Communication & Methods

Mapping the Cinematic City: Adana in Yılmaz Güney's Film

El mapeo de la Ciudad Cinematográfica: Adana en las películas de Yılmaz Güney

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Abstract:

As a structural element of cinema narration, space has always been a part of the film. On the other hand, the film and cinema studies have been the subject of interdisciplinary studies because of its layered and holistic structure. The cinematic geographies tend to use cartography, which has a novel method in the context of cinematic narration. That is because the director does not only use cinematic cityscapes and cinematic landscapes as a background but as the narration itself. This study aims to look at what cinematic geographies are and how its methodology can be applied to a specific director, namely Yılmaz Güney, and to an understanding of locality.

In this study, a Yılmaz Güney's film, *Seyyit Han: Toprağın Gelini* (*Seyyit Han: Bride of The Earth*, 1968), shoot in Adana are mapped by the cartographic method and then are analyzed contextually. Findings will be discussed through a triangulation of data collected from oral history and cartographic methods. In the conclusion part, cinematic Adana in the frame of Güney's the movie, and present physical Adana as a form of memory will be evaluated by the contextual film analysis method.

Keywords: Cinematic city; Cinematic geography; Cinematic cartography; Cinematic cityscapes and landscapes; Yılmaz Güney

Resumen:

Como elemento estructural de la narración cinematográfica, el espacio siempre ha formado parte de las películas. Por otro lado, el cine y los estudios cinematográficos han sido objeto de estudios interdisciplinarios debido a su estructura estratificada y holística. Las geografías cinematográficas utilizan la cartografía, que supone un método novedoso en el contexto de la narración cinematográfica. Esto se debe a que el director no sólo utiliza los paisajes urbanos o de otro tipo como fondo, sino como la narración misma. Este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar qué son las geografías cinematográ-

ficas y cómo su metodología puede ser aplicada a un director específico, Yılmaz Güney, y a una comprensión de la territorialidad.

En este estudio, una película de Yılmaz Güney, Seyyit Han: Toprağın Gelini (Seyyit Han: Bride of The Earth, 1968), rodada en Adana, se analiza utilizando el método cartográfico y luego contextualmente. Los hallazgos serán discutidos a través de una triangulación de datos recolectados de la historia oral y de los métodos cartográficos. Así, la Adana cinematográfica en el marco de la película de Güney, y la Adana física, presente como una forma de memoria, serán evaluadas por el método de análisis fílmico contextual.

Palabras clave: *Ciudad cinematográfica; Geografía cinematográfica; Cartografía cinematográfica; Paisajes y paisajes cinematográficos; Yılmaz Güney*

1. Introducction

> Mountains make people sceptical. It turns people against each other, makes people afraid of birds flying. It makes you suspect even your comrade. "Mountains make people more mature and tougher, plateaus softer and looser" his father used to say.
>
> (Baydar, 2009)

From the beginning, film studies first proceeded with the theories concerning the essence of cinema and with the methods based on the mainstream style of these theories. Afterward, film studies have been the subject of interdisciplinary studies under its inherent properties and the holistic structure. As a consequence of cinema's narrativity, space is also a part of the edition of the film, and necessarily cinematic geography has to be a subject of the film studies. Accordingly, as a new field, cinematic geography necessarily needs its method. The present study aims to look at what cinematic geographies are by having a holistic perspective from this point of view. The cinematic geographies tend to use cartography, which is an authentic method in this context. That is because the director does not only use cinematic cityscapes and cinematic landscapes as a background. Moreover, it is a paramount element in the cultural context of the director's cinematic narrative. Accordingly, as a consequence of the mainstream paradigms, film studies generally concentrate on urban films and the experience of the spectators. In this study, firstly, the theoretical background for this study will be explicated. Secondly, the context of the movie *Seyyit Han: The Bride of The Earth* (1968), that will be explicated, will be explained. This context will help in making sense of this method. Finally, how this method shall be used will be discussed.

2. Theoretical background

Studies on cinema, for a long time, has continued its existence over its authentic theories and historicity. After a while, the necessity of creating its theory has arisen. That is closely related to the fact that the subject thereof is human. Furthermore, because of its

interdisciplinary nature, cinema had to develop a more complex theory. While the first studies were examining the movies and evaluating them in their conceptual schemas, new studies evolved into the ones regarding the cinema as a whole, rather than focusing on movies and directors alone. Firstly, by that Roland Barthes (1979) deepened his analyses on spectators, the discussion on the doctrinaire position of the spectators has been initiated. Shortly thereafter, when David Bordwell (2011) criticized the positions of the subject, and then by that, the relation between subjectivity and objectivity has changed, it has been criticized to indoctrinate the hegemonic culture depending on race, gender, and politics. The result of these fundamental changes in cinema is making sense of it as a whole together with directors, producers, production companies, the identity of spectators, and their subjective and social experiences. At this point, it has two focus. Firstly, focusing on the subjective language of the director, instead of the position of big cities, metropoles, in the cinema, as a result of cinema as a form of narrative. In this context, the studies carried on intensively investigate the experience of going to the cinema and focus on the experience of various ages and the cinema halls, in which this experience has taken place. Secondly, focusing on the cities subject to the movies. Nevertheless, these two types have popular movies and metropoles in their focus. For instance, David B. Clarke, in his study called *Cinematic City* (1997), focuses on a metropole, Berlin. Specific to Turkey, similar studies focus firstly on Istanbul, then Ankara, as in the studies of Ozturk (2005).

Marxist perspective regarding it as purely material, constructivism explaining it with pure language and nominals, and the psychological point of view through the pure subject will not suffice. The perspective that renders the relations between cultural geography, geography, and human relations as intelligible is the one of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger set forth the method of phenomenology and hermeneutic by depending on Edmund Husserl and elaborating on his works. Thus, without separating what is factual and what is abstract about humans, it would be possible to study human-space relations as a whole. Amy Lynn Corbin (2015) emphasizes that geographical spaces preferred in the narratives of the movie are chosen, considering a specific gaze of the spectator. In this case, the director is not only an author anymore, who gathers up the meaningful images.

At the same time, he travels to the geographies that he has contracted by demonstrating the imagination of a three-dimensional space. With the phenomenological point of view of Heidegger, Corbin explains that spaces and geographies are not residences for spectators, but they become home to some familiar emotions by gaining some new meanings. Thus, it is not just a background, and it is manipulated by shooting angles. Not only internal things but also external. In this context, the cinematic landscapes in the cinematic narratives, whether it has any connection to the physical world or not, develops its meaning by making it possible to reconstruct what is spatial. Moreover, the unique way of being experienced in cinematic space is different from what is physical, and it validates this private experience by creating a sense of place. Also, in movies, the meaning is constructed with landscapes and other factors. Later she emphasizes that as opposed to this, these meanings will be in their internal context, meaning that they will have their meaning between cultural factors and that since it is exposed to gazes, cinematic space is an authentic experience depending on the culture. In his study published in *Erdkunde*, Anton Escher (2006), explains the concepts, such as cinematic position and the cine-

matic world, of this relatively new field, cinematic geography. In their study Stuart C. Aitken and Deborah P. Dixon (2006), depending on the criticism of Frankfurt School, claims that cinematic geographies are cinematographic factors. In the other studies published in *Erdkunde*, Chris Lukinbeal and Stephan Zimmerman similarly argue that cinematic space makes the space in which the narrative exists possible and provides the connection between cinematic narrative and reality. As Immanuel Kant, perception is limited in spatiotemporally. Thus with its narratives, cinema cannot break out these limits.

Teresa Castro (2009) claims that the director, who is drawing, recording, and archiving the factors of the chosen physical world, seems like a cartographer. In this point of view, a camera is not only a pencil but also a cartographic tool and can explain any geospatial story. With this fascinating and relatively new point ow view, the problem of representation in cinematic geography and space discussions has been overcome. In this context, the director who has always been seen as an auteur in the history of cinema is not only an author or a painter but also a cartographer creating the space. That can be evaluated in two ways: Cinema, which contains the other forms of art, can gain its meaning by distorting the space, and reconstructing it, and thus as having an artistic creation intertwining with architecture. The other way is that when we consider the cinematographic tools as the tools of the cartographer, rather than the pen of a writer, the visual imagination, which has left to the reader, would be under the manipulation of the director. This case does not conflict with the concepts of *auteur* of Peter Wollen (1969) and Andrew Sarris (1974), and it will strengthen the focus point of these director based approaches.

3. ON *Seyyit Han: The Bride of The Earth*

For this reason, investigating the cinematic geographies can provide us with much more data, than investigating cultural and physical geography can provide, because cinematic spaces have much richer content than the physical spaces. As Aydın Çam quoted from Bollnow (2018), cinematic spaces are not backgrounds and are different from physical spaces, it also contains the economic, political, social, cultural, ideological relations, which explain the inner experience of the cinematic character. In other words, implicitly or explicitly, we can collect economic, cultural, political, or social data about the physical world through cinematic spaces. The movie *Seyyit Han: The Bride of The Earth*, whose director and scenarist is Yılmaz Güney, contains valuable data about the villages of Yenice and Gökçeli, in Adana, where constitutes the cinematic spaces of the movie. A village in the middle of nothing, whose borders are determined by the horizon, has been used as the movie set. In the film festival called *Altın Koza* in 1969, the twenty-sixth of which has taken place this year, it has been awarded to the best director of cinematography, best actor, best movie music, and the third-best movie.

Analyzing the movie, where documentary and fictional cinema intertwine and which contains images that can be regarded as documents, mapping of the city, and village geography of Adana, depending on the movie, provides us the possibility of analyzing the economic, cultural, political or social structures of this city. Depending on the argument that the director is also a cartographer, mapping the city of Adana lets us make sense of cinematic spaces in the narrative of Güney. He explains the lives of those people with the images that have the characteristic of a documentary. Specific to the movie Seyyit

Han, it is necessary to talk about an almost mythical folk hero and the topic of the movie. What we should draw attention to is that as Onat Kutlar (1997) already mentioned, it is not so close to mitos as *Ferhat ile Şirin* is. On the one side, the stories of heroes of Çukurova is as precisely as the one of Seyyit Han. On the other side, nature-friendly aggrieved hero, Seyyit Han, has a character who does not conflict with the geography where he lives, and as Kutlar (1997) claims, he feeds his horse, gets on with birds, et cetera. In this point of view, the geographical landscapes of Çukurova, which ends with the horizon line is, in fact, closely related to its people and, thus, to the movies of Güney. Güney's movies, in such periods, still deserves the phrase of people of Çukurova: Our movies, movies of us as mentioned Güney Özkılınç's (2014) book. Güney's movies are associated with that the actor is inexperienced people whose stories are similar to the stories of the characters they act out, and the spaces are real spaces. The realist narrative in Güney's movies can be evaluated not only by that the spaces are real spaces but also by that the characters correspond to the people in real life. The other village movies in Turkey are criticized because they are recorded in some places in Istanbul, where have village-like landscapes and a couple of animal and village house since it is cheaper than others. What makes people say that "Güney was one of us" or "He made the movies that depict us" is places where he made those movies, such as the village Gökçeli, where has the same silhouette, even after 51 years, on the same horizon line.

4. Methodology

In this study, after the contextual analysis of the movies, the data from the literature review, and the data from the mapping will be put together and interpreted. The places of the spaces in the movies are found in the city and visited. Later on in this study, in mapping places as divided into their plans, the contextual method analysis has been used. Those spaces are photographed from the exact point of view with the director. Those spaces are mapped by using GIS *(Geographic Information System).*
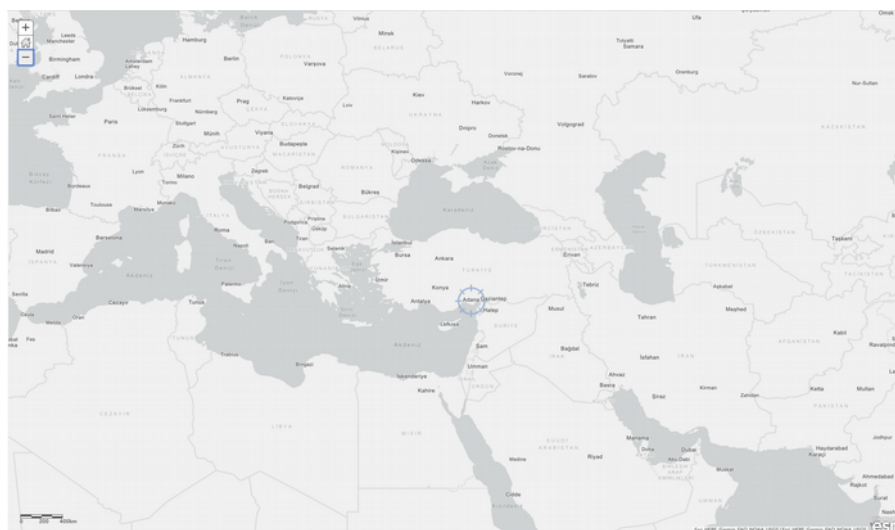
Figure 1. The Mapping (GIS, 2019)
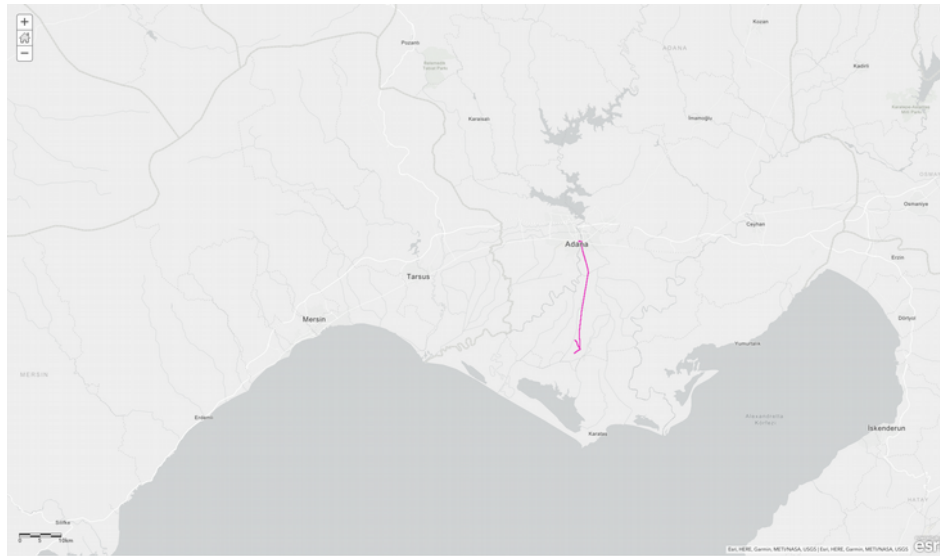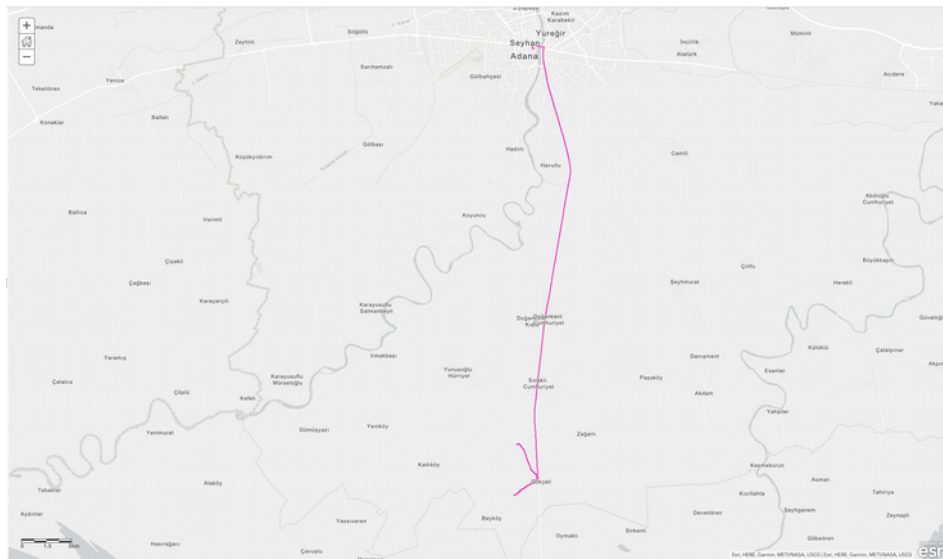
Figure 2. The Mapping (GIS, 2019)

Figure 3. The Mapping (GIS, 2019)

In a movie, meaning groups can be created by their similarities to the linguistic expressions or the physical universe, or, by representations. At the same time, these groups can also be created by images, or for example, by senses, and it is possible to interpret these only by using the concept set and methods that are specific to the cinema. As Aydın Çam (2016) mentioned, methods of film analysis can be divided into two: Textual and contextual, because cinematic creation of meaning has two dimension: The first dimension is shaped on purpose and limited: the director attempts to create meaning by being in the center of creating meaning and by using all cinematic tools. That happens when using the techniques and tools of movie making and when realizing both the story and the meaning. The contextual dimension of meaning is generally not shaped. Mostly, the

director puts many factors of the physical universe into the movie, even if he does not do it on purpose. In other words, while textual analysis is about the factors which render the movie as possible and about regulating those factors, contextual analysis is about the relation between the movie and the physical world.

Some examples of analysis of cinematic spaces using textual and contextual analysis and the theoretical approach depicted above can be given as follows. For example, when the stage where facts and characters are realized are evaluated as cinematic spaces, where the process of the cinematic act, using textual analysis, it is possible to examine how camera processes between different spaces, whether the director aims to have, i.e., a tension with this processing, and whether the cinematic meaning has evolved or not. With the opportunities of the process of dividing into plans, by listing the cinematic spaces of movies without a gap, it becomes possible to compare the reality and representations of physical spaces. Thanks to this, by questioning whether cinematic spaces match the physical spaces, with the methods of contextual analysis, we can evaluate how space provides the reality of the physical world if it could do it, or we can evaluate the reasons behind it if it could not. Contextual analysis can be used together with textual analysis, depending on different resolutions about the space (Çam, 2016, p.28).

Studying *Cinematic Cartography* in this context has, of course, some limitations. Firstly, leaving the other big cities aside, that has been already many times studied, only Adana is studied. However, it would not be sensible if we were to aim to cover all the places that have taken place in any movie. Thus, choosing this movie would be the best option because all the scenes were in Adana. On the other side, apart from the fact that all these scenes are from Adana, those Adana scenes, especially in the adventure movies of Güney, has a different meaning from the ones in the movie, because in the movie the city has been used as a city without an identity or as a random geography. However, the landscapes of the movie belong to Adana and complete the narratives of the movie about Adana.

Between 1965 and 1975, Adana has undergone an enormous change and evolution. That can be seen in its economy, demography, and even in its urbanization as a whole. Studying the movie means, at the same time, studying these times in different contexts. Nevertheless, on the other side, this defines the scope of the study. That is why the time interval that is to be studied here is limited to the years between two. At this point, considering the relation between Adana and cinema, it is necessary to justify this relation. As we explained before, Adana has changed. The reason for that is that Adana is an industrial city. At the same time, Adana has started to become the city of cinema. Of course, it is about the fact that cinema has its industry, but it is also closely related to that experience of watching a movie is still an actual social event. According to the study of Nezih Coş (1969), the number of total cinema halls in the city was 100 at that time, 75 of which was open-air and 35 of which were regular cinema halls and the total number of spectators was 86.900 in a day. Moreover, Çam and Şanlıer (2018), Taurus highlands villages were similar like the city center, and the villagers watched *travelling cinema* as a collective activity in the village square between 1960 and 1980. The reason why there were so many open-air cinemas could be that Adana, which is in south of Turkey, is hot in the summer and the experience of watching movie were regarded as a social activity that should be done together with all the people in the environment because there were

no TVs at houses at that time. As a result of the fact that cinema was the collective activity of the city, it dominates the cinema industry, even if its center was Istanbul. The subject and the actors of movies were determined, depending on whether they would have many spectators in Adana or not. For this reason, the difficulties that resulted from the changes Adana has undergone, which are mentioned above, are tried to be avoided by limiting the scope of the study with Adana.

In the study, the movie was divided into its plans with Adobe Premiere Pro. When the interior and exterior shootings were given attention, interior spaces are typical village houses of Çukurova and the exterior shootings, which constitute the main characteristics of the movie and which were the center of Güney's narrative, were village, tombs and landscape shootings. Kutlar (1997) divides these plans into three (village, tombs, and terrace) as I did in this study, and for him, these plans are introduced as three people in the movie, whose director of cinematography is Gani Tunalı. After that, he claims that in tombs shootings, extreme-close-ups, in terrace shootings, vista-shots, and village shootings, full-shots are in the majority. Moreover, Kutlar (1997) says that the three space act like as characters at the Güney's movie. In Seyyit Han, the physical space and the cinematic space which correspond to each other have taken its place in the narrative in its authentic way.

Figure 4. The village   Figure 5. The Tombs   Figure 6. The Landscapes

From: Toprağın Gelini (Seyyit Han: Bride of The Earth, 1968)

Employing the studies on oral history together with cartography, has prevented the trouble that might be caused in the village Gökçeli. In the online maps of those places, there might be seen a building that is structurally highly similar to the residence in the movie. However, people interviewed claim that this new building, belonging to the Yalçınar family, is precisely in the same spot with that residence. It is justified by the still-standing building across the residence, which can also be seen in the movie. As can be seen in the pictures, there are no fundamental changes in the place, except that the trees have grown up. Because the texture of the city has been changing quickly, it is essential to carry out parallel studies together with studies on oral history in the other movies left outside. In this context, when considering the ever-chancing details over the course

time, there are occasions where one must support its study with other methods, other than methods of mapping and oral history.

5. Conclusions

At the beginning, the cinematic cartography is has been briefly discussed. Then the scope and context of the study has been decided. The scope of study was limited with Adana and with Güney's movie: *Seyyit Han: The Bride of The Earth*, because our context was to investigate the economic, political, socio-cultural changes of the city. Whereas at some point regarding the limitations of studying the history of a long period of 51 years, there were some appeals to the method of oral history and at the end of the study the data from the mapping put together by means of contextual analysis, our method of mapping has mostly worked successfully in this study. That this method worked might mean: (1) it showed us how cinematic spaces are used in a movie, (2) this characterizations of cinematic spaces revealed the cultural context in which people of those times lived, (3) thus, economical and socio-cultural status of those people come in sight. By this means, the study worked in the context of three problematizations for Adana City for a specific period.

Based on this study, it can be studied cinematic geographies for other films by the mapping method. It is also possible to get data from the elements of the culture, economy, demography et cetera, which is reflected in the film and to study them by enriching the mapping with other methods. The director, like a cartographer, creates cinematic geographies, whether real or imaginary. For instance, Woody Allen's movie Barcelona Barcelona (2009) and Alejandro G. Iñárritu's movie Biutiful (2011) were shot in the same city which is Barcelona two years apart. Allen's Barcelona is clean, comfortably spacious, full of art, and open to even the characters who come for summer. On the other side, it is dark, full of people, and there is no place for these people to work and to live. The camera was used to show the same city, but for different narratives in their contexts in these two films. Allen is revealing an elegant life, and Iñárritu is marking the back streets of the city, and both of them are real in each own context. Therefore, the mapping method can be used to determine which life flows in which part of the city or village, as well as the sociological, demographical, political, et cetera context of these places, which are the basis of the narrative. Therefore, looking at cinema films with the mapping method provides us with a rich source of information and a new field of interpretation.

6. References

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