

## TATIL KİTABI/SUMMER BOOK

### [Interview with the director, Seyfi Teoman]

*Question:* Does the story of the film have autobiographical aspects? Is there a character that you feel closer to than others?

*S.T.:* Of course there are lots of scenes and details in the film inspired by my own experience, especially the ones about childhood. I grew up in a similar environment, and when I was younger I had similar tensions with my friends and my family. Because of this connection, I can say, the little boy Ali and his teenager brother Veysel are the characters I feel closer to than the others.

*Question:* The film starts as the story of the little boy, Ali; the reference to the title also prompts the audience to expect a film about Ali. However, later you shift the perspective of the story; on and off, it becomes the story of Ali's brother Veysel, or of Ali and their uncle Hasan. Why did you choose these three characters as the focal points of the story?

*S.T.:* I think it is very interesting to focus on a family, rather than a particular character; it gives you the opportunity to deal with different generations at the same time. Ali, his brother, his uncle and even his father, as the eldest of the group, may be considered as the same character at four different ages. So one can easily argue that the family here stands for one man's life living in a provincial city.

*Question:* Though we do not see the father, Mustafa later on, the name of the father has a certain presence throughout the story. Why is he so central in spite of the fact that he almost disappears in the middle of the story?

*S.T.:* This is a family's story where the father is an authoritarian man. I think by definition, the power of an authority comes from the influence it has even when it is not physically present. An important theme in the story is the possibility -or even the desire- of replacing the father with another family figure. That is also why the father's presence is important even though we don't see him too much.

*Question:* There is no music in the film. Are you against the use of music in cinema? Why did you refrain from using music?

*S.T.:* I am not against it but I am always very skeptical about film music. There are really good examples but they are very rare. I find most of them awful. As a director, there are lots of attractive toys you can play with and music is the most colorful of these toys. But I believe that film directing is mostly about restraining yourself and concentrating on the essence of the meaning you are looking for. I did not prevent using music, I rather did not think about it or felt the need to use it.

*Question:* There are many car scenes in which we only see characters driving; or many scenes in which we only see characters walking... Why did you use such scenes so frequently?

*S.T.:* This is all about trying to create a certain pace and rhythm. And I think a person walking or driving in a film is not just a person walking or driving but more. They are not static, they are moving, so there should be a motivation or reason for their movement. And showing a character walking or driving in a certain location defines him or her within that particular location, which is very important for

creating a certain mood. These scenes are more powerful than a lot of dialogue scenes for me.

*Question:* "The money" is the source of the two major tensions in the film: the compensation that Veysel needs for leaving the military school, and the money which is lost in the car. Especially the later one has a McGuffin side to it. Why did you use money as a source of tension?

*S.T.:* The people in the film are living modest lives in a small town. They are very hard-working and any amount of money is very important in their lives. So any issue about money inevitably turns into a major tension. Money and property are not subjects you can ignore if you make a film about provincial life and if you have a merchant father figure at the core of the story.

*Question:* Hasan, the idealistic uncle who at the beginning supports Veysel, turns out to be a true conformist after the father's disappearance. Why does he change sides that drastically?

*S.T.:* Because he is a weak and conformist character. He is basically a loser; he appears to be idealistic when he has no responsibilities or in situations without pressure, but when he is led into being the new father figure he simply conforms. Conformism is the easiest way if you have to make a decision. He is weak, and he chooses the easiest way.

*Question:* One expects to see more intimate relationships between people in a provincial town. However, most of the dialogue is between the family members. Strangers have a solely functional role in the story. This seems to render the characters as isolated and lonely. They are reminiscent of the ones we got used to see in big cities. Although one of the ongoing tensions in the story is between living in a big city and a small town, have you tried to challenge such a dichotomy by limiting the scope of relationships?

*S.T.:* I think expecting a wider range of relations in a provincial town is a cliché. A town full of eccentric, joyful and warm people does not exist in real life; this only exists in films. The people, especially the young ones in small cities are really as lonely as the people in big cities. They are even lonelier, because of the feeling of being left outside the center and missing the opportunity of having a different life. Also the narrative of the film is based on showing mostly the intersections between characters while leaving the rest to be completed in the spectator's mind.