

A SIMMELIAN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL FORMS AND
INDIVIDUALITY IN LÜTFİ Ö. AKAD'S FILMS: *GELİN / THE BRIDE*
(1973), *DÜĞÜN / THE WEDDING* (1974), *DİYET / BLOOD MONEY*
(1975)

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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 2016

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WEDDING* (1974), *DİYET / BLOOD MONEY* (1975)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN CULTURAL STUDIES

DECEMBER 2016

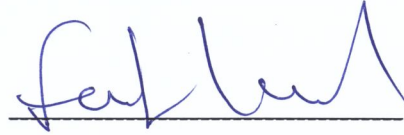
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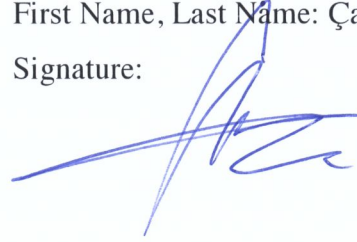
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ABSTRACT

A Simmelian Analysis of Social Forms and Individuality in Lütfi Ö. Akad's Films:
Gelin / The Bride (1973), *Düğün / The Wedding (1974)*,
Diyet / Blood Money (1975)

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MA, Department of Cultural Studies

Supervisor: Prof. Nezih Erdoğan

December 2016, 90 Pages

This thesis aims to analyze the narrative aspects of *The Bride (1973)*, *The Wedding (1974)*, and *Blood Money (1975)* through Georg Simmel's phenomenological approach, which necessitates delineating the dual role of the individual in the process of sociation by problematizing the functions of such social forms as exchange, conflict, domination, subordination, and sociability in conjunction with the protagonist's existential subjectivity.

Keywords: subjectivity, form and content, manipulation of value, distance, tragedy of culture

ÖZ

Lütfi Ö. Akad Filmlerinin Simmelci Bir Yaklaşımla Toplumsal Biçimler ve
Bireysellik Açısından İncelenmesi:
Gelin (1973), Düğün (1974), Diyet (1975)

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Aralık 2016, 90 Sayfa

Bu tez, *Gelin (1973), Düğün (1974), Diyet (1975)* filmlerinin öykü yapılarını Georg Simmel'in fenomenolojik yaklaşımından yola çıkarak "mübadele", "çatışma", "tahakküm" ve "sosyallik" kavramlarıyla birlikte, öykülerdeki ana karakterin öznelliğini inceleyerek, bireyin toplumsallaşma sürecinde oynadığı çift yönlü rolü sorunsallaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: öznellik, biçim ve içerik, değer manipülasyonu, mesafe, kültürün trajedisi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professors Nezih Erdoğan and Mahmut Mutman, who guided, encouraged, and supported me with useful comments, remarks, and engagement through the developing process of this master thesis. I am also very grateful to Professor Ferhat Kentel, who spent their valuable time providing useful suggestions, and motivation to the completion of this work.

Many friends have helped me during the process of developing a coherent theoretical pathway for this thesis. I greatly value their friendship, and deeply appreciate their belief in me. I would especially like to thank Zeynep Yilmaz Hava, who was always first willing to listen my attempts to read Lütfi Ö. Akad's cinematography together with Georg Simmel's writings. I am more than grateful to my only and dearest brother Çağdaş Duran, and friends Nur Şeyda Koç, Ayşe Berre Karaman, Mustafa Akay, Duygu Ergun, Çağlayan Eskiçirak, Dina Iordanova, and Adile Sedef Dönmez, who were always supporting me during the publishing process of this work, which would be impossible to do unless they had helped me in it.

I would also like to express my heart-felt gratitude to my family Turgay and Nazife Duran, and my uncles Ragıp Duran and Mehmet Otar, who have always supported me throughout my education life, both by helping me to keep myself motivated, and putting the pieces back together when I fell apart.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nothing could be similar to a child's imagination. I always wanted to remain a child. So, I did ...¹ *Lütfi Ö. Akad*

The artist is capable of doing what the logician is not: to extend a concept without it losing content.² *Georg Simmel*

The Bride (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975) share a common theme: an internal migration of a family from a rural to an urban area; specifically, from an Anatolian city to the greater city of Istanbul. Therefore, these three films, directed by Lütü Ö. Akad during the early 1970s, have been considered as a coherent trilogy in the name of migration.

In *The Bride* (1973), a nine-person family from Yozgat, a central Anatolian city, moves to Istanbul in order to establish a better life in a bigger city. The household of the family consists of small-scale tradesmen: grandfather Hacı İlyas and his two adult sons. The name of the film derives from the bride Meryem, who is the newly married wife of the youngest son Veli. They live together with this extended family in a squatter house near the city center. The film portrays how the family survives both economically and morally in their new urban context.

In *The Wedding* (1974), a family comes to from Şanlıurfa, a city located in southeastern Anatolia. Compared to the family in the first film, they are less well-off and therefore their economic survival in the city becomes much more dramatic. Throughout the film, the women of the family are exploited by their older brothers and uncles. Zeliha, the elder sister and protagonist, objects to this patriarchal inequality and confronts the difficulties behind her familial tragedy.

In *Blood Money* (1975), differently from the first two films, Lütü Ö. Akad portrays the process of acquiring class-consciousness of two working-class people, protagonist Hacer and her lover Hasan. Both come from rural backgrounds and end up

¹ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütü Ö. Akad*. Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 171. (*My Translation: Hiçbir şey çocuğun hayal dünyasına benzemez. Hep çocuk kalmak istedim. Kaldım da...*)

² Swedberg, R., & Reich, W. (2010). *Georg Simmel's Aphorisms*. Theory, Culture & Society, pp. 33.

as immigrant factory workers in the city. The film deeply questions the social-economic and cultural disguises behind the capitalist mode of production through the dramatic reactions of the protagonist. Hacer and Hasan's wish to marry each other is devastated by an unexpected accident that they encounter towards the end of the film.

In this context, it can be said that *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975) discuss the change in values in a rapidly growing urban context with a specific narrative aspect that leads these stories to a tragic end by raising greater questions related to ethics, individuality, and social forms within the cultural environment of Turkey.

In each film, the protagonist is a female character who encounters an ethical dilemma because of her family members' loss of integrity by engaging the money economy in the city. Breadwinners fade away in their life struggles. Consequently, their families fail to cope with the difficulties of their new urban setting.

Dramatically, each film involves a sacrifice which characterizes the entire nature of the films. In *The Bride* (1973), little child Osman loses his life by avoidance of his family concerning his serious illness. In *The Wedding* (1974), elder sister Zelha dares to save her sister's freedom at the price of her own life. In *Blood Money* (1975), Hasan loses his arm because of an accident in a steel factory. Cinematographically, Lütfi Ö. Akad binds each sacrifice to a broader allegory which eventually leads those stories to take a universal form which speaks to the tragic weakness of humanity: finding "a ready food without an inconvenience."³

To illustrate, *The Bride* (1973) adopts Abraham's dilemma of sacrificing his son in the name of god; *The Wedding* (1974) depends on the story of Joseph, who is sold by his brothers in exchange for money; *Blood Money* (1975) uses prophet Muhammad's saying: "Two is greater than one; three is greater than two; you shall all unite." In this respect, Kurtuluş Kayalı describes Lütfi Ö. Akad's unique approach in this migration trilogy in the following words:

Primarily, on Lütfi Akad's calm attitude must be noted: He argues that his goal is to depict social phenomena rather than to find a cure for the problems of society as sociologists try to do. Knowing this outlook gives us a clue to understand the films *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974) and *Blood Money* (1975) in order to develop further arguments on them. Otherwise it is difficult

³ Akad, L. (2004). *Işıklı Karanlık Arasında*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 550. (My translation: *Sorun, zahmetsiz yiyecek.*)

to find an answer to the pinnacle question of *The Wedding* (1974) that is raised by Habibe's lover Zeki to her family members: "You are a good person, I am good, so are we all; but why do we live with this evil?" Similarly, the idea that "one shall not negotiate with the place where s/he works for his/her own living" in *Blood Money* (1975) and the dramatic reactions of the protagonist in *The Bride* (1973) cannot be understood unless we pay attention to Lütü Akad's descriptive perspective. Hence there must be logic behind those narrow critiques which are addressed by the different schools of people supporting one film instead of the others. It is not wrong to argue that these three films, which form a coherent trilogy in the metaphorical sense of "cannibalism," have not been properly understood yet. Thinkers and writers from the different intellectual poles do not comprehend Lütü Akad's dissection technique in cinema because of the fact that they are after some concrete messages for the contemporary issues arising in Turkish culture.⁴

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lütü Ö. Akad complained about a "lack of comprehensive criticism"⁵ within Turkish cinema. A "sharply polarized atmosphere in politics"⁶ affected every realm of artistic production within the country, including literature, theater, painting, music, and, consequently, cinema. What is important for us to understand is that Lütü Ö. Akad's critical perspective on cinema goes beyond such dualistic categories as "East/West, Traditional/Modern, Secularist/Islamist, Revolutionary/Nationalist, Individual/Social Realist or Particular/Universal"⁷ acceptance of the problems emerged within the sociological geography of Turkey.

Lütü Ö. Akad has been considered as a "visual-thinker"⁸ who is able to touch on questions that are mainly raised by prominent Turkish writers such as Yaşar Kemal, Kemal Tahir, Sait Faik Abasıyanık, and Orhan Kemal: depicting the everyday life struggles of the ordinary man, understanding him being-with his/her own social environment, and questioning his/her personal existence within the society's historical development.

⁴ Kayalı, K. (1989). *Lütü Akad Sineması Yararlanılmamış Engin Bir Kaynaktır*. Bilim ve Sanat Dergisi, pp. 29.

⁵ Ibid., pp 31.

⁶ Başgüney, H. (2010). *Türk Sinematek Derneği - Türkiye'de Sinema Ve Politik Tartışma*. İstanbul: Libra Yayınları, pp 39–59.

⁷ Ibid., pp 117–129.

⁸ Kayalı, K. (1989). *Lütü Akad Sineması Yararlanılmamış Engin Bir Kaynaktır*. Bilim ve Sanat Dergisi, pp 30.

In this context, my aim is to develop Kurtuluş Kayalı's argument of Lütü Ö. Akad as an intellectual figure who asks persistent questions in order to understand human nature, specifically the ever-present attributes of the people living in the Anatolian peninsula, along with his audio-visual productions. Through the master examples of his cinematography: *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974) and *Blood Money* (1975), I shall analyze Lütü Ö. Akad's systematic way of thinking concerning individual subjectivity in his cinema and Turkish intellectual history during the early 1970s; basing my arguments on Georg Simmel's theory of "form and content," I question the ontological possibilities of the coherent system of thought produced by Lütü Ö. Akad via his audio-visual apparatuses.

1.1. Lütü Ö. Akad: Symptomatic Social-Realist Films

Today, novel is about to be replaced by cinema. And cinema is one of the greatest art forms. Great novels can be written through cinema; accordingly, small, marvelous poems or beautiful short stories can be written too. Cinema is the forthcoming art form which can take the place of literature.⁹ *Lütü Ö. Akad*

Lütü Ö. Akad is considered one of the founding directors of the Turkish film industry—namely, "Yeşilçam"—"where he produced 48 feature films, 11 documentaries, 8 short TV films, 7 scenarios filmed by other directors, and 2 unmade feature film scenarios over the course of his life."¹⁰

Lütü Ö. Akad joined filmmaking by a coincidence in the year 1947. "Between the years 1919 and 1947 only a few Turkish films were produced annually. These were mainly under the effect of theatrical expressions."¹¹ In contrast, after 1948, new producers and directors entered into the film business; therefore, new ways of filmmaking were introduced in Turkey that were different from the previous ones in terms of both form and content. Consequently, Turkish cinema was enriched with an emphasis on changing cinematographic expression.¹²

⁹ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütü Ö. Akad*. İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 165.

¹⁰ Akad, L. (2004). *İşıkla Karanlık Arasında*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 613–632.

¹¹ Scognamillo, G. (2014). *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (1st ed.). İstanbul: Kabalıcı Yayıncılık, pp. 111.

¹² Ibid.

The post-1950 epoch in Turkish cinema is called the “Filmmakers Era,”¹³ and it was during this period when Lütfi Ö. Akad became the pioneer of the movement with his successful feature film *Kanun Namına / In the Name of the Law* (1952). In this film, Lütfi Ö. Akad tells the story of a “trapped man/l’homme traque” who tragically becomes a murderer and cannot escape from the consequences of his life actions. Cinematographically, Lütfi Ö. Akad put the camera in the streets of Istanbul, captured the everyday rhythm of the city, and used dynamic montage techniques for the first time in Turkish cinema.¹⁴ This was the beginning of the Western influence on Turkish filmmakers, especially Hollywood’s, concerning genre and editing techniques. Later, Lütfi Ö. Akad would argue that his search for a local, self-reflexive, and minimalistic perspective in cinema began after the turn of the 1960s.¹⁵

The first decade of Lütfi Ö. Akad’s filmography reflects an experimental attitude toward filmmaking. This includes: his debut film *Vurun Kahpeye* (1949), which was surprisingly successful in terms of its coherent narrative and strong production facilities; *Lüküs Hayat* (1950), *Tahir ile Zühre* (1952), and *Arzu ile Kamber* (1952), which were three melodramatic adaptations; and *İngiliz Kemal Lavrens’e Karşı* (1952), *Katil* (1952), *Çalsın Sazlar Oynasın Kızlar* (1952), *Öldüren Şehir* (1953), and “*Altı Ölü Var/İpsala Cinayeti* (1953), which was an attempt to include real life events in his films by searching for a natural atmosphere in the narration.”¹⁶ In 1954, he directed four more films: *Bulgar Sadık*, *Vahşi Bir Kız Sevdim*, *Kardeş Kurşunu*, and “*Görünmeyen Adam İstanbul’da*,” which was an attempt at a science-fiction despite the lack of appropriate production facilities for such an effort in Turkey. Finally, Lütfi Ö. Akad directed *Beyaz Mendil* (1955), a successful adaptation of Yaşar Kemal’s novel of the same name telling a tragic love story set in rural Anatolia, which is considered one of the cornerstone examples of his cinematography, “prospecting his minimalistic style that is established with *Hudutların Kanunu / The Law of the Border* (1966).”¹⁷

Over the following five years, Lütfi Ö. Akad produced several mainstream films including *Meçhul Kadın* (1955), *Kalbimin Şarkısı* (1956), *Ak Altın* (1957), *Kara*

¹³ Evren, B. (2005). *Lütfi Akad ve Sinemasına Ansiklopedik Bir Yaklaşım*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad* (pp. 94 - 100). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp. 95-96.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütfi Ö. Akad*. İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 33.

¹⁶ Scognamillo, G. (2014). *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (1st ed.). İstanbul: Kabcı Yayıncılık, pp. 136.

¹⁷ Ibid., 137.

Talih (1957), *Meyhanecinin Kızı* (1958), *Zümrüt* (1958), and *Ana Kucağı* (1959). In this period, his keystone film was *Yalnızlar Rıhtımı / The Quay of the Lonely Ones* (1959) “which was a search for a new language in his cinematography. Even though the film was criticized for its mimicry of French aestheticism, it remains a perennial example of his filmography.”¹⁸ Later, Lütü Ö. Akad would stir up controversy with his declaration that “it was an attempt to discover a new form by implementing geometrical mise-en-scène and including in the narrative local characters who are initially alienated from the realities of the society.”¹⁹ In the same year, the directors of “Yeşilçam” failed in the box office and “the producers strengthened their position in the filmmaking industry of Turkey.”²⁰

Lütü Ö. Akad would take a break from his filmmaking practice until 1966, except for such mainstream examples as: *Cilalı İbo'nun Çilesi*, *Yangın Var*, and *Dişi Kurt* in 1960, *Sessiz Harp* (1961), and *Üç Tekerlekli Bisiklet* (1962), which was an adaptation of Orhan Kemal's short story written by Vedat Türkali, and which became one of the key examples of Lütü Ö. Akad's filmography. In it, Lütü Ö. Akad applied aesthetic shootings by “reserving empty scenes for his characters in order to reveal their psychology without using dialogues.”²¹ The successful *Tanrının Bağışı Orman* (1964) would become another pathway for his minimalistic style in cinema, where he questioned the universal vulnerability of humanity in the face of nature, prioritizing symbolistic forms of narration over dialogues. After this film, Lütü Ö. Akad would become eager to make social-realist films with utmost care for his decluttering approach in cinematic language.²²

In 1966, Lütü Ö. Akad would come back to “Yeşilçam” with *Hudutların Kanunu / The Law of the Border* (1966), which was immediately welcomed as the precursor example of his cinematography which would later be characterized as: self-reflexive; deep in questioning the universal problems of humanity by searching for ubiquitous appearances in contemporary issues; caring for individual's confrontation against the impositions of society; and therefore always reserved for further

¹⁸ Öztürk, S. R. (2005). *Türkiye'nin Görsel Belleğinde Bir Öncü ve Bir Usta: Lütü Akad*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütü Akad* (pp. 53 - 74). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp 67.

¹⁹ Scognamillo, G. (2014). *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (1st ed.). İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayıncılık, pp. 138.

²⁰ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütü Ö. Akad*. İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 74.

²¹ Algan, N. (2005). *Türkiye'nin Görsel Belleğinde Bir Öncü ve Bir Usta: Lütü Akad*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütü Akad* (pp. 23 - 53). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp 36.

²² *Ibid.*, 37.

interpretations. For Lütü Ö. Akad, *Hudutların Kanunu / The Law of the Border* (1966) is the first film where he began to capture the enduring social problems of Turkey via his cinematic art. Two folkloric explorations, *Ana* (1967) and *Kızılırmak-Karakoyun* (1967), would strengthen Lütü Ö. Akad's intellectual approach in filmmaking as well as his forerunner role for the directors of "Yeşilçam," especially for Yılmaz Güney.²³ "Following with *Kurbanlık Katil* (1967), *Vesikalı Yarım* (1968), *Kader Böyle İstedî* (1968), and *Seninle Ölmek İstiyorum* (1969) Lütü Ö. Akad would returned to urban setting and shoot melodramas including star actors."²⁴ In this period, *Vesikalı Yarım* (1968) became "a cult film which is always present to be referred in various contexts and meanings."²⁵

In the early 1970s, Lütü Ö. Akad continued to be productive, both in terms of popular films—like *Anneler ve Kızları*, *Rüya Gibi*, *Bir Teselli Ver*, *Mahşere Kadar*, and *Vahşi Çiçek* in 1971—and social-realist films like *Irmak* and *Yaralı Kurt* in 1972, *Gökçeçiçek* (1973), and *Esir Hayat* (1974). At this juncture, *Irmak* (1972) and *Gökçeçiçek* (1973) reveal Lütü Ö. Akad's historical perspective in filmmaking, where he tries to integrate allegories from ancient sources. In the former, he tells "a tragic-dramatic story from rural Anatolia which even goes beyond the classic tragedy formations"²⁶; in the latter, he brings insightful referents from the "shamanistic heritage of the Turks."²⁷ Along with these rural examples, Lütü Ö. Akad would once again come back to an urban context with *Yaralı Kurt* (1972), a hybrid example of his cinematography, where the issues of individual-psychology and social-historical realities are inextricably intertwined with each other. "*Yaralı Kurt* (1972) is about understanding the 'psychological mindset' of a murderer who is darkened with the overwhelming reality of the money-cartels, politics, and urban-squatter-expansion triangle in Turkey."²⁸

Beginning with *The Law of the Border* (1966), Lütü Ö. Akad intuitively searched for a language in cinema where he could realize individual-driven social-

²³ Öztürk, S. R. (2005). *Türkiye'nin Görsel Belleğinde Bir Öncü ve Bir Usta: Lütü Akad*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütü Akad* (pp. 53 - 74). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp 61.

²⁴ Scognamillo, G. (2014). *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (1st ed.). Istanbul: Kabalcı Yayıncılık, pp. 194.

²⁵ Abisel, N., Arslan, U. T., Behçetoğulları, P., Karadoğan, A., Öztürk, S. R., & Ulusay, N. (2005). *Çok Tuhaf Çok Tanıdık: Vesikalı Yarım Üzerine*. Istanbul: Metis Yayıncılık.

²⁶ Scognamillo, G. (2014). *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (1st ed.). Istanbul: Kabalcı Yayıncılık, pp. 199.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Dadak, M. Z. (2005). *Bir Redd-i Miras: Yaralı Kurt*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütü Akad* (pp. 81 - 94). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp 86.

realist films: “The psychological atmosphere created in *Yaralı Kurt* (1972) stems from the ‘middle-far distance’ camera angle which was applied by the cinematographer Gani Turanlı. Later, in *The Bride* (1973), the same perspective is used to deepen the psychological character of Lütfi Ö. Akad’s cinematography.”²⁹ Lütfi Ö. Akad explains his cinematographic approach in *The Bride* (1973) as follows:

They [the Hacı İlyas family members] are over there. I can feel their presence, posing near the camera, or in the middle; and I can even fully intuit the presence of the bride, who is gazing from the furthest spot of the frame He [Gani Turanlı] is a real “artist-peintre” who is able to reach the level of master portrait-painters in transcending all the presence/being of individuals, as few photographers manage to do in their art...³⁰

Lütfi Ö. Akad ended his career in the “Yeşilçam” film industry with his magnum opus trilogy *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975). Nonetheless, collaborating with Gani Turanlı, he would go on to make four adaptations of Ömer Seyfettin’s short stories,³¹ the film *Bir Ceza Avukatının Anıları* (1978), and the documentary *Dört Mevsim İstanbul* (1985), where, on the whole, one can perceive his characteristic and lifelong passion for understanding the “human phenomenon” together with its own individual, social, historical, and ethical concerns.

1.2. Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms

German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel lived and was productive across the late 19th and early 20th century, where his works reflect the juncture of such various philosophical schools as Neo-Kantianism, Bergsonian Lebensphilosophie, and Goethean Romanticism. Certain scholars also place him within the sphere of phenomenology for his pursuit of “an authentic individual theory for the relentless transformation of the self/inner world caused by the modernity.”³²

Simmel’s legacy is his emphasis on understanding a phenomenon through “its historical, philosophical and sociological perspective; each ‘seemingly insignificant trait on the surface of life’ can be made to reveal a deeper meaning.”³³ His

²⁹ Algan, N. (2005). *Türkiye'nin Görsel Belleğinde Bir Öncü ve Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad* (pp. 23 - 53). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp 46.

³⁰ Akad, L. (2004). *Işıklı Karanlık Arasında*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 548.

³¹ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütfi Ö. Akad*. İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 132.

³² Barbour, C. (2012). *The Maker of Lies: Simmel, Mendacity and the Economy of Faith*. Theory, Culture & Society, pp 230.

³³ Goodstein, E. (2002). *Style as Substance: Georg Simmel's Phenomenology of Culture*. Cultural Critique, pp 210.

phenomenological writings deal with “human activities, attitudes, and worldviews; ranging from the descriptive study of adventure to the nature of the bridge, through ancient ruins to modern coquetry, and through the development of money to the need for tact.”³⁴

Simmel’s philosophical anthropology concerns one of the basic components of the human life: How do things come into picture through form/content relations? How does the flux of individual inner needs find its manifestation through the necessary social forms? What determines the flowing boundary between the form and content? What is the logic behind this dialectical relation?

In order to develop a comprehensive methodology, Georg Simmel worked perpetually on such themes as “conflict, freedom, individuality, dualism, aesthetic styles, and distance.”³⁵ The problem of subjectivity lies at the heart of these categories, where the individual oscillates between his/her inner wishes or drives, which consist of both social and non-social elements, and the world outside, which is an amalgam of the greater social foundations such as family, state, religion, and the non-social factors like nature and technology.

Georg Simmel’s subjectivity analysis through form and content relations reflects “a complete continuity between what is inside and outside, where all impressions and perceptions have both physical and psychological aspects: ‘the Ego and its objects are not yet distinguished; consciousness is filled with impressions and perceptions while the bearer of these contents has still not detached himself from them.’”³⁶

It is not a coincidence that Simmel wrote extensively on modern urban life and the money economy, where the notion of value is abstracted by and from the individual and, as a result, dissimulated through the social institutions. In other words, a Simmelian approach shows us how human life evolves from the proto level to the greater social-cultural and technological level through the notion of subjectivity, which lies at the locus of life-generating structure of the human life.

For this reason, throughout his career, Simmel questioned the topics of conflict, freedom, individuality, dualism, aesthetic styles, and distance in order to articulate

³⁴ Backhaus, G. (2003). *Simmel’s Philosophy of History and Its Relation to Phenomenology: Introduction*. Human Studies, pp. 207.

³⁵ Levine, D. N. (2012). *Soziologie and Lebensanschauung: Two Approaches to Synthesizing ‘Kant’ and ‘Goethe’ in Simmel’s Work*. Theory, Culture & Society, pp. 42.

³⁶ Salem, A. (2012). *Simmel on the Autonomy of Social Forms*. Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas, pp. 5.

different phenomena which are seemingly unrelated, yet, at the same time, essentially connected to each other.

1.3. Methodology: Reading Together Lütfi Ö. Akad and Georg Simmel

Lütfi Ö. Akad and Georg Simmel share a common approach to interpreting the world around them. Both have an interdisciplinary outlook with a concern for analyzing a cultural phenomenon and questioning it without falling into a dualistic category. What matters for both thinkers is to understand the basic mechanisms of the cultural formations which give rise to the emergent society that they live in. While Lütfi Ö. Akad manifested his observations about Turkish society and its cultural accumulation through his filmography, Georg Simmel articulated a modernist philosophy via his phenomenological writings.

Even though Lütfi Ö. Akad was the pioneer of the Turkish film industry, his legacy did not create a hegemonic influence upon subsequent directors. He remained as a silent figure who was not truly understood by his contemporaries in terms of his sophisticated questions concerning the structural problems of Turkish society which have been alive since the 19th century's modernity experience. For that reason, Lütfi Ö. Akad remained as the "master-less master"³⁷ where there was no appropriate canonical figure in the short history of Turkish cinema.

Similarly, Simmel was not properly understood by his contemporaries during his career. His ideas were found obscure, unsystematic, and impressionistic. Therefore, they did not fall into a proper school. Nonetheless, "his influence spread into Frankfurt School through Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectics of enlightenment, as well as Walter Benjamin's aesthetic theory of the 19th century modernity practices."³⁸ Nowadays, it is not a coincidence that Georg Simmel's phenomenological inquiry is attracting much more attention within the fields of contemporary critical theory and humanities, where the issue of subjectivity is prioritized against the meltdown of modern institutions. In view of those two figures this thesis outlines:

The first chapter introduces Georg Simmel's understanding of the social sciences. Departing from the Kantian question of "How is nature possible?" Simmel asks, "How is history possible?" Upon the same methodology, Simmel articulates the

³⁷ Evren, B. (2005). *Lütfi Akad ve Sinemasına Ansiklopedik Bir Yaklaşım*. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad* (pp. 94 - 100). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp. 99.

³⁸ Goodstein, E. (2002). *Style as Substance: Georg Simmel's Phenomenology of Culture*. *Cultural Critique*, pp 229–230.

notions of history and society. The discipline of sociology becomes one of ways of discovering the nature of change in modern ages. Individuals are at the locus of his phenomenological inquiry, and play the key role both as cause and effect of the changes in history. Accordingly, Simmel develops his arguments on form and content relations, where one can distinguish the relation between the subject and his/her social surroundings without falling into a dualistic category.

The second chapter details the basic categories of social interaction: exchange, conflict, domination and subordination, and sociability. The concept of exchange appears as the key social form where the notion of value finds room for its possible meanings. Conflict reveals the dual-binding effect, seemingly negative but essentially constitutive. Domination and subordination actualize material building of group relations, whose dynamics unfold under the rule of a person, a group, or an ideal. Through the notion of sociability, Simmel describes the “play-like” and “art-like” character of social life, where each individual performs life, and therefore the changing meanings of their subjectivities.

The third chapter covers the main framework of the film analysis. The narrative aspects of *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975) are problematized through Georg Simmel’s phenomenological approach, where the protagonist’s existential subjectivity delineates itself in the process of sociation. Analyzing the characters of these films within their own social environment raises greater questions related to the notions of individuality, communality, distance, and ethics in the Turkish intellectual context.

The conclusion chapter combines Georg Simmel’s notion of the “tragedy of culture,” which speaks of the enduringly evolving character of social forms, together with Lütfi Ö. Akad’s lifelong interest in the practice of individually driven social-realist filmmaking, where the intertextual character of his cinematography seeks to show “trapped man” protagonists to whom his/her social surroundings have a manipulating effect on the protagonist’s life actions which eventually resulting in tragic resolutions.

CHAPTER 2

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

2.1. How is History Possible?

Man, as something known, is made by nature and history; but man, as knower, makes nature and history.³⁹

Georg Simmel's critique of history starts with a basic question: "How does the raw material of immediate experience come to be the theoretical structure which we call history?"⁴⁰ Simmel's understanding of history differs from the view of historical realism, which argues that history must depict the past as it was and thus that historiography must be understood only within the forms of recurring events. For Simmel, this view is problematic. His main concern is to determine the a priori dimension of historical knowledge. Accordingly, history is regarded as a product of the mind; yet, the mind's formative capacity in history is not as explicit as in the cognition of nature. Here, Simmel turns to the Kantian question of "How is nature possible?" to delineate his methodology in order to understand the concept of history. Parallel with Kant, Simmel asks: "How is history possible?"⁴¹

The Kantian answer to question of "How is nature possible?" necessitates the triumph of the subject over nature. The laws of nature are not something distinct from the forms of the individual mind. This gives autonomy to the subject against the bondage of nature. For the laws of history, on the other hand, the mind constitutes both a cause and an effect for its creation. For this reason, Simmel's investigation of history promises aliberation from historicism, just as Kant achieved a liberation from naturalism. Simmel explains his approach to the concept of historicism as follows:

That form in which all psychic reality comes to consciousness, which emerges as the history of every ego, is itself a product of the creative ego. Mind becomes

³⁹ Simmel, G. (1971 [1905]). *How is History Possible?* In D. N. Levine, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 3 - 6). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

aware of itself in the stream of becoming, but mind has already marked out the banks and currents of that stream and thereby made it into “history.”⁴²

In this sense, the Simmelian understanding of history drives us to the conclusion that man must be considered both as a producer (or knower) and as a product (or known) in its historical existence. Therefore, man has to be analyzed in respect to his/her dual characteristics. Starting with Simmel’s critique of historicism, we must now depict his view on the concept of society.

2.2. How Is Society Possible?

In Kant, the question of “How is nature possible?” is solved by the promise that world is a representation which is already an outcome of the content of individual consciousness:

...what we call nature is the special way in which the mind assembles, orders, and shapes sense perceptions. These given perceptions of color, taste, tone, temperature, resistance, and smell pass through our consciousness in the accidental sequence of our subjective experience. In themselves, they are not yet nature. They rather become nature, and they do so through the activity of the mind which combines them into objects and series of objects, into substances and attributes, and into causal connections. In their immediate given-ness, Kant held, the elements of the world do not have the interdependence which alone makes them intelligible as the unity of nature’s laws. It is this interdependence which transforms the world fragments in themselves incoherent and unstructured—into nature.⁴³

For Simmel, the question of “How is society possible?” necessitates an a priori condition analogous to the one Kant required for the problem of nature. In the Simmelian account, the a priori condition for the concept of society is its individual elements. Individuals constitute a society as long as they are conscious in synthesizing certain forms and rules in an existing context. However, one cannot fully grasp the unity of a society only with this brief explanation. Simmel’s argument is that:

...there is a decisive difference between the unity of a society and the unity of nature. It is this: In the Kantian view (which we follow here), the unity of nature emerges in the observing subject exclusively; it is produced exclusively by him

⁴² Ibid., pp. 5.

⁴³ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). How is Society Possible? In D. L. Levin, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 6 - 23). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 6.

in the sense materials, and on the basis of sense materials, which are in themselves heterogeneous. By contrast, the unity of society needs no observer. It is directly realized by its own elements because these elements are themselves conscious and synthesizing units.⁴⁴

Simmel's understanding of society provides an active position for subjects. Subjects are both a product of their society and a determinant factor for their society's existence:

The determination of which aspect of the externally observable is to be comprehended as a unity depends not only on the immediate and strictly objective content of the observable but also upon the categories and the cognitive requirement of the subjective psyche. Again, however, society, by contrast, is the objective unit which needs no outside observer.⁴⁵

In order to comprehend how the unity of a society is possible, Georg Simmel wants us to take into consideration the psychic processes of individuals. Knowledge of nature is possible because of the forms of cognition by which subjects are capable of synthesizing the given elements in nature. For society, on the other hand, these conditions already exist as an a priori within individuals themselves:

For it inquires into the processes—those which, ultimately, take place in the individuals themselves—that condition the existence of the individuals as society. It investigates these processes, not as antecedent causes of this result, but as part of the synthesis to which we give the inclusive name of “society.”⁴⁶

In Simmel, sociological a priori is a twofold working system, one part of which is determining the psychological processes of individuals, which eventually lead them to the process of sociation; and the other is the manifestation of the society as an ideal form. This system of causation gives us a clue as to how the notion of “form and content” feed each other in the Simmelian theory of society. Individuals are in the process of becoming throughout their life experiences. Encountering other people in the process of sociation affects the psychological categories of individuals. However, individuals on their own are not fully capable of naming the final process of sociation, since the process of sociation necessitates being-with other/s. For this reason,

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

individuals are required to take a distance or an objective stance from the incident that they are already involved. According to Simmel:

All relations among men are determined by the varying degrees of this incompleteness. Whatever the cause of this incompleteness, its consequence is a generalization of the psychological picture that we have of another, a generalization that results in a blurring of contours which adds a relation to other pictures to the uniqueness of this one. We conceive of each man-and this is a fact which has a specific effect upon our practical behavior toward him-as being the human type which is suggested by his individuality. We think of him in terms not only of his singularity but also in terms of a general category. This category, of course, does not fully cover him, nor does he fully cover it. It is this peculiarly incomplete coincidence which distinguishes the relation between a human category and a human singularity from the relation which usually exists between a general concept and the particular instance it covers. In order to know a man, we see him not in terms of his pure individuality, but carried, lifted up or lowered, by the general type under which we classify him. Even when this transformation from the singular to the typical is so imperceptible that we cannot recognize it immediately; even when all the ordinary characterological concepts such as “moral” or “immoral,” “free” or “unfree,” “lordly” or “slavish,” and so on, clearly appear inadequate, we privately persist in labeling a man according to an un-verbalized type, a type which does not coincide with his pure, individual being.⁴⁷

Simmel describes this situation as the result of the fragmentary existence of individuals. One part of us belongs to the general idea of man and the other to our own individual existence. Individuals are constantly in the process of becoming. They move towards an ideal form, never-fully grasping it; yet, at the same time, this constant desire of forming an ideal drives us to abolish our existing structures. Therefore, this process gives birth to the creation of certain forms, but is also the cause of their extinction. Simmel argues that the a priori condition of the concept of society exists in this dialectic:

The practice of life urges us to make the picture of a man only from the real pieces that we empirically know of him, but it is precisely the practice of life

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 10.

which is based on those modifications and supplementations, on the transformation of the given fragments into the generality of a type and into the completeness of the ideal personality.⁴⁸

For Simmel, in a group, members see each other as part of their own social identity. In a sense, they construct a “we” in their togetherness. Yet, seeing each other from a “we” perspective involves veiling the uniqueness of the participant individuals. This process is relevant for the case of encountering people from other groups. Individuals try to know each other through generalizations in which their a priori assumptions are already operative. However, Simmel argues that by doing so, individuals distort the pictures of one another:

The distortions derive from all these a priori, operative categories: from the individual's type as man, from the idea of his perfection, and from the general society to which he belongs. Beyond all of these, there is, as a heuristic principle of knowledge, the idea of his real, unconditionally individual nature. It seems as if only the apprehension of this nature could furnish the basis for an entirely correct relation to him. But the very alterations and new formations which preclude this ideal knowledge of him are, actually, the conditions which make possible the sort of relations we call social. The phenomenon recalls Kant's conception of the categories: they form immediate data into new objects, but they alone make the given world into a knowable world.⁴⁹

In the Simmelian sense, there is another dimension which characterizes group dynamics in the process of sociation. These are individual impulses such as personality, mood, or interest which are able to shape certain social types such as stranger, enemy, criminal, and poor. Simmel puts it as an “intermixing social picture with non-social imponderable.”⁵⁰

Here, Simmel’s approach invites us to take into consideration the non-social aspects of individuality in the process of sociation. In order to see how involved non-social elements are in social interactions, Simmel brings two suggestions. One pole consists of love and friendship, the other of money economy. In both cases, individuals want to act in accordance with the norms of their social discourse. However, this creates a clash between the social and non-social aspects of individuals:

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 11.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 12.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 13.

There is an extreme case, namely, the notion that this social activity or mood is something separate from the rest of the personality that the personality's non-social existence and significance do not enter into social relations. Clearly, even this notion, however, has its effect upon the attitude which the subject holding it adopts toward others and upon the attitude which others adopt toward him. The a priori of empirical social life consists of the fact that life is not entirely social. The reservation of a part of our personalities so as to prevent this part from entering into interaction has an effect upon our interactions which is twofold. In the first place, through general psychological processes it has its effect upon the social structure of the individual. In the second place, the formal fact itself, the part that exists outside the individual, affects this structure.⁵¹

Here, individuals are both inside and outside of their social existence. They are effect sociation and, at the same time, are affected by its immediate confrontation. Societies are units which always carry this twofold character in their structure. For Simmel, a key sociological a priori lies in the premise that “the ‘within’ and the ‘without’ between individual and society are not two unrelated definitions, but define together the fully homogeneous position of man as a social animal.”⁵²

Following from this, Simmel’s concept of society promises autonomous individuals who are responsible for their life actions. He uses the terms “terminus a quo” and “terminus ad quem,” through which individuals are the products of their own qualities and decisions, and therefore their own societies. Even so, Simmel does not seek an idea of equality among all individuals. On the contrary, he finds this to be impossible in reality, since every individual has his/her own nature, content, and goal. For this reason, we need to see the concept of society as an objective system which is the result of the different contents and actions of individuals that are connected with each other through specific time, space, and value interactions.⁵³ Simmel explains this paradigm as follows:

Every action and quality within it is individual and is irrevocably located in its specific place. Society appears as a cosmos whose complex nature and direction are unlimited, but in which every single point can be fixed and can

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 14.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 17.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 19.

develop only in a particular way because otherwise the structure of the whole would change. What has been said of the structure of the world in general—that not a single grain of sand could have a shape different from what it has or be in a position different from its actual position without first conditioning the alteration by a change of the whole and without entailing such a change in the whole—is true of the structure of society, or society considered as a web of qualitatively differentiated phenomena.⁵⁴

In this manner, the Simmelian understanding of society carries a phenomenological approach which takes into consideration the actions of individuals together with objective elements that are found in the society's inter-relational context. The existence of society is intertwined with the existence of its individuals. In other words, the social existence of an individual is an a priori for a society to exist within its unique form. For Simmel:

The processes of consciousness which formulate sociation-notions such as the unity of the many, the reciprocal determination of the individuals, the significance of the individual for the totality of the others and vice versa—presuppose something fundamental which finds expression in practice although we are not aware of it in its abstractness. The presupposition is that individuality finds its place in the structure of generality and, furthermore, that in spite of the unpredictable character of individuality, this structure is laid out, as it were, for individuality and its functions. The nexus by which each social element (each individual) is interwoven with the life and activities of every other, and by which the external framework of society is produced, is a causal nexus. But it is transformed into a teleological nexus as soon as it is considered from the perspective of the elements that carry and produce it—individuals. For they feel themselves to be egos whose behavior grows out of autonomous, self-determined personalities. The objective totality yields to the individuals that confront it from without, as it were; it offers a place to their subjectively determined life-processes, which thereby, in their very individuality, become necessary links in the life of the whole. It is the dual nexus which supplies the individual consciousness with a fundamental category and thus transforms it into a social element.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 22.

Along these lines, Simmel gives us a phenomenological clue about how to approach the pinnacle question of *The Wedding* (1974)—“You are a good person, I am good, so are we all; but why do we live with this evil?”—or the last words of *Hacer* in *Blood Money* (1975)—“You are not guilty, neither they are. We are guilty!” To elaborate this, we need to progress on to Simmelian methodology. In view of that, the next section talks about the problems of sociology.

2.3. The Problem of Sociology

Sociation is the form (realized in innumerable different ways) in which individuals grow together into a unity and within which their interests are realized. And it is on the basis of their interests—sensuous or ideal, momentary or lasting, conscious or unconscious, causal or teleological—that individuals form such unities.⁵⁶

As we have seen in the previous section, Simmel’s theory of society regards the notion of the individual as both a cause and an effect for the existence of society. Individuals are neither inside nor outside of their social boundaries. They are a priori conditions for their society. In other words, individuals interact with each other in order to pursue certain drives and purposes. This creates a synthesis or a unity out of a number of individuals. Therefore, individuals constitute a unity with their own social and non-social aspects by interacting with each other in a given context. Simmel calls this process “sociation”:

Sociation ranges all the way from the momentary getting together for a walk to the founding of a family, from relations maintained "until further notice" to membership in a state, from the temporary aggregation of hotel guests to the intimate bond of a medieval guild. I designate as the content-the materials, so to speak-of sociation everything that is present in individuals (the immediately concrete loci of all historical reality)-drive, interest, purpose, inclination, psychic state, movement-everything that is present in them in such a way as to engender or mediate effects upon others or to receive such effects. In themselves, these materials which fill life, these motivations which propel it,

⁵⁶ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). *The Problem of Sociology*. In D. N. Levine, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 23 - 36). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 24.

are not social. Strictly speaking neither hunger nor love, work nor religiosity, technology nor the functions and results of intelligence, are social. They are factors in sociation only when they transform the mere aggregation of isolated individuals into specific forms of being with and for one another, forms that are subsumed under the general concept of interaction.⁵⁷

For Simmel, any social phenomenon is composed of at least two elements: a motive and a form through which individuals interact with each other in order to unify a mode of interaction. In other words, content necessitates a form in order to fulfill its goal, but the way content and form create a synthesis is not stable; rather, they are constantly in a state of flux and affect each other in the process of becoming. For this reason, Simmel offers an argument that the concept of society is only possible when a reciprocal affection of form and content is accomplished:

A collection of human beings does not become a society because each of them has an objectively determined or subjectively impelling life-content. It becomes a society only when the vitality of these contents attains the form of reciprocal influence; only when one individual has an effect, immediate or mediate, upon another, is mere spatial aggregation or temporal succession transformed into society. If, therefore, there is to be a science whose subject matter is society and nothing else, it must exclusively investigate these interactions, these kinds and forms of sociation. For everything else found within “society” and realized through it and within its framework is not itself society. It is merely a content that develops or is developed by this form of coexistence, and it produces the real phenomenon called “society” in the broader and more customary sense of the term only in conjunction with this form. To separate, by scientific abstraction, these two factors of form and content which are in reality inseparably united; to detach by analysis the forms of interaction or sociation from their contents (through which alone these forms become social forms); and to bring them together systematically under a consistent scientific viewpoint-this seems to me the basis for the only, as well as the entire, possibility of a special science of society as such. Only such a science can actually treat the facts that go under the name of sociohistorical reality upon the plane of the purely social.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 24.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 25.

Simmel pursues a methodology which does not promise a determinant factor that causes a social phenomenon at the last instance. Rather, his methodology invites us to detach various factors, both social and non-social, in order to describe certain types in the process of sociation. Thus, the constant affection of the form and content makes the notion of change inevitable in the process of sociation. Therefore, we must delineate the interaction between form and content in a phenomenological manner.

For Simmel, to analyze socio-historical phenomena in terms of form and content relations, there must be two basic rules: Firstly, one form of sociation should be seen in different contents and their purposes must be dissimilar. Secondly, one must show that the content is realized using quite dissimilar forms of sociation as its medium or vehicle.⁵⁹ In so doing, Simmel's sociology depends on identifying the pure forms of sociation, ordering social forms systematically, explaining them psychologically, and studying them from the standpoint of their historical development.⁶⁰ Here, Simmel offers the following analogy:

Only if we follow the conception here outlined can we grasp what in "society" really is society. Similarly, it is only geometry that determines what the spatiality of things in space really is. Sociology, the discipline that deals with the purely social aspects of man (who, of course, can be an object of scientific inquiry in innumerable other respects), is related to the other special sciences of man as geometry is related to the physicochemical sciences. Geometry studies the forms through which any material becomes an empirical body, and these forms as such exist, of course, in abstraction only, precisely like the forms of sociation. Both geometry and sociology leave to other sciences the investigation of the contents realized in the forms, that is, the total phenomena whose forms they explore.⁶¹

It is noteworthy here that Georg Simmel avoids determining an ultimate cause for a social phenomenon. In his sociological account, forms should not be diminished to mere definitions. Rather, specific types of social forms must be analyzed in their existing contexts. For instance, super-ordination and subordination are two social forms which can be found in any sociation process. However, analyzing the specific type of super-ordination and subordination with the immediate forms in which they

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 26.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 27.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 27–28.

are realized is more important for Simmelian sociology. It is similar to the case of geometrical abstractions, which are autonomous in themselves, yet, at the same time, can be found within different matters in space. Therefore, it is important to study a specific type of geometrical form within its own specific space. To make the analogy of geometry more explicit in terms of explaining social forms, Simmel discusses the notion of competition:

About competition, for instance, we learn something from a great many fields—political science, economics, history of religion, history of art, and so on. The point is to ascertain from all the facts what competition is as a pure form of human behavior; under what circumstances it emerges and develops; how it is modified by the particular character of its object; by what contemporaneous formal and material features of a society it is increased or reduced; and how competition between individuals differs from that between groups. In short, we must ascertain what competition is as a form of relation among individuals. This form may involve all sorts of contents. But in spite of the great variety of these contents, the form maintains its own identity and proves that it belongs to a sphere which is governed by its own laws and which may legitimately be abstracted from other spheres or from total reality. What we are suggesting, in brief, is that similar elements be singled out of the complex phenomena so as to secure a cross-section, whereby dissimilar elements—in our case the contents—reciprocally paralyze each other, as it were.⁶²

At this point, Simmel delineates the analogy of geometry in his sociological methodology:

In other words, there is no sure method for answering the question of what purely sociological configurations and what specific interactions of individuals (irrespective of the interests and impulses residing in the individual, and of purely objective conditions) are involved in the historical process. On the contrary, all this can be interpreted in more than one way and, furthermore, the historical facts that attest to reality of the specific sociological forms must be presented in their material totality. In brief, there is no means of teaching and, under certain conditions, even of performing, the analysis of form and content

⁶² Ibid., pp. 29.

into sociological elements. The case is comparable to the proof of a geometrical theorem by means of figures drawn in the unavoidably accidental and crude way of all drawings. The mathematician can feel quite safe in assuming that, in spite of the imperfect drawing, the concept of the ideal geometrical figure is known and understood, and that it is regarded as the essential significance of the chalk or ink marks. The sociologist, however, may not make the corresponding assumption; the isolation of truly pure sociation out of the complex total phenomenon cannot be forced by logical means.⁶³

In Simmelian sociology, understanding social phenomena involves following the laws of the psychic processes of individuals which take place in a specific content. In other words, the question of how content and its configurations work together in a social phenomenon is the key aim for Simmelian methodology. Therefore, the notion of sociation carries a similar logic. Individuals affect each other by changing their way of doing things, views, or feelings according to the nature of their interaction. In so doing, they socially construct each other. However, this affection must be read in terms of psychological categories. Therefore, Simmel's focus on sociation invites us to add psychological processes into the equation of social facts. To analyze sociation from a scientific point of view, Simmel pursues a model which aims to depict affections of psychic processes of the individuals in accordance with the embodiment of their social forms.

In this sense, then, the givens of sociology are psychological processes whose immediate reality presents it first of all under psychological categories. But these psychological categories, although indispensable for the description of the facts, remain outside the purpose of sociological investigation. It is to this end that we direct our study to the objective reality of sociation, a reality which, to be sure, is embodied in psychic processes and can often be described only by means of them.⁶⁴

In view of this, the Simmelian approach of exploring continuous form and content relations in human interactions leads us to problematize Lütfi Ö. Akad's migration trilogy—*The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975)—in terms of his subtle psychologism, where we can see the manipulation of

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 31.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 35.

individual will through such specific social forms as exchange, conflict, domination, subordination, and sociability.

Rather than analyzing these films within the dichotomies of modern/traditional, urban/rural, and masculinity/femininity or restricting the causes only to mere economic conditions, I follow a Simmelian perspective, which necessitates delineating the constant interaction between the psychic processes of individuals and their embodied social forms. According to Simmel:

...a drama, from beginning to end, contains only psychological processes and can be understood only psychologically; but its purpose is not to study psychological cognitions but to examine the syntheses which result when the contents of the psychic processes are considered from the viewpoints of tragedy and artistic form, or as symbolic of certain aspects of life.⁶⁵

Consequently, the tragic style of Lütfi Ö. Akad's storytelling leaves these films always open to further interpretations. How did Lütfi Ö. Akad deal with complex cultural problems concerning urban/rural, masculinity/femininity, individual/communal, and modern/traditional, or with the social forms of exchange, conflict, domination, and subordination, and how did he do so without offering his own account of their ultimate cause? How did Lütfi Ö. Akad create subversive protagonists, or namely antagonists, whose actions lead these narratives to take a tragic form? To elaborate this, in the next section, we shall see how the notion of form is understood in a Simmelian perspective of culture via Donald N. Levine's interpretations.

2.4. Form in Culture and Personality

The starting point of Simmel's theory of culture, as indeed of all his thought, is the distinction between form and content. Contents are those aspects of existence which are determined in themselves, but as such contain neither structure nor the possibility of being apprehended by us in their immediacy. Forms are the synthesizing principles which select elements from the raw stuff of experience and shape them into determinate unities.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Levine, D. N. (1971). Introduction. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. ix - lxxv). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. xv.

According to Levine, forms in Simmel can be considered as similar to the notion of a priori in Kant. However, they differ from each other in two respects. Firstly, instead of affecting only the cognitive realm, forms must be seen as factors which diffuse throughout all dimensions of human experience. Secondly, rather than a Kantian fixed a priori notion, forms must be seen in action, where they can emerge, change, and be lost in the course of time in the Simmelian theory of culture.⁶⁷

For Simmel, forms are accepted as necessary conditions which are created by the undifferentiated immediate experiences of subjects. In other words, this is an outcome of the interaction between the self-knowing subject and his/her immediate confrontation with nearby objects. Subjects define the confronted objects in terms of their cognitive, aesthetic, or evaluative impulses. Therefore, the nature of a specific situation does not always have an effect on determining its ultimate form. However, naming those forms is only the first step: “The forms which come into being at this stage are fragmentary and preliminary in character—what Weingartner has aptly called “proto-culture”—for they are bound by the pragmatic interests and adaptive exigencies of the immediate situation.”⁶⁸

In this sense, proto-culture arises once there is a stress between a subject and his/her confrontation with the immediate object. The subject’s need to express his/her own self creates its necessary form. It carries out one’s practical need in the realm of proto-culture. On the other hand, once the form emerges in proto-culture, it starts to live its own existence. This attempt is one of the primary steps to create a tradition. Levine articulates the emergence of forms as follows:

As soon as elements of proto-culture have been created for specific practical reasons, they take on an existence of their own. While still rooted in subjective purposes, they become objectified. They need not be continuously reinvented, and the more successful of them accumulate to form a tradition. When that happens, a second level of cultural development is possible. Sooner or later the forms can be liberated from their connection with practical purposes and become objects of cultivation in their own right. They become autonomous, in that men become devoted to them not for some practical advantage but for their own sake.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. xvi.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

For Simmel, the movement from proto-culture to second-level cultural development is defined in the realm of objective culture. Levine gives an example: “Moral regulations designed to regulate human relationships become transformed into autonomous ethical principles. This is the movement from proto forms to objective forms.”⁷⁰ For Levine, there is another realm called “worlds” in Simmel’s theory of cultural forms:

Beyond any particular realization of objective culture, moreover, there is a third level of cultural formation which Simmel refers to as that of “worlds.” Each of the main types of formative capacity of the human spirit is able to shape the totality of contents into a self-contained, irreducible world of experience. The so-called real world consists of that complex of representations needed for us to act adaptively in accord with the psychobiological requirements of our species. Historically it develops first, but it does not thereby have any special ontological claims. Equally valid as ways of organizing all the contents of life are the worlds of art, of theoretical knowledge, of values, of religion, and so on. Worlds come into being over time through the interaction of specific ways of experiencing—the practical, the aesthetic, the scientific, the religious with various kinds of contents. Although in principle any given content can be constructed as an element in any world, some contents lend themselves more readily than others to becoming part of certain worlds. Thus, three areas of life experience particularly lend themselves to being “transposed into the religious key” —man’s relation to the forces of nature, to fate, and to his fellow humans. But each world exists as a sovereign form, urging those who are at all responsive to its claims to translate more and more of the contents of the cosmos into its domain.⁷¹

For Simmel, individuals have capacity to create “worlds” in which they lead to cultural diversity as a basic promise in their discourse. According to Levine, this is one of the basic points which differentiate Simmel from his contemporaries like Comte and Marx, who theorized, in different ways, a unified totality as an ultimate form for humanity. Levine states:

The energy inherent in life to create forms that transcend life is a force toward cultural diversity, not unity. In radical contrast to Comte and Marx, who

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. xvi–xvii.

⁷¹ Ibid.

envisioned the goal of evolution to be the production of a homogeneous culture for one-humanity, Simmel saw the generation of increasingly specialized cultural products ordered in fundamentally discrete and incommensurable worlds. The gods who rule these worlds are not at war with one another anymore than colors and sounds are in basic conflict—but each tries to move human accomplishment closer to the universal implementation of its basic principle.⁷²

At this point, Simmel's priority of diversity in the cultural forms necessitates delineating the concept of individual in his theory of culture. We need to ask: What is the capacity of an individual in relation to his/her existing cultural forms? In other words, what is his/her role in enduringly changing form and content relations? In what ways do Simmel's subject-prioritized methodology help us to explain the diversity among the multiplicity of the cultural forms?

For Levine, Simmel relies on the distinction between form and content in conceptualizing his notion of the individual. In Simmel, the theory of personality is structural and is primarily based onto discovering the question of how, out of the multiplicity of psychic contents, a unified personality is formed. In this sense, Simmel's main concern is to clarify the different contents derived from the impulses of ego and how they give rise to the construction of personality.

Individuals have an active position in determining the nature of forms in the social realm. As such, they have the similar capacity to form their own personalities by synthesizing the external world within their internal one. In other words, the Simmelian modernist approach to the concept of humanity accepts the fact that “externality like god” does not exist apart from human creativity, since what is external or objective to individuals is already an outcome of their own synthesis of objects and their actions. Even though individuals yield to the necessary criteria of the “worlds” or “cultural forms” they are already involved in, it is up to them to change the structure of those forms. However, Simmel articulates that forms have their own logic; and once externalized beyond individuals, they will employ their own laws upon living subjects. In this sense, cultural forms are evolutionary and shift paradigmatically. The domain of language, ethics, or technology can be given as examples.

⁷² Ibid., pp. xvii–xviii.

In order to make a “form and content” analysis of *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975), I shall read the narrative aspect of the trilogy from the protagonist’s point of view by delineating the social forms of which she is a part. In this way, I shall better be able to analyze the change in values in the urban context and be able to see the individual’s capacity to resist the imposition of cultural forms.

To conclude, we need to make a last remark on relationship between individuality and objective culture. In Simmel’s account, both objective and subjective cultures have their own logic of existence. Yet, at the same time, they are mutually inclusive. There is a constant tension between these two poles. The relationship between form and content unfolds in the process of constant becoming. Therefore, Simmel prefers to define individual existence as fragmentary. Human beings are bound to the laws of mortality, which restrict them to living within the rules of time and space. Their energies attain to goals as far as they are able to synthesize things in the objective world. On the other hand, objective culture has a limitless capacity to fulfill its necessary forms, since its ever-increasing nature reshapes them in accordance with individuals’ performances of subjective culture. In this sense, what is important for Simmel is depicting the tension between subjective and objective cultures.

2.5. The Categories of Human Experience

All contents of life, therefore, are subject to this dual categorization. They can be considered as results of social development, as objects of human interactions, but they can with equal justification be considered with respect to their objective content—as elements of logical, technical, aesthetic, or metaphysical continua, possessing their meaning in themselves and not in the historical actualities which depend on social relationships.⁷³

According to Simmel, “All contents of life are directly borne by individuals. Some person has conceived them. They fill the consciousness of someone; they bring someone pleasure or pain. Although they are social, they are at the same time

⁷³ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). The Categories of Human Experience. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 36 - 40). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 37.

individual, intelligible in terms of the psychic processes in this or that individual.”⁷⁴ Although Simmel accepts individuals as inseparable from their social environment, his initial motive is to understand individual preferences. As a result, he seeks to understand the possible attributes of society:

What needs drive this individual to his religious activity, what personal destinies have moved him to found a sect, what value this action and experience has for the development of his psyche, this order of questioning does not in the slightest compete with one which subordinates the same facts to the point of view of society—what historical milieu has produced those inner needs; what forms of interactions among individuals and in their relationship to outsiders make them into a “sect”; what enrichments or cleavages the public mind experiences through that sort of religious movement.⁷⁵

In his account, individual and society must be considered as methodological concepts. Human beings have a fragmentary existence. There are multiplicities of relations which cause specific social events in the course of history. Attempting to find an ultimate determinant factor can drive us to reduce this case to a mere meaning, which would be misleading. This is why historical events must be evaluated in terms of “form and content” relations, which necessarily involve individual psychic elements. He argues:

Individual and society are, both for historical understanding and for normative judgment, methodological concepts. This is so either in that they divide given events and conditions among themselves or in that they deal with the unity of the given, which we cannot directly comprehend, by organizing it under two different points of view, comparable to the way a picture is considered now as a physiological and optical phenomenon, now as a cultural product, or now with respect to the technique of painting, now with respect to its content and aesthetic value. To express this with that radicalism of conception which in practice is naturally approached only fragmentarily, all human psychic events and ideal constructions are to be understood as contents and norms of individual life, and just as thoroughly as contents and norms of existence in social interaction, as for Spinoza the cosmic-absolute existence is to be conceived now under the attribute of extension, now (and just as completely)

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

under that of thought—*una eademque res, sed duo bus modis expressa* [“one and the same thing, but expressed in two modes.”]⁷⁶

At this point, Simmel stresses the concept of association within the realm of social-historical form. Conducting a scientific analysis in order to understand a historical reality can be erroneous. For him: “One can therefore examine the givens and contents of historical reality independent of their specific social genesis and significance according to the value and meaning which they possess as elements of the life of humanity, as stages of its development.”⁷⁷

In other words, Simmel tries to conceptualize an ideal which can be considered as universal as in any period of human history. Therefore he uses the term “humanity.” For Levine, Simmel tries to bring four basic categories in order to understand the concept of “value”: “All together, the fundamental categories in terms of which human experience may be viewed are: society, objective culture, individual personality, and humanity.”⁷⁸ According to Simmel:

Although the category of the values and developments of the human type is methodologically as distinct from the category of the being and action of the individual as from that of the life of social interaction, the first two of these categories nonetheless stand in an inner relationship which places them as it were as one party over against the social category as a second party. The material of the idea of humanity and the questions based on it are individual. It is only a matter of secondary interest whether the activities of these individuals contribute to the condition and development of humanity in the form of sociation or in that of a purely personal activity in thought, sentiment, or artistic works, in the biological improvement or deterioration of the race, or in the religious relationship to gods and idols. The existence and conduct of the individual must of course occur in some such form, which provides the technique or the connecting link through which individuality can become a practically effective element of humanity. But for all the indisputable indispensability of these individual forms, among which sociality stands uppermost, humanity and the individual remain the polar concepts for the observation of human life. Objectively and historically, this correlation may

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 37–38.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

not be of very extensive importance when contrasted with the fact of society-although this chapter has shown its efficaciousness in a series of historical epochs, and modern individualism has been traced back to it more than once. But at the very least it remains the ideal auxiliary construction by means of which “society” is shown its place in the series of concepts which methodically order the study of life. Just as within societal development the narrower, “more socialized” group attains its counterpart (internally or historically, on a cyclical or simultaneous basis) in that it expands to the larger group and is specialized to the individual element of society-so from this ultimate point of view society as a whole appears as a special form of aggregation beyond which, subordinating their contents to other forms of observation and evaluation, there stand the ideas of humanity and of the individual.⁷⁹

Simmel’s unique approach to understanding social phenomena transcends dualistic categories. His conceptualization of form and content, therefore, forecasts the pathways of the phenomenology by which individual subjectivity finds its meaning in the process of “becoming” as well as “being-with others.” At the turn of 19th century, the concept of society became an object of study where one could see the vulnerability of human beings against the sovereignty of modernity. Therefore, Simmel sought to clarify the threshold boundaries between individual life and its manifested social forms. As the next chapter analyzes, social forms such as exchange, conflict, domination, subordination, and sociability, which can be found in every social interaction, became one of the primary aims of Simmelian sociology.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 39–40.

CHAPTER 3

FORMS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

3.1. Exchange

Neither need nor enjoyment contains in itself value or economic process. These are actualized simultaneously through exchange between two subjects, each of whom requires some self-denial by the other as a condition of feeling satisfied, or through the counterpart of this process in the solipsistic economy. Through exchange, economic process and economic values emerge simultaneously, because exchange is what sustains or produces the distance between subject and object which transmutes the subjective state of feeling into objective valuation.⁸⁰

According to Simmel, “most relationships among men can be considered under the category of exchange. Exchange is the purest and most concentrated form of all human interactions in which serious interests are at stake.”⁸¹ From a conversation to a game or to an act of love, we can see exchange as one of the essential forms of social interaction. For Simmel, exchange is not about an object; rather it is about a change in one’s subjective value through the act of exchange. As he puts it, “The meaning of exchange, moreover, is that the sum of values is greater afterward than it was before, and this implies that each party gives the other more than he had himself possessed.”⁸² Here, Simmel introduces the term “interaction” as a broader concept. He suggests that we can grasp the concreteness of the notion of interaction through the form of exchange:

The ordinary vicissitudes of daily life produce a continuous alternation of profit and loss, an ebbing and flowing of the contents of life. Exchange has the effect of rationalizing these vicissitudes, through the conscious act of setting the one

⁸⁰ Simmel, G. (1971 [1907]). Exchange. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 43 - 70). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 56.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 43.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 44.

for the other. The same synthetic process of mind that from the mere juxtaposition of things creates a with-another and for-another—the same ego which, permeated by sense data, informs them with its own unified character—has through the category of exchange seized that naturally given rhythm of our existence and organized its elements into a meaningful nexus.⁸³

At this point, Simmel explains the nature of economic exchange. For him, there is a great correlation between sacrifice and economic exchange. In the latter, individuals are less free of redemption, since economic exchange is bounded to laws of profit and loss. Simmel articulates: “Economic exchange—whether it involves substances, labor, or labor power invested in substances—always entails the sacrifice of some good that has other potential uses, even though utilitarian gain may prevail in the final analysis.”⁸⁴

Simmel considers the notion of exchange as a pure form which eventually exposes individuals’ psychological changes. For instance, kissing someone is always more than an interaction of the lips of two individuals. Rather, it is a change in their psyches. There is no gain or lose in this process. For economic exchange, on the other hand, sacrifice is considered as the price. It transforms one’s psyche into a calculative mind. Simmel calls this situation a double-sided exchange in which sacrifice and gain are two basic elements. Things take place both in actuality, the exchange of objects, and in the psyches of individuals, the values of transaction. In this way, two subjective events are balanced within an individual case. For Simmel:

This is basically unaffected by the secondary question whether the process is instigated by the nature of things or the nature of man, whether it is a matter of purely natural economy or exchange economy. All feelings of value, in other words, which are set free by producible objects, are in general to be gained only by foregoing other values. Such self-denial consists not only in that indirect labor for ourselves which appears as labor for others, but frequently enough in direct labor on behalf of our own personal ends.⁸⁵

In Simmel’s account, exchange always creates greater value concerning the subjects who are a part of that transaction. This is the creative nature of exchange.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 45.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 47.

Practical life is based upon the relation of value and exchange. They are two basic causes for their own existences. According to Simmel:

In one and the same area, value and exchange constitute the foundation of our practical life. This indicates the profound connection between them, such that value is determined by exchange just as the converse is true. Much as our life may appear to be determined by the mechanism and objectivity of things, we can in reality take no step nor think any thought without imparting values to things through our feelings and directing them in relation to our actions.⁸⁶

In this sense, we see here how inseparable the relation of form and content in Simmel's theory of value is. Through the notion of exchange, individuals acquire a value by giving up another one in the name of sacrifice. In fact, this synthesis ultimately creates greater value. For Simmel, it is possible to read the relation of value and exchange as one of the foundational principles of our practical lives:

From the satisfaction of our lowliest need to the acquisition of the highest intellectual and religious goods, value must always be offered up in order to obtain a value. What is starting point and what is consequence here is something that can perhaps not be determined. For either both are inseparable in the fundamental processes, constituting the unity of practical life which we must decompose into separate factors since we cannot directly grasp that unity as such, or else an unending process occurs between both, such that every exchange leads back to a value which in turn leads back to an exchange. The more fruitful and truly illuminating aspect of this, at least for our considerations, is the path from exchange to value, since the converse is better known and more self-evident.⁸⁷

Concerning our everyday practices, Simmel argues that sacrifice is not an external obstacle for individuals; instead, it refers to an inner condition of our own goals in order to have a meaningful existence. In this regard, Simmel suggests that we need to think of sacrifice as an a priori condition for the notion of value. Thus, value must be considered in economic terms. A price must be paid for a value to become a meaningful thing. Nonetheless, this is a limitless process. We must keep in mind that value is always in the process of coming into being. Therefore, it is endless. On this

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 47–48.

point, Simmel invites us to question the concept of exchange in relation to the concept of value, specifically the value of labor:

All labor is indisputably a sacrifice if it is accompanied by a desire for leisure, for the mere self-satisfying play of skills, or for the avoidance of strenuous exertion. In addition to such desires, however, there exists a quantum of latent work energy which either we do not know what to do with or which presents itself as a drive to carry out voluntary labor, labor called forth neither by necessity nor by ethical motives. The expenditure of this energy is in itself no sacrifice, yet for this quantum of energy there compete a number of demands all of which it cannot satisfy. For every expenditure of the energy in question one or more possible and desirable alternative uses of it must be sacrificed. Could we not usefully spend the energy with which we accomplish task A also on task B, then the first would not entail any sacrifice; the same would hold for B in the event we chose it rather than A. In this utilitarian loss what is sacrificed is not labor, but non-labor. What we pay for A is not the sacrifice of labor—for our assumption here is that the latter in it poses not the slightest hardship on us—but the giving up of task B.⁸⁸

At this point, Simmel turns his discussion to the relativity of value. In order to measure a value, there must be a comparison between at least two separate things. Value is not intrinsic in the thing itself. On the contrary, it only becomes visible along with another value. For instance, in the immediacy of death due to hunger, one can give his/her most valuable things for a piece of bread. According to Simmel, this shows that “every such feeling of value is lodged in a whole complex system of our feelings which is in constant flux, adaptation, and reconstruction.”⁸⁹ Simmel argues that the relativity of value comes from an immaterial motive which is, in principle, subject oriented and always in flux within the constant nature of change. In other words, a theory of value depends on psychological reasons, yet their exposition necessitates exchange along with its complementary form of sacrifice. Only in this way does value reach its material limits and do we become capable of measuring its possibilities. Simmel’s famous example of climbing the Alps shows this clearly:

What comes to expression in this process is the desire to prove one's strength, to overcome difficulties, indeed often to oppose for the sheer joy of opposition.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 49.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 52.

The detour required to attain certain things is often the occasion, often the cause as well, of perceiving them as values. In human relationships, most frequently and clearly in erotic relations, we notice how reserve, indifference, or rejection inflames the most passionate desire to prevail over these obstacles, and spurs us to efforts and sacrifices which, without these obstacles, would surely seem to us excessive. For many people the aesthetic gain from climbing the high Alps would not be considered worth further notice if it did not demand the price of extraordinary exertion and dangers and thereby acquire character, appeal, and consecration.⁹⁰

Here, Simmel's theory of value offers us a greater insight with which we can re-evaluate the complex nature of exchange as one of the fundamental social forms. In the analysis section, we shall see how the phenomenological inquiry of Simmel finds its concrete exemplifications concerning the notion of exchange through Lütfi Ö. Akad's migration trilogy. *The Bride* (1973) and *The Wedding* (1974), especially, harshly expose the transformation of mind into a calculative entity, primarily in the case of men, through the form of exchange in the current money economy. In the following section, we shall discuss the concept of conflict as another way to articulate social interactions.

3.2. Conflict

If every interaction among men is a sociation, conflict—after all one of the most vivid interactions, which, furthermore, cannot possibly be carried on by one individual alone—must certainly be considered as sociation. And in fact, dissociating factors—hate, envy, need, desire—are the causes of conflict; it breaks out because of them. Conflict is thus designed to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some kind of unity, even if it be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties. This is roughly parallel to the fact that it is the most violent symptoms of a disease which represent the effort of the organism to free itself of

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 53.

disturbances and damages caused by them.⁹¹

In Simmel's sociology, conflict is considered one of the basic forms of social interaction. Simmel does not see the concept of conflict as an intermediary between different interest groups. Instead, he takes a dualistic approach in which conflict exposes tension between contrasting social units. Both the positive and negative aspects of conflict are integral to its nature. For this reason, Simmel argues that "Conflict can be separated conceptually, but not empirically."⁹²

In our everyday lives, we are more prone to perceive conflict as a negation of harmony which is hard to establish, and keeping it in balance through our social relations. This is the negative or destructive character of conflict. The concept of life, in principle, must entail a positive force. There must be a "will to live" in our existence. For Simmel, these positive, life-giving conceptualizations of life are problematic. They connote an ideal which aspires to stabilize the unending nature of change in human relations. All greater social forms, such as society, religion, family, or ethics, are the outcomes of this aspiration. By describing conflict as "conceptually separable but empirically inseparable," Simmel invites us to comprehend this "yin-yang" nature of conflict:

According to the common view, life always shows two parties in opposition. One of them represents the positive aspect of life, its content proper, if not its substance, while the very meaning of the other is non-being, which must be subtracted from the positive elements before they can constitute life. This is the common view of the relation between happiness and suffering, virtue and vice, strength and inadequacy, success and failure—between all possible contents and interruptions of the course of life. The highest conception indicated in respect to these contrasting pairs appears to me different: we must conceive of all these polar differentiations as of one life; we must sense the pulse of a central vitality even in that which, if seen from the standpoint of a particular ideal, ought not to be at all and is merely something negative; we must allow the total meaning of our existence to grow out of both parties.⁹³

⁹¹ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Conflict. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 70 - 96). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 70.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 71.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 72–73.

For Simmel, unity and discord both have a twofold meaning. For unity, the first meaning is an agreement on dissonance between two different groups. The second meaning of unity refers to the coherence or oneness of people, energies, and forms. In the case of discord, Simmel contends that it is destruction of an agreement between identical individuals within a group. Therefore, it would seem to have a negative effect upon the total structure of group. He goes on to say that:

In reality, however, something which is negative and damaging between individuals if it is considered in isolation and as aiming in a particular direction, does not necessarily have the same effect within the total relationship of these individuals. For a very different picture emerging when we view the conflict in conjunction with other interactions not affected by it. The negative and dualistic elements play an entirely positive role in this more comprehensive picture, despite the destruction they may work on particular relations. All this is very obvious in the competition of individuals within an economic unit.⁹⁴

Here, Simmel directs his analysis into the integrative function of conflict within different group relations. He argues that conflict among small groups can have a binding influence. For instance, in a marriage, a little conflict in terms of the different preferences of a couple can strengthen the coherence of marriage. "A certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy, is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together; it cannot be separated from the unity of the sociological structure."⁹⁵ Additionally, conflict can strengthen existence of the group where the polarization of interest among different groups is crystalized.

From a sociological point of view, Simmel offers a functionalist perspective for understanding conflict. As human nature moves through the mixture of positive and negative forces, the notion of conflict can be viewed as an outcome of these contrasting forces. In other words, if we want to see social relations become more harmonious, or let us say natural, we need to admit that certain energies such as love, hate, anger, or sympathy must pour through the necessary social forms such as conflict, exchange, subordination, and domination. We need to look at the ontological possibilities of sociability where yin-yang forces find their pendulum.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 74.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

For Simmel, conflict in certain contexts creates an aversion, a distance, or an opposition.⁹⁶ He gives city life as the key example. Accordingly, if there is no conflict among individuals, we would never have come to live together in modern metropolises. In this way, city life would not be possible. Conflict, in this sense, provides grounds for us to live together in accordance with our changing preferences, since it creates distance through which individuals sustain their originalities. From another angle, it gives us the power necessary to resist the changing structure of social life. Therefore, recognizing conflict from a dualistic perspective make us more resilient in our life struggles.

What is important for Simmel is to distinguish between homogeneity and heterogeneity in social relations. In so doing, Simmel focuses on the psychological oscillations of individuals within their conflictual relations. Yet he is aware of the fact that subjective affection from social phenomena can be misleading. Individuals need to use external justifications to correct their outcomes from the incident that they are a part of it. For him, individuals can become actors only through those externalities.

In this Simmelian way, this thesis aims to problematize the narrative aspects of *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975) where the subtle psychologism of Lütfi Ö. Akad unfolds through the coherent antagonistic moves of the protagonists against the impositions of social encounters. Accordingly, each protagonist uses certain analogies in order to conceptualize the change in values in their familial moralities. In this context, the following questions can be raised: What is the meaning of being an individual in a family in a rapidly growing urban context? In what ways do changes in morality find a sociological means? What is the role of an individual against the manipulation of values which is primarily caused by the money economy?

In order to answer these questions, we need to turn to the concept of conflict as a social form. In Simmel's theory of conflict, in some cases, conflict may sometimes expose only its destructive nature. For instance, in the case of "lust for fight," conflict is more likely to become a meaningless act. Simmel argues:

If the conflict is caused by an object, by the will to have or control something, by rage or revenge, such a desired object or state of affairs makes for conditions which subject the fight to norms or restrictions applying to both warring

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 76.

parties. Moreover, since the fight is centered in a purpose outside itself, it is qualified by the fact that, in principle, every end can be attained by more than one means. The desire for possession or subjugation, even for the annihilation of the enemy, can be satisfied through combinations and events other than fight. Where conflict is merely a means determined by a superior purpose, there is no reason not to restrict or even avoid it, provided it can be replaced by other measures which have the same promise of success. Where, on the other hand, it is exclusively determined by subjective feelings, where there are inner energies which can be satisfied only through fight, its substitution by other means is impossible; it is its own purpose and content and hence wholly free from the admixture of other forms of relation. Such a fight for its own sake seems to be suggested by a certain formal hostility drive which sometimes urges itself upon psychological observation.⁹⁷

For Simmel, we need take into account the different contexts of conflict as another decisive factor. Simmel argues that among the different actors in a conflict, the content of the conflict can change the results. If we imagine a conflict arising between two groups who have intimate affinities, such a conflict is more likely to result dramatically than if it were to arise among complete strangers. In this sense, when you increase the closeness between two actors, you sharpen the cruelty that results from their conflict. Therefore, the entire beings of individuals are affected by this negation. Simmel articulates:

Hence the wholly disproportionate violence to which normally well-controlled people can be moved within their relations to those closest to them. The whole happiness and depth of the relation to another person with whom, so to speak, we feel identical, lies in the fact that not a single contact, not a single word, not a single common activity or pain remains isolated but always clothes the whole soul which completely gives itself in it and is received in it.⁹⁸

Naming a person as “traitor” is one of the common characteristics of cultural forms which are strictly communal and therefore intolerant to different individual moves. An insider antagonistic act is more likely to be read as a total threat against the binding character of that group. In such situations, the hardest thing can be remaining self-critical against the domination of that group’s societal norms. One must be aware

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 82–83.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 91–92.

of what one is fighting for and against whom one is fighting. Otherwise, conflict can be self-destructive. From a Simmelian perspective, if one does not, then there will not be any change in the existing conflictual relations. Simmel continues as follows:

The inverse phenomenon shows the same form: the deepest hatred grows out of broken love. Here, however, not only the sense of discrimination is probably decisive but also the denial of one's own past—a denial involved in such change of feeling. To have to recognize that a deep love—and not only a sexual love—was an error, a failure of intuition, so compromises us before ourselves, so splits the security and unity of our self-conception, that we unavoidably make the object of this intolerable feeling pay for it.⁹⁹

For Simmel, conflict as a social form develops on two levels: the subjective level and sociation. Therefore, the third chapter of this thesis shall be a phenomenological analysis of these two categories. Now, our discussion turns to a delineation of domination and subordination as the other forms of social interaction.

3.3. Domination and Subordination

Within a relationship of subordination, the exclusion of all spontaneity whatever is actually rarer than is suggested by such widely used popular expressions as “coercion,” “having no choice,” “absolute necessity”. Actually, the “absolute” coercion which even the most-cruel tyrant imposes upon us is always distinctly relative. Its condition is our desire to escape from the threatened punishment or from other consequences of our disobedience.¹⁰⁰

Domination as a form of interaction has a twofold meaning. Firstly, domination is a reflexive act. If one person wants to dominate another, s/he does not necessarily capture the other's entire will. Rather, the dominator wants to invade the other's inner resistance or pride, in order to make him or her react to the dominator's will. Simmel exemplifies this by the relation of a sculptor with his statue. From a sociological point of view, he argues: “by virtue of it alone, sociation occurs as little as it does between

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 93.

¹⁰⁰ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 97 – 98.

a sculptor and his statue, although the statue, too, acts back on the artist through his consciousness of his own creative power.”¹⁰¹

For the case of subordination, Simmel follows a comparable logic. His argument suggests that even in the rule of a dictatorship, people still have some sort of freedom. This can only be broken in the case of direct physical violence. For every other incident, subordination carries this twofold reflexive potential. He argues:

In every other case, this relationship only demands a price for the realization of freedom, a price, to be sure, which we are not willing to pay. It can narrow down more and more the sphere of external conditions under which freedom is clearly realized, but, except for physical force, never to the point of the complete disappearance of freedom.¹⁰²

Simmel’s suggestion leads to the conclusion that social interaction is a mutually determining phenomenon which originates in the wills of individuals. However, once the will is externalized beyond individuals and enters the social sphere, it evolves into a norm for the people who are a part of the sociation. In other words, once “Pandora’s box” is opened, no one should expect things to remain the same. The logic of social relations is bound to the same fate; once they are abstracted from the individuals, they create their own internal logic.

In Simmel’s account, the concept of super-ordination can be explained within three sub-categories: super-ordination by an individual, a group, or an objective force. The argument is as follows:

The subordination of a group under a single person results, above all, in a very decisive unification of the group. This unification is almost equally evident in both of two characteristic forms of this subordination. First, the group forms an actual, inner unit together with its head; the ruler leads the group forces in their own direction, promoting and fusing them; super-ordination, therefore, here really means only that the will of the group has found a unitary expression or body. Secondly, the group feels itself in opposition to its head and forms a party against him.¹⁰³

For the unity of a group, Simmel gives the example of religious formation. Judaism and Christianity are two different religions in terms of their content and

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 96.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 98.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 101.

formation. Yet what makes them inseparable is their unique existence as religious entities which share the same belief in an omnipotent creator. While the former is based on the communal belonging to Jehova through kinship ties, the latter is based on an individualistic embodiment of the belief in Jesus. Therefore, in Judaism social stratification is more strictly structured than is in Christianity. On the other hand, in Simmel's articulation, the unification of a group can also be possible through opposition. He gives the example of political alliances between different interest groups. Despite their ideological friction, they can stand together in order to depose an oppressive ruler. The notion of subordination functions in the following way:

In general, common enmity is one of the most powerful means for motivating a number of individuals or groups to cling together. This common enmity is intensified if the common adversary is at the same time the common ruler. In a latent, certainly not in an overt and effective, form, this combination probably occurs everywhere: in some measure, in some respect, the ruler is almost always an adversary. Man has an intimate dual relation to the principle of subordination. On the one hand, he wants to be dominated. The majority of men not only cannot exist without leadership; they also feel that they cannot: they seek the higher power which relieves them of responsibility; they seek a restrictive, regulatory rigor which protects them not only against the outside world but also against themselves. But no less do they need opposition to the leading power, which only through this opposition, through move and countermove, as it were, attains the right place in the life pattern of those who obey it.¹⁰⁴

The desire for personal freedom is a fragile pendulum which constantly oscillates between individual capabilities and the impositions of social means. Therefore, knowing one's own limits can help one to overcome the problems that one she encounters in the process of sociation. From a wider perspective, the notion of enmity which brings different groups together involves the same danger of dissolution. Simmel describes this as a "psychological threshold." When this limit has been exceeded, we would no longer expect to see a unifying effect from enmity in our social relations. Like the pendulum of personal freedom, the pendulum of unification under individual subordination can be exercised within its limits.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 103–104.

The film analysis part of this thesis—namely, the third chapter—shares the same motivation of exploring the implicit threshold structures of change in “value” in the urban context. Within the subjectivity analysis, we shall see how individual manifestation through familial tragedies finds its eventual meaning in the process of sociation.

In Simmel’s inquiry, the second form of subordination is “subordination under a plurality.” Simmel classifies this as the domination of a group over individuals or other groups in a society. This creates risks for the people who are ruled by another group. For instance, workers in small enterprise are more likely to be exploited than those who are working for a larger-scale business. For Simmel, while the former is regulated by personal preferences, impulses, and interpersonal abuse, the latter is characterized by objective and impersonal rules. However, Simmel describes here an ideal situation. In his analysis of modern societies, specifically capitalist Western societies, objectification brings lesser abuse stemming from interpersonal relations. Yet knowing the situation itself does not solve the manipulation problem. As Simmel elaborates:

The basic reason for the difference in the results which the rule by a plurality has for its subordinates, lies, first of all, in its character of objectivity. This character excludes certain feelings, leanings, and impulses, which become effective only in the individual actions of the subjects, but not in their collective behavior. Within the given relationship and its particular contents, the situation of the subordinate may be influenced, favorably or unfavorably, by the objective or by the individually subjective character of this relationship; and, accordingly, differences result from this. Where the subordinate, in line with his situation, needs the tenderness, altruism, and favor of the superordinate, he will fare badly under the objective domination by a plurality. Inversely, under conditions where only legality, impartiality, and objectivity are favorable to his situation, the rule which has these features will be more desirable for him. It is characteristic of this phenomenon that the state, although it can legally condemn the criminal, cannot pardon him; and even in republics, the right to pardon is usually reserved for exercise by particular individuals. The principle is revealed most strikingly if we consider the material interests of communities.

They are governed according to the profoundly objective axiom of greatest advantages and least sacrifices possible.¹⁰⁵

In addition, Simmel argues that objectivity in social relations can also result in the diffusion of responsibility across those individuals who are a part of that structure. In other words, objectivity can be used as a way of justifying the means in the name of a collective act. This can be seen mostly in kinship relations, where the head of the household carries the potential of manipulating his power. Individuals who are subordinated by existing societal laws are more prone to be silent in the expanded context of subordination. Examples of this include the existence of patriarchal law and its abstraction upon the social forms as masculine god images in various religions or male dominance in legislation and politics. In this way, it is easy to observe the rule of patriarchy, but nonetheless hard to break its uneven outcomes in favor of individual freedom. On this point, Simmel's phenomenological approach emphasizes the importance of psychological recreations upon inequalities that individuals encounter in their social relations. Otherwise, group behavior, which involves suppressive tendencies, can easily take an action by silencing those individuals within the group.

The third category of subordination is "subordination under a principle." For Simmel, this principle is characterized within the process of transition from subjective culture to objective culture:

The individual who is subordinate to an objective law feels himself determined by it, while he, in turn, in no way determines the law, and has no possibility of reacting to it in a manner which could influence it—quite in contrast to even the most miserable slave, who, in some fashion at least, can still in this sense react to his master. For if one simply does not obey the law, one is, to this extent, not really subjected to it; and if one changes the law, one is not subordinate to the old law at all, but is again, in the same entirely un-free manner, subject to the new law. In spite of this, however, for modern, objective man, who is aware of the difference between the spheres of spontaneity and of obedience, subordination to a law which functions as the emanation of impersonal, un-influence-able powers is the more dignified situation.¹⁰⁶

According to Simmel, historical man experienced this transition from personal to objective culture in various phases. Paradigmatic changes in philosophy can be

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 109–110.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 113–114.

given as examples. Since the beginning of Plato and Aristotle, shifts in metaphysics would have never been as dramatic as in the other courses of human history. In politics, Roman law, the Magna Carta, and the suspension of monarchies in Europe and the transition to modern nation-states can be considered other examples of the development of objective culture in history. All these achievements have supported the development of modern societies, where the objectification of culture reaches its peak. These changes exemplify the case of subordination under a principle.

All things considered, Georg Simmel's existential inquiry emphasizes a notion of authentic being in the merging of individual, social, and objective cultures where everything comes and mixes together through the constant fluctuations of change. In the following section, sociability as the last form of social interaction aims to show us how change happens in human relations.

3.4. Sociability

The sight of the sea frees us inwardly, not in spite of but because of the fact that in its rushing up only to recede, its receding only to rise again, in the play and counter play of its waves, the whole of life is stylized to the simplest expression of its dynamic, quite free from all reality which one may experience and from all the baggage of individual fate, whose final meaning seems nevertheless to flow into this stark picture.¹⁰⁷

For Simmel, just as a single atom constitutes the smallest unit of energy in the material body of things, an inner impulse or interest of individuals operates the same way for individual manifestations. Each individual is a nucleus of the greater social body, namely the society. Nevertheless, society has a dynamic structure. Social relations are always in a state of flux due to the changing impulses and manifestations of individuals. Consequently, social relations must be conceived in their constantly changing fragmentary structure.

Simmel defines the concept of sociability as an amalgam of both "art" and "play." Sociability is "art-like," since the inner energy of an individual needs to find

¹⁰⁷ Simmel, G. (1971 [1910]). Sociability. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 127 - 141). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 140.

its own way of expression. It is “play-like,” since social relations are performed by different individuals within the borders of societal norms, laws, and ethics. In this sense, sociability is the interplay form of “art-like” and “play-like” social relations.

For Simmel, the modern individual finds him/herself oscillating between his/her subjective way of expression in social life through a rapidly growing objectification culture. Therefore, one is always in a ready position where one questions the surrounding world. Sociability, in this account, necessitates that individuals become self-critical in terms of the interplay between their personal preferences and the impositions of society. For instance, one’s social position, class, gender, age, and personal traits or moods must be out of this equation.

In other words, Simmel suggests sociability as a universal form which has existed throughout history but that always appears new and unique, and which has strong ties with the immediate reality of human existence. In a sense, Simmel tries to follow a Kantian path which describes the notion of sociability from a universal point of view:

Kant set it up as the principle of law that everyone should have that measure of freedom which could exist along with the freedom of every other person. If one stands by the sociability impulse as the source or also as the substance of sociability, the following is the principle according to which it is constituted: everyone should have as much satisfaction of this impulse as is consonant with the satisfaction of the impulse for all others. If one expresses this not in terms of the impulse but rather in terms of success, the principle of sociability may be formulated thus: everyone should guarantee to the other that maximum of sociable values (joy, relief, vivacity) which is consonant with the maximum of values he himself receives.¹⁰⁸

Another concept introduced here by Simmel is that of the “social game.” In his analysis, social game has a double meaning. Like the chicken-or-egg dilemma, Simmel argues that the “social game is not played only in the society, but also, as a form, it plays of the society.”¹⁰⁹ For instance, coquetry is one of the social games which maximize the playfulness of sexuality within a socially acceptable form. Another example of a social game is conversation. Simmel suggests that conversation as a form

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 132.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 134.

of sociability reflects an open-ended, flowing, and unexpected virtue of human interaction.

In Simmel's formulation, sociability refers to the most lively, immediate, and simultaneous experience of human existence. All possibilities of life unfold through the association between social forms and individuals who are in principle both a cause and effect of this process. In other words, sociability is the actuality of this human experience. For Simmel, understanding change in history requires developing such an ideal. For instance, he explains the transition from "ancien regime" to "modernity" thanks to the unending desire of individuals who are able to change the social forms that they lived out in their immediate experience of time. Once these are externalized beyond individuals, the upcoming subjects, or so-called new generations, are bound to this newly established law. Accordingly, they are both a part of the law, and the law itself.

CHAPTER 4

FILM ANALYSIS

This chapter aims to analyze the narrative aspects of *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975) through Georg Simmel's phenomenological approach, which necessitates delineating the dual role of the individual in the process of sociation by problematizing the functions of such social forms as exchange, conflict, domination, subordination, and sociability in conjunction with the protagonist's existential subjectivity.

4.1. Gelin / The Bride (1973)

As with many films that have the theme of migration, *The Bride* (1973) begins with a train arriving at a station. Members of the crowd pass by each other within a gloomy atmosphere which echoes like the buzz of "a dangerous forest where one has no other option than to survive."¹¹⁰ A young couple—the protagonist Meryem, her husband Veli, and their small child Osman—are welcomed by their older brother Hıdır, who rushes them off to their house which is located on the periphery of Istanbul.

From the first moment, we see the protagonist Meryem at the focus of the frame along with her ill child Osman and her husband's extended family members. From their faces, we see how the city of Istanbul both excites and scares them. On the ferry Veli murmurs: "Such a big city!" and Hıdır replies: "These parts are just a tenth of it; Istanbul is a sea of people." Lütfi Ö. Akad easily transmits the insecure feelings of the couple against the vastness of the city with his fast-cutting montage technique. The following scene leads us inside Hacı Ilyas' squatter house, where the "claustrophobic atmosphere"¹¹¹ evokes the prospective tension between the protagonist and her extended family members. Abruptly, the men go to Hacı Ilyas' work place and Meryem loads the baggage in the garden. Hierarchy and dualism between men/women, rural/urban, new comers/late comers are depicted through the gazes of the brides and grandmother.

¹¹⁰ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütfi Ö. Akad*. İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 126.

¹¹¹ Algan, N. (2005). Türkiye'nin Görsel Belleğinde Bir Öncü ve Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad. In A. Kanbur, *Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad* (pp. 23 - 53). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp 49.

Meanwhile, in the neighborhood, we see Veli and Hıdır visiting their father Hacı İlyas and seeing a mutual friend, İbrahim, from their hometown. Here, Hıdır turns a blind eye and does not greet İbrahim. He says: “You are supposed to help your countryman in a foreign land, yet forget this man. He is strange. He allows his wife to work in a factory. How can this happen?” Afterward, they return to the house. In this frame, we see a block of apartments over the hills, upon which Hıdır directs his eager to build “the family’s” material gains.

In the subsequent scene, we see the greater Hacı İlyas family within the same frame, where the presence of the whole family hints at a bright future: two sons for earning bread, along with Hacı İlyas and grandma sheltering their two brides and three grandsons. As long as future plans go well, the family’s future survival in the city seems guaranteed. Though, as Lütfi Ö. Akad implicitly questions, at what price? In order to show this, Lütfi Ö. Akad pictures the frame by surfing the protagonist Meryem’s gaze both inside and outside of the family. Firstly, she carefully stares on the table where Hacı İlyas, Hıdır and her husband talk about business. Then, staying at the edge of the frame where all the members posing themselves with their full being. Lütfi Ö. Akad’s subtle psychologism via the protagonist’s subjectivity initially unfolds itself through this iconic scene.



Figure 4.1. Lütfi Ö. Akad’s “middle-distance” perspective in *The Bride* (1973)

Next, we enter Meryem and her husband’s private life. The couple discusses their new life in Istanbul where gender dichotomies voice the differences. Meryem

cares both for Veli and her son Osman and does not forget their rural backgrounds. Veli speaks of the changing division of labor in the urban context and wants to keep his wife inside of the house. He makes it clear that he considers compatriot Ibrahim and his wife who works in a factory to be immoral. Here, Osman shouts in pain and Meryem speaks of taking him to a hospital, but Veli ignores his son's illness. Meryem's dilemma of reading her social environment would be challenged by this initial disagreement.

The classic sexist dichotomy which associates femininity with the interior and masculinity with the exterior perfectly fits within the narrative. Women are working inside of the home and men are dealing with the money economy in the city. In one scene, Hacı İlyas explains economic conditions in the center, where one can earn almost five times as much as one can in his suburb neighborhood, which is filled with all sorts of immigrants. His aspiration for a better life necessitates to embody a calculative mind which is already characterized by exchange of things in the name of profit. According to Simmel, this is one of the important signs where individuals in capitalist city life lose their subjective meanings with a mode of exchange by being subordinated under an object:

This type of domination usually involves a humiliatingly harsh and unconditional kind of subordination. For, inasmuch as a man is subordinate by virtue of belonging to a thing, he himself psychologically sinks to the category of mere thing. With the necessary reservations, one could say that where law regulates domination, the superordinate belongs in the sphere of objectivity; while, where a thing regulates it, the subordinate does. The condition of the subordinate, therefore, is usually more favorable in the first case and more unfavorable in the second, than in many cases of purely personal subordination.¹¹²

Meanwhile, inside of the house, "grandma embodies the patriarchal tradition"¹¹³ of discrimination against women, keeping two brides inside of the house and valuing superstition over modern medicine. Meryem is warned by the grandma

¹¹² Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 117.

¹¹³ Çöloğlu, D. Ö. (2009). *Bir Üçlemeyi, 'Modern - Geleneksel ve Kadın - Erkek' Karşıtlığında Yeniden Okumak: Gelin, Düğün, Diyet*. Selçuk İletişim, pp. 146.

not to take her son to a hospital, and not to see her neighbor Güler who works at the factory.

Visualizing the scenes taking place in a separate room belonging to *Meryem* and Veli plays a crucial role in the narrative aspect of *The Bride* (1973) in terms of expressing the change in characters' inner feelings. While Meryem is caring for her ill son Osman and fears the heterogeneity of the city, Veli is enchanted with the idea of doing business in the city center. Opportunities in urban context inspire him with the idea of a money economy in contrast to the stable economic conditions in their provincial hometown. Cinematographically, Lütfi Ö. Akad focuses on Meryem's face, showing her anxiety in contrast to Veli's excitement. Meryem's husband ignores her explanation of their son's illness. Instead, Veli speaks of the ways of doing business in the city center. This is one of the signs where the protagonist's subjectivity begins to be challenged by the unfitting actions and priorities of her loved ones.

In the following scene, Osman fades on the street while playing with other children in his neighborhood. Coincidentally, Güler sees him and takes him into her house. Meryem rushes over, and thoughtfully takes Güler's advice to take Osman to a doctor. The grandmother gets mad at Meryem for doing so, murmuring: "Is saying of Mother or the voice of tradition dismissed?" In fact, Meryem does not listen to the grandmother and gets inside of the house. In this picture, the protagonist is dominated by the rule of patriarchy. "The voice of patriarchy is exercised by the grandma who governs the interior of the household."¹¹⁴ Once she is not listened by Meryem, she points out her husband Veli or Hacı Ilyas as the dominator. However, urban context diversifies social relations. Therefore, Meryem questions her social environment.

Lütfi Ö. Akad clearly portrays different the social maps of the characters. For instance, Veli, who is working in the family's small shop, starts to see how social boundaries are blurred in the urban context. He learns tricky of ways of selling alcohol and making extra money from his older brother Hıdır, even though they consider themselves as religious conservatives. The father Hacı Ilyas, whose religious title refers to a person who has successfully finished his pilgrimage duty, turns a blind eye his sons' actions. Hıdır has conflict with people while trying to set up a new business in the city center. He does everything he can to obtain a place for his shop. In the house, the grandmother is the voice of tradition. She remarks on the prestigious name

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 146.

of Sorgunlu Hacı İlyas, who was a respectful tradesman in their hometown. The elder bride silently completes her household tasks. According to Simmel's theory of sociability, individuals must participate in social life with an "art-like" and "play-like" attitude, whose content is characterized by existing social forms:

It is no mere accident of language that all sociability, even the purely spontaneous, if it is to have meaning and stability, lays such great value on form, on good form. For "good form" is mutual self-definition, interaction of the elements, through which a unity is made; and since in sociability the concrete motives bound up with life-goals fall away, so must the pure form, the free-playing, interacting interdependence of individuals stand out so much the more strongly and operate with so much the greater effect. And what joins art with play now appears in the likeness of both to sociability. From the realities of life play draws its great, essential themes: the chase and cunning; the proving of physical and mental powers, the contest and reliance on chance and the favor of forces which one cannot influence.¹¹⁵

In this way, sociability is performed through different channels concerning the members of the family. Here, social boundaries are determined by the rule of patriarchy. When there is a change in their new urban condition, the meaning of change is manipulated by different members of the family in accordance with their hierarchical position in the tradition. This is one of the key plots where the story would be challenged by the protagonist's subjective actions against the family's conservative reactions.

Accordingly, we see Meryem taking her son to a hospital where her inner anxiety, which originates from being in public against her family's prohibition, is materialized with a non-diegetic sound effect in this scene. When she returns home, grandma reports her actions to her husband. Veli wisely says that he gave her permission to visit the hospital. Then, they withdraw into their room and talk about this situation. Here, Veli denies that his son is ill and gets angry with Meryem for her actions. Meryem asks Veli to come with her on Wednesday in order to get the report about Osman's illness. However, Veli rejects this and says that he needs to go to their shop, because Hacı İlyas and Hıdır will be setting up their new business at the same

¹¹⁵ Simmel, G. (1971 [1910]). Sociability. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 127 - 141). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 129.

day. Meryem is left alone. As a result, without asking permission, she goes to the hospital on Wednesday.

Lütfi Ö. Akad depicts urban conditions by not directly showing them throughout the film. We encounter the impressiveness of the city and its vastness through changes in the protagonist's psychology. In the following scene, Meryem goes to the hospital and learns that her son's illness is fatal. Meanwhile, Hıdır and Hacı İlyas rent the shop in the center. Meryem returns home. In the garden, she finds the whole family waiting for her in order to give their good news. However, Meryem cries and reveals the nature of her son's illness. Osman must undergo an operation. Nobody believes her. They deny Osman's illness and the whole family goes to their new work place. The women clean the shop. The men start to work. Everything is in order. In the evening, Hacı İlyas asks Meryem about Osman's illness. He pretends as if he cares for Osman. However, he admits that they cannot afford the money which is needed for the operation. If everything goes well with their new business, they might find the necessary amount of money and accordingly Hacı İlyas could cover Osman's operation. At the moment, the economic well-being of the family is more important than Osman's illness, since the idea is that Osman is a child and there is no need to be worried about him. On the table, Meryem stares at her husband's face. Veli seems to be ashamed of his incapability to act against his father's will. As a result, Meryem's psychology changes with these fluctuations, and she is eventually left alone to deal with her son's health problem.

The next scenes depict the different priorities of the characters. The protagonist tries to find the necessary money for Osman's operation by selling her jewelry. On the other hand, family tries to pay the debt they incurred with their investment in the new shop. This creates a conflict between Meryem and the other family members. She complains about their blindness concerning her son's illness. She confesses this problem to Ibrahim and Güler: "They only care about the new shop. Even in their dreams they live with this place." The couple helps Meryem in order to sell her jewelry. In the evening, we see the family members collect all their money together. The elder bride offers her jewelry to Hacı İlyas. Accordingly, Veli asks Meryem to take her jewelry to his father. At this point, Lütfi Ö. Akad uses non-diegetic sounds in order to increase the dramatic atmosphere resulting from the different wills of the characters. Eventually, Meryem shouts at the faces of the family members: "You! The shop has

made you sick. Osman will die soon. Everywhere is full of dust. No one sees anything except money! You, grandma, your superstition cannot heal my Osman.”



Figure 4.2. A scene from The Bride (1973)

In this scene, Lütfi Ö. Akad highlights the protagonist’s inner tension, which voices the sharp clash between subjective value and economic value stemming from her family’s material priorities in the capitalistic urban context. In Simmel’s theory of value, psychic differences are based on “distance” between subject and object. There are positive and negative forces which shape this dialectical relation. For instance, economic value is determined in the form of exchange through sacrifices, gains, losses, or immediate personal enjoyments. In this example, we see Meryem distance herself from her family members’ perspective:

This distance differentiates the original subjective state of feeling into a desiring subject, anticipating feelings, and counter-posed to him, an object that is now imbued with value; while the distance, on its side, is produced in the economic realm by exchange, that is, by the two-sided operation of barriers, restraint, and self-denial. Economic values thus emerge through the same reciprocity and relativity in which the economic condition of values consists.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Simmel, G. (1971 [1907]). Exchange. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 43 - 70). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 57.

In so doing, Meryem takes Osman into her arms and goes to the garden. Afterwards, Hacı Ilyas, grandma, and other members blame their countryman Ibrahim and Güler. They say that Meryem has changed. Their fellow neighbors poisoned her. In their eyes, guilt is directed at the neighbors: Ibrahim and Güler are the guilty ones. The Hacı Ilyas family would not be wrong in this. The father says: “If they weren’t our countryman, I would have beaten them already. The way they live is against our values.” For Simmel:

We cover our secret awareness of our own responsibility for it by hatred which makes it easy for us to pass all responsibility on to the other.¹¹⁷

In the view of that, we can easily also recall Simmel’s suggestion that if a conflict arises among people who have close bonds, its prospective result will be even more dramatic:

The more we have in common with another as whole person, however, the more easily will our totality be involved in every single relation to him...
...Therefore, if a quarrel arises between persons in such an intimate relationship, it is often so passionately expansive and suggests the schema of the fatal "Not you". Persons tied to one another in this fashion are too accustomed to investing every aspect of their relationship with the totality of their being and feeling not to endow conflict with accents and, as it were, a periphery by virtue of which it far outgrows its occasion and the objective significance of that occasion, and drags the total personalities into it.¹¹⁸

Lütfi Ö. Akad wisely depicts this situation: a person who makes an antagonistic act against the common will of the group, here the family, is more likely to be considered as a “traitor.” The logic works as if the well-being of family is more important than the individual will. Accordingly, individual will must yield to the will of a greater structure. At this point, the will of the Hacı Ilyas family subordinates the will of the protagonist, who wants to prioritize the well-being of her son over material gain from the money economy. And, as Lütfi Ö. Akad implicitly questions, at what price does the Hacı Ilyas family survive in the big city? Could an individual will challenge this structure?

¹¹⁷ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Conflict. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 70 - 96). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 93.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 91–92.

Early the next morning, the family wakes up for the first day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. Meryem begins her chores around the house as if nothing had happened the last evening. In the following scene, we see Meryem, Veli, and Osman going to the Bosphorus. Veli explains that his family is not a bad one. They work, even over the weekends, for the well-being of their family. Yet Meryem mentions about an anecdote about a person who has gold eventually dies because of his hunger. Whatever he touches turns to gold. She is worried about her son's future, since the family only cares for their business. Nevertheless, Meryem sits beside Hacı Ilyas and apologizes for her actions. She offers her savings to the father. Hacı Ilyas takes it and guarantees that in several weeks they will be better off and that he will take care of his grandson's operation. At that moment, the conflict is silenced with the submission of Meryem for the sake of the Hacı Ilyas family's economic well-being.

Lütfi Ö. Akad's cinematography finds its taste within the dramatic structure of the narrative. In *The Bride* (1973), the dramatic nature of the scenario unfolds towards the end of the film. Meanwhile, the protagonist and other characters do their best in order to survive economically in their urban context. Meryem works for the family. The men work at two deli shops. All the while, Osman's illness becomes much more serious. After Ramadan, the family decides to invest more in the new shop, and Meryem's expectation of help for her son is left unfulfilled.



Figure 4.3. A scene from *The Bride* (1973)

Two months later, the Muslim feast of sacrifice begins. Hacı Ilyas buys a sacrificial lamb for the feast. He brings it into the house and tells his grandson Osman the story of Abraham, whose faith is judged in bidding of Isaac. Lütfi Ö. Akad captures this moment by making Osman sit on his grandfather's knees and listen to the story. At the back of the frame, we see Meryem carefully listening to the story as if foreshadowing the prospective tragedy coming towards the end of the film. Once the story is finished, Lütfi Ö. Akad inserts a close-up of the protagonist's face.

Here, we can discern the director's motivation for understanding the psychology of the individual by subtly depicting the protagonist along with her social environment. Social boundaries are very strict. At the same time, they can be overcome through individual acts. Again, Lütfi Ö. Akad poses a greater question: What is going to be the redemption of this individual sacrifice?

Dramatically, Osman feels closeness to the sacrificial lamb. He takes care of it. Meryem looks at them with the utmost care and a deep, implicit fear. Simultaneously, Hıdır and Veli decide to take out a loan in order to expand their business share in the city. On the other hand, day by day, Hacı Ilyas' store brings in a deficit. Meryem takes her son and visits Hacı Ilyas' deli shop in the neighborhood. She just stares at him and says: "I bring him to you, grandpa. Is it going to be our redemption?" Hacı Ilyas has nothing to say. One more time he postpones Osman's operation, since he admits that he has not enough money. As a result, Osman wants to leave with his mother, as if they accept the fact that grandpa would not be able to afford to pay for the operation. Cinematographically, Lütfi Ö. Akad exposes his symbolism by taking Meryem and Osman near a cemetery over the Bosphorus. Osman plays near by the graves and finds a green leaf and gives it to his mother. Meryem seems overly thoughtful and whispers: "I hope you always remain green and healthy my son." Suddenly she cries. Osman says that she is crying because of the fact that he will die soon. Meryem does not want to accept this fact. They talk about their future plans, hoping that during the feast everything will be better. In the evening, Meryem talks with Veli by saying that she has no time to wait. She feels that Osman will die soon. Veli assuages her fears by promising that he will take action soon. They hug each other and exit the frame. Now, we see a sacrificial lamb bound with a rope. It spins around itself as if prospecting the fact that there is no way out for the family's dramatic fate.

The next scene opens with a smooth pan showing the greater area of Istanbul where squatter neighborhoods surround the center. Throughout the film, Lütfi Ö. Akad

intelligently depicts the change in the city via the struggles of immigrant lives, which embody multi-layered factors such as economy, patriarchy, gender relations, individuality, and ethics. In the final plot, the story reaches its peak via the dramatic reactions of the protagonist. In the morning, the men of the family go to a mosque. In the house, the women and children celebrate the feast by kissing each other. This scene is sharply characterized by the embodiment of the patriarchal culture through the women's mimicry. For Simmel, this is how subordination works by an individual involvement:

The believer in authority himself achieves the transformation. He (the subordinate element) participates in a sociological event which requires his spontaneous cooperation.¹¹⁹

Later, the men come back to the house. In the garden, we see Hıdır preparing the knives for the sacrifice of the lamb. Osman and Hıdır's two sons silently watch him. However, they suddenly run away from there to a carnival car in the neighborhood. Osman follows them. Eventually, the illness of Osman causes him to collapse while he is running after the carnival car. Meryem immediately runs after Osman and takes his body from the street and brings him back into the house. Meanwhile, we see Hıdır is interrupted by this incident and he cancels the sacrifice of the lamb. Osman dies and the whole family is saddened by his death. This way, the feast day becomes a day of mourning.

The Bride (1973) embraces a tragic turn in the last scene, where the protagonist comes up against the actions of the family. Meryem gets the knife; she cuts the rope and releases the sacrificial lamb. She says: "Happy feast of sacrifice Hacı Ilyas! You are the grandfather; your sacrificial act reaches your god!" Osman's coffin is carried by the neighbors. The whole family seems to be deeply saddened and ashamed of this tragic end. Meryem shouts the name of Osman. She feels an unimaginable pain for the loss of her son. The sacrificial lamb walks behind the coffin. In the background, we hear a chant related to Abraham's dilemma: "My dear Lord! By myself, I sacrifice him to 'You'!"

Despite her loss, Meryem refuses to yield to the outcome of her tragic fate. She sees Hacı Ilyas going to his workplace in the neighborhood along with the money he has secretly pocketed. She goes after him into the shop. She shouts in Hacı Ilyas' face:

¹¹⁹ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 98-99.

“Osman is dead, my grandfather. I will carefully look after my new baby in order to protect your business. I will sacrifice him too.” Hacı İlyas answers: “It is god who took your son, my dear. It is god’s will. We cannot do anything about it.” Meryem enters a rage at his answer. She wants demands Hacı İlyas return the money she had given him. They fight for a while and the shop is set aflame. Meryem directs her anger to the shop and knocks down all the items in the deli. Fire spreads all over the shop. Accordingly, Hacı İlyas loses all his material possessions. The neighbor Ibrahim sees Meryem and helps her by taking her away.

Hıdır tries to relieve his brother Veli by saying that earning bread is not an easy task. Once you are in it, you need to be strong. He does not want to be in pain over the sacrifice of Osman. Hıdır runs after Ibrahim and threatens him in order to learn where Meryem is. He asks: “Does your way suit with a fellowship?” Ibrahim answers: “I do not understand from the fellowship. I do understand the idea of goodness. We helped her. She found a job in the factory. She does not depend on anybody except herself.” Once the family learns Meryem’s new address, they plan to pursue an honor killing in order to save their familial morality. Hacı İlyas talks with Veli, saying that the honor of the family is above everything. He gives her address to Veli and advises that if he is a true man, he should not hesitate to save their morality.

In the final scene, Veli takes the gun and goes to the factory where Meryem has started to work. They see each other. Meryem approaches Veli sorrowfully. Veli hesitates, looks into her eyes, and he asks, “Is there any position for me in the factory?” There and then, Meryem looks into his face with a hope that they can reunite without losing their individual morality. They hug each other and walk through the gate.

4.2. Düğün / The Wedding (1974)

The Wedding (1974) is the second feature film of Lütfi Ö. Akad’s migration trilogy. In it, the life struggles of immigrants are problematized through the familial tragedies taking place on the periphery of Istanbul. In this film, Lütfi Ö. Akad focuses on the issue of “cannibalism” by delving more deeply into the notion of “greediness” via an individual confrontation in the greater social map of the migration. *The Wedding* (1974) can be considered as a continuation of the first film *The Bride* (1973) in terms of its content. However, the family in *The Wedding* (1974) is less well-off, and therefore their survival in the city becomes much more dramatic. Thus, the protagonist’s social boundaries are more strictly underlined. Consequently, her moves embody more antagonism than is projected in the first film. For Simmel:

Even in the most oppressive and cruel cases of subordination, there is still a considerable measure of personal freedom. We merely do not become aware of it, because its manifestation would entail sacrifices which we usually never think of taking upon ourselves.¹²⁰

Again, similar to Georg Simmel's individuality analysis for the concept of sociation under the form of domination, Lütfi Ö. Akad tries to understand the multi-layered causes of familial sacrifice.

For the narrative aspect, *The Wedding* (1974) begins with a panoramic view of a rural southeastern town, Şanlıurfa, where poverty marks every single household in the area. People desperately wait for commercial activity under the heated light of the Mesopotamian sun. Following this prologue, Lütfi Ö. Akad takes his camera into the streets of Istanbul where trade activities are at their peak. Like a documentary film maker, Lütfi Ö. Akad captures the everyday life of Istanbul, especially economic activities in the city, in order to provide a sufficient background for the immigrant family of *The Wedding* (1974). In contrast to the first film, Lütfi Ö. Akad shows the city's dynamism via the activities of street vendors in the city. He does it so naturally that the family members who appear in the first scene are not discernible from the ordinary people in such documentary footage.

The immigrant family of *The Wedding* (1974) consists of the protagonist and elder sister Zelha, older brothers Halil and Ibrahim, two younger sisters Habibe and Cemile, and one baby brother Yusuf. The family earns its livelihood by engaging in street vendor activities in the city. Their parents have passed away. Therefore, Zelha never married her lover Ferhat. She devotes her life to her family members. They all need to work and contribute to their familial budget. Otherwise, the family has no power to sustain their needs in Istanbul.

In the first scenes, we see the family's integrity, with each person happy with to their roles within the family. At the same time, this is the first sign of the fragile devotedness of the family members, where there is no capital accumulation except their labor power against the harsh economic conditions of the city. This will cause the main conflict in the film. Yet how the different family members overcome the problems will be the determining theme of the narrative.

¹²⁰ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 97-98.

The uncle Bekir, who is an early comer to the city, plays an intermediary role for the family in order to help them adjust to immigrant life in Istanbul. In a scene where the whole family sits around a table, Lütfi Ö. Akad uses his art of depicting the individual along with his/her social environment via the “middle-distance” camera angle. This is one of the crucial points where Lütfi Ö. Akad’s subtle psychologism exposes its motivation. In order to underline this, we need to depict the subversive plots which emerge from the conflictual moves of the protagonist in reaction to changes in her family’s integrity.



Figure 4.4. Lütfi Ö. Akad’s “middle-distance” perspective in The Wedding (1974)

In the next scene, we see Zelha from a point-of-view angle, motivating her brothers to ensure that all members of the family will give their best in order to survive in this city. They are coming from the harsh soils of Mesopotamia. They have to survive in Istanbul with their ultimate labor and honor. From the first moment, we see “the protagonist Zelha being the strongest character in the film despite her unequal social position in a patriarchal family.”¹²¹

The following scene gives us a clue to as to the different motivations of the characters. Habibe’s apprentice lover shows his interest in her in the bazaar; the older brother Halil tries to sell textiles as a street vendor; the younger brother Ibrahim seeks

¹²¹ Çöloğlu, D. Ö. (2009). *Bir Üçlemeyi, 'Modern - Geleneksel ve Kadın - Erkek' Karşıtlığında Yeniden Okumak: Gelin, Düğün, Diyet*. Selçuk İletişim, pp. 145–146.

to expand his food vendor share by buying a motorcycle; the protagonist Zelha helps all of them by working in the home; the uncle Bekir wants to find suitable men/husbands for Zelha's two sisters. In this way, he plans to use them as a means to make extra money through the bride-price they command.

This is one of the initial moments where Lütfi Ö. Akad depicts the degeneration of the money economy in the urban context via an individual manipulative action. According to Simmel's theory of exchange:

That being the case, the isolated economic man, who surely must make certain sacrifices in order to gain certain fruits, behaves exactly like the one who makes exchanges. The only difference is that the party with whom he contracts is not a second free agent, but the natural order and regularity of things, which no more satisfy our desires without a sacrifice on our part than would another person. His calculations of value, in accordance with which he governs his actions, are generally the same as in exchange. For the economic actor as such it is surely quite immaterial whether the substances or labor capacities which he possesses are sunk into the ground or given to another man, if what he gains from the sacrifice is exactly the same in both cases.¹²²

Similar to Simmel, we see here an immigrated family, whose members have no means of surviving in a city, turn a blind eye to their ethical existential backgrounds and use each other as a mere means of exchange through the manipulative offers of the uncle Bekir. In addition to those characters, we see the youngest brother Yusuf as a hope for the family, since he is the only person who pursues his education. The whole family imagines that he will have a bright future. However, the price of survival in the city will also affect his future towards end of the film.

Until this point, the family members within their social boundaries give us a happy picture, but their happiness is interrupted by the uncle who brings a suitable husband candidate for the sister Cemile. However, he does not do so openly. Bekir conceals his motivation, saying that the man he brings as a guest is a fellow man from their hometown. There is no need to run away from him. Meanwhile, we see the family's crucial dilemma: They desperately need money to buy a motorcycle in order to increase their business share in the city, since they are latecomers and have nothing to rely on except for their labor power.

¹²² Simmel, G. (1971 [1907]). Exchange. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 43 - 70). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp 46.

The scene becomes dramatic with the confession of Bekir, who wants Cemile to marry the guest. The elder sister Zelha directly asks: “Is he a good man?” The uncle replies: “If a man stands on his feet, he is a good man. No need to question it.” Zelha answers: “You equate goodness with money! We have no money. Are we bad? I do not consent to this marriage. I do not give you Cemile as a means for your benefit.” She says: “We are poor at the moment. If you marry a weak person, you can subordinate her according to your greediness. Therefore, I am against this idea of marriage.” The protagonist’s sisters Habibe and Cemile empathize with their elder sister Zelha, who had previously sacrificed her own chance of marrying her fiancé in order to be able to look after her sister and brothers after their parents passed away. However, the same empathy is not seen in the brothers, who start to dream about the bride-price that will come from Cemile’s prospective marriage. Georg Simmel explains how the domination of a group over subordinated subjects works, and how this creates a manipulating power:

By acting “authoritatively,” the quantity of his significance is transformed into a new quality; it assumes for his environment the physical state—metaphorically speaking—of objectivity. But the same result, authority, may be attained in the opposite direction. A super-individual power—state, church, school, family or military organizations—clothes a person with a reputation, a dignity, a power of ultimate decision, which would never flow from his individuality. It is the nature of an authoritative person to make decisions with a certainty and automatic recognition which logically pertain only to impersonal, objective axioms and deductions.¹²³

In this scene, the women understand each other better than the men do. Nonetheless, the men of the family yield their relatively strong position in their patriarchal family. They turn a blind eye to the well-being of their sisters. Accordingly, they want to use them as a mere means of exchange. At this point, Lütfi Ö. Akad introduces the metaphor of the tale of the prophet Joseph in order to conceptualize the meaning of the acts of brothers Halil and Ibrahim, who propose that Cemile marry their countryman. According to the tale, the prophet Joseph was betrayed by his brothers in order to make a profit from his flesh. Even though Joseph knew his brothers’ motivations, he remained silent and resigned himself to his fate. Therefore,

¹²³ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 98–99.

he tried to struggle against his new life's outcomes all alone. Fortunately, he received his reward in the future.

Cinematographically, we see this legend from the perspective of the protagonist. The camera makes a close up to the face of Zelha. She listens to the story within utmost care. Her anxiety can be read from her changing facial expressions. Accordingly, we must ask: Is she trying to decide on her sister's future? What is her dilemma concerning the tale of Joseph? What would be the solution for this story? How does the family expose itself within their changing life struggles? Lütfi Ö. Akad offers his answer towards the end of the film. Now, we must enrich the story by describing the conflictual relations among the different characters.



Figure 4.5. A scene from *The Wedding* (1974)

Zelha and Halil talk about prospective marriage of Cemile. Halil seems okay with the idea of marriage, since he thinks that sooner or later she will be married to someone. If she marries this man, they will get the bride-price. Zelha objects to this idea. She does not want her baby sister sacrificing her life for the well-being of their family. She feels a responsibility. Simultaneously, we see her lover Ferhat finding Zelha in Istanbul. The conversation between the two works for the protagonist as a metaphor in order to understand the people around her. In the view of that, Lütfi Ö. Akad's self-reflexive technique reveals itself through the contemplation of the protagonist concerning her subjectivity and the phenomena in her social environment.

The brothers decide on Cemile's prospective marriage. She marries her compatriot. The family gets the bride-price. In the next scene, we see Ibrahim buying his dream motorcycle in order to expand his vendor job. The family seems enthusiastic about their future, except for the elder sister Zelha. A smooth close-up of the protagonist's face invites us to read her psychology. On the other hand, Halil names his motorcycle vendor "trivet," which symbolizes the lives of his two sisters and baby brother: Cemile, Habibe, and Yusuf. As Lütfi Ö. Akad captures the inner tensions of the protagonist by oscillating both inside and outside of her family, in *The Wedding* (1974) we see Zelha carefully listening to her brothers' business talks in the garden, at the edge of the frame yet as an observer of the locus of the content. When the brothers end their conversation, the camera approaches to Zelha and captures her thoughtfulness.

In the next scene, Zelha visits Cemile's new house. Her husband makes Cemile work in a cleaning business. Zelha is discontented with this situation. She wants her sister back. However, Cemile's life has already changed and no one can now interfere in it.

In the following scene, Ferhat finds Zelha. He moves to Istanbul in order to be with his Zelha. They sit together in a café and talk about the events in their lives. Ferhat says: "People get used to sponging off each other, therefore there is no way out. Whoever does this, it means that they eat human flesh. Your brothers have already eaten your sister Cemile's flesh. Maybe the next is yours, or Habibe's, Yusuf's, or maybe Ibrahim's. Whoever strong is, s/he can survive here." Zelha does not want to believe this idea, but Lütfi Ö. Akad shows the main motivation of the film through the "metaphor of cannibalism."¹²⁴

In the next scene, we see the protagonist's harangue which finally interprets the tale of Joseph through Cemile's marriage, which reduces her being to a mere bride-price. In Simmel's phenomenological inquiry, rather than the social form itself, it is how it is interpreted by individuals that plays the central role. This is the dual role of the subjects who give the ultimate meaning to a sociological event. Here, we see an active subjectivity who interprets her social environment from her own ethical standpoint. In other words, Zelha tries to search for her authentic being by constantly

¹²⁴ Kayalı, K. (1989). *Lütfi Akad Sineması Yararlanılmamış Engin Bir Kaynaktır*. Bilim ve Sanat Dergisi, pp. 29.

questioning her social boundaries along with her immediate experience of social life in an urban context. For Simmel:

All of us are fragments, not only of general man, but also of ourselves. We are outlines not only of the types “man,” “good,” “bad,” and the like but also of the individuality and uniqueness of ourselves.¹²⁵

This is one of the parallelisms between Lütfi Ö. Akad’s self-reflexive perspective in cinema and with Simmel’s phenomenological approach. The individual is always both a cause and an effect of the greater social structures, where the inevitability of life unfolds through relations of form and content.

The following scene remarkably depicts the austerity of immigrant lives in Istanbul, where the idea of going back has already been forgotten. The brothers try to secure a vendor place in the city center. However, vendors who arrive before they do want Halil and Ibrahim to go elsewhere, and they get into a fight. Ibrahim stabs on the vendor, and then they run back home. For the sake of their family’s livelihood, the brother Yusuf takes responsibility and tells to police that it was he who stabbed the vendor. Yusuf, as the youngest member of the family, pays the bitter price of the fight. Lütfi Ö. Akad wisely picturizes this inevitable fate of immigrant lives by leaving us with greater questions: At what price do people survive in the money economy? What makes a human being a good or a bad person? Where lies the notion of responsibility in this complicated problem? What is the role of an individual against the dominant social forms?

In the narrative of *The Wedding* (1974), the trivet of metaphorical cannibalism eventually directs its attention towards life of Habibe. The countryman Cabbar brings new business opportunities to the family. He is an old lonely man who cares only for money. His intention is to marry Habibe. Meanwhile, Habibe’s apprentice-lover Zeki wants to marry her. They love each other. He asks for the permission of her older brother Halil. Halil does not initially accept the idea of marriage, since his motive has already converted into that of a calculative mind. Halil wants his sister to marry Cabbar, since he could pay a larger bride-price. Zelha’s nightmares come true one by one. Halil manipulates his hierarchical position in the patriarchy. Zelha’s initiative to prevent this marriage seems to fail. Overnight, Zeki hears about the bad news

¹²⁵ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). How is Society Possible? In D. L. Levin, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 6 - 23). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 10.

concerning his prospective marriage with Habibe. As a result, he goes to house of Habibe in order to confront the older brother Halil.

At this point, the pinnacle question of *The Wedding* (1974) unfolds from the mouth of Zeki: “I am a good person, my elder sister Zelha. You are good too. So is our brother Halil. We are all good people. If this is so, why do we endure this greediness? What is all about?” he shouts. Then he is taken away from the house. The frame closes up to the protagonist Zelha. She seems to know all the answer for this greediness now.



Figure 4.6. A scene from *The Wedding* (1974)

In Lütü Ö. Akad’s account, people can compose great novels via cinema or lyrical poems and even short stories. Cinema is a rich and inclusive medium which carries a great potential in its nature to make us discover the notion of “human” via its audio-visual means. In cinema, as Simmel puts it, for the mission of artists, a notion can be discussed via artistic mediums without losing its deeper content. Consequently, the artist is the one who is able to expand a notion by discovering new ontological grounds for the problem. Therefore, Lütü Ö. Akad’s position in *The Wedding* (1974) is similar to bringing new insights on the structural problems of Turkish society, where concepts of individuality, communality, tradition, patriarchy, gender, class, and ethics are intertwined with each other.

The Wedding (1974) ends with a tragic turn for the protagonist. Zelha objects to the marriage of Habibe to her older compatriot Cabbar. Cabbar stabs Zelha in

revenge for her antagonistic action during the wedding. However, like an Antigone, the protagonist dares to confront the upside-down moral values of her family. As an elder sister, she embraces her sister Habibe's individuality, and therefore her freedom. This final act breaks down the biases of the other brothers. Ibrahim joins her confrontation, together with Cemile, Yusuf, and Habibe. In this way, the family reunites again. Sacrificing herself, the elder sister Zelha redeems the family's integrity.

In many films, Lütfi Ö. Akad leaves his characters empty scenes in order to reveal their psychological dilemma in the face of characters' life struggles. He does this so subtly that people are prone to categorize his films as social realist in nature. It is true that Lütfi Ö. Akad made social realist films. Nonetheless, I argue that it is hard to categorize his approach only with this dualistic notion. Accordingly, this thesis aims to search for Lütfi Ö. Akad's implicit psychologism via the tragic natures of these migration films. In the view of this aim, *The Wedding* (1974) serves as a sharpened example of how the notion of the individual supersedes the will of the biased patriarchy in the trilogy.

4.3. Diyet / Blood Money (1975)

In *Blood Money* (1975), Lütfi Ö. Akad shoulders a double mission: delineating the process of acquiring class consciousness through an individual subjectivity which is already disguised by the various social forms and economic structures in an urban context. In other words, Lütfi Ö. Akad tries to understand the notion of "human"¹²⁶ in the greater context of the capitalist mode of production from an individual standpoint. Rather than following a Marxist path, the director tries to question the class consciousness problem, including the multi-layered burdens of an individual subjectivity challenged by the various social forms and disguises in an urban context.

Similarly to the first two films, Lütfi Ö. Akad enriches his approach to the problem of subjectivity through the various social forms of sociability, subordination, exchange, and domination via the protagonist's confrontation of difficulties that arising from the different social-economic structures and individual wills. Coherently within the trilogy, the protagonist derives her consciousness from her life experience, where "anecdotes" become crucial signs in order to interpret the world around her. In the view of this, the phenomenological approach of Simmel— which considers

¹²⁶ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütfi Ö. Akad*. Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 127.

individuals as the locus of change in terms of value—will help us to delineate the subjective tendencies in the cinematography of Lütfi Ö. Akad.

Blood Money (1975) begins with footage of a steel factory where the protagonist Hacer earns her living. We see an unfortunate accident that is caused by a dysfunctional machine in the factory. The foreman Bilal explains the reason: “That’s how God’s will works!” From the very beginning, we can discern the ways the story will develop during the film. Similar to the reactions of Hacı Ilyas in *The Bride* (1973), we see how people manipulate their power positions in their social hierarchy.



Figure 4.7. A scene from *Blood Money* (1975)

Hacer, the protagonist, lives together with her father and two children as an immigrant factory worker in a squatter section of Istanbul. Her husband left her two years previously, and she thus learned to rely only upon herself and her rural character. As Lütfi Ö. Akad puts it, “Having a rural confidence that taking less but concrete moves.”¹²⁷ Mustafa, who is paralyzed by the dysfunctional machine, is replaced by Hasan, who also comes from a rural background. Hasan managed to obtain the position in the factory through the help of his network and his countryman Bilal. On the other hand, we see Bilal playing an intermediary role between workers and the factory owners. He prepares suitable grounds for the exploitation of labor through familial disguises and patriarchal obligations. Here, Lütfi Ö. Akad picturizes the protagonist as

¹²⁷ Akad, L. (2004). *Işıklı Karanlık Arasında*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 571.

a silent figure who tries to understand what is going on in her social environment. Even in the first scene where Bilal consoles Mustafa's wife after the accident, Hacer is positioned on the left side of the frame while she looks at his face, as if admitting that there is something wrong with Bilal's attitude. We shall inquire further into the protagonist's individual moves as the story develops.

The main conflict in *Blood Money* (1975) stems from the acts of two opposing groups: on one side is a group of workers who are connected to a labor union and are therefore seeking their rights through resistance strategies; on the other side are the capital owners who are seeking to maximize their profit with an opportunistic attitude. The foreman Bilal embodies the power of the capitalist side, even though he is also a blue-color worker. Moreover, he becomes a useful tool in order to prevent class integrity, which inevitably requires more engagement from the free laborers. At this point, we see this struggle from the perspective of the protagonist Hacer and her lover Hasan, in which various social forms such as gender relations, patriarchy, and being an immigrant in an urban setting all play a key role. Changes in their subjectivities will determine the "value" in the urban context.

In the next scene, we see three workers from the union asking to see the owner of the factory. They argue that the machine which caused the accident must be replaced with a new one. However, their boss Salim rejects this request. His first motive is to secure his profit. The worker asks: "How much is the life of a worker worth, boss?" *Salim* silences the other workers with a small amount of money—namely, with blood money.

Meanwhile, the prospective lover Hasan gets the job in the factory with the help of Bilal, who offers him this job as if he were a boss, granting it out of generosity. The immigrant Hasan accepts this job with great gratitude and becomes even more biased against the exploitative ways of the capitalists. In *Blood Money* (1975), Lütü Ö. Akad's main motive is to understand the "inner self and redemption of immigrant workers"¹²⁸ in conjunction with their vulnerable social conditions, which are exemplified in Hacer and Hasan's life struggles in the city. Accordingly, Hasan becomes the person responsible for the dysfunctional machine in the factory.

Throughout the film, we see co-workers try to convince Hacer to join the labor union. In the beginning, Hacer refuses their offer, since what she knows from her rural

¹²⁸ Onaran, A. Ş. (2013). *Lütü Ö. Akad*. Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, pp. 133.

values is that “one should not control the horse if s/he does not know anything about it.” Hacer faces many problems in her life. Since she immigrated to Istanbul two years ago, her husband left her alone with her two children and one jobless father. She needs to look after her family by earning her living with her own labor power. At the same time, she is irritated by the male workers in the factory who are trying to advantage of her loneliness. She must avoid these people, who do not look trustworthy. Coincidentally, she meets Hasan, whose attitudes reflect hesitations similar to those she commonly carries in her life. Hasan is a very poor person, and looks like an orphan who needs someone to take care of him. This creates a sympathy in the eyes of Hacer for her co-worker Hasan. Hasan’s self-confidence increases once he gets the job and develops good relations with Hacer. He also helps Hacer’s father by finding a vendor job for him selling balloons in the streets of Istanbul. The old man accepts this offer, since being in the city without having a proper job undermines his self-esteem. Therefore, he becomes vulnerable in the harsh conditions of the urban context. Hasan says: “In order to struggle with city-people you need to be harsh. You need to step over them. Otherwise, whatever you do, you cannot get anything.”

Day by day Hasan and Hacer grow closer. Hasan confesses his feelings to Hacer by offering her being a hand to each other in Istanbul. Hacer silently agrees to this proposal. In the next scene, we see Mustafa, who was paralyzed in the accident, returning to his house. He lives in a squatter house neighboring Hacer’s. This soon becomes another sign to help Hacer to interpret the true working conditions in the factory. Initially, Hacer believes that one should not rebel against his/her workplace. She values her labor as a generosity of the workplace, which originally stems from the traditional view of the feudal-patriarchal attributes. In the view of that, capitalists make use of the masses’ labor power by getting their consent for the legitimacy of their exploitative actions. For a person who comes from subordinated background, it is even harder to delineate what is just or unjust in this massive manipulation of values. Nonetheless, the father elaborates what the labor union is trying to say with prophet Muhammed’s sayings: “Two is greater than one. Three is greater than two. Four is greater than three. You shall all unite!”

One of the main motivations of Lütfi Ö. Akad’s migration trilogy is to delineate the different layers of the cruel economic conditions in the city, which eventually cause social and cultural problems for individuals who are inevitably bound to the laws of ethics. Therefore, the notion of value becomes a stigmatized phenomenon in order to

draw a coherent picture of change in an urban context. Commonly with these subjective stories, Lütfi Ö. Akad reveals his resistance to the “historical structural problems of Turkish society,”¹²⁹ which have been categorized in the conceptions of modern/traditional, urban/rural, and secularist/conservative. The director tries to harmonize these dualistic categories through tragic immigrant stories.

In the next episode, we see the capitalist Salim offering some presents to the workers who are embodying the exploitative conditions in factory with their full consent. Bilal as an authority figure who is above other workers never forgets to remind them that they have jobs because of the generosity of Salim, not because of their own labor power. This idea carries a great parallelism with Georg Simmel’s ways of manipulation in objectified modern societies:

This harshness and lack of consideration is by no means the same as the cruelty which individuals may commit for its own sake; but rather it is a wholly consistent objectivity. In a similar fashion, the brutality of a man purely motivated by monetary considerations and acting, to this extent, on the same axiom of greatest advantage and least sacrifice, often does not appear to him at all as a moral delinquency, since he is aware only of a rigorously logical behavior, which draws the objective consequences of the situation.¹³⁰

Accordingly, Hasan is one of those who accept Hassan’s offerings. He accepts it because in short term he can get a large amount of money. In addition, he hopes that only with these subsidies he can build a future together with Hacer. Otherwise, he is a poor man and he can never think about his own future. The domination of the money economy and disguised feudal-patriarchal relations will create a deep clash between Hacer and Hasan towards the end of the film.

In the next scene, Hacer goes to see that dysfunctional machine in the factory as if she foresees an inevitable end waiting for her lover in the future. She fears for her fate, and therefore her psychology subtly starts to change with this visualization. Hasan takes Hacer to an empty suburb area which is to be the place for their new squatter house. Hasan becomes a secret informant responsible to his boss in order to reveal workers’ political positions and whether or not they are involved in union activities.

¹²⁹ Kayalı, K. (1989). *Lütfi Akad Sineması Yararlanılmamış Engin Bir Kaynaktır*. Bilim ve Sanat Dergisi, pp. 30–31.

¹³⁰ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 109–110.

However, he cannot explicitly say this to Hacer. Rather, he lies, saying that Salim helps those of his workers who are soon to marry. Hacer does not accept Hasan's lies, but she wants to believe in him in order to be able to establish a future.

In the following scene, the boss Salim wants to make workers work overtime during the evenings. The union wants their necessary overtime payments according to the law, but the majority accepts working for their normal wage. In fact, Hasan shouts in the faces of his fellow workers: "I do not share my portion with anyone. I can work in this dysfunctional machine." Then, he looks at Hacer's face with enthusiasm. Nonetheless, Hacer seems worried about the situation. The camera makes a close-up of her face, and we therefore empathize with her inner tension.



Figure 4.8. A scene from Blood Money (1975)

In another scene, we see the couple going on a picnic together with Hacer's two children. Hasan becomes much closer to the children. They begin to plan their future together, full of hope. Hasan carries the children on his shoulders and looks fondly upon Hacer's face. Hacer cries softly with this happy picture. The closer their relation is, the clearer are the barriers in front of the truth. As we realize towards the end of the film, Hacer's closeness will allow her to "distance" herself from the tragic event which is caused by the conflictual attitude of the protagonist towards the idea of class consciousness.

Hacer's father Yunus passes away before the marriage. Hasan remains the only person with whom Hacer could live afterwards. They become even more hard-working after her father's death. They need to establish their own lives. However, this also accelerates the inevitable end waiting for them at the end of film. Hacer becomes more critical about the exploitation of their labor in the factory. The effort they put into their work does not cover their needs. Neither it is suitable for Hacer's sober values. Working like a machine makes them greedy. Mustafa lost his legs because of this. She fears that Hasan will experience the same fate. She cares for Hasan, and therefore does not hesitate any longer to join the side of the workers union.

Finally, Hacer joins the union without mentioning it to her husband Hasan. She tries to understand what those people try to do. Every morning, she sees Mustafa, who was paralyzed because of the accident. Hasan works at the same machine, and therefore she fears losing him. She also understands better her father's anecdote from the prophet Muhammad: "Togetherness brings goodness." Hasan learns about her move. He is angered and offended. He interprets Hacer's action as a disgrace to his manhood. Accordingly, they have a short quarrel. Hasan hits Hacer in her face. The camera shows the empty wheelchair of the neighbor Mustafa, who has been signaling the tragic end of *Blood Money* (1975). The protagonist subjectivity establishes her "value" via these anecdotes in the constant nature of change. For Simmel:

When we are attracted and at the same time repelled by things; when nobler and baser character traits seem mixed in a given action; when our feeling for a particular person is composed of respect and friendship or of fatherly, motherly, and erotic impulses, or of ethical and aesthetic valuations-then certainly these phenomena in themselves, as real psychological processes, are often homogeneous. Only we cannot designate them directly. For this reason, by means of various analogies, antecedent motives, external consequences, we make them into a concert of several psychological elements.¹³¹

In the last scene, all the workers get together in the garden of the factory. The boss wants to see which are affiliated with the union and which are not. Here, Hasan and Hacer's ways separate. Hasan goes to other side and Hacer stands together with the people from the union. In fact, she hesitates several times. However, when she

¹³¹ Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Conflict. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 70 - 96). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 77 – 78.

looks at Mustafa's face and his wheelchair she makes her final decision. She gets her class consciousness.



Figure 4.9. A scene from *Blood Money* (1975)

Lütfi Ö. Akad's repeated question appears one more time in the ending scene: At what price can one survive in the sea of people—namely, in the money economy—of Istanbul? Hasan loses his arm in a tragic accident at the end of the film. Hacer hears his scream and comes running in to find him lying on the ground. She picks up Hasan's severed arm and throws it in the faces of the capitalists. She shouts: "Take your redemption! Who is going to give our blood money now? Who?" She gets a sledgehammer in order to destroy the dysfunctional machine, but she stops there and says: "This machine is not the cause!" Then, she walks towards the foreman and the other workers: "You are not guilty. Neither are you. We are guilty!" She looks at the camera and repeats her sayings: "We are guilty! We are guilty!"

Lütfi Ö. Akad's standpoint in *Blood Money* (1975) directs the ultimate cause of false consciousness to the individual itself. There is a multiplicity of reasons why individuals are manipulated by the capitalist mode of production in the urban context. However, individuals can create their own ways of dealing with the uneven structure of social/economic life, even though they are unable to see those disguises initially. Individuals are both a cause and an effect of their society. The important thing is to discover the multi-layered factors in this sociation process. For Simmel:

We are dealing here with differences which not only are psychologically of the greatest delicacy, but whose boundaries are also constantly blurred in practice. Yet this mixture of motivations in which psychic reality moves, makes it all the more urgent that it be isolated analytically. Whether society and individual confront one another like two powers and the individual's subordination is effected by society through energy which seems to flow from an uninterrupted source and constantly seems to renew itself; or whether this energy changes into a psychological impulse in the very individual who considers himself a social being and, therefore, fights and suppresses those of his impulses that lean toward his "egoistic" part; or whether the-ought, which man finds above himself as an actuality as objective as Being, is merely filled with the content of societal life conditions—these are constellations which only begin to exhaust the kinds of individual subordination to the group. In them, the three powers which fill historical life—society, individual, and objectivity—become norm-giving, in this order. But they do so in such a way that each of them absorbs the social content, the quantity of super-ordination of society over the individual; in a specific manner, each of them forms and presents the power, the will, and the necessities of society.¹³²

Through Simmelian subjectivity analysis along with Lütfi Ö. Akad's delineating cinema techniques, we can bring new insights in order to understand certain problems such as individuality, communality, manipulation of values, and ethics from a broader perspective.

¹³² Simmel, G. (1971 [1908]). Domination. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 96 - 121). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 119 – 120.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1. Tragedy of Culture

Georg Simmel's analysis of "form and content"¹³³ finds its auxiliary meaning in the conceptions of "Life is more-life" and "Life is more-than-life" which are the outcomes of his enduring interest in describing the constant nature of change in human experience. For Simmel, each social process that is driven by individual preferences finds its concrete corpus in the shape of social forms and their eternally changing natures. Hypothetically, "forms" are the only vehicles for one's own self-expression, which is internally bound to the social and non-social elements of one's individual existence, and which also characterizes the realm of "content" in this dialectical relation. This is similar to the notion of "Yin and Yang" in Chinese thought, which explains the fact that seemingly opposite or contrary forces are actually interconnected or even complementary to each other. Consequently, Simmel's philosophical anthropology, which is based on "form and content" relations, aims to explain basic disguises in the psychologically and socially characterized life processes of human beings.

On the other hand, Simmel's evolutionary inquiry argues that once individuals create certain forms such as language, music, art, money, religion, kinship, or gender roles in order to interact with their social environment, these forms immediately begin to develop their own internal logic, which eventually sustains them beyond any individual inclinations. For that reason, such things as languages, the money economy, familial relations, superstitions, or gender relations that are initially caused by individual needs come to embrace further meanings in the greater process of social interaction. This is the "Life is more-life" concept of Simmel, which admits the never-ending creative character of the human experience.

Intellectual life cannot but present itself in forms: whether words or deeds, pictures or any sort of contents in which psychic energy currently realizes

¹³³ Simmel, G. (1971 [1918]). The Transcendent Character of Life. In D. N. Levine, *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 373 – 374.

itself. But these forms enjoy in the very moment of their emergence an objective significance of their own, a fixity and inner logic, with which they confront the life which created them. The latter is a restless flux that not only streams beyond this and that definite form, but overflows every form because it is form. Because of this contrast in essence, life cannot lose itself in form. The achievement of every structure is at once a signal to seek out another one, in which the play—necessary structure, and necessary dissatisfaction with the structure as such—is repeated. As life needs form; as life, it needs more than the form.¹³⁴

In view of this, society and its complementary forms become our inevitable spaces for developing our individual meanings. We can only grasp our horizontal maps in order to interpret the world around us as long as we can follow certain paths in this sociation process. However, nature is bound to the law of “time and space,” which eventually describes the finite attributes of human experience.

We are constantly in the process of becoming. We fix forms in order to understand the world around us. Then, we yield to those fixations that have already become our meanings, which causally force their own internal logic upon our individual subjectivities. Here is where the concept of change appears. Every generation has to understand the world by forgetting and remembering, gaining and losing, and creating and destroying their social forms, which go hand in hand with their individual meanings. This is the “Life is more-than-life” concept of Simmel, which speaks to the tragic character of human life that eternally seeks both the development and destruction of its own fate:

The fact that our ideas and cognitions, our values and judgments stand completely apart from the creative life in their meaning, their objective intelligibility and historical effectiveness—exactly this is the characteristic of human life. Just as transcending its current, limiting form within the plane of life itself constitutes more-life, which is nevertheless the immediate, inescapable essence of life itself, so does transcendence into the level of objective content, of meaning that is logically autonomous and no longer vital, constitute the more-than-a-life, inseparable from life, and the very essence of mental life.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 370.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 371.

For Simmel, the “wish to create” or “will to power” is inherent to human life, which ceaselessly moves through the circle of “birth and death.” Like the story of Frankenstein exemplifies the calamitous defeat of human desire against the law of nature, every individual attempt is bound to the law of “gain and loss” in its eternal circle.

Life can manifest itself only in particular forms; yet, owing to its essential restlessness, life constantly struggles against its own products, which have become fixed and do not move along with it. This process manifests itself as the displacement of an old form by a new one. This constant change in the content of culture, even of whole cultural styles, is the sign of the infinite fruitfulness of life. At the same time, it marks the deep contradiction between life's eternal flux and the objective validity and authenticity of the forms through which it proceeds. It moves constantly between death and resurrection between resurrection and death.¹³⁶

By the same token, Lütfi Ö. Akad's magnum opus trilogy of migration is developed around the basic question: “What is the price of change?” All together, *The Bride* (1973), *The Wedding* (1974), and *Blood Money* (1975) carry a tragic nature which eventually invites audiences to delineate the complicated social-economic structures his characters have to live with. At this juncture, Lütfi Ö. Akad's meticulous development of the psychology of the characters and picturing them together with their social environment from a realist outlook creates a crucial impact. Each film moves towards a dramatic finish, one that ultimately determines the overall taste of the films, through the protagonist's life actions.

In so doing, Lütfi Ö. Akad's migration trilogy raises further questions related to the greater social/economic problems of Turkish society: “What is the meaning of being an individual or a part of a community in a constantly changing urban environment?”; “What is the role of social forms such as religion, state, family, or patriarchy in disguising the unfortunate facts that have already been silenced by and from the individuals?”; “How can individuals take the initiative in those unending silencing/forgetting politics which stem from manipulation of the social forms by various actors?”; “What can be the role of ethics in the complex collapse of morality in the current money economy?”; “Why has Turkey always experienced

¹³⁶ Simmel, G. (1971 [1918]). *The Conflict in Modern Culture*. In D. N. Levine, *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 376.

dramatic/tragic events, which have been exercised by the different social and political groups throughout its history, yet at the same time, they have never been reached at a confrontational/reconciling point?"; "What are the prices of those social and economic changes that have been taking place in Turkey, and in actuality who has been paying for them?"

Lütfi Ö. Akad's overall filmography reflects a consistent passion for understanding the individual together with his/her social environment. Therefore, his films can be considered as having a subtle psychologism which eventually seeks to interpret the world from an intersubjective perspective that never discounts social factors and which leads his characters towards a dramatic fate.

This way, I can argue that his protagonists are individually strong enough to embrace their life actions even though they move to a tragic end. "Socially trapped-man/woman"¹³⁷ protagonists like Aliye in *Vurun Kahpeye* (1948), Nazım in *Kanun Namına* (1952), Güner in *Yalnızlar Rıhtımı* (1959), Hacer in *Üç Tekerekli Bisiklet* (1962), Hıdır in *Hudutların Kanunu* (1966), Mustafa in *Kurbanlık Katil* (1967), Sabiha in *Vesikalı Yarım* (1968), Ali in *Yaralı Kurt* (1972), Tosun Bey in *Ferman* (1975) together with Meryem in *The Bride* (1973), Zelha in *The Wedding* (1974) and Hacer in *Blood Money* (1975) bravely combine those individual attributes in order to confront the results of their social actions in conjunction with their ethical dilemmas.

Similarly, in Simmel, sociability is a notion which provides a legitimate end in itself. Individuals must not become narrow means for each other. On the contrary, every participant does make the notion of sociability possible via their own self-reflective subjectivities by playing the "art-like" and "play-like" forms of social life itself. In this way, Simmel brings the question of ethics into the picture:

The great problems placed before these forces are that the individual has to fit himself into a whole system and live for it: that, however, out of this system values and enhancement must flow back to him, that the life of the individual is but a means for the ends of the whole, the life of the whole but an instrument for the purposes of the individual. Sociability carries the seriousness, indeed the frequent tragedy of these requirements, over into its shadow world, in which there is no friction, because shadows cannot impinge upon one another.

¹³⁷ Algan, N. (2005). *Türkiye'nin Görsel Belleğinde Bir Öncü ve Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad*. In A. Kanbur, Sadeliğin Derinliğinde Bir Usta: Lütfi Akad (pp. 23 - 53). Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları & Ankara Sinema Derneği, pp. 36.

If it is, further, the ethical task of association to make the coming together and the separation of its elements an exact and just expression of their inner relations, determined by the wholeness of their lives, so within sociability this freedom and adequacy are freed of their concrete and substantively deeper limitations; the manner in which groups form and break up at parties, and conversation spins itself out, deepens, loosens, cuts itself off purely according to impulse and opportunity-that is a miniature picture of the social ideal that one might call the freedom of bondage. If all association and separation shall be the strictly appropriate representation of inner realities, so are the latter here fallen by the way, and only the former phenomenon is left, whose play, obedient to its own laws, whose closed charm, represents aesthetically that moderation which the seriousness of realities otherwise demands of its ethical decisions.¹³⁸

Lütfi Ö. Akad, via his narrative technique and subversive characters, has always stood as a unique voice in Turkish cinema by including various social, political, economic, historical, and individual contents of life by always having a constant desire to learn from the people around, and reflecting upon his own individual experiences. His filmography speaks through his life practices, his contemplations, and the realities of his social environment. In this way, his artwork, which has always been a silent witness to the history of Turkish cinema, can always be open for further questions and interpretations of Turkish intellectual history.

On the other hand, we can argue that Lütfi Ö. Akad's silence and the revolutionary moves in the Turkish film industry could not create a hegemonic influence upon later directors in the "Yeşilçam" tradition. This failure may be due to the fact that the Turkish film industry has always been strictly controlled by state censorship and the fact that "Yeşilçam" producers were required to make desirable profits through melodramas. In this sense, the constructive and at the same time subversive nature of Lütfi Ö. Akad's cinematic art has always stood at the edge of the Turkish film heritage.

In this sense, the social/economic/individual problems which we see in Lütfi Ö. Akad's migration trilogy are still alive in their different derivative forms in contemporary Turkey. In fact, the social and economic stagnation of today makes our

¹³⁸ Simmel, G. (1971 [1910]). Sociability. In G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (pp. 127 - 141). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 137 - 138.

modern institutions even less effective against the destructive nature of social change. People who have been expelled from their lands in order to pursue a better life in other places come across similar dilemmas in their new social environment. Thus, people who have been experiencing a lack of economic stability or who fear for their prospects of developing a sustainable future bring analogous outcomes into our everyday lives, where we can see a great peak in the crystallization of greediness in human interactions.

In view of this, Lütfi Ö. Akad's migration trilogy brings us a multi-layered perspective on the social and economic struggles of people's experience in Istanbul in the early 1970s. This perspective is especially valuable because of its attention to individual psychology, which has always been silenced from the priorities of history readers. On this point, art, particularly cinema, could be one of the greater ways to convey silenced meanings of change by never losing its content into our present lives from its own self-reflexive point of view.

In his last interview, Lütfi Ö. Akad was asked the following question: "As a director, you have always thought about social/political/economic changes of people with an intellectual passion. And, I would like to ask now: What do you think about humanity? How do you see its future? Are you hopeful or not?" The following is Lütfi Ö. Akad's reply:

... You are making me lie about the concept of future. I have no words left to say. I am done with my works and articulations People have always needed to do things and have moved accordingly. In so doing, they needed to embrace the outcomes of their actions Whatever happens now, it belongs to all human beings. People have to accept the results of their actions. Then, they have to take responsibility for them. Each generation has to go through this process. This is neither a hope nor a gloomy outlook that I'm speaking about. This is the tragic fate of humanity, which we are all inevitably bound to face.

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¹³⁹ Akad, L. Ö. (2010, Ağustos). *Lütfi Akad Olmak En Sıkıldığım Şey*. (S. Pehlivanoğlu, Interviewer)

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APPENDIX

The list of full cast and crew of *Gelin / The Bride* (1973), *Düğün / The Wedding* (1974), *Diyet / Blood Money* (1975).

The Bride (1973)

Feature Film, Color, 93 Minutes, Turkish, Turkey

Producer: Hürrem Erman

Director / Writer: Lütfi Ö. Akad

Cinematography: Gani Turanlı

Music: Yalçın Tura

Cast: Hülya Koçyigit (Meryem), Kerem Yılmazer (Veli), Ali Şen (Hacı İlyas), Kahraman Kıral (Osman), Nazan Adalı (Naciye), Kamran Usluer (Hıdır), Aliye Rona (Ana), Seden Kızıltunç (Güler), Günay Güner (Yerköylü İbrahim), Orhan Aydınbaş (Doktor), Yüksel Gözen (Dükkan Satıcısı), Mürüvvet İşsever (Müşteri), Nermin Özses (Müşteri)

The Wedding (1974)

Feature Film, Color, 84 Minutes, Turkish, Turkey

Producer: Hürrem Erman

Director / Writer: Lütfi Ö. Akad

Cinematography: Gani Turanlı

Music: Metin Bükey

Cast: Hülya Koçyigit (Zeliha), Ahmet Mekin (Ferhat), Hülya Şengül (Habibe), Erol Günaydın (İbrahim), Turgut Boralı (Bekir), İlknur Yağız Allıoğulları (Cemile), Kamran Usluer (Halil Ağa), Sırrı Elitaş (Raşit), Altay Günbay (Cabbar), Günay Güner (Cemile'nin Kocası), Ramazan Akboğa (Tütün Satıcısı), Yaşar Şener (Dayı), Ajlan Aktuğ (Zeki'nin Arkadaşı)

Blood Money (1975)

Feature Film, Color, 90 Minutes, Turkish, Turkey

Producer: Hürrem Erman

Director / Writer: Lütfi Ö. Akad

Cinematography: Gani Turanlı

Story: Ömer Seyfettin

Cast: Hülya Koçyigit (Hacer), Hakan Balamir (Hasan), Erol Taş (Bilal Usta), Erol Günaydın (Mevlüt), Güner Sümer (Fabrikatör Salim), Turgut Savaş (Yunus), Yaşar Şener (Muhsin), Osman Alyanak (Börekçi), Günay Güner (Mustafa), Atıf Kaplan (Salim'in Babası), Uğur Kıvılcım (Şerife), Murat Tok (İmam), Ayla Arslancak (İşçi), Giray Alpan (İşçi), Doğan Tamer (İşçi), Ali Demir (İşçi), Erdoğan Seren (İşçi), Nermin Özses (Zehra), Osman Han (İşçi), Mustafa Yavuz (İşçi), Yüksel Gözen (Fabrika Genel Müdürü), Muzaffer Cıvan (Hasan'ın Ağabeyi), Yusuf Çağatay (İşçi), İhsan Bayraktar (İşçi), Gülten Ceylan (Aliye)

