

“DUSMAN” (ENEMY) FILM AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS: WHO IS THE GUILTY ONE?

“Düşman” Filmi ve Sınıf Bilinci: Suçlu Kim?

Nazar BAL¹

Abstract

Cinema is a communication tool that reflects the society by visualizing the culture, values and norms in which the society lives, as well as conveying the periodic problems experienced by the society from a social and political perspective. Addressing the changes occurring in a society through social realism allows the social, economic, and cultural problems experienced by the society to be revealed within the framework of a certain ideological perspective. Yılmaz Güney's films attempt to depict social realism through themes such as unemployment, exclusion, poverty, social mobility, alienation, freedom, class differences, and class consciousness. In this study, the 1979 film “Düşman” (Enemy), written by Yılmaz Güney and directed by Zeki Ökten, is evaluated from a sociological perspective using document analysis techniques of qualitative research, focusing on the “class consciousness” approach. In the film “Düşman”, it is observed that individuals migrating from the village to the city develop a working-class consciousness as a result of their experiences in job searching, employment, and working. Additionally, it shows how, with the dominance of capitalist society, the lower-income group strives to emulate the upper class and luxury consumption to cope with poverty. Efforts to climb the social class ladder, in particular, lead to alienation between spouses within the family. The film explores the question “Who is the guilty one?” by highlighting how class differences lead to competition, conflict, devaluation, alienation, and exclusion in daily life. While the capitalist system is viewed as the enemy, it becomes evident that the real culprits are those subjected to the oppression of this system. The film demonstrates that overcoming the pressures of the capitalist system is achievable through class consciousness and solidarity. Güney's cinema critically reflects the socio-political conditions of its time within an ideological framework and offers a realist representation of social struggles. **Keywords: Class consciousness, social realism, migration, alienation, Turkish cinema**



Araştırma / Research

www.toplumvekultur.com

<https://doi.org/10.48131/jscs.1677009>

Başvuru/Received 15.04.2025

Kabul/Accepted 17.08.2025

Sayfa/Page 67-96

¹Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Nazar BAL

İstanbul Gelişim Üniversitesi

İktisadi İdari ve Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi

Sosyoloji Bölümü

e-posta: nbal@gelisim.edu.tr

ORCID: 0000-0001-5843-9225

Atf/Citation:

Bal, N. (2025). “Dusman” (enemy) film and class consciousness: who is the guilty one?, *Toplum ve Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (16), 67-96

Öz

Sinema, toplumun içinde yaşadığı kültürü, değerleri ve normları görselleştirerek yansıtmanın yanı sıra, toplumun yaşadığı dönemselsel sorunları sosyal ve politik bir bakış açısıyla aktaran bir iletişim aracıdır. Toplumda meydana gelen değişimleri toplumsal gerçekçilik aracılığıyla ele almak, toplumun yaşadığı sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel sorunların belirli bir ideolojik perspektif çerçevesinde ortaya konulmasına olanak tanır. Yılmaz Güney'in filmleri, işsizlik, dışlanma, yoksulluk, toplumsal hareketlilik, yabancılaşma, özgürlük, sınıf farklılıkları ve sınıf bilinci gibi temalar üzerinden toplumsal gerçekçiliği yansıtmaya çalışır. Bu çalışmada, Yılmaz Güney'in senaryosunu yazdığı ve Zeki Ökten'in yönettiği 1979 yapımı “Düşman” filmi, nitel araştırma yönteminin doküman analizi tekniğiyle sosyolojik bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirilmiş ve “sınıf bilinci” yaklaşımı üzerinde durulmuştur. “Düşman” filminde, köyden kente göç eden bireylerin iş arama, çalışma ve emek sürecindeki deneyimleri sonucunda işçi sınıfı bilinci geliştirdikleri gözlemlenmektedir. Ayrıca kapitalist toplumun egemenliğiyle birlikte alt gelir grubunun yoksullukla başa çıkabilmek adına üst sınıfa ve lüks tüketime öykündüğü görülmektedir. Sosyal sınıf atlama çabaları ise özellikle aile içinde eşler arasında yabancılaşmaya neden olmaktadır. Film, “Suçlu kim?” sorusu etrafında şekillenerek, sınıf farklarının günlük yaşamda rekabet, çatışma, değersizleştirme, yabancılaşma ve dışlanmaya nasıl yol açtığını ortaya koymaktadır. Kapitalist sistem düşman olarak görülse de, bu sistemin baskısına maruz kalan bireylerin aslında gerçek suçlular olduğu gerçeği de vurgulanmaktadır. Film, kapitalist sistemin baskılarının sınıf bilinci ve dayanışma yoluyla aşılabileceğini göstermektedir. Güney'in sineması, dönemin sosyo-politik koşullarını ideolojik bir çerçevede eleştirel bir şekilde yansıtarak toplumsal mücadelelerin gerçekçi bir temsilini sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sınıf bilinci, Toplumsal gerçeklik, Göç, Yabancılaşma, Türk sineması

Introduction

Since the 1960s, cinema in Turkey has evolved as a crucial narrative medium that not only reflects but also critically engages with the country's social, cultural, political, and economic transformations. Beyond its aesthetic dimensions, cinema functions as a sociological lens that reveals societal structures, class relations, and cultural values. It documents lived experiences and archives historical realities, thus shaping collective memory and social consciousness. Individuals negotiate their identities within these socio-economic and political contexts, and cinema captures this dynamic interplay. Social science scholarship acknowledges the influential role of cinema in molding public opinion and societal attitudes (Güçhan, 1992), rendering films valuable sources for analyzing social change and collective sensibilities.

Within this framework, Yılmaz Güney's oeuvre occupies a distinctive position in Turkish cinema. As an actor, screenwriter, and director, Güney emerged as a seminal figure in the social realism movement, foregrounding themes such as working-class struggles, poverty, migration, and injustice. His films—including *Umut* (1970), *Arkadaş* (1974), *Sürü* (1978), *Yol* (1981), and *Düvar* (1982)—offer nuanced portrayals of class dynamics that shape both individual lives and collective experiences. They critically engage with issues like unemployment, rural-to-urban migration,

aspirations for social mobility, and familial alienation amid urbanization. Güney’s personal political ideology profoundly influenced the thematic and aesthetic contours of his work.

In the broader landscape of Turkish cinema, social realism emerged prominently after the 1960 military coup, focusing on labor, class conflict, and socio-economic inequality. Scholars such as Daldal (2005) trace this rise, highlighting cinema’s dual role as both artistic expression and ideological arena where class struggles are depicted. Alaca (2019) provides an extensive overview of labor and unemployment representations throughout the Republican era, albeit without concentrated period-specific analysis. Tunalı (2009) links cinematic realism’s emergence to the political and social upheavals of the post-1960 period, framing cinema as a medium of critique and collective memory. Complementing this, Yücel (2021) examines how migration, urbanization, class inequality, and belonging are visualized in 1960s Turkish cinema, emphasizing their sociological underpinnings. Varol (2016) argues that Güney’s films, particularly *Umut*, *Arkadaş*, and *Sürü*, draw significant influence from Italian Neorealism in depicting migration and poverty. Yıldız (2019) situates Güney’s work across three paradigms—popular cinema (*Aç Kurtlar*), art cinema (*Umut*), and Third Cinema (*Duvar*)—demonstrating diverse cinematic strategies in addressing social issues. From a Third Cinema perspective, Koyuncu (2017) foregrounds *Duvar* as an oppositional discourse on state violence and resistance. More broadly, Şahin (2006) conceptualizes cinema as a reconstructive force during Turkey’s 1960–65 crisis, underscoring Güney’s pivotal role.

While existing literature predominantly addresses macro-level themes such as working-class struggles and ideological representation, micro-level dynamics—including personal class mobility, familial alienation, and cultural conflicts—remain underexplored. Furthermore, systematic narrative and aesthetic analyses focusing on class thematics are limited, with sociological methodologies centered on individual experiences seldom applied. This study aims to fill these gaps by offering a sociological analysis of working-class culture, class consciousness, labor strikes, solidarity, aspirations for class mobility, and family relations through a multilayered reading of *Düşman* (Enemy, 1979), written by Yılmaz Güney and directed by Zeki Ökten. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How are migration, employment, and working conditions experienced and represented?
- In what ways does the film portray the working class and individual laborers?
- How are everyday lives of working-class individuals depicted, and what insights do these portrayals offer into class consciousness?

While situated within the historical context of 1970s Turkey’s class transformations, the film’s themes resonate with contemporary issues exacerbated by neoliberal policies, including unemployment, urban poverty, and housing insecurity. Thus, this study not only reconstructs past social realities but also critically engages with present-day class dynamics, particularly in relation to precarious labor, intergenerational poverty, and the erosion of solidarity networks among younger generations in Turkey.

The analysis commences with an overview of the transition from the Yeşilçam era to worker-focused cinema, contextualizing Güney’s contributions within Turkish social realist cinema. Subsequently, it introduces a theoretical framework grounded in Marxist critical theory, drawing on the works of Eagleton, Engels, and Thompson to conceptualize class, labor, alienation, and cultural conflict. Finally, employing qualitative document analysis, it conducts a content analysis of *Düşman*, examining themes of unemployment, migration, labor, class division, family relations, and solidarity to articulate the film’s portrayal of class consciousness.

1. From Yeşilçam to Social Realism: The Cinema of Yılmaz Güney in Historical and Ideological Context

The Yeşilçam era, dominated by melodramas, largely avoided social realities, favoring formulaic narratives centered on drama, comedy, and action. While offering emotional escapism, these films failed to address structural societal issues. In contrast, the rise of “workers’ films” foregrounded themes such as labor, class, migration, strikes, and solidarity. Yılmaz Güney’s *Enemy* (*Düşman*, 1979) occupies a distinctive position by vividly reflecting Turkey’s political turmoil and socio-economic structure between 1970 and 1980—a decade marked by military interventions, class struggles, and social polarization. To understand this film’s significance, it is crucial to contextualize it within the broader transformation of Turkish cinema from 1960 to 1980.

During the 1950s, Yeşilçam cinema distanced itself from theatrical traditions but lacked realism, relying on stereotypes and melodramatic relationships (Özön, 1962). From the 1960s, socio-economic transformations including migration, industrialization, and urbanization shaped cinematic themes (Pösteği, 2005). This era saw the emergence of social realism, challenging Yeşilçam’s dominant narrative conventions and promoting a critical representation of social tensions. Güney viewed cinema as a tool for social change, integrating revolutionary struggle into his narratives (Güney, 2000; Görücü, 2015). The socio-political shifts beginning in the 1950s,

including industrialization and cultural conflicts intensified by capitalism’s growth, laid the groundwork for this shift (Çebi, 2006; Tanilli, 2008). The 1960 coup expanded freedoms that enabled filmmakers to explore previously taboo subjects, such as labor and social inequality (Ateř, 1994).

The social realist movement, fueled by young directors’ search for a national cinematic language aligned with global aesthetics, gained momentum in the 1960s through cinema clubs and international festivals (Daldal, 2005; Kasım & Atayeter, 2012). It addressed working-class struggles, gender inequality, migration, and urban poverty, bringing silenced issues like informal labor and women’s workforce participation to the fore (Gçhan, 1992). Although many directors shifted towards market-driven productions in the 1970s, politically radical ideologies spurred the development of revolutionary and national cinemas (Cořkun, 1977; Gçhan, 1992). The 1961 Constitution and labor movement advances facilitated working-class narratives and class consciousness in film, amidst escalating political unrest and economic crisis (Akřın, 1997; nk, 2011; Tanilli, 2008). Within this politically charged context, Gney emerged as a leading figure, blending commercial viability with political ideology. His cinema functioned as a cultural and ideological apparatus, navigating censorship to convey social critique (Dursun, 2009; Atam, 2013). Themes of strikes and labor activism gained prominence, though funding challenges pushed filmmakers toward independent opposition cinema (Esen, 2002).

Enemy portrays İsmail’s struggle with unemployment and urban migration, exemplifying social realist cinema’s focus on working-class material conditions. Despite a limited number of social realist films, these works demonstrated cinema’s potential as a medium for social critique beyond entertainment (Esen, 2000). Gney’s revolutionary cinema critically engaged Turkey’s socio-economic crises, exposing poverty and systemic oppression while revealing fractures in political, economic, and cultural spheres. *Enemy* stands as a critical example of this tradition, reflecting individual hardship and broader class conflict shaped by Turkey’s historical and political context.

2. Theoretical Background

This study analyzes *Enemy* (1979) through a Marxist art criticism framework, focusing on social realism, alienation, class consciousness, and cultural representation. Drawing on Friedrich Engels’ concept of typicality, Terry Eagleton’s Marxist literary theory, and Edward P. Thompson’s

historically situated class approach, the analysis examines class relations, social inequalities, and ideological structures in the film at both micro (characters, narrative) and macro (social structure, production relations) levels.

Enemy transcends an individual’s life struggle to ideologically depict broader 1970s Turkish social dynamics such as urbanization, unemployment, poverty, and class conflict. Marxist aesthetics provides a critical framework linking the film’s socio-historical context to its production conditions. Marxist art criticism examines the interplay between the artwork’s thematic content and the socio-economic environment of its creation, emphasizing that authorial intent, textual meaning, and audience reception must be understood through a thorough analysis of underlying economic, political, and social factors.

A key analytical task is to determine whether the work reflects the *typical* individuals, events, and material-social conditions of the historical period it portrays. According to Engels, the most important criterion of realism is *typicality* (Coşkun, 2017). Regarding Margaret Harkness’s novel *City Girl*, Engels (Marx and Engels, 2001, p.51) states that realism, beyond the accuracy of details, involves depicting typical people in typical situations. He notes that the characters are sufficiently typical insofar as they are portrayed, but the same cannot be said for the environments that surround them and shape their actions.

While acknowledging that Harkness’s characters are “typical,” Engels criticizes the novel for failing to depict a social and historical context that authentically reflects the *typical* environment of the time (Coşkun, 2017). In line with this understanding, Engels’s principle of *typicality* provides a critical basis for interpreting the characters in *Enemy* not merely as individuals, but as representative types of the urban working class in 1970s Turkey. These characters, embodying the lived realities of the urban poor and proletarian segments of the population, carry a historical and class-based *typicality* that transcends personal narrative and functions ideologically within the film’s broader social critique.

According to Marxist criticism, *reflection theory* does not view art as a mere mirror of social reality. Artistic works are not simply neutral representations of the historical period they depict; rather, as Marx and Engels (2003) emphasize, these works are filtered through the consciousness of the artist and reflect the characteristics of their era only to a certain degree. In this regard, while works of art can indeed serve as valuable material for social analysis, they must be interpreted through the lens of the realism debate in art (Coşkun, 2017, p.11). Within the framework of reflection theory, art does not directly mirror social reality but ideologically reconstructs it through

the subjective lens of the creator. Hence, the events and characters in the film *Enemy* do not represent the socioeconomic structure of the 1970s in a literal way; instead, they indirectly but meaningfully evoke its central tensions and contradictions within a fictional context. This theoretical perspective provides a foundational basis for uncovering the film's historical and sociological meanings.

This study draws on Terry Eagleton's (2009) Marxist literary theory, particularly his threefold distinction between the general mode of production, the literary mode of production, and general ideology. The *general mode of production* refers to the dominant economic relations within society; the *literary mode of production* pertains to the material and institutional conditions under which a given work is produced; and *general ideology* encompasses the cultural and ideological values that emerge in parallel with the dominant economic system. The socioeconomic conditions of 1970s Turkey—especially issues such as urbanization, unemployment, and class segregation—had a formative influence on both the content of *Enemy* and its characterization. Eagleton's conceptual framework allows for a deeper analysis of how the film's ideological content is embedded in and shaped by its historical context.

Edward P. Thompson (2004) conceptualizes class beyond structuralist frameworks focused solely on production relations, viewing it as a historically and experientially constituted process shaped by collective struggle. Class is not a fixed category but a dynamic relationship evolving over time. While class experience is grounded in productive relations often imposed without consent, it is also shaped by cultural traditions, values, and institutions. Experience is visible and lived, whereas class consciousness is more abstract and indirect, becoming meaningful only within historical processes. Freezing social structure at a moment obscures class, but tracing social relations historically reveals broader patterns, with class emerging through individuals' self-definitions over time.

This framework suits the analysis of *Enemy*'s protagonist, whose social position is not a fixed class identity but shaped through migration, unemployment, urbanization, and alienation. Although class is unnamed, the character's experiences of exclusion, inequality, and disintegration reflect Thompson's distinction between visible experience and invisible consciousness. Thus, Thompson's approach provides a nuanced basis for interpreting class as both a structural and culturally constructed category within cinematic representation.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine phenomena related to class transformation—such as rural-to-urban migration, unemployment, familial alienation, cultural conflict, aspirations for class advancement, social exclusion, strikes, resistance, solidarity, and class consciousness—in 1970s Turkey through the film *Enemy*. Qualitative research is a methodological approach aimed at understanding social and cultural phenomena contextually and providing in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2014).

Document analysis was utilized to explore the reflections of social reality in cinema, treating the film *Enemy* as a document rich in historical and sociological content. Document analysis is a data collection technique involving the systematic examination of written, visual, or digital materials, particularly to understand historical and cultural contexts (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). In this context, *Enemy* was selected through purposive qualitative sampling due to its capacity to represent the class structure and social relations of the period, thereby constituting the study’s sample.

The film was analyzed as a visual representation of social structures at the levels of scenes and dialogues. While the entire film was taken into consideration, scenes and dialogues that directly intersected with the research aims and theoretical framework were examined in detail. Preference was given to sequences that vividly illustrate themes such as disintegration resulting from migration, unemployment, loss of belonging, inequality, and class conflict. These scenes were analyzed for their representation of character development and social structures, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to contextual analysis. This approach facilitated a holistic understanding of both the film’s contextual dimensions and the structural issues it portrays.

Qualitative content analysis was employed to analyze the data, whereby meaning-rich scenes were thematically categorized. Qualitative content analysis aims to systematically uncover themes and contextual relationships in textual, visual, or auditory data to address research questions (Schreier, 2012; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). This method was chosen for its capacity to provide an in-depth examination of class structures, cultural dissolution, and social inequalities as presented through the film’s narrative and characters. Cinematographic and formal features were not prioritized; instead, social themes were explored through narrative content, character relationships, and dialogue. The film was interpreted within the framework of Marxist theoretical approaches (Eagleton, Engels, Thompson), with individual storylines analyzed in conjunction with the broader

historical and social context. Accordingly, themes such as class positioning, unemployment, cultural conflict, alienation, solidarity, and class consciousness were critically examined.

4. Formation of Class Position: Rural-to-Urban Migration and Unemployment

In the 1960s, migration was both a cause and consequence of transformations in the social structure. The rapid population increase driven by migration generated new social problems. Kıray (1999, p.161) notes that surplus labor—those who left the peasantry and became detached from the land—struggles to adapt to urban life and integrate into the social organizations and institutions specific to modern cities when migrating to them.

Internal migration is one of the most significant factors shaping a country’s economic and social structure. Cinema, which interacts dynamically with social phenomena, has addressed migration and the experiences of migrants in various ways. As an indispensable component of Turkey’s industrialization process, migrants provided labor for industry and fueled the growth of industrial society. In this context, migration triggered substantial social change. The gradual liberalization of the economy in the 1960s and the emergence of mass culture and its products led Turkish cinema to engage increasingly with issues related to internal migration (Pişkin, 2010). Applying Eagleton’s critique of Marxist art theory, *Enemy* is set in 1970s Turkey during mass rural-to-urban migration and unemployment, reflecting structural crises of capitalism and urbanization. The film exposes economic inequalities and labor market exclusion embedded in this mode of production.

In *Enemy*, both internal and external migrations are central themes. İsmail migrates from his parents’ village to the Eceabat district of Çanakkale with his wife in search of a better life. Simultaneously, it becomes evident that internal migration is widespread in Çanakkale, exemplified by two distinct “day labor market” (*amale pazarı*) —one for locals and one for migrants from elsewhere. As Turkey underwent economic and political industrialization, rural-to-urban migration accelerated. Migrants began working in various labor-intensive jobs to survive. The workers’ self-description as “commodities waiting for customers” on the labor market reflects, on a cultural level, how individuals are reduced to mere commodities within capitalist production relations. The prevailing ideology conceals structural problems by framing poverty and unemployment as individual fate.

Engels’ concept of realism as “typical characters in typical conditions” is embodied in İsmail, who represents the unskilled, unorganized rural migrants struggling for steady urban employment. Through his story, the film reveals economic and cultural dissolution, class exclusion, and alienation accompanying migration. İsmail thus exemplifies both “typical conditions” (unemployment, precarity) and a “typical character” (an isolated, newly urbanized lower-class individual). His experience resonates with millions living precariously on city margins today, making İsmail a timeless class symbol. İsmail’s migration reflects not only spatial relocation but a historical and cultural reconstitution of class position. Thompson’s (2004) emphasis on class as an experiential, historical relationship rather than fixed structure is apt here. The film depicts class as shaped by migration, cultural dissonance, and loss of belonging, alongside economic relations.

After the 1950s, migration abroad also increased, with Germany being the most common destination. In the film, it is implied that immigrants who go to Germany enjoy a better standard of living, as indicated by the *Alamanca* (a colloquial term for Turkish immigrants in Germany) who come with a German man to buy a rooster. Apart from Germany, the film also includes the story of a man who migrated to Greece many years ago. This man left for Greece about 25 years prior due to economic difficulties. Once a homeowner and shopkeeper in İsmail’s neighborhood, he returns to visit, driven by nostalgia for his homeland. They are guests at İsmail’s house and take a photo together. As they depart, the immigrant gifts İsmail two bottles of alcohol, which İsmail later sells to Nuri due to financial hardship.

Other minor characters—like the German expatriate and the man returning from Greece—represent typical social types shaped by migration, alienation, and lower-class experiences. Their inclusion highlights that class differentiation arises not only nationally but also through international labor mobility. From Thompson’s perspective, such migration stories signify ruptures in cultural memory and individual experience. İsmail’s selling of alcohol gifted by the Greek migrant exemplifies the erosion of both class-based deprivation and solidarity, underscoring the complex, layered nature of experiential class formation.

Within the framework of Eagleton’s critique of Marxist art theory, the capitalist order functions as an ideological structure that naturalizes unemployment, urban isolation, and the invisibility of migrant laborers. Although the German characters are depicted as symbols of wealth, this contrast with İsmail’s poverty ideologically reinforces the notion that “if there is no salvation outside, there is none inside.” In other words, the film encourages the audience to question the injustice of the system while simultaneously emphasizing the near impossibility of escaping it.

5. Working Life: “I'll do anything”

In the film *Enemy*, the economic struggles of İsmail—who is constantly anxious about securing employment—and his simultaneous feelings of resentment and submission to the socio-economic order are depicted within the framework of livelihood difficulties. The film opens with scenes of the labor market, where individuals compete ruthlessly for available work, sometimes resulting in violent outcomes. İsmail arrives at the day labor market (*amele pazarı*) in Çanakkale. A man from Diyarbakır offers to light his cigarette, initiating a conversation. The labor market is populated largely by migrant workers from various regions. While the day labor market serves outsiders, a separate market exists for locals. İsmail’s timid demeanor reflects his unfamiliarity, and his interlocutor likens the laborers present to “commodities waiting for customers.”

The film portrays the labor market as a harsh survival struggle driven by hunger. Workers fiercely compete for jobs, sometimes leading to physical fights or fatal outcomes. Güney emphasizes the antagonism among workers and the absence of solidarity, reflecting Thompson’s concept of class struggle and the underdeveloped state of collective class consciousness. Individual interests prevail over unity, highlighting the fragmented and disorganized nature of the working class. According to Neziĥ Coş (2015, p.157), in underdeveloped Third World countries, the working class forms the backbone of capitalist production, while a collaborator bourgeoisie emerges, dependent on foreign powers. Working-class culture distinguishes itself from bourgeois culture, fundamentally shaped by class struggle (Çubukçu, 2014, p.16). Employers instruct workers to bring acquaintances for jobs, reinforcing regional ties and networks. One worker remarks on the hardships faced by migrants:

Today, the work is not going well. You are a local; you have a place to sleep. Even if you eat dry bread, no one knows your trouble. For a stranger, unemployment is hard, you sleep on benches and get chased away, you go to garages and are seen as a thief, winter is coming, rain and mud, winter is hard...

Unable to return to the day labor market, İsmail takes a temporary municipal job through his neighbor Muammer Abi, involving poisoning dogs. This morally unsettling work haunts his dreams, confronting the viewer with the harsh reality that impoverished individuals “must choose in the absence of choice.” The dog-poisoning scenes symbolize the internalization of ideological violence. Later, İsmail attempts to request his inheritance to meet his needs, but his father refuses, highlighting familial tension and ethical dilemmas within structural oppression.

İsmail’s depression stems from persistent economic hardship and lack of stable employment. His material deprivation incrementally precipitates violent, individualistic reactions. Marginalized

by society, he becomes first alienated from others and then from himself. The film exposes the corrosive effects of urban systems on impoverished individuals, depicting fragility and volatility. Thompson’s conceptualization of class as a site of not only economic but also moral and ethical conflict is particularly insightful here.

Meanwhile, the film portrays řevket—a rooster owner from Germany—hosting German guests for a coffeehouse inauguration. İsmail is recruited to serve and guide the visitors. The visible prosperity of migrant workers in Europe can be read through Eagleton’s notion of general ideology: the affluence perpetuates the myth of individual salvation within capitalism. Yet, the pervasive loneliness, isolation, and despair depicted throughout the film reveal the fragility of this ideology.

The transformation of the working class in the 1960s, combined with social-issue films, contributed to the emergence of the “worker hero” in Turkish cinema (Daldal, 2005). Worker-centered films gained prominence following the 1960 Constitution’s political and economic changes. Between 1960 and 1965, the Turkish working class experienced heightened visibility in cinema, with workers depicted as protagonists or secondary characters (Coş, 2015, pp.159-162). In *Enemy*, İsmail’s livelihood struggles and his wife’s class aspirations are central, while broader working-class traits such as unionism, resistance, and solidarity mainly appear through side characters like Selim, illustrating Thompson’s idea of class consciousness as underdeveloped but emergent.

Thompson (2004, p.42) further argues that if history were arrested instantaneously, classes would cease to exist, leaving only a multitude of individuals. In *Enemy*, the term “class” is never explicitly mentioned; no unions or political discourse appear. Nevertheless, personal stories—though seemingly apolitical—emerge from underlying class dynamics. İsmail’s despair reflects the surplus labor force in the city. The film captures class formations in a “snapshot,” allowing viewers to perceive profound class imprints through İsmail’s behavior and transformation. This reinforces Thompson’s assertion that class exists as an invisible yet organizable process.

6. Cultural Conflict and Alienation in Family Relations: “While I was running after bread, you dreamed of becoming an artist and being famous, so you left your home!”

The bilateral dialogues between İsmail and his wife Naciye in the film reveal not only a marital crisis but also how class positions permeate interpersonal relations. What Marx conceptualizes as alienation, and Lukács describes as *reification* (thingification), constitute significant consequences of everyday social practices. This is explained through the ontological status of social roles and institutions: “all institutions of the system, all statuses and roles are perceived as fixed and immutable entities” (Coşkun, 2013, p.34). Marx’s theory of alienation and Lukács’s notion of reification are here applied not solely to the production process but also to the micro-level dynamics of daily life. The alienation experienced within domestic relations encompasses all four types of alienation identified by Marx, namely, alienation of the individual from themselves, their labor, others, and the product of their labor.

İsmail experiences alienation from his labor as he is excluded from meaningful participation in production. His simultaneous feelings of anger and love toward his family arise from the erosion of authentic emotions under commodity relations. Similarly, Naciye suppresses her own desires due to İsmail’s material circumstances, reflecting her alienation from herself and her relationships. This situation illustrates Lukács’s concept of reification: individuals begin to perceive each other as mere means to ends. İsmail views his wife as a potential “threat to honor,” while Naciye perceives İsmail as an “obstructive figure” who controls her life yet fails to fulfill her aspirations. While Naciye is ensnared in desires shaped by the ideological apparatus of the system, İsmail is emotionally and morally depleted by financial hardship and unemployment, despite his efforts to uphold his values.

The reciprocal conversations between Naciye and İsmail reveal both their alienation from one another’s struggles and Naciye’s tacit acceptance of the prevailing social order. According to Marcuse, alienation occurs when individuals become prisoners of dominating and dehumanizing forces, losing connection to their consciousness and creative powers (Marcuse, 1985, as cited in Akyıldız, 1998). İsmail’s words in the scene where he confronts Naciye illuminate this alienation:

İsmail: You have never understood me until today, never understood my pain, never comprehended the love I felt for you, my worries and anxieties. You always misused my good intentions. How many times have I told you that we are surrounded by vultures, carrion crows, human brokers, scoundrels, dishonorable people — yet you did not understand. While I was preoccupied with our livelihood, you dreamed other dreams. While I was chasing bread, you dreamed of becoming an artist and becoming famous, and you left your home... Look at these walls and see who drowned in the picture we took years ago. Who are these men, and what

are these women doing on our walls? Who are these men and women you envy? What good are they to us? We are poor people in need of bread, Naciye. Will they feed us? Will they heal our wounds? Did you never think that the dreams you carried in your head for years would lead us to the abyss and destroy our home? What are you willing to risk to become an artist? There are millions like you. Millions of women and young girls are poisoned by such dreams. Some leave their homes, some are abandoned by their homes. Do you know how they end? I have been silent until today, hoping you would reconsider and learn from what I said, but you did the opposite; the softer and more understanding I was, the more you abused me.

İsmail’s anger towards his wife transcends individual jealousy, embodying the alienation produced by urban life and economic pressures. As Thompson emphasizes, class is shaped not only by economic position but also by cultural forms. There exists a sharp rupture between Naciye’s urban dreams—fame, ostentation, television culture—and İsmail’s rural-rooted value system. This cleavage manifests as a civil war within the family: the home ceases to function as a site of love and solidarity, instead becoming a battleground for ideological and class conflict.

Enemy may seem like an individual’s breakdown story, but it fundamentally represents class contradictions. Thompson’s (2004) concept of class consciousness—formed gradually through İsmail’s economic and cultural ruptures—remains incomplete. Bourdieu’s (1998) symbolic violence explains why this consciousness rarely leads to organized resistance, as dominant cultural codes impose oppression symbolically, causing individuals to internalize their subjugation as natural and legitimate. İsmail’s anger toward Naciye exemplifies this symbolic violence. Thus, the film reveals both the formation of class consciousness and the ideological mechanisms disrupting it, showing how individuals experience even their anger within systemic constraints. Combining Thompson’s and Bourdieu’s theories offers a holistic understanding of resistance and submission in the characters.

Eagleton’s Marxist aesthetic theory highlights that art, especially cinema, reflects not only individual emotions but also ideological formations tied to the mode of production. *Enemy* uses an individual conflict narrative to reveal a structural class crisis. Beneath İsmail’s economic oppression lie capitalist production relations and their ideological effects, including conflict with urban values and family dissolution. The film’s aesthetic elements—such as celebrity portraits on the walls—serve as ideological tools of bourgeois culture, fueling Naciye’s social mobility desires but clashing with İsmail’s values.

The capitalist “vultures” permeate everyday life—from workplaces to family relations—acting selfishly to exploit others. These oppressors appear even within lower classes, as seen in Bahtiyar and the bundler woman. İsmail’s reference to “vultures” expresses anger at the entire system, not just his immediate surroundings. As Eagleton notes, such anger signals ideological

awareness, but in the film, this does not develop into collective class consciousness. Following Thompson, class consciousness emerges through struggle, yet individual, internalized struggle hinders class transformation.

İsmail’s violence against Naciye should not be reduced merely to patriarchal behavior; it also expresses class loneliness, emotional helplessness, and an inability to cope with systemic pressures. Thompson underscores that class experience manifests not only through organized collective movements but also through the pain, anger, and ruptures internalized in everyday life. Naciye’s desperate plea, “help me, don’t leave me,” poignantly reveals the failure of two class-dissolved, alienated individuals to share a common language.

According to Marx, individuals become alienated as an automatic consequence of the objective conditions imposed by the socio-economic mode of production, resulting in a disconnection from the essence of human existence defined by these conditions (Akyıldız, 1998). Those who perceive society solely through the veil of reification (thingification) fail to recognize exploitative and oppressive relations, and consequently do not question them. Since they are unable to conceive alternatives to existing modes of life, exploitation and oppression persist unchallenged, rendering social transformation impossible. Everyday life practices play a crucial role in inculcating these ideas within individuals (Cořkun, 2013, p.34).

The relationship between İsmail and Naciye deteriorates continuously under psychological strains induced by financial hardships. The adverse living conditions prompt attraction toward alternative lifestyles. İsmail harbors fears regarding certain individuals whom he does not want his wife to associate with, concerned that their influence might not only estrange Naciye from him but also lure her into deceptive promises of wealth and moral decline. Despite this, Naciye maintains contact with these people, which provokes İsmail’s anger and causes tension between them. İsmail attempts reconciliation by addressing his wife’s resentment: “We are already depressed; you shouldn’t do this... Well, I made a mistake, forgive me, I wish I hadn’t yelled at you, but you know the situation.” Although Naciye briefly reconciles with him, the resolution remains fragile. One evening, İsmail returns home to find Naciye absent. As he waits anxiously, his daughter and mother-in-law retire to bed. İsmail’s gaze wanders over the celebrity portraits adorning the living room wall, with Naciye’s photographs occupying a central position. Upon Naciye’s return, İsmail notices her lateness.

Naciye: I regret it very much, forgive me, I will never hurt you again

İsmail: Where were you?

Naciye: I was afraid you wouldn't let me. Mr. Bahtiyar had a circumcision wedding. They said famous singers and artists would come, so I went to watch them.

İsmail: Until this hour?

Naciye: Forgive me, İsmail. From now on, I promise I won't step out of the door without your permission.

In reality, Naciye had attended an entertainment night organized for the German guests and was seated at their table. The following day, she visits Feyyat's wife and daughter—neighbors with whom she had planned to flee to Istanbul—and tells them she has abandoned the plan. Feyyat, a farmhand, is blind to his wife and daughter's side business of entertaining men at home when he is absent, a fact tacitly accepted to ensure sustenance; this situation is openly known in the neighborhood. That same evening, İsmail returns home late and finds his wife washing his feet in a basin with hot water. The next morning, Naciye pleads for forgiveness: “Don't leave me alone, help me, I need your help, I need you, I need your compassion, I need your love more than ever, take my hand, beat me if you want, I won't leave you.” İsmail does not respond verbally but slaps her and leaves the house.

İsmail's estrangement from his aspirations for class advancement and fame renders him a “typical” figure of his class; however, this typicality does not romanticize or idealize him. Though a victim of the system, İsmail's rejection is not articulated as active resistance but as withdrawal, accumulating anger that ultimately manifests as violence toward his closest relations—his wife. In this way, systemic violence cyclically returns as individualized violence.

According to Thompson (1978), individuals recognize exploitation, engage in struggle, and ultimately discover their class identity. İsmail, though not explicitly identifying as working class, is positioned within it through his humiliations, housing struggles, and urban isolation. His “enemy” is the system rather than an individual. However, this awareness remains incomplete, internalized as individual violence. *Enemy* dramatizes this fragile, unfinished class consciousness formation.

Naciye's aspiration for upward mobility and İsmail's unemployment deepen their mutual alienation. As Görücü (2015, p.186) notes, embracing working-class identity is often framed as a moral stance against bourgeois immorality. Thompson argues that class is shaped not only by production relations but also by cultural forms and lifestyles. İsmail's rural values—honor, family, tradition—lose meaning in the urban context. His alienation stems not just from joblessness but from his inability to adapt to urban cultural codes, exacerbated by Naciye's dress, lifestyle, and social circle. This cultural clash exemplifies Thompson's idea that class is also experienced through conflicting symbolic structures.

As traditional structures dissolve under economic transformation, women’s participation in urban life also shifts (Görücü, 2015, p.191). In *Enemy*, Naciye abandons labor in the city—partly due to İsmail’s opposition—and instead seeks class mobility through domestic management and consumerist aspirations, aligning herself with bourgeois aesthetics. As Eagleton (1990) argues, such representations function ideologically to estrange individuals from their class positions.

Cinema, as a mirror of everyday life, reveals how state policies and economic forces shape class dynamics (Soner, 2015, p.209). Lefebvre (2012, p.142) sees everyday life as key to understanding collective consciousness, which is especially relevant to worker films. İsmail and Naciye’s diverging concerns deepen their alienation. İsmail distrusts the system’s moral corruption and even considers robbery as a form of resistance, while Naciye aspires to financial security through integration into the system. Engels’ theory of “typicality” positions İsmail not as an isolated case but as a representative of broader working-class experiences. Naciye, in turn, reflects a figure shaped by ideological promises of upward mobility. Their conflict illustrates the internal fragmentation of the working class under capitalism.

7. Aesthetic Representation of Class Differences: "It is enough for me to boil the pot and bring home the bread"

In the film *Enemy*, class differences are represented not only through their economic and social dimensions but also visually and emotionally by means of cinema’s aesthetic tools, thereby acquiring ideological significance. Following the 1960 coup, economic transformations brought class distinctions into sharper focus. As Caille (1997) states, “By subordinating relations between people to relations with things, capitalism systematically destroys all social, cultural, and political forms that guarantee the collective sovereignty and freedom of society over its destiny. It undermines everyone’s material and symbolic conditions of existence, leaving all unarmed, silent, and powerless in the face of depersonalized forces.” Within the film, an underclass submits to the capitalist system, which causes İsmail to perceive everyone else as an enemy.

The dichotomy between lower and upper classes is also visually emphasized in *Enemy*. İsmail and his family reside in a slum area, struggling to meet basic needs, often lacking even enough bread for a meal. Naciye attempts to escape this poverty through aspirations of celebrity. However, İsmail’s anger toward Naciye’s desire for fame culminates in his harsh reproach during an eviction scene: “I can’t poison a dog, I can’t play games, I can’t endure the stench of this and that for a

woman of this mind.” The film portrays the lower class’s everyday life as fraught not only with economic deprivation but also cultural exclusion and moral erosion. Evaluated through E.P. Thompson’s concept of class, it becomes evident that class is shaped not merely by one’s position within production relations but also by historical experience, cultural practice, and moral values. According to Thompson, class formation occurs through the internalization of material conditions in history; İsmail’s reactions toward Bahtiyar, Nuri, and Şevket manifest a consciousness shaped by and simultaneously entrapped in this historical experience.

The film also draws attention to cultural oppression through the depiction of circumcision weddings, traditionally a marker of social status. The circumcision ceremonies involve drums and zurna music, with the circumcision boy carried on horseback, surrounded by a gathering of people, while others observe from a distance and take photographs. The ceremony is symbolically highlighted as an event accessible only to the wealthy. A conversation between Nuri and another character reveals that, unlike the past, the poor no longer can afford such celebrations. This illustrates that workers suffer oppression not only economically but also culturally, through daily practices that demean, humiliate, and degrade them. Scott (1990) argues that workers experience this symbolic domination not only as exploited laborers in the workplace but also as individuals whose dignity is violated in everyday life.

Eagleton’s Marxist aesthetic theory elucidates the relationship between art — particularly cinema — and ideology. Eagleton contends that literary and artistic narratives reveal not only individual emotions but also the underlying mode of production, power relations, and ideological apparatuses. The circumcision wedding scenes in *Enemy* thus operate not merely as representations of tradition but as symbolic spaces where cultural capital and class power intersect. While impoverished children watch from afar, the boys being circumcised are paraded as embodiments of wealth and cultural privilege. This underscores Eagleton’s assertion regarding the ideological function of aesthetics: cultural representations serve as arenas where class inequalities are legitimized.

In this context, Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of cultural capital provides a valuable analytical framework. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital comprises the knowledge, manners, tastes, and behaviors individuals acquire from their social environment. The circumcision wedding serves as a symbolic practice through which those possessing not only economic power but also cultural codes reproduce their class dominance by displaying these codes publicly. While upper-class children gain symbolic privilege by being carried on horseback during the ceremony, lower-

class children are relegated to the role of passive spectators. This distinction can also be elucidated through Bourdieu’s notion of habitus: the everyday practices and lived experiences of lower-class individuals lead them to internalize lifestyles that exclude them from such social rituals and symbolic representations. Thus, class differences are perpetuated not only economically but also culturally. This dynamic is exemplified in the character of Bahtiyar, who, having achieved economic success—albeit through deceitful means such as lying, cheating, and fraud—embodies a figure who has ascended socially but through ethically questionable practices:

Nuri: When Lame Bahtiyar came here, he wore only a pair of pants, had 10 liras, and a typewriter. That’s how he arrived in town. His biggest weapons were his typewriter and his brain. After ten years, he takes over everyone.

A man in the coffeehouse: Every penny of Bahtiyar’s money belongs to thousands of orphans, Nuri. Does a fortune earned on orphans’ rights do any good to a man?

Nuri: Leave the orphans’ rights alone, Rüstem.

At this, laughter erupts in the coffeehouse as people mockingly say, “Bravo, Bahtiyar.” Nuri retorts, “Laugh all you want. In two or three years—not long after—I will take you in. You’ll come to my door; I will take your money, your fields, your boats, whatever you have, down to your underpants, and remind you of all this laughter.” Nuri assists villagers with bureaucratic tasks such as writing petitions and managing property deeds (tabu), but he overcharges and confiscates half of their payment before completing the work. İsmail’s friend Nuri aspires to earn wealth similar to Bahtiyar:

İsmail: It’s hard to be a Bahtiyar, brother. Today they were selling tickets at the car lot, and I thought of buying a national lottery ticket. But then I thought: hundreds of thousands of tickets are sold, and out of those, only one wins the jackpot. Being a happy man is the same—one chance in a million.

Nuri: It’s a chance, but...

İsmail: Bahtiyar did everything—from smuggling to pimping. He played whichever side was in power; rightist with the rightists, leftist with the leftists. He protected and crushed whoever he needed to. He deceived some with lies and fraud, and others with violence. He moved to Ankara, business cards in his pocket to open every door, notebooks full of big men’s addresses. He carried wives for some, bribed, extorted. He took houses, fields, and lands of those who didn’t pay their debts on time—using the law, police force, and bailiffs.

Nuri: We can do the same. We can do everything he did.

İsmail: That goes against me. It’s enough for me to boil the pot and bring bread home. Even that is so difficult. Heroism. You don’t have to worry about a house, at least you’re a man on your own.

Nuri: Alone, with nowhere to go in the evening—what good is that?

İsmail’s declaration, “*It’s enough for me to boil the pot and bring bread home,*” reveals the working class’s effort to remain faithful to its own moral universe. Conversely, Nuri’s remark, “*We can do everything he did,*” signals the ideological disintegration of an individual seduced by aspirations of upward class mobility. This fragmentation aligns with Thompson’s analysis that class consciousness

is neither direct nor complete; while working-class individuals experience exploitation, this awareness does not always culminate in collective class consciousness. Figures like Nuri and Bahtiyar exemplify this rupture as they become alienated from their own class and ideologically aligned with the bourgeoisie.

Although İsmail warns his friend by asserting that one cannot be like Bahtiyar, it becomes evident later in the film that Nuri, the solicitor, ultimately follows Bahtiyar’s path. Şevket receives a tape recorder as a gift from the Germans, and Nuri expresses a desire to purchase it. Persuading Şevket, Nuri manages to buy the tape recorder. Since Naciye is interested in tape recorders, İsmail also wishes to purchase one for his wife. While walking along the road, İsmail insists that Nuri “sell me the tape recorder.” Nuri responds, “How will you pay for it? You don’t have that kind of money. No offense, but you can barely bring bread home. How can you afford it?” İsmail replies, “I’ll pay somehow,” and they pay partially in cash and partially through promissory notes.

Naciye’s desire for the tape recorder, Bahtiyar’s fraudulent ascent to wealth, Nuri’s ambition to become a solicitor, and İsmail’s reactive stance are all aesthetic manifestations that convey the contradictions embedded within the individual by ideological dissolution, class tension, and the mode of production. Especially, Naciye’s aspiration to ascend socially through consumption exemplifies the ideological penetration of bourgeois values into the lower classes, a phenomenon frequently discussed by Eagleton in his analysis of aesthetics. The tape recorder ceases to be a mere object and instead symbolizes “another life” for Naciye.

This ideological dissolution can also be elucidated through Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony. The ruling class controls not only the means of production but also the modes of thought; when the subordinate classes internalize these hegemonic values without critique, they effectively consent to ideologies contrary to their interests. In *Enemy*, Naciye’s desire for fame, Nuri’s drive to accumulate wealth, and Bahtiyar’s legitimized fortune reflect the lower class’s internalization of hegemonic values. This functions as an aesthetic embodiment of Gramsci’s theory: the oppressed reproduce the values of the system that oppresses them.

This dynamic also echoes Nancy Fraser’s (2000) conceptualization of the tension between redistribution and recognition. Naciye seeks visibility and social approval rather than material improvement. Yet, because this desire for recognition is achievable only through consumption within the capitalist framework, it exacerbates her vulnerability. According to Althusser (1971), individuals are interpellated into the system through ideological state apparatuses such as schools, family, religion, and media, becoming subjects of the ideology. The tape recorder scene in *Enemy*

is a concrete example of this interpellation: Naciye becomes the ideological subject who equates fame and consumption with freedom. Although İsmail initially resists this call, he too is eventually absorbed into the same ideological structure. Ideology here functions not only as oppression but also as the producer of desire.

When İsmail returns home with the tape recorder, Naciye has already fled. The tape recorder remains in İsmail’s possession. A few days later, Nuri visits İsmail. İsmail retrieves the tape recorder, and Nuri reimburses him, but is 100 liras short, promising to pay the rest later due to lack of change. İsmail responds, “Şevket is right, I’ve lost my mind too, but you should know that the Bahtiyars have no future.

This clashes with working-class values grounded in collective solidarity. Nuri’s and Bahtiyar’s struggles for upward mobility epitomize this conflict, whereas İsmail’s statement, “just bringing home bread is enough for me,” reflects an internalized form of this contradiction. Yet, the film also reveals the fragility of this moral stance: İsmail ultimately desires to purchase the tape recorder, indicating that economic and emotional deprivation alike constitute forms of alienation.

8. Strike and Resistance: “Give me my rights and I'll work, or I won't work”

According to Thompson (2004), class is not a fixed category predetermined for individuals, but rather something people define as they live their own history. In *Enemy*, İsmail’s character exemplifies this process. Born into rural social relations of production, his class position is neither static nor fully conscious at the outset; rather, it is shaken and reshaped throughout the film. Following migration, İsmail experiences unemployment, homelessness, and exclusion from urban production, which collectively draw him into a class position. This position is not a pre-existing “class label” but is gradually constructed through the economic and cultural struggles he encounters in the city. Thompson’s thesis that “the ultimate definition of class is the product of people’s historical experience” (Wood, 2016) resonates fully with İsmail’s transformation. İsmail refers to his neighbor as “uncle,” and in a private moment, the uncle shows İsmail a strike notice from his son’s workplace, discreetly revealing the phrase “There is a strike in this workplace.” During a horse-drawn carriage ride, the two engage in a dialogue:

Uncle: Nobody is satisfied with their situation, İsmail. Nobody.

İsmail: There is no life for us here, uncle.

Uncle: It’s like that everywhere, son. You know, my son has been in Istanbul for three years, and yesterday I got his letter. There was a strike at the factory where he works, and the workers walked out. I don’t know if it’s right or wrong. What I know is that a strike means “resistance.” It means, “Give me my rights and I’ll work, otherwise I won’t.”

İsmail: They know what to do, uncle. It’s not just a handful of people, it’s the whole factory.

Uncle: There were 400 of them.

İsmail: Look, if it were just two or three people, one might doubt. But there are 400. Selim is a smart man; he won't do wrong.

Judith Butler's (2008) theory of performativity reveals that class identities and acts of resistance are not merely economic demands but “performances” continually constructed through repetition of social norms. The strike here is more than an economic act; it is a performative reassertion of collective identity, modes of being, and social positions. İsmail's and his uncle's reflections illustrate how class belonging is dynamically and continuously reconstructed in everyday life.

While both men acknowledge the hardships caused by poverty and unemployment, the uncle's fear of the strike stems from concern over his son's precarious employment. Engels' theory of typicality is illuminating here: characters are “typical” not by individual traits but because they represent the historical-social relations shaping them. İsmail is a typical figure—neither heroic nor a caricatured victim, but one of millions of migrant workers struggling to find footing in the city and grappling with systemic contradictions. His discussions with his uncle and reflections on the strike situate him firmly within “typical class contradictions.” The uncle's character similarly embodies the “traditional suspicions” often found within the working class: endorsing the right to struggle yet wary of potential risks.

Eagleton's Marxist aesthetic theory contends that literary and artistic works do not merely reflect class relations but also produce and transform them formally. In *Enemy*, while a direct portrayal of political struggle like a strike is absent, the film nevertheless manifests the budding consciousness of struggle through the characters' fears, hopes, and ambivalence. Thus, the film reveals the psychological, ideological, and cultural dimensions underlying class relations, as Eagleton emphasizes. Thompson's proposal to treat class historically and culturally finds concrete expression in the social unification symbolized by the idea of the strike.

9. Class Consciousness and the Building of Solidarity: “We don't feel like leaving you in this situation, it's a duty!”

Thompson (2004, p.40) states that while class experience is visible, class consciousness often remains hidden. In *Enemy*, İsmail's struggles—housing insecurity, unemployment, alienation, and marital tension—reflect class-based pressures, yet never fully develop into explicit political

awareness or collective resistance. His anger, though seemingly personal, signifies deeper unrest with the social structure. Thompson’s idea of an “invisible yet emerging” class consciousness effectively captures the film’s underlying tension.

Selim, the son of İsmail’s neighbor and a factory worker in Istanbul, and the dialogues he shares with his father and İsmail provide insight into the dynamics within the working class and the development of class consciousness in factory culture. Towards the film’s conclusion, conversations between Selim and his wife offer further glimpses into working-class life. After Naciye’s escape to Istanbul, İsmail’s neighbors encourage him to seek stable employment in the factory rather than continue precarious temporary jobs. It is also emphasized that factory workers protect their jobs collectively:

Selim: What do you plan to do now, brother İsmail?

İsmail: I’m going to call Naciye. She betrayed the humanitarian feelings I showed her, dishonored our family, stabbed me treacherously, wounded me deeply—she has left me unable to face anyone. She shouldn’t live.

Selim: It’s the easiest thing to do, to kill Naciye.

İsmail: Easy or difficult.

Selim: As long as this order exists, thousands like Naciye will live. One dies, a thousand more are born.

İsmail: I don’t know about that. Naciye shouldn’t live.

Selim: Listen to me. I understand your pain, but one pain is enough. Killing Naciye will only bring you more pain—prison, hardship, poverty, ruin. Zeynep might suffer too. Killing isn’t the solution; you have to endure. You should try to find a new life.

İsmail: A new life, huh? At my age?

Selim: What difference does it make if you’re fifty? I’ll help you. We can find you factory work and you can stay with us until then.

İsmail: Why?

Selim: Because we don’t feel right leaving you alone in this situation. It’s a duty. A human duty.

The worker, oppressed by the capitalist ruling class, is forced to sell labor and surrender surplus value, enduring exploitation. Yet, the worker’s historical duty is to pursue a social order free from exploitation, where wages honor human dignity (Coş, 2015, p.158). Selim embodies values like justice and solidarity, foundational to working-class culture. His offer to help İsmail reflects collective solidarity beyond individual kindness. Using Engels’ “typical character” concept, Selim represents developed class consciousness, while İsmail resists but retains its potential.

It can be argued that İsmail gradually becomes aware of his identity as a factory worker through his interactions. When İsmail talks about avenging his honor by finding and killing his wife who ran away to Istanbul, his neighbor Selim—a factory worker—and Selim’s wife intervene to dissuade him. Selim insists, “Don’t do that, let’s find you a job in the factory instead,” emphasizing that it is “a duty.” This illustrates the solidarity characteristic of the working class. İsmail’s anger

directed at Naciye on an individual level actually reflects a deeper anger toward the social order, which has yet to be articulated in political terms. According to Thompson (2004), class consciousness develops through collective struggle; in *Enemy*, this process remains incomplete. While Selim represents a more advanced stage of class consciousness, İsmail hesitates to embrace this call for collective solidarity.

Thompson (2004) argues that class consciousness develops through conflict but not automatically. In *Enemy*, İsmail’s oppression deepens his anger without leading to collective resistance, illustrating an “unformed class consciousness.” Bourdieu’s (1984) concepts of habitus and cultural capital complement this by showing how class is reproduced symbolically and culturally. İsmail’s insecurity limits his habitus, while Selim’s solidarity and access to cultural and social capital reflect a more organized class identity, highlighting how non-economic resources influence class consciousness formation or fragmentation.

İsmail’s alienation and insecurity manifest as conflicts within his habitus, while Selim’s collective solidarity reflects the symbolic and cultural dimensions of a more developed class consciousness. İsmail’s move to Istanbul corresponds with the development of his class consciousness. Sertlek (2015, p.241) states that the formation or transformation of class consciousness is essentially linked to changes in real life and the intervention of workers as a class in their own lives.

Çubukçu (2014, p.19) discussed the elements of working-class culture, emphasizing that it “should have holistic validity across different fields,” and examined the behaviors expected from workers. He noted that workers are not indifferent to their peers and do not hesitate to help one another. Highlighting that a worker “has no eyes for the wife and daughter of another,” he emphasized the prevalence of the saying, “working men do not do such things.” This expectation is not based on being a good, religious, or honorable person, but rather stems from the fact that he is a worker. As Çubukçu emphasizes, the neighbor’s son also reached out to İsmail, offering him a new job opportunity and even stating that he could stay with them until he found employment and housing in Istanbul.

Thompson (2004) views class consciousness as a historical and experiential process, shaped through struggles within existing structures. Individuals do not enter social life as predefined classes; rather, they encounter exploitation, recognize conflicting interests, and through resistance, begin to form class identity (Thompson, 1978). In *Enemy*, İsmail’s experiences in both family and work life reflect this development. His encounter with Selim—a factory worker and neighbor’s son

who embodies conscious political agency—marks a turning point. Instead of revenge, Selim urges İsmail to join collective labor, echoing Marx’s (1993, p.23) idea that social being shapes consciousness.

According to Engels’ theory of “typicality,” İsmail represents a transitional male worker trapped between rural values and urban alienation, while Selim reflects the “typical” class-conscious subject shaped by collective struggle. These figures go beyond individual narrative to signify class positions and contradictions. As Eagleton suggests, art not only reflects class tensions but aesthetically enacts them. İsmail’s personal crises express deeper systemic oppression, while Selim’s factory invitation serves as what Eagleton calls an “implied solution.” Though the film avoids explicit political messaging, it leaves space for hope through the potential of solidarity.

Thus, *Enemy* dramatizes the fragmented yet emergent nature of class consciousness. While İsmail’s transformation remains incomplete, Selim’s guidance and the film’s aesthetic structure suggest that individual tragedy may evolve into collective awareness.

Conclusion

The Enemy presents a class representation that focuses on the economic, cultural, and ideological transformations experienced by the working class that migrated from rural to urban areas in 1970s Turkey. Through themes such as urban poverty, unemployment, the erosion of patriarchal roles, and the desire for upward social mobility, the characters in the film make visible the processes of class rupture; these processes deepen not only at the economic level but also within cultural, symbolic, and emotional layers. Beyond a narrative of individual decadence, the film becomes an aesthetic space that questions the multidimensional effects of class domination shaped within capitalist relations of production.

Edward P. Thompson's (2004) approach, which defines class not as a fixed category but as a dynamic process resulting from historical experiences, is decisive in understanding the class formation at the center of the film. The loss of belonging, economic inadequacy, and cultural exclusion experienced in the city represent an intermediate state that expresses intense class unrest, even though it has not yet transformed into an organized class consciousness. Thompson's observation that “experience is visible, class consciousness is invisible” proves highly functional in explaining the structural predicaments faced by workers and their contradictory responses to these

challenges. In line with Engels' concept of “typicality,” İsmail appears as a typical representative of the urban working class. Through this individual figure, the experiences of migrant workers of the period become collectively visible. Eagleton's understanding of aesthetic ideology demonstrates that the film not only represents class relations but also reproduces the ideological conflicts inherent in these relations on a formal level. In this respect, *The Enemy* produces a political narrative that offers an aesthetic expression of class contradictions.

Bourdieu's (1991) notion of “symbolic violence” is instrumental in understanding the cultural dimension of class experience in the film. İsmail's withdrawal, his anger towards his wife, and his passive reactions to social norms should be read not only as consequences of material deprivation but also as manifestations of cultural and symbolic oppression. In this context, class oppression is not only external but also manifests as an internalized form of domination. The ideological structure the film constructs through themes of masculinity, family, and honor can be explained by Althusser's (1971) theory of ideological apparatuses. İsmail's fall into the position of the “inadequate man” reflects his deep crisis of social and cultural role conflicts; this crisis is situated at the intersection of the capitalist system and patriarchal norms. İsmail's emotional breakdown and his turn to violence over time should be understood not merely as personal pathology but as structural strain resulting from a combination of historical and ideological pressures. In line with Nancy Fraser's (2000) multidimensional theory of justice, inequalities in the film occur not only at the level of economic redistribution but also at the levels of cultural recognition and symbolic representation. *The Enemy* shows how class is constructed not only as an economic category but also culturally, ideologically, and emotionally. Within this framework, silence, passivity, and reticence in the film can be interpreted as forms of symbolic resistance developed by lower-class characters against the hegemonic oppression of the system.

The Enemy offers a deep cinematic analysis of class inequalities and the capitalist mode of production's economic, cultural, and ideological impact on individuals. It transcends a mere historical narrative, providing a theoretical framework for understanding contemporary class struggles under neoliberal policies marked by precarious labor and unemployment. Economic vulnerability extends beyond survival, encompassing cultural exclusion and emotional breakdown. Today's youth unemployment, urban poverty, and blocked social mobility echo İsmail's class-related anger. The film's portrayal of silence, loneliness, and masculine crisis manifests now as disorganization, withdrawal, digital rage, or individual violence, indicating suppressed but potentially emergent class consciousness. Thus, *The Enemy* remains a relevant cinematic reflection of enduring inequality.

References

- Akşın, S. (1997). *Türkiye'nin yakın tarihi* (2. cilt). Yenigün.
- Akyıldız, H. (1998). Bireysel ve toplumsal boyutlarıyla yabancılaşma. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari bilimler Fakülte Dergisi*, 3(3), 163–176.
- Alaca, E. (2019). Türk sinemasında sendikal hareketler ve işçi sınıfının işlenişi. *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3(1), 46–53.
- Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In L. Althusser (Ed.), *Lenin and philosophy and other essays* (pp. 127–189). Monthly Review Press.
- Atam, Z. (2013). Yol: Varoluşa dair bir sorgulama. In Y. Dinçer (Ed.), *İsyan ve devrim filmleri* (pp. 254–276). Yordam.
- Ateş, T. (1994). *68'li olmak*. Ümit.
- Berg, B. L. (2009). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Pearson.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Polity Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Caille, A. (1997). Piyasa ve kapitalizm: Hep aynı kavga. (U. Baker, Trans.). *Birikim Dergisi*, 104.
- Çebi, Z. (2006). *1960 Dönemi Türk sineması ve toplumsal gerçekçi çalışmalar* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Marmara Üniversitesi.
- Coş, N. (2015). Türk sinemasında işçi. In F. Başaran (Ed.), *İşçi filmleri, öteki sinemalar* (pp. 157–177). Yordam.
- Coşkun, E. (2009). *Türk sinemasında akım araştırması*. Phoenix.
- Coşkun, M. K. (2013). *Sınıf, kültür ve bilinç*. Dipnot.
- Coşkun, M. K. (Ed.). (2017). *Emekçileri izlemek*. Kor.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage.
- Çubukçu, A. (2014). Sunuş: İşçi sınıfı kültürü, sorunlar ve olanaklar. In M. K. Coşkun (Ed.), *Emekçileri okumak*. Evrensel.

- Daldal, A. (2005). *1960 darbesi ve Türk sinemasında toplumsal gerçekçilik*. Homer Kitabevi.
- Dursun, B. (2009). *Yılmaz Güney sinemasında devlet temsili* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Erciyes Üniversitesi.
- Eagleton, T. (1976). *Marxism and literary criticism*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Eagleton, T. (2009). *Eleştiri ve ideoloji*. İletişim.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115.
- Engels, F. (2003). The condition of the working class in England. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(8), 1246–1249.
- Esen, Ş. (2000). *80'ler Türkiye'sinde sinema*. Beta.
- Esen, Ş. K. (2016). *Türk Sinemasının kilometre taşları*. Agora.
- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking recognition. *New Left Review*, 3, 107–120.
- Görücü, B. (2015). Türk sinemasında işçi: 1893 sonrası. In F. Başaran (Ed.), *İşçi filmleri, öteki sinemalar* (pp. 178–208). Yordam.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. (Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & Trans.). Lawrence & Wishart.
- Güçhan, G. (1992). *Toplumsal değişim ve Türk sineması*. İmge.
- Güney, Y. (2000). *Siyasal yazılar*. Güney.
- Hepkon, Z., & Şaki Aydın, O. (2010). *Türk sinemasının görünmeyen öznesi*. GSU İletişim Dergisi.
- Kasım, M., & Atayeter, D. (2012). 1960'lı yıllarda Türk sinemasında toplumsal gerçekçilik. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 1, 19–33.
- Kellner, D., & Ryan, M. (2010). *Politik kamera*. (E. Özsayar, Trans.). Ayrıntı.
- Kıray, M. (1999). *Sosyal yapı ve nüfus artışı etkileşimi, toplumsal yapı ve toplumsal değişim*. Bağlam.
- Koyuncu, M. (2017). Yılmaz Güney'in politik sineması ve Duvar filmi üzerine bir inceleme. *Nişantaşı Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(1), 196–215.
- Kuyucak Esen, Ş. (2002). *Türk sinemasının kilometre taşları*. Naos.
- Lefebvre, H. (2012). *Gündelik hayatın eleştirisi I* (İ. Ergüden, Trans.). Sel.
- Marx, K. (1993). *Ekonomik politığın eleştirisine katkı*. Sol.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2001). *Sanat ve edebiyat eleştirisi*. İletişim.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2003). *Kutsal aile*. (K. Somer, Trans.). Sol.

- Ökten, Z. (Director). (1979). *Düşman* [Film]. Güney Film.
- Örn, Ü. Y. (2011). Türk Sinemasında türler üzerine bir inceleme (1970-1980). *Yaşar Üniversitesi E-Dergisi*, 6(23), 3866–3877. <https://doi.org/10.19168/jyu.47526>.
- Özön, N. (1962). *Türk sinema tarihi*. Artist Reklam Ortaklığı.
- Pişkin, G. (2010). Türkiye’de göç ve Türk sinemasına yansımaları: 1960-2009. *E-journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 5(1), 45–65.
- Pösteki, N. (2005). *Türk sinemasına yeni bir bakış: Yönetmen sineması*. Es.
- Şahin, K. (2006). *Türk sinemasında toplumsal gerçekçilik ve Yılmaz Güney sineması* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Beykent Üniversitesi.
- Savran, S. (2010). *Türkiye’de sınıf mücadeleleri*. Yordam.
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Sage.
- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Tabakküm ve direniş sanatları* (A. Türker, Trans.). Ayrıntı.
- Tanilli, S. (2008). *Uygurluk tarihi*. Alkım.
- Thompson, E. P. (1963). *The making of the english working class*. Vintage.
- Thompson, E. P. (1978). Eighteenth-century English society: Class struggle without class? *Social History*, 3(2), 133–165.
- Thompson, E. P. (2004). *İngiliz işçi sınıfının oluşumu* (U. Kocabaşoğlu, Trans.). İletişim.
- Wood, E. M. (2016). *Kapitalizm demokrasiye karşı: Tarihsel maddeciliğin yeniden yorumlanması* (Ş. Artan, Trans.). Yordam.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2016). *Nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Seçkin.
- Yıldırım, T. (2022). İlişki, süreç ve deneyim: E. P. Thompson’ın sınıf kuramı. *Alnteri Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 6(2), 133–144.
- Yıldız, E. (2019). *Popüler sinema, sanat sineması ve üçüncü sinema ekseninde yılmaz güney sineması* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Yücel Diken, D. (2021). *Türk sinemasında toplumsal gerçekçilik serüveni-toplumsal gerçekçilikten toplumsal kaderciliğe*. Akademisyen.

Hakem Deęerlendirmesi: Dıř Baęımsız çift kùr hakem.

Yazar Katkısı: Nazar BAL % 100 oranında katkı saęlamıřtır.

Özgünlük Beyanı: Bu makale, yayımlanmıř hiřbir alıřmadan üretilmemiř tamamen özgün bir alıřmadır.

Destek ve Teřekkür Beyanı: alıřma için destek alınmamıřtır.

Etik Onay: Bu makale, insan veya hayvanlar ile ilgili etik onay gerektiren herhangi bir arařtırma içermemektedir

ıkar atıřması Beyanı: alıřma ile ilgili herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile ıkar atıřması bulunmamaktadır.

Peer Review: External Independent double blind review.

Author Contribution: Nazar BAL contributed 100 %.

Statement of Originality: This article is a completely original work that has not been derived from any published work.

Statement of Support and Acknowledgments: No support was received for the study.

Ethical Approval: This article does not involve any human or animal research requiring ethical approval.

Conflict of Interest Statement: There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person related to the study.