were very popular indeed. This study tends to see these movies as a historical formation of Turkish popular culture; in other words, it can be argued that Yeşilçam melodramas are historically lived cultural formations, which indicate Turkish society's symbolic transformation through modernization. Therefore, contrary to widespread negligence towards these movies by the Turkish intelligentsia which are obsessed with high art, in this thesis, I argue that Yeşilçam melodramas do tell us a story about the Turkish modernization itself as they present the modernization's embedded ambivalences and also hybrid articulations which take place within this process. First of all, we should note that such formations of popular culture are not alien to the Turkish modernization project, but on the contrary, they are constituents of process of modernization since they reveal the double-edged feelings of masses towards this traumatic experience: the sense of fear on the one hand, and the sense of liberation on the other. This ambivalent journey of popular emotions is related with the changing politics of capitalism as well. Thus, the oscillation between fear of losing what is regarded as "traditional" (to be displaced by what is regarded as "modern") and liberation from "traditional" is a class-bounded experience. In other words, different classes response differently to the modernization project. Although this oscillation might be evaluated in an individual level as a *schizophrenic* experience resulting from cultural disorientation and loss of identity, it might also be considered as a superstructural phenomenon related with the class relations of capitalism. The reason why I underline the significance of Yeşilçam melodramas is that I believe they show us what has been seen as "traditional" and "modern" by Turkish society. Therefore, modernization cannot be seen as a smooth process since such oscillations are the very constituents of the nation's experience. The duality inscribed in Yeşilçam melodramas as "the rich versus the poor" signifies the one side of the coin, the fear of loss of tradition. These movies show us how Yeşilçam

regarded "traditional" and "modern" and how they are evaluated by its leading poor as well.

Since this thesis will focus on the main opposition of Yeşilçam melodramas between the rich and poor, we should ask ourselves how the relation between the lower and upper classes changed in the wake of the rapid industrialization and westernization of the society. However, I should note that this study does not attempt to analyze the complicated formation of Turkey's socio-economic differences and class hierarchies in the cultural sphere. Such an analysis is far beyond the scope of this thesis. We can only hope to hear the echoes of these hierarchies in the world of Yeşilçam. According to Erdoğan, the most evident characteristic of the representation of the social (class and cultural) hierarchies and differences in the poor-subaltern narratives is that the relation between the lower and upper classes was experienced in a despising, humiliating and harming manner. Despite the complicated articulation of Turkey's social hierarchies and differences, we can still argue that the social sphere in the imaginations of the poor/subaltern is established upon the binary opposition between the rich and the poor (2002).

The people's relation to either abundance or lack of material wealth depends upon their social class. Speaking from the language of Turkey's poor, it depends upon whether they are rich or poor. In other words, while people of deprivation do not want to see the people of abundance, the vice versa is also the same. Yeşilçam melodramas always take sides in opposition to the world of good-looking people. While the poor do not want to see the rich or to be seen by them, Yeşilçam's poor characters struggle against the world of appearances. The message is as follows: they might not have something to display but they have much more important things which cannot be seen but only felt. In big cities, the boulevards and streets[10] of

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[10] Erdoğan defines streets and roads of the city as the chief chronotope where the social and class hierarchies are experienced: "A social chronotope where the rich are met, seen and they look at the poor with their 'showy', 'despising' etc gazes. Another chronotope where this meeting is experienced is the houses of the rich as a work place" (2002: 37). It should be noted that in Yeşilçam melodramas, the villas of the upper class were often used as a

which are designed as the sites of demonstration, the relation between these poles become ocularcentric, a relation between the gazes: "The décor which transforms all urban humanity to a wide 'family of eyes' also exposes the unwanted step children of this family." (Berman; 1994: 193) How these gazes, the gaze of the poor and that of the rich, see each other can give us important clues about the class hierarchies. Elias argues,

> The elaborate courtly rituals of display devised to mark the articulations of social hierarchy led to a devaluation of more intimate senses of smell and touch in favor of a more remote vision (1973: 23).

Then, in the streets of the cities, the struggle between the ones below and those above become the war of gazes. The relations between social classes or sections become a relation of hierarchical gaze; a barter of humiliating, despised, boasting, ashamed and oppressed gazes (Erdoğan; 2002).

This point is very important to this study since I believe Yeşilçam melodramas constructed a world from the eyes of its poor, which in return re-constructed the gaze of the poor. Therefore there might be a cyclical relation between the gaze of these movies and that of the lower class. As I previously stated, in societies which fail to develop political agencies other than political parties, communitarian values, symbols and tales are of great importance. Mardin argues that the Turkish society lacked a 'civil society' in Western terms but had a communitarian structure where individuals were socialized in the traditions of community (1974: 412-3). Therefore, such societies give more traumatic reactions to the process of modernization since it results in cultural disorientation and displacement of societal bonds which people believe cannot and should not be replaced.

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meeting point of the rich and the poor. The most evident feature of these meetings in the houses of the rich is the sense of non-belonging and alienation felt by the poor character. Everyone who's seen a melodrama can recall the famous home party scenes where the rich despise and make fun of the poor character (for example, *Kezban* and *Otobüs Yolcuları*).

In this chapter, after presenting a brief history of the Turkish popular cinema, I have tried to underline the similarities and differences between Yeşilçam and Hollywood melodramas in order to show the path the former followed in developing its own narrative structure. We have seen that the focus on the opposition between the lower and upper classes is peculiar to the Turkish popular cinema when compared to Hollywood. Despite certain important features which are common in both Yeşilçam and Hollywood, Yeşilçam was also influenced by certain popular traditions like *tuluat* theatre. Then, I have tried to trace the marks of Turkish modernization process on the cultural sphere so as to address the traumatic tension between the "high" and "low" classes, which, I assume, influenced the Yeşilçam narratives. Besides, I have tried to mention the implications of the corporatist understanding on the imagination of the Turkish society as a classless nation. I have argued that the original shock of up-to-down modernization together with the Republic's monist policies have created spheres of chronic crisis at symbolic level of collective memory, whose implications are traumatic in the sense that they exacerbated the sense of spiritual deprivation for the groups who are already destitute of material wealth. Therefore, excessive sense of deprivation paved the way for mechanisms of self-protection especially against the extravagant life style of the upper class, such as reversing the order of the "high" and "low" embedded in the relation between the lower and upper classes. This mechanism was often used by the cinematic representation of the opposition between the poor and the rich via sublimating the "values" attributed to the lower class against the "good-looking" and "showy" life style of the upper class. I also argued that Turkish society attempted to love and embrace its "ill fate" in contradiction with the Western world via a symbolic transcendentality which was used by Yeşilçam melodramas in order to transform the state of childhood – the idea of immature society – into a loveable virtue.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL TENDENCIES IN THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF YEŞİLÇAM MELODRAMAS

This chapter seeks to analyze the general characteristics of the narrative structure of Yeşilçam melodramas. The aim is to determine main tendencies in the narrative of Yeşilçam melodrama and to identify the templates used by it in terms of storyline, places, characters etc. Therefore, by looking at the movies I have selected, I will try to present a number of formulas in order to give a general panorama on the issue.

It should be noted that generalization as a method of analysis might fail to reduce the wealth of meanings to certain imperious categories. However, this study by no means aims to design such domineering groupings. However, the reason why I need to develop generalizations is to determine dominant tendencies in the movies. Since I take for granted that there *is* a structure in these films, we need to understand it in order to draw a complete picture laying out general tendencies.

4.1 General Narrative Characteristics of Yeşilçam Melodramas:

4.1.1 Simplicity and Clarity

The story is simple. There are usually two leading characters, which the narrative evolves around and a number of supporting characters who

help the narrative to evolve around the leading characters. In other words, supporting characters are considered to be the instruments of the main story. They are presented as no-psychology characters without interior depth who merely serve the development of the narrative. For instance, closest friends of the leading characters, parents of the leading characters or the residents of the place that the main story takes place etc are given as simple as possible. They have a purpose within the story and they have no psychology outside this purpose. The purposes of these characters including the leading ones are presented as simplest as possible. Once a character is shown the audience immediately grasps his/her purpose. Whether he/she is "rich," "poor," "good," or "bad" is simply understood from the very first scene he/she is seen on. The main attributes of a character rarely change.

Exceptions to this constancy may be observed for the sake of the story; however the reasons behind such changes are not explained. Reversals in psychological moods are sudden. For example, if the story has a "happy ending," a stubborn parent who doesn't approve the marriage of the leading male and female characters suddenly changes his/her mind after all other obstacles against the marriage are eliminated (*Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*). There are no complexities or ambiguities in the definition of characters, situations and conditions. Even irreconcilable elements are simply juxtaposed without any reasonable explanation. The world is simply defined in these movies.

Beyond its simplicity, the narrative is also evident. In other words, the beginning, the development and the end are all already known or at least anticipated by the audience. Surprises are rarely observed in the development of the story.

The plot is usually similar in all movies. There are certain narrative templates that serve this clarity. The main story is usually about a love affair between a man and woman. Leading male and female characters always fall in love at first sight. After meeting, they realize that they have been looking for each other for a long time. These leading characters are usually hungry

for love and have been looking for "true love" since they were born. Both characters are each other's "first love." As soon as they fall in love with each other, their love is sublimated. Life is centered upon the presence and continuance of their love; therefore the loss of each other's love is a cause of death or endless misery. The happiness is only possible when two leading characters are together. The happy ending is imagined as "marriage." Other supporting characters either help this company or try to prevent the marriage. Therefore their purpose is either to constitute an obstacle to this love story or to help the marriage take place.

The leading male and female characters usually fall apart. As a matter of fact, the real story is about their separation. The "happy ending" requires their re-unification. In other cases, the couple – one of them or both of them – suffers similar problems in each movie. First of all, the leading male and female characters are extremely unhappy when they break up. One of them suddenly get handicapped, blind, deaf or deadly sick. Except for happy endings, one of the leading characters might die, a development which makes their love immortal. The other character is doomed to suffer an endless misery for the rest of his/her life.

Among the movies I have analyzed, *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim, Küçük Hanımın Şoförü, Aşk Mabudesi, Acı Hayat, Kezban, Gençlik Hülyaları, Otobüs Yolcuları, Hayatım Sana Feda* and *Fakir Gencin Romanı* fit the above-mentioned narrative frame. These movies tell the simple stories of a man and woman who love each other but then encounter serious problems separating them. In these movies, the story of the events is simply presented, allowing no confusion in the minds of audience. The simplicity in these movies safeguards the feeling of security in the hearts of the audiences who never feel threatened or shaken by the narrative.

However, *Namus Uğruna, Gurbet Kuşları* and *Yaprak Dökümü* are quite different. In *Namus Uğruna*, the main story is again love, but a threatened love by the severe economic conditions. In this film, a marriage between a poor driver and housewife is the center of the narrative. The

movie mainly aims to stress the importance of rectitude and the protection of woman's honor; therefore the story is not about a couple which falls apart, but the protection of honor and dignity. *Gurbet Kuşları* is also about the protection of a family's honor, which migrated to Istanbul from an eastern province. It tells the story of a poor and crowded family, which tries to survive in Istanbul, without losing its honor. In addition, *Yaprak Dökümü* tells the story of a family with a conservative father dealing with the newly emerging Westernized life style. The story is again about the protection of family and personal honor. Although these movies do not perfectly fit the above-mentioned narrative template, which focus on the love affair of a man and woman, their stories and the flow of events are again simple and evident. From the very first scene on, the upcoming events are predictable. More importantly, all these movies including the exceptions underline the importance of same values such as honor and dignity, no matter what the narrative focuses on. Therefore, the simplicity of the narrative does not only stem from the predictability, but also the use of conventional iconography. In other words, Yeşilçam melodramas adhere to the accepted standards of the genre since they rarely chose complicated stories or surprising narrative templates.

4.1.2 Fixed Signification

The signification of Yeşilçam melodramas is descriptive in the sense that these signs, meanings and values serve as words. Yeşilçam's symbolic representation - signs, icons, or any representation that stands for its subject or object by virtue of a resemblance or analogy to it - serves to describe the conditions and situations experienced by the characters. In addition, Yeşilçam melodramas try to fix the meanings of these words so that each sign, meaning and value possess and support a constant map of meaning which remain the same in *almost* every movie. Yeşilçam melodramas treat these signs and meanings like fetishes. For example, jazz is always used as

theme music in the scenes where rich people appear. Jazz is not only foreign music but also signifies the obsession of the upper class with fun and entertainment. Easy listening funk jazz also nourishes the idea that the life of upper class is easy and comfortable. In all movies I have analyzed, jazz or jazzy music is used this way.

Another important icon was automobile with a private driver which was often used to indicate material richness. In *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim, Küçük Hanım'ın Şoförü*, *Aşk Mabudesi, Acı Hayat, Kezban, Otobüs Yolcuları*, *Gençlik Hülyaları* and *Hayatım Sana Feda*, the rich people have their own automobiles and private drivers. Yeşilçam's high society cannot be considered without their cars and chauffeurs. In the eyes of the poor, possessing a car and a house is the most important indicator of being rich. Being a driver whether in a private automobile, *dolmuş* or a public bus is another common symbol for the lower class men, and all drivers are sublimed as being tough and honest people (*delikanlı*). Especially *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim, Küçük Hanım'ın Şoförü, Namus Uğruna* and *Otobüs Yolcuları* focused on this icon as a signifier of the *delikanlı* culture.

Moreover, the use of space is also fetishized. The spaces are used as symbols eliciting unquestioning meanings. In every movie I have analyzed, the stories take place in Istanbul: Istanbul's open-air landscapes and public places, and dwellings are the most common spaces used. The stories take place in dwellings - squatter settlements, villas, waterside residences (*yalı*s), flats – and public places for entertainment (bars, discos, night clubs, *meyhane*s, *pavyon*s). The streets and landscapes are sometimes used as a background for the story. The iconography ignores open air spaces but focuses on interior ones. Open-air spaces are represented as being at maximum distance from the frontal plane. In other words, Istanbul's open air spaces or landscapes are not considered as an environment but as a background. Therefore, open-air space was used as in the paintings to stress what is in the front. Especially, the woods of Istanbul or waterside parks, sidewalks and ferries are often used for the love scenes of the leading couple. In all movies I have analyzed except for *Yaprak Dökümü* and *Namus*

Uğruna, we can see these places used. *Yaprak Dökümü* and *Namus Uğruna* ignored public space except for coffeehouse and focused on private ones.

The use of residences has two important features: The visual representation of the most common public and private spaces is ambiguous. The differences between various public and private spaces can only be understood by oral explanation. In other words, without a character telling that the residence is a villa, *köşk* or *yalı*, the audience cannot name what it is since they seem to have the same architectural characteristics. The situation is the same for entertainment places. There are no significant visual differences between nightclubs, discos and bars, or *pavyon*s and casinos. The use of entertainment places are seen in every movie I have analyzed.

The most important space is the residence in these movies. The architectural characteristics of a residence are connected to the wealth of the family. The most common templates are as follows:

> Both the interior and exterior appearance of the dwelling is important. The houses where the rich people live are usually duplex villas or seaside *yalı*s with their own gardens… The neighborhood of the poor comprises the houses made of timber on stony and dirty streets have gardens. The poor families live in the squatter areas where the majority of the houses have window bays (Adiloğlu; 2003: 75).

The stairs showing that the house is duplex and the bay windows (*cumba*s) are the fetish-like space symbols used by Yeşilçam. Inside the houses, fireplaces and stoves are commonly used symbols. In the houses of rich people, the stairs and fireplaces, and in the houses of poor people, the stoves are the most important symbols. The houses of the rich people are duplex, and all poor people live in the squatter settlements with bay windows.

4.1.3 The Dominant Role of Obstacles and Coincidences

Obstacles and coincidences play a major role in the development of the narrative. Reasonable or not, there are always obstacles against the happiness of the leading couple. The problem, which is always presented in a standardized way, is usually reduced to a misunderstanding, which emerges due to similar causes such as lies, fake documents, photographs or intrigues. The purpose of the misunderstanding or other obstacles such as socio-economic differences, the disapproval of the parents or intrigues of the "bad guys" is to delay the happiness of the couple. The whole story is centered upon whether or not the leading characters realize the "truth". However, their realization is always postponed. The main characters are usually late for happiness, for knowing the truth and for taking the necessary steps to correct the misunderstanding.

The purpose of the obstacles is to present a cause – reasonable or not - to split the couple. In addition, "coincidences" speed up the development of the incidents. All main points of the story are centered upon coincidences. For example, the couple meets by coincidence; one of them gets rich by coincidence or they meet again by coincidence. Obstacles and coincidences function as the two inevitable elements of the story. These two constituents of the narrative of Yeşilçam melodramas underline the idea of the inevitableness of the destiny. Fatalism dominates the story.

Yeşilçam melodramas created suspense with the coincidences of fate and obstacles created by bad people. Both served delays in time, which referred to the deferring of the re-unification of the leading couple. As the main question is whether or not they re-unite, these two played a major role for the flow of events. It can be argued that the obstacles such as tricks, lies, fake documents etc and coincidences, which break the sense of verisimilitude, are connected to the unanswered questions in the minds of audience. Either individuals or the fate itself is responsible for the problems. The embrace of fatalism and the personification of the evil show that

Yeşilçam's good people know that they suffer but they do not know why. The answers to "why" questions are given by these coincidences and obstacles. Either God wants them to be so or evil intentions cause the problems.   In all movies I have analyzed, the coincidences and obstacles can be seen as the two main factors helping the story develop. Especially in *Hayatım Sana Feda,* Yeşilçam sublimates the coincidences as inevitable plays of fate.   For example, the leading female character is hit by a car driven by the leading male, after which she becomes blind, and she tells her friend that she felt the accident before it happened. The leading male and female character often meet by coincidence especially in nightclubs, restaurants or *pavyon*s. Conforming to the religious belief that manhood's fate was written by God and human beings walk on a pre-determined path no one can ever change, the underlying message is that no one can escape from his/her inevitable fate. The only thing that the audiences worry about is whether or not the fate pre-determines a happy ending.

4.1.4   The Dominance of Vocal Narrative

Vocal narrative is dominant. Theme music, songs, and especially dialogues are essential for the development of the story. The basic incidents and turning points of the story are presented via words. Yeşilçam used predominantly words rather than images in order to narrate its stories. Dialogues were meant to explain the details of the incidents and the reactions of the characters to these incidents such as their feelings and thoughts. Music is also very important for Yeşilçam melodramas. The lyrics are usually harmonious with the main story. They are the part of the vocal narrative. Emotional ups and downs are supported by music and lyrics.

The Turkish cinema began dubbing the movies in the 1940s. Dubbing in Yeşilçam melodramas was a signal for the beginning of a new kind of narrative since it had significant implications on Yeşilçam's symbolic universe. Not actors and actresses themselves but theater players who had

excellent and poetic dictions dubbed these movies. The voice was used as an ignition mechanism for the bodies to move. Yeşilçam's characters might be considered as puppets, which had no significant appearance other than their voices. The appearances were denied by Yeşilçam melodramas in the sense that they were considered "deceitful" and "distorting." There was always something to be discovered beyond the bodies. Therefore, the voices, the words, are used as inner appearances, as something to be seen rather than to be heart. Erdoğan makes important remarks on this issue:

> [The players of Yeşilçam] never spoke. Their bodies were not given to homogenous and speaking subjects but to a Logos which express itself with the voices loosely pinned on bodies; which is why Yeşilçam was like a master of Karagöz with its voice which remained the same with the differences it produced. The word in Yeşilçam was Yeşilçam's word; what was said was the moments of the Logos managing the flow of the narrative in line with its morals. So the player was made speak rather than speaking; which is why most of the dialogues were in the form of propositions, failing to indicate the psychology of the characters. Then, can we argue that the voice of Yeşilçam was in the form of a voice-over [a bodiless voice whose source is unknown but pinned onto the bodies]? (Erdoğan; 2003: 116).

4.1.5 The Body as a Site of Excessive Signification

The body of Yeşilçam melodramas is a site of signification as the most important signifier to convey the meaning:

> The melodramatic body is a body seized by meaning. Since melodrama's simple, unadulterated messages must be made absolutely clear, visually present, to the audience, bodies of victims and villains must ambiguously signify their status. The bodies of the virtuous victims are typically subjected to physical restraint … Melodrama constantly reminds us of the psychoanalytic concept of 'acting out': the use of the body itself, its actions, gestures, its sites of irritation and excitation, to represent meanings that might otherwise be unavailable to representation because they are somehow under the bar of repression (Brooks; 1994: 18-19).

The body became an inscription of high and sublime emotions experienced by the leading characters, which cannot be expressed verbally. Yeşilçam melodramas had immoderate recourse for use of body, accompanied by the excessive use of words. In the movies I have selected, I have seen that the bodies of the leading actors and actresses are used as sites of either "victimization" or "heroization." The excess in the use of body was presented hysterically in their emotional ups and downs. As the human body is the most important symbol for the "appearance" which was considered as deceitful by the Yeşilçam's symbolic universe, melodramas did not avoid wasting it for the sake of noble emotions representing inner beauty. The realm of body is where we can most clearly see the contradiction between "interior" and "exterior."

The body is usually represented as "repressed," "restricted," and "suffering." The "happy periods" of the couple is briefly narrated. The real story is centered upon the suffering of the leading characters. The two main reasons of suffering are to fall apart from the beloved or a child. In other words, two basic human feelings, namely love for opposite sex and love for a child are used to help the audience simply identify with the story narrated. Suffering is usually presented via "crying," "drinking too much alcohol," "misery," "melancholy," or "sickness." The body is the center of the suffering. The body in pain usually speaks with a tearful voice, never laughs, never finds pleasure or entertains. The suffering body eventually collapses and consequently either becomes miserable in the worst way or dies. The repressed body is sublimated.

The ones who freely display their bodies are usually "bad" and "shameless" women. For this reason, the use of women's body by Yeşilçam melodramas requires a special attention. In these movies, there is a well-balanced tension between the morals of the Turkish society and the use of woman body which is regarded as sacred and intimate. As we all know, free display of woman body is blamed by the traditions and morals. Yeşilçam melodramas used the sexuality of woman in line with this understanding,

however this should never mean that the sexuality is denied. As in the society, the sexuality is kept alive in the public spaces but lived behind closed doors. As Brooks underlines:

> The hysterical body is typically … a woman's body, an indeed a victimized woman's body, on which desire has inscribed an impossible history, a story of desire in impasse … It is a pure image of victimization, and of the body wholly seized by affective meaning, of message converted on to the body so forcefully and totally that the body has ceased to function in its normal postures and gestures, to become nothing but text, nothing but the place of representation (1994: 22-23).

In these movies, body is a site of struggle between sublime emotions and desire. The body is repressed by and under what is regarded "noble." Yeşilçam has never attempted to decrease the tension between human and sublime desire. Here we regard the human desire as the sexuality of the leading couple, sublime desire as true love. This tension was used as a site of never-fulfilled covet, which is cyclically reproduced. The woman body is an object of desire for men especially often used "singing" scenes, but this desire is never openly presented. Close-ups of eyes, lips, short scenes of kisses, the scenes where the leading couple hug each other cheek to cheek, holding their hands, looking into each other's eyes, walking together or running after each other are the mostly used scenes of sexuality by Yeşilçam melodramas. Despite the parrying of sexuality, the realm of desire is never averted:

> The reflection of beauty onto the screen in Yeşilçam melodramas was almost from top to toe, the female player was not only a character but also what is watched. The scenes of kissing are evaded, the sexuality is secluded but the woman is used as an object to be looked at. The number one job for the women of melodramas, singing, is very useful to construct such a gaze. The woman who sing and dance on the stage becomes the object of desire for men and exhibits her beauty as a star (Maktav; 2003: 282).

In addition, Sarıkartal makes important remarks on the "acting out" of the melodramas' actresses. Although he writes about Hülya Koçyiğit's acting, one can argue that not only Koçyiğit (in *Kezban*) but also Türkan Şoray (in

Aşk Mabudesi, *Hayatım Sana Feda, Otobüs Yolcuları*), Nilüfer Aydan (in *Gençlik Hülyaları*), Fatma Girik (in *Yaprak Dökümü*) and Belgin Doruk (in *Küçük Hanımın Şoförü*) presented similar performances, allowing us to generalize this kind of "excessive acting" as a "melodramatic acting" of women:

> (1) The body moving by contracting and bending as if it suffers from a crisis… (2) the restriction of bodily movements despite there is no physical obstacle to prevent the body from freely moving. This creates the influence that the body has a physical disability to move. (3) Slightly moving lips without any reason. This move might be interpreted in many ways but the general meaning that this strange mimic creates is that the woman character wants to tell important things but is prevented by an unidentified presence. (4) glances fixed at either the leading male or the camera for periods long enough to draw the attention of the audiences (Sarıkartal; 2002: 81).

Such acting conforms to the idea of "repressed body." The body of woman was used as a puppet whose control belongs to an unidentified presence. The woman's beauty was regarded natural and divine; therefore any damage to it can only made by the fate. That's why physical disabilities are often used as a source of tension, which delay this divine beauty of the female character.

Blindness is the most commonly used physical disability in Yeşilçam melodramas. In most of the Yeşilçam melodramas, blindness serves as a mechanism of tension in the center of the story (*Aşk Mabudesi*, *Adını Anmayacağım*, *Hayatım Sana Feda*). Yeşilçam's blindness is always temporary, medically treatable. Blindness was not regarded as an illness or disability in itself, but indicated other meanings. In other words, it was not blindness *in* itself but blindness *to* something. For example, in *Aşk Mabudesi* and *Adını Anmayacağım*, the stories are about the male characters who become blind soon after they break up with their beloved one. Here blindness refers to the man's refusal to see how bad, corrupted his beloved one becomes. However, since usually misunderstandings result in the separation of the leading couple, the disability should be temporary because sooner or

later the truth reveals itself. For women's blindness, the situation is quite different. The blind female character's struggle is to find her beloved one. In other words,

> …the healing of blind woman's eyes gives the final impetus to the narrative: the woman must find her beloved one or must reach him… The woman has to match the male voice which is the source of her desire with the 'original' body (Erdoğan; 2003: 121).

Here women who become blind are treated as weak subjects to be protected by the leading male character. While, the blind men refuse to hear the voices as an escape from what hurts his manhood (*Aşk Mabudesi*), the blind women seek the voice of her beloved one (*Hayatım Sana Feda*). The issue of blindness should also be considered as:

> The voice and image in Yeşilçam refer to different worlds in a hierarchical order. The disappearance of the body from the sight of the leading character emphasizes the voice - better to say the word - which is higher than appearance in the hierarchy of existence. The word is always the conduit of the Truth (Erdoğan; 2003: 123).

We see that Yeşilçam first creates a struggle between the eye and the hear and takes sides in favor of the hear, in other words, the word. The word is considered as the source and conduit of the truth. That is why misleading words, lies, slanders, defamatory statements etc are considered as the biggest sins in Yeşilçam scenarios because such acts distort the very truth itself. Since appearances are already excluded from the realm of truth, the only source and channel of the facts and frankness are the words.

Yeşilçam melodramas judged its characters by what they say, rather than how they look. Therefore, deafness is a bigger catastrophe in Yeşilçam's world. For example, in *Namus Uğruna*, after the leading male becomes deaf, he becomes completely unable to realize the facts. He is excluded from the world's realities, particularly what goes around himself, and is deceived by what he sees. He sees an affectionate wife and a sincere

boss in front of himself, but in fact, the wife and the boss have a secret love affair, mocking his disability. The movie displays the male character's disability as an end not only to his manhood but also to his very existence.

4.1.6 The Domesticity of the Narrative:

The narrative is usually focused on small groups, especially families. It would be no mistake to generalize that Yeşilçam melodramas tell domestic stories. The family as the cornerstone of an "honorable" society is always sublimated. The way to form a happy and healthy family is true love. Only families based upon mutual love of the couple can be happy. Other marriages especially the ones arranged due to commercial or socio-economic reasons are doomed to be unhappy. For the leading couple, there are no alternative spouses other than each other. All the movies I have analyzed fit this narrative structure. All the scenarios tell the stories of families and the couples who try to form a family. The success is defined as the formation of the family, in other words, marriage.

4.1.7 The Use of Stereotypes

A stereotype is a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group. The stereotypes which serve both simplicity and clarity of the narrative, are often used in Yeşilçam melodramas. These stereotypes are considered as natural parts of the society. Therefore, no question is raised about their characteristics or social conditions. In all the movies I have analyzed, the leading female character is always "beautiful," "charming," "honest," "good," "pure," "virtuous," "honorable," and "generous." She is generally a submissive wife and a young beautiful girl who is ready to be a submissive wife. She is dignified and unyielding.

Similarly, the leading male character is always "handsome," "good," "strong," "virtuous," "honorable," and "generous." He is decent and always respects law and social morality, is always liked by his neighbors in poor towns and the members of high society as well. He has "tough guy" (*delikanlı*) mannerisms and ethic which are sublimated in all Yeşilçam melodramas. Whether or not the movies tell the love story of the rich man – poor girl or vice versa, these characteristics of the leading characters never change.

In addition, they are both in search for "true love." Their relationship is based upon mutual sacrifice. "Bad guys" are either ugly or "handsome" or "beautiful" in notorious way. In other words, they use their physical beauty to seduce or to destroy other people's happiness. In other words, "real" beauty is found in people's honesty and pureness. "Bad" female character is usually described as "*femme fatale*" with her seductive beauty, her partners-in-crime and indignity. For example, in *Namus Uğruna* and *Acı Hayat*, the bad guy is described as a good-looking, charming man. The difference between the two movies are that while in *Namus Uğruna* the bad guy is a rich man who has evil intentions to seduce poor and beautiful girls, in *Acı Hayat*, the bad guy really likes the leading female character but he uses his richness to lead astray the leading female from rectitude. They both use their richness to attract women, a behavior cursed by Yeşilçam. In *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, *Aşk Mabudesi*, *Hayatım Sana Feda* and *Kezban*, the leading male characters have good looking but insincere and dishonest fiancés from high society, with whom their families want them to get married. The fiancé from Istanbul's upper class was used as a symbol of the reproduction of relations in the high society. The families of the leading male usually want this marriage as part of a commercial business agreement. This character symbolized the lack of true love and sincerity in the upper class since she wants to get married with the leading male character only because he is also rich and noble. Especially in *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, the leading male character's fiancé refuses to get married with him when she heart a rumor that his family business bankrupted. Thus, the artificialness of the rich people's world was underlined.

Furthermore, in *Namus Uğruna*, *Gurbet Kuşları* and *Yaprak Dökümü*, there is a supporting female role for a corrupt woman, who tries to persuade the leading female character to sell his beauty to the rich men. This stereotype may be a mistress to a rich man (*Namus Uğruna*), or a dishonorable woman who believes women should sacrifice from her dignity to save themselves from poorness (*Yaprak Dökümü, Gurbet Kuşları*). Therefore she symbolically represents the seductive side of appearances as she always talks about the importance of money, shopping, make-up, beautiful clothes etc.

Finally, there are always supporting "honest," "benevolent" and "good" characters who are either ready to do anything to help the reunification of the leading couple or support the leading character no matter what happens to him/her. Certain characteristics of the narrative structure of the Yeşilçam melodramas were gathered from popular tales, novels such as those of Kerime Nadir and popular theatre. In *tuluat*, there are comic and wise characters. Similarly, the comic figure (the friend of the leading character) and the wise figure (the old father of the leading character) were often used by Yeşilçam melodramas. Such characters can be seen in all the movies I have analyzed.

4.1.8 The personification of the social conflicts

Socio-economic differences and all social conflicts are reduced to personal level. Evil and goodness are personalized. Yeşilçam melodramas subordinate everything to emotions in the sense that they express every social concept as extreme feelings of sorrow, fear, happiness, anger and love. Social change is refused to be understood other than private and domestic contexts. Socio-economic differences between people are standardized. In all the movies I have analyzed, there are good and bad people, whose goodness and badness come from their nature. No good person commits crime or voluntarily contradicts with the morals; but the conditions might force him/her to do so. Therefore, the goodness and

badness in Yeşilçam are inborn and free from any class-bound context. The only question is whether a character's innateness is good or bad. The evil is intrinsic to the nature. "Bad guys" are parts of the society. However, the reasons behind their evil are never questioned and explained. Evil is a natural part of life. It is rarely considered to be a socio-economic situation. There are both rich and poor "bad guys" therefore badness is never seen as a "class-bound" or "socially determined" phenomenon. There are both absolute goodness and absolute badness in life. Among the movies I have analyzed, only *Acı Hayat* tries to define evil within a social context as it attempts to accuse the economic conditions of leading people to dishonorable lives, however, it cannot adopt a true realist perspective.

4.1.9 Favorite Plotting

The love affair between a man and a woman from different social classes are the favorite storyline of Yeşilçam melodramas. If the woman is poor and the man is rich then the woman tries to adopt herself to the world of rich. In the beginning of the movie, her behaviors and attitudes are presented as "traditional" and "vulgar." She eventually changes her behaviors and physical appearance and learns to behave politely. The leading poor female character does not accept "degenerated" values of the rich people. Her "good" nature never alters but she adopts herself to the conditions of upper class. In other words, her changing does not affect her "good" essence but only changes her physical appearance and behaviors (*Kezban, Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim, Aşk Mabudesi, Hayatım Sana Feda*).

When the leading male character is poor, the leading rich female character prefers her lover's "honest" and "good" world to her parent's world. The leading poor male character usually becomes rich by coincidence. In both cases, male should be rich (*Acı Hayat, Namus Uğruna, Gençlik Hülyaları, Otobüs Yolcuları*).

If the movie has a happy ending, it cannot end these two characters living in poverty. Although the values of poverty and lower class are sublimated, the happy ending always requires a formation of middle class family[11]. The leading rich character escapes from the "degeneration" of the world of rich and the leading poor character saves himself/herself from the deprivation of the poverty. These movies promote social harmony and reconciliation under the roof of a middle class family. The middle class family is defined as the one having a moderate house and the ability to survive without any debts under temperate conditions.

Yeşilçam's favorite plotting uses the ideal of moderate family life as the key for happiness. The happiness, which is found, lost and later either re-found or never-reached-again, is defined by certain standards in Yeşilçam melodramas. The leading characters want to acquire wealth in order to reach a reasonable standard of living. The dream of the leading male and female character is to buy a house of their own and live their lives honestly and without any debts. The favorite plotting of Yeşilçam used "true love," "honesty," "honor," "virtues," "sacrifice" and "benevolence" as the inevitable elements of happiness.

In this chapter, I have tried to underline the general characteristics of the narrative structure of Yeşilçam melodramas. General tendencies, which can be observed in most of the Yeşilçam melodramas, are enlisted in this chapter. Here I have elaborated the position occupied by Yeşilçam narratives in the genre of melodrama. We see that Yeşilçam used constant formulas such as simplicity, fixed signification, personification of social conflicts and obstacles and coincidences like Hollywood melodramas do. However, it also overemphasized the vocal narrative and used the "rich" versus "poor" stories as its favorite plotting.

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[11] Here I use the term "middle class family" as a specification of Yeşilçam's definition of happiness. According to the movies I have analyzed, a family requires sufficient amount of household income (not excessive earnings) and a moderate and cozy house to live a happy life. Other possessions such as private automobile and big houses are not needed. Under this perception of the economy of the family, I prefer to use this term to specify Yeşilçam's mediation between two extreme situations, namely poverty and richness.

CHAPTER V

THE DICHOTOMIZED WORLD OF YEŞİLÇAM MELODRAMAS: BINARY OPPOSITIONS

This chapter seeks to analyze the two basic oppositions between the "good" and the "evil" and the "rich" and the "poor." Yeşilçam melodrama presented a symbolic realm where these oppositions together with a number of sub-oppositions were underlined. Here I will try to present these oppositions and the meanings attributed to them.

As stated in the Chapter 2, the melodrama as a genre inherited its narrative structure from popular myths and borrowed its narrative templates from the collective memory of the society. Melodramas entail a symbolic system similar to that of myth. The myths and myth-making narratives have their own language and grammar through which their messages are communicated. Therefore, there is a structure to be analyzed to discover the ways that various meanings and discourses are communicated to the society.

The oppositions to be dealt with are defined with constant and immutable signs, meanings and values. I have determined two basic oppositions that are intertwined in the world of Yeşilçam narratives. These oppositions are determined by a narrative analysis of the movies selected.

The first opposition is "the good versus the evil," and the second one is "the rich versus the poor." It should be noted that there are no clear

distinctions between these two oppositions. However, we can at least claim that Yeşilçam melodramas see the opposition between the good versus evil as a trans-class phenomenon since they underline that every social class has its good and bad people. Although we cannot equalize the bad with the rich or the good with the poor, there are certain fixed attributes to different social classes.

5.1 The Good versus The Evil

In 1960s' Yeşilçam melodramas, the basic story was about the conflict between "the good" and "the evil." These movies fixed the meanings of "goodness" and "badness." In each movie, no matter how the incidents develop, the good and the bad were predetermined and standardized. The presentation of these two phenomena was ahistoric and deprived of any social or economic context. The good and the evil were considered to be natural constituents of life. The cause and effect chain and social dynamics were ineffective in the imagination of "the good" and "the evil." If one person is presented as "good," or "bad," there is no need to explain why this is so. Melodramatic imagination envisages "goodness" and "badness" as embodied in people. A character is presented as if he was born to be "bad" or "good." "Goodness" and "badness" are used as labels for defining characters.

The world of Yeşilçam melodramas deployed fixed symbols and values to define "goodness" and "badness." Moreover, these two terms are re-defined by these movies and restricted to the world of melodramatic imagination. There are constant meanings ascribed to both terms. Through these common symbols and values, these meanings become congeal in the world of Yeşilçam that all values, objects, words, places pertaining to these two poles are treated like fetishes. With these fetishes, the manifestation of "goodness" and "badness" become the cornerstone of the narrative structure of the Yeşilçam melodramas.

Now, it is high time to turn to the movies to elaborate the meanings of "goodness" and "evil" implied by Yeşilçam. At this point, there are two questions that spring to mind: How are goodness and evil manifested in these movies? What are the fixed symbols and values that make these two phenomena congeal in these movies?

First of all, in each movie that I have analyzed, the conflict between "good" and "bad" is the cornerstone of the narrative. The polarization between these two phenomena dominates not only plot itself but also the visual and vocal features of the movies. All characters find their places in either "good" or "bad" side from the very first scene they appear. This serves the simplicity and clarity of the narrative structure.

Since the main focus of the narrative is always upon the love affair between a couple, the protagonists are always on the "good" side. The "goodness" and "evil" are defined in relation with this love affair. In this sense, the definitions are simple: The ones who want the couple to be together and the ones who help them overcome all the obstacles they face are "good" people. Similarly, people who do not want the leading couple to be together, and the ones who try to separate them are "bad" people. These are the fixed definitions of these two concepts. There may be no exception to these positions. A person who wants the couple to break up can never be considered "good," and vice versa. However, if one of the protagonists makes mistakes that cause their love affair to end or to suffer problems, he/she may be labeled as "bad." Similarly, if one of the "bad" characters changes his/her position in the sense that he/she decides that the couple should be together, he/she also changes his pole. However, no matter how grave mistakes he/she makes which cause their relation to end, the protagonist is always good in his/her essence since he/she never stops loving his/her beloved one. Therefore, the main criterion is love. The ones in love or the ones who support the lovers are "good" but others are "bad."

5.1.1 The Goodness

Yeşilçam melodramas created their own map of meanings attributed to the concept of "goodness." There are certain fixed values and symbols ascribed to "good" people. These values are "hunger for true love," "modesty," "sincerity," "honesty," "honor," "dignity," and "diligence."

a) Hunger for true love:

In each movie, irrespective of their social class, all characters who are hungry for true love (also searching for it) are on the good side. People who are in search for true love of opposite sex or friends are considered to have "goodness" in themselves.

But how was true love defined in these movies? True love meant romance, romantic love, free from extreme sexual desires. Yeşilçam played a symbolic game on the realm of desire by concealing the appetite for sexuality under the ideal of a legitimate family. According to the symbolic universe of Yeşilçam, sexuality was only possible in glances, looks, hugs and kisses but it also signals that in a marriage formed by a loving couple, all sexual desires will be fulfilled. Therefore, in these movies, true love referred to the period when sexual desires are not fulfilled since the sublime desire, the ideal of marriage is, always delayed. In addition, the fiction of melodramatic woman does not need the 'passionate love' characterized by sexuality, which makes people rootless in an abnormal manner, but 'romantic love' which reinforces the idea of taking root in a common history, namely a family. Romantic love aims at creating a predictable future, makes long-term plans for the relationship and attaches the highest importance to the institution of family and marriage. Although we see the melodramatic bodies repressed by the passionate love, crying, drinking too much alcohol, retired into seclusion or even losing its sense of sight, this is usually a temporary case since the

dominant discourse is determined by the fiction of romantic love. If either the hero or the heroine fail to reach the sublime goal of romantic love, he or she dies at the end of the movie. Due to the discourse of romantic love, the most sublime state of being for the female characters is the motherhood. Women are sublimed as suffering mothers and wives. The only way to realize the ultimate goal of romantic love is that women have to protect their honor and dignity even if they are forced to work under dishonorable conditions such as in *pavyon*s or casinos (Maktav; 2003).

Therefore, the passionate love is not an ideal but a phase of a true romance which should culminate with a marriage. The romantic love defines the man as husband, woman as a wife and mother, and treats sexuality not by an emphasis on sexual matters but as a fight against pure sexuality. In other words, for instance, half-open, trembling lips of a female character (*Hülya Koçyiğit*) and amorous looks (*Türkan Şoray*) which were two mostly used symbols, did not symbolize the passionate love but the belief that the passion should be controlled. The ones who cannot control their passion for sexuality or any other thing such as money and expensive clothes are always punished (*Namus Uğruna, Acı Hayat*).

The important point is that the hunger for true love is a trans-class criterion in Yeşilçam. No matter which social class they belong to, people looking for true love are virtuous. Such people may exist both in upper and lower classes. For example, in *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim,* Cüneyt Arkın is a rich businessman's only son, who is bored of the "artificial" and "degenerated" relations of the high society. Arkın believes that he and his father are not really loved by the high society, even by his fiancé who is also a daughter of another rich family. He argues that without his father's wealth no high society member would want to establish relations with him. He searches for "true love," "true friendships," "sincerity," "modesty," and "simplicity." Irrespective of his class, Arkın's failure to adopt himself to the conditions of high society, which are in fact presented as "money-dependent," "dishonorable" and "meaningless" is sublimed in the movie. Although he is indeed one of the high society members with his upper class behaviors and high-standard living

conditions, his refusal makes him different from the others. In other words, as soon as he refuses the "degenerated" world of the upper class, he finds his position in the "good" side. Very similarly, in *Aşk Mabudesi*, Cüneyt Arkın is a rich man, who is again sick of "artificial" and "degenerated" world of the upper class. He has a rich, good-looking but "insincere" fiancé whom he does not really care for. Arkın is again searching the same values I have mentioned for *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, which he fails to find in his own world. In brief, true love is used as a mediator and common denominator among people different social classes. In Yeşilçam, each and every kind of person from different social classes may come together under the universal title of "true love."

b) **Modesty and Hate for Ostentation and Extravagance:**

All "good" characters in Yeşilçam melodramas are modest. They hate ostentation, extravagance, excessive expenditure of money, pretentious show of wealth or social status intended to impress others and grandiose manners. No matter which social class they belong to, good characters always believe that modesty is one of the most important values of life. The upper class "good" cannot adapt to showy and ostentatious life of the high society. They find such manners and behaviors meaningless, artificial and dishonorable and they try to escape to another world where they believe they can find "the meaning of life" and "honor." Too much money is never approved. "Good" lower class people always believe excessive money only brings unhappiness and they never imitate the life of the rich people. Both upper and lower class goodness is centered upon the idea of modesty. These people want to have a middle class life. The equation here is the modesty equals to life standards of a middle class family. All they want is to earn sufficient money to survive. Survival is defined as to have a moderate house of their own and to be able to afford food without any debts. The dreams of the good leading characters are almost similar in each movie. For example, in *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, Gönül Yazar is a "district girl," living with

her poor uncle (Münir Ozkul) and her friends. Yazar and her friends are very poor but hardworking and honest people. In a conversation with Arkın, Yazar defines what happiness, money and richness mean to her:

> - (Arkın) You like money very much, don't you?
> - (Yazar) Not too much but sufficient money.
> - How much do you think is sufficient?
> - I don't want villas and cars. I just don't wish to become indebted to anybody. I wish to afford food and clothing. That'd make me happy.

In another conversation with Arkın, Yazar says,

> - Richness is nothing! It'd be enough for me if I had a small house and honorable husband.

Similarly, in *Küçük Hanım'ın Şoförü*, Ayhan Işık (who is the only son of a rich businessman) and Belgin Doruk (who is the only daughter of a rich family) express their dream of their future life as follows:

> - Let's live in this shanty for years. Let the small bells of the sheep wake us up in the mornings. Then you wear your cloak and I wear my dress. You take your shepherd's pipe and me my bow. Let's spend a life together like this, shall we?

As a last example, in Gençlik Hülyaları, Nilüfer Aydan (who is the daughter of a rich businessman) and Göksel Arsoy (who is a poor worker and a former "street kid") dream of a small house they are going to live together in the future. "We both work. Don't you want to live with me in the small house in your chaste dream?," asks Aydan to Arsoy.

c) Sincerity and Honesty:

Good characters are always honest and sincere. They have integrity and uprightness; they are adhered to rectitude, straightness and correctness. Irrespective of their social class, all good characters always tell the "truth," speak of their "true" feelings and "true" ideas. Good people establish "real"

relations based on mutual sacrifice and care. Their language is uttered with frankness. They never hide their true feelings for the sake of appearing "noble" or "distinguished." They cannot either pretend or imitate. In brief, they are as they are. For example, In *Aşk Mabudesi*, when Türkan Şoray and Cüneyt Arkın are at a restaurant, Şoray refuses to pretend being "polite" to impress Arkın and does not give up her habit of eating chicken with her hands and says:

> - (Şoray) I don't like to share the taste of chicken with fork and knife.
> - (Arkın) How sincere you are! I can't help admiring your sincerity.

In addition, in *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, Yazar states that she cannot hide her true feelings and says to Arkın, "I'm a straightforward girl. I can't be flirtatious."

"Good" characters never deny their past and are always honest about their past experiences and social status. If a "good" character belongs to lower class, he/she is always proud of his/her social. If he/she joins the high society by chance or meets someone from upper class, he/she never hides his/her "peasant" and "vulgar" behaviors and this mannerism is sublimated as the sign of "honesty" and "sincerity." Moreover, whether he/she was poor, peasant or forsaken is of no importance if he/she later becomes rich. If the good character is rich, it is always emphasized that he/she was once poor and established his/her own business by working very hard. Good characters always make great effort to earn their money in accordance with the principles of honor and dignity. He/she again never denies his/her past experiences.

For example, in *Kezban*, Hülya Koçyiğit, who is a small town girl from a lower class family, moves to Istanbul to her rich uncle's house and meets with her "rich" nephew and her saucy friends. Kezban's nephew and her friends make fun of her "peasant" appearance. Koçyiğit replies as follows: "There is nothing wrong with being a peasant. I'm proud of it and there is

nothing to be ashamed of in my clothes." Similarly, in *Aşk Mabudesi*, Şoray reminds Arkın of her social class as follows: "I'm a simple girl of streets." In addition, in *Gençlik Hülyaları*, Göksel Arsoy tells Nilüfer Aydan of his past experiences: "I'm a person who has grown in the streets, who have come from the streets. I'm a man of streets."

In *Küçük Hanım'ın Şoförü*, it is emphasized that Ayhan Işık's father, who is a rich businessman, was poor when he was young and he made great effort to establish his own business. The father believes that his son must work in an honorable and hard job to learn the rules of "real" life. Işık says, "All jobs done in an esteemed manner are honorable for my father who have started his life from zero."

d) Sublimation of Diligence:

No matter which social class they belong to, good characters always believe the importance of diligence, constant and earnest effort to accomplish, industriousness, and working energetically and devotedly. Good characters always stress that the only way for them to survive is to work in an honorable and honest job no matter how hard the conditions are. Good characters are never inclined to earn their money in a "dishonorable way." "Eşşek gibi çalışmak" (working very hard) is the motto of the good people as a principle of survival. In addition, good characters are always contended with the money and wealth they acquire. They are neither jealous of other people's wealth nor envy others' social or economic position. To be satisfied and happy with one's own conditions is sublimed as a virtue in these movies. If the good character is from the lower class, he/she wants to have average living standards. Despite the material deprivation he/she suffers from and the poverty which leads him/her to difficult working conditions, he/she believes that richness is not necessary for his/her happiness. Envy, jealousy and begrudging for other's possessions are considered as very negative features which plunge people into their personal catastrophe. Therefore, all good

characters should be gratified with what they have. What they have in possession should be earned via hard working and sacrifice. If the good person is rich, then he/she never speaks with exaggeration and excessive pride about his/her own possession and material wealth. He/she is generally described as a "fair" boss, businessman or factory owner. He believes in the importance of hard working and always fair in his business relations. He/she never looks down on upper class since he/she was once poor. He always recommends other people (especially his children) to be industrious, fair and just.

In *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, Munir Ozkul, who is the poor uncle of the female protagonist, does not have a regular occupation or profession but works very hard everyday in whichever daily job he can find. He believes that every man should work to earn his day and disapproves idleness. Similarly, Gönül Yazar works very hard everyday and when she receives an expensive gift (jewel) from a rich man at the casino she is working, she refuses it and says that she must earn her money via her own great efforts. "Not with the money of that *pinpon*[12], but with my own efforts," she says. In *Namus Uğruna*, Eşref Kolçak is described as a hardworking chauffer and he is proud of this ability as a virtue. In *Gençlik Hülyaları*, Nilüfer Aydan tells her lover Aksoy that she doesn't want to live with her father's money and says, "We can both work." In *Otobüs Yolcuları*, Türkan Şoray, who is the daughter of a rich businessman, does not make an outward show of her father's richness:

> - (father) Do you still go to your school by bus? How many time have I told you that…
> - (Şoray) I've also told you that I can't go to the university by private car and cause people to make fun of myself.

In *Aşk Mabudesi*, in a conversation with Arkın's rich fiancé Şoray emphasizes that she is proud of being hardworking: "We're both the lady and maid of our houses." she says.

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[12] In Yeşilçam melodramas, the word *pinpon* belonged to the language of the lower class, which usually referred to the rich and old man.

e) Honor, Pride and Dignity:

All good characters live for their honor, pride and dignity. Personal honor is considered to be the most precious value of life. Loyalty is the signifier of personal honor. Whether a person is honorable is measured through his/her loyalty to his/her husband/wife, to the conditions and values of the life he/she is living and the universal principles of dignity. Persons of high rank or title are not always considered "honorable." The privilege of being associated with a respected person, group, family or organization is not a precondition for living an honorable life. First of all, all good characters, no matter which social class they belong to, display honesty, fairness, and integrity in their beliefs and actions. Whatever happens to them, they make no concessions from these sublime values; which is why the movies always exalt them. Yeşilçam melodramas always emphasize that morals and loyalty should always be protected to maintain the order and happiness of the society.

For good people, social conditions, economic problems and material deprivation are never meant to be obstacles against an honorable life. If the good is poor, the fate always helps them to earn more money in an honorable job. If the good is from upper class, it is always stressed that he/she gained wealth by working very hard in an honorable job, which is always defined with regard to legality and social morals. If a job is legal and accords with the social morals, it is considered to be estimable. There are certain patterns used by Yeşilçam to describe such honorable jobs. For lower class, the most common way to survive is defined as working in jobs with low salaries. They are usually workers. If a lower class person is to become rich, his/her change in economic status generally happens by the discovery of his/her talent. In other words, he/she is generally talented in music and after discovery of his/her talent, his/her social and economic status changes. However, for good people, such changes in economic status never mean changes in their understanding of honor. After changing their low-salary job

with a high-salary one, they continue to live for their honor and dignity. High-salary job always offers them indecent and immoral opportunities, through which their loyalty to personal honor is tested in the eyes of the audience. The ones who fail to pass these tests are no longer considered to be "good." For upper class, the most common way to survive is to run a family business. Rich people are usually defined as businessmen owning their own business. If he/she is good, it is emphasized that he/she acquired his/her wealth through legal and hard working. His/her honor is tested on behaviors to his/her workers and servants. If he/she is loved by his workers and servants, this is because he is fair, just and moderate despite all material wealth he/she has. Despite all extreme, indecent, illegal and improper alternatives that money offers, such good rich people show their honor and dignity with their regard for decency of behavior, speech, dressing etc. Avoidance of extremes and excesses is signifier for personal honor. A person proves his/her loyalty to personal honor when he/she faces with such extremes and excesses. A person is never considered as "honorable" or "noble" just because the richness of his/her family. Aristocratic understanding of honor is refused by Yeşilçam. For example, in *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, Cüneyt Arkın says, "Not the families but the people themselves are noble or lowborn." In addition, Arkın's father says, "A girl who refuses a gift of 50 thousand lira is a precious person. You should marry her," showing his belief that such a behavior proves Yazar's noble character because she attaches no importance to the material wealth. In other words, as Yazar demonstrates that she does not make concessions from her dignity for the sake of expensive gifts from a rich man, she proves to be a "good" girl to be married with. In addition, in *Namus Uğruna*, Eşref Kolçak who is angry with his wife who spends lots of money, manifests his principles as follows: "Do you think I'm a millionaire? I don't want a wife who spends her husband's money on clothes, or who is obsessed with ornaments. I wanted to marry with a girl who will be satisfied with my earnings to live a honorable life." He also says to his wife, "It's your duty to be satisfied with my salary." Meanwhile, the neighbor's daughter who loves Kolçak says to his wife seduced by a rich man defends

her loyalty to the life she is living as follows: "And the pennilessness! We are from those who live for honor."

5.1.2 The Evil

As for goodness, Yeşilçam melodramas attribute constant meanings and values to the concept of evil. Evil is in the nature of some human beings without any explanation. In other words, the social and economic reasons are not shown but certain values are emphasized to narrate the story of evil. Let's take a look at these maps of meanings and values:

a) **Artificialness:**

The world of bad people lacks naturalness and spontaneity; it is a forced, contrived and feigned world. The relations are centered upon personal interest, desire for money and material wealth. Such people do not believe in the importance of true love, sincere relations and honesty in human conduct. More importantly, bad people usually make fun of such values. They disregard the most important values of life. The world of bad is presented as "money-dependent," "dishonorable" and "meaningless." If a bad person is from lower class, he/she imitates rich people's life, desires to have more money, and do whatever she/he is able to do (illegal, improper, dishonorable actions) to become rich. If the bad is from upper class, he/she is usually believe that everything can be sold and has a price. Such people believe that the most important thing in life is money; which is why all relations are based upon material wealth. They treat poor people either without due regard, respect and attentiveness or look down on them. Bad people regard others with scorn or disdain. Bad people do not possess any "real" feelings or emotions about other feelings. If they are poor, they "pretend" to care for rich people for the sake of living a good life with high

standards. If they are rich, they "pretend" to care for other members of the high society for the sake of maintenance of their social status. While poor and bad people's ultimate aim is to join the high society through making money via illegal or dishonorable ways, rich and bad people do not care about the rest of the world and establish relations only with other rich families. They define personal honor and dignity in different terms, as two aristocratic concepts, which can only be preserved through maintaining relations with other rich people. True love is meaningless in the world of bad.

In *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, Cüneyt Arkın, who is bored and sick of the "artificial" and "degenerated" relations of the high society, believes that his father and himself are not really loved by the high society, even his fiancé who is also a daughter of another rich family. He argues that without his father's wealth no high society member would want to establish relations with him. He spread gossip in the high society that his father went bankrupt. His father gives a home party for Arkın's birthday but no one shows up. Even Arkın's fiancé returns the engagement ring to Arkın because of the gossip. Thus, Arkın proves his father that high society would not even talk to them without their family wealth. Such people are described as "bad" in the sense that they attach no importance to values such as love, friendship and benevolence other than money. In addition, in most of the movies, the world of the bad forces the protagonists to get married with the people whom they do not love. If the bad person is from lower class, he/she tries to manipulate the protagonist to get married with a rich person. For example, in *Namus Uğruna*, Perihan, who is the mistress of a rich man, tries to persuade Neriman (the female protagonist who is a wife of a poor driver) that she must have an affair with Kenan, who is a rich businessman. Perihan says that young and beautiful women should not waste their youth with poor man. She believes that love is meaningless: "You're all the same," Perihan says. "You first insist on love, and then you feel shocked after the marriage, you fools… Let go this peasant mind! A rich and handsome man likes you. Why do you escape from him?" Perihan shows the audience that she can do anything for the sake of money and she has no moral principles that she cannot betray to

be rich and good-looking. Similarly, in *Gurbet Kuşları*, Mualla, tries to force the only daughter of the family which migrated from Maraş to Istanbul to join the world of rich. "You aren't aware of your own beauty, you fool!" she says to her. Mualla tries to persuade her that she should change her appearance and adapt to the world of rich men. Mualla's only concern is to establish relations with rich people and she believes that no other value or principle is important.

b) Ostentation and Extravagance:

In these movies, all bad people are imprudent, spendthrift and prodigal or want to be so. Spending excessive amounts of money and inordinate, showy manners are common. Rich and bad people are infatuated with the luxury-oriented life, an obsession which is also presented as a reason for their stupidity. These people are stupid in the sense that they are lost in the artificial and synthetic world that the money builds and that they do not care about the real virtues of life. As a matter of fact, although the source of the happiness is defined as "true love" and "sincere relations," such rich and bad people are paradoxically never defined as unhappy. In other words, you cannot see a character in these movies, who selects to be extravagant because this makes him/her happy as a life style. These people love spending excessive amounts of money because they do not know what they do, as if they lack the necessary qualifications to be aware how stupid they are. They are defined as if they were born extravagant just as the good people are defined as if they were born to refuse the ostentation. Since the stupidity is regarded as intrinsic to the ostentation, this concept works in cahoots with the discourse that all people who are obsessed with luxury are low in character and should not be respected. In the movies where a rich man and a poor woman falls in love with each other, the man usually has a rich fiancé in the beginning of the movie. His fiancé is generally depicted as a stupid person, who is disrespected by the leading male. The reason for stupidity in this case is shown as her obsession with richness. The difference

between the good and the bad is determined according to the views of the characters about extravagance and ostentation. If a person, rich or poor, believes that excessive amounts of money is not necessary and showy behaviors are immoral, he/she is "good" in the eyes of the Yeşilçam narrative. However, if he/she persists to live his/her life by sacrificing his/her father's fortune to meaningless activities, he/she automatically becomes bad in the eyes of audience.

Ostentation is defined with constant symbols. If a person spends too much money on entertainment, nightclubs, whisky, champagne and shopping, he/she is considered extravagant. The money spent upon such entertainment is considered unnecessary. At this point, Yeşilçam melodramas distinguish between two types of entertainment. Extravagant entertainment is centered upon the idea of spending money and pure fun. However, in the world of the good people, total fun is impossible because happiness and unhappiness go hand in hand. In other words, in the scenes where good people entertain, there are always reasons to both laugh and cry. These people are described as the ones "crying when laughing." Since they are aware of the "real" life as an encounter of joy and pain, pure fun is impossible, which is why in melodramas such people can have fun only in places where sorrow and pleasure can be experienced together. There is only one such place, namely *meyhane*, which is taken up in opposition with the nightclub in the following section. When good people drink alcohol and sing songs, they oscillate between dancing, laughing, and crying and grieving. While good people can never be completely happy, the bad people are lost in the world of fun since they are stupid to know that there is no reason to be happy.

In addition, rich and bad people love to show and boast other people how much money they spend. For high society women, hairdresser is the mostly used place to tell other women about their excessive spending. Women tell other women what they bought, where they went to travel, what kind of a house they live in etc. They spend lots of money in the hairdresser and use this place as a tool to show off to gain attention by displaying their

own material wealth. Extravagant people are socialized in the places where they can regularly spend excessive amounts. For the lower class, bad people ape and envy such extravagance. They desire for money and can make every necessary concession from the virtues of life to become rich. A bad person from the lower class is described as excessively desirous of wealth. Such inordinate desire for money and luxury is the main source of badness in the society. Manifesting that desire for richness can never be fulfilled by working too much to earn lots of money, Yeşilçam melodramas always disapproves this desire as a pathological, driven greediness suggesting a concomitant stingness. However, at this point, there are two contradictory discourses implied by Yeşilçam. On the one hand, the movies signal that some good people may get rich by working too much, but, on the other, they also imply that no poor can get as rich as "the rich" by working too much. That is why bad and poor people always tend to resort to dishonorable or illegal way to join the world of rich. Poor people may of course make money, if they work, the amount is limited. The only exception is to win a lottery (*Acı Hayat*).

The issue of ostentation is connected to the capitalist dynamics brought by the up-to-down Westernization of the society. In his article where he traces the imprudent figure in the Ottoman society, Mardin gives *Bihruz Bey* from Recaizade Ekrem's novel entitled *Araba Sevdası* as a true example of this figure (Mardin; 1974). According to Mardin, "Bihruz Bey types reappear in Turkish literature as persons to made fun of or despised" (1974: 411). Such characters have always been regarded traitors to their original culture since they are obsessed with a Westernized life style. Mardin argues that since the Turkish society had been undergoing "a pervasive crisis for centuries," a folk theme believing that the Westernization was of no good to the ordinary citizens emerged. "This might be called the "objective" content of popular revulsion against Westernization" (1974: 413). As Mardin points out, the rich people obsessed with ostentation are regarded as total loss by the man on the street and their cultural representations were no different as we observed in Yeşilçam melodramas.

c) Dishonesty: "The World of Intriguers"

The bad characters of Yeşilçam melodramas are well known for their use of underhand machinations and deceitful stratagems. Bad people often lie, trick and cheat. Such people lie, use fake documents and make every possible tricky action to separate the leading couple. While good people are committed to "honesty" and "telling the truth," bad people are the ones who can do anything to fulfill their desires. Their dishonesty derives from their greed. Bad people always want to take what they do not deserve. The presentation of intrigues is often irrational. Their lies and intrigues usually manage to separate the leading couple since nobody investigates whether or not they lie. Although the resolution of the problems, which emerge due to such deceitful and tricky actions, is easy, the incidents entangle more and more as the story progresses. In the world of intriguers, there is a distinct pattern of acting based on the idea that anything can be done to fulfill personal desires. However, no matter how the story evolves, sooner or later, such tricks, lies and ploys fail. No matter whether or the movie has a happy ending, the leading characters always learn the truth. It can be too late since one of the protagonists die, however, the evil does not win either. In other words, if the protagonists lose at the end of the story, no one else is the winner. Such intrigues functions in a symbolic universe, where the truth is given a false, perverted, or disproportionate meaning. However, Yeşilçam melodramas use this universe only to create suspense. That is to say, reality is always there to be discovered. The sense of trustable reality is promoted in the eyes of the audience, without destroying the sense of security. The underlying message is that no one can trick with the poetic justice in the final sense. There are truth, true feelings and actions, with which no trick can actually play because the realm of truth cannot be damaged but can only be misrepresented by ephemeral tricks.

d) Laziness or Illegality: "Living on father's wealth" or "Illegal ways of making money"

For rich and bad people, the way to maintain richness is to live on father's wealth. Such people are often described as lazy or unaware of the fact that money can only be earned by hardworking. No bad person from upper class is described as an honest, generous and hardworking businessman. These people carelessly spend their father's fortune. Meanwhile, a bad person from the lower class is characterized by his/her strong craving for money, which is very likely to lead him/her to dishonorable or illegal ways. Such characters violate the moral codes of the society, as men commit crime such as blackmail (*Gençlik Hülyaları*) or embezzlement (*Yaprak Dökümü*) and women disregard the principles of honor by becoming a mistress to a rich man (*Namus Uğruna*). Therefore, bad people's richness is always dependent upon socially unacceptable resources.

5.2 The Poor *versus* the Rich

In Yeşilçam melodramas, besides the fight between the good and the bad, the story also evolves around the contradiction between the upper class and lower class. However, this contradiction is never presented as a social antagonism. The existence of lower and upper classes are taken for granted as natural parts of the social system. They both have their own rules, values and conditions, which are defined with constant symbols. Their worlds are different from each other. "We are from different worlds" (*Biz ayrı dünyaların insanlarıyız*) is the most commonly used phrase used to describe the contradiction between the protagonists from different social classes. However, the reasons behind this "difference," the social motives creating this mutually exclusive relationship between "we" and "they" are never defined.

It should also be noted that there were a number of movies in Yeşilçam, which did not have lower class leading roles (for example, *Sevemez Kimse Seni*). However, Yeşilçam's basic oppositions between "the good and the evil" and "the rich and the poor" were fixed in the sense that there were certain values attributed to goodness, badness, richness and poverty. Despite the lack of lower class leading roles, the good people from upper class were defined in line with these fixed values attributed to the lower class. Therefore, even if there was no lower class leading role, the opposition between the good and the evil was defined through the same symbolic mapping.

This opposition is narrated via other oppositions. Certain clichés are often used to describe different social classes. There are constant meanings; objects, properties and manners that belong to upper and lower classes. The main opposition is between Istanbul's high society (*sosyete*) and ordinary people (*halk*). The rich protagonist is usually unhappy in his/her world. However, in the beginning of the movie, the rich protagonist may be unaware of the fact that his/her life is meaningless. This case is temporary and the real story begins with his/her "discovery" of the meaning of life and true love. This is a temporary deception. As soon as he/she meets with the love of his/her life, the rich protagonist suddenly changes. For example, in *Küçük Hanım'ın Şoförü*, Ayhan Işık is the only son of a rich businessman. In the beginning of the movie, Işık is presented as a "snob" who spends too much money, wastes his time in nightclubs with women and loves to drink champagne every night. Despite his father's warnings, he doesn't work at all. However, after his father's death, he is forced to find a "decent" job though which he can learn the difficulties of the real world. In his will, his father wants Işık to work hard for one year in order to be able to hand over the family business. The real story begins at this point. Işık becomes a private chauffer for the young lady (Belgin Doruk) of another rich family. He suddenly becomes a member of the lower class. He easily adopts the values of lower class as his temporary deception suddenly ends. Similarly, in *Kezban*, İzzet Günay is from an upper class family, who makes fun of Hülya Koçyiğit's (Kezban's)

"rural" and "traditional" appearance. In the beginning of the movie, in a garden party scene, Günay and his upper class friends laugh at Kezban's clothing, looking down on her physical appearance. However, in the next scene we see Günay protecting Koçyiğit against other upper class female characters who try to despise Koçyiğit as an "Anatolian" and "peasant" girl. Günay asks them respect Koçyiğit's personality. He also apologizes from Kezban, and wants her to forgive him because of his inappropriate behavior in the party scene. Günay's shift is again sudden. As a matter of fact, there is no reason for Günay to change his attitude except. However, in line with the typical progress of the storyline, since he will fall in love with Kezban, he has to give up his "bad" and "improper" behaviors, which belong to the upper class members.

From now on, I shall deal with a number of binary oppositions which were used by Yeşilçam narratives to signify the conflict between the lower and upper classes:

5.2.1 *Delikanlı* versus *züppe*

a) *Delikanlı*: "Young and tough guy"

Delikanlı is a decent, good looking, attractive, honest and strong young man. Yeşilçam's male leads usually play "young and tough guys." The "tough guy ethic" is inspired the principles and rules of the world of lower class males. There are constant values and meanings ascribed to this ethic. First of all, it has immutable and inevitable rules and principles (*racon*). In tough guy ethic, every problem and issue is to be handled and dealt with in a certain predefined way. This definition is in accordance with the socially accepted and endorsed social morals and principles. There are certain things that a "*delikanlı*" would never do. He is the beloved of the lower class world. Everybody (of course, except for the bad guys) likes, respects and trusts him. He is straightforward, modest, honorable, hardworking and trustworthy. He is the symbol of the good characteristics attributed to the lower class by

Yeşilçam. As he is young and physically powerful, the weak always trust him whenever they encounter with a problem to be dealt with (*Otobüs Yolcuları*). Delikanlı always respect law and social order. He never breaks laws on purpose and always trusts courts and justice in the resolution of legal problems. However, he is doomed to encounter and fight with problems and obstacles as he tries to make his way in the world. He is the symbol of society's justice. In other words, before legal authorities handles the problem, *delikanlı* deals with it and fights with the bad guys in order to protect the weak or the woman he is in love with. There are socially predefined procedures and methods (*racon*) which he uses and to which he is always devoted to when dealing with a problem or fighting with bad guys. As a matter of fact, *delikanlı* is defined as "*sine qua non*" for the establishment of social and moral justice. The social order and morality are protected thanks to these young and tough guys. They are physically and ethically strong because they always encounter many problems that they have to resolve with their fists.

In addition, *delikanlı*'s ethic is centered upon the principle that there are certain values in life which can never be made concessions from. No matter what happens to him, a *delikanlı* never changes this "no-concession" attitude. His personal honor, pride and morality are his most important wealth in life. Therefore, money or material wealth can never be replaced by these values. His social role is to bring justice to the world of rich and that of poor. Rich snobs have a lot to learn from him. He does not have any "bad" characteristics. He is the symbol of "absolute" goodness, morality and honesty. No matter how difficult conditions he lives in, he never thinks of committing crime to become rich. He is a true hero of Yeşilçam melodramas with his courage and physically vigorous and robust standing.

b) *Züppe*: "dandy, snob, fob"

In Yeşilçam melodramas, *züppe* is presented in opposition with *delikanlı*. Their encounter is inevitable in order to show the difference

between the man of lower class and that of upper class. *Züppe* possesses all characteristics attributed to the world of upper class. He is characterized by pretentious and conspicuous shows in an attempt to impress others. He likes showy and arrogant behaviors, looking down on the people of the lower class. *Züppe* likes richness, spends excessive amounts of money on nightclubs, his lovers, champagne, whisky and luxury. In other words, he is committed to a life style completely centered upon fun and entertainment. He usually spends his father's money and does not see it necessary to establish his own business. Economic independence does not matter to him. *Züppe* is a snob in the sense that he cultivates and admires richness, condescending or overbearing to others. He is a dandy because he is excessively concerned about his physical appearance in a showy way, despising others who do not look like him. He is a popinjay since he is a person given to vain, pretentious displays and empty chatter. He does not care about other's problems and his relations are usually money-dependent, artificial and degenerated. Most importantly, he is happy with the life he lives. He is submissive to his father. If his father is alive, he cannot live an independent life from his father. Since the wealth of his father is very important to him, he cannot disobey his father's commands.

In his opposition and encounter with *delikanlı* some "*züppe*"s are harmless. The character of *züppe* to display *delikanlı*'s power to deal with the meaningless and ridiculous world of the rich. In most of the conversations between these two characters, *züppe* tries to despise *delikanlı* by using his richness however, he always fails. Since *delikanlı* is the physically strongest, the disputes between them are inevitably won by *delikanlı*.

Nevertheless, *züppe* is more dangerous when his only mission is seduction. The "*züppe*"s are described as rich, good looking, well speaking and polite males. Their only mission is to seduce women by these good characteristics and then abuse them with the promise of a future marriage. These characters exploit the dreams of young, beautiful and poor girls, who want to find a rich husband to have high standards of living. This man's relation with "*delikanlı*" is more problematic since he poses a grave threat to

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the love affair between the protagonists (*Acı Hayat, Namus Uğruna*). His only aim is to seduce women and leave them after having a sexual affair. Such rich men are usually described as the owner of his own business. Since he has the economic independence, he is stronger than the abovementioned rich men.

5.2.2 Villa versus squatter

Since most of the Yeşilçam stories take place in Istanbul, the description of the city is important. Istanbul is described as a city where these two poles come and live together. Rich people usually live either in luxurious apartment flats or duplex villas. Their houses have many rooms and they employ servants, private drivers and maidservants. The houses of rich are large, comfortable but cold. Each family member has his/her own room; there is a large kitchen where a private cook(s) is employed. The house has a separate garage as the family has its own cars and private drivers. Each family member has his/her own car and driver. The servants, maidservants, cooks and drivers usually come together in the kitchen to chat. The kitchen is a place where they talk and gossip about their employers. The villas have a fenced garden. Meanwhile, the lower class lives in the small districts of Istanbul. Neighborhoods (*mahalle*) are made up of either squatters (*gecekondu*) or small houses. The houses have few rooms. There is usually a stove in the middle of the living room. If the house is hired, the rent is usually high compared to the household income. However, these houses are described as cozy and warm places. Despite their worn-out and old appearance, small houses are the symbols of the "sincere" and "moderate" life that the lower class lives. "A house should have a soul! Damn this concrete grave!" cries out the leading male in Acı Hayat, while he talks about his luxurious villa.

5.2.3 *Rakı* versus champagne and whisky

This is an opposition not only between "*rakı*" and "champagne and whisky" but also between *meyhane* and nightclub. In Yeşilçam melodramas, alcoholic beverages are commonly drunk by both upper class and lower class members. Yeşilçam melodramas often used alcoholic beverages to signify entertainment mannerisms of different social classes. Therefore alcoholic beverages are used to signify the social status. The main opposition is between "*rakı*" and "champagne and whisky." The former is seen as the common beverage of the lower class and the former as those of the upper class.

What does *rakı* stand for in these movies? First of all, *rakı* signifies a different type of socialization and life style than the foreign beverages. Drinking *rakı* has its own set of rules (*racon*) and mannerisms, accompanied by a peculiar state of mind. In these movies, how to drink *rakı* properly is a practice to be learnt. Yeşilçam melodrama stresses that there are social codes and rules to obey at the *rakı* table. In almost every movie, there are a number of inevitable companies of *rakı*: appetizers (*meze*), chatting (*muhabbet*) and the traditional Turkish music. *Rakı* should not be drunk without obeying these rules. If a man wants to join the world of Yeşilçam's poor, the *rakı* table is an important test for him. Therefore, drinking *rakı* is not considered merely having fun or entertainment by Yeşilçam. In *meyhane* scenes, the mood of the people drinking *rakı* is oscillatory between joy and grief. This is not a constant state of mind. In one scene, a person who drinks *rakı* may sing songs with this friends, dance and laugh but in the next scene, he starts crying for the miseries of his life. This swinging of emotions is not presented merely as a drunk psychology. Yeşilçam melodramas create a world where lower class people presents a schizophrenic mood. Although they seem happy with the life they live as they manage to keep their virtues, they are also ready to immediately start to grieve for the difficulties that they must endure. Therefore, in Yeşilçam melodramas, crying and grieving at the

rakı table is like a ritual. Whenever the lower class is entertaining at the *rakı* table, we also know that their pains and sorrows are ready to suddenly awake. Therefore, not alcohol but pure fun is banned to the lower class. In *meyhane* scenes, we often see people singing, dancing, chatting, laughing, cursing at the destiny and crying at the same time. More importantly, these actions are collective. The person at a *rakı* table is not alone even if he physically sits alone at the table since *meyhane* is a place of collective grieving. The other tables guess or understand why he is unhappy, because in the world of lower class, people are believed to be born to grieve. Besides, appetizers are also special for Yeşilçam melodramas since not every food can be eaten by *rakı*. Simple foods such as cheese and melon are the most popular appetizers. For example, in *Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*, Cüneyt Arkın says his driver, who drinks *rakı* at the kitchen, that he can ask the cook to give him some food from the family's rich dinner menu. However, the driver says, "*Rakı* must be drunk with white cheese, melon, mackerel salad and *cacik*. The luxurious food on your table would ruin the nobility of the *rakı*!"

Yeşilçam's poor sees alcohol as their company on their path full of pains and suffering. For example, in *Fakir Gencin Romanı*, a characters says: "Without this damned thing, who can bear the suffering of this world!" However, the use of alcohol in Yeşilçam narratives is more connected to the ritual of collective grieving rather than entertaining. Because the collective memory of the lower class in Yeşilçam does not actually forget, alcohol acts like a catalyst in an iterative recalling mechanism. It is more like grieving for "what is not forgotten." *Rakı* is not presented as a numbing beverage. On the contrary, the more the lower class drinks *rakı* in Yeşilçam's *meyhane*s, the more it recalls. This is why chatting, conversations, complaining, expressing dissatisfaction, pain, uneasiness, censure or resentment and cursing are mostly observed in *meyhane* scenes.

However, nightclubs are different in terms of such mannerisms and social codes. First of all, the upper class never drinks *rakı* in these movies because it is considered to belong to the lower class. "Whisky" and

"champagne" are the favorite alcoholic beverages of the upper class just because they are imported products. "Whisky" and "champagne" are favored by the upper class not only because they are expensive but also for the social symbols attached to them. Yeşilçam melodramas depicts the world of rich as a Western-oriented one, therefore what they eat, drink and use are also determined by the traditions of Western countries. Whisky and champagne are used to signify luxury-oriented lives. Unlike *meyhane*s, the mood promoted by nightclubs are centered upon pure fun and entertainment. In nightclubs, people do not attach importance to chatting or conversation. They dance, flirt with the opposite sex and numb their minds. Unlike *meyhane*s, the nightclubs are places which are designed to make people forget, what as a matter of fact they do not already remember. In Yeşilçam, nightclubs symbolize the fast motion lives that the upper class lives. While in *meyhane* scenes, people remember their past pains, their loved ones, the difficulties that they had to endure in the past, in nightclub scenes, rich people lose themselves to forget everything. In a nightclub, the male characters usually meet more than one woman with whom he had love affair in the past. The nightclub males are defined as casanovas. However, if someone is truly in love, the place for him to "drink alcohol" is *meyhane*, not the nightclub.

5.2.4 Home party versus coffeehouse

Yeşilçam melodramas used fixed symbols, places and similar scenes to represent the social lives of lower and upper class and the socialization of different social classes as well as their interaction with other members of the social class they belong to. There are two major places which Yeşilçam often use to show the social lives of the lower and upper class: coffeehouses and home parties. A lower class in a home party is like an alien which can never adapt to the atmosphere (*Kezban, Fakir Gencin Romanı*). The same rule also applies to the upper class in a coffeehouse (*Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*). However,

the adaptation is possible for the alien as an indication of the change in social status. This adaptation process is represented unrealistically since in most of the movies it takes places as a fast modification of individual and social activity in adjustment to cultural surroundings.

a) Coffeehouse: The Arena of Masculinity[13]

Coffeehouse, where all men of the small districts come together, is the one of the most commonly used places by the Yeşilçam cinema. In every small neighborhood all men go to coffeehouses. Women are banned from these places where each male member of the small community experiences his daily socialization. In Yeşilçam, coffeehouses are the places to which all lower class men go as an indispensable part of their daily lives. Coffeehouses have their own set of rules (*racon*). How to behave properly in a coffeehouse is socially learnt. Especially unemployed and retired men spend their hours in the coffeehouses which are also presented as a safe haven for the men wishing to escape from their family problems (*Yaprak Dökümü*). Like *meyhane*s, coffeehouses are the places where all men demonstrate their masculinity and behave in line with the social codes regarding manhood. Coffeehouses have their own language. How to sit at a table, how to order tea or coffee and how to play backgammon, the most important activities in a coffeehouse, are socially learnt and well known by "*delikanlı*"s of every small community. Each man is required to act in line with these socially-predetermined set of rules to survive in a coffeehouse. If a upper class man wants to join the world of the lower class, coffeehouse is a test place to see how "*delikanlı*" he is (*Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim*).

One of the most important characteristics of coffeehouse is that these places are used by Yeşilçam as communication platforms among the men of

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[13] Here I will call coffeehouse as an arena of "masculinity" and then home party as an arena of "femininity." As both terms are controversial indeed, it should be noted that the terms masculinity and femininity will be used with reference to their popular and conventional meanings.

the lower class. If the leading male is from the lower class, coffeehouse is the place where he received important news and gossips. In coffeehouses lower class men talk about the incidents of the small community to which they belong (*Namus Uğruna*).

In addition, the fight is also common in the coffeehouse scenes. "*Delikanlı*"'s not only prove their commitment to the socially determined "*racon*" by knowing how to behave properly in coffeehouses, but they also subject their own and other men's masculinity to test, in which the winner becomes the favorite of the community. If two men fight in a coffeehouse, others do not intervene or try to stop them which is why coffeehouses are stages for men to display manhood openly, surrounded by seats for other male spectators. In these places, the fight is accepted as a form of communication. If there are correct reasons to fight, men should fight and nobody should intervene to stop them. Therefore, these places are used by Yeşilçam as the arena of masculinity, where physically powerful is always the winner. The leading male never loses fight, demonstrating how strong he is. It is the law the law of body language, which rules in coffeehouses.

b) Home Party: The Arena of Femininity

The scene of home party, which is actually a Western tradition, is one of the most commonly used scenes in Yeşilçam to depict the lives of the upper class. Home party scenes are generally shot in villas or palace-like buildings. Dwellings are usually duplex and large houses.

In Yeşilçam melodramas, to give a home party is the sign of richness since it transforms the house into a demonstration area of material wealth. In home party scenes, the setting displays the richness and affluence of the people. Although there are approved patterns of behavior in a home party, it does not have socially embedded and rooted rules as the coffeehouse does.

Therefore, it is not the social codes but the appearances rule in a home party. If a person wears fashionable and expensive dress and knows how to dance, which are regarded as superficial features, he/she is accepted by the high society. Party people do not care about who the person really is but attaches the highest importance how he/she looks like. Therefore, in Yeşilçam melodramas, as soon as the lower class protagonist learns how to dress and dance, he/she manages to join the world of rich. However, if he/she fails to do so, he/she is laughed at. In a home party scene, while the protagonists are usually shown together with a sense of non-belonging, the others are always very happy. People dance, drink whisky or champagne, and laugh loudly. People dancing and swinging are the mostly seen figures in the party scenes because the home parties are committed to pure fun. Therefore, the socialization of the high society centered upon pure entertainment is defined with personal and social irresponsibility.

The femininity in Yeşilçam's party scenes derives from the pejorative meanings attached to womanhood, which is conventionally equalized with appearance. The main aim of the party is to display. As a matter of fact, the socialization process of the upper class is centered upon the idea of displaying. In Yeşilçam, all exhibitionist activities and manners are cursed. The rich go from one party to another to see and to watch.

5.2.5 Language of the upper and lower class:

a) Body Language: "Impoliteness versus Artificial Refined Manners"

When the issue of body language is concerned, Yeşilçam adopts an extreme stance. First of all, politeness, cultured and elegant behaviors are seen as the signs of artificialness. The upper class does not seem to mentally assimilate or digest such behaviors; in other words it does not have

gracefully refined and dignified manners, as in tastes, habits, or literary style, behaviors and attitudes but is labeled with them. For Yeşilçam melodramas, refined and genteel behaviors and possessing intellect or mental capacity to a high degree are not important. In the definition of good, fineness or elegance of feeling, taste, manners and language is not a matter of concern. On the contrary, such attitudes and characteristics are not openly defined. All we can see is that Yeşilçam adopt an anti-intellectual and anti-refinement stance, as if it argues that the human nature does not possess such attitudes and behaviors. In this case, Yeşilçam denies not only the importance of elegance but also denies its presence. One can never see a Yeşilçam character defined as elegant or noble just because he/she has polished manners in terms of body language. For example, to know how to behave in a restaurant is not important in defining the nobility of a character. Yeşilçam denies the conventional standards of proper behaviors and manners which are considered to belong to the high society. As a matter of fact, such proprieties are not considered as intrinsic to the human nature. A good person does not necessarily have to obey the codes of refined manners. It should also be stressed that good characters of Yeşilçam do not violate these codes on purpose, but believe that they are unnecessary and unimportant. Besides they are illiterate of proper mannerism, they do not even try to act with refined manners as the high society does. Because, the behaviors of the rich are usually depicted as "artificial" and "dishonest." Yeşilçam defines "impolite" behaviors, which are non-conformant with the refined manners of the high society, as "real" and "honest." Therefore, the lower class does not know these codes and disregards them. The lower class talks and laughs loudly, likes fighting and cursing. However, the upper class has manners full of affectation which are characterized by an ostentatious display of arrogance. While the upper class likes displaying these stilted behaviors, the lower class is represented as genuine manners which share the sense of actuality and lack of falsehood or misrepresentation. Therefore, in terms of body language the lower class is what it is claimed to be. The lower class people act in line with their emotions and ideas. The upper class,

on the contrary, has conspicuous artificiality of manner or appearance. Impoliteness, that is to say, non-conformance with the socially agreed definition of refined manners, is sublimated by Yeşilçam due to its so-called authenticity. On the other hand, these movies present the upper class as suffering from an identity crisis, lacking roots.

b) Spoken Language "Slang versus foreign words"

In Yeşilçam melodramas, where the upper and lower class members most contradict with each other is probably the realm of spoken language. The languages of people from different social classes are incomprehensible to each other. While the lower class uses slang and swearwords, the upper class often intersperses its speeches with foreign words. Yeşilçam's lower class has its own language characterized by informal usage in vocabulary that is more metaphorical, playful and elliptical than ordinary language. Their speech is characterized by the use of vulgar and socially taboo vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. The lower class plays with the words, subverting the grammatical rules and creating their own realm of meaning. The language of the lower class tends to be ambiguous, cryptic and obscure, which makes it impossible to translate into the language of the upper class. Meanwhile, the most important characteristic of the language of the upper class is the usage of foreign, especially French words. Upper class men but especially women, sprinkle French words in their speeches. The foreign words like "*Bonjour,*" "*Merci*" and "*Bye bye*" are often used by the upper class. The upper class also uses subverted words, not playfully but affectedly. "*Canikom*", "*babişko,*" "*nonoş,*" "*şekerim,*" "*cicim*" are the most favorite ones. However, these words are not used metaphorically or cryptically but on the contrary, they are spoiled since they impair the nature of the language by excessive indulgence. This is a language which appear to have sincerity not really possessed, which as a matter of fact own a set of words suffering from deceit, hypocrisy and duplicity. It signifies the lack of

probity in communicating. Moreover, the lower and upper classes mock and humiliate the language of one another, in other words, they are presented as mutually exclusive.

5.3 Is Class Mobility Possible in Yeşilçam Melodramas?

Here I shall mention the patterns and possibility of social class mobility in Yeşilçam. In Yeşilçam melodramas, there are certain patterns which allow characters to pass over or go beyond the boundaries of different social classes. As a matter of fact, the movies generally tell the story of successful or unsuccessful attempts of social mobility. When an upper class man or woman wants to join the world of poor, it poses no threat. However, if the case is contrary, there are certain socially approved or unapproved ways. First of all, the lower class must not have high hopes, desires and imaginations. Whenever a lower class person wants to become rich and apes the lives of the rich, he/she is punished by the hands of destiny. The underlying message for the lower class is that "Everybody should know its social status and behave so." Moreover, another message is that the life of the rich does not have good features to be desired. A lower class person makes concessions from his/her honor and dignity. The only alternatives are to win a lottery or to be discovered for his/her talent as a talented singer. In other cases, women usually become the mistress of rich men (*Namus Uğruna*) and men apply to illegal ways of making money (*Gençlik Hülyaları*). In other words, they have to pay high price for their high desires. Desire is described as an unworthy strong feeling, deep and imperative wish that impels to the attainment of material wealth at all costs. However, the cost is always either death or endless misery.

However, if the lower class person joins the world of rich without making any concessions from his/her personal honor (*Kezban, Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim, Acı Hayat*), he/she could be happy. Despite the popular statement "We are from different worlds," the adaptation is very fast, which shows that

the boundaries are crossable. The lower class person can learn the rules of the rich but does not lose his/her good nature. Similarly, the upper class can also join the world of poor. However, the difference between these two processes is that the upper class person, who later joins the world of the lower class, is already good in nature, looking for the values of the poor for a long time. In other words, the social mobility is impossible for the characters who is both "bad" and "rich." Yeşilçam's patterns of social class changes are developed in accordance with the opposition between the good and the evil. In this sense, the melodramatic imagination of social class mobility is unrealistic in Yeşilçam. The change is not regarded as a social process. Good people, no matter rich or poor, have the power and ability to change without suffering any identity crisis or loss of orientation.

In this chapter, I have tried to elaborate Yeşilçam's representation of two main oppositions between the "good" and the "evil" and also the "rich" and the "poor." I have also presented a number of sub-oppositions as part of the map of meanings implied by the Yeşilçam narrative. We have seen that the two main oppositions can hardly be separated from each other as they weave a narrative structure together. From my analysis, I have seen that Yeşilçam took sides in the battle between the poor and the rich, sublimating the values it attributed to the world of lower class.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I have tried to undertake a structural study of the Yeşilçam melodramas in an attempt to analyze the narrative representations of the oppositions between "the good and the evil" and "the rich and the poor." My main focus has been the representation of the lower and upper classes in Yeşilçam melodramas in contradiction with each other. I have tried to display the various kinds of signs that occur in Yeşilçam's narrative system and the possible arrangements of those signs as binary oppositions. Here, the problem is to understand the resonation of this system with the society's imagination about the poor and the rich.

There is a relation based on resonance between what is represented and its representation. Resonation can literally be defined as a sound produced when air is present. Here I have accepted the sound as the sound of Yeşilçam melodramas, and the air as the social, ideological and economic dynamics, which in a way paved the way for the rise of melodramas and shaped them to boot. Although the sound and the air are interrelated, they have different structures, which cannot be translated into each other's language. Thus, a reflectionist approach fails to comprehend these peculiar structures. From such a perspective, I have tried to display how Yeşilçam gave peculiar meanings to or made sense of social processes that the Turkish society experienced.

In Chapter 2, I have tried to give an overall picture of melodrama as a genre. Beginning with the literal definitions of the term, I have continued with exploring the historicity of melodrama. My aim was to determine the popular traditions which acted as the symbolic resources of the genre before and after its transfer to the cinematic mode. Consequently, it has been argued that melodrama as a genre has emerged as a hybrid form marked by transmutation and intertextuality as it both adopted and altered the structures of popular traditions such as tragedies, popular fiction, popular songs, street ballads etc, which all provided material for it. The re-introduction of the popular traditions and the compulsory non-verbal language of cinema in the beginning gave way to its hybrid development.

Yeşilçam melodramas underwent a similar process of intertextuality, the parallelism is of significance to us. Then a panorama of Hollywood melodramas' signification is given so as to provide a framework for the similarities and differences between the US national cinema, which partially influenced the other traditions of melodrama, and the Turkish one.

In Chapter 3, I have tried to address the historicity of Yeşilçam melodramas. First, having given a simple but concise history of the Turkish popular cinema, I have examined the differences and similarities between the narrative structures and artistic styles of Hollywood and Yeşilçam melodramas. Yeşilçam melodramas are separated from Hollywood melodramas especially for their focus on "rich versus poor" stories. While Hollywood prefers to tell the stories of middle class families, Yeşilçam gave a special place to the battle between the lower and upper classes. In Hollywood, we do not observe Yeşilçam's exploitation of such oppositions as the ones between traditional/modern and rural/urban. In this study I have not regarded Yeşilçam melodramas as degenerated examples of Hollywood cinema. In other words, I have not regarded the 1960s' melodramas in pejorative terms for their mimicry and plagiarism. On the contrary, I believe that the differences that Yeşilçam exposed in conjunction with the similarities (even the plagiarism and mimicry) paved the way for a peculiar style in the Turkish popular cinema.

Therefore, as this discussion cannot be separated from the debate on the Turkish modernization process, I have briefly touched upon the cultural tension caused by the modernization and Westernization effort. Such a discussion is inevitably controversial. As soon as we have entered the realm of the modernization project, we encounter not only with a great deal of complexity and ambiguity, but also with parallel discussions on other complicated concepts such as class formation and social hierarchies. Here I have not tried to draw a comprehensive picture but a line, which can give us insights about the symbolic representation of the lower and upper classes. I have tried to underline the meaning of poverty which was put on the center by the Yeşilçam narratives and have also drawn attention to the ocularcentric relation between the lower and upper classes in the public spaces of the big cities. Since poverty and richness I have dealt with are urban phenomena, the visualization of richness and poverty is of great importance. I have underscored that there is a tension between Yeşilçam's poor and rich that the former stresses what is invisible but the most valuable; whereas the latter insists on extravagantly displaying what is materially visible but spiritually worthless. The former possess precious values of life which are sublimated by Yeşilçam. Therefore, Yeşilçam makes an ontological difference between what deserves to be seen and what does not.

In Chapter 3, I have also tried to trace the historical marks of the traumatic reaction of the masses towards the class society, which deepened not only with critical developments such as urbanization and industrialization, but also the Republic's cultural policy. I have argued that Yeşilçam melodramas tell us a story about the Turkish modernization process as a hybrid articulation of different discourses about the modernization. Therefore, we cannot regard them as a degenerated form, but a part of the Turkish modernization process itself.

In Chapter 4, I have entered the realm of structural analysis of the Yeşilçam narratives. Here I have tried to present a general picture of Yeşilçam's narrative structure in line with the melodramatic characteristics I have introduced in Chapter 2 and 3. In this chapter, the similarities and

differences between Yeşilçam and Hollywood melodramas can be better observed together with examples from the movies I have analyzed. I have attempted to enlist basic characteristics pertaining to Yeşilçam's symbolic world.

Yeşilçam told simple and clarified stories with predictable storylines and end, which did not surprise the audiences. The favorite plotting was the story of unification, separation and re-unification of a couple who falls in love with each other at first sight. The simplicity and clarity was provided by the use of fixed signs and signification. The tension was created by delays, obstacles and coincidences, which also underlined the inevitability of the fate. The obstacles created by the bad people to prevent the marriage of the leading couple served the personification of the evil and social conflicts. In Yeşilçam melodramas, there were usually bad characters responsible for the unhappiness of the leading couple. In addition, the evil was regarded as intrinsic to the nature. The social, economic or political underlying causes of badness were not addressed. Yeşilçam classified people as the ones having good nature, and the other who lack it. In other words, goodness and badness were defined as a disposition, the predominant tendency of one's spirits. Unhappiness was defined in the hands of the evil-minded. The coincidences were used to speed up the flow of events on the one hand, reinforced the idea of a pre-determined path, on the other. The happiness is defined as re-unification and marriage of the leading couple. However, how the happiness is delayed was more important than how it is reached. Yeşilçam did not tell the stories of happiness but the legends of people who inevitably lost happiness and tried to re-find it. Besides, the use of stereotyped characters such as the benevolent father, the lower class comic and the *femme fatale* was common in almost every movie. The stories were often domestic, focusing upon the relations between families or people from families of different social classes. Furthermore, Yeşilçam's body was seized by excessive meanings, as the symbolic site where the grief and happiness oscillate. The body was used an inscription of high and sublime emotions and represented as if it was a puppet whose control was in the hands of an

unidentified presence. The beauty of the leading characters was regarded natural and given by God; therefore, only the fate might deprive them of this divine beauty. The physical disabilities such as blindness, deafness or other treatable handicaps were often used as a source of tension but the important point was that such disabilities were usually used as temporary delays in the divine beauty of the leading characters.

As I have tried to display in Chapter 4, especially two features of the narrative structure make Yeşilçam distinguishable from its American counterpart. Hollywood is well known for its spectacular, impressive and large-scale displays and *mise en scéne*. The visual regime of Hollywood is dominated by perfectionism in lightning and décor. However, Yeşilçam melodramas subordinated the visual regime to the vocal one. This was largely because the Turkish movie directors lacked both the necessary infrastructure and capital invested in the cinema sector. However, strong oral traditions such as popular theatre and shadow plays also played a major role in the development of the melodrama in Turkey. Therefore, the dominance of the vocal narrative through which Yeşilçam preferred telling rather than showing was a part of a traditional symbolism based on words. In addition, Yeşilçam melodramas often used the love affair between a man and a woman from different social classes as their theme. This plotting was fetishized by Yeşilçam, unlike Hollywood's middle class family stories, an obsession which I have specifically dealt with in this study.

In Chapter 5, I have elaborated upon the binary oppositions between "the good and the evil" and "the rich and the poor." Here an interweaving relation between the two oppositions is observed although the former is usually seen as a trans-class representation. I have discussed both under separate titles in an attempt to define fixed attributes of the goodness, evil, the richness and the poverty as represented by Yeşilçam melodramas.

Movies I have analyzed fix the meanings of "goodness" and "badness" as well as those of "richness" and "poverty." These concepts were standardized in line with the fixed signification, which is mentioned in Chapter

4. In Chapter 5, I have tried to examine two basic oppositions between the "good" and the "evil" and the "rich" and the "poor" via a number of sub-oppositions. Although these two oppositions interrelate, the former is usually seen as a trans-class representation but the latter is directly related with class hierarchies. The goodness and evil are primarily defined with reference to the love affair between the leading couple. Here comes a simple definition which is constant in almost every Turkish melodrama: The ones who want the couple to be together are "good" but those who try to separate them are "bad." Despite this simple definition, there are also other properties which indicate goodness and evil in relation with the opposition between the lower and upper class. There are certain fixed values and symbols ascribed to goodness such as "hunger for true love," "modesty," "sincerity and honesty," "diligence," "protection of personal honor and dignity." These characteristics must be considered in relation with those which are attributed to the evil, namely, "artificialness," "ostentation," "dishonesty," and "laziness." When we think these properties together, we can better see how Yeşilçam melodramas regard this opposition by establishing oppositions between "trueness" and "artificialness," "honesty" and "dishonesty," "modesty" and "ostentation" as well as "laziness" and "diligence." Yeşilçam's good are characterized by their "true" nature given by God, their ability to maintain "sincere" relations based upon "true love," their effort to protect personal "honor" and their diligence through which they earn their lives in legal and honorable jobs. Yeşilçam's attach the highest importance to what is invisible (essence), namely values, rather than the visible possessions. They know how to content with moderate lives and more importantly they hate extravagant behaviors even if they are rich. In opposition, Yeşilçam's bad is artificial and insincere in their relations with other people since they regard the material wealth as the most important thing in life; they are also infatuated with ostentation since they like to display the material wealth they possess; they only establish relations with other rich people if they are also rich, and they are ready to make concessions from their personal honor in order to join the world of rich if they are poor. In addition, Yeşilçam's bad is lazy in the sense that he/she either lives on

his/her father's money or tries to make easy money through illegal and immoral ways. Since they do not attach importance to dignity and honesty, they lie, trick and deceive other people in order to reach their goal whatever it may be.

In Yeşilçam's opposition between the good and the evil, another opposition reveals itself: the form *versus* the essence. Here while the "form" refers to external appearance, which is illusory, the "essence" means the inward nature and true substance. In Yeşilçam melodramas, the distinction between the appearance and essence is based upon what is visible and what is not. Yeşilçam's good invisible but bestowed characteristics, they might have nothing to display in terms of material possessions, but most important virtues of life are bestowed upon them. Most importantly, they attach the highest importance to essence and trueness. However, Yeşilçam's bad place the highest premium on the form as they judge people by their appearances and they like to display their material possessions, or at least they are seduced by the extreme desire for money. While Yeşilçam's good defines a good life as honorable and honest, bad characters believe that a good life can only be lived by possessing "expensive" materials such as big houses, automobiles, expensive clothing etc.

In Chapter 5, the opposition between the rich and the poor is also discussed via a number of sub-oppositions. Despite its interrelation with the opposition between the good and the evil which is represented in a trans-class manner, this opposition is directly related with the social and class hierarchies. The sub-oppositions I have presented have been determined as the main symbols indicating the contradiction between the lower and upper classes. First, two main characters, namely "*delikanlı*" and "*züppe*" are discussed. *Delikanlı* symbolizes all virtues and good properties touted by Yeşilçam melodramas since he has all the characteristics attributed to goodness. He acts like the guardian of all noble values and masculine powers of the society. The existence of *delikanlı*s, according to Yeşilçam melodramas, ensures the continuity of the social morality and dignity. However, the character of *züppe* is either a threat to the honor of poor

women as a seducer or a symbol of degeneration of the traditional masculinity because of his infatuation with extravagant behaviors. Yeşilçam identifies the willingness to display and obsession with good-looking appearances with femininity. Therefore, *züppe* is often harmless as he can easily be surpassed by *delikanlı*. The physical superiority of *delikanlı* is often represented in fight scenes in order to show that a good-looking *züppe* can never act like a real "man." The only case where a *züppe* can be dangerous is when he attempts to seduce a woman. *Züppe* can only be harmful to *delikanlı* when he uses his material richness to seduce the leading female character. As a seducer, he plays his game in the world of appearances.

I have also presented the oppositions between villa versus squatter as well as *rakı* versus champagne and whisky. These oppositions are not about values but directly material possessions. In Yeşilçam, the places where the rich and the poor live are highly different from each other. These symbols are often used to show how different the worlds of lower and upper class is. In addition, moving to a non-squatter settlement, for example an apartment, is a symbol of upward social mobilization. Duplex villas and squatter settlements are placed in different districts of Istanbul. The important thing is that while luxurious houses of the rich people are presented as "cold" and "soulless," small, old and bad-looking squatters of the poor are seen as "warm" and "cozy." These two symbols were used by Yeşilçam as a reflection of the sincerity of a lower class life and artificialness of an upper class one. Besides, the opposition between *rakı* and imported beverages like whisky symbolizes the tension between "traditional," "Eastern" and "modern," "Western." While *rakı* table symbolizes the collective grieving mechanism accompanied by an understanding of entertainment oscillating between laughing and crying, the whisky and champagne implies an understanding of pure entertainment. In this sense, public places where *rakı* is drunk are the places where the good characters recall their grief. However, the public places where imported beverages are drunk symbolize areas where rich people lose themselves in pure fun. Consequently, not only the beverages

themselves, but the ways to drink them and the places they are consumed are also significant with the social meanings attributed to them.

I have also discussed the opposition between two public spaces, which were often used by Yeşilçam to symbolize the opposition between the rich and the poor, namely, the "coffeehouse" and the "home party." These two places stand for the differences between socialization mechanisms of lower and upper class. While coffeehouses are communication platforms of lower class men with its own rules based on masculinity, the rich socializes via home parties, which have also its own rules based on femininity. Here, the conventional meaning of masculinity, which is equalized with "essence," is used since not appearances but values, morality and *racon* are the most important in coffeehouses. However, in home parties the important aspect of socialization is visual appearances. How the party is visually organized and how the participants look like is important. In other words, the main aim of the party is to display.

Finally, I have also discussed the opposition between body and spoken languages between the lower and upper classes. In Yeşilçam melodramas, politeness and elegant behaviors are seen as the signs of artificialness since the rich does not seem to mentally digest such behaviors but on the contrary use them as a insincere label. While the upper class likes displaying stilted behaviors, the lower class is represented with its genuine manners, which are away from falsehood and misrepresentation. In other words, while Yeşilçam's poor act in line with their true emotions and ideas, the rich pretends, showing conspicuous artificiality of manner and appearance. Furthermore, spoken languages of the rich and the poor are different from each other. While the lower class plays with the words and creates their own realm of meaning which cannot be translated to the language of the upper class, the most important characteristic of the language of the upper class is the usage of foreign, especially French words. The latter uses foreign words which suffer from insincerity and which also lack of probity in communicating.

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In Chapter 5, I have finally mentioned the patterns of social class mobility in Yeşilçam melodramas in a brief manner. In Yeşilçam melodramas, the poor who tries to imitate the rich is always punished. A poor might become rich either by chance factors like winning a lottery or working hard. Yeşilçam's message for the poor is that "Everybody should know its social status and behave so." If the poor gets rich via honorable ways, he/she can be happy. In all other cases, he/she dies or endlessly suffer. Despite the famous statement of Yeşilçam, "We are from different worlds," the adaptation takes place very fast, showing that the boundaries between the lower and upper classes are easily crossable for people who have good nature. Only good people have the power to change and adapt to other class without suffering from an identity crisis or loss of orientation since they are not seduced by the appearances.

Yeşilçam melodramas are *heteroglot* and present a topsy-turvy relation between the values attributed to the rich and the poor, indicating an upside-down representation of what class society underlines as "high" and "low." The reversing of order between the high and the rich is about the values attributed to the lower and upper classes. Yeşilçam represents the material wealth as worthless and instead sublimates moral values. While deprivation is seen as a state where the most important values of life exist, the abundance is regarded as a state of degeneration. Therefore the values of people suffering from material deprivation are represented as "high" and "noble" but the lives of the rich as "low" and "lowborn."

According to the observations I offered in Chapter 5, a number of discourses within which Yeşilçam melodramas spoke about the world can be determined. First of all, I have observed prevailing properties universally attributed to the goodness and badness in these movies. These universal attributes such as honesty, natural beauty, modesty, sincerity, honesty and honor might be observed in many popular tales, fairytales, legends and anecdotes etc. Universally, the good is supposed to be beautiful, honest, modesty etc. It is generally identified with white, pureness and so many other positive and divine characteristics. However, the evil is universally attributed

to the ones who disrespect personal honor, honesty, morals etc. Here we can see how this *universal symbolism* speaks in the language of Yeşilçam but with a few additions. It is at this point where Yeşilçam becomes distinguishable. In its opposition between the good and the evil Yeşilçam interweaves its position with the other opposition between the rich and the poor and as a matter of fact an anti-Western stance. The characteristics attributed to the evil by Yeşilçam include artificialness, extravagance and laziness in the form of living on father's wealth. We cannot argue that these properties are universal to the evil. They derive from another discourse, which I prefer to call an *anti-superwesternization symbolism*. I should underline here that I do not use the term "anti-superwesternization" to indicate a fundamentalist reaction towards Westernization. In this study, anti-superwestern refers to state of opposition against a specific relation with the Westernized life style marked with ostentation and degeneration. Yeşilçam never completely refused what the Westernization has brought about to Turkey. However, Yeşilçam melodramas equalized certain aspects of Westernized lives with deteriorated relations which have declined in morals. Yeşilçam's anti-Western attitude only covers the corrupt members of the upper class, marked with a Western style. Yeşilçam established a ambivalent relation with certain aspects of Westernization as object of both desire and aggression; which is why we cannot see Yeşilçam's reaction to it as an fundamentalist one. It, on the one hand, labeled super-Westernized lives of its rich characters as "artificial," and keep the doors open to Westernized and moderate lives its good characters. In other words, Yeşilçam did not refuse positive outcomes of Westernization but denounced its degenerated forms.

Yeşilçam represented bad people as the ones who lack naturalness and spontaneity in their contrived and feigned world where relations are centered upon personal interests and desire for money. Yeşilçam's struggle was to sublimate the world of essences against the world of appearances. The artificialness of these characters stemmed from their infatuation with an extravagant exhibition although they had nothing but spiritually worthless materials to show. This perspective was also backed by a covert religious

discourse, which I will call a *covert religious symbolism*.[14] As we all know, Islam promotes modesty and curses ostentation. Not only for Islam, but also for other religions, ostentation is thought to be related with the sins of greed and avarice. In addition, the characteristics bestowed on the upper class by the class society such as excessive consumption, pure entertainment, expensive clothes, houses, foods and beverages were equalized with a Westernized world. Among other examples that can be given here are artificial refined manners, the use of foreign words in Turkish, gambling, and home parties, which were all represented as imported from the West. However, the covert religious discourse inscribed in the worldview of Yeşilçam's good led these people to modesty just like Islam commands its believers to avoid from vanity and ostentation. In addition, the definition of true love in Yeşilçam melodramas is again nourished by the idea of a divine love promoted by religions. Yeşilçam's true love is free from an overt sexuality, as a supreme feeling surpassing the existence of human beings. Yeşilçam treated "love" as a symbol for intuitive perception of truthness and nobleness independent of any reasoning process but with an immediate apprehension (at first sight). In other words, love is bestowed upon Yeşilçam's good people as if it was a revelation from God.

I have determined a final discourse, namely a *symbolism of mediation*, which I have called as the sublimation of a middle class life in the study. Yeşilçam denounced the high hopes of the lower class, their desire for material wealth or any efforts to change social class. Yeşilçam's good might change their social class however anybody who grow greedy feelings that impel himself/herself to the attainment of money and wealth were labeled as bad people. Desire for money in Yeşilçam was described as uncontrolled. Such people were portrayed as inordinately desirous of wealth, profit, etc so that they can make concessions from the most invaluable things in life like personal honor. Therefore, Yeşilçam's good does not have such desires but

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[14] I prefer to call this symbolism as "covert" because the movies I have analyzed did not openly tout the values of Islam. In other words, there was no overt Islamic discourse in these movies but the shadow of social morals backed by a religious conscience can still be observed. I believe that Yeşilçam maintained a well-balanced relation between the religion and a secular worldview.

only dreamed about a modest life with love. The modesty of Yeşilçam was described as an intermediate point between the two poles of richness and poverty. The leading couples of Yeşilçam dreamed about avoiding the artificial world of the rich which was degenerated by excessive amounts of money on the one hand; and wanted to have a small moderate house and a regular job on the other. In fact, their dreams might be labeled as low-middle class dreams.

Yeşilçam melodrama was a hybrid site where different discourses and traditions revealed themselves. It both imported certain properties from Hollywood and developed its peculiarity thanks to popular traditions and tensions inherited from Turkey's history. Since the popular culture should be regarded as empirical, Yeşilçam melodramas might tell us about our personal and social stories. I believe that Yeşilçam's symbolism has affected the imagination of people in these territories as it was in return influenced by it. If people still shed tears while watching these movies, these movies must have touched an unforgotten realm of collective grief which has never been left behind.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF THE FILMS

Namus Uğruna – 1960

Yönetmen ve Senaryo Yazarı: Osman F. Seden

Oyuncular: Eşref Kolçak, Peri Han, Serpil Gül, Memduh Ün, Suphi Kaner, Diclehan Baban, Mualla Sürer

Otobüs Yolcuları – 1961

Yönetmen: Ertem Göreç

Senaryo Yazarı: Vedat Türkali

Oyuncular: Ayhan Işık, Türkan Şoray, Senih Orkan, Salih Tozan, Suna Pekuysal, Ahmet Tarık Tekçe, Reha Yurdakul, Atıf Kaptan, Suphi Kaner, Avni Dilligil, Diclehan Baban

Acı Hayat – 1962

Yönetmen ve Senaryo Yazarı: Metin Erksan

Oyuncular: Ayhan Işık, Türkan Şoray, Ekrem Bora, Nebahat Çehre, Hüseyin Baradan, Handan Adalı, Memduh Alpar

Gençlik Hülyaları – 1962

Yönetmen: Halit Refiğ

Senaryo Yazarı: Sadık Şendil

Oyuncular: Göksel Arsoy, Nilüfer Aydan, Pervin Par, Kenan Pars, Reha Yurdakul, Erol Taş, Ali Şen, Suzan Avcı, Hüseyin Baradan

Küçük Hanımın Şoförü – 1962

Yönetmen ve Senaryo Yazarı: Nejat Saydam

Oyuncular: Ayhan Işık, Belgin Doruk, Sadri Alışık, Avni Dilligil, Suphi Kaner

Gurbet Kuşları – 1964

Yönetmen: Halit Refiğ

Senaryo Yazarı: Orhan Kemal, Halit Refiğ

Oyuncular: Tanju Gürsu, Filiz Akın, Özden Çelik, Pervin Par, Cüneyt Arkın, Önder Somer, Sevda Ferdağ, Mümtaz Ener, Hüseyin Baradan, Gülbin Eray, Danyal Topatan, Madalet Tibet

Fakir Gencin Romanı – 1965

Yönetmen ve Senaryo Yazarı: Nuri Ergün

Oyuncular: Filiz Akın, Cüneyt Arkın, Neriman Köksal, Gürel Ünlüsoy, Muzaffer Tema, Kadir Savun, Ali Şen, Öztürk Serengil, Nedret Güvenç

Fakir Bir Kız Sevdim – 1966

Yönetmen: Sırrı Gültekin

Senaryo Yazarı: Sadık Şendil

Oyuncular: Cüneyt Arkın, Gönül Yazar, Münir Özkul, Oya Tarı, Semih Sezerli, Tanju Okan

Yaprak Dökümü – 1967

Yönetmen: Memduh Ün

Senaryo Yazarı: Orhan Kemal, Halit Refiğ

Oyuncular: Ediz Hun, Fatma Girik, Cüneyt Gökçer, Semiramis Pekkan, Gürel Ünlüsoy, Nurhan Nur, Esin Gülsoy, Senih Orkan

Kezban – 1968

Yönetmen ve Senaryo Yazarı: Orhan Aksoy

Oyuncular: Hülya Koçyiğit, İzzet Günay, Selma Güneri, Yusuf Sezgin, Muzaffer Tema, Süleyman Turan, Fatma Karanfil

Sevemez Kimse Seni – 1968

Yönetmen: Ertem Eğilmez

Senaryo Yazarı: Burhan Bolan

Oyuncular: Hülya Koçyiğit, Kartal Tibet, Önder Somer, Gülsün Kamu, Cahit Irgat, İhsan Yüce

Hayatım Sana Feda – 1969

Yönetmen: Muzaffer Aslan

Senaryo Yazarı: M. Aslan, B. Oran, E. Tünaş, O. Elmas

Oyuncular: Türkan Şoray, Cüneyt Arkın, Münir Özkul, Gügün Erdem, Kayhan Yıldızoğlu, Aynur Aydan

Aşk Mabudesi – 1969

Yönetmen ve Senaryo Yazarı: Nejat Saydam

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