

GLOBALISATION DISSOLVING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ALTERNATIVE FILM MAKING IN BRITAIN AND TURKEY*

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ABSTRACT

It can be seen that globalisation, which has contradictory dynamics and so, on the one hand helps local cultures to be visible on the other hand, causes cultural homogenisation by using transnationalisation as a discourse, results in Hollywood domination over all other national cinemas. However, globalisation facilitate the development of an alternative cinema culture against mainstream commercial cinema by virtue of communication technologies. And the alternative film making and consumption of such films seem to have a similar structure all around the world when it comes to the point of being rebellious and anti-system.

Although they are all determined by the same motivation, the emerging conditions, the historical and cultural developments of alternative cinemas vary depending on the country. However, it is possible to say that they have many common points such as being low-budget, having contradictory issues, giving marginalized cultures the chance of being represented, using the financial resources and distribution channels out of studios...etc. And all these common aspects exist due to the fact that alternative filmmakers in different countries communicate by virtue of developed and expanded communication technologies.

In this respect, this study aims to analyse the alternative cinema tradition in two countries chosen, Turkey and Britain, which are quite different from each other on the basis of economical development level, cultural and historical features, in order to expose the similarities and differences. Because the former is representative of developing countries and the latter of developed ones Turkey and Britain are two important countries for such a comparative study. Besides, it is believed that they have many shared points by means of globalised alternative cinema culture. In accordance with this, this study focuses on production, distribution, exhibition and consumption practices of alternative filmmaking in the two countries from a comparative point of view by analysing the most representative samples of alternative films in both countries.

Keywords: *Globalisation, filmmaking, alternative cinema, British cinema, Turkish cinema.*

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ÖZET

Çelişkili dinamiklere sahip olan ve bu nedenle bir yandan yerel kültürlerin görünür hale gelmesine yardımcı olurken diğer yandan uluslararasıüstünlüğü bir söylem olarak kullanarak kültürel homejenleşme yaratan küreselleşmenin, bütün diğer ulusal sinemalar üstünde bir Hollywood egemenliği yarattığı söylenebilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, küreselleşme, iletişim teknolojileri sayesinde anaakım ticari sinema karşısında yer alan alternatif bir sinema kültürünün gelişmesini de kolaylaştırmaktadır. Muhafız ve sistem karşıtı olma ölçütleri dikkate alındığında alternatif film yapımının ve bu filmlerin tüketiminin tüm dünyada benzer bir yapı gösterdiği fark edilmektedir.

Benzer bir motivasyonla üretim gerçekleştirmelerine karşın alternatif sinemaların ortaya çıkış koşulları, tarihsel ve kültürel gelişimleri ülkeye bağlı olarak değişmektedir. Ancak yine de düşük bütçeli olmak, tartışmalı konuları işlemek, marjinal kültürlere temsil fırsatı sunmak, stüdyo dışı finans ve dağıtım kanallarını kullanmak v.b. pek çok ortak noktaları bulunduğu söylenebilmektedir. Ve bütün bu ortak özellikler, farklı ülkelerdeki alternatif film üreticilerinin gelişen ve yaygınlaşan iletişim teknolojileri aracılığıyla iletişim kurmaları sayesinde var olmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, aradaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla, seçilen iki ülke olan, ekonomik gelişmişlik düzeyi, kültürel ve tarihi özellikler açısından birbirinden oldukça farklı durumdaki Türkiye ve İngiltere'deki alternatif film yapım geleneğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. İlki gelişmekte olan ikincisi gelişmiş ülkelerin temsilcisi konumundaki Türkiye ve İngiltere böylesi bir karşılaştırmalı çalışma için önem arz etmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, küreselleşen alternatif sinema kültürü sayesinde pek çok ortak noktaları bulunduğu inanılmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma, her iki ülkedeki alternatif filmlerin en temsili örneklerinin eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla eleştirilmesi yoluyla, iki ülkedeki alternatif film yapımının üretim, dağıtım, gösterim ve tüketim pratiklerine odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küreselleşme, film yapımı, alternatif sinema, İngiliz Sineması, Türk sineması.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I want to offer some comparisons and contrasts between the alternative cinema traditions in two countries chosen, Turkey and Britain, which are quite different from each other on the basis of economic development level, cultural and historical characteristics. Because the former is representative of developing countries and the latter of developed ones, Turkey and Britain are two important countries for such a comparative study. Besides, it is believed that those two have many shared points by means of globalised alternative cinema culture. In accordance with this, this study focuses on production, distribution, exhibition and

consumption practices of alternative filmmaking in the two countries from a comparative point of view in addition to the analysis of the most representative samples of alternative films which are supposed to be really remarkable for being made with various forms of productive dexterity, about non-commercial, unprofitable subjects, with controversial gender, social class and ethnic representations, on limited budgets, often with non-famous actors and actresses...etc. in both countries.

Globalisation as a widely and deeply discussed and so as a very significant notion of contemporary debates in last few decades, determines daily practices of our lives especially depending on the development of communication technologies. Due to the new economic structure created by developing communication technologies and globalisation, the methods used both in production and consumption processes generally of mass communication and particularly of cinema industry has been changed. Globalisation, which has contradictory dynamics, and thus, on the one hand helps local cultures to be visible, on the other hand causes cultural homogenisation by using transnationalisation as a discourse, results in Hollywood domination over all other national cinemas. However, globalisation also facilitates the development of an alternative cinema culture against mainstream commercial cinema by virtue of communication technologies. And the alternative filmmaking and the consumption of such films seem to have a similar structure all around the world when it comes to the point of being rebellious and anti-system.

Having a global economic structure rather than national or geographical one (Todd, 2001:22) Hollywood defines the content and aesthetic merits of a film by forming the regime of comprehensibility of the narrative entertainment film all over the world. Even though it can be easily misinterpreted as a new case caused by globalisation it has roots in the late 1920's. Americans were the first to think of film as an industrial product besides establishing the narrative conventions, the identifiable genres, the standards of production and design and the levels of technical reproduction necessary to capture and hold on to a large popular audience (Davies, 2000:110) resulting in an economic and cultural domination. Since then the aesthetic values created by Hollywood that surpasses all national cinema industries in the world by controlling the production, distribution and exhibition channels of the film industry, determine the perception of the audiences. This results in the formation of smaller Hollywood models by national mainstream commercial cinemas that want to satisfy the viewers' expectations in order to have high box-office income.

In this respect, it can be said that the difficulty in surviving under Hollywood dominance leads national cinemas to form their own mainstream industries to rival. Therefore, being under economic and ideological pressure, cinema has to create its economic and intellectual sources out of the mainstream studio system in order to be approved as a respectful form of an art.

Since the current industrial structure of the cinema is two-sided; alternative cinema versus Hollywood and other national mainstream commercial cinema industries, it is obvious that alternative film makers, regardless in which country they work, have to challenge both Hollywood and the national mainstream cinema influenced by it. Those who want to express their personal perceptions of the world by means of very personal forms and contents prefer or are forced to produce out of traditional mainstream cinema which coerces them to create under pre-determined economic, technological, ideological and aesthetic rules. Although freedom of expression and creative autonomy are the same basic motivations encouraging alternative filmmakers all around the world, the emerging conditions, the historical and cultural developments of alternative cinemas vary depending on the country. However, it is possible to say that they have many common points such as being low-budget, dealing with contradictory issues, giving marginalized cultures the chance of being represented, using the financial resources and distribution channels out of studios...etc. And all these common aspects exist partly due to the fact that contemporary alternative filmmakers in different countries communicate by virtue of developed and expanded communication technologies, which lead to an interactive alternative film culture.

A Brief Review of British Cinema

Generally in all European countries, it is a prevailing fact that theatres are mostly controlled by Hollywood companies. However, it is possible to say that Britain is one of the most damaged ones since it has been the nearest market with potential target audience for Hollywood films across the Atlantic Ocean. In addition, the spoken language is the same, which means the public is ready to consume those films, and is open to the effects of them. Although there are various reasons for the pre-eminence of Hollywood in Britain, insufficient number of theatres can be considered as the most important one. On the other hand, as explained by Geoffrey Macnab, at the end of 1997, there were around 2400 screens in UK, and new cinemas are still being built. In theory, this is supposed to make it easier to release British films, but it can be said that the reverse is often true in

practice (Macnab, 2001:136). The British films that have the chance of being shown are the ones handled by aggressive American distributors who may eschew the small, low-budget, alternative films. In this case, the increasing number of multiplex screens causes an illusion of improvement whereas the reality indicates an unfair competition.

Mike Wayne emphasizes that increased direct investment and ownership in the exhibition sector is reinforced by Hollywood's domination of distribution: UIP, Buena Vista, Columbia Tri Star, Warner and 20th Century Fox, the companies considered as the majors of America, took approximately 80% of the UK box-office takings in 2000 (Wayne, 2002:8). Depending on this structure of exhibition, not only the small British films but also other minority-interest European films cannot reach the audience. For example, Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (1999) and British director Ken Loach's film *Riff-Raff* (1990) were displayed in only small screens in Britain. Despite this, they achieved impressive box-office results in other countries. This fact underlines the continuing structural weakness of UK distribution and exhibition polarised between blockbusters and a few art house releases (Christie, 2001:71). Moreover, being relevant to the concerns of this conference, it refers to the existing and potential audiences of alternative films independent from national borders. According to this statement and referring to Thomas Elsaesser it is possible to talk about an international alternative cinema communicating similar concerns across a wide spectrum of settings, but within an identifiable stylistic repertoire providing alternative filmmakers to share a cinephile universe of film with their audiences (Elsaesser, 2005:18). Consequently, cultural differences as well as geographical borders for alternative films are likely to be dissolved due to this internationalisation of cinema culture.

As it followed the same route in all other countries, under such a Hollywood domination in the different channels of the industry, British filmmakers and producers, too, have had two limited choices; to compete with Hollywood by copying it or by stressing British cinema's intrinsic cultural difference (Davies, 2000:112). Considering the roots of alternative film making in Britain it can be said that since Free Cinema years this tendency has been directing production in the industry: The attempt of Arthur Rank who tried compete with Hollywood by using its own strategies such as studio system, star system, high investments on advertising... etc. caused him to be dependent on big production companies (Ellis, 1995:204) whereas in 1956, Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz established the mentality and making conditions of independent cinema which could be

evaluated as their discontent in the current system (Houston, 1966:81). In this period, when the best British directors were hired by giant Hollywood corporations, the advent of television increased the crisis of British Cinema. From these years on independent producers has tried to find finance out of the system. The alternative films with stories about ordinary people in routine daily life and with angry, hard thesis about social insecurity and discontent produced by the directors in the movement of Free Cinema helped for creating a critical visual culture which has effects on today's alternative film culture.

At this point it is important to mention about institutions supporting British film industry, especially alternative film making as well as some private production companies. British Film Institute which was founded as an autonomous and non-commercial institution in 1933 has been serving to improve the film production and cinema culture by sponsoring a few first films of new directors every year even though it is not responsible for subsidizing or training directors. In addition, some television channels like BBC, ITV and particularly Channel Four which also has a specialised production company named Film Four have a significant role in British film industry. *My Beautiful Laundrette* by Stephen Frears, *The Passion of Remembrance* by Isaac Julien, *Drowning by Numbers* by Peter Greenaway, *Life is Sweet* by Mike Leigh, *The Crying Game* by Neil Jordan, *Trainspotting* by Danny Boyle or *Bread and Roses* by Ken Loach can be given as samples of films financed by Channel Four. Having a worldwide reputation due to its film making policies, Channel Four encouraged other television channels and institutions in order to support film production. As a result, more films like *Mrs. Brown* by John Madden, *Wonderland* by Michael Winterbottom, *Billy Elliot* by Stephen Daldry or *Last Resort* by Pawel Pawlikovski have been sponsored by BBC (Hill, 2005:114-115) although they were intended mainly to be shown in television.

Like everywhere else in the world, 1980's and 1990's were the years of deregulation in Britain affecting all aspects of economical life. Therefore subsidies in film industry and quotas compelling theatres to show certain amount of British films were abolished. Moreover, National Film Finance Corporation, which supported many important alternative filmmakers, was privatised by conservative politicians. However, it did not last long and by means of criticism targeting government's culture policies in the middle of 1990's the system changed and government started to invest money in Art Council of England. Furthermore, two new production funds were established; Premiere Production Found supporting high-budget, commercial

films and New Cinema Fund encouraging new talents to make authentic, innovative, low-budget short or feature films by using new technologies.

In accordance with this brief depiction of British film industry it is possible to conclude that unlike Turkey, where there isn't governmental or institutional support of the film industry, the existence of private institutions taking part in producing films in Britain gives it an advantageous position. However, as Ian Christie expressed, since the films produced by these institutions are hardly ever intended for theatrical release (Christie, 2001:70) dozens of feature films made in Britain throughout the 1990's have been unreleased and many others have been given limited release as revealed in Screen Finance's statistics (Screen Finance, 1998:1). Besides, it is very common among British alternative filmmakers like their counterparts in Turkey to get funding from, for instance, German or French institutions or Euroimages than to find support in their own country. Lastly it can be said that the weakest point of British cinema is the lack of control in distribution and exhibition channels. This has two different results; one is Britain's low proportion of box-office income, and the other is alternative filmmakers' endeavour to create their own distribution and exhibition methods and practices.

A Brief Review of Turkish Cinema

When it comes to Turkey, the problem becomes more serious and urgent than it is in Britain. It is known that the film industry in Turkey has had oppressive conditions, laws and rules determining its presence, especially since 1980 when a military coupe affected all aspects of social life. The difficulties in supplying equipment in order to produce films due to the economic problems, pressures on filmmakers about distribution and exhibition, the lack of attendance in the theatres caused by television, and the barriers in front of free creativity because of the isolation, alienation and fear surrounding the 1980 coupe, can be given as the main reasons of the failure of Turkish cinema.

Except for the brilliant period during the 1960's, Turkish cinema can be described as an economic structure, which has production crises depending on the periodical economic crises of the country, and cannot form a consistent industry. However, it continues to develop though these negative circumstances. Engin Ayça, a cinema critic, classifies the basic problems of Turkish Cinema in four categories: 1) Social-cultural profile of the audience, 2) Lack of capital, and direction of the income to other investment areas instead of filmmaking, 3) Censorship, and 4) Lack of cinema publications, intellectual creation and film criticism (Ayça, 2003-

04:23,24). Of all these problems, censorship can be seen as the one which causes most regression. Censorship controls the films even when they are uncompleted projects, so filmmakers tend to avoid making alternative films in an original style and with controversial topics. This strict application results in permanent auto-censorship which has been seriously harmful for Turkish national cinema. Even though it was lightened by an act in 1986, the censorship institution still endures and determines the conditions of filmmaking in Turkey (Atam, 2004:15). Generally, all these factors have prevented the institutionalisation and improvement of Turkish cinema so far.

Turkish theatre attendance has risen thanks to the gradual increase in film production following twenty years after the 1980 military coupe. The main characteristics designating the boundaries of filmmaking in Turkey during these years are; the decline in the production and exhibition of Turkish films, shrinking market place, and the diversity of production companies due to the liberal economic law called 'Off Shore Media Project' which lets foreign firms work in Turkey. Since the late 1970's not only the indigenous production but also the traditional production-distribution-exhibition chain of Turkish films have been weakened. It is possible to classify this period into two parts; the first one from late 1970's to late 1980's was a general crisis phase influencing both the indigenous producers and foreign distribution companies and the second one since 1990's can be seen as a new phase of re-construction developed by growing interference of foreign companies which are particularly Hollywood (Isigan, 2003:33). In this context, for Turkish films it becomes difficult to find a producer, and moreover, this reduces the chance of theatrical release. In addition, as an underlying determinant, the decrease in the number of screens all over Turkey makes the crisis in the film industry deeper. Nezi̇h Erdoğan draws attention to the fact that the number of screens in Turkey at the beginning of 1970 was 3000 while in 1995 it was 363 (Erdogan, 2001:114). This causes a problem similar to the one of British Cinema in that there is a big gap between produced films and exhibited ones, which indicates the importance of the ownership mechanism in the film industry. It is exactly the same as it is in Britain that most of the box-office income is taken by Hollywood majors who also control the distribution sector. Furthermore, another disadvantage of Turkish filmmakers when compared with their British counterparts, is the absence of support by neither government nor private institutions.

At the beginning of the 1990's, however, Turkish cinema began to change on the basis of quality rather than quantity. It is obvious that the

general economic circumstances and the economy of the film industry have parallel structures, so because of the difficult economic conditions and low income level of Turkish people the small numbers of films produced and of audience in Turkey are understandable. Like Britain, the number of multiplexes in Turkey has been increasing, creating similar problems. These multiplexes are supposed to provide low-budget films to be released as well as blockbusters, but this is so only in theory. Contrary to this positive picture in theory, it is known that multiplexes work on behalf of big distribution companies and high-budget movies advertised and delivered by them. Despite the fact that not many Turkish films have been made recently, most of them can be considered as quality ones attracting people to theatres. Also, the subsidy from the Ministry of Culture, the opportunity given to co-productions offered by Euroimages, and the recent support coming from the advertising sector, appears to encourage film making in Turkey.

From 1990's on there has basically been a two-sided production structure in Turkish cinema; one side is occupied with popular directors preferring making commercial films with profitable subjects and technological features while the other side is distinguished with alternative filmmakers examining controversial and taboo issues with authentic styles. Nonetheless, there is still an important point which should be expressed that since there is not an industrial structure in Turkish cinema, almost all of the films are produced by virtue of individual attempts of directors. Therefore, rather than economic or technological conditions, what they deal with and how they express themselves become more important in order to classify Turkish films as commercial or alternative ones. From this point of view, while films like *İstanbul Kanatlarının Altında* by Mustafa Altıoklar, *Eşkiya* by Yavuz Turgul, *Komser Şekspir* by Sinan Çetin, *Her Şey Çok Güzel Olacak* by Ömer Vargı, and *G.O.R.A* by Ömer Faruk Sorak can be given as samples of commercial, popular cinema with high box-office income, *Harem Suare* by Ferzan Özpetek, *Masumiyet* by Zeki Demirkubuz, *Gemide* by Serdar Akar, *Tabutta Röveşata* by Derviş Zaim, *Güneşe Yolculuk* by Yeşim Ustaoglu, *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* by Handan İpekçi, and *Uzak* by Nuri Bilge Ceylan are alternative films having international rewards and being considered praise-worthy even though they have not been released in Turkish theaters for long terms.

For a country like Turkey which has not even got a mainstream film industry, these can be seen as quite important improvements. However, inspite of recent economic and technical development, artistic and aesthetic weakness including content and form still continue in Turkish films except

for a very few alternative examples which are hindered by economic inadequacy compared with commercial ones. Although there are different reasons for this, the audience's limited expectations caused by traditional commercial films in previous years has a significant impact. When the lists of box-office at the end of any season are considered, it can be easily understood that the top ones are the same Hollywood films in Turkey as the ones in European countries like France, Germany or Italy (Nowell-Smith, 2003:748). Therefore, for alternative filmmakers in Turkey, it seems very difficult to continue to make films under such intellectual and economic restrictions.

It is an inevitable fact that commercial films are essential in order to establish a mainstream film industry which also provides the emergence and maintenance of alternative filmmaking. In this respect, it is definitely necessary to support alternative filmmakers who dare to use sometimes revolutionary forms of expression contrary to the official prevailing discourse and form accepted by mainstream commercial cinema. Not only in Turkey but also in all countries, the improvement of alternative filmmaking culture and practice need institutional support. Andrei Trakovsky criticizes the mentality and attitude leaving the creative cinema artist in the hand of the audience's appreciation, and emphasizes the responsibility of culture policies applied by governments that determine viewers' expectations that mostly approve popular, formulated, repeated, limited narration rather than intellectual, alternative and creative ones (Tarkovski, 2000:197). At this point, international cooperation between alternative filmmakers becomes very important and vital. Today co-productions are seen as a kind of necessity for the sake of national cinema industries. In a structure in which filmmaking is described as an international business, most of the films, especially the low-budget alternative ones need to be supported by international organisations.

Two Directors on the Basis of Alternative Filmmaking

Claiming that national cinema productions are financed by national capital aiming a defined homogenous target audience seems very unrealistic in today's world where the notion of nation state and national identity policies have been changing. As being transformed by the demographic and deterritorialising forces of globalisation the crisis of nation state demands a re-assessment of the kinds of loyalties, affiliations and allegiances binding people to their community, region, language and culture, including film culture (Elsaesser, 2005:25). It is an agreed fact that both Turkish and British cinemas as well as other national cinemas are constituted by various cinemas

appealing different intellectual, cultural, ethnic interests and social groups. In other words, most of alternative filmmakers like Abbas Kiarostami, Lars von Trier, Pawel Pawlikowski, Zeki Demirkubuz, Peter Greenaway, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Ken Loach and Yeşim Ustaoglu from different countries of the world seem to have more common points with each other than with directors of their own national cinemas.

Globally new methods and structures of film financing, production, distribution and exhibition have been applied in all film industries. In this respect, most films are described as co-productions made by small-scale production units of television channels or some other companies and intended to be shown in international festivals as the first-run venues before being delivered worldwide. Furthermore, the increasing precautions for cultural protectionism taken by countries who regionally or strategically work together lead governments to finance filmmaking. In order to accomplish this, for example European Union has activated various projects supported and administrated by the successive MEDIA programs of the Council of Europe, which created such European-wide institutions and enabling mechanisms as Euroimages, European Documentary Network, Archimedia...etc. in order to strengthen cinema and create the legal framework for subsidizing generally the whole audiovisual industries (Elsaesser, 2005:17). As a result, it can be said that such international organisations do more than simply funding films; they minimize the differences between countries supporting a border crossing alternative filmmaking practice and culture.

Regarding the tendency towards internationalisation, samples of Turkish and British cinema can be analysed on the basis of their common points in narration, style and also production, distribution, exhibition conditions. As subtle, innovative ones, films of Turkish director Zeki Demirkubuz and of a Polish-born English director Pawel Pawlikowski are chosen as representatives of alternative films in their countries. Despite the fact that he is an immigrant, Pawel Pawlikowski is seen as a typical British director and it is believed that as an international director who works out of national, geographical boundaries he can be a good sample for the concerns of this conference.

Considering the numbers of films they made, the organic and thematic bounds among the films and that it is possible to notice an authentic style, both Zeki Demirkubuz and Pawel Pawlikowski can be accepted as auteur directors who represent the alternative filmmakers of their own countries. Besides, they have many more common points. For example, as

auteurs they both prefer shooting screenplays they write or co-written. Furthermore they work with private and governmental organisations in order to find financial source for their films because they prefer to have creative autonomy. In accordance with this, Pawlikowski says that *Last Resort* (2000) had a documentary budget of around £320,000, a lot more had been spent since, but that meant that he had had complete freedom (http://www.netribution.co.uk/features/interviews/2001/pawel_pawlikowski/2.html, 23.08.2006). Like Pawlikowski, whose last two feature films made by means of BBC Films' support, Zeki Demirkubuz makes his films by virtue of private companies that accept to be sponsor like Efes Pilsen or of the subsidy by Ministry of Culture although he also has his own production company named Mavi Film. In addition, their films are shown and therefore known by means of national and international festivals. This can be considered as a shared strategy among alternative filmmakers to introduce their films and to reach their specific audience. While Pawlikowski's *Last Resort* (2000) was awarded as the best film in Croatia and in Spain with screenings at Venice, Toronto, Sundance, Moscow Film Festivals and *My Summer of Love* (2004) was screened at Toronto, London, Thessaloniki, Rotterdam, Berlin Film Festivals, Demirkubuz' *Innocence* (1997) was nominated at Venice, Mardel Plata, Strasbourg, Selonica, Hamburg and Vancouver Film Festivals and *Confession* (2001) was awarded as Best Film by FIPRESCI with screenings at Edinburgh, Vienna, Cannes and Flanders Film Festivals.

Although many independent productions are highly original and metaphorical, critics argue that they are made by and for predominantly educated, middle-class audience. Their main achievement is to promote discussion and debate about issues which have once been considered minority and peripheral (Christopher, 1999:90). This can be evaluated in terms of authorship indicating that alternative filmmakers do not look for commercial success and so do not produce for a large number of spectators, but have a special group of followers all around the world. This statement is valid for both Demirkubuz and Pawlikowski in regards with the period their films are on screens at multiplexes and the theatres in which their films are shown. In one of his interviews, Pawlikowski expresses his bewilderment when his film *Last Resort* (2000) was distributed even in the United States after doing well at a serial of festivals (http://www.netribution.co.uk/features/interviews/2001/pawel_pawlikowski/2.html, 23.08.2006) indicating his aims and expectations from making films.

Zeki Demirkubuz's first attraction was the movie *Innocence* (1997) with impressive character analysis, realistic story and strong script reversing the patterns of Turkish melodrama, which was shown in Turkey and different European countries. Afterwards with the movie *Third Page* (1999), which was indicating the third pages of newspapers full of disaster, accident and murder events, he continued his success by being invited to the festivals like Venice, Locarno, Rotterdam...etc. Two films of his trilogy 'Stories About Darkness' *Destiny* (2001) and *Confession* (2001) gave him the reputation of being the first director who had two films shown in Cannes Film Festival at once. It is believed that what distinguishes him from other Turkish directors and gives him an international fame is his special talent for self-reflexive film tradition that is very peculiar to American independent cinema and became popular by virtue of Quentin Tarantino (Starker, <http://www.columbusalive.com/2003/20030116/011603/01160308.html>).

Waiting Room (2003) which can be given as a good sample of such films and in which he got the whole control and had an active role as scriptwriter, actor, editor and director proving his minimalist perception of expression provided him to be chosen as the best director of the year in İstanbul Film Festival in 2004.

Zeki Demrikubuz makes a minimal cinema questioning the production possibilities, conditions and the material of film itself, forming an authentic, original visual aesthetic and narrative style. His films and most of others made by contemporary alternative filmmakers in Turkey have similar qualifications which can be read as indicators of minimal approach in filmmaking. So do the Pawlikowski films. They usually prefer improvisation and therefore work with unknown players avoiding excessive mimics in order to be as natural and simple as possible. In order to accomplish this, they usually treat their players in a flexible way. For instance, it is known that the pornographer in the *Last Resort*, which was performed by a real pornographer without any experience, became a character even though Pawlikowski planned to give him a little role at the beginning. They organize setting on the basis of simplicity and functionalism. Instead of using designed indoor places they mostly prefer outdoor shots. In addition, they prefer natural light sources rather than artificial ones. They mostly use stable camera and long shot sequences. Moreover, instead of dubbing they shoot with voice and do not want to use music and other sound effects as long as it is definitely necessary. These features can be used as evident of insufficient economic conditions, however when it is considered that the expenses of making a film can be reduced by means of new technological developments,

this structure refers to a total film making mentality determining the aesthetic merits of many alternative films. David Bordwell's evaluation of Angelopoulos and Antonioni films gives many queues for the interpretation of Zeki Demirkubuz films as well, because constant long shots, dead times, de-dramatisation, pressed emotional expressions, competent direction of audience's attention and reminding viewer that s/he is watching a film (Bordwell, 2000:102) are some common elements of his all films.

From *C Block* (1994) on, it is noticed that in all of Demirkubuz' films perspective is created by means of lightning and replacement of objects and characters. And preferring long shots, the director prevents viewers to neglect the details, instead he demands lots of attention for a comprehensive understanding of the film. Pawlikowski applies a similar method and in the movie *Last Resort* (2000) which deals with the refugee problem in England, he uses long shots of seaside resort Margate in order to enhance the dramatic power of the loneliness of refugees stuck in this small resort. This can be quite difficult and boring for standard viewers who are used to traditional narrative cinema of Hollywood depending on action and short scenes following each other.

When it comes to subjects, theme or content, repeating themes, attempt in order to understand and demonstrate the psychology of characters, background constituted of current social problems, documentarist and social realist perspective are remarkable components of his narration. Besides, the gender representations in his films differ from stereotypical presentations of women and men in mainstream commercial films: His heroines are strong, though, clever and warrior women who never give up, chase their desires using their wills while men are fragile, sensitive and right because of this more real. In this respect, Zeki Demirkubuz does not use women as objects of the men's gaze as it is in traditional commercial films. Nor does Pawel Pawlikowski. For Example, the heroine of *Last Resort* chooses self-improvement and so to goes back to her homeland in order to establish herself a new life on her own instead of staying with her boyfriend and living on his salary, and *My Summer of Love* is a women-centered film presenting a relationship which turns into a love affair between a working class girl and a middle class girl. He also deals with social class differences portraying daily life routines of the two girls.

Another characteristic of Zeki Demirkubuz films is that not only himself but also some of his relatives perform as players in his stories. This corresponds to the mentality of alternative films on low-budgets produced by virtue of supports of friends, family members...etc, which can be seen in

Pawlikowski's work, too. Because non-commercial alternative films are risky projects and he wants to avoid any kind of challenge on creative process, he prefers to work with only close friends and with people he likes. Zeki Demirkubuz also works in co-operation with other contemporary significant alternative directors of Turkish cinema such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Serdar Akar, Semih Kaplanoğlu which is another characteristic of alternative filmmaking in all countries.

CONCLUSION

Alternative filmmaking, which has approximately ninety years old background, has been spreading thanks to the development of digital technologies. Due to the fact that technical equipments to make films are getting cheaper and convenient, the numbers of films made for personal satisfaction creating very personal ways of expression increase. In contrast with the professional mechanism of mainstream commercial cinemas putting directors and all other creative team in a position of artisan, the alternative filmmaking tries to transform this mentality to a platform where all members of the team contribute to the product with their original creative ideas. In this context, the main aspects of alternative films can be described as being different from traditional ways and ownership of production and form of narration existing in mainstream commercial cinema. Even though it is becoming more likely to make films with reasonable budgets film making is still very expensive and there are four basic sources of financing for alternative films: Director's own money, Grants, Corporate Underwriting and Investor (Wiese, 1986:5) which means that they have to struggle with economic difficulties in order not to sacrifice their freedom of self-expression.

When it comes to the content, every sample of alternative films has its original, authentic style nonetheless they all have a point in common that they are against the system rejecting to obey the rules compelled by dominant Hollywood. The features which were categorised under titles like physical dimensions, subject matter, portraiture, being rebellious, gender representations, cineplastics, style, narration and technique (Renon, 1967:23-37) in order to define underground films of 1960's still direct the methods of alternative filmmaking in today's world.

Apart from their distinguishable strategies of production, alternative films also differ from the commercial ones on the basis of distribution and exhibition methods. Most of alternative films deal with unprofitable, controversial subjects, represent marginalized or isolated people or groups

and so try to be the 'other' of the traditional cinema. As a result, they usually cannot reach the audience in theatres; instead they are released in art houses, culture centres, university campuses or recently in various types of festivals like local, regional, national or international. This results in a different ritual of viewing which is interactive rather than passive consumption. Audiences not only watch the films but also re-produce the meaning by interfering the process. Sometimes they stop the film and talk about only one scene for hours, or they prepare and deliver booklets about the director or certain genres, they sometimes try to figure out the connections between a director's all films or films of different directors...etc. Moreover, festivals as convenient points for international access can be seen as the first step for alternative films from different countries in order to enter local or national exhibition channels. Thanks to these festivals, and in addition to producers, distributors, promoters and press, directors as well come together, share their experiences, interpret each other's work and so create an interactive alternative film culture. As this is how it works, it is agreed that most alternative films are made for festivals which create a kind of global network. World known festivals also gives the chance of being marketed for alternative films that are likely to be left unreleased in their domestic markets like it happened to the films of Zeki Demirkubuz, Pawel Pawlikowski, Ken Loach or Nuri Bilge Ceylan.

Directors listed above are not representatives of an official, sponsored, sanctioned state cinema, but are the ones who are identified with their countries' national cinema in the outside world. Therefore, in such a world where a country's cinema seems concentrated around a few directors' films to the outsider, it is possible to talk about autonomous filmmakers. However, apart from being unique auteurs, they also have some common points on the basis of production strategies, delivery and exhibition conditions and artistic-cinematic assets. In this respect, Demirkubuz and Pawlikowski can be given as good examples of alternative filmmakers working with similar motivations regardless which country they are from.

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