

Dry Summer 1963

Metin Erksan

OVERVIEW

Dry Summer is the second film of Metin Erksan's films known as property trilogy. The film, adapted from Necati Cumali's same-name novel, focuses on the effort to establish property over water. Osman gains power by owning the water supplies which springs from his land and by leaving villagers' fields in drought. Similar power also works over Osman's brother and his wife. Although the main theme of the film is property over water, the women's body and sexuality stand out as well. Furthermore, a group of villagers who cannot get organized against a violation of rights in the countryside, is mentioned.

The film became the first film to win an international award in Turkish film history with Golden Bear of Berlin International Film Festival in 1964. It was also selected to represent Turkey in 37th Academy Awards in the best film in the foreign-language category while it was censored to be screened. The film also brought a special prize for the director from Venice. In 2008, a restored version of the film has been screened during the 61st Cannes Film Festival in classical films' session.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

Dry Summer can be described as an original adaptation despite being taken from a literary work. It is possible to see many characteristics of Erksan's cinematic expression in this film. In the black and white film, drought and hot/dry weather are especially felt parallel to the general mode of the film. Despite being deprived of the contribution of colours, arid lands, fields cracking with thirst, weak crops, sunburned/tired/weary faces of villagers who took shelter under a shade tree, and lizards appearing from time to time emphasize the dryness. On the other hand, Osman, Hasan and even Bahar seem quite vigorous and healthy as the owner of the water. Contrast has been created as they enter the water on various occasions and are shown wet.

Lighting. Daylight is mainly preferred in the film. Night shots are fewer, but there is no intense darkness. In interior night shots, although there is a gas lamp in the image, there is very bright lighting.

Camera and Shooting Techniques. The duration of the shots is quite long. Right-left pans, up-down tilts, dolly, and tracking shots are common in these long shots. Especially in crowded shots, it is remarkable that the camera focuses on individual faces without cutting. Although the shots are long, the narration is not static. The tempo is quite high. Camera movements rather than the duration of the shots provide this tempo. In the fight scenes, there is also the mobile use of the camera. Tracking shots are used in this sense. The camera also follows the flow of water from time to time. The director uses the camera to express Bahar's emotional devastation. From Bahar's point of view, the camera shoots by rolling 360 degrees (from right to left). The gaze of the main character, Osman, wanders over Bahar's body (especially on her legs) with the close-up shots. By moving the camera from Osman to Bahar without cutting in these scenes, Bahar is directly pointed out as the object of Osman's gaze. In the shots where Osman is peeping Bahar, the camera is directed to the body from the gaze, without any cuts. The camera angle has a special place in the film. In this sense, the use of lower and upper angles is common. The power of Osman is emphasized by shooting him from lower angles. This use of angle is seen in Osman's encounters with the villagers, his brother Hasan and Bahar.

Music and Sound Effects. In the film, authentic music was used as the events taking place in the countryside. However, the tension of the scene in the fight and conflict scenes was tried to be supported by choosing the music used in the horror films of the period. As an important element in the film, water is presented in a vital position as the 'blood of the soil' with its presence and absence. The use of water sound is quite successful. Crickets and gunfire are other sound elements frequently featured in the film.

CHARACTERS

Osman Kocabaş: In his thirties, single, powerful, and cruel. Owns his land and water.

Hasan Kocabaş: In his twenties. Osman's younger brother, Bahar's husband. Merciful but dependent on the family hierarchy that restrains him to argue against his brother.

Bahar Kocabaş: In his twenties. Hasan's wife. Young, beautiful, patient. Loyal to her husband until the news of his death.

Veli Sarı: In his thirties. The only character whose name is known among the villagers. Dies in a gunfight with Osman.

SYNOPSIS

Osman claims to have property rights over the water that springs from his land. He dams the water and closes waterways to prevent it from reaching other fields. His brother Hasan kidnaps Bahar, whom he falls in love with, and marries her. In the meantime, the villagers sued them but could not win. Drought has increased. Osman and Hasan start to keep watch at night. That same night, one of the water dams is exploded and one of the villagers is shot during the gunfight. Although Osman shot the villager, he convinces Hasan that he will receive less punishment. Thus, Hasan goes to jail. Meanwhile, Bahar and Osman staying in the same house cause gossip. Osman's interest in Bahar has also increased. One day, the news about a person named Hasan was killed in prison is published in the newspaper. Everyone believes that this is Osman's brother. Bahar is devastated by this news. However, Osman does not leave her, and after a while, they started to be together. Villagers suggest buying water from Osman. While things are going well for Osman, Hasan is released with a general amnesty. Having learned that Osman and Bahar are together, Hasan follows Osman. As a result of the struggle in the water, Hasan chokes Osman and opens the dams that block the water.

THE PLOT

Water is Mine. The film begins with an image of Osman riding a donkey through the streets of the village. The poverty is underlined with the ruins in the narrow dusty streets of the village and in contrast to Osman's imposing appearance. Osman comes to Hasan, who is working by the water and tells him his opinion about the water. He says that he will be the first to use the water springs from their land and then he will give the remaining water to the fields of other villagers. For this purpose, he surrounded the water and built waterways reaching his fields. Other waterways were blocked with dams. However, Hasan does not agree with Osman's idea and warns him. The phrase 'water is the blood of the soil' is heard here for the first time. Meanwhile, Bahar gives a sign to Hasan with a mirror. Osman's sexist attitude towards women is also revealed here for the first time. However, Hasan and Bahar love each other and meet among the reeds. Bahar's mother will allow them to marry after the harvest.

Bad News for the Villagers. Osman, taking Hasan behind him, goes to the villagers who fix the waterways to their fields. He tells them that he will give them limited water. The villagers object after the first surprise, but Osman does not change his mind. Afterward, Osman, speaking by the water, tries to persuade Hasan. Even though Hasan is not convinced, he can't get out of Osman's word as the elder of the family. When it comes to Bahar, Osman wants Hasan and Bahar to get married immediately. He aims to benefit from Bahar's labor. He convinces Hasan to kidnap Bahar.

Abduction and Wedding. Hasan and Bahar meet secretly. Hasan force Bahar to run away. Bahar already accepts Hasan's authority helplessly before she got married. Hasan and Osman kidnap Bahar. Following Bahar's mother coming to their doorstep, the problem is solved. With the participation of the whole village, there is a wedding with drums and zurna. The couple, who went to their rooms on the wedding night, became uneasy with the arrival of Osman. Osman immediately asks for children, especially boys. Hasan and Bahar, who forcibly sent Osman, make love. However, Osman does not leave the young couple alone. In the following days, he points out Bahar's femininity and beauty at every opportunity and tries to touch her. Meanwhile, he tells that he lost his wife at a young age. In the evenings, he peeps Bahar and Hasan.

The Villagers Do not Idle. With the arrival of summer, the importance of water for the fields has increased. Therefore, Osman constantly reduces the water he gives to the villagers. Meanwhile, he tries to persuade Hasan, who is uneasy, by explaining his rights on the water. Due to the decreasing water, the villagers gather and open the dams that block the water. Osman, who always has one eye on Bahar, stops the

villagers as soon as he realizes the situation. A fight breaks out between the villagers and Osman, but before it grows, Hasan intervenes. This time, the villagers activate the mukhtar, but he also cannot control Osman.

The Case. Villagers sue to claim their rights. The court decides to open the water temporarily. However, Osman also hires a lawyer. As a result of the lawsuit, the right to use the water is given to Osman. Therefore, the water of the villagers is cut off once again. They are helpless. Meanwhile, drought has increased, and even there are fires. With the encouragement of Bahar, Hasan sometimes opens the dams providing water to the villagers. When Osman sees them, an argument breaks out between them. Hasan objects to Osman for the first time. He says that half of the water is his.

The Violence Begins. The villagers were overwhelmed by the drought. However, they cannot unite for fighting. Meanwhile, Osman, who finds the dead body of his lost dog, realizes that things are getting serious. He starts to take precautions by keeping watch at night. That same night, two villagers explode the dam. Osman, who is on watch, follows them. Hasan joins him and a chase starts. Meanwhile, one of the villagers is shot. The next day, the villagers find the body of Veli Sarı, who is the only villager whose name is mentioned in the film. Osman, who was unaware of the situation, called the gendarmerie to complain about the explosion. The villagers come to lynch Osman. The gendarmerie barely saves Osman from the hands of the villagers.

Crime, Punishment, and Cunning. The prosecutor arrives. Osman and Hasan are arrested. While being taken to the town, Osman tries to persuade Hasan to take the charge of the crime, although he is the murderer. He says Hasan will get less punishment because he is young. They also silence Bahar on this issue. Once again, Hasan submits to his brother's authority and Bahar to Hasan's authority. Hasan is found guilty and goes to jail.

Osman and Bahar. After Hasan is imprisoned, everything is left to Osman and Bahar. They work together all day, but Osman's eye is always on Bahar. He sometimes looks at her bare feet, sometimes at her legs, and sometimes at her hips. He tries to touch her at every opportunity. He secretly peeps at her at night. Bahar, on the other hand, yearns for her husband and misses him. In the village, an unmarried woman and a man staying in the same house cause gossip. Bahar offers to marry Osman, but Osman does not accept it. When Osman and Bahar visit the prison, they learn that Hasan has been transferred to Niğde Prison.

Osman is After Bahar. The villagers take advantage of Osman's loneliness and attack him. However, Osman, who was unprepared for the first time, defeats them the next time. Despite everything, he never releases the water. His focus is now Bahar. One day, when returning from the field, Bahar is bitten by a snake. Osman sucks the poison out of Bahar's leg. At these moments, it is seen that Bahar is also affected. Still, she manages to resist all of Osman's harassment. Meanwhile, Osman stopped sending money and letters to Hasan. He also tears up letters from him. Osman's harassment goes beyond lustful looks and gift giving. He pushes the limits. He evokes Bahar erotically by sucking a cow's nipples.

News of Hasan's Death. While returning from town, Osman learned from a newspaper that a person called Hasan died in Niğde Prison. The villagers believe that this person is Hasan from the village. This works well for Osman, and he accepts this news. Bahar is emotionally devastated by the news. She wants to go back to her family's house due to her husband's death. However, Osman prevents her from going back. Osman's passion for Bahar has now exceeded the limits of his mind. He talks to the scarecrow as if it was Bahar. On the same night, he prevents Bahar from sleeping in another room, and they slept together.

Let's Buy the Water. Things are going well for Osman. He also dominates Bahar as he dominates the water supplies. Meanwhile, one of the villagers, devastated by drought, comes up with the idea to buy water. Together they go to Osman. Bahar is washing Osman's feet. Osman makes fun of the villagers by pouring water on them but gets serious when he hears the money.

Drowning Osman. While everything is going well, the news about a general amnesty makes Osman uncomfortable. Thinking that Hasan can return and take revenge, he begins to practice weapons. Meanwhile, Hasan, who is counting the days to leave, is advised by an elder in prison about the impropriety of owning the water. Although he listens to this advice, on the way back, he learns that the whole village, including Bahar, thought he was dead. Moreover, he goes crazy when he hears about

Bahar and Osman's togetherness. He goes home first. Bahar, seeing him, starts to cry with regret and goes down on his knees to apologize. She tells that Osman deceived her. Hasan, who believes Bahar, goes after Osman. They meet by the water. Bahar attacks Osman who deceived her with an ax, but Osman shoots her. The target of the next bullets is Hasan. Hasan escapes by jumping into the water. Every time, water allows Hasan to get rid of the bullets and approach Osman. Finally, Osman runs out of bullets, and they start to fight in the water. Although Osman resists, Hasan kills Osman by drowning him in the water he claims to own. Then he runs to Bahar. Bahar is only injured. Hasan forgave her. When he realizes that Bahar is good, he immediately opens the dams that block the water and releases it. Osman's dead body floats over the water.

THEMES

Property. The property issue, which has been an important problem throughout the history of humanity, is handled as the main theme in the film. The conflict of the film also arises after a claim of property over water. Water is one of the basic needs of people. Apart from individual consumption, it has vital importance for the villagers. Because the source of income of the villagers is completely dependent on the land and therefore on the water. In the narrative, owning water as a commodity and the limitation of its use opens a discussion on the property over water. Throughout the film, this understanding of property is questioned although it is legally recognized and it is criticized by the oppositions of the villagers and even Hasan. Therefore, at this point, the correctness of legal recognition is also open to discussion. At the end of the film, the villagers' offer to pay for water, which they have been using comfortably as a natural resource for years, is a tragic situation that describes the stalemate they are in.

Female Body. Another prominent theme in the film is the female body. This element is represented on the character of Bahar and continues throughout the film. It is described with various forms of domination on the female body. First of all, the female body is positioned as a sexual object. Throughout the film, various parts of Bahar's body are displayed in close-ups, sometimes naked. Bahar's body is especially presented as the object of Osman's gaze. The domination over the female body is not limited to the gaze. Bahar, who faces harassment by Osman, is forced into sexual intercourse towards the end of the film. The objectification of the female body is also expressed through labor, apart from sexuality. Women are seen as an important workforce both at home and in the field. She makes bread at home, hangs laundry, washes her husband's feet, and works in the field. In this sense, Bahar, who represents the villager woman, does not have any possessions on her body. All decisions about her are taken by others. In any case, Bahar portrays a character whose body is exploited both sexually and as labor and cannot resist this exploitation.

Sexuality/Sexual Deprivation. The emphasis on sexuality is another frequent theme throughout the film. As it is connected with the female body, the sexuality of both women and men and their sexual hunger in the countryside are mentioned. In this sense, this theme characterized on Hasan and Bahar, who met secretly as young lovers, is turned to a legitimate dimension with the marriage of the couple. After that, Bahar and Hasan's passionate lovemaking as a socially approved couple is shown at every opportunity. On the other hand, Osman is a character who experiences sexual deprivation as a person who lost his wife at a young age. It is expressed in various discourses that he sees Bahar as a sexual object from the very beginning and he has the same attitude towards other women. However, this situation becomes obvious after Hasan goes to prison. It is not approved for two unmarried people to stay in the same house in the countryside. Because an illegitimate sexual relationship may develop between them. Osman's sexual harassment towards Bahar has increased, and he evokes her sexually with various behaviors. After a while, Bahar completely turns into an object of desire. Meanwhile, Bahar at a young age cannot experience her sexuality as a woman whose husband was imprisoned. While she suffers from sexual deprivation, she tries to resist Osman's harassment. This dilemma ends when Osman forces Bahar to have sex after the news of Hasan's death.

Unorganized Resistance. In the film, the idea of organized struggle is handled through the villagers who cannot water their fields, which are their source of income. With the cut of water they have been using for years free of charge, the villagers have great difficulty as well as the effect of the drought. In this case, it is expected that the villagers will unite and fight for the right to use water. However, the villagers, who are usually shown in crowded scenes, cannot propound a total fighting power after their first reaction. Even in conversations among themselves, it is understood that they are in despair and hopelessness. In particular, the court decision in Osman's favor breaks the resistance of the villagers. Only a few villagers take action to resolve the matter violently, killing Osman's dog first, and then exploding the water dams.

However, the murder of one of them increases their desperation. The film shows many unsuccessful attempts of the villagers. Offering to pay for water means that they have given up the struggle. At the end of the film, it is Hasan, the other owner of the water, who kills Osman and delivers water to the villagers. Thus, the failure of the villagers' struggles is underlined. Because this struggle could not go beyond an unorganized and unplanned opposition.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Osman: As the eldest son of the family, Osman is the protector of the family heritage. He has no one but his brother. He lost his wife at a young age. He tries to control the water going to other fields, claiming that he has the right to own the water springing out of his land.

Holder of power. Throughout the film, Osman's power over the water, over his brother, and his brother's wife is told. Osman is a strong, self-reliant, fearless character in every situation. Sometimes he fights alone against a group. He uses weapons as well as physical strength. His walrus mustache, hat, and imposing sitting on a donkey are the features that complete his domineering personality. Not having financial problems strengthens his power.

Cruel. The character is quite selfish and is extremely cruel to others. He ignores all the complaints of the villagers. He does not compromise on his decision. He is ruthless both when he sends Hasan to prison innocently, and when he leaves him in prison oblivious and without money. He deceives Bahar about Hasan's death. He only cares about his wishes. Bahar's sorrow does not concern him.

Cunning. He cunningly persuades Hasan to dam the water, kidnap the girl, and even take the charge of the murder. He takes the necessary precautions for any kind of opposition from the villagers and fails their attempts. This works in the same way both in legal struggle and in cases of violence. An important situation in which Osman's cunning comes into play when he immediately accepts the news of Hasan's so-called death in the newspaper. Because Hasan's death will help him to remove the obstacle between him and Bahar. He makes preparations by foreseeing that Hasan may be released from prison. However, his cunning cannot save him this time.

Hasan: Although he is Osman's brother, his personality characteristics are almost the opposite of Osman. He is not avid like Osman. He does not agree with Osman that they have a right over the water. However, due to the family hierarchy, he does not go out of his brother's word. In this sense, he is a character that is easily influenced.

Merciful. Although Hasan disapproves of Osman's decision to cut the water off, he cannot break his word either. However, he feels very uncomfortable. He opens the dam to deliver the water to the villagers unbeknown to Osman. In all respects, he also approaches Osman with mercy. He warns him at every opportunity not to argue with the villagers. He also stands by his brother in case of arguments and fights. His forgiveness of Bahar, who was with Osman, also reflects Hasan's merciful personality.

Obedient. Despite Osman's cruel and authoritarian behaviours, Hasan is extremely compliant and mild-tempered. In most cases, he is quickly convinced. When he does not share the same opinion, he does not prolong the discussion with his brother. Even when Osman annoys and scares Bahar, he does not react to Osman, he tries to calm things down. He accepted his brother's superior position in the family. Even though he is not guilty, he is obedient enough to take on Osman's murder.

Bahar: Hasan's wife. The couple, who love each other, get married by running away, although there is no obstacle to their marriage. Because Osman wants to take advantage of Bahar's labor power as soon as possible. Apart from her beauty, she is an ordinary villager woman. She not only undertakes all kinds of cooking and cleaning work at home, but also works in the field with men.

Weak. Bahar is a young woman in love with her husband. She is emotionally devastated, first with Hasan's imprisonment and then with the news of his so-called death. She has no say in any situation, including the decision to run away from her house. She even lets her husband innocently go to jail. Because it is Osman who always decides for her, although it is seemingly Hasan. She is in a state of passive resistance against Osman's harassment. After the news of Hasan's death, she completely lost her strength of resistance and had sexual intercourse with Osman. At the end of the film, she learns the truth and attacks Osman with an ax, but she is shot. Therefore, she cannot even take her revenge.

Sexy. As a young and beautiful woman, Bahar is the object of Hasan's and then Osman's gaze. Their pre-marital and post-marriage sexual relations with Hasan are passionately staged. In these images, Bahar's body is shown as naked as possible under the circumstances of the period. This emphasis is strengthened by Osman's peeping them. Throughout the film, Bahar's beauty is portrayed sexually rather than aesthetically. Especially in Osman's expressions, the sexual emphasis accompanying beauty is obvious. In addition, various parts of Bahar's body are screened naked in close-ups, underlining her sexuality. Bahar is portrayed as a desirable woman.



Osman enters the village as a holder of power.



Hasan and Bahar decide to run away to get married.



Hasan and Osman dam for the water springs from their land.



Veli and other villagers learn that the water is going to be cut off.



Osman is shot from low angle while talking to the villagers.



The subject of the gaze is Osman.



The object of the gaze is Bahar.



Osman evokes Bahar erotically by sucking a cow's nipples.



Osman's dead body floats over the water that he claimed to own.