

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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ÜÇ TEKERLEKLİ BİSİKLET (Tricycle) 1962

Lütfi Ö. Akad & Memduh Ün

Overview

The screenplay was adapted by Vedat Türkali from a work by Orhan Kemal. Lütfi Akad started and produced most of it. However, it was completed by Memduh Ün due to a disagreement with the producer. The film was shot in black and white and produced by Nusret İkbâl on behalf of Be-Ya Film company.

The film's setting is in one of the outskirt neighborhoods of Istanbul. As in many Akad's work, the migration to the big city and the problems emerged by it are seen in this film. These include slums, distorted construction, unemployment and poverty, exploitation, deteriorating family structure, and women's struggle.

Although critics find the director's films of this period immature, it is possible to see a thematic coincidence with his works. E.g. His observations of economic exploitation relations, which he later theorized as "eating human flesh" or cannibalism is evident.

When it comes to migration, although Akad's trilogy (the Bride, The Wedding, and The Blood Money) represent the cornerstone, Üç Tekerlekli Bisiklet is a typical Akad film that touches on migration and other social and economic problems mentioned above.

Üç Tekerlekli Bisiklet, like the other works of the director, has well-balanced editing as well as some differences. The use of high contrast lighting that emphasizes light and shadow in the mise-en-scene, a significant number of close-ups, and the intensity of camera movements come to the forefront.

It is also reminiscent of Italian Neorealism as the story reflects the environment, human relations, and socio-economic conditions of the neighborhood. However, the narration withholds information and is unclear from time to time. This limitation in the range of story knowledge increases the mystery and curiosity in the film to a degree.

People

<i>Hacer</i>	A lonely woman living with her small son Hasan on the outskirts of Istanbul.
<i>Ali</i>	The man who runs a dairy, but murders the boss of a construction company and took refuge in Hacer's house while he is in the run.
<i>Topal Selim</i>	Selim is an idle man who lives in the neighborhood and is an informant for Abdi from the construction company.
<i>Abdi</i>	He is the guard in charge of the construction company.
<i>Hasan</i>	Hacer's five years old son.
<i>Yakup</i>	Hacer's landlord.

Synopsis

Hacer is a lonely young woman who lives with her young son Hasan in one of Istanbul's slums and makes a living doing laundry. Ali is a dairyman in the vicinity and has shot the owner of a construction company who tried to take his land from him with bullying. Ali escapes the wounded and takes refuge in Hacer's house. Hacer helps Ali and treats his wound. Discovering Ali's presence hiding in the attic, little Hasan thinks he is his father, who has not been nearby for years. Ali and Hasan establish warm communication and trust between each other. Hacer continues this game. Thus, Ali hides in Hacer's for a while. They get closer to each other, and a relationship begins between them. Hacer's husband returns home from a distant town. However, she refuses him. Meantime, the circle narrows, with police and company men looking everywhere for Ali. Recovering, Ali tries escaping the blockade. Hacer does not desire Ali gone. Topal Selim, who understands that Ali is hiding in Hacer's home, wants to help Ali by changing sides. Despite Hacer's and Selim's insistence, Ali goes out to escape. He fights against the gang but, the police capture him eventually.

Scenes

Opening

Coffeeshouse At the local coffeeshouse, men discuss going to Germany as workers. As Hacer passes the coffeeshouse with his son Hasan, Yakup greets Hacer. Hacer continues on his way regardless. Then Gülsen, a young woman, passes. The men talk to her and joke. They laugh.

On the way Gülsen catches Hacer and Hasan, who walk in front of her. They chat as they walk. Gülsen talks about her love life and boyfriend. She is surprised that Hacer has been alone for four years.

At night As Gülsen walks through a garden, she encounters a mysterious man in the dark and shouts for help from the neighbors. She thinks an acquaintance stalks her. The man runs away when the neighbors arrive.

The runaway The man silently walks through the gardens and houses in the dark. He is in hurry.

The intruder Hasan begs for a bicycle from his mother. He asks his mother to re-read his father's letter before bedtime. The armed and wounded man (Ali) enters Hacer's house. Hacer is afraid. The man assures her he will not do any harm. Hacer wants to call a doctor, but Ali refuses it. Although Hacer is afraid of him, she helps and hides him in the attic.

At the police station Police investigate a nearby murder. They question Selim as a suspect and ask about his relationship with the victim. Gülsen comes into the police station and says that the man she sees in the dark at night looks like the man she has seen in the paper.

The investigation Gülsen shows the police where he saw the man. The officers search the neighborhood. The neighborhood talks about the murder and argues between them. Upon learning of the murder, Hacer warns Ali to leave her house as quickly as he can. She regrets helping a suspect. Ali suffers because of his wounds.

The debts The men apply to the agency at the coffeeshouse to go to Germany as a foreign worker. Hacer's landlord Yakup catches her on the street and asks her to pay her debt. The men of murder victim Emin, who owned a construction company, come to the neighborhood. They want Selim to seek Ali and pay for it.

The guest Hacer treats and feeds Ali. She asks Ali the reason for the murder. Ali does not answer but just explains he had a dairy in the area. They chat. Ali asks Hacer why she has not called the police. Hacer explains that it is a tradition in her hometown to help anyone who seeks refuge.

The informer Abdi, the company's guard, presses and threatens Selim to locate Ali. Selim says he does not know where Ali is. Abdi wants to find Ali before the police do. He pays Selim.

A stranger at the home Little Hasan asks Hacer about his father before going to bed. The next day, Hacer wants to send Hasan to pick up his circumcision ceremony suits. Hasan does not want to go. When Hacer leaves the house, Hasan comes up to the attic and finds Ali. Hasan thinks Ali is his father, who had gone four years ago. Ali approves the idea.

The debt again Her landlord, again presses Hacer to pay off her debt. He threatens her to start a legal procedure.

Happiness Hasan is happy to think his father has finally arrived. He tells his mother that his father told him everything and that he would keep it a secret. Hacer does not reveal the truth by maintaining this game. She tears up the letter of her husband.

The arrival of the father A kite that the children fly in the street falls on the roof of the Hasan's. Hasan blushes at the children who go up to the rooftop to pick up the kite, saying his father is asleep. Selim, who is nearby at the time, hears Hasan. Ali gets angry with Hasan.

The suspicion Selim visits Hacer to understand the situation. He asks if her husband has returned home. Hacer tells her husband is still not around. Hacer informs Ali. Hasan apologizes for his carelessness.

At the coffeeshouse The men talk about whether the murderer was caught by the police. One of them wishes Ali would run away. He curses the company because it took his money. Selim listens to the conversations.

The trap The company's men watch the neighborhood at night.

At night Hasan mentions that his father will buy a bicycle soon. Hacer tells him not to talk about the father, and he will be leaving soon. Yakup comes again to ask for the rent. She advances Hacer and attempts to rape her. Hacer defends herself with Ali's gun.

The punishment Ali sneaks out, follows Yakup, and beats him. He comes back home.

The love Hacer says that she is glad to see Ali again. They make love.

Morning Hasan is annoyed and asks Ali why he left at night. Ali wants Hacer not to be afraid. In the coffeehouse, Yakup fabricates the lie that five men bate him at night.

Tricycle Hasan is circumcised. Hacer does not see Ali when she comes back home. Ali sneaks out and lends money from one of his friends. He buys Hasan the tricycle he has promised. Hasan becomes happy. Ali wants to leave, but Hacer wants him to stay. Ali promises that he will take Hasan and Hacer if he escapes.

The search Yakup comes to Hacer's house with the police. Police search for the gun Hacer pointed at but could not find it. Hacer shows them Hasan's toy gun. Although Selim grasps the situation, he supports Hacer's statement surprisingly.

The payback Ali goes out. He confronts the company's guardians in the neighborhood. He fights and escapes when the locals call the police.

The return Hacer's husband returns after a long break. Hacer does not let him in. Hasan does not recognize his father.

At the coffeehouse The men calm Hacer's husband. There is talk of Ali beating up the company guard.

The chase Ali tries to get his money from a shop-owner. The company's man waits for him goes after Ali. Ali escapes and returns to Hacer's house. Hacer begs him not to leave. Topal Selim comes in. He offers help to Ali because the company caused him to be handicapped. He explains that the company will kill Ali and build on his land. He advises him to go to Germany. He also tells Ali that Hacer's husband has arrived. Hacer says she accepts Ali as her husband. Hacer asks Ali the cause of his crime.

The past Ali tells how the construction company wanted to take his land by force. He regrets that if he had met her and Hasan earlier, he would not have killed anyone.

Germany Selim takes away the immigration documents of Şaban, who is still hesitant to go to Germany.

The father Hasan rides his tricycle down the street. His father approaches him and tells him that he is his father. Hasan does not believe it. He says his father sleeps at home.

The siege The company men blockade the neighborhood, and they locate Ali's place. Selim comes to warn Ali. He recommends that unless he surrenders to the police, the gang will kill him. Hacer begs Ali not to leave.

The raid and escape The police raid the house. Ali runs out the back door. Abdi and his men start a hunt for Ali. Ali fights the men and wins; however, the police arrest him. Hacer leaves her husband and goes after Ali with her son Hasan.

Themes

Migration and unemployment The place where the events occur is a slum of Istanbul, where people who migrated from the countryside to the city live in a high concentration. One of the main characters of the film, Hacer, also has come from an Anatolian town.

Especially since the 1960s, these neighborhoods, which have increased in number in large cities, have been the first stop for people migrating from the countryside. The new settlements, which accumulated around the city with rapid construction, acted as a jumping stone for access to the city center. They appeared as a hybrid habitat, carrying rural features in lifestyle while being close to the city. Increasing demand for houses with migration has also led to the growing and strengthening of construction companies. In the film, Ali's conflict is with such a construction company.

The 1960s were years of foreign migration as much as domestic migration in Turkey. Some of the people in the film talk about going to Germany, which accepted migrant workers at the time, because

they could not find the conditions they were looking for in Istanbul. Agency representatives take action to send unemployed residents to Germany in coffee houses.

When Hacer's husband cannot find a decent job where they are, he goes to another big city to work. A large number of people in the neighborhood are unemployed. Most men spend their days sitting idle in the local coffeehouse.

Love Another theme in the narrative is love. Hacer has been left by her husband and falls in love with Ali. Little Hasan also finds the fatherly compassion he looks for in Ali. Hacer becomes happy with Ali's presence. She tears up her husband's letter sent years ago, which his son asks her to read every night. Therefore, at the final of the narrative, they prefer not the man who abandoned and did not call them for years, but Ali, with which they were able to foster a bond of love, even if he was guilty. When the police arrested Ali, it is inevitable for him to be imprisoned. Hacer and Hasan go after him and show that they accept him as a father and a husband.

Family Hasan needs a father, and Hacer needs a spouse. Taking refuge in their home, Ali fills the place of a missing father and completes the family. Ali is also a lonely person without a family. He does not refuse it and adopts this role. The image of the family, which seems fake, becomes a reality with the good relations between them. Hacer's husband and Hasan's father, who had abandoned them when they needed him in the past, are rejected by both when he wants to return to the home towards the end of the narrative.

A trapped man Ali is an ordinary man. He is on his own. When he cannot bear the harassment of the construction company anymore, he shoots its' boss. Although Ali regrets what he did, he runs away. The film depicts this process of escaping and hiding. It is another primary theme that Akad often proposes. Ali becomes more regretful about what he did after he meets Hacer and Hasan. He says if he had met them before, he would not have tried to kill that man.

Money As in other Akad films, socio-economic conditions occupy a critical role here. Events take place in an impoverished district of Istanbul. Hacer and most of the other characters suffer from difficult living conditions. The money she earns from the laundry is not enough to pay her rent and fulfill her child's wishes. Her landlord Yakup reminds Hacer of her debt throughout the narrative. Hacer cannot afford the tricycle his son dreams. Besides, she and her neighbors also benefit from the mass circumcision ceremony provided by the municipality or charity for their children.

The greedy construction company plans to have Ali's property. The company also has grown by buying the land of other residents undervalued and making buildings in these places. The company profits a lot. The company's partners do not hesitate to resort to illegal actions such as fraud and using force.

Abdi, a man of the construction company, tries to recruit Topal Selim as an informant. However, they do not pay what they owe to the people. Unemployed people sitting in coffee houses also need money for migration to Germany.

Ali needs money to escape and has to go out to get his money from a restaurant owner. That is why the men who are after him see him.

Character Analysis

Hacer Hacer is a young woman trying to hold on to Istanbul with her young son Hasan and has been left by her husband.

Strong and dignified She tries to make a living doing laundry in the neighborhood. Despite being alone and trying to take care of her young son, Hacer is a strong and honorable woman. When someone hides in their house, she does what she thinks is right. She is afraid to get in trouble, but she takes responsibility. She firmly rejects the landlord she owes and who is constantly harassing her. She does not obey these harassments, threats, and inappropriate offers.

Benevolent Hacer helps Ali, who is a stranger and fugitive. When she finds out that he was escaping from the police, she does not report him and let him hide at her home. She heals and feeds him. She helps him to recover.

In love Hacer shares with Ali the love and sexuality that she has long been unable to experience in her struggle for life. At first, she is worried, and she wants this unwanted guest to leave her home immediately. Over time, an affection is born between her and Ali. She gets upset when she thinks Ali has gone.

When Ali returns home one night when he is out, he asks Hacer: *Shouldn't I have come back?* Hacer replies: *You did well.* Her husband, who had left years earlier during the events, comes back, but Hacer has already forgotten him. There is now Ali for Hacer.

Ali Ali is a lonely young man who runs his grandfather's humble dairy in the area. He becomes a criminal while trying to defend himself against the greedy people who try to take away the only thing he owns. He hides from the police and the men who are after him.

Honest On the first day he arrives at Hacer's house, he promises that he will not do harm and keeps his promise. He is grateful for Hacer's help.

Compassionate Ali shows love and compassion for Osman, a child who grew up without a father. He does not object to this for fear of being caught when Osman thinks that he is his father. However, Ali is kind and compassionate to him. He tries to act as his role as a father for not destroying the child's dreams. He allows him to call him "Dad" and loves the boy as if he were his son. He promises to buy him the tricycle that Osman has wanted for so long. He takes risks and sneaks out to buy Osman a tricycle with a loan from a friend. Osman's statement that his father has arrived and bought the bike while he rides among the children in the neighborhood creates suspicion and plays a role in Ali's failure.

Quick-tempered Due to the harassment of the construction company, he kills one of the company owners. Knowing that the company's men will not leave him alone, Ali does not refrain from clashing with them.

Protector Despite the danger of being caught, Ali follows and beats Yakup, who attempts to rape Hacer. **Protector** In spite of the danger of being caught, Ali follows and beats Yakup, who attempts to rape Hacer.

Selim Selim is an unemployed and lame man who lives in the neighborhood. The men of the construction company assign him as an informant.

Informant In the beginning, Selim, who appears to have been threatened by Abdi, a man of the company, is assigned to find Ali and tell him where he is. Selim had been beaten and wounded by Emin. He is afraid of the gang. He watches the neighborhood and tries to find Ali throughout the film. Abdi often pressures Selim to make him find Ali's hiding place. Eventually, Selim discovers that Ali is hiding in Hacer's house.

Humane However, Selim, who is tired of being used and humiliated by the company but cannot do anything, sympathizes with Ali's courageous acts against the power. He tries to protect Ali from the company men by switching sides in the following scenes. He backs Hacer when she shows the toy gun to the police, who come to the house looking for Ali's pistol. Selim unexpectedly supports Hacer's testimony.

In this scene, Selim is now sure that Ali is hiding there, but instead of giving him to the police, he chooses to protect him. This turn is a moment of a significant improvement in the plot. Selim has gradually changed his mind. In the coffeehouse, the men talk about whether the murderer has been captured, while one of them says he hopes Ali would escape. This man has lost his money because of fraud by the company. Selim listens to their conversation silently. Eventually, Ali has also avenged Selim's and other victims' losses in the neighborhood.

Yakup The man who is the landlord of Hacer is opportunistic and immoral. He tries to take advantage of Hacer.

Opportunistic Yakup has not received the rent from Hacer for a long time. Hacer is in financial difficulty. She tries to postpone her debt by promising she will pay it. When Yakup is unable to get his money, he wants to turn it into an opportunity to exploit her sexually. He goes to Hacer's house one night pretending to ask for the rent. He proposes an affair to her. When Hacer refuses him, he attempts to rape her. Hacer gets rid of this critical situation by pointing Ali's pistol at Yakup.



Hacer and Hasan



Hacer, Ali, and Hasan



Ali confronts the gang



Hacer



Selim questions Hacer.