



*To my parents, Sevda and Yalçın ERKOÇ*

METİN ERKSAN'S *THE FEMALE HAMLET* AS AN  
INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
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May 2018

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.



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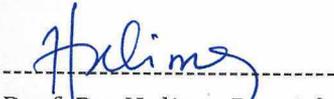
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## ABSTRACT

### METİN ERKSAN'S *THE FEMALE HAMLET* AS AN INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

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This thesis analyses famous Turkish director Metin Erksan's film, *The Female Hamlet* as an intercultural adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The relationship between literature and cinema, the discussion of originality / fidelity and then the interculturality is examined in the thesis as theoretical parts and in the light of these discussions, in the final part, *The Female Hamlet* is analysed as an intercultural adaptation.

Keywords: Adaptation, Interculturality, Metin Erksan, Shakespeare

## ÖZET

### KÜLTÜRLERARASI BİR UYARLAMA ÖRNEĞİ OLARAK METİN ERKSAN'IN *KADIN HAMLET*'İ

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M.A., İletişim ve Tasarım Bölümü

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Bu tez William Shakespeare'in *Hamlet* oyununun kültürlerarası bir uyarlaması olarak ünlü yönetmen Metin Erksan'ın *Kadın Hamlet* filmini incelemektedir. Edebiyat ve sinema arasındaki ilişki, orjinallik / sadakat tartışması ve sonrasında kültürlerarasılık tezin teori kısmında incelenmiştir ve sonuç bölümünde tüm bu tartışmaların ışığında, *Kadın Hamlet* kültürlerarası bir uyarlama olarak analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürlerarasılık, Metin Erksan, Shakespeare, Uyarlama

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents an analysis of Metin Erksan's *The Female Hamlet* (1976) as an intercultural adaptation. Scholarly studies on the field of adaptation, as well as on Erksan's cinema, have been relatively limited both in terms of number and scope. Scholarly interest on both, however, gained a new momentum after the millennium, the former with a broadening of approaches to the adapted materials, the latter after the death of Erksan. This study, through its discussion of the traditional and newly emerging approaches to adaptations and its detailed evaluation of Erksan's rather less-known movie, aims at filling a gap in the existing literature.

Adaptations and their relationship to the source material have always been a highly debated topic. Still, the emergence of a field of adaptation studies might be accepted as a relatively new development. As Thomas Leitch states, "after years of being stuck in the backwaters of the academy, adaptation studies are on the move" (Leitch, 2008: 63). Defined as "the transfer of a printed text in a literary genre to film" by Desmond and Hawkes (Desmond and Hawkes, 2006: 257), it is clear that adaptation is initially a change of medium, from words to images. Linda Hutcheon, along with Sanders, considers adaptation a creative process as well as a receptive process, whereby readers identify and enjoy adaptations much more through what Leitch describes as a

constant shifting “back and forth between their experience of a new story and their memory of its progenitors” (Leitch, 2008: 74).

Freed from the barren discussions of originality and fidelity, now, adaptation studies turned into a field with expanding horizons, borrowing theories and practices from numerous fields such as semiotics, cultural studies and literature. Thus adaptations are now approached as artistic productions and are evaluated according to their own merits rather than being perceived as low quality productions that are doomed to lose against literary works. This study, therefore, starts with a brief discussion of the approaches to the adaptations with a specific focus on the literature-film binary in the first chapter.

After setting this background, the theoretical framework of this thesis is explained in the second chapter. The importance of the term “intercultural” for adaptation studies and its application to the field are discussed here. Explaining the need for a discussion of intercultural adaptations from various aspects, this second chapter of the thesis focuses initially on terms such as culture, intercultural texts and globalization. Suggesting a specific tripartite analysis for intercultural adaptations, this chapter tries to underline the impact of the translation process of the original work, the transfer of cultural codes and finally the selective approach of the individual directors to the adapted versions.

Metin Erksan (1929-2012), seen / regarded as one the most significant directors of Turkish cinema, produced more than 30 films throughout his career. However, as Kayalı states, it is hard to find a detailed scholarly work on this prolific director.

Standing in distance to almost all political fractions of his time, Erksan was not specifically favoured or supported by any group, hence his works ironically remained marginal. Erksan's adaptation *The Female Hamlet*, analysed in the third chapter, is evaluated as an intercultural adaptation. Starting with a short introduction to Erksan's cinema and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the third chapter aims at tracking the specific moves of the director in adapting Shakespeare's work to Turkish cinema.

## CHAPTER 1

### ADAPTATION: TRADITIONAL VIEWS AND NEW APPROACHES

Since the beginning of the 21st century, numerous works in adaptation studies, such as Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo's *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (2004), Mireia Aragay's *Books in Motion: Adaptation, Intertextuality, Authorship* (2005), Julie Sanders's *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2005), Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan's *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* (2007), Thomas Leitch's *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ* (2007) and Deborah Cartmell's *A Companion to Literature, Film and Adaptation* (2012) have re-organized the study of adaptations, moving the main discussion of the field from basic dichotomies of hierarchy and conceptions of originality and fidelity to the source text to a focus on mutual benefit, intercultural and intertextual evaluation of adaptations.

Accepting the growing richness of the field and the variety of discussions that continue to expand the study of adaptations, this first chapter will present a discussion of the traditional views and new approaches to the study of adaptation. Starting with a

summary of the classical views on the relationship between literature/the text and cinema/the image, this chapter will present an overview of the ideas on the superiority of literature to cinema. Two concepts that dominated the studies of adaptation, originality and fidelity will be explained and the problematic nature of such terms will be discussed. Finally this chapter will conclude with a focus on the new approaches to adaptation studies.

## 1.1 Literature and Cinema

Both literature and cinema are well established creative arts and they have a close and strong relationship. Like all other types of art, literature and cinema require imagination. What connects these two is their preoccupation with text and for a comprehensive comparison about it, Thomas Leitch's "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory" might be taken into consideration. Apart from other types of art, literature and cinema are bound to a written text so they stick with the words. This main basis makes them two close branches of art but because of the common starting point, to be superior, there has always been a competition between them. Cinema, since the very first movies has been perceived as an attack to the long reign of literature, especially of novels, as rulers of readers' imagination. Adaptation, according to many critics is doomed to lose, when compared to the literary work as it has always been perceived secondary to literature. This perceived secondary status of adaptation, and the reasons for such a hierarchy, according to Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, should be first analyzed and then challenged in order to set a more neutral environment for the study of adaptation.

Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo groups the negative and the positive points about the adaptation and literature in the introduction of the *Literature and Film A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 1-50). Stam and Raengo, in explaining the roots of the supposed superiority of literature over cinema, employ the long - lasting text-image dichotomy. Stam and Raengo's list of the possible roots of the negative attitude towards cinema/the image vis-à-vis literature/the text can be divided into two: those that are related to broad and long lasting socio-cultural norms and those that are more connected to an erroneous idea about cinema and its production and consumption processes. To start with, it is certain that one of the most definitive socio-cultural norms that resulted in the inferior position of cinema is the idea that anything older is always more valuable than the newer. This idea of superiority that comes from seniority favors literature twice, as not only literature is historically prior to cinema, but also a specific work of literature is prior to the adapted movie. Thus as literature is seen as a more valuable form of art when compared to cinema, the literary work that was adapted to a movie has always been seen as the better one when compared to the movie.

It is certain that the senior position of literature and honor and importance that came with priority is also backed with long lasting cultural norms that tend to value written or spoken word over image. Although we are more used to associate the negative attitudes towards image (or iconophobia, to be more precise) with major Abrahamic religions, it is important to remember that Plato's polemic against poetry was also based on a similar hierarchy between ideas and words. When Plato was refuting Poetry as an "erroneous representation" that did not have "the shadow of a likeness to the original"

that was created by God, and accused poets to be more concerned with the passionate and emotional parts of the human soul, which were considered to be the lowest sides, little did he know that one day his ideas would be employed in a similar manner, but only to degrade image and to upgrade literature (*Complete Works*, 2015). Very much like Plato's rejection of poetry as a copy of the original and the higher form, cinematic image is seen as the copy of the original literary text. Again, in a similar way to Plato, numerous modern critics thought of image/cinema as an inferior medium that appeals to the eyes rather than the brain. Virginia Woolf's often quoted words certainly reflect such an idea: "The eye licks it all up instantaneously, and the brain, agreeably titillated, settles down to watch things happening without bestirring itself to think" (Woolf, 2009: 172).

The final point in Stam and Raengo's list that refers to a cultural norm as a root of the prejudice towards cinema is "anti-corporeality", as they put it (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 3). Although both reading and watching are purely mental events, a movie's capacity to trigger some bodily reactions is much stronger than that of a novel's. Thus, cinematic image's ability to create a bodily response, due to its visual existence, in the spectator is seen somehow inferior to a literary work's stimulation of the brain. Here what we see is certainly related to the link between body-mind and soul perception and the image is seen inferior as its effect is more "real", "concrete" when compared to "abstract", "mental" appeal of the literary work. This process of "realization" of the abstract meaning of the text brings forth the issue of limiting the numerous meanings of the word into the most obvious one, and thus making a movie shallower than the literary work. The hierarchy between the body and mind therefore, brings another dimension of

hierarchy between the literary work which has a soul and the cinematic image which consists of only a body.

The second group of possible roots of the idea of inferiority of the image to the text, thus of the movie to the literary work, is actually a list of erroneous and prejudiced ideas that were most probably acquired as a result of socio-cultural points that were explained above. Most of these erroneous thoughts are dealt with in the second chapter of Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006). First and foremost, from the emergence of the very first moving images onwards the rivalry between movies and literature has been seen as the most complicated issue. Focusing on the time and manner in which cinema would cause the death of the ancient and venerable art of literature, scholars and critics often ignored the possibility of a relationship based on mutual benefit. This dichotomous thinking pushed literature and cinema towards opposite corners and thus left adaptation as an unwelcomed guest. It is obvious that ideas that refer to simplicity of making a movie when compared to writing a novel and the parasitism of adaptations are initially connected to the idea of literature being somehow more valuable than cinema. Despite numerous similarities between the production process of a literary work and a movie, making a movie is thought to be easier than writing a book. The root of the idea that "Film, as a primarily visual medium, can only aspire to metaphorise in a highly restricted sense, mainly through the uniquely cinematic technique of editing", which ends in the assumption that shooting a movie to be a lot easier than writing a book, is also discussed and explained by Aragay (Aragay, 2005: 13). The intellectual value that is attributed to a novel is transferred to the efforts of the writer and as well as the reader. Thus a novel is both difficult to write and difficult to read. Similarly, supposed ease of

watching a movie is also transferred to its production process. Thus it is easy both to make and watch a movie.

The idea of the ease of making films can also be connected to a misunderstanding on the role of the director. The notion that director captures what is already there without any sort of involvement does not only turn cinema into a “mechanical means of reproduction” but also raises questions on its artistic value. The creativity of the director and his comment on the existing screenplay are ignored. Shelly Cobb’s mind-opening analysis on the role of the adaptations in construction of “the cinema auteur as the equivalent of the (paternal) literary author” concludes that “Western culture’s masculine version of individual authorship as the signifier of originality, authority, and ownership is troubled by adaptation and its threat of multiple authors and fragmented identities” in her article in Deborah Carmell’s *A Companion to Literature, Film and Adaptation* (Shelley, “Film Authorship and Adaptation,” 112).

The final erroneous idea in Stam and Raengo’s list is the association of cinema with popularity and literature with prestige. Since the opening of the first nickelodeon in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, movies were accepted as the entertainment of the masses. The low cost of movie tickets made it very popular among the members of the working class. By 1920s, almost 50 percent of the American population was cinema goers (Butsch, 2000: 16). This association with the lower classes of the society ended in the presumption that movies were popular, thus easy to understand, simple and dry. In contrast, literature remained as mainly an upper-class entertainment. Literature’s association with upper-classes can be connected to the long histories of literacy and the book. Reading and writing abilities were historically confined to upper classes as those

were the ones who could have access to education. Economically or socially inferior members of the society, such as the slaves, the poor, women or outsiders, were kept out of the literary circles all throughout the Ancient and Middle Ages. Thus literature was always seen as a high-end entertainment, and was associated with wealth and status. These ideas on literature and cinema, the former being an elite occupation and the latter being a lower class entertainment, ended in an unfavorable evaluation of adaptations as more popular, simple, degraded versions of written text.

All these thoughts on the superiority of literature in comparison to cinema influenced adaptation studies fundamentally. From the very early stages onwards adaptations have been perceived as a simplified version of the literary work, and this process of simplification is explained as a natural outcome of turning written words into images. It was for this reason that Woolf likened film to a “parasite” and literature to “prey” and “victim” (Woolf, 2009: 174). Louis Begley’s character’s words on how he felt about his own work simply summarize the ideas on the superiority of literature:

Writing a screenplay based on a great novel is foremost a labor of simplification. I don’t mean only the plot, although particularly in the case of a Victorian novel teeming with secondary characters and subplots, severe pruning is required, but also the intellectual content. A film has to convey its message by images and relatively few words; it has little tolerance for complexity or irony or tergiversations. ... You might tell me that through images film conveys a vast amount of information that words can only attempt to approximate, and you would be right, but approximation is precious in itself, because it bears the author’s stamp. All in all, it seemed to me that my screenplay was worth much less than the book, and that the same would be true of the film (as quoted by Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2006: 20).

As being based around these ideas on the superiority of literature, adaptation studies ignored the value of the adaptation in itself, thus turning adaptation studies basically into a field of comparative studies (Cardwell, 2002: 9). Although new studies tend to treat adaptations as completely independent “texts,” rather than focusing primarily on their connections to the literary text that was produced before them, it is hard to claim that the discussions on fidelity/originality have ended. Before discussing the new approaches and the discussion of originality / fidelity of adaptation now there will be an overall look to Shakespeare and his plays in English Literature canon and how this affects the adaptations of his plays into different mediums.

## 1.2 Shakespeare Adaptation

The discussion between literature and cinema was evaluated in the previous part and it underlined the idea that literature has been seen as superior to cinema throughout the traditional views and at that point the critical border between the fidelity and the originality has been a contradiction. Just before the discussion of originality / fidelity, Shakespeare needs to be mentioned at this point. Shakespeare is a cult writer whose works have been adapted for centuries. In Jonathan Brody Kramnick’s “The Making of the English Canon”, he defines Shakespeare, as well as Spenser and Milton, as writers who “achieved decisive status in the mid-eighteenth century” (Kramnick, 1997: 1087). Moreover according to Kramnick, Warton displays Shakespeare and his contemporaries as one of the first representations of the English canon as a trinity with regards to cultural change, literary language, and print capitalism (Kramnick, 1997: 1092).

Seeing that Shakespeare appears to be the most adapted and well researched out of this so-called trinity, it is also easier to understand the popularity of choosing his literary works to adapt into multiple mediums of display. When examined historically, because of the technological developments about cinema happening much later than theatre, there are many more adaptations of Hamlet and other Shakespearian works onto the stage. The study of the differences and why they occurred within these different adaptations can make a separate research topic that would cover volumes but as this study examines the medium of cinema there will be a discussion with regards to understanding why Erksan chose to stay true to the original text or he chose to interpret the play differently. At this point, it might be good to have a look at the process behind the filming of Shakespeare plays.

Anthony Davies and Judith Buchanan analyze the adaptations of Shakespeare and the processes of it in their works. In their dissection, they do not only focus on the specific adaptations of Shakespeare but they also comment on the adaptations themselves. Judith Buchanan, in *Shakespeare on Film*, points out the idea that Shakespeare is not something that one can analyze as theatre or film as it is but it is rather a genre that should be examined on its own terms. Shakespeare's style due to being unique is hard to define and to locate in the hemispheres of theatre and cinema. Adaption of such a sunique kind can result in threats and possible hardship to locate what is cinema production and what is theatrical production. Anthony Davies, in *Filming Shakespeare*, has a parallel point to Buchanan. He mentions that Shakespeare has its own body of literature and has his own unique place within the cannon of English Literature.

In addition to the notion of uniqueness of Shakespeare, the language that is used in his works is another significant point to highlight. Davies points out that written text and theatrical presentation demonstrates that in Shakespeare play there is an obvious domination of dialogue. In the stage performances of Shakespeare's plays, the dialogue might be perceived as the most important element but on the contrary, in the film adaptations the crucial part is the moving image (Davies, 1988: 2). On the other hand, Buchanan focusing on the limits of the dialogue in Shakespeare's plays, states that ““You can’t have a battery of dialogue, dialogue, dialogue in a movie”” (as quoted by Davies, 1988: 7). She here tries to shed light on the fact that medium of the movie might be expected to be away from that of the play. Dialogue makes it difficult to completely adapt all the aspects of the play into the screen. Characteristics of a movie will have their own governance on theatre texts.

In the process of Shakespeare adaptations, the specific aspect can be diversified because it is a wide area so there are numerous criteria but according to these two authors, these aspects were underlined much more than any other ones that were discussed. Despite being a different medium, cinema still feeds on details of theatrical performances. Cinema adaptations have been able to find itself a place right in between cinema and theatre. In the book, the author claims that next generations of directors will feel themselves much relaxed about producing movies out of Shakespeare plays. Buchanan has upheld the idea that it is natural to expect changes while adapting a play into cinema and expecting changes should represent “recreation” as it is stated by the author himself (Buchanan, 2004: 2). Because of multiple points included in adaptation, it is claimed that something new might come up and even not now, different from those

performed and produced before. So under the light of this interpretation, it would serve better to examine the originality/fidelity discussion.

### 1.3 Originality and Fidelity

Belen Vidal Villasur refers to adaptation as a memory-object of its source (Villasur, 2011: 15). Perceiving adaptation as an extension of an original material, in this case, literature, brings forth the question of fidelity to the original source. While discussing fidelity, different authors came up with different categorizations in order to make the complex original-adaptation relationship a bit more understandable. Initially, Geoffrey Wagner, (Wagner, 1975: 231) introduced three classes of adaptation: “transposition”, in which the adapter remains loyal to the original text; “commentary”, in which the adapter alters the original text intentionally or unintentionally; and “analogy”, in which the adapter changes the original text to create a different work of art.

Dudley Andrew, similarly came up with a tripartite, but reverse structure: borrowing, intersection and complete fidelity. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker also suggested a three-class categorization that might be useful in evaluating the relationship between an adaptation and the original literary source: Firstly, “fidelity” is explained as following the original as closely as possible. Then, there are adaptations which reinterpret or destruct the main core of the narrative of the source text and finally there are adaptations which use the original text as a source of inspiration, or as a “raw-material”. Although it is hard to determine a final and definitive scheme according to which one can categorize an adaptation, it is important to note that these studies present

a challenge to the primary importance of fidelity to the source in terms of adaptation studies. As McFarlane states, “there are many kinds of relations which may exist between film and literature and fidelity is only one” (McFarlane, 1996: 9).

The initial point that should be discussed is the moralistic tone that is used to be employed in discussing adaptation and their fidelity to the original. Such words as “tampering,” “interference,” and “violation,” as Brian McFarlane quotes (McFarlane, 1996: 12), or “betrayal,” “deformation,” “perversion,” “infidelity,” and “desecration” as Stam lists (Stam, 2000: 54) all refer to somehow accepted superiority of the adaptation and describe adaptations in relation to this hierarchical secondary status. All the prejudices against adaptations and ideas that support superiority of text over image have a certain impact on this sort of moralistic approaches to adapted materials. As Newman states, a transfer from textual to cinematic image have been seen as a transition to “a willfully inferior form of cognition” (as quoted by Hutcheon; Newman, *The Postmodern Aura*, 1985: 129). In the end, if adaptation is perceived as a degraded form of the original, then it is doomed to lose.

Here what needs to be defined is the term “original” as it is the most frequently used one in the literature-adaptation discussion. It is possible to say that there are two historical views about “originality” of a creative work. The first line of thought explains originality in relation with “creation”. As early as 1589, George Puttenham praised poets who were makers “such as ... we may say God who ... made all the world out of nought” (as quoted by MacFarlane). Using such comparison of poet to God, Puttenham was trying to explain the highest level of poetry, according to the hierarchy he proposed. As Puttenham stated, the distinguishing point about a poet was that he “make and

contribute out of his own brain both the verse and matter of his poem” (MacFarlane, 2007: 2). The importance of the originality of a creative work, let it be a poem, a play, a painting or a sculpture, has been repeated over and over, from the Sixteenth Century onwards. As a result of the importance of the originality in evaluating an artist’s abilities, any sort of “resemblance” is thought to be an indicator of “unoriginality” and unoriginality simply indicated the artist’s intellectual incapability and infertility. This line of thought ended in the idea that “repetitious modes of writing are always aesthetically unsuccessful, because the bona fide work of art has to be “perfectly unborrowed”” (Macfarlane, 2007: 3). It is exactly this way of thinking that made Frank Darabont to utter his comment on the directors of adaptations: “Some of us have great original ideas and some of us depend on adaptations.”

The second line of thought explains “originality” in relation to word “invention”. This line refutes the possibility of any kind of originality ontologically. Creating something out of nothing is simply impossible; therefore, any sort of artistic creation has to be “invented” out of the existing works. Stating the impossibility of complete originality inevitably turns the writer into a “rearranger of bits and pieces” (Macfarlane, 2007: 5). Creative mind invents already existing words or meanings and reunites them in a unique way to compose a new work. Intertextuality is inevitable. So this second line of thought does not perceive “originality” as a paradigm that would determine the quality of either the author or the work. Rather any piece of writing is accepted to be composed with the materials, words and ideas that were already in the vast pool of continual creation and re-creation.

Considering these two lines of thought, it is easy to understand their perception of adaptation. Those who praise the originality of the work above anything else certainly perceive adapted work as a copy of the original. Thus adaptation is never thought of as aesthetically valuable as the original. The second line of thought, on the other hand, is less inclined to value the original over the adapted version, as the original is not valued because of its originality. Accepting the impossibility of an original piece of work simply destroys the hierarchy between the source text and the adaptation. Attitudes towards originality of a literary work and towards adaptations have moved between these two different lines of thought according to McFarlane.

According to Christian Metz, cinema “tells us continuous stories; it ‘says’ things that could be conveyed also in the language of words; yet it says them differently” (Metz, 1974: 44). Adaptations narrate stories in their own ways. They use very similar tools to those of other storytellers. As Hutcheon explains, adaptors “actualize or concretize ideas; make simplifying selections, but [they] also amplify and extrapolate; they make analogies; they critique or show their respect, and so on” (Hutcheon, 2006: 3). Despite numerous similarities between the tools of a writer and an adaptor, still a cinematic adaptation of a literary work can be seen as a change of medium. Robert Stam, in his article called “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation”, discusses the notion of fidelity in the film adaptations to conclude that complete fidelity is not something practicable in the adaptation. According to Stam, complete fidelity is not possible due to the change of the medium. For this reason, the new work within a new medium is consequently different from the original one and it is stated as ‘original’ in a way at the same time because it is a new medium and gets its own originality.

In a film adaptation, as in all filming process, directors have to make specific decisions. The plot, time and setting, costume, décor, sounds, characters etc. are the instances of those decisions. These aspects are significant in the film production. Most of these aspects are visually constructed so it depends on the personality of the director because the director is characterized by his / her environment so his / her perception is shaped within those borders, at the same time, it is impossible for a director to follow all the aspects and details in the source text, because making something visual that is already described with words is hard work. As Stam states

the shift from a single – track, uniquely verbal medium such as the novel, which ‘has only words to play with,’ to a multitrack medium such as film, which can play not only with words (written and spoken), but also with theatrical performance, music, sound effects, and moving photographic images, explains the unlikelyhood – and I would suggest even the undesirability – of literal fidelity (Stam, 2000: 56).

It cannot be the same in every detail due to the variety of points of view. For the scales of shots and camera angles it might reveal a discussion whether they are fit for the atmosphere of the source, again having the core air of the source is significant. On the other hand, there is limited time in a film so the director has to sacrifice some of the aspects in the source text in order to make the film go faster. In addition, the novel is written by a single person, the author, and he / she does not have any concern about the time of the story and the setting. He / she can write whatever in his / her mind with no doubt but for the film, these points are important for the budget. That is why the director has to be limited in their art work according to the budget because making a film is a

collaborative work; it does not only depend on one person's desire. Directors need to pay attention to some of the aspects, not all of them; even when they aspire to remain completely faithful to the original text. In a very general sense, due to the cinematographic language, something has to be different and the directors need to follow this process in the adaptation.

Stam and Raengo emphasize that a literary text is an open-ended source that does not have a link between the two types of art works. He gives the instance of *Robinson Crusoe*. They classify the novel as “long – consecrated text” and say “[...] the passage of time has readers/adapters skeptical about the novel's basic premises and assumptions” (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 10). The conditions in the Eighteenth Century are not the same with those of today, consequently, the expectations and measures to criticize are not the same with the ones in our time according to the perception of the audience and the reader. For this reason, some points, references and details can be omitted or changed from the original source when it is produced again as an adaptation.

It is certain that one of the most important aspects of the fidelity issue has been brought forth by the question “Fidelity to what?” (Stam, 2000: 57). Here, what is questioned is the intentions of the writer and the director. In the film, the way of expression is different from the novel so even though both of them have the essence of the story, they do not share the same language in every sense and detail. Stam implies that sometimes the author, himself, does not recognize his own ‘deeper intention’ for the story in the novel so why and how the director should follow the author's ‘lack’ of intentions for the film. He expresses the point that “an author's expressed intentions are not necessarily relevant, since literary critics warn us away from the ‘intentional

fallacy,' urging us to 'trust the tale not the teller'" (Stam, 2000: 57). In relation to that argument, Derrida's concept of *deconstruction* that Stam uses in his article comes into play again. As there is no hierarchy between the original source and the copy in a very general sense, the adaptation film and the source text become two innovative works. Fidelity, in this manner, is enough to be seen in the basic notion of the story, not to be seen in every detail so no matter that the adaptation work is classified as a 'copy', it does not mean that the novel as original, is superior to the adaptation in *deconstruction*.

Film is a visual representation and it is directly associated with the images. Definitions such as 'painting in motion' (Canudo), 'sculpture in motion' (Vachel Lindsay), 'music of light' (Abel Gancel), and 'architecture in movement' (Elie Faure) merely call attention to the synthetic multiplicity of signifiers available to the cinema (Stam, 2000: 62).

Due to the fact that vision is the basis of the cinema, there might be deficiencies in terms of mental expression when it is compared to the novel, because in the novel, the author has a chance to clarify the psychology and mentality in detail with the words for pages but in film, sometimes the images are not enough to make those issues clear.

Pauline Keel also thinks that "the cinema inevitably lacks depth and dignity of literature" (Stam, 2000: 59), even though she is a "supporter" of film. On the other hand, the versatility of cinema led it to offer more ways and opportunity to the expression rather than the novel and film producers are free to use these ways liberally but here, the focal point is not about their ability to succeed, it is about their points of view and perspectives. To make it clearer, music and sounds might be good examples. Thanks to

the ‘multitrack’ quality of the film, it is hard to put the novel and the film in a same grading.

The perception of a story can be differentiated from one another and a novel that is a written text is interpreted quite differently in the minds of everyone. That is why; a novel can be read in various criticisms as well as it is also interpreted as ‘creative misreadings’ (Stam, 2000: 63). Intertextuality, in adaptation, does not mean to reuse the words in its original forms; it means an ongoing process of dialogue. For this reason, intertextuality is on a higher level to the fidelity notion in adaptation.

It is clear that fidelity is a significant discussion topic for adaptation, especially as it relates to the relationship between the novel and the cinema because they are different forms of media. From literature, the novel, to the cinema, it is hard to succeed with being faithful to the source. Due to the different qualities of these two media, strict fidelity is not practicable in cinema. Changes are inevitable in the process of “selection, amplification, concretization, actualization, critique, extrapolation, analogization, popularization, and reculturalization” that come with adaptation (Stam, 2000: 68).

#### 1.4 New Approaches to Adaptation

According to Cartmell, most of the criticism, until the twenty-first century, was unfortunately predictable; —an adaptation’s merit was evaluated by its closeness to its literary source or, even more vaguely, the spirit of the book (Cartmell, 2008: 1-2). Adaptation studies were founded upon the originality and fidelity ideas as it was much

easier to categorize adaptations as faint mechanical reproductions of some original literary works than to face the complex issues around the definition of the term originality (Leitch, 2003: 162-3). Although it is hard to claim that originality and fidelity discussions came to an end, numerous new approaches that have been circulating among the scholarly circles in the last few decades had a clear impact on the evaluation of both the literary work itself and the adaptation that was based on it. Now, as Sanders states, —infidelity constitutes the core of the most creative acts of adaptation and appropriation (Sanders, 2006: 19). Leaving the fidelity issue aside, and bringing infidelity to the fore as an important component of adaptation process, poses the questions on the role of the author in adaptation studies as an important one. Adaptations are now perceived as a commentary on a source-text (Sanders, 2006: 20).

Among numerous developments that influenced the study of text, the earliest ones are the structuralist and post-structuralist theories. These theories managed to break the barrier between the literature and cinema as they argue that act of signifying is as complex and worthy of studying as literary text. Kristeva's intertextuality helped to soften the ideas of the autonomous integrity of both author and reader and melted them within cultural experiences of common texts. Barthes started where Kristeva left and attacked the uniqueness of the text itself, as the text was accepted to be based on numerous texts. Both intertextuality trans-textuality, in a similar manner stressed the infinite variations of textualities, thus destroyed the main basis of the idea of originality of and fidelity to a specific text. Roland Barthes's ideas against the hierarchy between literary criticism and literature also helped critics to free the adaptation from the idea of

being a version of literary text, which is by definition subordinate to its source (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 9).

It is clear that Derrida has a special place in terms of shaping new approaches to adaptations. Deconstruction questions the hierarchy between the original and the copy and simply abolishes this distinction. As Stam states, “In a Derridean perspective, the auratic prestige of the original does not run counter to the copy; rather, the prestige of the original is created by the copies, without which the very idea of originality has no meaning.” (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 9) Bakhtin’s approach to the literary author to reduce its value, a new understanding of the creative writer as the re-organizer of the already existing discourses brings us back to the originality discourse. Bakhtin’s theory, closely following the line of thought that did not believe in the possibility of any sort of pure originality in a creative work of art, did not only liberate adaptations from originality and fidelity pressure but also helped to refute that old idea of comparing the writer/artist to God/creator. Bakhtinian conception of the author and Foucault’s anonymity discourse “opened the way to a non-originary approach to all arts” (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 9).

Broad and interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, focusing mainly on the relations between different media on a horizontal level, made it easier to perceive adaptations as a text, within the universal body world of images and simulations. Narratology, listed as another new approach that had an impact on adaptation studies, accepts adaptations as another “narratological medium” and in this way helps to deconstruct the existing hierarchy between the source text and the adapted version.

Reception theory, as an extension of the poststructuralist ideas perceives a text as an event, whose unknown, or unspecified aspects are finalized and actualized through the process of consumption by the spectator, i.e. while reading or watching. The ideas that any sort of creative art does not present an already existing reality and that the meaning cannot be created by the artist or the writer alone turns any sort of creative work into a breathing, organic object. Very much like refuting the existence of a perfectly original text and arguing for endless inter-textual references; reception theory, also, challenges the idea that a text has a pre-existing core meaning which has to be protected in the process of adaptation. This line of thought invites the reader as well as the adapter to be a part in the process of continuous creation of the meaning within a text and thus brings in the idea that an adaptation might be one of the active parties that created the meaning, rather than passively mimicking it.

Hutcheon also elaborates on these ideas by stating that the adaptor is simultaneously the reader and the author. As Hutcheon states,

By their very existence, adaptations remind us there is no such thing as an autonomous text or an original genius that can transcend history, either public or private. They also affirm, however, that this fact is not to be lamented. ... the traces of the adapting interpreter-creator cling to the adaptation. (Hutcheon, 2006: 111).

Despite all these new theories that had an impact on adaptation studies, there are still numerous questions and clear contradictions within the field. In his recent article Thomas Leitch, argues that there are numerous contradictions between the aim of the adaptation theorists to open new aspects for the field and the limitations of the

vocabulary that lines the borders of both the scope and originality of new contributions. These contradictions, according to Leitch, are so frustrating that readers often think that they actually read the same article written with different examples (Leitch, 2008: 63, 65). What needs to be done according to Leitch, is to eliminate “evaluative problems” that were actually those of the literary studies such as; fidelity, hierarchy, canonicity, from the main axe of adaptation studies. A new set of studies should be supported to clarify the specific problems in production and reception of adaptations and the relations between the adaptations and other intertextual modes; instead of publishing more “anthologies of book-to-film analyses”, which actually replicate already existing contradictions and limits of the field, rather than opening new areas of research. A closer look on the relations of the adaptations of to their source texts needs to be employed, Leitch continues. And finally, Leitch states that theorists of adaptation should

explore more deeply the one context: media literacy. If adaptation studies can make a decisive contribution to students’ “ability to ‘critically read and write with and across varied symbol systems”, it will have succeeded where literary studies has increasingly failed. (Leitch, 2008: 76)

As this chapter indicated, the discussions over the relationship between the text and image have grown extremely complex over the decades. The most mainstream discussions have mainly revolved around the notion of fidelity of the adaptation to the source text. Fidelity criticism depended on the idea that the text conveying a single and correct “meaning” which the adapter either successfully or unsuccessfully transfers to the new medium. As stated above, new theories shattered these ideas and opened the field to a more detailed evaluation of the adaptation as a text in itself. In an age where

the lines between media are fading away it is clear that adaptation studies need a more holistic approach, it ought not to be analyzed in a single specific criteria. Adaptation which refers to a transfer from one medium to another actually consists of numerous other transfers when the source text and the final audience of adaptation are from different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural adaptations, comes with more complicated issues than that of fidelity and the meaning of the text. This aspect will be discussed in the second chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### INTERCULTURAL<sup>1</sup> ADAPTATIONS

Culture is “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” according to Raymond Williams, as “it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thoughts” (Williams, 1983: 87). Culture is a notion that can be observed in almost all parts of life as well as scholarly studies. A further point that complicates any study on or related to culture is that culture is open to be perceived subjectively because it has lots of dimensions in life and it is shaped according to the habits and life styles

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “intercultural”, “cross-cultural” and “trans-cultural” should be used with caution as they refer to different concepts. Intercultural, is defined as “taking place between cultures, or derived from different cultures” in *Oxford Dictionary*. Cross-cultural, on the other hand, is defined as “relating to different cultures or comparison between them”. The difference lies in the idea of setting a reference point, in order to create a comparison. In cross-cultural societies, for instance, one culture is often considered “the norm” and all other cultures are compared or contrasted to the dominant culture. Intercultural, however, refers to a mutual exchange. In intercultural communities, ideas and cultural norms are mutually exchanged. “Trans-cultural” is defined as “relating to or involving more than one culture” in the dictionary and thus it refers to cultural norms that are valid across social groups, or which do not take into account cultural differences.

within a specific region, so it is interpreted differently from one to another. That is why one needs to define what culture means in the specific work that refers to it.

Williams continues his explanation of culture by stating that the definition of culture should be both contextualized and historicized. He proposes three definitions for the term: culture is “the independent and abstract noun which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development”, it is also “the independent noun, whether used generally or specifically, which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general” and it is “the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity” (Williams, 1983: 90). To sum up, culture is the huge abstract unit that includes traditions, common values, common language, common habits and the common ways to live socially and mentally in a certain area. In As Elisa I. Costa Villaverde explains, culture is

a global definition of this concept refers to the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior. Culture consists, therefore, of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and all capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Villaverde, 2001: 50).

People, who live with the same cultural backgrounds, therefore, share their understandings of social life. That is why, these common qualities steer their points of view and it draws a kind of frame that the life goes on within.

It may be interpreted in a way that every human activity shapes and becomes shaped by the culture in which it is realized. Arts and all other sorts of creative works, therefore can be seen both agents and objects of a specific culture. “*Culture* is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film” (Williams, 1983: 90). Any creative work inevitably reflects the culture of the artist and the moment it is created it also re-shapes that culture that it was created in. It is impossible to think of a film that is not, in a way, related to the cultural background of its director. In any case, shooting a movie is all about selections. When one chooses a story and rearranges it in a specific way; he/she decides on the specific method of conveying his/her story; he/she chooses the music that would accompany the story; decides on numerous details such as costumes, colors, camera angles, décor and setting. All these choices he/she makes reflect something about him/her, and about the culture that fed him/her while he/she was making so many decisions. For an independent film, the process of creation is smooth, and therefore it is somehow easier to catch the cultural references.

In an adaptation, however, there might be two or more cultural contexts that should be taken into consideration. Source text of the adapted movie might belong to another cultural sphere, and in this case, it is a hard decision for the director to choose in which culture he / she wants to shape the film. Sometimes it is also possible to track references to more than one culture. Interweaving references to different cultures, turns the adaptation into an intercultural one. At this point, in this chapter, the focus will be on the transfer and translation of cultural norms and codes from one culture to another and the use of adaptations in this respect.

## 2.1 Adaptation and the Transmission of Cultural Values

Culture is a very broad term for description but in a very general sense, it is the unity of the same shared qualities which create the community within a specific region as it is called the society. So culture is a significant notion for a society, it is the keystone. For this reason, it is one of the most frequently used means to understand a society and connect it to the outside world. Culture is expressed with its subparts like cultural codes, cultural indicators and cultural values. These parts work for the different dimensions of culture. Cultural codes carry a certain implication within a social region. Cultural values are a society's traditional attitudes that are decided by the majority, throughout the history, such as religion, language, history, art, vision of the world. Cultural indicators are the tools that let us to convey those codes and values to the others, to those who are not a part of the culture we are in. These three aspects are the parts of the chain that creates the whole concept of culture (Villaverde, 2001).

Societies exist with and within their cultures and it is that very notion of culture that differentiates one society from another. In the globalized world of Twenty First Century, despite all similarities, we still live in quite different cultural contexts. These contexts, when they appear either on the page or on the screen, need to be conveyed from one society to other. Things get even more complicated if there is also a process of translation, as well as, and most probably before, the process of adaptation. So, in the case of any work of Shakespeare, for instance, there are three processes that progress simultaneously: Shakespeare's literary work is translated from one language to another; i. e. from English to Turkish; then, the medium of narrative is changed from words to image; and finally a cultural adaptation follows, to turn Shakespeare's Sixteenth

Century story into something somehow relatable to the Twenty First Century Turkish audience. Thus, understanding these processes is of great importance for understanding the final adaptation.

### 2.1.1 Intercultural Adaptations: the Translation

As mentioned above translation is an indispensable part of intercultural adaptations most of the time. Some insight of the processes that are at work in the translation process might be helpful in terms of understanding the actual process of adaptation. The term “intercultural communication” was set by E. T. Hall (Rogers et al. 2002). He insightfully noticed that the obstacle between communications with the Native Americans was not the “language”, but they were some other “silent” or “unconscious” factors; that are the “cultural differences”. Later on, the term was defined by Bennett in detail:

the fundamental premise of ‘the intercultural communication approach’ is that ‘cultures are different in their languages, behaviour patterns, and values. So an attempt to use [monocultural] self as a predictor of shared assumptions and responses to messages is unlikely to work’ – because the response, in our case to a translation, will be ethnocentric. (Bennett, 1998)

Seeing language as an indispensable part of culture, Nida (2002: 29), states that “the context actually provides more distinction of meaning than the term being analyzed”. Thus, it is certain that the meaning is actually determined not by bare words, but by the one who receives them. This makes words relative. Each reader understands or receives the words according to their perception as well as their cultural background. This turns

translation into a “mediation” (Katan 1999/2004) or “refraction” (Lefevere 1982/2004) between two different languages and the cultures they are used within.

Another and the final term that needs to be explained in relation to inter-cultural translation is “the cultural filter”. Numerous authors (especially, Hervey and Higgins (1992) and Katan (1993)) mention the importance of cultural filter in terms of translation. According to Katan (1999/2004), there are four filters that determine our perception of the text we read, or the image we see: “physiological”, “cultural”, “individual” and “linguistic”. Cultural filters, according to Katan, “are one of the four particular, but related, ways in which groups organize their shared (limited, distorted and stereotypical) perception of the world” (Katan, 2009: 75).

To what extent should one use the cultural filter, in translations? This brings us back to “the issue of fidelity”, this time of the translated text to the main one. And here as well, the concept of fidelity falls short in explaining the success of the translation. “The translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril” according to Bassnett. (1980/2002: 23) and for her, the culture filter had to be employed by the translator. Numerous others, on the other hand, evaluate any sort of intervention to the main text as a “loss”, “mistake”, “inability of the translator”, or “infidelity”. Claiming that there can be some “untranslatable” parts in a text, others blame the distance between the cultural or linguistic spheres of the main language and the target language. This line of thought, however, denotes a hierarchy between languages, and thus, is problematic.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a full discussion of the role of the translator in translation, see Demirkol, “Can Yücel’in Shakespeare Çevirilerinde ‘sadakat’”, unpublished MA thesis, Bilkent Univ., 2006, pp. 14-29.

Translating the main story not only from one language to another, but also from one cultural sphere to another is one of the main steps in most of the adaptations. Any discussion on intercultural translations and the transfer of cultural codes within the text from one culture to another is in a way related to adaptation studies. However, the role of the adaptor does not end here. In the light of all these points of discussion in relation to intercultural translation, one might have a better idea on the difficulty of evaluating intercultural adaptations, which might be seen as a process of three-partite translation.

### 2.1.2 Encoding-Decoding

All the groups of people, the communities or societies, constitute specific habits and the way life that only belong to them. These aspects are typical to those societies so there are always specific cultural concepts for every society. These cultural concepts are unique for the societies that they belong to. People are naturally affected and shaped by the culture that they were born and live in. Living and belonging to a certain culture is the point that creates the contradiction because at that point the interferences between the different cultures start. The culture codes, in this manner, only make sense to the ones who live in that culture. The others outside that culture cannot intellectualize those particular implications. That is why, the cultural codes have the certain interpretations only in the culture that they belong to, and they are not meaningful when they are forced to fit in another culture. In this circumstance, the cultural codes have to face the fact of disappearance between different cultures.

In relation to the notion of culture and its context, it can be said that an individual might not perceive the message as given, without looking at the context, the one who takes the message, might interpret the given message in various ways by straining it in their own cultural origin. In this manner, the encode and decode theory is significant to pay attention. This theory is put forward by Stuart Hall who is a sociologist and one of the leading figures in British cultural studies. Hall identifies the codes by referring to the culture in his article “Encoding / Decoding” and he says

Certain codes may, of course, be so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed – the effect of an articulation between sign and referent – but to be ‘naturally’ given. Simple visual signs appear to have achieved a ‘near – universality’ in this sense: though evidence remains that even apparently ‘natural’ visual codes are culture – specific (Hall, 1980: 55).

He points out to the idea that codes are shaped within the culture so they may change from one to another. That is why the meaning of them is perceived subjectively by the individuals as a community. Hall specifies the process within two kinds of the codes: encode and decode. He matches up the encoder with the producer and the decoder as the receiver so there is a transaction chain between them as Villaverde states “usually producers encode and receivers decode meanings” (Villaverde, 2001: 52). So these two aspects are strongly linked to each other. These notions lead the codes to be paid close attention, the encoder should produce the meaning and the decoder should consume it in a certain meaning in order to follow the social construction and culture because Hall states that “If no ‘meaning’ is taken, there can be no ‘consumption’. If the meaning is not articulated in practice, it has no effect” (Hall, 1980: 52). The meanings of the codes

are decided by the social perceptions and the common approaches of the majority in the society. Social perception is constructed with the common reading process of the situations of the community; people identify the meanings according to these settled points in their minds as Hall underlines that

the domains of 'preferred meanings' have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs; the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture', the rank order of power and interest and the structure of legitimations, limits and sanctions (Hall, 1980: 57).

This coding system might be available for all the types of communication, audio, verbal, behavioural and visual. In our case, the visual codes are the most significant ones among the other and they also have remarkable entity in the cultural context and film is the work that is visual that is why the visual codes are really crucial for in terms of encoding and decoding. Generally, the audience gets the first impression from what they see on the screen in the very early moments of the film so the codes can be available from the first scene of the film. Hall mentions the visual signs in his article and highlights the point that they are counted as the codes and the reason of it is that they are *already coded* in that culture.

In the adaptation film, the codes might work a little different when it is compared with an independent film. At first, their encoder, producer, is different in the film and the source text; the encoder of the source text is the writer whereas the encoder of the adaptation film is the director. Then when the basis culture of the source text and the adaptation version is not same, it is sure that their codes and also decoder, receiver, will

not be the same. The other appreciable point is the time. Adaptation might mean a shift from a specific time period to another, especially in the case of the adaptation of the classic texts such as *Pride and Prejudice* or *Great Expectations*, so even though the source text and the adaptation version depend on the same cultural background, due to the changes of the way of life in relation to the time, the perception of the audience might change and this is another point that makes the adaptation different from the independent film. With the adaptation, one might look at the past and see it through that frame as Selby and Wensley Giddings states:

it seems almost ironic that no previous age in history has had better means with which to reconstruct the past than ours. Not only, do we inherit a vast storehouse of objects [...] but we have photography, film and sound recording which enable us to see and hear what our ancestors actually looked like and sounded like (as quotes by Villaverde, 2001: 53).

Leaving the initial cultural sphere in which it is created, the literary work is re-created in a new one, in the one of the director. After the film is made, it is also received in numerous other cultural contexts, those of the audience. Thus right after the creation, adaptation is continually encoded and decoded in a variety of contexts. Their already existing cultural norms of the audience lead a multi-layered understanding of the very same text or movie. The interpretation and the perception of an adaptation, therefore, are naturally subjective. That is why, the director's cultural background and the cultural context he was raised in matters, as well as that of the author and the spectator. It is sure that, in the film, the specific cultural codes and references that are critical for the director, is seen and in the adapted version, the references to the source text have a

certain effects for the story and the audience. Neil Sinyard comments on that issue are revealing:

Novels describe, films depict. At their best, adaptations from one to another should not be seen as travesty but translation, not a reductive illustration of an inimitable masterpiece but an imaginative retelling of classical material in a new form and for new audience (as quoted by Villaverde, 2001: 54).

So the new form and the new audience interpret the retold film version of the source text with their settled structure of social life related to the culture. Not only the director's background, but also the social context of the audience is diversified and it affects the link between the source text and the adaptation. The more the commentaries become varied, the more the adaptation moves away from the source.

### 2.1.3 Intercultural Adaptations

All these points mentioned above, the translation of the language, transfer of cultural norms and codes and the adaptation of the time, brings us to the all arching concept of intercultural translation. It is hard to say that adapting from one culture to another is something new. All throughout the history, cultures borrowed myths and stories from each other and manipulated those stories according to their own needs. Romans, for instance borrowed numerous works from the Greek theatre. What increased the interest in the intercultural adaptations, according to Hutcheon, is "cultural globalization" (Cuddy-Keane, 2003: 544). As mentioned above, intercultural adaptations frequently denote more than one process of translation: of language, of place and/or of time period. Moreover, "almost always, there is an accompanying shift in the political valence from

the adapted text to the ‘transculturated’ adaptation,” according to Hutcheon (Hutcheon, 2006: 145).

Transcultural adaptations also come with radical changes in racial and gender politics. As the expected racial and gender roles differ greatly from one culture to another, adapters tend to change the gender or race of main characters to make them more relatable. In the end, movies are shot to be watched and keeping up with the expectations of the public to some extent, is a concern of almost all directors. Thus to increase the success of the movie, un-relatable or strange aspects of the story need to be changed. As Stam and Raengo state, “sometimes adapters purge an earlier text of elements that their particular cultures in time or place might find difficult or controversial; at other times, the adaptation “de-represses” an earlier adapted text’s politics (Stam and Raengo, 2008: 42–44).

## 2.2 Globalization of *Hamlet*

Adaptation has a significant role to play as a tie between the different cultures. If the source text and the adaptation version depend on different cultural backgrounds, the adapted work also creates a certain relation between these cultures. Thanks to the adaptation version of work, a certain transaction occurs and it leads us to talk about the interculturality that means the relation among the cultures, in this sense. Both cultures have some specific details on the new version of the work and at the same time these details produce new common aspects while becoming unified. These common aspects

move the issue to the terms of globalization. Here, defining this term makes the upcoming statements clearer. Globalization is a kind of result that occurs from the relational transition between the nations. Parvis Partovi defines this term as “globalisation has enhanced the interdependence between countries and intensification of cultural flows across the globe” (Partovi, 2013: 103) in his doctoral thesis that is called “Adaptations of Hamlet in Different Cultural Context: Globalization, Post Modernism and Altermodernism”.

Being global is against the singular specific entity, whereas it consists versatile frame. The transaction of the cultures is one of the main sections of globalization. It is not only the one that is influenced by that term but also it provides substantial points to it. When the globalization is concerned in terms of culture, it can be said that cultures might lose some of their indigenous aspects but on the other hand, this interplay helps to produce a new entity. That is why in globalization issue, the synchronous processes of construction and distraction of the cultures is a complicated point to discuss. The cultural interactions are directly affected by each other in the globalization process and in this way, this notion, globalization, is one of the reasons that reveals the common intercultural points. When it comes to the adaptation issue again, *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare is a cult and crucial case to see the connection between the adaptation and its globalization.

At first, it might be beneficial to mention about the general aspects of the play and the writer before the analysis. *Hamlet* is one of the most popular plays of William Shakespeare. It is thought that Shakespeare wrote this play in 1600. *Hamlet* is a tragedy in which the main character is the Danish Prince called Hamlet. The core theme of the

play is revenge. His uncle Claudius kills Hamlet's father then marries his mother. Hamlet learns this fact and swears for revenge.

Due to the popularity of the play, *Hamlet* might be called as a globalization tool because it is adapted in many different cultures and all these adaptations offer a link to each other as well as the source text. This feature is, of course, in relation with the widespread characteristic of Shakespeare as Partovi states "Shakespeare's great art belongs to everyone. He is not only for all the time, but also for all places" (Partovi, 2013: 78). Moreover its global side also shows the variety of understanding and interpretations for common aspects that come from different cultural structures as he comments "the adaptations of Hamlet illustrate the possibility of positive interaction between societies and cultures, in spite of the fact that they are ideologically divided" (Partovi, 2013: 99). In addition to this point, the inter-culturality and the globalization issues in adaptation might be associated with the use of language because the language is directly concentric with the cultural evolution. Thus, the usage of language is significant in globalization but in Hamlet adaptations, the language is diversified in the territories that it is included, and these discrepancies highlights a specific commonly shared point within the cultures.

Globalization is also examined with its localized perception. Partovi, for *Hamlet* adaptations, emphasizes this context as

the adaptations of Hamlet describe various strands of local everyday social life which are mostly 'symptomatic of globalisation' (Gupta, 2009: 13). These diverse adaptations show how people are thinking and acting locally through adapting the elements of another culture. They share the opposition to the

‘global forces’ and ‘global thinking’ which threaten local spaces (Partovi, 2013: 96).

*Hamlet* is, as T. S. Eliot stated, “the Mona Lisa of literature”. Being such a popular work, it has been subject of constant study, analysis and interpretation. It has also been adapted and appropriated into numerous different cultural contexts and genres. All these different adaptations, in the end produce a plurality of *Hamlets* containing numerous similarities as well as striking differences. All these *Hamlets* as proposed by Partovi, creates a “global family of *Hamlets* from around the world” that add much to the main text. The adaptation cannot be classified with just to be global or local. It consists the both elements of these acquaintance terms. In the light of all these aspects above, *The Female Hamlet* which is directed by Metin Erksan can be a good example as a Turkish adaptation of Shakespeare’s play to analyze.

## CHAPTER 3

### METİN ERKSAN AND *THE FEMALE HAMLET*<sup>3</sup>

Metin Erksan, one the most significant directors of the Turkish cinema, started his professional career with *Karanlık Dünya/ Aşık Veysel'in Hayatı* in 1952 and ended it with the television movie series, *Preveze'den Önce* in 1982. Throughout the 30 years in-between, Erksan produced 35 films, 6 television movies and 2 documentaries. Being a controversial character the number of works that deal with either Erksan or his cinema are surprisingly few. According to Kayalı, of the small number of studies that discuss Erksan's career, almost none of them are objective, let alone being positive. (Kayalı, *Metin Erksan Sienamsını Okumayı Denemek*, 1.) Since the beginning of the 1960s, almost until mid-1990s, there had been an invisible state embargo on Erksan and his works according to Kayalı. Standing in distance to almost all political fractions of his time, Erksan was not specifically favored or supported by any group. This neglect of his work might be a result of his own distance to mainstream political groups. Thus, almost all studies that mention Erksan or his works try to place him or his works within the

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<sup>3</sup> Although "The Lady Hamlet" would sound a lot better as a translation of "Kadın Hamlet", "The Female Hamlet", the English version of the title that has been used frequently in scholarly works and by IMDB is preferred here.

broad spectrum of Turkish cinema, rather than discussing them for their own sake. This lack of adequate sources makes it even harder to write about Erksan and his works.

Among the 35 films of him, there are two adaptations: *Ölmeyen Aşk* (1966) which is adapted from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and *The Female Hamlet* (1976) adapted from Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Birsen Altıner, 2005: 19, 77, 98). At this point, looking at the time period about the Turkish cinema which he was active might be a good start as a preparation to the analysis this thesis aims: *The Female Hamlet*. So, this chapter will introduce the case study of this thesis; that is an analysis of Erksan's *The Female Hamlet*. To this end, this chapter will firstly mention Erksan's career, the social and cultural conditions that Erksan worked in and try pointing out some patterns in Erksan's adaptation, through a discussion of *The Female Hamlet* (1976). Then, it will focus on Erksan's *The Female Hamlet* and will provide an evaluation of Erksan's movie as an intercultural adaptation (Altıner, 2005: 19-77-98-103-128).

The career path of Metin Erksan before *The Female Hamlet* is worth examining in order to understand his reasons for the choices in this work. His remittent career draws a certain line for his audience to comprehend this adaptation work because it is seen Erksan settles a significant link with the adaptation in his older attempt so all these points bring *The Female Hamlet* as an adaptation in Metin Erksan's career as a striking work.

### 3.1 Erksan and Adaptation

In Turkish cinema, the period that followed 1950s might be called a turning point. 1950s marked a new period in Turkish cinema in terms of cinematic perception. As a

result of the exhortation to this sector and the expansion of the financial opportunities there happens an increase in the number of the films. With these foundations, the opportunities increase. Cinema becomes a profitable investment. This situation especially rises the opportunities for the films whose artistic sides are more. Together with this increase in numbers, a variation of themes and subjects are also introduced. Seeking a louder tone for Turkish cinema, directors then start to feel more relaxed in their choices. Born into this atmosphere of courage and freedom Metin Erksan filmed his first movie *Karanlık Dünya/ Aşık Veysel'in Hayatı* in 1952 and it is censored for one year (Scognamillo, Volume I, 1986: 105 – 10).

Soon after, there comes a heavy censorship and starts a financially problematic period for the film sector. Erksan's striking movie *Yılanların Öcü* is censored in 1962. One of the passions of Erksan in cinema is to use surrealism and imagination as a basis of the film so Erksan's, intangible and fantastic perception starts as a reaction to this suppressive period. *Sevmek Zamanı* might be accepted as the first example of this fantastic style. Then, through the 1960s, there is a nationalist approach to cinema like the Turkish culture is higher than an outer culture and at the end of 1960s, this idea starts becoming invalid. In the beginnings of the 1970s, it is the waiting period for Erksan because his last films at the end of the 1960s face the financial failure and did not bring so much appreciation even though he films his most successful films in the beginning of that decade. That is why, he directs towards commercial films, to increase financial gain.

When it comes to 1973, another financial crisis is getting ready to shake the sector and the number of the films start decreasing again. In 1976, there is another

depression period with the censor over the sector but in this second part of the 1970s, Erksan stands up again with *The Female Hamlet*. This attempt is unexpected within the depressed atmosphere of the cinema, it is a brave step and it gets significant attention. *The Female Hamlet* is the one in which Erksan's surrealism and fantastic way to expression peaks. *The Female Hamlet* is not the first adaptation of Erksan. In fact, when he first enters the cinema industry, his primer work is *Binnaz* which is adapted from Yusuf Ziya Ortaç by Erksan in 1950 but it is filmed nine years later. Moreover, *Ölmeyen Aşk*, an adaptation of "Wuthering Hights" by Emily Brontë is filmed in 1966. Thus it can be said that Erksan has already improved and settled his own techniques for adaptation (Scognamillo, Volume I, 1986: 145 – 6; Volume II, 15, 27 – 9 and Dorsay, 1989: 63 – 4, 148, 153).

Erksan is already accepted as a successful director when he films *The Female Hamlet*. His previous movie *Susuz Yaz* (1963) wins the first international movie award of Turkish cinema; the Golden Bear. *Kuyu* (1968) also wins a couple awards in Adana Film Festival. Thus, Erksan do not feel the pressure to prove his success or increase his popularity. This might be the reason behind his courage that is so visible in *The Female Hamlet* (Scognamillo, Volume I, 1986: 19). At this point, before the analysis of *The Female Hamlet*, pointing out the notion that directed Erksan to such a film and giving a brief introduction of the film seems beneficial.

Metin Erksan is interested in history, not only of his homeland but also of the world. He is connected to the current international approaches to the cinema. As well as his interest in history, he also takes courses from the Turkish and the foreign instructors when he is a student in Art History in Istanbul University. Halide Edip Adıvar is his

instructor and Erksan also indicates that he wants to take Shakespeare courses from her. These issues show that he is not in a limited frame, he developed a wider and universal perception. Both his interest in world history and William Shakespeare probably directed him to *Hamlet*. Kayalı also underlines the point that when Erksan films *The Female Hamlet* there are no Shakespearean adaptations in Turkish cinema because of the heavy censorship, so his move is considered as a courageous one. It is also related to the universality of Erksan's way of thinking and its reflection on his films (Kayalı, 2014:52, 68 – 9, 85; Altıner, 2005: 167).

*The Female Hamlet*, also known as *The Angel of Vengeance*, is filmed in 1976 and the producer is known as Memduh Ün but in fact Erksan and the lead role Fatma Girik supported the film financially. The film attracts a remarkable attention when it appears on screen with its striking open credits and Hamlet's horrified eye-shots. Erksan's anomalous settings and the choices support to increase the attention of the audience. On the other hand, it is crucial to mention that Erksan writes the scenario of the film and he does not use the old translation of the play, he re-translates it (Altıner, 2005: 103-4, 153).

This film should be taken into consideration as a dynamic and new approach to the original play, *Hamlet*. It is not counted just as a film adaptation; it is kind of a different work that was based on the source text in a way. So here, Erksan's work is perceived as commentary on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He changes some specific aspects of the play whether intentionally or not. In Erksan's film, the most striking change is the sex of the lead role; Hamlet is a female. This significant point makes the film quite different from the original one. In the film, Hamlet is a girl, well – educated in America,

and she turns back to her family home when she hears that her father is murdered. Her mother marries her uncle soon after the funeral so Hamlet starts to feel grudge to them while she is trying to find out her father's killer. Then she learns the fact that her uncle kills her father and at the end she kills him to take revenge of her father. In the end, Hamlet dies as well. Here, I am going to draw two parts to analyse the film in detail.

## 3.2 In Terms of Form

### 3.2.1 General Structure

In *The Female Hamlet*, Erksan changes some structural aspects of the source text. The first change is the opening scene in the film. In the original play, Act I Scene I, the play opens with the talking of the guards about the ghost of the dead father and in the play, Hamlet does not see the funeral of his father and we even do not know the scene that he learns the death of his father. The audience does not know the murderer of Hamlet's father. After the conversation of the guards, Hamlet enters the play in the celebration of Claudius (Hamlet's uncle) and Gertrude's (Hamlet's mother) wedding. In Shakespeare's play, the act of murder is not displayed, thus Hamlet's suspicions and curiosity is transferred to the audience. The audience, together with Hamlet, tries to solve the puzzle that the ghost presents.

In Erksan's film, in the opening scene, Kasım (Hamlet's uncle) kills his brother, Ahmet. So the audience knows the fact and the murder just from the beginning. That is why, there is no secret point in the story for the audience. It is possible to suggest that Erksan tried to familiarize the Turkish audience to the characters from the very

beginning. Then, the scene jumps to the funeral of Ahmet, (Hamlet's father). We see the funeral and the reactions of Kasım and Gönül (Hamlet's mother). After this scene we see the wedding celebration scene and in there Hamlet seems isolated from the crowd. The scene where the ghost comes is following scenes.

Another significant difference between the film and the source text is that in film, Hamlet goes to near her mother and the uncle while they are sleeping on their hammocks. She carries a mirror, wakes them up and makes a speech as if she is mad. She puts the mirror and forces them to see their reflection on it and wants them to face with their inner world. Hamlet ends her speech with the word "elveda" (farewell) and leaves the scene. This scene reminds one the speech of Ophelia (Hamlet's lover) in act IV scene V. In that scene, Ophelia approaches Gertrude and Claudius and wants to talk to them. She goes insane at that scene because of her father's death and Gertrude and Claudius realize her madness. Ophelia sings a song on her own and at the end of the scene she says "goodnight ladies, goodnight sweet ladies, goodnight, goodnight!" while leaving the scene. It seems that the speech and madness of Ophelia in the play, is transferred to Hamlet in Erksan's film.

Another point to underline in the film is about Orhan (Hamlet's lover). While Orhan is painting in the forest, Hamlet comes in very feminine clothes and starts talking to him about his painting. She gives reference to life and in her speech, she tells all the events about the death of her father, pretending to be mad. However, in the source text, the reader does not come across this kind of explanatory scenes because Hamlet, himself, cannot understand what is happening around him from the beginning. He is just trying to interpret the situations in his mind. It is possible to say that female Hamlet is

more powerful than Shakespeare's Hamlet. She understands everything from the beginning and she makes plans for revenge.

On the other hand, there is one more point to highlight is the ending of both narratives. In Shakespeare's play, Hamlet and Laertes (brother of Ophelia), start a fight as a result of Claudius's setting. Claudius prepares a poisoned sword for the fight because he wants to get rid of both of them. On the other hand, he also prepares poisoned-wine to be served to Hamlet, in case he wins the fight. No one, not even Gertrude, knows this plan. In the fight, both Hamlet and Laertes are deadly injured. At this point, Gertrude, seeing her son wounded, drinks the poisoned-wine, and dies. After that when Hamlet sees that his mother is dying, he injures Claudius with the poisoned sword so at the end of the play all of them die.

In Metin Erksan's film, however, Hamlet comes to kill her uncle Kasım with a rifle. At first, Orhan's brother tries to kill Hamlet and he wounds her but then she kills him. In the following scene we see Kasım running into the forest in order to escape from Hamlet. Kasım shoots Gönül by mistake and she dies there. In the end Hamlet kills Kasım. Here, at the ends of the stories, both uncles Kasım and Claudius kills their wives unintentionally. Just after the wives, they are killed by the male and female Hamlets. There is a parallelism in terms of ending of the stories, in both versions; the characters die in similar ways.

In the last point, there are some missing points in the film when it is compared to the original play so there is another clue that shows Erksan's choice not to be faithful to the original play in some sense. In Erksan's film, only the main characters are seen and

that is why there are missing characters in the film. Horatio, for instance, is a significant character for the play because he is the closest one to Hamlet but in the film, we do not come across such a person. Guardians that Hamlet makes plan with, can be thought as the soldiers in the play. Moreover, in Shakespeare's play, Fortinbras is also a significant character because he is the Prince of Norway and he attacks to Denmark because he wants to take the revenge of his father that is killed by father Hamlet. In Erksan's film, there is not any character that combines with Fortinbras so in this content it can also be said that in the film, there is no reference to such a war between countries or something like that. The film only focuses on Hamlet's revenge.

### 3.2.2 Narrational Mode

In terms of narrational mode, it can be said that both the source text, the play and the adaptation version, the film is told by third person singular. There are objective narrations. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between these works. In the film, the secret of Ahmet's death is known from the beginning of the film. Hamlet learns this fact after talking to her father's ghost and makes plan to behave as mad and in this way, she can make her uncle confess the truth. That is why, throughout the film, the audience know that Hamlet is not mad in fact, she just pretends like that so all the scenes that she behaves as mad are not real, they are the parts of a certain plan.

On the other side, in the play, Hamlet is really troubled, he loses his logic gradually. He is getting mad step by step through the play and he finds out all the facts one by one. The things that he learns, make him get mad gradually. In his soliloquies, it is seen that he has conflict about the real and the illusion so there is a blur to decide

whether he is really mad or not. For these reasons, the play of Shakespeare is classified as a tragedy but when it comes to the film of Metin Erksan, it is clearly seen that it is a passion for the revenge tragedy. That is why, the general atmosphere of the story and its reflection on the audience is differentiated in the film.

### 3.2.3 Character Functions

In terms of character functions in Erksan's film, Hamlet and Orhan might be the most important ones. These character's sexes are changed in this film so their representations and the characteristic mutate in a way. Hamlet the protagonist of Shakespeare's play is male. He is the only son of the family and after the death of his father, he should have some authority. Despite this power, Hamlet is a kind of passive character in the play. After the death of his father, he is getting mad gradually and at the same time he feels the conflict about his own psychological situation. He acts slowly to find the killer and it seems like he does not want so much to find who he is. Maybe he is afraid to learn the fact. On the other hand, he does not show enough reaction to the marriage of his uncle and his mother.

On the contrary, Hamlet, in Erksan's film, is represented as female. There is a significant point to highlight that in the Shakespeare's play the name of Hamlet's father is Hamlet, too but in the adaptation version, the father's name is Ahmet and this difference is a clear result of the sex change. Despite her sex, she is wearing masculine clothes until she starts pretending to be mad. This masculine look fits her personality in the film so her behaviors are not found odd when it is thought with her physical

appearance as a whole. Then while she is pretending to be mad she starts wearing very feminine and revealing dresses. This change, however, does not affect her masculine attitude, and her many behaviors continue throughout the film. In addition to that, Hamlet has a certain authority over the guardians and her friends because she is dominant and behaves masculine. She is a powerful woman unlike Hamlet in William Shakespeare's play.

Ophelia, on the other hand is another sex change in the film. In Shakespeare's play, she is a very passive, quiet and calm girl. She loves Hamlet and her father Polonius who works with Claudius. When Polonius dies, Ophelia is getting really mad and she is in a psychological disorder. She cannot cope with the struggle between the man that she loves and her father and as a result of it, she commits suicide. Her madness is realized by both Hamlet and the others, Claudius and Gertrude because she expresses her madness in every situations, when she comes face to face with Claudius and Gertrude, she sings song without listening of what they say so when she dies, it is not a so much surprise for the reader because the reader is got ready to her end throughout the story.

On the contrary again, Orhan in Erksan's film is male. Despite his sex, his characteristics do not change in the adaptation film. He is still passive, quiet and does not have a powerful character. Generally he obeys the rules that are set by others. For instance, when his father prohibits him to see Hamlet and after a while he encourages Orhan to talk to Hamlet, for their plan, Orhan obeys the rules. He is not a dominant man. He loves Hamlet as it is in the Shakespeare's play and here, it seems that he is just so sorrowful because of thinking that he is not loved back. Orhan commits suicide in the film and this point fits with the play.

Except the two of them, Hamlet's two best friends are performed by women in the film but the characteristics of them are not changed so much - both in play and the film they come to understand what is happening to Hamlet and at the end they follow the uncle's order and try to take Hamlet away so they are still passive and not effective characters - as well as Hamlet and Orhan; Hamlet is more dominant, masculine and powerful whereas Orhan is quite calm and passive so there is a blur between the distinctions of the gender in the film.

This changing the sex of the characters in the film might be interpreted in a way as a result of Erksan's aim to surprise his audience. A male Hamlet is much more suitable for the male dominated Turkish audience and their expectations but he presents a female for Hamlet. It also might be read like while Erksan tries to bring a new surprising momentum with a female Hamlet, he also manages to catch the expectations of the audience in a way with the dominant and 'manly' characteristics of his female Hamlet. Here, he not only changes the sex of the character, he also changes such a cult play in an innovative way.

### 3.3 Cinematographic Style

A director has to make some decisions about the cinematographic representation of his work. Setting, colors, sounds, costumes, décor and the camera angles all emphasize the significance of the scene. Erksan is very specific about his choices in cinematographic terms. *The Female Hamlet* is a fantastic and surrealist film due to Erksan's

cinematographic decision so looking closer to these choices make the film's fantastic character clearer.

### 3.3.1 Mise-en-scène

The primarily significant point is the setting. In the film, generally the setting is a forest or a desolated sand, like desert. It is interesting that Erksan uses these desolated, open-air settings as an indoor space for the first time at 27:16 of the film. In that scene, Kasim and Gönül are sleeping on their hammocks in the forest. Besides them, there are coffee tables and the flowers within vases on them (Fig. 1). Moreover, Hamlet's bedroom is settled on the sand and even the bedroom has a door which Hamlet specifically mentions in the film (Figs. 2, 3). Even though that bedroom is settled into an open-air space, she states that every room has a door by referring to her door. These desolated areas are probably used to underline the main character Hamlet's loneliness both in her inner world and in her revenge plan.

The forest, jungle, shows her complexities, her wild side to take her revenge. Both of these open-air and infinite spaces also refer to her freedom. For the first time in the film, at 30:44, we see an indoor setting, it is a huge saloon and its magnitude reminds a kind of chateau (Fig. 4). Due to this magnitude of the indoor setting, the characters are seen so little in it. In this way, Erksan probably refers to the ones' inferiorities in that saloon. That indoor scene might also refer to the captivity of the materials like money because the uncle kills his brother for money.



Figure 1 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 27:16



Figure 2 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 32:22



Figure 3 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 33:10



Figure 4 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 30:44

Apart from the setting, costume and decor are interesting points to understand Hamlet's personality. She generally wears masculine clothes like trousers, shirts and ties but when she decides to act like she is mad, she starts wearing very feminine; low-cut dresses and accessories so the costume choices is significant in that sense (Figs. 5, 6). Through the end of the story, she again wears masculine clothes because everyone understands that she is not mad in fact, she is just pretending, so no need to keep her actual side for Hamlet anymore. The shift of psychological moods of Hamlet becomes very distinctive with her costume choices.

Decor is again generally set in forest or the sand land in Hamlet's scene. It both shows Erksan's imagination and makes the scenes fantastic. For instance, Hamlet has a bedroom on the sand, she has a huge and pretty bed and even there is a pink window door on the sand that she claims that it's the door of her room. Here the pink door emphasizes her “pretty girl” mode that is quite associated with mad characteristics of Hamlet so this is what she really wants.

There is one particular scene that needs to be addressed here, in terms of décor. At the very beginning of the film, in the wedding celebration of Kasım and Gönül, the scene is set in forest again. People have fun among the trees but the interesting point is that the area is decorated with numerous flags that belong to different countries (Fig. 7). I interpret this kind of decoration as a way to emphasize universality. Those foreign countries' flags are flied side by side so it may symbolize the universality of *Hamlet*. In relation to this, in a scene where Hamlet talking about her revenge and her plans to kill her uncle in the forest, behind her, there is a huge earth model (Fig. 8). I think it is a symbolic reference to the universality of Hamlet's story.

The last point for the décor analysis is the scene that Hamlet conducts the orchestra. In that scene, there are the instruments on the sand, they are tied to stick up but there are not any musicians to play those instruments, however, Hamlet conducts while the overture of ‘Hamlet’ by Shostakovich is heard (Fig. 9). Here, the instruments without their musicians refer to Hamlet’s incomplete side. An instrument does not mean anything if no one plays it and here, Hamlet is lost as well within her madness as just after the overture, she gives her soliloquies as it is known in the Shakespeare’s play “to be or not to be”. It is hard to decide whether she is mad at all or not in that scene.



Figure 5 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 5:31



Figure 6 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 32:53



Figure 7 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 5:56



Figure 8 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 1:14:03



Figure 9 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 37:17

On the other hand, for the color, it can be said that use of color is quite significant for Erksan. In *The Female Hamlet*, red and blue are the most used colors. Red is seen in almost every scene, either in costumes or in décor. It symbolizes passion, ambition in almost every culture so it is a universal interpretation of this color and also in this film it symbolizes betrayal as well as the revenge of Hamlet because it might be associated with the blood. We can associate this color with Hamlet because generally it is seen whenever Hamlet is on the scene. Even at the end of the film, when Hamlet is shot by the brother of Orhan, she wears totally white and her blood paint her clothes in red. It might be interpreted as she is painted in red so she takes her revenge.

In addition to the red, there is another significant color; it is blue. Blue is seen generally in the family scene. It can be associated with the royalty. It might be a symbol for the royal family, as blue historically represents the royalty in Europe. In the film, it is hard to see Hamlet with this color, blue is generally associated with the uncle, Kasim. Moreover, in the film, blue color is shown with a combination of red. It might mean that the royalty of the family of Hamlet is cut down by the betrayal that is means for red (Figs. 10, 11).



Figure 10 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 1:00:12



Figure 11 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 1:13:31

### 3.3.2 Sound

Music is another crucial point in Erksan's films. He chooses the music for his films studiously. He uses the music in order to make the scenes more dramatic, dynamic or effective. In the credits of the film, the overture of the Shostakovich that is called "Hamlet" is played and this is the audial reference to the international *Hamlet*. This overture is also heard in the scene when Hamlet conducts the orchestra. She is conducting this overture with the instruments without their musicians.

There is another song called "Pireli Şiir", a poem of Orhan Veli Kanık and in the film, Timur Selçuk's version of this poem as a song is heard. It is heard when Hamlet and her friends perform a play in the film. In this song, of course there is a message about the situation that Hamlet in. It says that the fleas will gulp down the elephants, so it is clear that Hamlet specifically chooses that song to give the message that she will defeat her uncle. She is the little one because of being the daughter and her uncle's authority while the uncle is the bigger one with his power but she points out that she will come over him and ruins his plan.

Apart from these, there is another important choice for the music in the film again. When Hamlet is resting in her bedroom in the sand, she is listening "Makber" on her own. It is interesting because this is a poem by Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan and it composed as a song. This poem belongs to the very old Turkish literature because Tarhan in the one who sees the Divan literature. Hamlet is educated in America so she and her family are quite modern but here there is a clash of the old and the new, the

modern and the authentic. It also shows that she belongs to her ancestry despite growing abroad and this loyalty urges her revenge.

### 3.3.3 Cinematography

At last, it might be beneficial to touch on the camera angles and their meaning in the film. In this film, Erksan uses various camera angles to offer a certain inference. In Hamlet scenes, he generally uses close shots to Hamlet's face in order to show her reactions and mimics because in the film Hamlet is the only one who acts as if she performs on the stage (screenshots 12, 13, 14). Her body language is exaggerated as well as her ways of speech and her tone. They are so theatrical. Besides the close shot, Erksan uses low-angle shots especially for the uncle's expression (Figs. 15, 16). Low shots are used to show the character more powerful but here, it is not only used for this purpose. The low shots of the uncle make him scary because it is very close to his face and almost under his chin. That is why, rather than to show his power and greatness, it is used to emphasize his dreadfulness. In a very close relation to this, the shots from the top also refer to the idea that to underlines the superiority of the top when it compares to the bottom one. Erksan specifies this idea with his shot in this film. Especially in a significant scene, Hamlet is on the table and standing there while her uncle is at the bottom floor and looking up to Hamlet (Fig. 17). Here, it is easy to interpret that Erksan wants to show the superiority of Hamlet over the uncle. Moreover, it is clearly seen that the uncle face is timid. He seems very little especially from the eyes of Hamlet, both in terms of personality and the physical reactions.



Figure 12 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 11:02



Figure 13 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 22:02



Figure 14 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 38:58

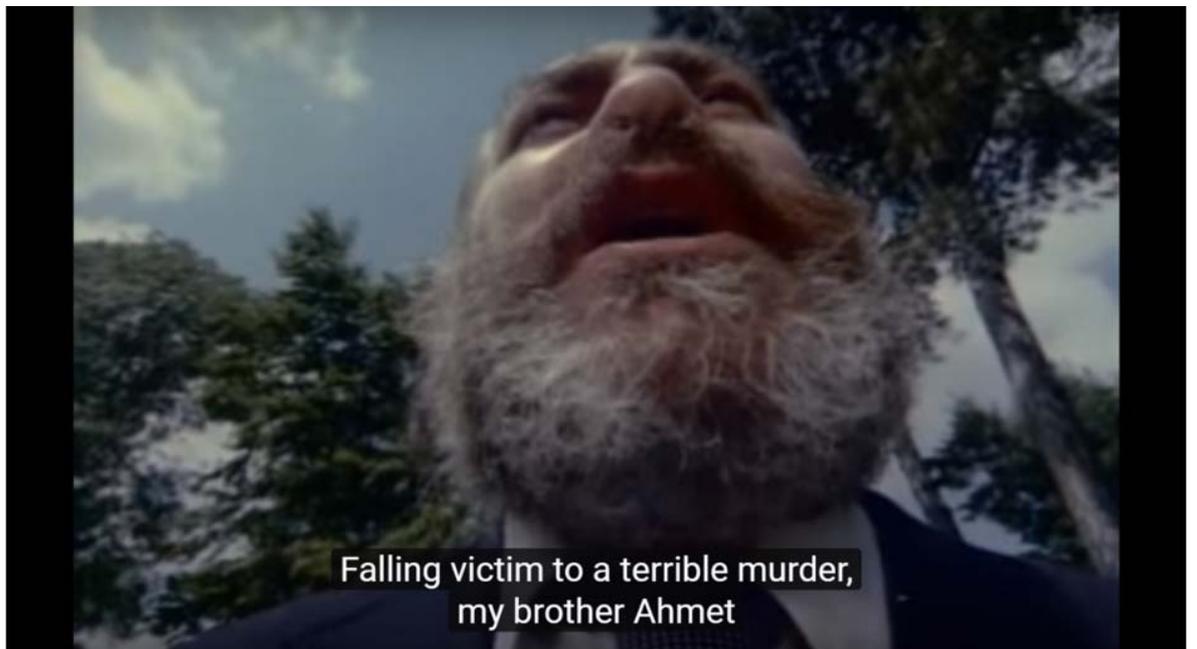


Figure 15 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 4:05



Figure 16 Erksan, The Female Hamlet (1976), 1:16:29



Figure 17 Erksan, The Female Hamlet (1976), 1:08:07

### 3.4 In Terms of Content

As it is highlighted above, the social norms and the cultural codes have a significant role in an adaptation film. It is sure that the social norms of the culture that the adaptation version belongs to, is seen in the film in order to localize it in a way as well as to take the audiences into the film. Erksan uses this method in a very clear way. He uses some specific notions to make the film in consideration both as global and local. Throughout the film, the references to the intercultural examples are mentioned already so now, I want to focus on the notions that only have a significant understanding in our culture.

*Hamlet* is a revenge tragedy and it is known that the main character wants to take the revenge of his father. In *The Female Hamlet*, the revenge of her makes her a passionate woman in a sense. She is strictly against the marriage of her mother and uncle. She states this marriage does not let her father rest in peace. There is a crash within the family bonds. In Turkish culture, family is the most significant community in the society as it was crucial in the English society of Shakespeare's time. Family bonds are greatly respected. That is why such a crash and betrayal in a family are not approved by the society and in film this issue is underlined again and again because Erksan's Hamlet frequently repeats her mother and uncle's betrayal and she gets angrier with them and the audience interiorizes her revenge in this way.

On the other hand, there is a significant superstitious belief in the film. When Hamlet goes to the uncle and her mother while they are sleeping in their hammocks, she carries a mirror with her. After giving a speech, Hamlet breaks the mirror just before

leaving. She frightens them with the sudden fracture of the mirror and then states that the broken mirror is interpreted as bad luck. This is a significant point because this superstition is universally well known, and it is quite common in Turkish culture. People avoid from breaking mirror, as it would bring bad luck. The superstitious beliefs are the parts that piece the culture together as a whole. For this reason, Erksan makes a wisely decision because in this way, the film is directly linked to universality and this kind of specific tool, makes the film both intertwine with the Turkish culture and it creates as integrity.

As a bind to the social norms in the society, Erksan uses a common cliché in Turkish cinema in the film. The lovers who belonged to different social classes have an impossible love and this theme is commonly used in Turkish films. This situation is not only valid for Turkey, it also comes from Shakespeare's use of universal themes. Class distinction, is the one the most realistic matters in a society. It is impossible to create a society that consists only one and equal social level. Erksan uses this class distinction issue in this film. The rich girl Hamlet and the poor boy Orhan cannot be a perfect couple and they cannot continue this relationship as Orhan's brother states it to him in the film. This kind of class distinction between the lovers is seen in most of the melodramas in that time. Erksan makes the film familiar to the audience and at the same time he pushes the film to the universality of Shakespeare again. The audience does not find odd the film in this way. It is internalized universally and fits also again the Turkish film culture.

In addition, in spite of the fantastic side of the film, Erksan holds it in the reality with this kind of a certain and exact realism of the social structure, the class distinction.

In the film, into the chateau, there is an extremely long table and in a significant scene, Kasım and Gönül sit on the edge of the table whereas Orhan and his father sit on the other edge (Fig. 18). Between them, there is a long distance and it refers to their social level distinction so Erksan uses the material to make this distinction in sight and underlines this fact again.

For the last point, it might be good to point out the names of the character in the films when it is compared with Shakespeare's play. It is quite interesting that, Erksan only keeps the main character's name, Hamlet despite changing the sex. All the other characters are given Turkish names. By choosing the Turkish names, Erksan takes into consideration the link between the phonetics in the original names and the Turkish ones. Claudious converted Kasım, Gertrude – Gönül, Ophelia – Orhan etc. for the other characters, the same process is valid, except the father of Hamlet. In Shakespeare's play, the father's name is Hamlet as well but in the film, Erksan gives the name Ahmet to that character. This exception might be interpreted as the gender issue again. In the film, Hamlet is female so this changing in the sex might restrain Erksan to use the same way for these two different sexed characters. There is another interpretation that except the lead role Hamlet, all the characters have Turkish names. Erksan does not change her name because he wants to keep the internationality of the film and on the other hand, he might want only take the all attention to that character with this explicit difference. Hamlet should be the one to follow and focus on in the structure of the film, besides she is the only who is lonely and alienated from the others throughout the film.

As the discussion above indicates, Erksan's *The Female Hamlet* should be evaluated as a dynamic and new approach to the original play, *Hamlet*. Erksan manages

to adapt a story written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century England to the needs and expectations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Turkish audience. Erksan's adaptation does not only challenge numerous traditional adaptations of Hamlet and manage to stand out by switching the gender of the main character, but also creates a new approach to Shakespeare's work through intercultural adaptation. Certain structural aspects of the source text, the narrational mode and culture specific additions here and there all helps us see Erksan's fingerprints as the director and indicates his role in the adaptation process.



Figure 18 Erksan, *The Female Hamlet* (1976), 30:55

## CONCLUSION

This study evaluated Metin Erksan's adaptation *The Female Hamlet* as an intercultural adaptation. Erksan's cinema, as well as adaptation studies in Turkish cinema are known to be relatively neglected. Adaptation studies, especially with the new approaches to adapted materials, attracted renewed interest, as the field is expanding beyond the fruitless discussions of originality and fidelity. Erksan's films, on the other hand, are also brought to the foreground after his death in 2012. Thus in terms of both theory and the case study, this thesis aimed to fulfill a blank spot in the field.

As a starting point this thesis summarized the history of the discussions around adaptations. Stating the prejudiced approaches towards the image vis a vis the written word, this thesis firstly explained the roots of the secondary position of the cinema in comparison to literature. Here, in order to specify the issue, it touched on Shakespeare and his significant position in the canon of English Literature. Shakespeare, himself, has canon so this is also one of the reasons why his work and its adaptation are the cases of this thesis. After mentioning Shakespeare's popularity for the adaptation studies, the thesis moved to Shakespeare's adaptation literature so at that point, it highlighted the specific aspects that are significant for the process of Shakespeare's adaptations from theatre to cinema. The distinction between theatre and cinema adaptations of Shakespeare evolved a way to discuss the fidelity of the adapted work to

the original text because Shakespeare's plays are obviously written for the theatre stages. Then, the long-lasting originality and fidelity discussions are summarized, to conclude that with the destruction of the hierarchy between the text and the image as well as the original and the adaptation, originality and fidelity discussions are completely left out of the field. With a specific reference to the impact of the new theories such as intertextuality, reception theory, post-structuralism; the final part of the first chapter discussed the innovations in the field of adaption studies.

Secondly, and in order to set the theoretical framework, this thesis stated the importance of intercultural adaptations in the field of adaptation studies. Explaining the need for a discussion of intercultural adaptations from various aspects, second chapter of this thesis focused initially on terms such as culture, intercultural texts and globalization. Suggesting a specific tripartite analysis for intercultural adaptations the second part of this thesis tried to underline the impact of the translation process of the original work, the transfer of cultural codes and finally the selective approach of the individual directors to the adapted versions.

Finalizing the discussion with the analysis of Erksan's famous adaptation *The Female Hamlet*, the third chapter is dedicated to a case study of an intercultural adaptation. Starting with a short introduction to Erksan's cinema and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* the third chapter analyzed Erksan's *The Female Hamlet* to track the specific moves of the director in adapting Shakespeare's work to Turkish cinema.

As a conclusion, it can be said that Erksan's marginal and subjective approach to cinema is seen in *The Female Hamlet*. Accepted as one of the most outstanding works of

its time, the fantastic personal style, highly symbolic manner and innovative approach of Erksan peaks in *The Female Hamlet*. If adaptation is taken into consideration as a commentary, it would not be a mistake to say that Erksan's adaptation could be an example of commentary type of adaptation. There is of course a link between the adaptation and the original text but the differences between these two works cannot be denied. These striking differences put the both works on a different understanding and evaluating levels. The change of sex, in the film, is the most underlined changes so it pushes the audience to interpret the film from a different point of views in terms of cultural norms and gender roles. This highlighted point is interpreted as one of the clearest directions to the Turkish culture as well because here, Erksan brings a surprising character Hamlet with her masculine characteristics. Such a masculine and a dominant woman over the men is not a common expectation at that time. This is what Erksan does intentionally. On the other hand, there are some aspects that is not clear whether the director (the adapter) changes intentionally or unintentionally throughout the film. As the director of this intercultural adaptation Erksan affects and controls his work from every aspect. He does not only produce a new translation of *Hamlet* but also works for adapt of the cultural codes of the Shakespearean England into 1970s Turkey.

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## APPENDIX

### **The Female Hamlet (Erksan, 1976)**

- (00.01 – 02.00) Open credits (generic)
- (02.01 – 02.41) Kasım shoots Ahmet
- (02.42 – 03.48) Funeral
- (03.49 – 05.02) Kasım's monolog
- (05.03 – 08.48) Wedding ceremony
- (08.49 – 11.12) The conversation between Hamlet and Orhan
- (11.13 – 12.05) Guardians are waiting for the ghost
- (12.06 – 12.40) The ghost is seen for the first time
- (12.41 – 14.45) Guardians are telling about the ghost
- (14.46 – 15.43) Orhan and his brother (Osman) are talking about Hamlet
- (15.44 – 16.11) Orhan and his father are talking about Hamlet
- (16.12 – 22.26) Hamlet and the ghost
- (22.27 – 24.26) Hamlet is upon Ahmet's grave
- (24.27 – 27.04) Hamlet starts pretending mad
- (27.05 – 30.42) The mirror scene
- (30.43 – 32.14) Kasım and Gönül are talking to Orhan and his father
- (32.15 – 34.37) Hamlet's open air bedroom – Makber
- (34.38 – 37.01) Kasım and Gönül confirm the love between Orhan and Hamlet
- (37.02 – 38.38) Hamlet conducts the orchestra
- (38.39 – 41.35) Hamlet's monolog
- (41.36 – 42.40) Hamlet's friends (Rezzan and Gül) come
- (42.41 – 46.45) The cage scene
- (46.46 – 47.08) Hamlet finds theatre players for her play
- (47.09 – 49.40) Hamlet is planning the play
- (49.41 – 1.00.20) The play
- (1.00.21 – 1.01.23) Hamlet thinks about her plan
- (1.01.24 – 1.06.58) The conversation between Hamlet and Gönül (the death of

Orhan's father)

(1.06.59 – 1.08.55) Kasım persuades Hamlet about going to America with her friends

(1.08.56 – 1.11.59) The road trip

(1.12.00 – 1.12.42) Orhan commits suicide

(1.12.43 – 1.13.30) Osman's promise of revenge

(1.13.31 – 1.14.56) Hamlet's wing shooting

(1.14.57 – 1.16.30) Hamlet turns back

(1.16.31 – 1.19.09) Orhan's funeral

(1.19.10 – 1.26.04) The final scene

(1.26.05 – 1.26.11) End titles (generic)

## **Hamlet (Shakespeare, 1599 - 1601)**

I.I. The guardians see the ghost

I.II. Claudius' monolog

I.III. Laertes and Polonius talk to Ophelia about Hamlet

I.IV. Hamlet encounters with the ghost

I.V. Hamlet talks to the ghost

II.I. Hamlet and Ophelia

II.II. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern comes / The news about Fortinbras / Hamlet and his friends decide to stage a play / The players arrive

III.I. Hamlet and Ophelia / Hamlet's soliloquy

III.II. The play

III.III. Claudius wants to send Hamlet to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

III.IV. Gertrude and Hamlet / Polonius' death

IV.I. Claudius learns Polonius's death / He wants to send Hamlet hurriedly

IV.II. Rosencratz and Guildenstern try to persuade Hamlet to go

IV.III. Claudius tells Hamlet that he will be shipped to England / He plans to kill him

IV.IV. On the way to England, Hamlet learns that Fortinbras is going to attack Denmark / He decides to go back

IV.V. Ophelia's madness

IV.VI. Hamlet's return

IV.VII. Claudius and Laertes's duel plan / Ophelia's suicide

V.I. Ophelia's funeral

V.II. The duel / The final scene