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COEXISTENCE: CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL EXPERIENCE IN  
THE FILMS OF NURİ BİLGE CEYLAN



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COEXISTENCE: CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL EXPERIENCE IN  
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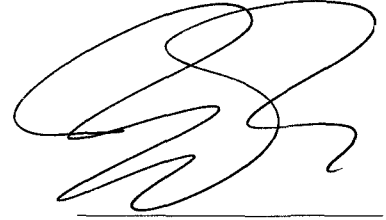
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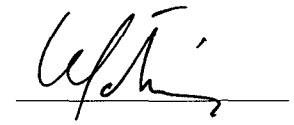
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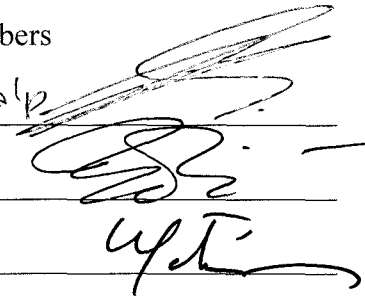
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## ABSTRACT

### COEXISTENCE: CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FILMS OF NURİ BİLGE CEYLAN

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This study examines time and space construction in the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan with a view to understand if and how Ceylan's movies have a potential to create long experience [*Erfahrung*] for the spectators, utilizing a framework derived from Walter Benjamin's thought. In terms of both form and narrative, Ceylan's films seem far away from the intention of attracting the spectators by shock effects. However, the experience lived here is not an absorption of the spectator by the artwork, either. In many scenes of the movies of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, where we move beyond the act of following the narrative, the spectator is engulfed. These movies expect the spectator to fill in the space-time vacuums with associations coming from the spectator's own 'sense memories', and thus, it is possible for them to turn into long experiences [*Erfahrung*].

**Keywords:** Cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, film perception, shock experience, temporal and spatial experience, cinematic habits, engulfment, aura.

## ÖZET

### BİRLİKTE VAROLUŞ: NURİ BİLGE CEYLAN SİNEMASINDA MEKANSAL VE ZAMANSAL DENEYİMİN KURULUŞU

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Bu çalışma, Nuri Bilge Ceylan filmlerinde zaman ve mekanın kuruluşunu, Ceylan'ın filmlerinin seyircilerde bir yaşantı (*long experience*) oluşturma potansiyeline sahip olup olmadığını, Walter Benjamin'in düşüncesinden yola çıkan bir çerçevede anlamaya çalışır. Hem biçim hem de anlatı açısından, Ceylan'ın filmleri seyirciyi şok etkileri üzerinden yakalama niyetinden uzak gözükür. Bununla birlikte, burada yaşanan tecrübe seyircinin sanat eseri tarafından massedilmesi (*absorption*) de değildir. Nuri Bilge Ceylan'ın filmlerinde seyirci, pek çok sahnede anlatı takibinin ötesinde bir yaşantıya davet edilir ve bu sahnelerde seyirci sarılıp sarmalanır (*engulfed*). Bu filmler seyirciden zaman-mekan boşluklarını kendi duyu hafızalarından gelen çağrışımlarla doldurmalarını bekler ; böylelikle, tecrübe edilenin yaşantıya (*long experience [Erfahrung]*) dönüşme şansı oluşur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler :** Nuri Bilge Ceylan sineması, film alımlaması, şok tecrübesi, mekansal ve zamansal deneyim, seyir alışkanlıkları, sarılıp sarmalanma, aura.

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# Coexistence: Construction of Temporal and Spatial Experience in the Films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan

“Until the time to go to my military service arrived, I did not think of anything else than getting saved from this town. But, when that morning arrived, I felt that there were deeper ties that I could not see and which tied me to this town. A slim odor was dispersing into the air from poplars covered with dewdrops. For some reason, it seemed to me that day that I was seeing these poplars, plane, and pine trees for the first time in my life. There is nothing else in the streets in these early hours other than packs of dogs, which cruise like wondering mines. I think I like these silent mornings, dogs, and the smell of the earth. But I do not understand the people living in this town and their little calculations. I find it alien and stifling. Now tell me, what is wrong with wanting to go somewhere where something big, serious and necessary for everyone is being carried out.”

Anton Chehov

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Subject and Aim

In this thesis, I examine time and space construction in the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan in order to think about and understand the possibilities and limitations of film spectatorship processes. Starting point of this study relates to my own spectatorship experience of his all, three feature films, *Kasaba (The Town; 1998)*, *Mayıs Sıkıntısı (Clouds of May; 1999)* and *Uzak (Distant, 2002)*. There are some common denominators in the criticisms aimed at these movies as I heard from several people who have watched them: These movies are said to be boring, that time does not pass

in these movies, that their cinematography is strong but that they fail to attract the spectator.

I myself can list the characteristics of these movies which I think are beyond the spectatorships habits of mine as follows: there are too long shots, many 'dead' times (passing times in the shot that are not related with the narrative), and different mise-en-scenes that effected me not as tools that help me to follow the narrative but also affected me as pictures or photographs that I should look at.

However I should add that these movies also left some impressions on me, which are very different from those of many spectators. For me, the process of watching these movies was a process, which had associations with my own personal experiences beyond following the narrative and/or the psychological tensions of the characters. Thus, I began to think that the effect of these movies on me was related to my perception of that moment's time and space, so I set out to study how Ceylan's cinema constructs time and space and hence understand what kind of a time-space experience it presents to the spectator.

## **1.2. Scope and Framework**

Since the study will focus on the spectatorship experience the movies of the said director presents to the spectator, I have concentrated on time and space construction rather than trying to cover the whole dimensions of the cinema of this 'author' director. Thus, this study will not entail narrative analysis, film discourse, semiotic analysis or the historical changes in the films of the director or their relation to the cultural atmosphere in which they were made, but will focus on the temporal and

spatial effects of the movie on the spectator. Hence, in this regard, Walter Benjamin, who tries to understand the perception of art by concentrating on the perception of film, became one of the names, which I refer to most in preparing my theoretical framework.

In other words, a theoretical framework related to what kind of an experience the film watching process presents to the spectator was necessary. Here, the starting point became Benjamin's assertions that distracted masses are not absorbed by the film's aura, but they absorb it (the film, the artwork) by clinging to its shock effects. In the process of watching a movie, the spectator is exposed to the next image before it can be attracted by the associations of the previous one (1969). The shock which is encountered by the protection of the consciousness and whose effects have been decreased is now an isolated experience [Erlebnis] and "the less these impressions enter long experience [Erfahrung]" (1983: 319).

However, today's spectator has gotten used to the shocks of cinema and the experience of film watching is an isolated experience for the spectator. Thus what can cinema do to attach the spectator to itself and make her live a long experience [Erfahrung]? Today, we can talk about two currents, which have the potential to create a long experience for the spectator. We observe that conventional cinema progresses from a channel, which has given up aiming to create such an experience, and accepted an isolated cinema experience. On the other hand, there is an approach to cinema, which is usually referred to as 'art-house cinema', or 'independent cinema' and which does not give up the ideal of creating a long experience

[Erfahrung] for the spectator. Perhaps we can also call this as a project, which does not give up Benjamin's project.

However, as noted above, we meet two different tendencies here. First, there is a cinema which gets more violent in the name of shock and experiments with a more dense visual ballistic effect and tries to achieve this by playing with time and space and is in interaction with commercial advertisement and music video aesthetics; this cinema stands as a western answer to conventional cinema. There is also a cinema, which stands as if watching us; a cinema, which awaits, looks at us and 'breaths' in time. Movies from this tendency do not seem to have a purpose of attaching the spectators to them by shocking them. Then, how can such a cinema create a long experience [Erfahrung]? Is it perhaps that they shock the spectator 'from the reverse' by not creating a shock and going beyond spectatorship habits? This study aims to answer these questions by studying the construction of time and space in the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, who is an example of the said second tendency in Turkey.

### **1.3. Outline of Chapters**

The second chapter of the thesis, following this introduction chapter, covers a discussion of Benjamin's contributions, which are relevant for the purposes of this study, as mentioned in the above section. The third chapter starts with an introduction on how narrative functions as a cinematic habit in conventional cinema. Then, the role of time and space construction in following the narrative is discussed. Next, time and space construction in conventional cinema is covered separately. The fourth chapter analyzes the time and space construction in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's cinema, with reference to the discussions and material covered in the previous two

chapters. The aim will be, first, on to what degree time and space construction in these movies corresponds to those in conventional cinema; and, even more so, the focus will be on analyzing the points where it differs from those in conventional cinema.

The fifth chapter of the thesis will discuss whether the cinema of Ceylan has a potential to create long experience. This will be done by taking up the observations on Ceylan cinema, which were covered, in the fourth chapter and discussing them with reference to the theoretical framework established in the second chapter. This discussion will entail the question of whether it absorbs the spectator like auratic artworks or if it affects the spectators over a different perception. Finally, this conclusion chapter will comment on what kind of a place all these occupy in contemporary art.

## 2. Film Perception from Benjamin till Today

Walter Benjamin argues that, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence, and adds that in the age of mechanical reproduction, "the aura of the work of art withers" and it is the basis of change in the modern perception (1969: 222). The term 'aura' will be discussed later; but it can be said that Benjamin defines aura as a "unique phenomenon of a distance however close it may be" and relates it with space and time perception. He associates the aura of an artwork with the cult value of it. He adds that a distant object is also the unapproachable one; and unapproachability is a crucial characteristic of the cult image (1969: 243).

### 2.1. Film Perception with Shock Experience

According to Benjamin, an artwork can be experienced either in distraction or in concentration. In order to understand changes in human sense perception, these two modes of perception are crucial for him. He says, "[a] man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of the Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art" (1969: 239).

The quantitative increasing of mass turns to qualitative change and this shows itself in the mode of participation of the mass in an artwork. Distracted masses both do not want to concentrate within their participation in an artwork and also their conditions are not suitable for that. Benjamin sees that point as a suitable platform for the analysis of film. According to him, distracted masses participate in/ are affected /

experience / perceive the film with the shock effects of it. Benjamin explains this in reference to Dada. According to Benjamin, Dadaists attempt to create by pictorial – and literary- means the effects, which the public seeks in the film. He continues:

From an alluring appearance or persuasive structure of sound the work of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality. It promoted a demand for the film, the distracting element of which is also primarily tactile, being based on changes of place and focus, which periodically assail the spectator (238).

Benjamin mentions the cinema's still continuing effect when he compares the screen on which a film unfolds with the canvas of a painting:

The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested. Duhamel, who detests the film and knows nothing of its significance, though something of its structure, notes this circumstance as follows: "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images." The spectator's process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant, sudden change. This constitutes the shock effect of the film, which, like all shocks, should be cushioned by heightened presence of mind (238).

Distracted masses cannot make a relationship with an artwork by contemplation. Contemplation needs concentration and distracted masses cannot respond to this. Instead, distracted masses are grasped by the moving images. They hold the



distracted spectator, and at that time spectator follows the continuously changing images only, she does not abandon herself to associations. In order to understand how cinema's shock effect can achieve this, it should be looked at the relationship between the shock effect and memory.

## **2.2. Voluntary and Involuntary Memory / Long and Isolated Experience**

In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", Benjamin mentions Proust's discussions on memory. According to Proust, there are voluntary and involuntary memories.

Voluntary memory is in the service of the intellect and attention. He had gone beyond the limits of voluntary memory, when he had eaten pastry called a madeleine that transported him back to the past. Hence, then he compares two types of memories: He says voluntary memory does not give the information about past that retains no trace of that past. Also he explains involuntary memory as: "somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect and its field of operations, in some material object [...] though we have no idea which one it is. And whether we come upon this object before we die, or whether we never encounter it, depends entirely on chance" (315). But especially with the rise of modernity, there is a possibility to decreasing one's external concerns had been assimilated to one's experience. According to Benjamin, newspapers constitute one of many indications of such a decrease. The intention of newspapers is "to isolate events from the realm in which they could affect the experience of the reader" (315). So, by modernity the isolation of information from experience is slightly increased. For this reason, the possibilities that could give an impetus to involuntary memory of someone are diminished. As Benjamin says,

The techniques inspired by the camera and subsequent analogous types of apparatus extend the range of the *memorie volontaire*; these techniques make

it possible at any time to retain an event- as image and sound -through the apparatus. They thus represent important achievements of a society in which long practice is declined (337).

This condition that changes the proportions in human's life of involuntary memory with voluntary memory is also related with withering of the aura.

Benjamin puts this relationship as follows:

The associations which, at home in the *memorie involontaire*, seek to cluster around an object of perception, and if we call those associations the aura of that object, then the aura attaching to the object of a perception corresponds precisely to the experience [Erfahrung] which, in the case of an object of use, inscribes itself as long practice (337).

So, we can say that the object that has an aura can start the involuntary memory and can relate to its related associations. Benjamin calls this experience long practice [Erfahrung]. At this point, I would like to elaborate on Benjamin's discussion of two different kinds of experience with respect to shock.

The shock, which could be cushioned by consciousness, would lend the incident a character of an isolated experience [Erlebnis] and "the less these impressions enter long experience [Erfahrung]". This is the achievement of the intellect; shock incident is isolated by consciousness, it gives the incident "a precise point in time in consciousness, at the cost of the integrity of its contents" (319).

### 2.3. From Benjamin till Nowadays

When Benjamin said film is perceived by the masses in distraction, the history of mechanically reproduced artwork and modern cities were not too old and, the things, which affect the masses with shock effect, had a unique character. Nevertheless, nowadays the masses have to encounter continuous shock effects. These effects catch them in their daily life with billboards, advertisements, shop-windows, video-clips, newspapers, news bulletins, traffic, etc.

So, the masses have become familiar with these shock effects. One's consciousness "learn" the shock experience through such familiarization, and she would be much more ready for every coming shock experience. In addition; Benjamin says, in his article "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", that if consciousness registers shocks more readily, they have much less traumatic effect (317). And today's spectator is different from the one whom Bela Balazs' mentions as coming from Siberia and going to a film in Moscow and is effected by the film very much, and says after her experience as there are smashed people here is a leg, there is an arm, etc. (cited in Lotman 1999: 52).

Today's spectator is ready for the film. Spectator has learnt watching film; she now knows the differences between the real space and cinematographic (virtual) space. Today's spectator knows the film not only from her previous film watching experiences, but also from optic construction in the whole area of life. Thus, the film has less traumatic effect on her and also its tactile (ballistic) effect does not cause shock experience anymore.

It was said above that shock, which is cushioned by consciousness, ends in an isolated experience [Erfahrung]. In this case, it can be said that if today's spectator is used to the shocks of cinema, then today's film experience has become an isolated experience. However, the woman's intellect which Bela Balazs talks about has failed to isolate this experience, the shock incident has not been isolated and these impressions have become long experience for her. The movie has stuck on the woman; she tells her experience to those who took her to the cinema as "disgusting" when she came back to her home after watching the movie (Balazs 1999: 52). As Benjamin says while describing Dadaist works, the film has made a tactile effect on the woman, something has happened to her.

However, the effect of cinema on today's spectators is different from its effect when cinema first came into existence. The spectators have gotten used to its shocks, the cinema experience has become isolated experience for them. Today's conventional cinema has quitted aiming for long experience and there is a film style, which has accepted isolated experience.

So, in this case, what can cinema do to attach spectators to itself and create long experience? At this point, we can talk about a cinema which does not quit aiming to create long experience and which targets it. This cinema appears today under the labels of 'art cinema', 'festival cinema' and 'independent cinema'. Actually, we can call this a strategy, which does not quit Benjamin's project.

We meet two approaches of that strategy. First, we can talk about a cinema which increasingly gets more violent in order to shock the audience and which prefers to

use hardcore violence and sexuality for visual ballistic effect. This cinema progresses with experiments and it engages in an interaction with video clip and advertisement aesthetics. On the other hand, we can also talk about a cinema whose aim appears not to create a shock effect on spectators but, instead, appears to watch us. Rather than telling stories, it is a cinema, which stands still, waits and looks at us; the images begin to breath in time. Tarkovsky, Ozu, Angelopulos, Mahmalbah and Nuri Bilge Ceylan are some of the names of this cinema. If there is not a shock effect in the languages of these filmmakers, how can this cinema create a long experience for the spectators? How can it stick to the spectator's life and identity? At this point, the position of this cinema against spectator habits creates its effective side.

#### **2.4. Significance of Time and Space Perception in Shock Experience**

Following the narrative is among the most prominent habits of the spectator. As Tom Gunning says, we can talk about a domination of the narrative in cinema after the era of "cinema of attractions which envisioned cinema as a series of visual shocks" ends in about 1903-1904 (1994: 116-121). Gunning adds that:

[R]ather than being an involvement with narrative action or empathy with character psychology, the cinema of attractions solicits a highly conscious awareness of the film image engaging the viewer's curiosity. The spectator does not get lost in a fictional world and its drama, but remains aware of the act of looking, the excitement of curiosity and its fulfillment (121).

Our discussion of the 'domination of narrative' has a context related to shock experience. Then, the question becomes what is the relationship of the domination of narrative to shock experience. This issue will be discussed in detail but here it would

be helpful to point out one thing in this regard. Moving images have a tactile effect and this tactility effect creates a space effect on the spectators. At this point, the spectator lives a strange space-time experience and Freud has said (1955) that this experience of time and space is an uncanny<sup>1</sup> one. In order to get relieved from this shock experience, the spectator orients the strange time-space she is in and wants to place it somewhere in her consciousness. When she thinks that these images, which create a spatial and tactile effect on her, belong to a story which is being told, in other words when she relates the time and space effect with the narrative, then she is relieved from its effect on herself. Thus, time and space construction belongs to the main context of this thesis because time and space construction is very essential in shock experience and spectators resort to their habits to relieve themselves from the effects of this shock experience and these habits are about following the narrative in the context of cinema. In the movies of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, the construction of time and space has a function different than only serving the narrative. Thus, in this thesis, I want to discuss time and space construction in the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan in this context.

## **2.5. The Relationship Between Uncanny and Shock**

### **2.5.1. Uncanny**

Now, I want to elaborate on Freud's concept of "uncanny" which can be integrated into Benjamin's discussions of shock experience and memory. Before elaborating on this relationship, I want to cover on "uncanny" in this section. Freud talks about two characteristics of uncanny and the first of these is related to time / temporality: "faint sense of memory". Freud explains this as such: "the uncanny is that class of the

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<sup>1</sup> It will be elaborated on the term 'uncanny'.

frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (220). On the other hand, the second characteristic of uncanny is related to the perception of space: “the uncanny would always, as it were, be something one does not know one’s way about in. The better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it” (221). Here, it would be sufficient to say that both of these two characteristics are related to shock experience and this will be elaborated on later.

After making this introduction to the concept of uncanny at the beginning of his article, Freud makes an assessment based on the equivalents of this word in various languages. He says that ‘unheimlich’, which is the German for this word, is the opposite of ‘heimlich’ [homely] and ‘heimisch’ [native] and adds that “what is novel and unfamiliar in order to make it uncanny”. Freud also pinpoints an ambivalent situation while studying the ‘heimlich’, the German opposite of the word, and says that the meanings of the word can be collected into two different groups. While one of them is “belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc.,” (222) the other is “concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others” (223). At this point, what is striking is that ‘heimlich’ is “identical with its opposite, *unheimlich*. What is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*” (224). When another dictionary, Grimm’s dictionary, is consulted, an explanation is given to the situation: “From the idea of ‘homelike’, ‘belonging to the house’, the further idea is developed of something withdrawn from the eyes of the strangers, something concealed, secret; and this idea is expanded in many ways ...” (cited in Freud 1955: 225). Freud explains this crosspath of these two words with opposite meanings as such: “*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in

the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*' (226).

Such a deduction can be made based on the characteristics of uncanny which were mentioned at the beginning. When a person meets something uncanny, this attracts her since it is "old and long familiar" and because it possess an association belonging to the past. On the other hand, uncanny makes the person experience "something one does not know one's way about in" and this works more on the perception of space. Here, we meet again the ambivalent characteristic of uncanny: on one hand, being familiar from the past, on the other hand being unfamiliar nevertheless (it is unfamiliar because the situation of "one does not know one's way about in" can be realized in this condition). In other words, during an uncanny experience, a feeling of familiarity is lived based on time and a feeling of unfamiliarity based on space. This way, the person's perceptions / experiences / sensations of time and space contradict each other while uncanny comes into being. This is a strange experience for someone used to a harmonious experience of time and space; she both fears from it and desires it.

It can be said that the uncanny experience is like a situation, during which shock defenses do not work as Benjamin describes. Benjamin posits that, the defense shield comes into play to protect the consciousness from the stimulus. If this defense works without a problem, then:

[t]his would be a peak achievement of the intellect; it would turn the incident into an isolated experience. Without reflection, there would be sudden start,



occasionally pleasant but usually distasteful, which, according to Freud, confirms the failure of the shock defense (319).

In other words, what the consciousness does to relieve itself when it meets an uncanny situation is very much similar to the defense mechanism of someone who meets shock factors. We had talked about how a familiarity from the past was lived during an uncanny experience. At that point, memory comes into play and an association at the memory is tried to be established with the experience one had met. When this cannot be done, the uncanny situation still remains. A similarity can be established between the working of memory when one is trying to overcome the uncanny and the introduction of involuntary memory when a long experience is being lived during a shock experience.

In addition, Benjamin also talks about occasionally pleasant but usually distasteful frightening feelings, which emerge during the failure of the shock defense, again referring to Freud. The ambivalent fear, which comes into play in such a situation, can clearly be seen in one of the examples Freud gives with regards to the situations when uncanny feelings rise in daily life. Freud states that “children have no fear of their dolls coming to life, they may even desire it. The source of the uncanny feelings would not, therefore, be an infantile fear in this case, but rather an infantile wish or even merely an infantile belief” (233). Here, the fear and desire in the definition of uncanny is very similar to the fear, which Benjamin says is mixed with sometimes pleasant but mostly unpleasant feelings when shock defense does not work. To sum up, one can say that uncanny is experienced in situations when shock defense does not work.

### 2.5.2 Uncanny and Shock Defense

At this point, it would be meaningful to think about what the consciousness resorts to relieve itself from shock and uncanny situations. We had stated that uncanny creates a strange time and space perception and that a certain temporality and spatiality was attributed to what is encountered. A similar ‘accounting / escaping’ process is also lived during shock experience. Benjamin explains the workings of shock defense this way:

The greater the shock factor in particular impressions, the more vigilant consciousness has to be in screening stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less these impressions enter long experience [Erfahrung] and the more they correspond to the concept of isolated experience [Erlebnis]. Perhaps the special achievement of shock defense is the way it assigns an incident a precise point in time in consciousness, at the cost of the integrity of the incident’s contents. This would be a peak achievement of the intellect; it would turn the incident into an isolated experience (1983: 319).

Again Susan Buck-Morss states that: “Under extreme stress, the ego employs consciousness as a buffer, blocking the openness of the synaesthetic system<sup>2</sup>, thereby isolating present consciousness from past memory” (1993: 130). In other words, in the mechanism developed to protect the ego from shock, our consciousness attributes a specific time to it in order to keep it away from past memory at the expense of not being able to grasp the totality of the event. Thus one can conclude that when the

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<sup>2</sup> Buck-Morss says that the conception of the ‘synaesthetic system’ is compatible with the concept of Freud’s ‘ego’. She cites Freud ‘ego as ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body, the place from which both external and internal perceptions may spring. And she adds the ego may be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body.’ (1993: 132)

experience is isolated, a time has been attributed to it and its uncanny characteristic has been relieved. When this cannot be the case or until it is realized, the long experience lived by the person is at the same time uncanny.

We can also say that the fact that “the better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it” (Freud 1919: 221) comes into play in order to relieve from the effect uncanny creates in the context of space. In other words, as the person situates herself better into the space where she lives a strange spatial experience, she relieves herself from the effects of that space. This can be related to the tactile perception, which is a response to shock experience.

It would be helpful to go back to Benjamin for this. Benjamin says that the discussion that the “masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator” which is carried out in art contexts would be very appropriate to study film. He adds that the reception of architectural structures is the most striking example of the fact that “distracted mass absorbs the work of art” (239). Benjamin goes on to say that “[b]uildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception--or rather, by touch and sight [...] As regards architecture reception habit determines to a large extent even optical” (240). In other words, the distracted mass introduces its habits in its relations with the work of art.

Resorting to French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ would be helpful in understanding the issue of habit better. According to Bourdieu, habitus is “a durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” which

“produces practices which in turn tend to reproduce the objective conditions which produced the generative principle of habitus in the first place.” Bourdieu states that habitus secures a degree of “the conditioning and conditional freedom.” However Bourdieu also underlines that “the habitus is an endless capacity to engender products -- thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions -- whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production.” Because of this, the above-noted characteristic of habitus in securing “the conditioning and conditional freedom” is “as remote from a creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings” (1977: 95). This approach of Bourdieu is similar to Benjamin’s explanation on how ‘human apparatus of perception responds to new forms:

For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation (1969: 240).

In other words, when a person is faced with a new form, she introduces her habits to deal with it. Since what she meets is a new thing and since the habit is a result of an old experience, habit can only show the way / guide in this challenge, the rest depends on the person’s improvisation to perceive the form, it is her performance. When cinema is in question, the most advanced habit is following the narrative. Rather than dealing with the encountered temporal and spatial effects by themselves, the spectators refer them to the narrative and narrative serves as such an instrument. Because of this reason, time and space construction will be discussed in the context of its relation to the narrative in the next chapter.

### 3- Time and Space Construction in Narrative Cinema

#### 3.1. Narrative in Cinema

##### 3.1.1. Narrative Following as a Cinematic Habit

Many spectator habits have developed since the dawn of cinema, but certainly, the oldest and most significant of these is following the narrative. Actually, when cinema first emerged, it was not really possible to talk about a dominance of narrative. Tom Gunning calls the cinema aesthetics which lasted about a decade and which was taken over by dominance of narrative at approximately 1903-1904 as “cinema of attractions” (1989: 121). Tom Gunning’s conception of early cinema can be compared to Benjamin’s approach about cinema’s perception with shock experience:

Historical context of these earliest images can restore an understanding of the uncanny and agitating power they exerted on audiences. This context includes the first modes of exhibition, the tradition of turn-of-the century visual entertainments, and a basic aesthetic of early cinema I have called the cinema of attractions, which envisioned cinema as a series of visual shocks. (Gunning 1989: 116)

Yet, in time, habits form and come into play. As habits form, does the cinema lose its capacity to shock the spectator or does it completely abandon the strategy based on shock?

Gunning’s answer is negative: “The cinema of attractions persists in later cinema, even if it rarely dominates the form of a feature film as whole. It provides an underground current flowing beneath narrative logic and diegetic realism...” (123). Of course, cinema has not given up shocking the spectator; actually it is impossible

for the distracted mass to enter into a relation with cinema without shock, but from now on the shock effects (Gunning's 'cinema of attractions') are beneath the narrative, they serve narrative, they work to tie the spectator to the narrative. A conventional movie gives the spectator the information on how to watch itself: "When you meet an effect (image) which has the potential to shock in terms of time and space, relate this to the narrative; what is happening (what happens to you) actually does not happen to you, it is actually happening to the characters in the world whose story you have been following so far". This situation resembles a communication flow where, even though the stimulus was given and realized, the stimulus flow ends at an earlier place (other than the real target) rather than going to the place it should go.

When this happens, an effect, which has the potential to make the spectator live a long experience, becomes isolated.

### **3.1.2. Significance of Time and Space Construction in Narrative**

Tom Gunning, citing Miriam Hansen, says that the modern experience of shock corresponds to "the adaptation of human perception of industrial modes of production and transportation, especially the radical restructuration of spatial and temporal relations" (1989: 127). In other words, the restructuration of spatial and temporal relations lie at the basis of shock. Based on this, we can say that cinema of attractions make the spectator live a different temporal and spatial experience. In this case, how did space and time come under the domination of the narrative in cinema? In order to be able to answer this question, we should first discuss the significance of time and space construction in domination of narrative in cinema. At this point, the

definitions of narrative provide us important clues to understand this. For example, Ora Gelley defines narrative as “a chain of events in a cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space”. Again according to Bordwell and Thompson, it “is a series of events taking place in specific times and places with causal relations” (1997: 74). As it can be seen from these definitions, the two most important elements, which define narrative, are a series of events linked to each other in cause-effect relations and their time and space. Actually, this definition of narrative is not peculiar to cinema; it goes back to even Aristoteles who, in his Poetics, locates the plot at the center of the dramatic structure and adds that this should be a “coherent combination of incidents in unity and as having a certain magnitude”. What Aristoteles means by a certain magnitude is that the dramatic structure should be formed such that the plot should be “long enough to attract attention, but not too long to be forgotten by the audience during performance”. This way, the spectator will not realize that what she watches is ‘fiction’ nor that she is a spectator. In this illusion regarding time and space, she will fall into the narrative, forget that the space she is in is actually a theater; and thus, it will be possible for her to reach the intended catharsis.

After cinematograph was first invented, Lumiere Brothers have recorded events from daily life such as workers in their own factories leaving the work place at the end of the day, the collapse of a wall, etc. Edison invented another device to record and reflect movement as photographic images. On the other hand, rather than choosing daily life segments to record, Edison preferred theater, which was one of the popular arts of the day. He put the camera at the place of a spectator at a theater and recorded the spectacle-styled performances on the stage. Melies, another pioneer of cinema, is

a filmmaker who provided the first seeds of experimental cinema by his techniques such as building maquettes and painting each film frame and by his stories which included voyages to the moon, for instance. Coming back to Lumiere brothers, it is said that they gave the first examples of documentary cinema and that Edison started fiction cinema by recording spectacles (Ellis and Wexman 2002: 9-15). Of course, all three categories (fiction, documentary, experimental) have influenced and have been influenced by each other over the course of time up to today. However, this differentiation is important because it shows how fiction cinema has adapted the dominant dramatic structure of its time when it first emerged. Consequently, it shows that an Aristotelian dramatic structure was formed in the new medium so that it would work as best as possible.

Bordwell and Thompson demonstrate with a very illustrative example how all the components of the narrative definition are related to each other. They state that it is very difficult to perceive a random string of events as a story and ask us to consider such actions: “A man tosses and turns, unable to sleep. A mirror breaks. A telephone rings” (Bordwell and Thompson 1997: 90). They say that the spectators would find it difficult to perceive such images as a narrative because they cannot establish a causal, temporal and spatial relation among these images. The ‘film’ leaves them in this matter; since they cannot establish a relation among the images in terms of time and space, they cannot establish a causal relation, either.

However, if the same events were shown as follows, the situation would be different for spectators: “A man has a fight with his boss; he tosses and turns that night, unable to sleep. In the morning, he is still so angry that he smashes the mirror while shaving.



Then his telephone rings; his boss called to apologize”. Henceforth, we have a narrative. The spectator connects them spatially and can say that “the man is in his bed; the mirror is in the bathroom; the phone is somewhere else in his home. In this example time is also important. “The sleepless night occurs before the breaking of the mirror, which in turn occurs before the phone call; all of the action runs from one day to the following morning” (Bordwell, Thompson 1997: 91). In conclusion, we can say that the spectator wants to make a meaning out the images she sees by relating them to a narrative. She locates the images in a context of time and space and carries this out over the narrative. At the point when she cannot succeed in this endeavor, those images, in other words, that experience, becomes uncanny for the spectator.

### **3.2. Time and Space Construction in Cinema**

In this part of my thesis, after stating that time and space in cinema is mostly subordinated to the narrative, I want to talk about time and space construction in narrative cinema. Since time and space construction in cinema will be studied here within a framework of its relation to narrative, first I want to talk about some key concepts regarding narration. Then, I will tell how time and space is constructed under the subordination of narrative in cinema. After that, in the next chapter, I will discuss to what degrees do the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan movies diverge away from this and to what degrees do they come close to it and the possible effects of these on the film watching experience of the spectators.

### **3.2.1. Narration and Time**

What does a cinema spectator expect from a film with respect to time and space? According to Bordwell, constructing the story has the precedence for the viewer (1985: 48). Hence spectator is accustomed to follow time and space in a film with their relation to the narrative flow. In order to discuss this, now I want to make a review of Bordwell's narration theory. His fundamental terms about narration are 'fabula' and 'syuzhet'. According to Bordwell, fabula (sometimes translated as 'story') that had been termed by Russian Formalists, means "the imaginary construct that spectators create progressively and retroactively. More specifically, the fabula embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a temporal and a spatial medium" (Bordwell 1985: 49). Bordwell's second term, syuzhet (usually translated as "plot") is the actualization / realization / presentation of the fabula in the film within an arrangement (1985: 50). The syuzhet can cue to spectators to construct fabula events in any sequence.

#### **3.2.1.1 Bordwell's Theory of Narration**

Bordwell studies temporal construction in cinema through three basic features. These are: temporal order, temporal frequency and duration. Before beginning to explain these, it is also necessary to talk about 'rhythm', which has the central importance in temporal constraints of the viewing situation (1985: 76). The following proposition is important for understanding time construction in the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan: "Within the confines of the shot's duration, the director can control the rhythm of time as it unfolds" (Bordwell, Thompson 1997: 196). Even though there are many factors besides shot duration, which effect rhythm in cinema, we can say "it involves,

at least, a beat or pulse, a pace (what musicians call tempo), and a pattern of accents, or stronger and weaker beats” (1997: 197). Bordwell tells that cognitive psychologists in mind’s induction operations can be limited by the speed. “If narrative information is coming thick and fast, the viewer will opt for a ‘quick-elimination’ strategy that discards many alternative hypothesis out of hand” (76). Together with this, slow rhythm forces “the spectator to reassess the appropriateness of the initial expectation” (76). For example, if Antonioni or Ozu insists on keeping the camera in places where the characters have left or if Dreyer insists on showing his character very slowly walking in a room, then the spectator also readjusts her expectations and possibly watches the movie from a less deterministic (pre-determined) schemata (76). “Rhythm in narrative cinema comes down to this: by forcing the spectator to make inferences at a certain *rate*, the narration governs *what* and *how* we infer” (1985: 76).

### **3.2.1.2 Temporal Tools of Narration**

#### **3.2.1.2.1 Temporal Order**

Bordwell relates that events can occur either ‘simultaneously’ (event 1 take place while event 2 is occurring) or successively (event 2 occurs after event 1). There can be four different combinations of them. Simultaneous events can be represented in a syuzhet both simultaneously and successively and, events that occur in the fabula successively can be represented in the syuzhet also, both successively and simultaneously (1985: 77). Those kinds of arrangements are generally made with split-screen, off-screen diegetic sound, and frequently used flashforward and flashback techniques.

I think representation of simultaneous fabula events successively is a way in which the cinematic medium/apparatus can be recognized less than in the other way, which is representation of them simultaneously. If events are represented simultaneously, the most commonly used techniques are split-screen or off-screen diegetic sound. Both of these techniques give a chance to spectator to recognize the medium/apparatus.<sup>3</sup>

#### **3.2.1.2.2 Temporal Frequency**

Another aspect about narrative time is frequency. Although the spectator can presume that the fabula events are unique occurrences, they can be represented in the syuzhet any number of times (1984: 79). In the films the frequency of fabula events are represented the same time as in the syuzhet. So, in the films, this narrative tool [changing the frequency of fabula occurrences in the syuzhet], is not used.

#### **3.2.1.2.3 Duration**

Bordwell's last point about narration and time is 'duration'. He explains fabula duration as the time that viewer presumes the story action to take and syuzhet duration as the time which film dramatizes, namely selected time periods in the fabula duration (1984: 80). For example, of the five years of presumed fabula duration, the syuzhet might dramatize only a few months or days. The usual narration about the duration differences is that, the fabula duration is expected to be longer than the syuzhet duration and it is expected to be greater than projection time (81).

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, cinema shows us the things that we do not see in real life by frames and in two dimensions. What is said here is, those techniques fragment the image more than the others and since the source of the sound is not seen it much more emphasizes the medium than the others.

Bordwell mentions that of the nine possible relations between syuzhet and screen duration, three different “durational relationships” can be seen. He names the situation in which the fabula duration equals to syuzhet and screen duration as “equivalence”. If fabula duration is summarized to syuzhet he calls this “reduction” and “expansion” on the opposite case (81).

### **3.2.2. Narration and Space**

#### **3.2.2.1. Narrative Space**

Stephen Heath relates that studies on space in cinema can be divided into two main parts. The first is “in frame: determined by the frame, held within its limits” and the other is “out of frame: the space beyond the limits of the frame” (1981: 33). In other words, when we talk about space in cinema, we mean both the space seen and constructed within the frame and also, beyond that, a space which is constructed by the gazes and movements of the actors within framing or constructed by the narrative but not completely visible and perhaps unique for each spectator in this aspect.

Heath also posits that, in reference to discourses which state/argue that cinema represents life, the most important thing in cinema (especially in contrast to paintings) is movement and that it determines the composition of frame, which is organized according to the “functions of the human figures in their actions”. After stating that ‘frame space’ is constructed as in ‘narrative space’ in narrative cinema, Heath adds, “it is narrative significance that at any moment sets the space of the frame to be followed and ‘read’, and that determines the development of the filmic cues in their contributions to the definition of space in frame” (36). This is a situation

related to the previously mentioned (in the above sections) fact that time and space perception in cinema, is determined by the narrative. The space of each new setup is located to a place in the narrative and it is perceived by setting up a cause-effect relation with the previous spaces.

Once space comes under the domination of the narrative, it moves away from making a spatial effect. The important thing about image in cinema would be “its narrative clarity and that clarity hangs on the negation of space for place, the constant realization of center in function of narrative purpose, narrative movement” (Heath 1981: 39): “Negatively, the space is presented so as not to distract attention from the dominant actions: positively, the space is “used up” by the presentation of narratively important settings, character traits (“psychology”), or other causal agents.” (Bordwell and Thompson 1975: 42; cited in Heath 1981: 39)

Heath talks about “negation of space for place”, but does not dwell much on the differences between space and place. At this point, it would be beneficial to use the distinction developed by Nick Kaye via Michel de Certeau. According to him, space is a “practiced place” and it “admits of unpredictability”. On the other hand, “a place is the order (of whatever kind) in accordance with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence” (de Certeau cited in Kaye 2000: 4-5).

In other words, if we utilize Kaye’s definition of space, in order to be able to talk about filmic space, perhaps the movie should open up a ‘practice’ venue for the spectator. There are several possible ways of doing this. It can be accomplished by making the spectator feel the ‘practice’ she is in at that moment; in other words,

making him/her feel the space of watching the movie. It can also be accomplished by assuring that the space set up by the film, by the moving image, either as image or as construction, is not simply locations where 'events take place', but goes beyond that and becomes related to the experiences of spectator.

Visual theorist and psychologist Rudolph Arnheim says that time and space is continuous in real life, but that it is "juggling with space" in cinema and asks why this does not disturb the spectator. He states that the answer is related to the "something-between"<sup>4</sup> status of cinema: "Film gives simultaneously the effect of an actual happening and of a picture. A result of the 'pictureness' of film is, then, that a sequence of scenes that are diverse in time and space is not felt as arbitrary..." (Arnheim, cited in Heath 1989: 40)

In conventional cinema, even though the time and space of scenes continuously change, this should not be perceived by the spectator as arbitrary. In space construction, setting up continuity from shot to shot is essential. In a movie, there can be close-ups of objects and people, but this should be done by "avoiding any disorientation of the spectator in respect of his or her own 'reasoned' analysis of the spatial continuum". Spaces which are shown piece by piece as we move from shot to shot by transitions combine in the mind of the spectator and she is linked to the space of the movie (Heath 1989: 40). Space in cinema is unlike from real space, but uses

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<sup>4</sup> Arnheim argues that by the flow of images in cinema and by means of various optical phenomena, an illusion of movement is created and as a result an image of movement occurs. And he adds that: "...the result is characterized as 'neither absolutely two-dimensional nor absolutely three-dimensional, but something in between'. The 'something between' is the habitual response to the famous 'impression of reality' in cinema and it is this impression, this reality that are of concern here in their implications for a consideration of space in film (cited in Heath 1989: 40).

some of its characteristics and ‘reconstitutes’ its own space. “In fact, we are in the realm of ‘composition’, where composition is now the laying out of a succession of images in order to give the picture, to produce the implication of a coherent (‘real’) space; in short, to create continuity” (42).

Continuity in space is especially established by transitions. In other words, since spatial continuum is crucial in cinema, this characteristic is sought after even in shot to shot transitions: “making a smooth cut means joining two shots in such a way that the transition does not create a noticeable jerk and the spectator’s illusion of seeing a continuous piece of action is not interrupted” (Reisz and Millar, cited in Heath 1989: 42).

Actually, contrary to what is generally assumed, in cinema, spatial “continuity is built on fragmentation rather than the long take”(Heath 1989: 43). If the movement is not distributed to different shots and is presented to the spectator in one long take shot, then only a part of the space in which action takes place can be shown to the spectator. However, for example, when a conversation between two people is presented with shot-reverse shot, the space, which was implied in the previous shot by the use of look and point of view structures, movements, etc. is shown in the reverse shot. This process has been defined as ‘suture’<sup>5</sup> and it is very important in connecting the spectator to the movie:

In its movement, its framings, its cuts, its intermittences, the film ceaselessly possesses an absence, a lack, which is ceaselessly recaptured for [...] the

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<sup>5</sup> This term is used by Jean-Pierre Oudart for the first time. (“Cinema and Suture”, Screen 18, 4 [Winter 1977/1978]: 35, 39.



film, that process binding the spectator as subject in the realization of the film's space (52).

Since what determines the frame in cinema is movement, movement and transitions should also be covered while discussing space construction in cinema. Figures do not stay motionless inside the frame but move. Generally, in order to catch this movement and present it to the spectator in the most appropriate manner, it is necessary to transit to another shot. Transition occupies a very important role in the construction of filmic space for "achieving a coherence of place and positioning the spectator as the unified and unifying subject of its vision" (Heath 1989: 38). The creation of an illusion of reality, which is held to be at the top of things that are considered to constitute the power of cinema or its difference from other arts, lies precisely at this point: "[i]f several successive images represent a space under different angles, the spectator, victim of the 'trick effect', spontaneously perceives the space as unitary" (Metz, cited in Heath 1989: 39).

It would be useful to mention one point which is usually ignored but is particularly emphasized especially by Christian Metz and Walter Benjamin: the identification of the spectator with the camera in cinema<sup>6</sup>. This lies at the basis of the fact that point of view shot can work: "The spectator must see and this structuring vision is the condition of the possibility of the disposition of the images via the relay of character look and viewpoint, which pulls together vision and narrative" (Heath 1989: 48). The perspective space, which is at the basis of visual organization in cinema, takes the

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<sup>6</sup> In his article titled 'The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin writes that 'the audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera'. Metz mentions that the "primary identification" of the spectator in cinema is with the camera in his book, Imaginary Signifier.

camera to the center and thus it takes the eyes to the center and the whole visual organization is carried out accordingly.

When the spectator is identified with the camera, the vision of the spectator also changes each time the position of the camera changes with camera movements or with each new shot. Thus in classical cinema, in order for a spectator to see the 'ideal picture' of a scene, the scene is narrated according to the point of view of an observer who can freely move in a room [which is 'ideal picture']. The movement in space in the scene is carried out by either editing or by camera movement within a shot.

Regarding 'ideal picture', Heath posits that, the set-up is arranged "for the central observer (and spectator); every shot or reframing adds a difference" to this arrangement:

The director's aim is to give an 'ideal picture' of the scene, in each case placing his camera in such a position that it records most effectively the particular piece of action or detail which is dramatically significant. He becomes, ubiquitous observer, giving the audience at each moment of the action the best possible viewpoint (Reizs and Millar 1968: 215; cited in Heath 1985: 49).

### **3.2.2.2. Variables of viewing and picturing**

#### **3.2.2.2.1. View and viewing angle**

One of the things, which determine the structure of the framing, which is one of the most important aspects of coherence of space, is 'angle of shot' (Davis 2002: 102).

As John Harrington puts it, angle of shot is used in cinema narration mostly when a

filmmaker “tells the viewer how to feel about a character or an action by a shot angle” (cited in Davis 2002: 103).

Another characteristic of the angle of view in framing is the “use or avoidance of symmetry and the tendency to prioritize the center of the screen” (Davis 2002: 103). Bordwell posits that Hollywood prioritizes the center of the screen while avoiding symmetry. Centralizing the action or the characters during framing, in other words centralizing the things, which are important for the narrative, stems from the tradition that the spectator follows the narrative while watching the film. This way, it is assured that the viewer’s attention is kept “away from the artificial frame of the image” (Bordwell 1985: 50-5; cited in Davis 2002: 103). In conventional cinema, symmetry in frame organization is avoided and the movement of the subject matter is organized according to three-quarter view. Rather than orthogonality of the movement, a “dominance of diagonal movement, typically from near-left to far-right” is observed (104). Harrington relates that the reason for this choice of conventional cinema is that the vertical or horizontal movement of characters reminds / shows / makes apparent the boundaries of the frame to the spectator (cited in Davis 104).

#### **3.2.2.2.2. The Lens**

There are two kinds of lenses that are used in cinema: Longer and wide-angle lenses. “Longer lenses offer a narrower field of view and a correspondingly larger picture of the scene, which is not equivalent to positioning the camera closer”. On the other hand, more objects can be seen on screen with the wide-angle shot scenes and hence they provide more information compared to longer lenses (Davis 2002: 106).

... [O]bjects appear to be far apart; anything approaching the camera will appear huge and out of proportion; movement towards and away from the camera seems very rapid; as a result, action may be surprising or threatening; and though people seem more isolated and distant when seen through a wide-angle lens, they come together at a startling rate. By contrast the long lens is more selective; compresses depth, forcing a subject against its background; eliminates all but a few key details (Harrington cited in Davis 2002: 106).

In a setup shot with wide-angle lens, the qualities of the scene “tend towards the sculptural” since there is a depth of field and both the background and the foreground are in focus. On the other hand, in scenes shot with long lens, the background goes toward the foreground, creating a more flattening, deprived of depth effect. Hence long lens “produces a more painterly aspect. Such perspectives offer trade-offs in informational expressiveness, the wide lens captures more across the scene but makes distant objects relatively small, while the long lens loses information in the plane but presents a relatively larger view of distant objects” (Davis 2002: 106-107).

### **3.2.2.2.3. Zoom**

We have stated that the visual organization in conventional cinema was narrative-centric. In a movie, you might have to get closer to an action, an object, a character, etc., in proportion to its importance in following the narrative:

Zooming in on a subject serves the practical need of revealing greater detail within a small part of a scene without the cut which would be inevitable if two or more different lenses were used, but it is also an analogue of the

psychological process of increasingly concentrating one's attention on part of a scene (Davis 2002: 107).

However, in cinema, transiting to a new shot with cutting and showing the object to be approached with close-up is conventionally used more often than zooming.

Generally, zooming is made either in a very slight way so that the spectator will not notice it or it is made in order to organize the frame according to the objects in motion within the frame, rather than coming very close to the object as the narrative necessitates. Alternatively, it is used to tell a psychological situation like when Hitchcock uses zoom-in with track-out to describe the character's feeling of vertigo.

#### **3.2.2.2.4. Focus**

Focus is also one of the most important instruments of the filmmaker to lead the spectator to where to look inside the frame. In Harrington's words, "focus gives a filmmaker an additional measure of *rhetorical control* over where a viewer looks" (Harrington 1973: 66 cited in Davis 2002: 107).

There are two types of focus, which should be mentioned here. One of them is "soft focus where no part of the image is fully focused". It is used in cinema either to create a romanticisation effect, or to imply the semi-consciousness when it is used as if the point of view of a character (Davis 2002: 108). Another focus type is 'pulling focus' where filmmaker changes the focus plane<sup>7</sup> dynamically. In this case, "[t]he intention is to transfer clear definition from one actor or significant object to another,

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<sup>7</sup> There are two variables with focus that should be mentioned here: "that distance from the lens which is in optimal focus (the location of the *focal plane*); how much of the available depth in the scene is in focus (the *focal range* or depth of field)" (Davis 2002: 107).

as an analogue to the process of shifting one's attention (either deliberately or through the act of noticing), similar to the uses of zoom" (109). However, it is used in cinema more often than zooming. It is especially a frequently used method to lead attention away from one object to another without cuts in setups with a large depth of field.

#### **3.2.2.2.5. Superimposition**

Superimposition is overlaying two images "on screen by double exposure of the film in the camera or by post-processing" (Davis 2002: 109). It is usually used during a change from one scene to another scene when the new shot fades in as the previous shot fades. This way, the spatial and temporal change (change from the location of a scene to the location of another scene, jumps in time) in the narrative structure is carried out slowly or in a more digestible manner in the spectator's perception.

Superimposition can be used in transition or it can be used in such a way as the images overlay each other. This second usage is less frequent; possibly because it harms the naturalistic effect that conventional cinema wants to create. In cases where it is used, for example as in the movie *Amelie*, it is used in scenes of daydreaming or remembering. For instance, in the scene where Amelie imagines the man she loves coming to her house (as we see Amelie cooking at home, we also see the man coming to home, talking to the greengrocer, etc, at the upper portion of the same frame).

## **4. Time and Space Construction in Nuri Bilge Ceylan Films**

So far in this thesis, narrative following as one of the leading habits, which causes a moving away from the shock effects of cinema, the dominance of narrative and the perception of the temporal and spatial effects of cinema according to these, were discussed. Afterwards, the construction of time and space in conventional cinema was studied.

In this part of the thesis, I want to analyze the construction of time and space in the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, which makes me live through a time and space perception different from my spectatorship habits. I will do this over the topics covered in the second chapter, which deal with time and space construction in narrative cinema. Then, I will go on to comprehend what is different in these movies in the context of time and space construction.

### **4.1. Time Construction in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's Films**

#### **4.1.1. Temporal Order**

In Nuri Bilge Ceylan's films, chronological order of events in the fabula is not changed in the syuzhet. Only simultaneous fabula events are spread out successively in the syuzhet, by using crosscutting between the shots, which is more common in cinema. I think successive representation of simultaneous fabula events is a way in which the cinematic medium/apparatus can be realized less than in the other way, which is representation of them simultaneously.

In all three of Ceylan's films, there is not any flash-forward and there is only one flashback. The flashback scene is in *Kasaba*: when Saffet is talking with his family in the garden, he remembers the time, during which he was leaving the town for his military service. This is also a unique scene in which there is a narrator voice-over. Hence, except this scene, in all three of the films, the order of the fabula events are preserved at the syuzhet presentation.

But there is a much more important point, which is deviant from a "normal" spectator's habit. In both *Kasaba* and *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, there are some shots, which we could not say easily whether the 'action' in that scene occurred after the action in the previous shot, or they happened simultaneously. For example, in *Kasaba*; after the opening of the school sequence, there are some shots in which a man is looking outside a window, a man who is walking on the street, and an empty street where only a dog is strolling. We do not know the exact temporal order of them. This raises several questions. What is the effect of this (the fact that shots cannot be connected to each other with a temporal order) on the spectator's following of the narrative? Is it that we could not give a temporal reference to these shots because there is not a following of the narrative or is it because these shots became episodes parted from the narrative since their temporal location was not known? What is the general role of these episodes in spectator's watching of the film?

#### **4.1.2. Temporal Frequency**

Another aspect about narrative time is frequency. Although spectator can presume that the fabula events are unique occurrences, they can be represented in the syuzhet any number of times (Bordwell 1984: 79). In the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, the



frequency of fabula events is represented in the same way in syuzhet. So in the films, this narration tool (changing the frequency of fabula occurrences in the syuzhet) is not used.

#### **4.1.3. Duration**

We said that in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's movies, neither the order nor the frequencies of events in the fabula change in the syuzhet. Regarding duration, it would be beneficial to add the following: in Ceylan's movies, the durations of certain sequences in the syuzhet have come very close to the durations in the fabula. Actually, at first glance, possibly because of the effect that time does not seem to flow easily, one can think that fabula, syuzhet and screen durations are close to each other beyond habits.

However, when one thinks it over, it becomes evident that the effect of the caesura of time flow cannot stem from such a thing. This is because in *Kasaba*, even though we do not know the fabula duration precisely, we know that the story takes place in a period starting in winter and lasting sometime until the beginning of summer.

However at the syuzhet, the director shows us only some parts of this story duration, which lasts over seasons (the school sequence at the beginning, the voyage of the children towards their homes across the fields and the evening chat at the garden of the house). In addition to this extreme non-intervention situation, on fabula's temporal reflection on the syuzhet, we observe that it is withheld from showing some events of the fabula in the syuzhet. Bordwell calls these as narrative 'ellipses', which he defines as "the shortening of plot duration achieved by omitting intervals of story duration" (1997: 478). Actually, similar ellipses are used in all narrative movies, but I believe the situation in N. B. Ceylan movies is a bit different. For example, in *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, we watch how the father worries about officials who survey and

appraise land coming to his field, we also look for these officials in the streets of the town one day when he thinks they have come. But the director does not show us this event, which is extremely important for the movie's narrative, plot and action.

Afterwards, we understand that the officials came and marked the trees when the family went away to Çanakkale. However, we cannot see this event, which is in the plot, in the syuzhet. In other words, we cannot see an event, which determines the whole motivation of one of the main characters even though we see several events, situations, scenes (characters watching sceneries, walking at roads, scratching their feet, watching TV while sitting on divan, etc.) which are not so "important" in the syuzhet in terms of plot. In *Uzak*, we do not see Yusuf, which is one of the two main characters in the movie, leaving the house towards the final. What we see in the syuzhet is Mahmut's coming home and seeing things such as the key hang up at the hallstand and the packet of cigarettes, which Yusuf forgot at his room, implying that Yusuf had left, but we do not actually see him leaving.

We can state that, syuzhet approaches and resembles to fabula by all terms of order, frequency and duration. Those points that syuzhet goes away from the fabula are considered to be determined by the narrative in cinema, but in these films it cannot be seen like this.

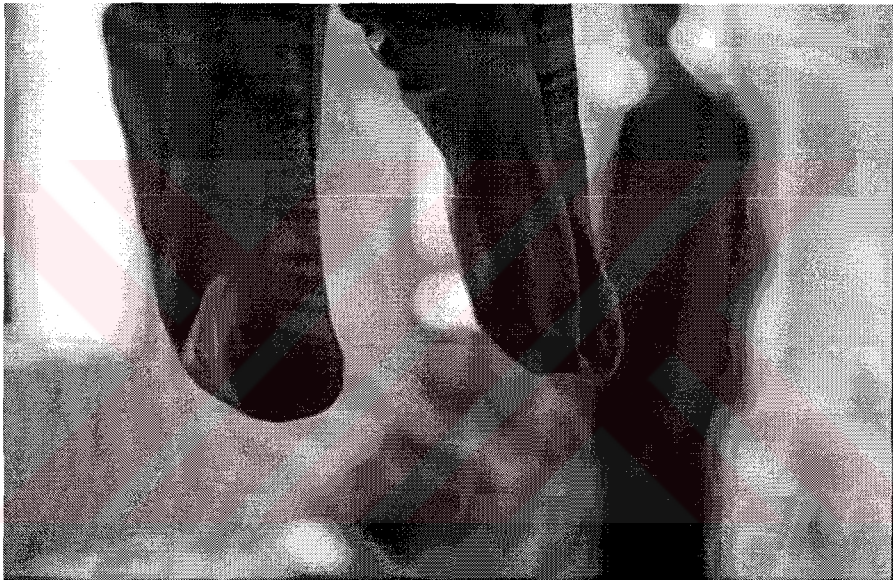
#### **4.1.4. Different Temporal Operations in the Films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan**

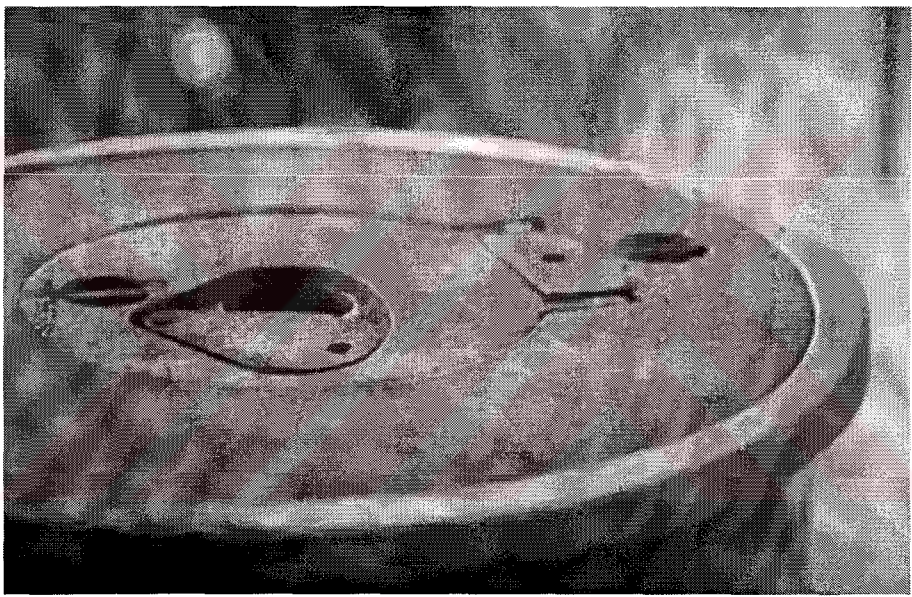
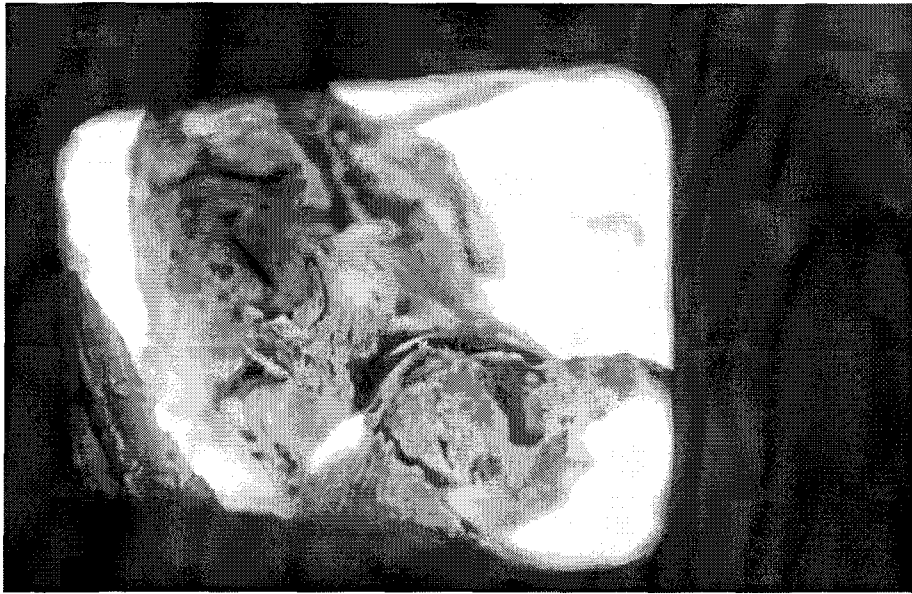
##### **4.1.4.1. The Time Inhabited**

I do not think Bordwell's terminology on time is sufficient to understand the time effect of Nuri Bilge Ceylan's films. There are different operations that I could not explain/understand accurately with the terms; temporal order, frequency and

duration. For example, in the opening sequence of *Kasaba* (see Picture Plate-1; pages: 43- 45), after coming to the classroom, Ismail hangs his wet socks over the stove. Then we see in close-up the dripping of water from his socks and begin to hear the dripping sound closer - however in the previous scene, a student was reading a piece and his voice was coming louder - we see Ismail's bare feet and see Asiye (we think she is looking at him). We realize that the reading piece, which we still hear from the background, is about poverty. We see the feather, which the children were playing before the arrival of teacher, falling in front of Asiye in slow motion; the feather flies over the classroom and we watch this from a high angle in slow motion. We see the dripping of the drop and the burning woods in close-up. All these consequent images makes a deviant effect on us, we feel that the time does not flow but would stretch like this. It is as if the time but swells inside us, it has to pierce our bodies in order to flow because it has penetrated us once. Precisely at a point like this when time has condensed so much, we transit to a street where dogs are wandering around. There is perhaps a feeling of relaxation stemming from being outdoors; being at a different space, being at a time where time would flow (at this point, Saffet has woken up and is looking outside from his window). The time effect in the scene cannot be explained by duration, frequency and temporal order.

Here we can talk about the fact that apart from both the other experiences of film watching and also the other parts of this film, the time constructed in these scenes seems and felt as if it does not pass away; it is as if the time is denser than usual or suspended. This situation can be best understood by the concepts related to experience. In the conclusion chapter, this will be discussed in relation with the terms long experience and isolated experience.







**Picture Plate-1: School Sequence from *Kasaba***

#### 4.1.4.2. Moments departing from the time

Another important scene which help us to understand temporal operations in these films is from *Mayıs Sıkıntısı* (see Picture Plate-2; pages: 46-47); the narrative is halted and we watch the footage of Muzaffer's father and mother which he had shot in the past. The mother and the father are in the nature and there is non-diegetic music. Different setups are shown to us at long periods; it is as if the mother and father who are looking at the camera/their son are also looking at the spectator. The spectator is dispatched from the narrative and leaves herself to the flow of the images. In the images seen, is there a time other than the time of the movie or a feeling of timelessness? (Is it because time is not linear or is it because it has separated from the time of the narrative / does it lose its reference when it is separated from the narrative?)





**Picture Plate-2: Footage Sequence from *Mayıs Sıkıntısı***



#### 4.1.4.3. Slow and Fast Motion

In slow motion, the screen duration lasts more than the duration of syuzhet, and the other way round in fast motion. In Ceylan's films there is only one shot in which fast motion is used although slow motion is used in a few shots.

In *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, after a rehearsal with an old man, Muzaffer comes near to a fence with a wide landscape view and looks at the scene. We see still images in a strip; a donkey just standing, a sheep grazing, an old chair is waving slowly in the wind. Then we see Muzaffer, who is looking at these objects, leaning against the fences. He stands still also, a fast motion shot begins and the clouds pass away rapidly over him. But since there is no movement in the frame, this fast motion is not felt as usual. Only the clouds and branches in the frame move. After the still images previously mentioned, the existing but not properly felt fast motion points to a change in the time construction of the film. It is as if time has not passed (motionlessness) but the subjective time of Muzaffer has elapsed in a vast speed (fast motion). Again the contradiction in time of this shot is effected by the disharmony between the image track and the soundtrack. In this shot, the images having been fast forwarding, soundtrack is just the same as in the previous shot; those sounds of dog and birds belong to the present time.

Slow motion exists in all three films although fast motion exists only in one. In those slow motion shots in *Kasaba* and *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, while the characters being in the nature, the wind condenses and the sound of the wind in the soundtrack makes the rustling of the leaves louder; we watch the swinging of trees and their leaves, and the waving hair of the characters under our attention. This waving is given by a close-up

but this is not a looking of a person in the narrative as the characters are alone. We cannot either consider these shots as objective because the scale of close-up is not suitable for this and the previous objective shots are given in general shots; so this kind of close-up means a special concentration of the narrator to the given situations. In this context, the viewing belongs to the narrator and the spectator shares this glance.

In conventional cinema slow motion is used in shots that are crucial for the narrative. First ones coming to mind are the moments of death, falling of a character or meeting of lovers. All of these situations are important for the narrative since they are the moments in which emotions are dense; dramatic, romantic or tragic emotions become denser. However the usage of this method in Ceylan's films disassembles the time perception and a new time construction is introduced rather than representation of such emotional moments. Then, how does this affect the spectator in the process of watching film and is it possible to gain long experience for the spectator? These questions will be handled in the conclusion chapter.

## **4.2. Space Construction in the Cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan**

### **4.2.1. Narration and Space:**

I would like to begin with the concepts in Stephen Heath's article titled "Narrative Space" to examine the space construction in the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan. In his article, Heath relates that in narrative cinema, the frame space is arranged as narrative space and also transforms to it. We can say that, in the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan narrative is being digressed during the construction of the space in frame. For example, in *Kasaba*, it even shows us other things in the closing sequence

where the family talks, as the dialogues still continue. The trees waving with wind, the firewoods burning (even the sound of the burning woods suppresses the talking of the characters as if they are unimportant) or grandmother peeling a fruit are all examples. We cannot claim that the talks of the family members are already unimportant for the narration here. From the beginning, we are given long speeches with all the details and the narration is built on those discussions. However, as the narration continues, at some points frame goes away from the narration and builds the space of some specific moments and situations although the space of the frame is constructed over narration.

Also in *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, there are some passes from the parent's room to Muzaffer's room in the scene where he first comes home at night and the family members wake up. We first see Muzaffer putting voice recording devices in his parent's room. When we later go on to parents' room (they are the parents who talk during the entire scene), we expect to see them talking, that is, see the source of the sound we hear. But what we see is just his mom's feet in an almost dark frame. Again the moments of the narrative or details of it are shown more than the narrative itself when the frame is constructed. We know the characters not by means of something based on their psychological profundity or contradictions but by their postures, glances or even by means of such simple acts as holding an object at a given moment.

Heath also mentions a "negation of space for place" in narrative cinema (1981: 39). In the previous chapter, we had related this with the definition of space by de Certeau as "practiced place" and in this context explained that for one to talk about space in cinema, either the film must make it obvious for the spectator of the place she is in or

the space in the frame must be related with the experiences of the spectator by previous practices. In the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, space is not constructed in a way that helps us to see the boundaries of the screen or the viewing space. But in most scenes, the space of the frame becomes the space of the spectator as if the space/scene engulfs the spectator. For example, during the opening sequence-shot in *Uzak* (see Picture Plate-3; pages 53-55), we see Yusuf left his town and heading towards the highway. Camera is fixed at the side of the road and walking of Yusuf is shown without cut; he climbs over the incline, we watch his coming at a great length, then he comes to the edge of the road and looks at his town for a last time and passes across the highway. Up to this time, the place of Yusuf we see in the frame is watched like the place where the narrative action occurs; but when he leaves the frame it seems as if we are the ones who are looking at the landscape. Then, we are left alone with the landscape, hear a sound of car coming left of the road, behave as a person in that space and look at it (very slow pan left occurs here) and later Yusuf walks a few steps and enters into the frame. Now frame belongs to the narrative. But it cannot be the place much more because we had been in it a few seconds ago, it seems as if we are still there and Yusuf stands next to us.

We had also mentioned that coherent space is very important during space construction in cinema and when moving from a shot to another, it is tried to have no unusualness and fragmentation in the perception of the spectator of the place and if they occur in the same scene there should be no hesitation felt in successive shots about whether the place is the continuation of the very same place. Heath argues that this “continuity is built on fragmentation rather than the long take” in space construction (Heath 1989: 43). One of the most preferred methods in establishing this

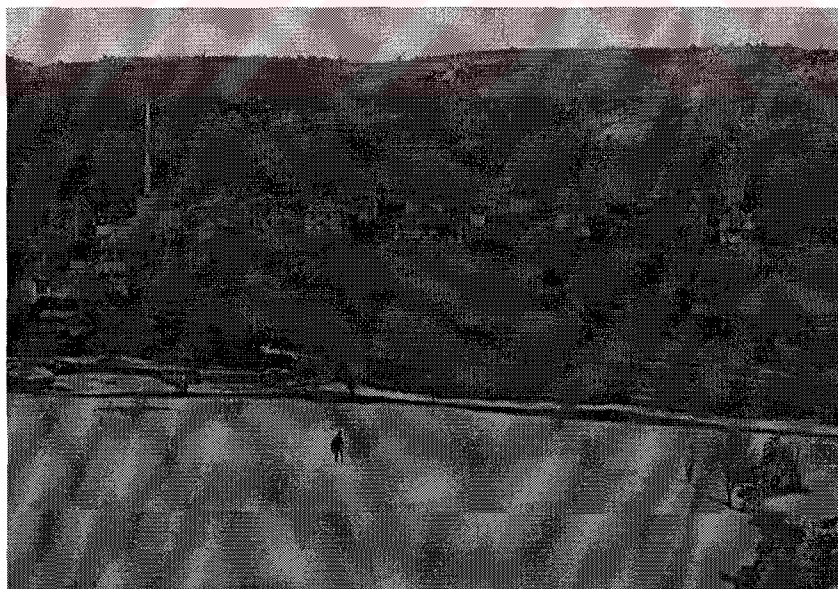
continuity is shot-reverse shot. By this way, two directions of the place formed by the glances and movements of the characters can be shown and a more coherent space is ensured in the perception of the spectator. Nuri Bilge Ceylan generally tries to shoot the scenes, which take place in a single place, with a single shot. We can also observe nearly no camera movement (short pans for catching the movements of the characters but those are too slow to be noticed by the spectator). Naturally by that way, the position of the camera in a place is almost fixed and we always see one direction of the mentioned space – never see anything behind the camera. For instance, in *Uzak* (see Picture Plate-4; page 56), we, the spectators, feel us next to the characters inside the room. Generally what is done in cinema is showing the place in a fragmentary way. By that way, the space in which the spectator does not exist is also constructed; space is the place where the characters live and action occurs. But the room in *Uzak* is not without our existence, we watch the characters as if we are in the place of the camera.

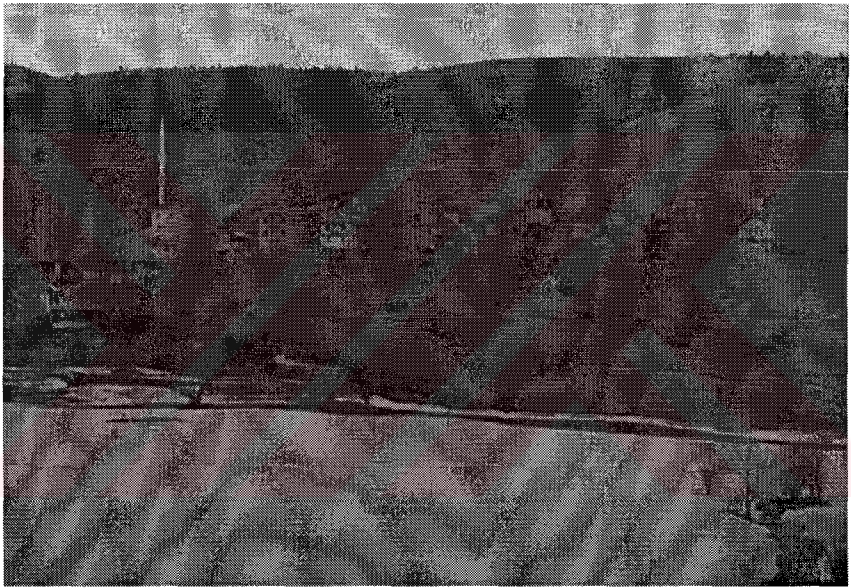
We had also stated that, “important” things are positioned at the center of the frame during frame construction. In this context, we do not observe a special difference in the frame construction of these films. The objects to be shown are again centered on the frame, but what differs is that there are lots of times that these do not have a narrative significance. A tree, a leaf or even grasses are centered on the frame although they are not important or characteristic objects for the narrative...

For shot scale, we can easily say that close-up does not exist in the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan. The only close-up I remember from *Uzak* is the shot at which Muzaffer looks for the watch in a box and maybe it is the only way to show the

watch among other objects in the box. Or in *Kasaba*, so as to make a comparison between the eye of the child and that of the donkey, a big close-up - one that is as big as generally not used in cinema - is used.

In close-up shots, object occupies a big proportion of the frame. If the object is a character, spectator stays alone with her and this shot scale is appropriate to identification and to share the feelings of the character. In all of his films, long shots are mostly used. At this kind of shot scale, there is a distance between character and spectator. Instead of sharing the feelings of him, spectator watches character from a distance. Mostly we see the character in the nature surrounds him. Aristotle posits, “a good tragedy will evoke pity and fear in its viewers, causing the viewers to experience a feeling of catharsis”. But by representing the characters in long shot and avoiding close-up, these films do not evoke that kind of feelings in us, but we understand the characters and empathize with them, but we never identify with them.







**Picture Plate-3: Opening Sequence from *Uzak***





**Picture Plate-4: Interior Shots from *Uzak***

## **4.2.2. Variables of Viewing and Picturing:**

### **4.2.2.1 The Lens / Movement**

Wide-angle lens is frequently used in cinema. It is widely preferred to establish a depth of field by long shot, get clear shots in both foreground and background without losing focus especially in landscape scenes. Stephen Boyd Davis states that the shots taken by wide-angle “tend towards the sculptural” and in those taken by long focus background goes over the foreground resulting in a poor depth of field and flattening views, the long lens “produces a more painterly aspect” (2002:107). The shots taken by wide-angle are usually landscape scenes and also these have little if any movement. According to Heath, the most crucial thing that differentiates cinema from photography is the movement itself. Again here, I believe that an ambiguous situation exists. Take for instance *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*... In the first shot in which Muzaffer and his father come to the wood, the camera is positioned on the far side of the area and we see them in a shot taken by wide-angle that no movement exists. What Davis means by “sculptural” must be something with three-dimensional affect. And in this context, this shot creates a feeling of a falling into it and looking at the landscape from the field rather than doing this act “outside” a painting. And in the subsequent shot, Muzaffer and the father is viewed inactive looking at the motionless landscape. This gets us out of space that we are in; we see the two as they pose rather than looking them to the landscape and this results in an effect of looking at a painting or a photograph.

Throughout the film, we encounter similar shots having long durations. In fact, if we had encountered these in the beginning for a few times and with short durations, we would not feel strange about the situation since we are used to this kind of viewing

from our previous watching experiences. The reason is that these shots will be useful for us in introducing the spatiality that the film occurs in. These are called establishment shots (such that establishes and constructs the spatiality of the film) having a greater scale than long shot (usually referred to as extreme long shot) that help us to deduce “ok, the events will take place here, and what is next”. We see this kind of landscape shots throughout the film: the fields, grasses waving with wind and trees. Nevertheless, we watch all these long shots not as a ‘spectator’ who is watching the film, but as a ‘person’ who is in front of that scene. Then, the question is what kind of a time and space construction exists in these shots, which makes us to feel as being in the landscape, rather than directs us to follow the narrative beforehand. There must be a change in time-space structure that enables this kind of time-space experience.

#### **4.2.2.2 Zoom / Focus**

The act of zoom which is usually used in “B picture” type of low cost productions even the conventional cinema abstain from is never used in the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan in parallel with his using camera movements in the minimum. The method used in his films is “pulling focus” if the object is to get the attention of the spectator to another place. For instance, in *Mayıs Sıkıntısı* the father is at the yard of the house in the early morning whenever he learns that the trees are marked. We see him in the background, near the door of the yard. Then, the door in the foreground opens and Muzaffer enters the place. At this point the focus pulls to the foreground from the background and later when Muzaffer approaches his father, the focus pulls back to the background. But the dominating kind of shot in his films is that having depth of field, having focus in everyplace of the frame although such “pull focusing” shots

occur.

#### **4.2.2.3 Superimposition**

By using superimposition, the spatial and temporal change (change from the location of a scene to the location of another scene, jumps in time) in the narrative structure is carried out slowly or in a more digestible manner in the spectator's perception. But we cannot encounter with superimposition in the director's films. This is not an act of creating a shock in the time and space perception of the spectator. There are smooth transitions among the shots and we pass to the next shot directly. However, in several places throughout the movie, the soundtrack of the subsequent scene starts at the previous scene and this prepares the spectator to the next space in a very slight manner. Yet, it should be noted that this operation is not carried out in a dense way, which would make the spectator to become aware of the medium.

#### **4.2.2.4 Ideal Picture**

Reizs and Millar argue that to establish an 'ideal picture', the camera must be positioned by the director in a way that it frames the important event having a dramatic effect (Reizs and Millar 1968:215; cited in Heath 1985: 49). If the "ideal picture" is defined dependent on the action this way, there are a lot of shots that go away from the "ideal picture" in these films. Again, in the above example where Muzaffer and his father are viewed on the far side of the field, the camera is positioned such distant that, we can hardly see Muzaffer and the father whom are diminished to a spot, no need to mention about the action. But interestingly you, as a spectator interfering with the film, can feel and understand that there is no action missed which is crucial for the narrative whether the camera positioned in a closer

place and watch the landscape and environment after some point. One of the shots that are far from the “ideal picture” is this: in *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, Saffet goes to a playroom and sits at a table. Camera is on the far side of the room and Saffet is the important person for the narrative because in the previous shot his coming to the place is shown. Spectator wants to see the character but it remains in background and those in the foreground makes him unavailable to the spectator, sometimes he is even invisible.



## 5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I want to discuss, within the context of the theoretical framework of the thesis, the questions and issues raised in the chapter on time and space construction in the movies of Nuri Bilge Ceylan.

### 5.1. Engulfment / Coexistence

In the theoretical framework put forward in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, it was seen that there were two kinds of perception of artworks in general and of cinema in particular. In the first one, the artwork is perceived with contemplation, the spectator is absorbed by the artwork and forgets the space-time she is in at the moment and loses her awareness. The other kind is a perception, which Tom Gunning describes as an experience opposite to perception by absorption. In this kind of perception, the “cinema of attractions” catches the spectator with shock effects. Gunning characterizes this as ‘anti-aesthetic’ with reference to Michael Fried.

Then, where does the perception style which Nuri Bilge Ceylan cinema presents itself into, stand with reference to these two poles? In terms of both form and narrative, his movies seem far away from the intention of attaching the spectators to themselves by shocks. However, is the experience lived here absorption of the spectator by the artwork? Here, I want to go back to Michael Fried in order to understand this experience in the best way. Fried has dealt with the issue of what happens to the beholder when she meets an artwork. Fried’s discussions are about sculpture and painting, but they can also be applied to other areas of art. Fried in his book ‘Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot’

(1980), distinguishes between the terms ‘engulf’<sup>8</sup> and ‘absorb’, which Diderot writes about in his *Encyclopédie* (1751):

TO ABSORB, TO ENGULF, synonyms. To absorb expresses a general but successive action, which, beginning only in one part of the subject, continues thereafter and spreads over the whole. But to engulf indicates an action whose general effect is rapid, and seizes everything at the same time without breaking it up into parts. The first is particularly related to consumption and destruction; the second properly designates something that envelops, sweeps away, and causes suddenly to disappear. Thus fire absorbs, so to speak, but water engulfs. It is according to the same analogy that one speaks in a figurative sense of being absorbed in God, or in the contemplation of some object, when one gives oneself up to it with all one’s thought without allowing oneself the least distraction. I do not think that to engulf can be used in a figurative sense (*Ouvres complètes*, V: 231-32; quoted in Sarikartal 1999: 99-100).

Here, one of the most important differences between engulf and absorb is that, in a relation of absorption, the object which absorbs (the artwork) is in a ‘higher’ position than the spectator. The spectator holds on to the form and gives herself to it. At the end of this relation, the spectator is as if being pulled to a different space-time than she is in. This can either be over the cult value of the object or absorption by the narrative. Contemporary conventional cinema generally works this way. The spectator is absorbed either over a visual form (a figure) she is exposed to, or over a character that affects her in the narrative or over the stars, which is according to Benjamin the response of the cinema to the “shriveling of the aura with an artificial build-up of the ‘personality outside the studio’”<sup>9</sup> (1969: 231). In this experience, the

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<sup>8</sup> I thank Sarikartal who suggested me to approach the difference in the movies of Nuri Bilge Ceylan with the term ‘engulf’ and hence opened my way forward.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin continues this important assertion which he made ‘in passing’ as: “The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the “spell of the personality,” the phony spell of a commodity” (1969: 231).

spectator goes to a different space-time than she is in. The time-space in the artwork, which absorbs is a representative one. The spectator goes to a representative place. When she comes back, what she has lived is a “vicarious adventure” and for this reason, as Freud says, the spectator of such a relation is “who experiences too little” (Freud 1905-6: 305; cited in Sarikartal 1999: 123). The lived experience is actually far away from belonging to that person and because of this, seems closer to the characteristics of isolated experience [Erlebnis]. What remains at the end of the experience are only the datas at intellectual memory. Susan Buck-Morss’s term ‘experience’ when she is saying “perception becomes experience only when it connects with sense-memories of the past” is similar with Benjamin’s ‘long experience’ [Erfahrung]. Hence, the perception in the mode of absorption has a little opportunity to enable the spectator to live long experience.

On the other hand, “to engulf” corresponds to a coexistence opposed to absorption. In the movies of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, many scenes where we move away from following the narrative, the spectator is engulfed. Rather than contemplation, these movies expect the spectator to fill in the space-time vacuums by associations coming from her own ‘sense memories’, and so it has a chance to turn a long experience [Erfahrung]. Here there is an invitation to the spectator, a polite invitation. The coexistence characteristics of the movie partially come from this. It is as if the movie is completed and ‘works’ if the spectator fills these vacuums with her own associations. (Of course, the movie exists in its material existence no matter how the spectator responds to it; but what is meant here is that the movie is completed by the spectators’ imaginary). This way, what these movies expect from the spectator is a situation of “pseudo becoming”. However, of course the sense of becoming and time and space difference which the movies of Nuri Bilge Ceylan create in the spectator is very different from “highly conscious awareness of the film image engaging the viewer’s curiosity” (Gunning 1989: 121) lived in ‘cinema of attractions’ whose time



and space experience for the spectator can be said to be the opposite of what is lived in absorption. The lived of spectator is not the remembering the time and space of film spectatorship process and its awareness. It is more like meeting the time and space of the events of the film's story. What the spectator meets after the distraction of the narrative, which flows above, are not the arrows of shock effects; what is met is rather aleatoric, daily and ordinary. The difference of this from absorption is that the spectator stands there as 'herself' and not over empathy, identification or involvement with narrative action. What is achieved in these movies with camera movements/inaction, with camera position is more like being a witness. In *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, when Muzaffer looks at the light diffusing from the leaf, we, the spectators, do not look at the leaf by becoming Muzaffer, we are there as ourselves and we share the look. It is as if Muzaffer/Director/Film says, "come and look, there is something beautiful here, stay and let's look together". The spectator either does not reject this invitation and sets the act of looking in motion or the movie may not attach the spectator who is not open to a sharing other than a vicarious experience in film watching.

The second situation is also related to the perception habits of the spectator in the world where "shock is the very essence of modern experience" (Buck-Morss 1993: 130). In this situation the purpose of the synaesthetic system is to: "numb the organism, to deaden the senses, to repress memory: the cognitive system of synaesthetics has become, rather, one of *anaesthetics*" (1993: 131). The end result of continuous numbing, continuous anesthesia is a loss of senses. As Benjamin says, in the modern world, the eyes "have lost their ability to look" (1983: 147-149). "Of course, the eyes still see. Bombarded with fragmentary impressions they see too

much-and nothing. Thus the simultaneity of overstimulation and numbness is characteristic of the new synaesthetic organization as *anaesthetics*” (Buck-Morss 1993: 131). This is partially the reason why the invitation of Nuri Bilge Ceylan movies seems too distant, too out of habit and experience and causes ‘boredom’ for the modern human eye which has been molded by a practice of ‘seeing without looking’. Today, the constant sudden change of the images, which constitute the shock effect of the film according to Benjamin, has become something, which is sought after and has ceased being shocking.

This situation is directly related to the production, circulation, consumption, life-style and culture of the modern world. Buck-Morss, who sees exploitation as a cognitive category, says that the factory system “injuring every one of the human senses, paralyzes the imagination of the worker” (1993: 131). Thus, exactly for this reason, “[w]ith its dialectic of continuity and discontinuity, with the rapid succession and tactile thrust of its sounds and images, film rehearses in the realm of reception what the conveyor belt imposes upon human beings in the realm of production” (Miriam Hansen 2001: 184). However here lies the ambiguous aspect of the shock experience. The value/meaning/importance Benjamin and Kraucer give to cinema, which is perceived by shock, experience (or, in Gunning’s words, the ‘cinema of attractions’) stems from this fact. They see it as both a result of the “drying up of experience and its replacement by a culture of distraction as a result of this organization of the modern world, and they also see it as a response to it (Gunning 1989:126) <sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Tom Gunning continues his points regarding Kraucer this way: “The sudden, intense, and external satisfaction supplied by the succession of attractions was recognized by Kraucer as revealing the fragmentation of modern experience. The taste for thrills and spectacle, the particularly modern form of curiosities that defines

At this point, the film, either morally (over the narrative) or by playing with the time and space it creates, will create shocks more severe than the spectator is used to and cause her to live a long experience [Erfahrung]. This way, it will have a chance to “expose disintegration rather than masking it” (Kraucer cited in Gunning 1989: 128). However, this can anaesthetize by “flooding the senses” as Buck-Morss says, rather than numbing the organism. In this period, which Morss calls “crisis in perception”, “it is no longer a question of education the crude ear to hear music, but of giving it back hearing. It is no longer a question of training the eye to see beauty, but of restoring ‘perceptibility’” (1993: 131). When we approach this issue from such an angle, the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan have a significant potential in creating a long experience in the spectators and setting these senses in motion and animating them even though they are limited in attaching the distracted masses to themselves.

## **5.2. Inhabiting Time**

The differential temporal operation, which the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan lived to spectator, is called ‘inhabiting time’ in fourth chapter. I think I can discuss this temporal operation of the films with the terms, which are focus on experience of time and perception of time. I think I can use the terms on time, which Edward Said discusses about the handling of time in some musical forms. Said observes two, different kinds of artistic forms. Some forms are based on “conflict and domination and the overcoming of tension through forced reconciliation” whereas in some other forms, “the issue is to prolong, like in a theme and variation”. According to Said,

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the aesthetic of attractions, is moulded by a modern loss of fulfilling experience” (Gunning 1989: 128).

these two kinds of form refer to two different kinds of relationship with temporality: “whether you try to resist the time and erect the structure, or you try to ride time and live inside the time”. In reference to the work of Arab musician Umm Kulthum, Said proposes that the forms produced in the middle-eastern tradition “are based on an inhabiting time, not trying to dominate it” (cited in Sarkartal 2003: 140).

I think the difference between habits of spectator and temporal experience of spectator in the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan can be understood with Said’s proposals. The habits of spectator about temporal film watching experience is can be understood ‘trying to resist the time and erect the structure’. Also time experience of Nuri Bilge Ceylan’s film of the spectator seems to relate with ‘trying to ride time and live inside the time’. The spectator has relieved herself from the determination of ‘what is next’ in the sequences of *Mayıs Sıkıntısı* where she watches the father and the mother or in the school sequence of *Kasaba*; in these sequences, time is no longer only the time of the narrative, but transformed into an ‘inhabiting time’ for the spectator.

This situation is also related to the perception of these scenes with engulfment.. The temporal experience which Said defines as “conflict and domination and the overcoming of tension through forced reconciliation” is an experience which the classical conventional cinema in general wants the spectators to live and its is based absorption. The masses have already been distracted in their daily lives. They want a temporal experience which works with the same method (the method she is accustomed to), but which take them to a time (narrative time) away from their experiences.

A temporal spectatorship experience based on ‘inhabiting time’, as perceiver and perceived in co-existence, is also appropriate for the relation we define as engulfment type of perception. Neither the form absorbs the spectators nor the spectators “resist the time and erect the structure”. What is expected of the spectator regarding the vacuums left in the time and space texture of the film for the spectator is not to resist it, but to “live inside the time”.

### **5.3. Auratic Images in the Age of Withering of the Aura**

There was an issue regarding the films, especially *Kasaba* and *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*, which intrigued my mind from the beginning - the issue which was solved only when I understood the time and space experience of the spectator: In many scenes of the movies I sensed that auratic characteristics were tried to be loaded and given to the images; however, I could not precisely name that experience because some of the most important characteristics of aura like authenticity, cult and uniqueness could not be realized for the spectator in the cinematic medium. What the spectator experiences, with engulfment, is seeing/witnessing/sharing the auratic experience which the character lives. Benjamin defines aura of the natural objects as “the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch, which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch” (1969: 222-223). There is such an experience in the school sequence of *Kasaba* with the burning wood chunks or the flying feather, or with the light diffusing from the leaf which Muzaffer sees in *Mayıs Sıkıntısı*. In fact, in these scenes, this is not an experience of ourselves. Yet, what the spectator lives is not a

vicarious experience as in absorption either. It is as if the spectator is experiencing the aura of the natural object since what is lived is more like the spectator being there as herself although she actually is not there.

It can be thought that, among the scenes, which can be given as examples of auratic images, the scene of the images of Muzaffer's father and mother flowing from the camera Muzaffer plugs in is different. This difference is because we also look at the television as the characters do and then the images fill the whole screen. People, who have become familiar to us with many details from their lives from the way they hold the knife to scratching their feet to the accent in their speech, become different in these images. We know that they are Emin and Fatma, but they definitely seem different from them to us.

I think this can be related the following proposition by Miriam Hansen: “[t]he gaze that nature appears to be returning, however, does not mirror the subject in its present, conscious identity, but confronts us with another self, never before seen in a waking state” (2001: 188). Benjamin has also related that, “to experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look back at us” (1983: 338). It is as if the images, which we look in, these scenes turn around and look back at us (the spectator). For this reason, I think that the experience in this scene is close to an auratic experience than the previous ones. This experience, which the spectator lives, “corresponds to the data of *memorie involontaire*” and hence can be considered as long experience [Erfahrung].

A final remark should be made on further studies. This thesis has developed the argument that Nuri Bilge Ceylan movies have the potential to enable the spectator to live long experience due to the space-time vacuums left in these movies for the spectator. However, whether this potential is realized or not depends on the habitus of the spectator; that is to say, the creation of long experience potentially exists in the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan. At this point, it should also be reminded that in Ceylan's movies, what emerges in the vacuums in the narrative, which flows above, is aleotric, daily and ordinary. In other words, it is not related to any shock effect. Hence, rounding up what we have said so far, Ceylan's cinema, which does not work by shock effects, has the potential to create long experience.

The question, which comes to mind regarding further studies, is related to the prospects of a cinema with shocks effects on creating long experience. Can a cinema with shock effects still continue to be in line with Benjamin's project or does it cause a "flooding of the senses" in a situation of "crisis in perception", as Buck-Morss describes, which is another factor causing the anaesthesizing of the senses?

The question for further studies can thus be summed up as follows: It should be investigated whether shock cinema has fallen away from creating a long experience which Benjamin talks about or whether it has a far larger potential in this regard than a cinema like the cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan which does not aim a shock experience for the spectators?

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