

A CRITIQUE OF EVERYDAY LIFE THROUGH
CHUNGKING EXPRESS
AND
A CASE STUDY IN ISTANBUL

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A Critique of Everyday Life Through *Chungking Express*
And
A Case Study on Istanbul

Chungking Express Üzerinden Gündelik Yaşamın Kritiği
Ve
İstanbul Üzerine bir Uyarılama

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Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

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- 3)Duality
- 4)Globalization
- 5)Turkish Classical Music

ABSTRACT

Mainly starting with the industrial revolution the world evolved into a modified epoch where everyday life has gone through thorough changes and gained vital importance in social sciences. Especially in our era, where globalization standardizing everyday life in all over the world molding it into sameness, the theory of everyday life has become a key subject that could unveil the actuality it conceals under the curtain of the mundane.

This study sets out to examine, analyze and criticize the concept of 'everyday life' first by theoretically and secondly by applying to three films, which are *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998), *To Die (or Not)* (Ventura Pons, 2000) and especially *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-Wai, 1994). Finally, a short film, *Jigsaw Puzzle*, has been produced in order to complement the everyday life duality with respect to what Wong Kar-Wai puts in *Chungking Express*. The rationale behind this study is to raise an awareness towards the obscure concept of everyday life which conceals artificial manipulation under its common facets.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline and Context of the Research

The aim of this study is to comprehend the concept of everyday life thoroughly. In order to realize this first, I focused on the theoretical side of the concept of everyday life. And therefore, I started from the very beginning, which was the history of everyday life. Second, since everyday life has been commonly considered to be a vague notion, I tried to clarify the concept through the practitioners' ideas, theories and definitions on this subject. As one proceeds through the research, one will realize the artful nature embedded in the very core of everyday life, which in return causes the problems for everyday life. This artful nature which the historians and I call a 'veil' covers the genuine side of everyday actuality. To solve this problematic means to uncover the veil as many practitioners metaphorically put it. According to historians, uncovering the veil, starts with being conscious of the existence of the veil while criticizing everyday life, which from my point view is the point where this study has really started. Therefore, as a next step, to tear the veil, the question 'How' was directed towards every street and every corner of everyday life in guidance of practitioners.

After defining the theory of everyday life and what it was, my next step was to derive everyday life theory and all that it entailed in *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-Wai, 1994) where this concept was adroitly knitted into the film. By this, I have grasped the interpretation of everyday life from Wong Kar-Wai's perspective.

The last step taken to reach my aim, which was understanding the concept of everyday life fully, was to show how I interpreted today's everyday life by putting theory into practice. Hence, as Wong Kar-Wai picturized today's everyday life with the way he analyzed in *Chungking Express*, I tried to do a similar analysis of today's everyday life in small scale with my short film, *Jigsaw Puzzle*.

While working on the plot of my short film, I thought over this problem a lot: Although it was almost impossible not to be influenced by Wong Kar-Wai's narration; that is, to show everyday life in the way he has already done, I didn't do it because it would have been to repeat or create a similar version of what he had done which would have lacked originality. So, I decided to go back to the very core of the concept of everyday life. There, as one comes across frequently in this research as well, lies the notion of 'duality'. Duality is what everyday life and its foundations are constructed upon. This duality is, in other words, a dichotomy like Yin & Yang in Chinese philosophy where the opposites cannot exist without each other and complement each other. In constructing the short film, I stuck to this duality and formed my starting point accordingly. Hence, I created a short film as a complement/duality of what I have seen in *Chungking*

Express. In *Chungking Express*, we witness the fleeting, evaporating, volatile and elusive condition of everyday life from Hong Kong. As a counterbalance to Hong Kong, my film is set in Istanbul which holds two reasons for that. From the point of being a metropolitan city, China's Hong Kong is what Istanbul is for Turkey. Second, everyday life is a global subject, which means everyday life evolves and is lived more and more similarly because of the overarching globalization. And we have come to the point that cities experience a stereotype of everyday life almost in the same way. Wong Kar-Wai, although he had the option to depict the problem of everyday life from different cities of the world, he chose to depict the everyday life of the city which he knows the best, knows its past well. That is to say, he chose to portray the global situation through local. Likewise, for me this city is Istanbul, which I know its past and experienced the evolution of its everyday life day by day. Moreover, as a complementary to Kar-Wai's way of depicting today's everyday life over fleeting, evaporating, elusive notions, I searched if there were any notions which succeeded to stay the same while keeping its values against the current of globalizing world. There, I found out that Turkish Classical Music was maybe one of the few things that remained the same and preserved its values. As a result, I decided to show the unchanging piece of the whole, which is in our case globalization. So, in addition to the dualities I have discussed in everyday life theory, now I have added one more rung to the ladder of dualities which I will call 'unchanging versus fleeting'. By this way, I hope to show the two parts of the duality of everyday life which cannot exist without each other

and the definition of everyday life will be incomplete in the absence of either one of them.

1.2 Contents of the Chapters

This thesis comprises seven chapters. The Introductory Unit, Chapter I, gives us the overall perspective of this study, of the theory and the historical background needed to decode it later from Wong Kar-Wai's *Chungking Express*. Then it goes on giving reasons for making the short film, *Jigsaw Puzzle*.

Chapter II is about the emergence of everyday life and understanding the concept of everyday life as dualities. As everyday life theory is constructed upon opposites and also complementary structures, I found it best to define everyday life theory by explaining each duality one by one. While dualities were defined, the historical background as well as the theory it entailed was explained in this chapter.

Chapter III covers the philosophical aspects discussed by its practitioners and also revolves around the problematics embedded in the core of everyday life. Starting from Lukacs and Heidegger, the study goes on with the distinction and definition of two approaches, micro-oriented interpretative approach on the one hand and systems perspective on the other. The two approaches hold invaluable importance in grasping everyday life theory thoroughly since the first examines everyday life from a micro perspective and the latter shows us the picture from a macro perspective. So, we neither lose the big picture only by focusing on micro issues, nor skip the invaluable participation of various micro issues brought to the concept

of everyday life. Durkheim, Comte, Parsons and Orthodox Marxism shed light on understanding systems perspective while Schütz, Berger, Luckman and Goffman argue micro-oriented approach against the first. By explaining both perspectives, one recognizes the evolution of everyday life theory as well. The chapter goes on with the thoughts and works of fairly recent philosophers on this issue like Henri Lefebvre who contributed a lot to the critique of everyday life. From then onward, Ben Highmore's thoughts on the critique of everyday life becomes the center of the topic. At the same time, the study gets supporting points from Tony Bennett and Diane Watson. The chapter ends with Manuel Castell's term 'network society' as a way to examine the relationship between technology and today's societies, today's everyday lives.

As Chapter III constructs the problem of everyday life, which is preserving actuality behind the veil of actuality in its very basic explanation, Chapter IV proposes practitioner's possible ways on how to tear this veil; that is, how to solve the problem. In this chapter, the basic habit and routines of today are criticized in order to reach the genuine actuality. Moreover, the relationship of everyday life with consumption and commodity is examined particularly by Lefebvre and Highmore. From this, how every individual's everyday life has been shaped and reshaped is uncovered.

Chapter V is a case study and aims to make a critique of everyday life. It gets its supporting points from everyday life theory, economy and politics. *Chungking Express*, as one of the best movies succeeded to

picturize the flow of everyday life in today's fast paced world, as well as *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998) and *To Die (or Not)* (Ventura Pons, 2000) were analyzed in scrutiny not only to make a critique of everyday life, but also to decode the critiques of everyday life made by the directors.

Chapter VI is the explanation of my short film, *Jigsaw Puzzle*, a film I shot solely as a practice to what I have learned in everyday life and its theory. The ingredients of my short film in relation to everyday life theory and the reasons for me to include them have been clarified one by one. For this, the chapter first starts with our perception of 'space', how it constructs our daily lives and its importance for us. From this, dualities related to space, existing in the short film, such as public and private sphere, inside and outside, home and street as well as its extensions like work and leisure, male and female are also analyzed. Meanwhile, 'city' notion is pointed out as macro space including all the micros mentioned above. In this chapter, how I made a critique of everyday life was substantiated by how I constructed the plot with respect to everyday life theory and the reasons for the selection of spaces, characters as well as the reasons for their actions. The chapter goes on to show the reasons why I have chosen music as a way to show the everyday life in Istanbul as well as why Turkish Classical Music has been chosen for this project. My aim in shooting *Jigsaw Puzzle* is the last destination of this chapter.

The Last Chapter, Chapter VII, is the evaluation of my thesis as well as my project. It will also be the arena where I have shared my experiences in writing the thesis and on shooting *Jigsaw Puzzle*.

CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF EVERYDAY LIFE AS DUALITIES

Everyday life, which is a vast and vague concept, has been the central area of discussion of several intellectuals and disciplines, some of which are philosophy, art, sociology, economy, economy-politics, anthropology, phenomenology, cultural studies and recently film studies. Every discipline tried and has been trying to define what it is. Its obliqueness, in fact, comes from the fact that it gets its data from everyday itself and unfortunately there are many concepts as well as inter-related factors that effect the chain of everyday life throughout the history. On the way to our definition of everyday life it will be necessary to introduce how different disciplines and intellectuals have had different approaches to everyday throughout history. I believe its definition, if we imagine it as a jigsaw puzzle, will reveal itself in the end when we put all the pieces together.

Maybe the first thing we should learn about the concept of everyday life is that it contains dualities in itself. Even deciding where everyday life emerges in history, which may be considered as a subject outside the concept, inhibits a duality between its researchers. According to one pole,

everyday life means the rhythms and routines of daily existence, which is as old as human society. On the other hand, according to the opposite pole, everyday life is a relatively recent invention. Although both suggestions are true, they are incomplete without each other. That is, some part of everyday life can be defined in its first suggestion but certainly the appearance of it in the scene of history is not until 1920s in social thought while its emergence as a recognized area, sociology, corresponds to the period after the Second World War. This is by no chance, since the period after the Second World War is the period where modern thought prevails and also the forces of polarisation is somewhat at a balance (Soviet Union and America). This is also the period where humanity is stimulated by what Jean-François Lyotard calls *grand recits/narratives* like living in a social utopia. Those were the years where people would think of the possibility to change the world. So the everyday life of those periods were different from the current. People were living the daily not for the sake of that day but for the everyday in the future. One of the most influential facts which effected the thoughts and everyday lives of people after the Second World War was the band Beatles. According to the statistics in 1985, it was estimated that the group's albums were sold more than a billion. John Lennon was again an important figure whom was followed by millions and with his one out of several songs had the power to revolt citizens against the government in the name of peace. In 1969, in front of the White House, where Nixon was dwelling, people sang Lennon's newly released song 'Give Peace a Chance', which was an anti

Vietnam War song. It was the biggest anti-war demonstration that the American history had ever witnessed.

The utopian narratives slowly diminish as modernism leaves its place to a new concept, which is postmodernism. It is in its most general sense can be defined as an opposition to all kinds of grand narratives. By this way micro issues other than macro were on the line. As a result, the hopes and struggles for the future leaves its place to the micro issues and especially to another level of daily life approaching to our current state of everyday lives. It takes its place as micro versus macro duality in everyday life.

Another part of the story which explains the emergence of everyday life is concerned with another duality, which is public versus private. And the public versus private is concerned with social classes in history. As everyday life brings the connotation of ordinariness when we speak of everyday life, it is usually the daily lives of the ordinary people -working and middle class- rather than the daily lives of the powerful social elites or classes. In other words, the emphasis was on 'the poor and nameless' rather than 'the rich and the famous' although it was seen that the latter had also been caught up in the sameness daily aspects of everyday life. Why and with what consequences the less powerful social group has been made visible against powerful social groups/classes can be answered by looking at the evolution of the meanings associated with the concepts of public and private. According to Habermas, the concept of 'public' has changed in the course of western history (42). Today, when we think of public, we refer to

the common, ordinary and shared. Also, the public entails everyone in its most recent meaning.

Yet, the notion had exactly an opposite meaning in the late middle and early modern periods. The handiwork of all kinds (subjects of history writing, statues, medals and coins, paintings, etc.) must be associated with the high class like queens, kings, princes, nobles from the royal family in order to be worthy to be represented in public eye. For example, only kings, queens, lords, princes are worthy to be painted and regarded to be shown publicly. Only noted artists and intellectuals could be the appropriate subjects of history. The developments in time changed the phase of the subject of representation which lead to the expansion of a more democratic society. Still life paintings focusing on everyday domestic scenes, portraiture from the aristocracy as well as the middle class, the rise of the novel, made the ordinary lives of the middle classes the center of attention. When we look at literary works closely, the same evolution is at work. That is, literary traditions from the nineteenth century realism and naturalism, and later modernist novels, writings of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, continuously focused on everydayness of life. Also, the practice of putting the genuine subject matter other than the high class as the representative of everyday life can be seen in impressionism. Especially in artists Edouard Manet and Berthe Morisot, it can be seen as a practice which aims to compete with highly accomplished paintings that dominated the Paris Salon and as a way to provocation (Highmore 24). Modern western art, likewise, “exhibits an uneasy relation with everyday life.” Such as in the “cubist

collages of Picasso, Duchamp's ready-mades, a urinal for instance, and pop art-which had made the commercial culture the subject matter of itself- are ways of critiques of the everyday of their time" (ibid).

Moreover, the development of photography, which in a sense is the freedom for anyone reaching a portraiture, made subject matter of the public change. As photograph came into the everyday lives of individuals, families, groups; the public notion started to represent the public as a whole and their everyday lives'. Starting from the twentieth century developments like photo-journalism, documentary, television, direct cinema and its notion fly on the wall, recently twenty four hour webcams showing people eating, sleeping, washing, working brought a totally different sense of mass public. By these developments, public's accessibility to everything as the way it is (of course questionable) about the daily has been made possible. Thus, Habermas' 'public' notion belonging to medieval time is now pulled down to the level of the majority.

A second perspective, however, concentrates on the negative effect of technological innovations -television, cinema, internet, photography on cultural dynamics due to power relationships which concerns "their relation to the development of new forms of social discipline and the forms of surveillance these have generated" (Bennett and Watson xi). Technological innovation is a gate to social control and it is a well known fact that the control is best exercised on society when everyone is controlled individually. According to Foucault, "individualization is the greatest where sovereignty is exercised and in the higher echelons of power" (192). This is

because these were regimes “in which power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested” (187). Bennett and Watson say that “the power of the king, for example, depended on images of royal power being put into public circulation and magnified through the spectacles of palaces, tournaments and processions. By contrast, those over whom power was exercised in such regimes -the peasantry and artisans, for example- tended to remain ‘in the shade’, eclipsed in significance by a power that entirely overshadowed them” (xii). Thus, it can be said that the people or groups (here kings or royal class) who exercise power are visible and people whom the power is implemented on are anonymous, invisible. Conversely, when we think of recent modern forms of discipline which Foucault points at -the prison, the asylum, the police, the hospital, the school for instance- we see that the power which is exercised from these institutions is invisible, anonymous and bureaucratized and the target which the power is exercised upon is apparent. For example, the prisoners in prisons, the patients in asylums, children in schools are made all visible with the hands of these institutions in order to be better controlled. By keeping the records of every individual (personal ID and driving licence of citizens, fingerprints, photographs in prisons, grades in schools, reports of the patients in hospitals and asylums) every individual is better regulated. Moreover, other than implementing a single power disseminated on a mass (which would break its power a lot) now power is examined on every individual through an accumulation of information (reports) and thus becomes a lot more potent. This is ‘Descending Individualization’ in Foucault’s terms. Hence, as

Watson suggests, an interest in knowing more about the everyday lives of ordinary people begins to emerge.

Of course the level of technology determines the strength of the power that is going to be implemented. When we consider the time period from Foucault's time until today, we can see the positive correlation between technology and power. As technology becomes more complex (e-government, police cameras located on streets), all citizens' records kept in computers made us (as citizens) lose our center in determining the focus of power as a concrete entity. When compared with the past, it is clear that by textual, digital and visual means of our history as well as our everyday lives are recorded incessantly by governmental institutions. Looking from here, *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol 1997) seems just the evolution of what Foucault has asserted.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF THE EVERYDAY: MAKING THE EVERYDAY LIFE VISIBLE THROUGH ITS PRACTITIONERS

The concept of everyday life is believed to appear in western social thought, in the work of George Lukacs, who borrowed the term from German Sociologist, George Simmel, who derived it first from the accounts of daily social routines and rituals. According to Lukacs, “everyday was a mode of relating to the social world in which existing relationships were spontaneously reproduced in and through daily routines which are simply taken for granted” (qtd. in Bennett and Watson xiv). Heidegger, who was influenced from this aspect of Lukacs, defined the term ‘everyday’ by its ‘banality’. That is, the run of the trivial, repetitive daily cycles of mundane activities, through which things and living itself became taken for granted. In addition, Henri Lefebvre(1991) spending his career working on the problem of the critique of everyday life defined the term as “what is left over after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis” (97). According to Bennett and Watson, Lefebvre, while agreeing with Lukacs and Heidegger, sought to build the everyday life

theory on a sociological base in order to unveil its relation to the life and specific conditions of the daily under industrial capitalism (xiv). Marx argued that, “the survival of capitalism relied upon its establishment of ‘natural order of things’ which prevented the working class from perceiving and understanding the true nature of their socio-economic circumstances” (Bennett 2).

Gardiner says from the eighteenth century to post war era there have been two central approaches within modernist sociology: Systems and micro-oriented, interpretive approach. In systems perspective, the individuals and their social behaviour are considered as the same. Also, they were regarded as passive creatures internalizing external social roles. So, in a way they act to reproduce social structures, institutions without criticizing. As Gardiner suggests, “culture and society operate as overarching, objective systems that function to integrate the individual into the whole” (4). Systems perspective which lasted for many decades were supported by Durkheim, Comte, Parsons, and Orthodox Marxism. So, the systems perspective which considers its individuals as a seria-type for reproduction of capitalism also considers the sphere of everyday life “as a space for the domination and exploitation of the individual subject” (Bennett 2). By the end of the nineteenth century, opposite perspective emerged as a reaction to the first and was exemplified by Max Weber, George Herbert Mead, Wilhelm Dilthey, Heinrich Rickert. Its basic idea was that, it was inadequate to degrade human into a stereotype so as to claim that what they internalized was the same. It also carried the following idea that:

It was not enough simply to describe the functioning of a structure, system or institution and that one must also have an interpretive understanding of the latter's uses, of how human beings develop an 'insider's knowledge' of particular social processes and utilize this understanding so as to act in a voluntaristic and creative fashion. (Gardiner 4)

Even it is both argued by Weber and Mead that 'this internalization of social forms' of individuals will create 'potential for self-motivated' rather than 'passive obedience'. In contrast to the thought of systems perspective that underestimates the contribution of diverse individual behaviour to the external norms as internalization; Weber states that although social relation and its manipulation is inherited inside capitalism, it is a fact that how these social relations are manifested will be up to each individual's creativity and articulation. Moreover, micro-oriented approach suggests that there is a vast richness on the everyday trivialities in each individual and it is not right to give up on those datas for the sake of reaching general and abstract principles. The ingrained social norms' power behind the veil of mundanity and ordinariness of everyday life may be best uttered by Lefebvre (2000): "there was a power concealed in everyday life's apparent banality, a depth beneath its triviality, something extraordinary in its very ordinariness" (37). In the postwar period, micro-interpretative approach spread to a variety of other microsociologies, including ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, the phenomenology of Schütz, Berger, Luckman and Goffman's 'dramaturgy'. In addition to this, Gardiner

in Critiques of Everyday Life points out that the indexical meanings shaped and formed by individual actors are inseparable from the significance of everyday life. This interpretation to everyday life which sees individuals as social actors is further developed by Erving Goffman. He used this approach while applying of his dramaturgical model of everyday interaction. Goffman adopted Shakespeare's famous line that 'all the world is a stage and we are all players' in his book. Moreover, Highmore suggests: "Goffman recognizes that the self is a collection of performances that take place in and across specific locations. By employing a set of tropes that are associated with theatre and gaming (play, stage, set and so on), Goffman's approach to the everyday suggests an inventory of performances spatially arranged across the geography of everyday life (50). In Gardiner's opinion, although this approach ascribes the individual a more active and voluntaristic function in relation to the daily life, it still considers the everyday itself "as a relatively homogenous and undifferentiated set of attitudes, practices and cognitive structures" (3).

In the twentieth and twenty-first century, the concept of homogeneity found its dual part, heterogeneity, as theorists came to the conclusion that culture in everyday life has its dynamics, which is made up of diversity changing through time. As a result, it is suggested that it is no more a homogenous sphere where every individual, group, culture acts in the same manners but a pluralistic and contested area which can be called as cultural fragmentation according to Chaney (4). In discussions, it is said that at the root of this transformation of everyday life lies two main reasons. The first

one is the breakdown of modernity and so the breakdown of the beliefs belonging to macro tendencies which have innate communalities at heart. Second, according to Chaney (2002, 1996), it is the relatively increasing and encompassing power of media and cultural industries which created a new form of identity based mainly on leisure and consumption. Lefebvre focuses on the same issue claiming that modern world is the product of industrialization and the state and/or corporate state's aim is to make people consume more (Wander viii). Means of consuming is mainly through advertising. He goes on to say that advertisement makes people consume by instilling fear "such as fear of being out of fashion, fear of not being young and attractive, being odd etc" (ibid).

From then onwards, humanity of late modern era where each individual shapes his/her personality with what s/he reflects from the culture and media industry is born. Hence, a way of life lived in commonality dissolves and one cannot talk about a homogeneous structure regarding to a society anymore. Thus, the commodification of culture unavoidably effects our everyday. Though workers' everyday lives are formed by leisure and work, the dialectical relationship between leisure and everyday (here work time) cannot be reduced to a simple separation like weekdays and weekends as Highmore also states (226). While in early industrial societies, the work cycle was arranged according to the industrial time and leisure was regarded as residual, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries leisure and consumption increasingly gained importance as commodification and rationalization of time and space came forth. According to Lefebvre (2000),

this rationalization requires great penetration to everyday life (53-60). Until the advent of bourgeois society, everyday life merged with productive labour-peasants and craftsmen's work and leisure. According to Highmore, what differentiates peasant's life from today's industrial worker's life is 'precisely this inherence of productive activity in their life in its entirety' (227). The work place is all around the house; work is not separate from the everyday life of the family. Formerly the imperatives of the peasant community (the village) were regulated not only by the way work and domestic life was organised, but by festivals as well. Hence, in an environment where leisure and work are held up together rather than individually, people committed to communality and their groups will develop. Moreover, the community or groups rather than the individuals will embrace the everyday altogether.

With bourgeois society this possibility was turned upside down. With the changing dynamics of life, individuals, for whom festivals were the natural part of their community, started to get separated, individualistic and inward looking. The indirect pressure on consumption discussed above internalised individualistic living. Furthermore, private spheres and lives were separated as much as from public life. People were made self-conscious and concerned of their appearance and for the profitability of marketing economy. This situation may be best illustrated in Lefebvre's example:

Our bodies should be slim, clean, unblemished (women's hands should be 'baby soft' to be attractive). We must be aware of our teeth (are they white enough?), our mouths (are they kissable?), our armpits (do they stink?), our feet (are they dry?)...Trained in a market economy to look upon ourselves as commodities and to worry over whether or not we are sufficiently pleasing and attractive, we confront an enormous corporate complex accentuating our insecurities and, in effect, selling us back to ourselves. Painted over, sprayed, powdered, covered in ways that are fashionable and therefore attractive, we purchase the ability to feel good about ourselves. (Wander xv)

The role of commodification culture on our lives is, without doubt, a crucial one. Due to the encompassing and universal nature of the media, there is no avenue left for the individuals' shaping and articulating their own critical thoughts or actions. With this lack of critical thought mechanism among individuals, a form of everyday knowledge and understanding leading to a form of everyday life is established and controlled by the mechanism of (capitalist)system, which are bureaucracy and administration. By this way, capitalism at pace is kept organized, maintained and survived. How this is managed over masses is according to the rearrangement of what Marx calls 'the natural order of things'. According to Marx and Engels, the relationship between the material actuality of everyday life and the way we perceive it is distorted or 'upside-down as in camera obscura' in Marx and Engel's terms (68). As a result, the happenings we perceive and confirm in

daily are not the second nature of everyday life but what is embedded. There is an 'actuality behind actuality' in everyday life in Marx terms. The most difficult part of everyday life is that it does not give up itself easily. According to Lefebvre (2000), "Everyday life refers to dull routine, the ongoing go-to-work, pay the bills, homeward trudge of daily existence" (vii). However, everyday life should not be understood as merely the things we do in a day but rather a way of living that we think as a given/second nature. For Highmore, for instance, everyday life is not simply the name that is given to a reality readily available for scrutiny; it is also the name for aspects of life hidden and according to Felski, everyday life is above all a temporal term. As such, "it conveys the fact of repetition" (qtd. in Watson 46). Repetition also plays an important role on how things become daily and usual as it refers to what happens 'day after day'. As Felski suggests that everyday life is based on three key factors: time, space and modality. "The temporality of everyday...is that of repetition, the spatial ordering of the everyday is anchored in a sense of home and the characteristic mode of experiencing the everyday is that of habit" (qtd. in Watson 272). So, though repetition seems harmless, in fact, it effects the whole characteristic of societies slowly, indirectly through the familiar, mundane, routine and daily. The significance of it can be grasped from Ludtke: "The first stresses everyday activities in which an element of 'repetitiveness' predominates" (5). Peter Borscheid explains this perspective as everyday thinking and action becoming pragmatic through routines which function in taking the burden of uncertainties or doubts from the individual's shoulders. As for

social groups/institutions he used the word 'submission to authority' for routinization (qtd. in Ludtke 5). Furthermore, Felski points out the Lefebvre's categorization of linear and cyclical time in her article, *The Invention of Everyday Life*, where Lefebvre explains everyday life itself as the cyclical one against linear which is defined as forward-moving. For him, everyday life's circadian, repetitive character are the ones that lack progress and accumulation (ibid). Activities like sleeping, eating and working which are in turn embedded in large cycles of repetition like annual holidays, starting term, the weekend are the core features of everyday life as both fascinating and complicating (ibid). The cyclical times (weekend, annual holiday, term) shown as the main features of everyday life unfortunately go back to and are the extensions of 'clock time' which is established during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for work discipline and efficiency in labor. By this way, a new form of time discipline (time-clocks, punch cards) is imposed and the workers arrange both their work life and leisure accordingly (qtd. in Watson 144).

By the advancement in technology, the time and space notion has been transformed into the notion of today's world. Present day's capitalism has developed space as an abstraction some of which are network of banks, e-government, business transactions, prolific enterprises linked by airports, motorways and the recent communication technologies. According to Manuel Castells, we are at the age of network society, where the space notion as we have known (house, neighbourhood, nation, locality) is no longer the case. Instead what should be understood as space is "global

flows”; that is, the movements of people, products and ideas between the main points in a network (443). Moreover, against the industrial society’s clock time, Castell’s network society is timeless. Some of Castell’s examples for it are split-second capital transactions in global markets, the growth of part-time and shift work, weekend and evening work, emerging culture of internet. Not only concrete values but also abstract values such as moral values are at a huge change in today’s fast paced world. As Lefebvre (2000) suggests “we are undergoing the uneasy mutation of our major ‘values’, the mutation of an epoch” (52-53).

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO TEAR THE VEIL

No matter how difficult it was to tear the veil and to reach the actuality behind the actuality of everyday life, theorists claimed diverse suggestions. According to Jameson, approaching from a Brechtian method for instance, “the theory of estrangement, which always takes off from the numbness and familiarity of everyday life, must always estrange us from the everyday” (84). In other words, Jameson suggests that alienation is the estrangement from the familiar habits, which brings the ordinary into everyday life through repetition. The concept will be better grasped by Bennett and Watson’s claim of everyday life which is about the mundane, routine, ordinary and habitual/self evident aspects of life, which are generally taken for granted and therefore not asked critical questions about. Bennett and Watson say:

By suspending our everyday assumptions about the world, we can approach everyday events with a fresh eye, as if they were ‘anthropologically strange’ to us. In adopting this approach, we are better able to suspend the ‘natural attitude’ (Schütz and Luckmann 1974) and gain new insights into these everyday processes and experiences. (189)

Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross adds another rung to the ladder by suggesting that besides estrangement from one's life and acts, a critical look at everyday is a must. According to Kaplan and Ross, "to advance a theory of everyday life is to elevate lived experience to the status of a critical concept- not merely in order to describe lived experience, but in order to change it" (qtd. in Highmore 77). In one of his writings called *Work and Leisure in Everyday Life*, Lefebvre presents his admiration to Chaplin for his intelligence and success in showing us the actuality behind actuality. According to Lefebvre, we live the actuality in its upside downness. So we see a distorted and reverse image of what it is. In order to reach the original one, Highmore suggests, we have to realise/find the "illusory reverse image" of the real world. And this can be achieved by making the critique of everyday life (230–231). Williams gives us a hint in *Culture is Ordinary* by sharing his memories of his childhood with us as an alternative method for realising what has changed from those days:

To grow up in that country was to see the shape of a culture and its mode of a culture and its modes of change... To grow up in that family was to see the shaping of minds: the learning of new skills, the shifting of relationships, the emergence of different languages and ideas. (7)

This perfectly matches with Bennett and Watson's definition made on the previous page that is, we suspend our taken for granted acceptance of everyday as it is normal and consciously perceived. According to Highmore,

the most effective way is to ask the basic questions for our lives and pose the problem such as “*How* is our life? *How* are we satisfied with it? Dissatisfied?” (241). Moreover, the question of *how* to register the everyday might lie in our attention to it and in our representation of it (19).

The following of this paper will be dealing with *Chungking Express*. The main reason why I picked this film is because I think *Chungking Express* represents a critique of everyday and more. It can be seen that just like Highmore, Wong Kar-Wai seeks to picturize today’s everyday life by asking basic questions over *How*. How are our daily lives? How is today’s fast paced world? How do we feel as individuals in everyday life? Unhappy, melancholic, distant, dissatisfied? According to Highmore, form is a crucial thing as one presents everyday through a medium (book, film, etc.) and that form which extends to everyday life theory should continually miss what it seeks (ibid). And it is seen that Wong Kar-Wai clung to this very notion not only in *Chungking Express* but also in other films in order to portrait it. According to Highmore, “To fail to criticize everyday life today means accepting the prolongation of the present thoroughly rotten forms of culture and politics”(239-240). In this sense Wong Kar-Wai portraits and criticizes today’s fast paced world over protagonist’s everyday lives while completing the general picture of everyday life in macro scale; that is, today’s modern world. In the following chapter, I will look through and analyze *Chungking Express* in detail to uncover/present the politics and poetics of everyday life, which leads to loss of identity connected with globalisation.

CHAPTER V

A CASE STUDY: A CRITIQUE OF EVERYDAY LIFE OVER *CHUNGKING EXPRESS*

To reach reality we must indeed tear away the veil, that veil which is forever being born and reborn of everyday life, and which masks everyday life along with its deepest or loftiest implication. (Lefebvre 1991: 57)

This section of the research aims to make a critique of everyday life in today's fast paced world, focusing on the drawbacks of modern societies while keeping its relationship with economy. It gets its supporting examples mostly from *Chungking Express* and from *To Die (or Not)* as they hold pertinent components with the topic.

What everyday life takes from us is the freedom of going on journeys which are realized not only physically but also mentally in order to attain a grain of truth about the daily. Experience and practical action, according to Bakhtin, is what can lead us toward physical journey (qtd. in Gardiner 49). Spatiality is an important feature for human beings because of their experiences perceived by five senses through which they perceive/realize the environment, the world itself. Everyday life seems to

cut off a vital part of humanity when it separates freedom of bodily experiences with its hidden walls that can neither be seen nor realized. Realisation of the 'spatial boundaries' like in *The Truman Show*, Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey) realizing he had been living in an artificial space by touching the concrete artificial horizon line would have been a fair way to play the game if we could have seen the boundaries in life concretely. Thus, crossing the spaces whose boundaries are concrete (like the moment Truman goes out of the decor and steps in the actual world or the moment in our lives when we pass from one country's border into another) is important and gives us the feeling that the everyday life is self evident; in fact it conceals the unsolved huge problem underneath while showing an illusion of a useless and nonexistent solution as transparent. This transparent part is recognised by us as routines of everyday life and this misled realization towards everyday, while creating no alienation towards the ordinary. As Ben Highmore says that the unproblematic acceptance of everyday life creates no option for insisting on the questioning the transparency of the daily (1). If we use a metaphor, it is like an iceberg which only the top part can be seen while the big part, the real threat, is hidden under the sea. Moreover, it is not only visually but also physically/materially invisible. When we come across this iceberg, we come across with its hidden part (under the water) but we are not even conscious that it is the hidden; that is to say, the threat and we are incessantly damaged by it. We are still in delusion; since we rather conceive it as the upper part. On the other hand, if we came across with this threat where society embodied itself as concrete

one-bodily-mass force (or as 'total man' as Lefebvre calls), it would be revealing for humanity since the origin of hitting would be comprehended (we would know whom we are dealing with). In addition, the physical and mental pain and damage it had created on us would be felt all at once, by everybody, in a single moment, not fragmented in a life time.

Everyday life and its problematic nature becomes unquestioned as it adapts, subordinates us to itself gradually day by day. Even the sources of its hitting and damages become unquestioned. Progress of this dimension gives signals of a terrorist society of Lefebvre when every individual becomes an agent of the damaging (system) exercised on other individuals and other living things (Gardiner 94-95).

Questioned or not, through life, a feeling of discomfort, an unhappiness in general, a dissatisfaction that cannot be named but only felt, remains. Because it is the outcome of everyday damage which we are unconscious of its everyday stabbings since it is out of focus and just lives an unnamed, uncomfortable feeling towards life behind and a gap we are unable to fill in.

Being out of focus for the distractions of everyday life and the lack of the required knowledge which will make us conscious (which everyday life conceals in itself); makes most people believe in reloaded meanings for feeding their disillusionments about life. Moreover, these disillusionments are seen as an inherent part of life. So, the struggles we do in daily life are regarded as usual chores where no other way of life is questioned today. Here Bakhtin's identification of forces is on the line as he explains the

existence of two different forces in social world. The former, in which an individual does not have a will to change is the official forces of stasis and fixity, and the latter one is the unofficial which seeks to move, diversify and change (Gardiner 61). The constructed reasoning of the official forces names the perceived reality and names the reason for damages as fate, misfortunes and unluck. The real life and the life perceived, according to Karl Marx, are totally different. That is why the source of the problematic nature of everyday life cannot be traced or that is why there is no willingness on the side of human beings to question it since the world's ongoing life and as a subordinate 'everyday life' are seen as a given (as the only truth). A concrete statement as strict as $2 + 2 = 4$ where the components or the solution, or who/which sources designed this equation is not questioned. Rather, surviving in it and adapting yourself to it gains importance. For most of the people, understandably, it is seen as a fact and needless to contemplate over it. The only people who can break the lack of knowledge and go beyond the perceived everyday actuality are the minority such as intellectuals, theoreticians since the majority neither has time to read enough nor has opportunity to access a variety of knowledge; therefore they will not be able to reach the level of knowledge and insight acquired by the minority. So, the system and its means mould the majority gradually and they are unfortunately unconscious of the transformation.

Like the construction of a mathematical equation; thousands of social, economic, political, cultural, gender related equations are built in daily life. These equations are also divided into other subequations within

themselves which are interwoven and interrelated with each other. What we experience is the effects of these equations we are exposed to, as a result of chores everyday. These constructions build and encompass the perceived everyday actuality. The static component of the fundamental equations in everyday life under the system of capitalism evolves its stages in Marx's terms leading to "fetishism of commodity" (Gardiner 77). Exchange value of goods are determined according to how much profit they will bring to the owner of that capital. So, the material is not determined according to human needs. As a result of the profit making mentality, economy is shaped by the amount of consumption where the exchange value of things supersede their use value (Gardiner 76). And the outcome is all kinds of commodities waiting to be consumed by 'consumer society'. As Lefebvre supports this with the following, "For neo capitalism to continue its expansion, everyday life has to be increasingly rationalized and integrated into the cycles of production and consumption" (qtd. in Gardiner 90–91). So, the vicious circle renews itself in order to go on making profit. Hence, for the sake of feeding the circle, new and fresh labels, brands as well as entertainments, pleasures are recreated and they are spread to every part of the world where any sign of consumption is foreseen by the help of the open economy and trade between countries, named as the global multi-national capitalism as a new stage in capitalist development by Mandel (MacCabe ix). In the light of this piece of information, we can understand the logic of what Wong Kar-Wai says over everyday in *Chungking Express*, when the spectator hears thoughts of the first cop (Cop 223) about expired pineapple cans as he sits

on a sidewalk in front of the supermarket, asking to himself: “Everything expires... I wonder if there is anything which could retain its value forever.” Here, Wong Kar-Wai does not merely mention any material objects’ being out-of- date, but also mentions any value melting while losing its uniqueness every other second as well, in a commodified culture woven in economic tissues in everyday life.

Gardiner says that although “leisure cannot be separated arbitrarily from other spheres of social life, especially work”(84), in modern society they are separated from each other. This separation where work outweighs, determines our spaces in daily life. For example, in *Chungking Express* the latter police’s (Cop 633) choice of Midnight Express (The Snack Bar) is because it is located in his working area. Thinking over our daily lives, an everyday life, rarely permits one to go out of the routine. The separation of leisure and work time may also hamper one discover new places. One cannot, for instance, buy a ticket for a bus in order to go and discover a new place which is unvisited even if it is in the local area one has been living for twenty years. It could be either because one has no time because of work or it could be a dream action that is always thought about but is always postponed because of upcoming priorities of everyday. It could also be because one has no interest or willingness to discover a new place. One way or the other, our personal experience towards the unknown place and inhabitants of it becomes blank, remote and ‘other’ for us. In addition, pieces of information attained from various means of media such as television can be one sided and misleading about that unknown territory.

The set of meanings toward an 'other' may be created genuinely when one gets information by physically being there and being exposed to it. Standing side by side with the other, being face to face and with a dialogue, the line between the borders of me and the other may also be erased. Through the writings of Lefebvre it can be seen that he sees communication as a way to the problem of everyday life. "He calls for dialogue, face to face communication over ways of improving the quality of life for ordinary people" (Wander xi). Although we can make up several other combinations of the probabilities for not buying a ticket to an unknown place in our twenty year-life time spent in a city, in the end, all reasons boil down to the same result: A state where we think we control our own lives as free people having the illusion that we own certain things, instead we are stuck by spatial terrains we have to be in.

If we think ourselves as a dot on a particular plane in everyday life, this plane we walk on, is shaped according to our direction. It is not unfortunately a terrain that we cannot draw any border (like when Alice falls into the Wonderland) but a place where we circle in the same geometrical terrain while drawing the borders of everyday. In a plane in everyday life, we usually end up with drawing a couple of lines or a triangle. Workers, for example, that commute between the office and home makes a straight line. As some have the advantage of drawing more directions than others in everyday life plane, they may form a polygon because of their economic advantages (wealthy people's opportunity to go out more often or having vacation a couple of times a year makes

fragmented polygons in everyday life next to their other routine triangled terrains). The more it is travelled, the more sides the polygons have. Still it is inadequate in recognizing 'the other' and 'otherness'. In everyday life, we are continuously 'other' for somebody and they will stay as an 'other' for us as "each of us occupies a unique time/space, we can see and experience things others cannot, within our sphere of self-activity" as Gardiner suggests (54). From the aspect of the "other", the reverse is also true. However, our visual fields neither overlap nor complement one another unless one takes off one's armor and masks and starts "dialogical", engaged, embodied, unprejudiced relation to the other and to the world at large (ibid).

Not only commodities (economic values), but also ethical values are reformed and exchanged between cultures. As in *Chungking Express*, we find ourselves in the rush of everyday life. An everyday life that we can only catch a glimpse and by this way realize how fast it goes during slow motion scenes of *Chungking Express*. This is the realization of now, and just after now. As Highmore suggests, "Things become 'everyday' by becoming invisible, unnoticed, part of the furniture"(21). In *Chungking Express*, what Wong Kar-Wai does is to make the unnoticed contents and the fast pace of everyday life visible. It is like catching a ghost close to you and making it visible by spreading a paint on it or taking a picture of it, or drawing a portrait of it. Within a day, people pass if not come into contact with dozens of others. In order to find the essence of everyday, Wong Kar-Wai points out the tangency of two bodies (Cop 223 and Woman in blonde wig) coming across by chance in a single moment and freezing at that second in

the rush of everyday life. By this way, first, the director picks up that moment, unnoticed piece of experience with tweezers from the hands of everyday life, which will otherwise be thrown into a pile of rubbish of everyday life after a second it is lived, and also, he codes, writes that moment to make it eternal.

Another feature of the film is how different things come together and make a unique organism in postmodern era. Living the same 'human experience' in daily life even if we do not know. For instance, In *Chungking Express*, two cops do not meet till the end of the film but they are both dumped by their girlfriends and they both live the same frustration. Moreover, they go to the same snack bar, Midnight Express, at different times of the days and listen to the advice of the same manager. Another example is Cop 633 as well as the latter girl (Faye) who works in the Midnight Express have the same habits like talking to objects. They like playing with the same toys (such as the small model of an airplane) in the same style.

Hong Kong depicted in *Chungking Express* lets us realize coinciding, intersecting parallel experiences, modes of inhabitants from other metropolitan cities (such as Istanbul, Newyork, Tokyo) in the terrain of everyday life through the same city signs, buildings, city design and global brands which encompass us and which we are all familiar with. Global Businesses, such as chain restaurants, determine the stereotypes of life in the places they are built in. The brands like Mc Donalds, Coca Cola,

which are usually inherent in the scenes of *Chungking Express*, signal how cultures are becoming the same. As Tomlinson suggests:

The perception here is that everywhere in the world is beginning to look and feel the same. Cities in any part of the world display uniform features determined, for example, by the demands of automobiles; architectural styles become similar; shops display a uniform range of goods; airports, the potential gateway to cultural diversity- have an almost identical 'international' style. Western popular music issues from radios and cassette players from New York to Delhi.
(qtd. in Bennett 66)

At this point where global brands instil their own culture and ideology through culture and where cultures are transferred between countries (mostly from hegemonic powers of the world to the others), the borders between cultures get blurred and intertwined. (Although when we look closely, it can be seen that the domestic culture and the outsider do not overlap). For instance, Faye listens to California Dreaming continuously during the day. After a couple of scenes, Faye, her actions, the song 'California Dreaming' as well as the place it is played and all that the lyrics signify become a unique mixture. Another example of how cultures are inseparably knitted into each other can be seen Highmore's depiction of young Chinese adults walking in the street of Beijing, with dyed blonde hair, listening to Chinese and USA pop on personal stereos, eating a traditional meal in the family apartment. Likewise, in *Chungking Express*,

we can find a Chinese woman (Ching-hsia Lin) with a blonde wig, red framed sun glasses wearing a raincoat and with high heeled shoes (resembling a star of an American film) who is also doing a job with an American drug seller and preparing Indians for this job while talking in English in the terrain of Hong Kong.

Not only signs but by signs, an everyday life mood also intersects, shows parallelism between people from these cities around the world. Feelings of loneliness, emptiness, dissatisfaction, unhappiness, drifting, depression, suppression, indifference, putting distance, exhaustion becomes the common denominator of city dwellers. Relations are also negatively influenced by the consumer society. That is to say, consumer society have a negative impact on relationships. At the beginning of *Chungking Express*, the effort of Cop 223 in order to give a direction to his life can be an example for this. He says that he will find another girlfriend if he does not get together with his ex-girlfriend (May) until a certain day. Throughout the film the way he looks at the opposite sex is for the sake of having a girlfriend. But whom she will be has almost no significance. After getting no answer from May, he starts to call other ex- girlfriends and asks all of them one by one to go out with him that night. Most of the girls are at their houses representing the private sphere which female belongs to in a postmodern era to stay away from the potential dangers of the public sphere dominated by male gender. Also, the manager of Midnight Express, Chen Jinquan, advises the young cop about girls in general and about girls he can go out that night in his buffet. Manager warns the cop to be quick at asking

the other girl at the snack bar for a date since she is going to be picked up by a potential rival sitting at the snack bar. At that moment we sense a kind of a consuming culture in couples' relationships as well, where everybody can have a lover for the sake of having one and search for others rightafter. This way of living everyday evolves the relationships by first emptying its values; secondly transforming them into exchangable objects like commodities. So, it can be said that consumer culture not only effects commodities (like food and drink) but also effects the dynamics of relationships.

Suppose we have an imaginary list in our hands. Everyday life changes the ranking so that the issues related with money have the priority. In addition, it has the power even to convert ethical values into commodities. Such a way of everyday life indirectly push people to pursue happiness in materiality. The reason for this false-consciousness can be traced in Lefebvre's words as the elusive feature of today's society is depicted:

We are now entering the vast domain of the illusory reverse image. What we find is a false world firstly because it is not a world, and because it mimics real life closely in order to replace the real by its opposite, by replacing real unhappiness by fictions of happiness, for example by offering a fiction in response to the real need of happiness.
(1991: 35)

He concludes with Marcuse's argument that "repressively tolerant system of late capitalism is capable of replacing genuine human needs", like pursuing happiness, "with false ones", in materiality (qtd. in Gardiner 85).

Consequently, a disalienation to the daily, which presents itself as self evident, hardly occurs, since world based sophisticated equations are genuinely interwoven with everyday life. It forces us to keep running at times in which we should stop and take time in order to look around to realize what is going on in everyday life. The inferred solution of Highmore can be thought of importing Brechtianism into everyday life to defamiliarize as Brecht did for theatre. That is, estrangement and alienation from everyday life. By this way, questioning and being aware of everyday trivialities as well as false-consciousnesses -like pursuing happiness on materiality- may be possible by estranging from the ordinary (Highmore 19-23). *To Die (or Not)* becomes a good example for this since it offers both taking moments and being estranged from the common place values of modern world as well as the realization process of what it really is.

Taking a moment like in *To Die (or Not)* -during the car accident scene- where life stops for a short time can be the moment the life itself is revealed and uncovered just as it was for the young boy on a motorcycle. A protagonist who is a director explains the recent script he is planing to write to his wife. According to the script, on a usual night in Spain a police car hits a motorcycle and this young boy falls onto the ground. All of a sudden the surrounding of the boy freezes and he hears a god-like voice coming from the top. The voice briefly asks what type of a future he would like to

have if he survived from this accident. The young boy depicts his dream of being very rich, popular, having a lot of women right away. In few seconds his wish, just as the way he depicted, comes true. He realizes how dull and meaningless life he would have as he witnesses his 70-year lifespan in a few seconds. After he sees himself at the age of 85 dying in bed as a lonely man, he is back to the accident moment again. The god like voice asks the young boy to choose between his wish and his present situation warning that he can die because of the accident. The boy says he wants to chance on his life at present. The young boy is managed to be brought to the hospital before he dies. He takes a different approach to life after the accident.

Here it is seen that 'taking a moment' is picturized in its exact literal meaning where the young boy physically takes a moment of his life to stop, think and decide about what he really would like to do in life. Even the saying 'taking a moment' is exaggerated in the film when the world freezes during his decision. In the film, the only place where the diegetic world stops while leaving a character alone with the director's voice (The god-like voice supersedes with the director's voice from time to time with intercuts which makes us think that the source of the god-like voice is the director) is this scene. The god-like voice which is also realized by us as the director commenting on an actor and in addition to this, the freezing scene where the diegetic world stops, creates self-conscious effect towards the film. Estrangement for both parties, for the young boy and for the spectator, is inherent in the scene of car accident. For the young motorcyclist, he saw physical impossibilities that do not occur in real life (freezing of the

surrounding, talking with an omnipotent voice) which makes him defamiliarized from the daily and second he realized the false-conscious base of his beliefs. From the spectator's sight, the realization the boy went through plus the self-conscious effect of the scene which resembles a theatrical sketch has an alienation effect on the spectator towards daily life.

Since we are not lucky to have a god-like voice giving us a second chance on determining what kind of a life we would like to have, a realization like the boy's on the motorcycle does not happen in life. In order to realize, taking moments in the rush of everyday, looking everyday itself and by this way, looking ourselves from the top to realize how everyday life evolves around us may be a good start.

CHAPTER VI

JIGSAW PUZZLE: EVERYDAY LIFE IN ISTANBUL

Space is an inevitable notion for human beings since we perceive the world in terms of time and space. When we talk about our experiences, our hopes, our thoughts in general, we give information about time and space directly/indirectly. Even after our dreams, where the concepts of ‘space and time’ seem to be weak, insignificant and nearly absent, we try to define the spaces we were in (if not the time) to the listener in order to make a meaningful whole out of it. So, if it is a crucial part of our lives, it must also be important for the small bits of our lives- that is our daily lives. As Jameson stated, “I think that it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space” (qtd. in Miles, Hole and Borden 29). These categories of spaces physically constitute urban life -which is the city. So when an event happens or when we act any time in our daily life we stand in the terrain of the city. In other words “ ‘A city is a set of practices’, it is the place where things happen and people act” (Miles, Hole and Borden 2). Just like *Chungking Express*, whose narration is strongly related with city life, Hong Kong’s life, I constitute my narration over the city, Istanbul. I chose

the spaces in Istanbul according to the spaces that construct the duality of everyday life in terms of space- that is public versus private, outside versus inside and home versus street. As Watson also asserts, “The home has often been seen as the archetypal site of everyday life, the scene of habit and repetition and of those cyclical relations of ‘everyday time’ particularly associated with women” (xix). On the other hand, in everyday life theory it is men who are associated with street. Because women stay inside due to housework or the reasons for safety. In my short film I try to show both spaces’ (home and outside) dwellers since they both constitute the parts of everyday life and since understanding the totality (which was one of Lefebvre’s names for the everyday) is not siding with general versus particular but weaving the two together (Highmore 14). That is why I tried to show people both in public and private spheres. Meanwhile, I tried to show if it was the same case that men dominated public sphere and women the private sphere in Istanbul. In the end, from what I have seen I reached the result that it is usually men who dominate streets as workers and women are usually workers at their homes or other houses. Apart from people who belong completely to inside or outside spaces, there are people who belong to the both which I found very interesting and worthy to mention about. One of them was a taxi driver, which can be seen in the short film. Although the taxi driver strolls in streets (that is outside) his direct contact with the outside is cut by a sphere -that is the car (inside). So a taxi driver is neither in outside nor inside world but in the middle.

As work and leisure duality in everyday life theory is one of the corner stones on the way to understand the daily life of a culture, I have based the short film on the same duality. So the characters were filmed during their leisure time and some while working and some doing both in their everyday life routines. But rather than creating poles between leisure and work, I tried to weave them together. By this way not only the distinction between leisure and work was blurred but also the protagonist's distinctions because of their backgrounds became trivial. My intention is to display if not the sameness then close similarity and differences of the characters supposedly leading different styles of life through taking shots from their everyday lives. As Ben Highmore says: "Everyday life can both hide and make vivid a range of social differences. But it should be remembered that the production of recognisable difference initially required the manufacture of a sense of commonality. So the everyday has the potential ability of producing, not difference, but commonality"(2), in my short film the people coming from a variety of different ethnicity/social classes were shown in order to grab the poetics and the politics of the everyday and all these different lives were given as 'commonalities' through the medium of music.

We have had a glimpse of the way that everyday life theory circles around the dualities of relatively abstract categories such as local/global, particular/general, female/male, work/leisure, private/public, micro/macro, inside/outside,...etc. Amazed with the dualities everyday life and its theory inherits, I tried to show the other side of the duality which I have seen in

Chungking Express. As an equivalent of the everyday life of a metropolitan city, Hong Kong; my short film is a trial of everyday life in Istanbul. Moreover, As a complementary to the fleeting, melting, evaporating values of *Chungking Express*' everyday culture, I searched if there were any notions which succeeded to be static/unchanging against the pressure of modern time in my city, in my culture, in Istanbul. By this way, I hope to utter a new duality of 'fixed and fleeting' specific to today's everyday life.

Through my research I came to the conclusion that although many things evolved during the course of everyday life culture, Turkish Classical Music has managed to preserve its values till today for decades. Grossberg's point may give us a clue about why it is so. According to Grossberg, "an understanding of music 'requires asking what it gives to its fans, how it empowers them, how they empower it and what possibilities it enables them to appropriate in their everyday lives'" (qtd. in Bennett 118). Turkish Classical Music constitutes an invaluable and huge part of Turkish culture. It comes from the past. In other words, it refers to the old times, where values were counted, where things were not corrupted and part of the furniture. In other words, it inherits a world where things have not become ordinary, mundane, routine. Second, it reminds us the history of our culture and our city. As Harris and Sandresky put it:

Music plays a remarkable role in communicating a notion of the 'character' or style of emotional expression of a particular people, nationalities and historical periods. It has symbolised collective feelings of grief and joy, excitement and despair... the list could go on. (qtd. in De Nora 32)

Likewise, Turkish Classical Music symbolises collective feelings of grief and joy, excitement and despair. It reminds us the deep, bitter and sweet taste of eternal love; the importance of genuine love, nobility, sacrifice, modesty, honesty and kindness. The things which should make a human a humanbeing; but distorted in global world unfortunately. Lastly, it is unique and local since it remained the same against globalization and pop culture. So, it symbolizes the local part of the local/global duality.

Throughout the film the protagonists sing the same piece of Turkish Classical Music song while they act in everyday life. In the past leisure and work were interwoven. Later, with the changing world and dynamics, it was separated. In today's world, individuals work in order to earn their leisure. Furthermore, leisure has become a totally opposite term of work. Also, leisure is seen as an escape and a release from work. Embracing leisure as a way to free the mind from the daily work opens a backdoor for governments in manipulating masses. Manipulating leisure as a form of mass distraction is another way of social control (Bennett 14). And using music is an ingenious way to manipulate masses. According to Adorno, who is a musician himself, it is the popular music that functions for this purpose. He also adds that when music is reduced to a commodity form, standardisation

of music occurs (ibid). Here, the commodified is the popular music. According to Frith, “the question we should be asking is not what does popular music reveal about the people but how does it construct them”(137). According to Adorno, popular music has dumbing down effect on its listeners and this “contributes to the patterning and regulation of leisure time in capitalist society” (Bennett 15). Its formula is calculated as to produce specific and uniformed responses among the individuals who serve to the cycles of the dull. So, the individuals who are relieved from their boredom can not go outside the mundane and the everyday. On the other hand, art music gives a chance to transcend the mundane world by avoiding musical cliché and thinking beyond the mundane realities. Turkish Classical Music corresponds to Adorno’s notion of art music and all that it signifies in my short film. That is, it is not commodified. Not yet. It preserves a core full of meaning transcending the mundane. It says things which belong to the outside values of today’s mentality and in order to grasp them, one should think outside the mundane. In addition, technically one has to have knowledge in order to sing it correctly.

Apart from Turkish Classical Music, the reason why I have chosen music is that first singing a song is an act which comes naturally/culturally from inside as an expression of our present moods which are effected by our accumulated everyday experiences. As individuals armored to the stabbings of everyday life and not to give themselves away to the outside world, those are the moments reflecting our impromptu, unprotected, uncalculated, pure, intimate feelings towards the daily.

The second reason why I have chosen music is, it is a common denominator among individuals which ties them all together. Moreover, it is the symbol of universal values of culture and society. The characteristic of a society and its culture is embedded in its traditional music. Since, as Shepherd and Wicke have put it, “a viable understanding of culture requires an understanding of its articulation through music just as much as a viable understanding of music requires an understanding of its place and culture” (qtd. in DeNora 5). Furthermore, I consider music as a medium which may tie leisure with work since singing or listening to music is something which is mostly done in free time (when we want to relieve from work, obligations and relax). As “music redefines temporal situation” (Denora 8) and “influence how people compose their bodies, how they experience the passage of time as well as how they feel in terms of energy and emotion about themselves, about others, about situations” (17), I would like to see the effect when the three (work, leisure and music) are carried out simultaneously. In *Jigsaw Puzzle* we see a housewife, a cook, a cleaning lady, a manicurist, a florist, a gyro man, a waiter, a taxi driver, a cotton candy seller, a civil servant (young woman) during break and a hairdresser in mixed orders as well as other workers dwelling in streets such as a corn seller, a tram conductor, a dried fruit seller, a shoe polisher, ‘simit’ seller, a bird-seed seller, fish grillers, a street newspaper seller interwoven with the shots from where they dwell, Istanbul.

My aim is to portray people who are different and who will not come together in otherwise but only share the public spaces by making them sing

the same song and catching the sameness/commonality and therefore forming the different bits of the mosaic of everyday life. In this sense both by depicting Istanbulians individually and at the same time showing them as commonality, a chorus of a metropolitan city, Istanbul, is formed. In addition, as a complementary to *Chungking Express*, which depicts the everyday life through changing values, I have tried to portray the everyday life through the unchanging, which is Turkish Classical Music in my short film.

CHAPTER VII

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Evaluation of the short film, Jigsaw Puzzle

First of all, it was not an easy project: it required impromptu role playing of the ordinary people. Since they were not professionals, that made shooting more difficult. Secondly, another difficulty was most of the people who fit to the concept of everyday life theory do not know lyrics nor the tune of the Turkish Classical Song ‘Yar Saçların Lüle Lüle’, which has been picked up as it was a very well known piece in Turkish Classical Music. Most of my time spent on trials on catching the right tune and lyrics of the song while they were singing. Shooting each person took at least twice as much time as I had estimated previously because the people accepted to sing knew neither the lyrics nor the tune of the song. On the other hand, this can be regarded as happy news because they were the proofs of Adorno’s theory on music on which a part of my thesis was based. As it can be remembered from Chapter VI, Adorno made a sharp distinction between popular and art music. According to him, popular music has been commodified and has worked to standardise people by dumbing effect. One of the ways of this is to compose songs easy to sing according to its tune as

well as lyrics which are easy to be remembered and not demanding sophisticated thinking. Nevertheless, art music, Adorno claims, has a quality which is embedded in itself and requires particular knowledge to play and sing its tune correctly. Moreover, through these and more, art music aims one to transcend the mundanity of the daily. Art music of Adorno corresponds to Turkish Classical Music in my film. Nearly all the people I asked to sing this song were unable to do it because the song cannot be performed without knowing the right tune. One may think that the only people who can sing the song correctly can only be the professional singers devoted themselves to this kind of music. But unfortunately what I was looking for was not about a good voice trained for Turkish Classical music but was about being familiar with it (by being familiar I mean a person having heard it many times in the past and /or sang it at least a few times before). So, it can be said that art music, that is, Turkish Classical music in *Jigsaw Puzzle*, protects itself from being commodified. As a result, few people know the lyrics as well as the tune when compared with any popular song. I have heard, for instance, some demands from the amateur singers to sing a song which is popular nowadays instead of singing this song. Likewise, they also demanded to read the lyrics of the song from a paper while singing. From all of this singing process, I felt that I was doing something out of their everyday life routine and I was convinced that I was on the right track.

Apart from this, I had hard times in convincing people singing in front of the camera. Nearly half of the people I asked to sing turned me

down. Furthermore, singing in front of a camera made these people/amateur singers uncomfortable. To minimize the discomfort and to capture the shots the way I wanted in a limited time, I had to work alone with a small camera. In addition, my camera did not work properly from time to time Hence, I lost one or two important shots. In addition I used the tripod only in the shots of panoramic views, other than that I had to hold it in my hands while shooting in order to capture the moments which are impromptu, original, unexpected. The editing process, on the other hand, was relatively easy for me as I had a rich footage.

Lastly, I had good time while strolling around the avenues, streets of Istanbul in order to display its everyday life and its routine. Walking in those streets, watching and observing the city as well as its dwellers whole day (on weekdays as well as at the weekends) made me feel like a flaneur. This made me think that I was out of the cycle of everyday life routine and its repetitiveness a bit as I was walking and shooting the city I lived in, on a weekday to record its progress.

7.2 Conclusion

This thesis is making a critique of everyday life. As a start its theory and history has been presented so as to understand its principles as well as its background. The best way to grasp the everyday life concept was to define its ingredients which are called ‘dualities’ since the everyday life concept is vague, ambiguous and elusive as a notion which does not reveal its actuality with clearcut definitions. Today the concept of everyday life has gained great importance in social sciences as well as art. One of its reasons

is that the world we live in and its daily has changed starting mainly from industrial revolution and it is the everyday life theory that sheds light on what ground we are walking. This timeline is the era which capitalism started to embrace the world and brought globalization as its extension. As a result, the everyday life concept is formed by pretty much being effected by globalization and all that it instils. In other words 'local' in all senses are gathered under the roof of 'global', which has caused the birth of local/global duality in everyday life theory later. As a natural consequence of globalization, we have come to a point that the same kind of everyday life is being lived/experienced around the world. The purpose of everyday life theory and its practitioners' is to unveil its actuality hidden behind the curtain of 'usual, common, routine and everyday'.

The thesis goes on making a critique of everyday life through *Chungking Express* as it holds close pertinence with the subject itself. Wong Kar-Wai depicts today's modern world adroitly. He shows us the everyday life under globalization and its manipulated present features such as fleeting, evaporating, increasing pace of things changing, things consumed and expired at an increasing pace in parallel with the accelerating pace of globalization. The film displays how values as well as identities are easily melted and transformed into stereotypes, which are the same in every part of the world. Wong Kar-Wai depicts how global absorbs and consumes local cultures.

In complementary to *Chungking Express*, I shot a film called *Jigsaw Puzzle*. I, too, could have shown how global effects my hometown, Istanbul,

but the results would have been more or less the same. Because everyday life under the effect of globalization shows almost the same effects and thus I wouldn't have said something original, new. While Wong Kar-Wai depicts the major characteristics of everyday life which covers the ninety percent of global everyday life, I have tried to prove this theory, this time from another angle, approaching it through its duality. In *Chungking Express* if the fleeting values were shown, I have looked if there were anything that could manage to preserve its original value. And I have chosen Turkish Classical Music and Adorno's theory to prove what is left unchanged and specific (local) to Istanbul in my short film, *Jigsaw Puzzle*.

With this thesis I have tried to raise awareness for all of us which share the same destiny in the bowl of globalization. We are all deluded by the term of 'everyday life' which means common, usual, routine, trivial which looks like our actuality, which is, in fact, not. As other practitioners have put it, I believe unveiling the curtain will start with being conscious and that is what I have tried to do both with my thesis and my film.

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