A CULTURAL REFLECTOR CONSTRUCTED BY CINEMATIC LANGUAGE AND GRAPHICAL DESIGN IN THE FORMATION YEARS OF TURKISH CINEMA: FILM POSTER*

Serra ERDEM[1]

ABSTRACT

Turkish cinema that was accepted as a new branch of art starting from the pre-republic period started to find its own identity between the years 1950 – 1970. The system has difficulties of the first stage of configuration in the fields of operation, application and screening. Cinema, with its production companies, producers, directors and artists, and audiences, comes out as the basic in this first stage and ends its configuration stages in executions. Movie theaters meet the audiences with the system. With the development of Turkish cinema, posters, the most effective conduit of marketing, are developed as well because of their peculiarity of transportation the messages to the audience most easily and effectively. Some similarities are seen between the posters that are analyzed according to genres, which are designed by considering the audience's appreciations, assets and expectations. Thus, we can see that a common formation of a design language in those posters is starting to form. The film posters which were made in these years are not only a communication conduit trying to draw audience's attention on films and establish a relationship between the film and the audience, but also gives information about the social and cultural situation and value judgments of the society.

Keywords: Turkish Cinema, Film Posters, Genres, Design

* Anadolu Üniversitesi Engelliler Entegre Yüksekokulu tarafından düzenlenen 5. Uluslararası Sanat Sempozyumunda yayınlanan bildiriden türetilmiştir.

[1]Araştırma Görevlisi Doktor, Gazi Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi , Görsel İletişim Tasarımı Bölümü, serra.erdem(at)hotmail.com

TÜRK SİNEMASININ BİÇİMLENDİĞİ YILLARDA SİNEMA DİLİ VE GRAFİKSEL TASARIMLARLA OLUŞTURULAN BİR KÜLTÜR YANSITICISI: FİLM AFİŞLERİ

ÖZ

Cumhuriyet Dönemi öncesinden başlayarak sanat dalları arasına yedinci sanat olarak katılan Türk sineması, gerçek kimliğini 1950-1970 yılları arasında bulmaya başlamıştır. Sinemanın kendi sistemini kurması için zamana ihtiyaç olacaktır. Bu sistemde, işletim, uygulama ve gösterim alanlarında kendini yapılandırmanın ilk aşamasının sıkıntısı vardır. Yapım şirketleri, yapımcı, yönetmen, artistleri, izleyicileri ile sinema bu ilk dönemde sistemin temelleri olarak ortaya çıkar ve kuruluş aşamasını uygulamaların içinde geçirir. Sinema salonları izleyicilerle sistemi buluşturur. Bu gelişmelerle eşzamanlı olarak oluşan reklam pazarında, iletişim mecraları arasında izleyiciye kolay ulaşılabilirliği ve iletiyi en kısa ve net bir biçimde anlatabilme özelliğiyle afiş ilk sırada yer almıştır. İzleyicinin beğenisine, değer ve beklentilerine göre tasarlanan bu afişler film türlerine göre değerlendirildiğinde, çeşitli benzerlikler görülmüştür. Bu da, ait olduğu dönemde yapılan afişler arasında ortak bir tasarım dilinin oluşmaya başladığının göstergesidir. Bu dönemin sinema afişleri yanlızca izleyicinin dikkatini çekmek ve filmle bir bağ kurmasını sağlamakla birlikte, aynı zamanda izleyiciye dönemin sosyal ve kültürel durumu, toplumun değer ve yargıları hakkında bilgi verir nitelik taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Sineması, Film Afişleri, Film Türleri, Tasarım

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Introduction

A poster, according to the definition of Turkish Language Association, is 'an illustrated placard installed in a public place, prepared for the purpose of announcing or promoting something (Wikipedia, 2015). Posters, composed by piecing visual and typographic elements together, have made progress with the advancing technology and printing techniques.

Historical Development of Posters

When examining the first examples of poster design, though it could be seen that Assyrians used posters for selling their goods (using cuneiform on clay tablets) or it was used for promotion of gladiator fights, founded circuses during the Roman Empire period, examples of posters in today's context first emerged in France.

'The French law with regard to the freedom of press that was enacted in 1881 led to a great advancement in the poster industry by abrogating the many provisions of censorship and allowing posters to be hanged on anywhere besides spaces that were reserved for official announcements and churches. Streets were transformed into an art gallery which people from every walks of life could observe, reputed painters desisted regarding designing advertisement posters as a depreciating act (Bektaş, 1992: 18)'.

Experiencing more development with the cultural movements, poster art grew into an efficient instrument of promotion and advertisement for announcing the goods and services produced to the public as a result of the industrial revolution. Rapid improvement and growth emerged in art movements showed its effect on poster art like in every other area. The art of poster, which is a branch of fine arts, is used in performing advertisement or propaganda, promoting art events such as theatre plays, exhibits, films or industrial products. Works conducted with the purpose of programming the promotion of items produced in industry and banking business lines that generated by the Industrial Revolution, covers an important place amongst the factors, which influenced the emergence of poster art. Changing living conditions at this stage caused new significance to be attributed to cities, the world of arts and entertainment which organized only focusing on the aristocratic segment expanded to every class and layer of the populace. While these developments necessitated the proliferation of programs, posters constituted a very significant portion amongst the printed materials which was to accelerate the promotion of cultural activities to be held and produced goods, and spread these to the society.

Development of the art of engraving in the 17th century and diversification of printing techniques with continuing advancement following this phase stand out as the preliminary advances constituting the technical infrastructure of poster art. Emerged in the early 19th century by banding visual and textual elements together, posters took yet another important turn in progress after gaining reproducible attribution with lithography technique as well. Emergence of color printing techniques in the second half of the 20th century increased the appeal of poster art. 'Color lithography techniques developed after Alois Senefelder's invention of lithography technique in 1798, played and important role for posters in gaining an artistic form. (Becer, 1997: 201)'. Starting to achieve an artistic identity with advancing techniques and designs, posters also assumed the function of spreading the art by reaching to the every fraction of society at the same time.

Beginning to distinguish itself as a branch of art within the Arts and Crafts movement, posters were influenced by various artistic styles such as Art Nouveau, Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism and created its own aesthetic with modern perception.

'The poster craze reached its age of maturity with "The Beautiful Era (Belle Époque)" which started in 1890's. In 1894, Czechoslovakian Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) became one of the names that left a mark on the Art Nouveau period with his "Gismonda" poster. Poster was now truly recognized as a branch of art, catalogues were produced and auctions were held. Poster exhibitions were first held in 1894 in Italy and Britain, 1896 in Germany and 1898 in Russia. In a poster exhibit organized in 1896, in France, there was a total of 1690 posters exhibited, categorized by country. Thus, poster, which started its journey in 1870's Paris, had become the most significant instrument of mass communication all around the world. (Merter, 2003: 11)'

Posters in Ottoman Empire

'Values that Renaissance brought in to the cultural life of Europe, started to affect the Ottoman community beginning from the early 18th century (Becer 1997: 112)'. It is an interesting fact that posters started to emerge in Turkey, in the later periods of Ottoman Empire and the early years of the republic were mostly designed for product advertisement, art events and charity organizations. When examining the design of posters in this period, within the text-image balance in these designs the prominence of especially text is striking. The significance of this is that the substantial consideration of printed text proves that this promotion is carried out with long descriptions. It appears that primary colors were opted for in color designs and choice of red, blue, yellow colors were a characteristic of the period.

Posters in Republic Period

'Specialization in graphic design field in Turkey started after the proclamation of the republic. In 1920's, Munif Fehim, İhap Hulusi and Kenan Temizan pioneered graphic design with their qualified works in book covers, press announcements and poster areas (Becer, 1997: 114)'.

However, posters in our country couldn't escape being copies of posters in Europe for a long time. The reason was, the Turkish government sent poster artists in our country to overseas (especially Germany) for education. Artists trained in those countries proceeded working in Poster Studios as instructors after their arrival. Poster art, however, experienced major development in post-republic era.

Posters and Turkish Cinema

With the advancement of technology, poster as a mass communication instrument differentiated from other communicative instruments by integrating visual arts into daily life. Poster design at the same time is responsible for conveying the message to the audience in the most efficient way as it has the characteristic of being a communication instrument beyond every artistic concern in its structure. Similarly, the art of cinema has the characteristic of being the most efficient communicative instrument in conveying the message to the audience as well.

When the advertisement and expression features of the poster art, which is the most efficient communicative instrument facilitated for the communication of the art of cinema to masses, are grouped together, this union takes on a more efficient, consistent and powerful significance. Turkish Cinema of the years particularly between 1950 and 1970, is the period when the formal and thematic style of our cinema and its own language was beginning to be developed. Those years were also the times when cinema in our country started to be appraised as a branch of art. Wide spreading of cinema also brought along marketing in order for this art form to reach the audience. In this context, poster is the most effective communicative channel. After being associated with the art of cinema, poster art have advanced in parallel with cinema. Since the poster designs are directly related with the subjects, thematic properties principally stand out as the primary factor having an impact on design.

When the movie posters belonging to the period between the years 1950-1970 are examined, it could be observed that the usage of photography is very few

and illustrations are preferred instead. The directors also prefer illustrative posters in which the designer could express himself or herself more freely. If the differing illustrations on movie posters are to be examined as per movie genres the similarities in-between become visible.

Posters and Turkish Society

Posters created with graphical designs and using the cinematic language, in addition to advertisement of the films, bear the feature of documenting the Turkish society and the structure of the film industry of that period. Posters have gone beyond being merely a decorative notice instrument, and grown into visual instruments that symbolically reflect the cultural and social life in the country. The movie poster, apart from the plot of the movie, reflects the characteristic properties of the period it belongs to and also the conditions forming the film industry as well. The name of the director alone gives clues to the audience about the genre of the movie and how the poster was created.

When performing a visual reading, similarities in posters of the 1950-1970 periods could be observed. However, if examined based on their categories, it could be seen that these similarities hold design oriented differences between each other based on their plots. For example, while the primary purpose of melodramatic posters is to emphasize the impossible love between social sanctions and personal expectation, Independence War posters emphasize the heroism of Turkish nation. These posters created with similar techniques, could be distinguished with the usage of figures, their postures, facial expressions, choice of clothing and figurative, iconic images (such as Turkish flag). Although this is a prevalent characteristic for all types of posters, each poster bears distinctive features of its own genre. (Figure1-2-3-4)

Content as well as form could be evaluated in a two-dimensional manner in the posters; as in the Turkish cinema, instead of conceptional or artistic solutions it is preferred to express the plot of the movie in an illusory realm and with easy-to-understand forms. The actual reason for this is that the plot of the movie should be in the most easy-to-understand way for the audience.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the image of movie actor and the audience creates new norms in the posters. At first, the ideal male image that is glamorized by the female audience and their fantasies, assumes definitive qualities. Further, the contradiction and conflict between the male figure and the gentle-obedient female figure shapes the intellectual principles affecting the poster design.

These images positioned in compliance with the social values also define the idealized symbolic meanings of male and female figures that desired to be reflected on the society.

This contrast is clearly made visible particularly in melodrama posters. The female figure that embodies a more implicit body language compared to the male, without making direct eye contact with the audience and in need of protection is portrayed together with a male figure that is strong, making direct eye contact with the audience and with express body language. The position of the women within the Turkish society of this period and their relationship with men could easily be demonstrated by examining the posture of women in the posters. (Figure5-6)

The conservatism in the Turkish society is especially apparent in the female figure. In these designs, two separate female typecasting facing the male was created. One of them is innocent and obedient, and the other is coquette and sexy. These determinate identities manifest themselves with their association with the strong, dominant, commanding typecasting of the male figure and positioning of their bodies. (Figure 7-8) Female figures with different identities; the sexy, bad, lonely or the miserable, good overwhelmed with social and cultural values, roles and prejudices always appear together with the male figure. The women figure that is not separately pictured from the male image determines the place of the women in the society with bold underlines. (Figure 9-10) Alongside the images that reflect the protective identity of idealized good men; the image of bad, malignant, ugly male reflects the opposing ethical values in poster design. The correlation set between the prime characters of the posters, the good and beautiful female, handsome and good male figures, and the bad and ugly male, handsome and strong, protective male also triggers the tension with humane feelings like fear, desire, passion and hate. This anthology is the indication of social judgment that determines the varying values of sexual discrimination. Despite the traditional, social judgment of definitive forms, clothing and hairstyles reflect the modern look of the period. (Figure 11-12)

The emergence of immigration phenomenon from rural to urban areas in 1960's causes the occurrence of immigration movies in addition to rural movies. At this stage, women in the urbanization process take the place of the innocent country girl. The insecure country girl with pigtails undergoes a change and transformed into the urban, city women. (Figure 13-14)

A similar approach also emerged in children's films. Children's movies, which manifested themselves particularly in the second half of 1960's, in order to

support the upbringing of children as free individuals, introduced the child stars to the society who were as important as the stars of singer movies. (Figure 15-16-17-18)

Yet, posters of comedy movies with caricaturistic features started making the audience laughing from the posters. Female nudity in these posters was also used as the element to increase attractiveness. Although there were no nude scenes in the film of that poster, this method was applied in order to appeal the audience to the theaters. (Figure 19-20-21-22)

In the 1970's, cinema experiencing the twinge generated from the fear of extinction against the television, attempted to solve the chaos of filling empty theaters by tending towards sex movies. The attention erotic foreign movies of degeneration period attracted, led to the commencement of erotic movie period in the Turkish cinema. The poster art of this chaotic period follows similarly degenerate approaches.

Although the Turkish cinema created its own movie poster style, it shows separate values from the Turkish graphical art of the period. The production of the poster was implemented within the frame of a system. The prime elements of this system were illustrators, typographer and the staff who prepared the poster for print. The illustrations created by the illustrators, and the calligraphies prepared by the typographers were pieced together in the printing house by the printing staff like a patchwork and the poster design was finalized.

However, it could be observed that the production process of the years between 1950 and 1970 gave way to a more serious and even more professional relations. This transformed the movie poster beyond from being merely a design created with visual and textual elements to a consistent combination created by a graphic designer or a design team, which created the poster by grouping visual and textual elements together with a distinct style.

The effect of Turkish cinema posters on Turkish graphic art is open to question. However, the designers who created the movie posters of the period that included the years between 1950 and 1970 continued their careers in the following years as caricaturists or illustrators, between 1960 and 1980 the period of designers with artistic identities started. Cinema producers whose commercial interests distanced them from appraising the poster design as an art form, prefers to stay away from artist posters. It is an undisputed fact that designers such as Mengü Ertel, Bülent Erkmen, Sadık Karamustafa or Yurdaer Altıntaş, who stayed away from

cinema posters because of the dilemmas generated from the approach of the industry to poster design and mostly created theater or festival posters, have become authority figures in Turkish graphic art.

Conclusion

Consequently, the period between the years 1950-1970 determines the era when Turkish Cinema started to be acknowledged as artistic. Therefore it is also important for the development line of Turkish Poster design. In this context, in the 1950-1970's when Turkish cinema made progress in real terms, similar progress is expected to emerge in the poster design in parallel with above-mentioned progress. The demand for posters created by the necessity of promotion undergoes a process of progress and development in itself starting from the first examples. The first stage of this process begins with the pictorial expression of the movie's plot. The reflection of the connection developed between the content and implementation aims to clearly emphasize the genre of the movie. In the second stage, the introduction of the actors who are the prime elements of the movie takes place. Actors bringing the plot together with the society are pictured in qualities that draw the audience to cinema theaters. At this stage, the illustrators are responsible for strengthening the bond between the character and the jeune. The hierarchy existing between the producers and the actors of the movies must be apparent in the posters as well. Typefaces and font size choices of the typographers should assume qualities construing this hierarchy. These characteristics determine the systematic qualities of the design of Turkish cinema posters and developed as the characteristics of the period.

Much like the movies that were joint products of a collective work area, the posters designed between the years 1950-1970 were designed as the products of collective working areas. Director of the movies also takes place in the act of directing the poster design. Despite the approach of the director, who as the employer embodies a concern that wishes the movie he or she directed to be reflected on the society with appealing values, to the artist identities of actors impersonating the characters of the movie, preferred to equip the poster designer only with an implementer identity. This approach proves that poster design was not acknowledged as art and appraised only functionally in the early years. However, while poster examples that emerged with the start and acceptance of implementation examples increased, inevitably artistic pursuit and approaches started to appear by itself. 1950-1970's were to gain great importance as the period when the posters started to obtain artistic identity. The designer was not independent in the design process of the posters created in the early years. The posters that the audience,

producer, director, even the studio owners had a say in, would appear before us as the independent area of work of the designer embodying a new meaning in time. This process would make way and pioneer the growth of the famous designers of the 1970 and 1980.

The years when technical equipment of poster designs was improved also include this process. Printing techniques were improved in accordance with the technological advancements of the time. Reverting back to illustration while the progress in which photography participated into the social life, dominated poster art in the early periods, is equivalent to importance attached to the artistic practices. In the following years, turning once again to photography means the implementation of the choices presented to poster art by the age of developing technology.

Turkish cinema developed between the years 1950-1970 created movie genres that reflects the change in the society and determined the characteristics of its frame of mind. While this diversity on the one hand put the rules, attitudes and opinions adopted by the society forward in the face of events experienced within historical processes; it also proves the changing aesthetic prospect of art on the other hand. The genre choice of movies also determines the thematic choices of movie posters and their change leads to the progress of designs.

Examining the poster art of years 1950-1970 poses great importance since it also documents movie producer, director and actors of this period. This is documentation identical with the significance of reading the history of cinema one more time on the basis of poster art. Movies constitute the memory of Turkish cinema, and poster art allows for the foreknowledge to be established in a process much shorter than viewing and assessing these movies.

Turkish cinema posters, of which the artistic development explained in the above passages, are also the indicators of social changes at the same time. As the visual records left after the movies consumed within their short staging times, posters that always formed bonds with the society, succeed in enamoring themselves along with many memories rooted into the hearts and minds of Turkish cinemagoers. In spite of the ill and harsh conditions of technological impossibilities of the years between 1950-1970's, movie posters produced during these years are products of a certain effort and these products, together with the movies of the period that they belong, they continue determining and sustain the culture, social and political structure, frames of mind and traditions of the country they were produced. The design of these posters, which covers a period of 20 years in the midst of 20th century, while reflecting a synthesis of the vital realities of

Turkey, they also determine their status among the posters produced for the World's Cinema.

Figure 1



Kendini Kurtaran Şehir-Şanlı Maraş, Faruk Kenç, İstanbul Film, 1951 (İnanoğlu, 2004: 48)

Figure 2



İstiklal Harbi-Ruhların Mucizesi, Hayri Esen, Milli Film, 1954 (İnanoğlu, 2004: 68)

Figure 3



Ateş Rıza, Şinasi Özonuk, Kemal Film, 1958 (İnanoğlu, 2004: 96)

Figure 4



Karayılan, Ümit Utku, Kervan Film, 1963(İnanoğlu, 2004: 193)

Figure 5



Bu Kadın Benimdir, Vedat Örfi Bengü, Elektra Film, 1953(İnanoğlu, 2004: 60)

Figure 6



Ninni Talihsiz Yetime, Muharrem Gürses, Işık Film, 1958(İnanoğlu, 2004: 105)

Figure 7



Beni Mahvettiler, Talat Özbak, Ömay Film, 1951(İnanoğlu, 2004: 46)

Figure 8



Felaket Kadını, Hüsnü Cantürk, Kulüp Film, 1960(İnanoğlu, 2004: 128)

Figure 9



Akrep Kuyruğu, Cevat Şahiner, Adalı Film, 1965(İnanoğlu, 2004: 233)

Figure 10



Bir Gönül Oyunu, Mehmet Aslan, Koçanga Film, 1965(İnanoğlu, 2004: 237)

Figure 11



Şaşkın Baba, Hulki Saner, Erman-Saner Film, 1963(İnanoğlu, 2004: 198)

Figure 12



Halk Çocuğu, Memduh Ün, Uğur Film, 1964(İnanoğlu, 2004: 212)

Figure 13



Toprak, Nedim Otyam, Barbaros Film, 1952(İnanoğlu, 2004: 58)

Figure 14



Yanıklar Köyü, Ümit Utku, Kervan Film, 1958(İnanoğlu, 2004: 107)

Figure 15



Ayşecik Şeytan Çekici, Atıf Yılmaz, As Film, 1960(İnanoğlu, 2004: 124)

Figure 16



Bana Annemi Anlat, Osman F. Seden, Kemal Film, 1963(İnanoğlu, 2004: 183)

Figure 17



Ayşecik Cimcime Hanım, Hulki Saner, Erman-Saner Film, 1964(İnanoğlu, 2004: 204)

Figure 18



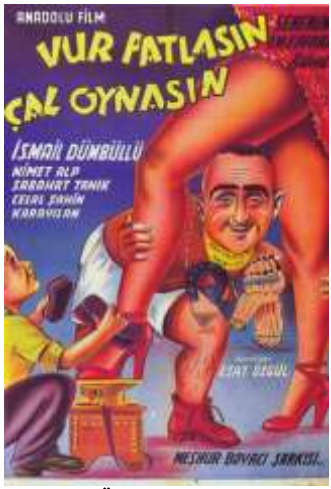
Ayşecik Cimcime Hanım, Hulki Saner, Erman-Saner Film, 1964 (İnanoğlu, 2004: 204)

Figure 19



Memiş ile İbiş anaforcular Kralı, Çetin Karamanbey, Arslan Film, 1952(İnanoğlu, 2004: 56)

Figure 20



Vur Patlasın Çal Oynasın, Esat Özgül, Anadolu Film, 1952(İnanoğlu, 2004: 58)

Figure 21



Şaban Çingeneler Arasında, Semih Evin, Seneka Film, 1952(İnanoğlu, 2004: 57)

Figure 22



Karamanın Koyuny, Semih Evin, Seneka Film, 1954 (İnanoğlu, 2004: 68)

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