



Interview with Ercan Kesal*

Serdar Öztürk (S.Ö.): Welcome, Mr. Ercan. We are in the Studios of Radio-Television and Cinema Department of Kadir Has University to conduct an interview with Mr. Ercan Kesal for our magazine Sinefilozofi's June issue. We are together on a nice May morning. May I start with my first question? Philosopher Alain Badiou indicates that cinema is a composition with lots of elements like colour, camera movement, camera angle, acting, and montage. Your relations with art or your perspective on life looks as a composition. It seems as if you correlate between irrelevant elements.

Ercan Kesal's relation with life is like a cinematic composition; what is your opinion on this?

Ercan Kesal (E.K.): Yes... Lütfi Akad drew parallels between film-making and cooking. He says that the way how you mix ingredients and its order is important. As you know, he was a good filmmaker, and interestingly somehow - just as many good filmmakers in the 1960s - he didn't come out from the movie sets and had no instructors to teach him. In that period, people

* This interview was conducted on 03.05.2018 at Kadir Has University. You can access the video of the interview from the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVKF4v4yWmc>

Translated by Barışkan Ünal, proofread by Rufat Karımzade and Özer Ozkantar.

like him found themselves in brutal film procedures, so that they had to learn many things. But still, they seemed succeeding to keep as quoted "clean."

Years later after reading *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s early editions, Akad said, "Oh, the French already knew everything about it!" and added, fortunately, I hadn't read them in my early times". So, he means that the requirement of discovering, learning and conducting a lot of things in life and cinema or through hands-on experience on film sets open much more different, strong and long-lasting inspiration doors. Since we started from Mr. Lütfi, maybe I have to finish this topic by giving one more example from him. Before starting preparations for a new movie, he sits on a diet for six months by abstaining himself from any movies he can watch and any screenplay he can read. He totally focuses on his own film process. I said it because his comparison of cooking and movie making is really interesting. Whatever we do, as an actor/actress, or screenwriter, or may be a doctor, or family man, after all, all of these are nothing more than milestones we met during our efforts on the way of our existence. From tomorrow on, I may stop acting or have no film scripts in my life, but it never stops my efforts on meaning, concerns and sorrow regarding my relation with life. From tomorrow on, I may stop acting or have no film scripts in my life but it will never end the worries and sorrow regarding my relation with the life and it will never stop my efforts on a search for the meaning. And in my relationship with the world cinema is a highly precious "instructor" which I noticed early, but got involved lately. I can find many answers to my questions through cinema and I am very satisfied with it. For this reason, if we go back to cooking and film-making comparison, my utter concern, and efforts are to add ingredients in a correct order and time without burning it. This is all I try to do. Of course, finally, I like to add my own flavour to it. That is probably what is called "style."

S.Ö. : Speaking of cooking reminded me of Antonio Gramsci's saying: "Well, everybody can fry an egg but it does not make everybody chefs". Maybe what he wants to emphasize is the differences between professionalization and amateur spirit. By touching to this issue in his book *Representation of Intellectual*, Edward Said points out that full professionalization never means a contribution to an intellectualism. And he underscores the value and importance of creating the amateur spirit. I can see an amateur enthusiasm inside you. This amateur enthusiasm may be advancing and diversifying your cooking art on affirming the life, as you just mentioned. I get an impression that you keep that amateur enthusiasm. In other words, you as Ercan Kesal, have you ever thought whether you have the amateur spirit in you, in your subconscious?

E.K. : You are right. Sometimes you can truly understand what has happened to you once you encounter with something that strikes you. When you are young, that is unlikely. It is the advantage of aging. Due to this, my hunger for the life is an effort to find answers to my *raison d'être*, to a never-ending odd sorrow in my heart. I have recently read Abbas Kiarostami's book. It is an Iranian fairy tale where a man encounters with lion. The man tries to escape and obviously lion starts to chase him. If he is caught, of course the lion will eat him. While running, the man comes to a verge of a cliff. He has two choices. If he jumps over the cliff, he dies and if he went back, the lion would eat him. After deciding to jump, he finds a tree branch

to hold at the edge of the cliff. He relieved and said, "Oh! I'm saved". But, the angry lion was still waiting at the edge. That moment he noticed the branch was about to break in because some two rodents were chewing it. Then, he saw wild strawberries and blackberries nearby. He reached out, picked and ate strawberries.

I believe that we swing between a risk of falling and a fear of being brutally killed by a lion in life. So, my brother, we should eat those strawberries, instead of holding on to the sorrow of life until death! Kiarostami concluded this story by saying "earth's lifespan is longer than your fate". In connection with this conclusion, I guess the story reflects the dilemma of existence and nothingness as well. We usually alternate between two opposite sides of having extreme self-esteem and of not giving any esteem to ourselves. I'm looking for something apart from these two approaches. Because I believe I am so worthy, but at the same time, I am aware of the fact that the earth was here before me; and will be here even after me. So, I should deserve to live in this world and try filling it. Besides, I should deserve the death when the time comes. That means I prefer to be free from the sick belief that imposed us that the postmodern era changes nothing and that we are worthless. I can be so beneficial and precious, and I am a part of this world. However, my brother, since the earth has been here long before me and has created and consumed many civilizations many times, I know this will occur after me, too.

Actually, it is meaningless to give myself so much credit. I want to fill the space between life and death with a big joy. Maybe that means to be an amateur. I can do this sometimes by writing texts, sometimes by witnessing or recreating one's life in front of or behind the camera. In the end, I realized that cinema is nothing more than a recreation of the facts and life.

I know I am belabouring the point but let me elaborate on this. We went to a village where I did my compulsory service in 1984 to shoot the movie *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* in 2009, 25 years later. The story in my book *Evvel Zaman* is a little bit like this. We went to a town rather than a village. 25 years ago, there was a small village clinic where I worked. What I want to say is that 25 years ago, during 2-3 years by spending lots of money and putting huge efforts for the film 70-80-person team tried to portray the events which I witnessed in one night. We recreated that night and what I learned from this film experience is that we cannot live any moment in the same way again. Time is so precious, special, and treasured, moments are so significant.

That is to say, my corpse search journey when I was a young man, 23-24 years old physician, expressed itself in the cinema after 25 years so worthwhile that BBC named it as one of the 100 films in the 21st century. The question is why a young man's rural experience has become as one of the important movies recognized by the world-known cinema "authers". It is something that we can talk on, even as a main topic. Why is English, French, Italian interested in an autopsy story happened in some Keskin State Hospital somewhere in Turkey? So it means that we all have something in common regarding to the problems, sorrows and fates of human beings. As if we are all around the earth's dining table, and we pursue the same questions, the same sentences for thousands of years.

S.Ö. : Your life view has led you to create different artworks. *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* is one of them. You play in TV series such as *The Pit*, as well. These TV series are also one of the most important art genres that develop an organic bond between you and the masses. TV series are in one side and on the other side are films that lead to deep thinking. Does Ercan Kesal see himself as the organic intellectual, who can carry the classes to a high level, regarding to the Gramsci's description on the organic and the traditional intellectual? Could you mind open your world to us as an intellectual?

E.K. : Of course. A couple of days ago, I attended a radio program at *Açık Radio* to talk on the movie *Two Days, One Night* of Dardenne Brothers with Mr. Jack. In the film, the protagonist Sandra has a risk of losing her job. She tries to convince her colleagues until the movie ends. If the colleagues agreed on giving up from 1,000 Euro, it would increase her chance to get back to the job. When I watched the movie again, I have seen that the evil act is not only about doing harm. Doing nothing does not differ from evil. There is no other sentence more selfish than "I do no harm to people" which is reserved, colder and encapsulating the greatest darkness underneath. Actually, good people do evil many times by not stirring a finger against wrongdoings. I believe that the worst act in this world is to stay silent. In other words, isolating yourself and always keeping a distance and border with the world mean you are becoming a part of evil. So, we have no chance than being altruistic for goodness. Avoiding harm, objecting to it or criticizing it is not enough. Instead, I should be there in a favour of those who oppressed and be altruistic. In fact, we cannot be indifferent or alien to any part of life. It is not a political act. If there is a wrongdoing somewhere and I am also there, I am responsible for it my brother. At least, unless I go beyond that and take any steps to change it.

There are two main approaches in the cinema. One is the mainstream cinema; the other one is Arthouse cinema, which we have involved in. The Arthouse is a film genre and place where we feel better and believe as more lasting, and where the philosophy of cinema finds a life. But the Arthouse comes to a point where we cannot make movies gradually due to the fact that it is an expensive job. It is hard to find money and a movie theatre. Even if we overcome these problems, there are no audience of this genre. I think we have been losing our audience. In this case, what we are doing should serve more than just stretching our wounds.

Besides, we witness another movement, a dynamic field. I became a father late, at the age of 47. My son's relation to computers, digital world, cell phone or others seems strange to me but I should follow and understand it. It will be a bad example; I'm an in a bit of shame to share this, however it came to my mind when we spoke of *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*. Just 180-190 thousand audiences watched the movie, however one scene in an episode of *The Pit* clicked on by 7,5 million audiences. One of my lines in a coffee-house in that TV series got 7,5 million watches, lots of comments and people discussed on it. There is a leaning in that direction and I cannot be just a mere spectator.

When they offered me the role at *The Pit*, I first read the script. It was a story of *Godfather* in which has characteristics of Turkey. We all watched *Godfather* many times, right? If it screens on TV this evening, I can watch it again without a second thought, even it means watching the

film 50th or 60th times. Some films have this effect on you. Anyway, in that scenario, they offered me to play the similar/exact role Marlon Brando played in *Godfather*. My brother what delight! What an appetite for an actor! The script was so powerful. I am wondered to see the film set, behind the scene and the acting performances there. I am always curious to get feedback from the audience. I talk with scenarists and producers persistently because I am never a kind of an actor who only plays the role and leaves the sets. I always seek a way to involve in it. Maybe, I am in search of an alternative in our cinema. I wonder whether I may offer new things. For this reason, since from the beginning, I have never considered that I do a bad job. I have learned many things, and it will continue. If we turn back to the Iranian fairy tale, I grab and eat those wild strawberries every time. I am aware that I will fall after a while or lion will brutally kill me, but it has always been that way.

S. Ö. : When listening to your expressions, it looks like your view on philosophy is based on experiencing the life. After all, cinema also is an experience. As you told before somehow your experience of life reinvents itself with in the cinema. Frankly, this view is highly related to our magazine's approach. We believe philosophy was born in the "bazaar" -marketplace. Then, it ascended to the sky by written philosophy, generated ideas in a vicious circle in limited space and once again turned its face to "bazaar" within the cinema in 19th century. Movies, which you played, or wrote their scripts or you watched, swinging between the marketplace - "bazaar" and the most intense thinking areas of intellectualism. I mean they dance like a dancer. Have you ever thought this way? Do you think there is a correlation between cinema and philosophy? If there is, what kind of relation do they have? I wonder your opinion on this issue.

E. K. : Many art fields have relations with philosophy. I think they nourish from each other and then incorporate to each other. This is also something dialectical. I mean there is a cause-effect relation among them. From my perspective, cinema is up front than the other art fields because of its connections with time. None of other art fields is able to hold froze and own the only thing we can never possess-time. Literature, painting cannot possess the time, they can only, as you said, imitate the nature, voice, words, and dreams. On the contrary, cinema does a different thing; it seals the time. And we get a chance to own the time, which we had already lost in life via cinema. For this reason, we highly value the cinema. This is very important characteristic of cinema - the matter of possessing time distinct cinema from other art forms. We need to ponder on this. That is why memory is so important. By withholding and sealing the time, cinema seems to give us the privilege to repeat, face and settle with it again and every time. This is really strange. And, memory is so crucial to continue this whole story, and to be part of it.

You asked about the born of philosophy in the bazaar at the beginning. If we discuss the knowledge and wisdom, I guess it may open new inspiration doors on this question as well. My tutor was my mother. She was an illiterate farmer in a small village. My father graduated from primary school. I always wonder how my mom got such knowledge, wisdom that I have never had. How and where did she get it? Why am I absent from it? I graduated from the college, changed couple of colleges, finished the master and Ph.D., but yet I do not

have it somehow? Where did we cut this strange connection? And how did my mom get it? So, did my grandma. My grandma had Alzheimer in her last days, but my mother always surprised us with her words about life. She held these words in her palms until her last moment and used it whenever needed.

Before she passed away, I finished my whole writings almost with my mother's support. Whenever I couldn't complete my writings, she was telling me how I should finish it. Interestingly, every time my wife or I read my writings to her, she said, "My son, how do you know all about them?" She was not aware that all of my writings are about what I heard from her. I only used different methods while writing them down. We both had the same inspiration sources. The only difference I have apart from my mom is to know how to set up proper sentences. I have learned it from my tutors. There is nothing more. Knowledge comes from mothers, the earth and geography, lands we live. And actually, I should name it as wisdom, not knowledge. What we do is a reproduction of it and mistakenly we are under the assumption that we discover something new from another universe. That is the question. This can be called "academic alienation." That coldness, arrogance may be always stay there. An incomplete, unsophisticated knowledge is garbage for wisdom. I know this is a sharp and angry claim, but I believe it. Maybe, the street is something that leads us to confront with our strange arrogance. Streets often carry a good deal of heavy memory and wisdom behind the scene of that bizarre tranquillity or behind a surface which looks like nothing is going on. We have no choice other than turn back and look at them every time; because this is a collective consciousness. A stone, rock, soil, water has a memory. There is no question on this. A 650-year-old tree has more knowledge than me. Then, a 70-80-year life we attribute to ourselves is nothing more than being arrogant. I try to look at the time-cinema and time-literature relation from this perspective. With this, I can escape from the risk of being surrendered by arrogance.

Whenever I called my mom, almost every time she was answering her dial phone and saying my name like "Ercan, my sweet are you calling?" I was warning her that she should not answer the phone call like that because it can be someone else. But she always responded by saying "I know when you call, it rings differently." We live in an era that we are convinced on that every phone rings the same. For me the story is this. My mom was not odd; she was right; the phone rings differently for each call. She realized that fact, and spots the differences, even if none of us believes this fact in this era. Why don't we do it? What keeps us away from this fact? This isn't about being spiritual; it is about her awareness, deepness that this era gives us no value. We should regain that awareness.

Lale Kabadayı (L.K.): I would like to continue talking about memory. You make use of your experiences a lot as sources, especially for your books. I named this as "whole-fragmented images." I would like to ask how you meet with whole-fragmented images, and how you identify with them in every way, even though both in your films and books, there are dual-characters like in *I am not Him* that you played. They sometimes can be a midwife, grandmother, aunt, or a Peri Gazozu (Fairy Soda). What I get from your book is that as you said before, you consider time as something to what we turn our head, look backwards-forwards and collapse back into the present again, and not something we lost. Therefore, time

in your description is lasting, and although we live in different lives, it seems like my life, as well. Because when I watched *Peri Gazozu*, I cried. Connections with fear of losing his dad, lack of father, relationship with mother and its connection with leaving home and a feeble child not knowing whether there is any future or not. Due to these reasons, your work is not a mechanic production; it is full of art. How do you see yourself from outside, especially in your works in the literature?

E. K. : It is so beautiful to see myself from your description and perspective. If they asked my opinion on *Peri Gazozu*, I couldn't explain it more beautiful than you. Believe me. I didn't start it with high awareness, as you can guess. You learn something through time or on the way. This is valid for my film acting, as well as for my works in literature and for *Peri Gazozu*. When they asked me what kind of movie I would like to shoot, I say movie like *Peri Gazozu*. I would like to be behind the camera with the same reflex, mood and state of mind I had when we shot *Peri Gazozu*. I believe these can lead my journey and me further in a positive way. *Peri Gazozu* coincided with my dad's demise. It was a time I was mourning for my dad and reckoning. The book has some gut-wrenching stories, I know.

But the main issue is that time is not something that is lost, gone or passes by. What makes it precious is the memory. However, we realize it after it passed, and became a memory. Everything happening through the time, or happened in the past, comes and settles in our souls. Since those facts settle in our souls, we always connect with them by invisible bonds, as Tarkovsky said, so, actually there is no past; we only assume it. If they stay in the present, they are not lost or passed by. It is something that stays at present and has prophecies for the future as well.

Now I have realized the importance of using metaphors more than images because cinema and literature tell stories through using metaphors and that is the only way to do it. Remember the "bazaar"; sellers describe a freshness of cucumber through an almond by writing "almond cucumber" on the counter. Once you read, you don't question why words "almond" and "cucumber" are together. You immediately get the sense of cucumber's freshness. I try doing the same in a basic way in the literature. I try depicting issues with the metaphors that we have never noticed or valued while passing by.

The seal which is one of the stories in *Peri Gazozu*, is not an ordinary stamp or ink imprinted on the paper. But when you look at it, it just looks like a strange object. It is on the other hand a courthouse mark on a left arm of a child who was raped or forced to incest. They (the courthouse) seal children's arm and send them back to you. While I was a young doctor I was examining the children, who had the seal on their arm and was listening to their stories. From that moment the seal has not been just a seal for me. I cannot look at it the same way anymore, it started representing something else. Whenever I see a seal, those meanings come to my mind.

L. K. : It became a notion.

E. K. : I think the point where this era makes us sick is here. This era claims, "It is just a seal, that's all". No, in fact, it is not. That's why these strange things were helping me to express my

thoughts with the context of metaphor in my childhood when I was having my first political experiences. And they started to make a certain way to my consciousness, streaming into my mind. So, somehow *Peri Gazozu* turned out this way.

My thoughts are like the litmus paper. After throwing memories into my memory pool, they decompose. It will be metaphoric, but let's explain it with fishing. You cannot catch all kind of fishes with the same fishing line. My metaphors are like a proper fishing rod thrown into my memory pool. That fishing rod, in a metaphoric way, was chosen consciously from the start. It catches its own reminiscences in the memory pool. I presume I will pursue similar journey in cinema, at least I will have behind-the-camera experience in July.

L. K. : Mr. Ercan, time-image concept and cinema, as the Deleuzian approach, identifies cinema with thought by estranging it from metaphors and phenomenon. We talked about the memory shortly before and mentioned that you consider the time as horizontal, not vertical, phenomena which sometimes may lift our heads up. What is your opinion about the view of "auteur" directors on time phenomena in Turkish cinema? Will time be a dominant part of your project?

E. K. : I may connect it with the question you asked before. After all, what makes cinema so powerful is the ability of intervening time. Directors in my generation in Turkish cinema were born in 1958-1959, and many of those who start filming after the 1990s were the ones who had no tutors to lead them, like "lay scholars". They were self-taught directors. For this reason, no doubt they read, researched a lot and they were influenced immensely by these philosophical approaches. Certainly, these approaches have affected and shaped their cinema. I think in the recent period, the search and transformation we see in Tayfun Pirselimoglu's cinema is a result of these concerns.

The time issue certainly affects my writings, as well. *Peri Gazozu* and *Cin Aynası* are the main examples. I head out from my experiences, my memories. They are my main and primary sources. The first feature film I will experience as a director will be *Nasipse Adayız*. It had published as a novella first. And then, I worked up it into a scenario – a story in which events happen in one night. I will shoot the film in July. I am planning to pursue something like this; in that movie, I guess I will pursue the experience I had in *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*. We found the real places to film at *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, like the hospital I worked, my room there, the autopsy room, fountains where we searched the corpse in 1984. That is so valuable. The film's reality and deep effects on the audiences may come from that.

This is not in our hands many times. Those places entered my life again after 25 years, but this time I met them in a movie, in cinema. This was where exactly I look for the time and cinema relation. It was a marvellous experience. In fact, I wrote it in one of my stories. There is a character, driver Arap Ali, in *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*. Ahmet Mümtaz Taylan portrayed that character in the film. One day while we were on the set of the film, Gazi ağabey-the real-life counterpart of the character Arap Ali, came to visit us. He was my driver 25 years ago, and now became retired 70 years old man living in Kırıkkale. After hearing that we were in Kırıkkale for movie, he wanted to visit me. We embraced each other on the set, had a supper

together, and there, on the table, Gazi ağabey was on my left while Mümtaz Taylan sat on my right. As the story's owner, screenwriter, and the actor, I was in the middle. Neither Gazi figured out that Mümtaz was portraying his own version of 25 years before nor Mümtaz realized that Gazi was the real-life-counterpart of Arap Ali. This showed me the power of cinema, its inspiration and how it opens a door of opportunity with our relations to the world. All these affect me in cinema.

I lived through the events of *Nasipse Adayız* in person during 2000's as a presumptive nominee for major election. I wrote the script based on that. I won't say that the protagonist in the film reflects me, but what I lived inspired me to create that character. It is of course fiction. In the end, all scenarios are fictional, but it is based on, nourished, and inspired by real events. What else can it be? What else can people create than the illustration of their lives? One can only write what he/she has witnessed, lived, heard and presumably owns. I preferred to shoot the film *Nasipse Adayız* at the real wedding ballroom in the 2000s. We rented it for the last 10 days of July. Other places never crossed my mind. I only imagined that ballroom, that hallway for the film. I don't say it with cinematic obsession, but I believe the fiction and the documentary can and should come together in one place. In other words, there is a line between the reality and the recreation of the reality and we walk on that line.

Tarkovsky describes an ideal cinema or movie as a filming a man from the beginning to the end of his life and as a result creating an hour and a half feature film from that. Kiarostami walked on the streets of Tehran with the tape recorder on his pocket and tried to record the sounds of life. Then he said, "When I listen to them, I discovered we can never reach to that perfection". So, I guess, we need to seek the answer of your question right here; time, past, their places in our soul and our effort to bring them to light and contribution of the cinema to that.

L. K. : We can see that life, memory, sociology, literature, being a doctor and its relationship with the body additionally the body dress up, your father's passion for fashion and description of the body and fire relations via a woman in your novels; all these nourish your acting, and it is similar with what Yılmaz Güney experienced. Güney working as an officer especially during his first years of cinema discovered in which part movie got applauses or people threw garbage on the screen. What do you think, can it be contributed to the acting?

E. K. : I didn't have an acting training, so I do not know how to pretend, but to my surprise, it has become an advantage in front of the camera. My style is not convenient for the theatre; I cannot perform at the stage in 1,5-2 hours with self-determination. You don't have any other way than to surrender yourself to the director when it comes to cinema. Playing in front of the camera, however, means surrendering yourself to the director with all your memories, knowledge, feelings, experiences and stories by portraying the character and allowing the director to lead you. That is all. On-camera acting is all about that. In fact, you are one of the instruments of the film and there is someone who directs you. Just as a writer needs to consign her writings to an editor, the actor or actress needs a director to be directed.

Stage actor directs himself on the stage because there is an irreversible flow in the theatre. In the cinema, however when the director says “cut”, flow stops. The director has a right to shoot scenes again and again until she/he feels that your play reflects the exact spirit of the character or the world the director imagines. Therefore, the relationship between the actors/actress and director is so critical.

When Marcello Mastroianni couldn't smile as Bertolucci wanted, Bertolucci told Marcello, “You asked something from the waiter at the hotel last night. When he responded, you smiled back at him, so I want that smile”. Why did Bertolucci want to see in the film the same smile Marcello did at the hotel last night? It means that what really matters is the director's imagination; the soul of the film. So, the actor must serve director's imagination. If you accept this fact from the beginning and give up from self-directing in front of the camera, you can be the right component of the film.

There is no good acting in a bad movie. Bad acting may be tolerated in a good movie, but there is no way of saying, “I played well, but the movie was bad”. That cannot save anyone, and it is shameful. To this respect, actors/actresses should know their places and limits when it comes to the cinema. They shouldn't refrain from revealing everything that has made them; their experiences and journeys.

Even if I talk easily and like chatting, I am really a shy person in my daily life. I cannot share everything, I hesitate, feel ashamed of. But, when it comes to on-camera acting my perspective is that I must do whatever the director's world demands from me. I see the acting from that point of view like acting in Kabuki Theatre. If a performer achieves to watch himself/herself from the eyes of first-row audiences, then he/she is a good performer in the Kabuki Theatre. I act like that, I mean, in front of the camera I try acting with the sense of that I watch myself from outside. So, because of that, I have no other sources to nourish my acting from than my life, my experiences, books I read, things I hear, my observations, my rural area stories or stories from my period when I was a doctor. I nourish my acting from them and see the acting in that way.

S. Ö. : May I ask one more question? There is a conference at Kadir Has University on “Yeşilçam”. There are different approaches to Yeşilçam among artists and critics. Some see this period as a romantic and nostalgic time, while some others completely ignore it or maybe disgrace with it. How do you see Yeşilçam?

E. K. : Yeşilçam is so valuable memory for Turkish cinema and is one of the reasons of my passion for the cinema. My Yeşilçam is “Yeni Sinema (New Cinema/New Movie Theatre)” in Avanos, Nevşehir. The idea of creating another world or my approach about the time was shaped somehow with the movies that I watched there. The art of cinema speeded up in the late 1880s, Turkey met cinema in the early 1900s, the late period of the Ottoman Empire. We can say it all started with the documentary on Manaki Brothers.

I may criticize why we haven't had a good progress in cinema even though we met it that early. It is, however, so precious that Muhsin Ertuğrul took a step to be Eisenstein's assistant, he went and tried to learn cinema from him and after turning back to Turkey he

worked to adopt what he had learned from Einstein. The 1900s... The hands-on experience of first screenplay, first acting; everything learned by trial-and-error. They certainly inspired from the theatre, so, the theatre's shadow was always on the cinema, positive or negative. Whatever happened in Turkey reflected itself in the Turkish cinema. Just as our life affected by cultural, political, social and economic processes and geography where we live in influence our daily life, we find the impact of them on cinema as well.

Isn't it Metin Erkan's attempt to shoot a movie in the 1960's based on "creating a millionaire in each neighbourhood" the best example on these efforts? Does not it mean that he nourished from life when he shot films like *Yılanların Öcü*, *Susuz Yaz*, *Kuyu*, on the subject of a woman, soil, and water? Likewise, Lütfi Akad. After that period, the relatively democratic environment in the 1960's opened a way for Yılmaz Güney. Didn't he show with his movie *Umut* in early 1970's that what only happens to us is what we face or witness in this country? We should be aware of and act with this knowledge. The military coup in 1980 was fascist, and caused the death, exile, unidentified murder of our many people, as well as it wiped out the intellectual accumulation. Which is why I always think that the period after 1980's was much more difficult, merciless. In the 1990's, our cinema improved by films which based on screenplays of our generation written with the effect mainly by European cinema, "auther" cinema, more of a French cinema. And then, our cinema has gained much more robust, productive and richer journey. From my perspective, we are still part of that journey.

We may add many things on this issue but I may conclude it by saying this, maybe in a bracket, Metin Erksan gave me cinema magazines of the 1960s. There were *Yeni Sinema Dergisi* (New Cinema Magazine) and also *Sinematek* movement leading by Onat Kutlar in that period. There was also a group named *Milli Sinemacı* (National Film-Maker) supported by Halit Refiğ, Metin Erksan, etc. Do you know how they challenged to each other? When you look at those discussions, enthusiasm, excitement there, you can say, "These men's entire world was cinema". They were that much serious about the cinema in their articles, discussions in those magazines. Even their styles sometimes were so tough, those articles show how much they took cinema seriously and put it in the middle of their life. So, the contributions of Erksan, Refiğ, Akad, Memduh Ün, and Atif Yılmaz are indispensable and lasting.

S. Ö. : Well, what are your next projects? Do you mind sharing with us?

E. K. : Cinema will always exist in my life, so will literature. I would like to keep writing. I would like to publish at least one book in a year. The book *Evvvel Zaman* was republished this year, but we won't be limited just by that in 2018. Hopefully, a book on Metin Erksan will be published by *İletişim Yayınları* in October-November 2018. Also, I will be behind the camera for the feature film in July. I have filmed a documentary recently. I was a director on that project. It was a good practice and tough training for me. I will make my first feature film in July. Filming will last 5-6 weeks and then the post-production phase will start. I will continue writing, shooting a film and talking.

L. K. : As the last question, could you please share your thought on our magazine SineFilozofi?

E. K. : You are doing a precious job. I always like talking on the memory, but I will say the same thing again. Since we are the children of geography where people like to talk rather than write, I would like to embrace those who prefer writing whenever I meet with them. For me, you are one of them, too. This magazine is a valuable work in accomplishing this job. Bon voyage.