

THE STRANGER IN THE CITY (Sehirdeki Yabancı) 1962

Halit Refiđ

Overview

It is a film written by Vedat Türkali based on the treatment of Halit Refiđ.

The film focuses on the relations and problems experienced by a young engineer who returns to his hometown after studying abroad, Zonguldak, Turkey's one of the important mining cities. It is the fourth film in the filmography of Halit Refiđ, who started directing in 1961. It is also known that Refiđ himself lived in Zonguldak for a while and worked as an interpreter in mining enterprises, so he knew the environment where the events took place. It is acclaimed as among the social realist films that appeared in Turkish cinema during the 1960s.

It is one of the first films to address labor problems in Turkish cinema. With this feature, it was also introduced as the first Turkish film to participate in the Moscow Film Festival within the political atmosphere of the era. It starred Göksel Arsoy and Nilüfer Aydan, famous actors of the period. Refiđ used the music of the German composer Wagner in his film's soundtrack.

People

Aydın	A mining engineer who returned to his hometown after studying abroad.
Gönül	The young wife of Selami. She is Aydın's ex-girlfriend.
Selami	Aydın's father's former boss, a wealthy businessman. He is also a childhood friend.
Şerafettin	A local politician.
Sabri	A reporter and writer for the local newspaper. Aydın's childhood friend.
Mustafa	One of the merchants who supplies the timber to the coalmine.
Nazif Usta	Foreman who works with Aydın at the same mine.
Recep	Muscle man of Şerafettin and Mustafa.

Synopsis

Aydın is the son of a poor miner but educated in England with the support of Selami, one of the wealthiest people in the region, when his father died. Aydın returns to his hometown of Zonguldak as a mining engineer and starts working at the mining company. He learns that Gönül, his love when he was younger, has married his friend Selami. Aydın, on the other hand, tries to prevent irregularities in the mine and correct security deficiencies. However, he soon acquires many enemies. Despite Aydın's warnings, the mine collapsed due to measures not being taken. Aydın and the workers are rescued despite being buried under the rubble. Leaving the hospital, Selami hosts Aydın in his home. A close rapport begins between Selami's unhappy wife, Gönül, and Aydın.

Upon learning of Gönül and Aydın's closeness, his enemies spread rumors in the town that two of them were having an affair. Selami inevitably becomes an enemy to Aydın. The rumors spread to provoke the conservative people against Gönül and Aydın. On the one hand, the interests circles that are uncomfortable with Aydın's obstruction of their business provoke Selami against Aydın. As the scandal grew, Selami goes to Istanbul with Gönül. Gönül gives birth to her daughter here.

Selami believes that the baby is Aydın's and mistreats Gönül. Selami and his wife return to the town after Selami's son's car accident, but his son dies soon. Gönül's mother-in-law blames her for this incident and wants to kill Gönül's baby as revenge. After Gönül escapes and seeks refuge in Aydın, a group of people formed by his enemies goes on a chase for them. Selami falls off a cliff and dies in the brawl between the lynching group, and workers try to protect Aydın and Gönül.

Scenes

Returning home After completing his education in Britain, Aydın, a mining engineer, returns home. Selami gives a ride to him from the port. On the way, Aydın mentions that he learned a lot there. Selami brings Aydın to his own home. Selami's mother greets Aydın with joy. Selami introduces Aydın to his wife.

At the mine Aydın begins to work in the mine. Nazif Usta (the foreman) informs him about the situation and the accidents as they descend into the mine. Following the workers' work, Aydın sees that the supporting poles in the mine galleries are weak and substandard. He immediately stops the operation and evacuates the workers. He prohibits the use of existing poles and informs the manager, Mr. Rahmi. Rahmi reinstates the workers after Aydın leaves the mine to supply new materials. While Aydın and the foreman are on the road, the foreman complains that the lumberman who provides the poles constantly sends the foul, poor-quality poles to the mine.

Lumber Merchant Aydın questions Mustafa, the merchant, who provides the timbers. Mustafa, who waits for Aydın, treats Aydın as if he did not know about the broken poles. Aydın warns Mustafa. Mustafa assures him not to worry about it. When Aydın leaves, he reloads the foul poles into the truck.

At the club In the evening, Mustafa tells the people at the restaurant what Aydın did that day. They laugh. Aydın's old friend at the table says that he was also stubborn as a child. Aydın comes in. His friend invites Aydın to the table.

After work After work at the mine, a man collects money from workers to build a mosque. Aydın learns that one of the worker's daughter is seriously ill.

At the town center Gönül is shopping in the bazaar with his stepson. The boy squeals as he indulges. When a man he disturbs starts a quarrel, Recep, passing by, roughs him up. Recep and his man come to the coffee shop. Şerafettin, the politician, arrives there and receives the collected money for the new mosque. He tells the people they are doing a great favor. The foreman tells Aydın that Şerafettin has started a campaign to build a new mosque. Aydın visits Şevki's home, whose daughter is sick. When Gönül and his stepson returns home, Selami sees his son crying and scolds Gönül. They argue.

Newspaper Aydın gives an interview to the local newspaper saying that the conditions of the workers should be improved before building a mosque. Şerafettin, who saw the story in the local newspaper, scolds journalist Sabri. Şerafettin and Mustafa are not happy with the situation.

Collapse Aydın reports that the working conditions in the mine are risky, and the work should be ceased immediately. The manager is not concerned about risk. He sends the workers down. Aydın goes down in the mine with them. However, some galleries collapse. Aydın and the workers are trapped under the rubbles. Selami and Gönül arrive. Aydın is rescued injured. Selami and Gönül invite Aydın to stay at their home when they visit him at the hospital.

The guest When Selami and Aydın return from fishing, Selami scolds Gönül alongside Aydın again because of the child. Mustafa visits Selami and begs him to send Selami's goods to the mine by mixing them with his faulty wood. Aydın tries to calm Gönül. He talks about what a cheerful girl she was in the past. In a flashback, Gönül and Aydın are seen having fun together when they were younger.

Rumors Sabri publishes a rumor that there is a relationship between Aydın and Gönül. Aydın tries to convince Selami that this is not true. Aydın pressures Sabri. Recep and Şerafettin run a prostitution racket. In the coffee shop, Şerafettin spreads rumors about Aydın. He says the lethal incidents in the mine are inescapable destiny. He is glad to see Selami's candidacy in jeopardy with the scandal. He assigns Recep to go after Aydın. Aydın is excluded from society. Recep and his men attack Aydın.

Unrest Selami and his mother argue with Gönül. The people of the city also start abusing Gönül. The workers stop their dialogue with Aydın. Nazif Usta, angry about this situation, tells the workers that those disturbed by Aydın's arrival start the rumors.

Fight Selami eats at the city club with Şerafettin, Mustafa and Sabri. Those at the table provoke Selami against Aydın with lies and slander. Aydın comes to the club. Selami attacks Aydın.

Dogs and men After she gets angry with her stepson, who tortures the dog, her mother-in-law and husband scold Gönül. Gönül has to let her dog out to protect him. She wants to give the returning dog to Aydın. Meanwhile, there was another accident at the mine. Selami finds Gönül and kills her dog. Aydın sneaks out to see Gönül at night. They meet the next day. Aydın offers her to run away together. Gönül refuses as she expects a baby. When they kiss, Sabri secretly takes their pictures.

Confession Gönül is forced to tell her husband about her love for Aydın. Selami says he will make Gönül regret it. He leaves the town with Gönül and goes to Istanbul. Depressed, Aydın begins to neglect his work. Gönül and Selami have a daughter. Nazif Usta encourages Aydın not to give up everything. After Selami's son Çetin had a car accident, Gönül and Selami returned to Zonguldak, but

his son died. His mother blames Selami and Gönül for the death of the grandson. She wants to kill Gönül's baby as revenge.

Lynch Aydın returns to work. Gönül escapes and asks Aydın for help. Selami goes to Şerafettin and Mustafa. A large group of people, including Recep and his men, go looking for Aydın and Gönül. When they catch them, the miners arrive for help. In the fight, Selami falls off a cliff and dies. The police save Gönül and Aydın.

Themes

Conservative provincial ethics When the local conservative community hears the news of the relationship between Aydın and Gönül, they cut off their communication and exclude them from society. The people she meets on the road do not talk to Gönül. Aydın, who was very well welcomed when he first arrived at the mine, is excluded among the workers and the spreading rumor. Workers do not respect him anymore. His enemies spread the rumor that Aydın had converted while in England.

Traditional and conservative workers believe this and move away from Aydın. Gossip is an essential motif of this sphere's morality. The enemies who bring up the old relationship between Aydın and Gönül know that gossip will spread rapidly in this conservative environment, bringing people into disrepute.

Relationship between religion, trade and politics Şerafettin represents a local conservative politician. He collects money from the public under the name of the organization of building mosques. However, he collects money through Recep from women working in the town's brothel. Şerafettin, who gives religious advice to the people and says he goes to the mosque for prayers, plans to become an MP in the elections by forming partnerships with Recep, the neighborhood's gang head, and Mustafa, a crooked merchant, while exploiting the conservative feelings of the people.

Forbidden love In the story, before Aydın left for England, a romantic relationship between Gönül and him is depicted. Their relationship with time and distance has weakened. When Aydın returns home, he finds Gönül as Selami's wife. Selami also took care of him when Aydın's father died and financially supported his education abroad. However, Selami and Gönül's marriage does not go well. The two, who hid this past relationship from their surroundings, including Selami, soon became close again. Lovers think about running away together when they are excluded from their environment. In this situation, the loneliness of both is also compelling.

Loneliness Two main characters, Aydın and Gönül, suffer from loneliness. Aydın returns to his hometown, starts working, but his relations with his old friends deteriorate, while at the same time, he falls into a quarrel with the managers and interests of his place of work.

Aydın's parents are not alive, and he has no family or siblings. The conflict with his surroundings pushes him towards day-to-day loneliness. He tries to build good relationships, but the intrigues that turn also undermine those good relationships. The workers walk away from him. There are two people left that Aydın can communicate with throughout the film: Gönül and Nazif Usta.

Although Gönül lives in the same house with her husband and stepson, she does not seem to bond with them. She complains of loneliness in a troubled relationship. Like Aydın, she has lost her parents. Her husband is a repressive character. Gönül is not allowed to spend time outside. She does not have any friends. She finds a dog and adopts him.

Intrigue Local politician Şerafettin, and Mustafa, a lumber merchant, are disturbed by Aydın's questioning approach and tendency to solve the issues. When Aydın's attitude undermines their authority and business interests, they try to block Aydın through intrigue. For this reason, they use the local journalist Sabri to spread rumors of a relationship between Gönül and Aydın.

Gönül is also the wife of Selami, a commercial rival. Therefore, harming both Aydın and Selami through Gönül will bring them significant benefits. Muzaffer and Sabri act alongside Selami and pretend to want his goodness and provoke him against Aydın while at the same time carrying out a plot to provoke conservative circles.

Intellectual – public differentiation Aydın, who represents the educated parts of the Republic in the narrative as an engineer, represents a modernizing intellectual going on since the Ottoman Empire. This is highlighted because the main character's name has been chosen as "Aydın," which literally means intellectual in the Turkish language.

When the Ottoman order, which could not keep up with the changes that occurred with modernization in the West, began to decline, it embarked on a modernization of the military and education, especially in two main areas with the development of the idea of reform. Thus, in the following years, both during the Ottoman Empire and republican period, both the officers and those who had undergone Western-style training such as doctors, engineers, and teachers became the most crucial element of modernization in Turkey.

The modernization's drawbacks to reaching a broad and conservative public have led to the continuation of a system in which the people - especially in the countryside - continue to be influenced by local influencers such as clerics and provincial peers, whom they have traditionally believed in and followed. Thus, the ideological gap between intellectuals and people who have modernized or Westernized has also sharpened.

The main character returns to his hometown with the ideals of serving his country following his engineering education abroad. Throughout the narrative, it is seen that Aydın criticizes the corruption he sees around him and tries to solve problems related to his expertise. As a result, this effort attracts the reaction of those who have earned a lot by the current established order.

Embodied in the local politician Şerafettin and the merchant Mustafa, these segments influence the people and exploit their religious beliefs and conservatism. Thus, they quickly mobilize them against a change and its representative in the society.

Character Analysis

Aydın Returning to his country after receiving a modern education abroad, he is an idealistic and honest mining engineer who wants to serve by developing mining practices in his hometown.

Honest and responsible When Aydın discovers on the first day of work that the poles used in the mine are non-standard, he stops the operations and informs the manager about the situation. He goes to check out the company that provides the poles. Later, he tells Selami that he does not understand the games that Şerafettin and Mustafa plan for their political and commercial interests. He also fights for the improvement of the working conditions. When there is an accident at the mine area, he rushes to help without hesitation.

Modern Aydın argues that ensuring the safety of mineworkers is a priority compared to an organization of the mosque building campaigns to collect votes in elections.

In love His love for Gönül is overwhelming, and he cannot give up her even though he believes it is immoral. Although he regrets it at first, he later wants to run away with Gönül. However, the sense of responsibility comes to the fore again and says farewell to Gönül by doing what he believes is right.

Selami He is a member of one of the long-established and wealthy families of the region, who was initially in a brotherly relationship with Aydın. Selami is a strict man who can be impulsive and, at times, ruthless.

Quick-tempered Selami is intolerant of those around him, and especially to Gönül. He is quick-tempered and scolds her often. When Aydın advises him to apologize for his harsh behavior, he ignores him and refuses. The rumors about his wife Gönül and Aydın make him even angrier.

Ruthless Selami not only abandons the stray dog that Gönül finds and adopts but kills him out of anger at Gönül. Moreover, when he finds out he is about to have a baby with Gönül, he chooses to be cruel to her. He mistreats Gönül day by day and does not believe that her baby is his own. He misbehaves when the baby is born. After his son Çetin from his previous marriage dies in a car accident, he furiously attempts to kill Gönül's baby.

Gönül Gönül, who is Aydın's former love and has to marry Selami, a wealthy man due to the difficulties she experienced in his absence, is unhappy, timid and lonely.

Unhappy Gönül is not happy with her marriage and the life she lives. With Aydın's return to the city, she becomes more nervous and unhappy. Aydın reminds her how happy a young girl she used to be. In various scenes, she expresses her unhappiness and frustration with life.

Lonely Gönül has no friends. She lives an isolated life at home with her family, and the only person she communicates with is Aydın. When she adopts the dog she finds on the street, she tells him, "You are like me; I don't think you have anyone." In another scene, she tells Aydın that she has no one to take refuge with but him.

Helpless Gönül, a poor young woman whose lover went abroad and lost her father, had to marry Selami, who was older than her, one of the wealthiest people in the region, even though she did not love him. Towards the finale, she cannot ask anyone but Aydın for help to save her baby's life.

Sabri Although he was Aydın's schoolmate, he was a corrupt provincial journalist in the trap prepared for Aydın.

Opportunist Sabri submits to the wishes of influential provincial notables. He builds personal relationships with them and cooperates in their intrigue. He does not comply with the ethics of journalism and reports in the way they want. Sabri, who witnesses the rapport of Aydın and Gönül, causes a scandal in the conservative town with his gossip story in the local newspaper, leaving Aydın, Gönül, and Selami in a difficult position. Sabri also secretly takes pictures of Aydın and Gönül at their meetings.

Şerafettin Şerafettin, a right-wing provincial politician, is a corrupt, hypocrite, religious exploiter, and liar.

Religious exploiter Şerafettin regularly collects money from workers and locals under the name of the campaign to build mosques. He often tells religious stories and preaches to those around him. On the other hand, he drinks alcohol despite being against his religion. Despite Aydın's warnings, no precautions are taken in the mine, and when there is a cave-in, he protects those responsible by saying that it is god's will to calm the people.

In addition, he extorts money from the women who worked in the local brothel. Under the pretext of going to the mosque, he leaves the coffee shop, meets with Recep, and receives the racket money collected. He also appoints Recep to eliminate Aydın.

Hypocrite Şerafettin plans to spread the rumor with Selami's wife, Gönül. He stands by Selami when Selami and Aydın argue as a result of these rumors. He provokes him against Aydın.

Mustafa Mustafa, the merchant who supplies the timber used in the mine, is a corrupt personality who only cares about his commercial interests, is a liar, a fraud, and can play with human life for money.

Liar and hypocrite When Mustafa sees Aydın coming to the warehouse, he scolds the workers and removes the broken poles he has loaded from the truck. He blames it on the workers. However, when Aydın leaves, he orders them to load the poles back into the truck. Although he seems sincere and caring towards Aydın, he constantly makes plans in his absence. Mustafa, Selami's opponent in business, seems to want his well-being, but he is happy with the difficult situation he has fallen in. He provokes Selami against Aydın.

Nazif Usta Nazif, who believes in Aydın's honesty and supports him from the beginning, is an honest, kind-hearted, and fair person.

Fair He goes out to the workers who mistreat him after rumors of an affair. He explains that Aydın fought for them and did all the good deeds, but they were ungrateful. Furthermore, Aydın was discredited for undermining the interests of some and that all of this was a game.

In the finale, When Aydın and Gönül are lynched, he gathers the workers and saves them from the gang.

Recep He is a local bully boy. He was hired by Şerafettin (the politician) and some other local rich. He is sneaky and deceitful.

Sneaky He gives the money he collects from the women in the brothel to Şerafettin. On the orders of Şerafettin, he tries to pressure Aydın to leave the city by scaring him. He attacks Aydın with his men. In the final, at the request of Selami and others, he and his armed men form a group to slaughter Gönül and Aydın.



Aydın, Gönül, and Selami



Aydın is at the coalmine.



Şerafettin, Mustafa, and Sabri mock about Aydın.



Gönül and Aydın plan to escape.



Aydın defends Gönül and her baby against the crowd.