

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

**THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
CINEMA AND TELEVISION**

**COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST IN TURKISH
CINEMA AFTER THE 1990s**

Master's Thesis

BİLLUR ÜLKÜ

ISTANBUL, 2010

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Thesis Supervisor: PROF. DR. Z. TÜL AKBAL SÜALP

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ABSTRACT

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST IN TURKISH CINEMA AFTER THE 1990s

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This study aims to explore whether the Turkish directors after the 1990s have begun to come to terms with the past regarding minority communities, especially the non-Muslims. Under the influence of the waves of nationalism and the nation states, polyphony and variety of ethnicities have been ignored in Turkish Cinema. However, with the decline of nation states and the growing interest in cultural variety, Turkish directors started to lay the foundations for an environment where dominant ideology is challenged and questioned. In order to analyze films which deal with remembrance and coming to terms with the past, this study establishes its theoretical basis on Gramsci and Althusser's ideology, narrative theory and historiography together with a brief touch on national cinema. This study examines Tomris Giritlioğlu's trilogy; *Across the Water* (1991), *Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds* (1999), and *The Pains of Autumn* (2009); Derviş Zaim's *Mud* (2002); and Yeşim Ustaoglu's *Waiting for the Clouds* (2004) and analyzes them with respect to the topics of remembering, forgetting, longing for the lost home and coming to terms with the suppressed painful memories. The current researcher addresses whether these films attempt to defamiliarize the audience against the conventional norms about non-Muslims; on the other hand, help unchain society from their collective memories of the past, which would contribute to perceiving the other points of views, thus suggests more polyphony and heteroglossia in the society.

Keywords: Minorities, ideology, remembering, history, ethnicity.

ÖZET

1990'LARDAN SONRA TÜRK SİNEMASINDA GEÇMİŞLE YÜZLEŞME

Ülkü, Billur

Film ve Televizyon Araştırmaları

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Bu çalışma 1990'lardan sonra Türk yönetmenlerin, azınlık topluluklarla, özellikle gayri-Müslimlerle, ilgili geçmişle ne ölçüde yüzleşmeye başladıklarını sorgulamayı amaçlıyor. Ulusçuluk ve ulus devletleri akımının etkisi altında çok seslilik ve etnik çeşitlilik Türk Sineması'nda göz ardı edilmişti. Ancak ulus devletlerinin düşüşe geçmesi ve kültürel çeşitliliğe ilginin artmasıyla birlikte, Türk yönetmenler baskın ideolojinin sorgulandığı bir ortamın temellerini atmaya başladılar. Geçmişle hesaplaşma ve hatırlama meselelerini ana merkezine alan filmleri analiz etmek amacıyla, bu çalışma teorik altyapısını ideoloji, anlatı teorisi ve tarih anlatısı ve bununla beraber kısa bir dokunuşla ulusal sinema üzerinden kurmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, geçmişi etnik topluluklar üzerinden kurarak hatırlama meselesini masaya yatıran Tomris Giritlioğlu'nun üçlemesi; *Suyun Öte Yanı* (1991), *Salkım Hanım'ın Taneleri* (1999), ve *Güz Sancısı* (2009); Derviş Zaim'in *Çamur* (2002); ve Yeşim Ustaoglu'nun *Bulutları Beklerken* (2004) adlı filmler tartışılmıştır. Bu filmlerin kapsamlı analizleri yapılarak hatırlama, unutma, kaybedilmiş vatana olan özlem ve bastırılmış, bu nedenlerle de acı veren anılarla yüzleşme meselesi öne çıkmıştır. Bu çalışma, bahsi geçen filmlerin Gayri-Müslimler hakkındaki yaygın anlayışı ve toplumsal hafızayı ne derece değiştirme amacı taşıdığı; böylece topluma çoksesliliği ve çok kültürlülüğü ne ölçüde sunduğu araştırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Azınlıklar, ideoloji, hatırlama, tarih, etnisite.

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1. INTRODUCTION

*If you are open to all the paths, you will find
your own way better.
(Jarmusch 2000)*

Until the early 1970s, the issues of ethnicity and ‘other’ had been ignored by the academicians and the filmmakers, yet for about twenty years during which meta-narratives have lost their dominancy, which is a clear indication of the weakening of the nation-states, the notion of ‘other’ has started to become popular. Turkish Cinema, as well, was influenced by this wave and the first examples of the representation of the ‘other’ were observed in the 1980s.

In Turkish cinema, “Yeşilçam” in the 1950s and ‘60s was the mainstream cinema that was influenced by French cinema and Hollywood Studio Systems. “It would be quite true to accept the fact that Yeşilçam in the ‘60s was an undeveloped imitation of Hollywood Studio System” (Kirel 2005, p. 66). It was a cinema of traditional family and moral values reflecting the dominant ideology of the Republican nation-state aimed at women and families. Kirel states that family is a very convenient platform where all the dominant ideologies could be legitimized and reproduced (292). Therefore, Yeşilçam ignored the ethnic and cultural differences in the society in favor of the nation-state’s policies of homogenization and Turkification¹. Censorship reigned if these ethnic identities were depicted by the filmmakers. “National cinema has always been the most powerful place where the nation and the ‘others’ are imagined, written, displayed, are spoken for, and where the culture has been displayed” (Akbal 2005, p. 51). Kurdish characters were not

¹ The term ‘Turkification’ articulated in Savaş Arslan’s dissertation is associated with imitation, adaptation and transformation of Western cinemas (Arslan 2005, p. 80).

depicted with their real identities. They were illiterate, poor people who came from the mountains (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 15). Non-Muslim figures, on the other hand, were either the antagonists or minor characters like the servants of a wealthy family; the cook, the nanny, the chauffeur etc. As well as ethnicities, sexuality was a taboo subject, too. Mainstream Turkish cinema was heterosexual and male dominant. Especially, woman sexuality and homosexuality were repressed.

During the 1980s, the military coup of 12 September, 1980 marked the interruption of all democratic and human rights. All the ideological opinions except for the official ideology were suppressed and punished, and a new constitutive rule was established. However, an oppositional cinematic language also appeared at this period focusing on the effects of 12 September, women issues and the feudal structure (Toprak 2004, pp. 143-145). With the arrival of liberal economy, Turkey witnessed liberalization through direct integration with global capitalism. Cultural identity and differences became the significant issues for the civil society movements (Suner 2002, p. 72). Parallel to this economic revival, the New Turkish Cinema emerged, which at first engaged with woman representation and self-reflexivity in the '80s. After the 1980s when the society was dragged into an environment of apolitization, the stories of 'anti-heroes and outsiders' started to dominate (Hoşsucu 2004, p. 135).

In the 1990s, the revival of the Kurdish question came to the foreground. Together with the Kurdish issue, the other minority communities attracted the interest of the intellectual elites; namely the leftists and the liberals. For the first time in Turkish history, the researchers, academicians, writers and journalists assumed a critical approach against the dominant ideology of the nation-state (Bali 2005, p. 26). The ethnic groups started to voice their opinion in the political arena and criticize the centralist Kemalist regime that suppressed the polyphony (Suner 2006, p. 21). "The term 'identity' began to be used frequently in the 1990s of Turkey and most of the time in order to indicate cultural, ethnic and religious differences (ibid., p. 23). Due to Turkey's membership in European Council and later Eurimages in 1990, the demand to reach the foreign audiences resulted in the

emphasis on growing issues of minority rights, plurality and multi-culturality. Therefore, the new film makers aimed at reflecting this diversity in their films (Göktürk 2005, p. 58). A new independent cinema that echoes the 60s French New Wave, but quite different from it in many ways, emerged with the new directors; namely, Zeki Demirkubuz, Derviş Zaim, Yeşim Ustaoglu, N. Bilge Ceylan and the others. The significance of these directors is that they employ a smaller crew; they are not dependent on the admiration of the audience and they do not work with producers (Hoşsucu 2004, p. 138). However, with the collaboration of foreign film production companies, they try to realize their own cinematic language regardless of the popular main stream cinema and the audience expectations.

In the 1990s, there was an increase in the number of woman directors working for TRT, the state channel. To name a few, Canan, Evcimen İçöz, Biket İlhan, Fide Motan and Tomris Giritlioğlu made films for both TRT and with the collaboration of TRT. Yet, the films which did not conform to the dominant ideology of the state could only be viewed in the festivals (Kıraç 2000, p. 15). The directors who were more independent from Yeşilçam filmmaking relations came up with more political, intellectual and artistic works, the focus of which are dominant ideology, suppression, sexuality and the individual's self-expression (ibid., p. 17).

Thus, the concept of identity found its ground through the eyes of new young directors. Kanbur states that instead of class based identities, in the 1990s, "multiple" identities have started to be discussed, and this brought about the struggle of "non-identity" crisis, and the issues related to the suppression of identity came to the foreground (2008, p. 63). All these developments in Turkish Cinema contributed to the appearance of directors who also focus on the issues of minorities in Turkey. After the 1990s, the ethnic and historical positioning of the non-Muslims and the Muslim migrants of compulsory Exchange in Turkey started to be projected in Turkish Cinema.

Therefore, this study will examine how the issues of coming to terms with the history and the historical narration of Turkey are dealt with by the young directors of New Turkish Cinema. The aim of this study is to question whether these films have brought a new

perspective to the perception of the historical narration of the ‘other’, and in this way create a new discourse upon the dominant ideology reflected in Turkish Cinema. In that respect, Toris Giritlioğlu’s trilogy; *Across the Water* (1991), *Mrs. Salkım’s Diamonds* (1999), and *The Pains of Autumn* (2009); Derviş Zaim’s *Mud* (2002); and Yeşim Ustaoglu’s *Waiting for the Clouds* (2004) will be analyzed. The analysis of the key moments in history is aimed through these films which foreground the questioning of history regarding ethnicity and minority issues.

This study is of significance to Turkish Cinema studies since it combines Modern Turkish History with New Turkish Cinema; thus, it enables the representation of non-Muslim minorities, and respectively Muslim migrants of compulsory exchange of 1923, to be examined in Turkish Cinema. In this way, an analysis of New Turkish Cinema between 1990 and 2009 in terms of the depiction of non-Muslim citizens and Muslim migrants is aimed to be achieved. The fact that these films focus on the issues of historical narration and the remembrance of those critical moments that initiate the historical narration is the departure point of this study. The reason why those five films have been selected for this study is that they are the only films which were made regarding the aforementioned issues. When we consider hegemony and ideology, we come across with narrative productions. And the reproduction of ideology and history has a representation in cinema. Therefore, what these films suggest and reproduce are the main concerns of this study.

1.1 SCOPE AND FRAMEWORK

Since the films regarding the non-Muslim minorities and the Muslim exchanges of 1923 will be analyzed in this study, the issues of nationalism and the nation state are significant. Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner’s definition of imagined communities will be employed. Moreover, Higson’s ideas on a national cinema will also be mentioned, which led to a new understanding that the growing sense of multiple identities in a country weakens the possibility of a national cinema after the 1980s. Thus, as well as the emphasis

of the notion of national construction and a brief information of national cinema will help me observe and analyze these issues in the films more effectively.

The relation of ideology with films is another aspect of this thesis since the term ideology is closely related with the concept of power relations. Thus, Gramsci's ideas on hegemony and consent will be the main theoretical basis for this study to articulate the power relations between the nation-state and the citizens of this state who are repressed and silenced. According to Gramsci, no regime could prevail solely through the dependence of armed forces or organized state power, no matter how authoritarian it is. He adds that it is vital for the organizations to obtain an active and direct consent from the public rather than a passive and indirect one, which helps the integration of the subordinates to the system. Thus, hegemony is sustained by the civil society; schools, church, political parties, trade unions etc., which is the major concern of almost all of these films.

Moreover, Althusser's employment of infrastructure and superstructure borrowed from Marx will be discussed. Althusser distinguishes between the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). ISAs, which include "religious (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'), family, legal, political (including political parties), trade union, communication (press, radio and TV, etc.) and the cultural ideological apparatuses (literature, arts, music, sports, etc.) are all constructed as narratives. On the other hand, the Repressive State Apparatuses include "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. Both of these apparatuses ensure the reproduction of the relations of production. Thus, in this study, while trying to find a common ground for both the dominant and the minority groups in Turkey, emphasizing the importance of the Ideological Apparatuses that constitute the identity of both groups is highly important to overcome any prejudice and conflict.

At this point, it is fundamental to question the role of films regarding the minority groups in Turkey after the 1990s, which could give us a clue about to what extent these films serve for the hegemony of the dominant ideology and the reproduction of it through the tools of

narrative. Since the main focus of this thesis is the role of these films on the impact of a possible reformist point of view and change in new Turkish films, whether they contribute to the prevailing consensus, in other words hegemony, or whether they are a hope of light to change the perspective of how minorities are dealt with in this society, will be answered in this thesis.

Narrative analysis helps to reveal a deeper framework of the cultural, social and ideological references in a film. Therefore, this study benefits from some aspects of narrative theory. In that respect, I will mainly employ Todorov's idea of disruption and equilibrium in analyzing a narrative structure. According to Todorov, in the capitalist system, the servants of the state; the officers who ensure the persistence of the system, are the heroes who sustain equilibrium, whereas the disruptive forces are the social activists who are against the dominant rule. Therefore, determining the disruptive characters and the servants of the state while analyzing the films will help me decipher the power relations in the films.

Moreover, in order to establish the basis of narrative construction, I will include the views of Barthes' ideas of the construction of meaning. The meaning in media texts, he suggests, is subject to the norms and conventions of the society it is produced in; thus, we cannot interpret a media text free from those conventions. Lastly, neoformalist film criticism, through Thompson's views, will be covered. Thompson claims that art defamiliarizes our perceptions of the world around us and makes us perceive them in a new realm, enabling us to notice and become conscious of things around us.

Therefore, for example, through films conventional beliefs and morals that have been imposed on the society for a long time might give way to different points of views. This is especially significant; in that, we observe a change of course in the way non-Muslim characters are portrayed, and this helps the defamiliarization of the non-Muslim concept in Turkish society. In these films, the non-Muslims and the Muslim exchanges of 1923 are portrayed as individuals who are being challenged by the social and political issues concerning their existence in the society, which is what has never been done before in

Turkish Cinema. Thus, this might create defamiliarization in the values and beliefs of the society.

The narration of history is another significant aspect in analyzing period films; therefore, in this study the employment of historiography will be quite useful in establishing the background information for historical events of Modern Turkey. The debates on historical narration center on the fact that it is a construction hence a historian can never escape from subjective perspective about historical events. Benefitting from many theoreticians from Karl Marx to Hyden White and also scholars from the Annales School will help me present a wide range of perspectives about the narration of history.

Within the confines of this thesis, in the first chapter, a theoretical framework of ideology, narrative, historiography and nationalism along with national cinema is drawn in order to establish a basis for the analysis of the films. The body of academic research and literature in this chapter, as aforementioned in more detail, lays the theoretical groundwork of this study.

Chapter 2 gives a historical background of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire followed by the important events in the Modern Turkish Republic regarding the non-Muslims and the the Muslim Exchanges; respectively, events during World War I, the Events of 1915, the 1923 Turkish-Greek Compulsory Population Exchange, the Wealth Tax of 1942-1943 and 6/7 September Events of 1955. A variety of historians and researchers is benefitted from in order to achieve a balanced and objective point of view about the historical events.

Chapter 3 analyzes the five films regarding the issues of loss, dislocation, identity search, longing for the home, forgetting and remembering. The films that are analyzed are in order of release throughout this chapter; *Across the Water* (1991), *Mrs. Salkim's Diamonds* (1999), *Mud* (2002), *Waiting for the Clouds* (2004), and *The Pains of Autumn* (2009). *Mrs. Salkim's Diamonds*, *Waiting for the Clouds* and *The Pains of Autumn* are based on the non-Muslim minorities in different periods of Modern Turkish History, whereas *Across the*

Water and *Mud* focus on the effects of the traumatic events of the exchange of Muslims and Greeks; the first in Cunda, the latter in the Northern Cyprus. The reason why I have integrated the analysis of these two films is that I aim to approach the issue of coming terms with the history. Consequently, historical narration through the narrative of not only non-Muslim minorities in Turkish films but also exchange Muslims who share the common fate with the former is of crucial importance. In other words, mutual feelings of loss and pain create the urge to examine both communities in new Turkish Cinema since they complement each other in terms of the common history, culture, experience, collective memory and political representation. Thus, the narrative of these communities will also help to examine the representation of political disruption in history in the process of establishing nationalism in the state. Last of all, conclusion chapter provides an overall analysis of the films and the innovative perspectives of the directors bearing the pioneering examples of coming to terms with the past, concluding with a suggestion for further study.

2. THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY IN RELATION TO CINEMA

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it (Marx and Engels 2002, p.39).

The term ideology is closely related with the concept of power. As Giddens defines ideology, it is "shared ideas or beliefs which serve to justify the interests of dominant groups" (1997, p. 583), or for Marx, it is "the system of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group (cited in Althusser 1971, p.158). Similarly, cinema dominating the minds and feelings of the audience for a period of time, is an ideological apparatus, and receives credit as a medium to have a substantial effect on power relations and the society. Therefore, mainly, the views of Gramsci and Althusser will help this study to relate ideology with films.

2.1 GRAMSCI AND ALTHUSSER'S VIEWS ON IDEOLOGY

Gramsci used the word ideology "in its highest sense of a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life" (1988, p.330). He defined ideology as the ruling ideas that constitute the social 'cement' unifying and holding together the established social order (ibid). Gramsci developed the approach that the traditional Marxism suggests about the determinist relationship between the base (the modes of production) and the superstructure (cultural, legal, political, and additional forms of life). For him the idea that "politics, ideology, and culture could be understood as a reflection of the material 'base' as elements of the 'superstructure'" was quite raw (Boggs 1976, p.36). As a result, he criticized some misinterpretations of determinist Marxists because of the fact that the class struggle and

power relationships are solely based on materialism and the modes of production, and the superstructure is just a reflection of it.

For Althusser, societies have to be considered in terms of relations between structures. He also uses Marx's model of infrastructure or economic base (the unity of the productive forces and the relations of production) and the superstructure, which includes political and legal institutions (law, the police, the government) as well as ideological practices (religious, moral, legal, political, etc.). Ideology needs to have its own theory since it is relatively more autonomous from the base. Therefore, Althusser pays more attention to ideology. "Ideology is a system of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society" (1969, p.231). According to Althusser, ideology has a more social function than a theoretical one. Thus, ideology is in every social part of our lives.

Gramsci believed that there should be a much more complex and dynamic relationship between the base and the superstructure. Even if the superstructure may not be independent, its power in a massive upheaval, revolution or a transformation period might be more important than the others.

Gramsci realized the lack of subtle but effective forms of ideological control to preserve the (repressive) structure in the theory of power in traditional Marxist thought. These forms of political domination were domination by the forces of the army and the police, which refers to consent of the individuals. To him, no regime could prevail solely through the dependence of armed forces or organized state power, no matter how authoritarian it is. He adds that it is vital for the organizations to obtain an active and direct consent from the public rather than a passive and indirect one (Strinati 1995, pp.165-167). Thus, the integration of the subordinates in a system could only be realized by the direct consent of the smaller groups in the long run regardless of how powerful the dominant regime is. Moreover, the amount of consent determines how well a subordinate group is integrated into a society. If the voluntary assent of the minority group to integrate with the dominant

power is not sufficient or does not exist at all, the society will face the danger of polarization at any stage of the integration process.

2.1.1 Gramsci's Ideas on Hegemony

For Gramsci, the dominant class of a Western Europe nation of his time was the bourgeoisie, defined in the Communist Manifesto as "the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labor," while the potentially revolution-leading subordinate class was the proletariat, "the class of modern wage-laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor-power in order to live" (www.marxist.org). To articulate the reciprocal relationship between base and superstructure in terms of political struggle, Gramsci conceptualized the theory of hegemony which posits that oppressive regimes are able to stay in power through a combination of coercion and consent – with an emphasis on consent.

The two major superstructural 'levels' Gramsci mentions are 'civil society', which refers to the 'private' organisms, and 'the political society' or 'the state'. These two levels on the one hand correspond to 'hegemony' (consent, ideological control of the society by the dominant group), and on the other hand 'direct domination' (direct physical control through the state and 'juridical government') (1988, p.306). Hegemony is not force according to Gramsci. "It is primarily a strategy for the gaining of the active consent of the masses through their self-organization, starting from civil society, and in all the hegemonic apparatuses" (cited in Buci-Glucksmann 1982, p.119). Accordingly, the amount of hegemony decreases as the amount of force increases in a society.

The 'spontaneous' consent the dominant group receives from the masses is the result of the 'prestige' and 'confidence' the dominant group possesses due to its position in the mode of production (Gramsci 1988, p.307). By hegemony, Gramsci meant that the diffusion of the entire system of values, beliefs, attitudes and morality into the society helps to preserve the

status quo in power relationships between the dominant power and the subaltern. Thus, the more hegemony is penetrated into the society, the easier the prevailing consciousness is internalized by the society, which becomes the ‘common sense’ (Boggs 1976, p.39). And it is this common consensus that is the most difficult to challenge in society in order to bring change and reform for the subordinates to have a voice and more existence in that society. In short, for Gramsci it is hegemony that allowed the bourgeois to prevail their dominancy over the working class, who did give their ‘consent’ willingly to live in miserable conditions.

As aforementioned, Gramsci divided the superstructure in the society into two; the obviously compelling and the ones that are not forceful. The first includes the public institutions such as the government, police, armed forces and the legal system he regarded as the state or political society and the latter makes up the institutions like the churches, schools, trade unions, political parties, cultural associations, clubs, the family etc., which he regards as civil society. Hence, all these institutions contribute to sustaining the prevailing ideology in the society. However, as Gramsci points out, the free will or the consent of the society should be present in order for an ideology to dominate for a long time. If this consent is lacking, then the cracks will naturally appear leading to an uprising taking place. Thus, other than the repressive powers of the state that is mentioned in Marxist ideology, it might be better to depend on more informal but effective forms of socialization in every area of daily life.

Informal education may come from popular culture and the mass media which the civil society possesses, or which now Gramsci could have called them as visual arts, films, literature, music etc. In order to secure the consent of the subordinate groups, the dominant power takes advantage of the mass media. For Gramsci, the civil society is responsible for the production, reproduction, and the transformation of hegemony, whereas the state is responsible for the use of coercion through its public institutions. Thus, the state implements repression, and the civil society exercises hegemony. In that respect, “popular culture and the mass media are subject to the production, reproduction and transformation

of hegemony through the institutions of civil society which cover the areas of cultural production and consumption” (Strinati 1995 p.168). In other words, hegemony could be sustained through the informal ways of popular culture.

Gramsci, moreover, explains the granting of concessions to the subordinate group in these words: Hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed...But there is no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential (1971, p. 161).

Therefore, Gramsci makes clear that, the rights given to the subordinates cannot change the dominant structure. Under these circumstances, if the films are considered as a part of the civil society, Gramsci is indirectly suggesting that the contribution of any films to the reform in any ideological structure is arbitrary. In other words, what Gramsci suggests seems to be more of a dualistic understanding of dominancy hiding behind a promise of more flexibility and granting to the subordinates. The question is ‘can films break out of the social structures of their own hegemony and help to create a freer society; in other words touch the essential?’

On the basis of this point that Gramsci makes, what Striani argues is if hegemony is the consent to dominant ideas, then it might also be possible to include yielding to the ideas and values of the subordinate groups (1995, p.166). And I argue that only when the minorities are given a medium to express themselves in public, for example, through the mass media, will there be a chance for a cultural reform in the society. Strinati concludes this issue by stating that “if hegemony is seen to rise out of conflict, then we could expect the hegemonic compromises which resolve conflict... to express the issues and interests at stake” (ibid., p.168).

2.1.2 The Concept of Organic Intellectuals in Gramsci

Gramsci categorized the intellectuals as “traditional” and “organic”. The clergy are an example of that as are the men of letters, the philosophers and scholars. They, who are also historical, mistakenly consider themselves as independent of the dominant power and deprived of class consciousness. “Intellectuals think of themselves as ‘independent’, autonomous, endowed with a character of their own” (Gramsci 1971, p.8). Although they regard themselves as independent of the ruling group, according to Gramsci, it is an illusion and a myth. On the contrary, they are the defenders and the supporters of the dominant ideology. They grow organically with the dominant class and they are produced by the educational system of the ruling ideology to maintain the hegemony over the rest of the society.

Moreover, within the intellectuals, strata have occurred; “i.e. the petty and middle landed bourgeoisie and certain strata of the petty and middle urban bourgeoisie” (Gramsci 1988, p. 306). Thus, the rural bourgeoisie is engaged with official duties of the state and professional people while the urban bourgeoisie produces technicians for the industry. The average intellectuals of the urban life carry out the production plan of the executives and can be compared with the subaltern officers of the army, whereas the top urban intellectuals are the executives of the production cycle (ibid., pp.306-308).

On the other hand, the organic intellectuals are sociological intellectuals and express the collective consciousness or ideology of their class. (McLellan 1995, p.26). Moreover, a revolutionary intellectual should have a historical awareness to understand the historical circumstances of the society of which he lives in to modify his own relations and the society.

For Gramsci, there must be a counter hegemony to beat the current system. For that purpose, not only the traditional intellectuals must revolt against the dominant power but also the working class should produce its own organic intellectuals, which he calls a

‘scholastic programme’ or a set of principles (1971, p.104). Moreover, the revolutionary intellectuals should originate from within the working class rather than being imposed from outside or above it. What Gramsci suggested was that every person has an intellect but not everyone has an intellectual function in the society. However, everyone carries some form of the intellectual activity and consciousness to change the morals and values in a society that will bring new modes of thought. “There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded... Thus, each man has a conception of the world to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought” (ibid., p.9). Consequently, what Gramsci was trying to achieve is to bring the revolutionary ideas from theoretic understanding to be practiced by everybody, but not only the elites in the society. Henceforth, the new intellectual would be able to have an “active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, ‘permanent persuader’ and not just a simple orator” (ibid., p.10). Thus, everyone will have the critical awareness and conception of the world to change, reconstruct and reorganize it. History was made rather by ‘intellectuals who are conscious of being linked organically to a national popular mass’ (Gramsci cited in Joll 1978, p.124).

Like the organic working class intellectuals of Gramsci who have the power to change the dominant ideology in a society, the power struggle between the dominant rule and the subordinates in a country could be resolved by the help of the intellectuals who want to reform the existing structure of the society. The question is, ‘can the subordinates produce their own organic intellectuals who would make the rest of the society aware of their existence in the society?’, or ‘whether those traditional intellectuals who are aware of the rights and the existence of the minorities, really have the state of mind to make a change and act as reformists’.

2.2. ALTHUSSER’S IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUSES

According to Althusser, the base provides a foundation for the superstructure and everything else is established on it. Moreover, the superstructure has an influence on the

base, too. In his words: “it’s the base in the last instance determines the whole edifice...obliges us to think what the Marxist tradition calls conjointly the relative autonomy of the superstructure and the reciprocal action of the superstructure on the base” (1971, p.136). As a result, he distinguishes between the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA). ISAs, which include “religious (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'), family, legal, political (including political parties), trade union, communication (press, radio and TV, etc.) and the cultural ideological apparatuses (literature, arts, sports, etc.)” (ibid., p.143). They are less centralized and more heterogeneous and more related to private institutions rather than public.

On the other hand, the RSAs include "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc.” imposing punishment and deprivation in order to enforce power (Althusser 1971, pp.142-143). This distinction is comparable to Gramsci’s coercion (state) and hegemony (civil structure). Thus, both these apparatuses function to secure the reproduction of the relations of production similar to what Gramsci points out; the repressive state apparatuses by the use of force and coercion, and the ideological state apparatuses through the use of ideology. Ideology achieves this by “installing the necessary skills into the minds and behavior of population” (Strinati 1995, p.152).

Althusser, however, does not suggest that the RSAs function only by violence, whereas the ISAs function only by ideology. He asserts that “the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression, while functioning secondarily by ideology” (1971, p.145). Similarly, ISAs function secondarily by repression. As well as there is no such thing as purely ideological apparatus, it is not possible for either to be purely repressive. Thus, Schools, the Family and the Churches all use appropriate methods of “punishment, expulsion, selection...censorship, etc. (ibid.). Driving from Althusser’s assertion, it seems that ISAs subtly control the subordinates since they already have the consent of them by using the private institutions, which do not seem to look real repressive organizations from the outside. “To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a

long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (ibid., p.146). This shows a quite similarity with Gramsci’s idea on consent in that he also believes that no state can hold power for a long time without the consent of the public through the enforcement of hegemony.

2.2.1 Educational State Apparatus

According to Althusser, a person’s capacity for perceiving himself is not innately given. Rather, it is acquired within the structure of established social practices, which impose on individuals the role of a social subject who is connected to the dominant relations of production in a society. In Althusser’s view, our values, desires and preferences are implanted in us by ideological practice. The most powerful agency is the educational apparatus, which is provided primarily by the school in the modern era and imposes on the society the ruling class’s ideas. Althusser’s thesis is that the Church, which once was the dominant Ideological Apparatus, has now replaced by the School, which is also considered as “natural, indispensable-useful and even beneficial” (ibid., p.157). Hence, the Family-Church couple has now become the Family-School, which dominates the capitalist societies. The School subtly shapes and manipulates the minds of the individuals towards the ideology of the bourgeoisie.

Every ISA contributes to the reproduction of the relations of production. The political state apparatus do this by State Ideology; the communications apparatus by shoveling the citizens with nationalism and chauvinism by means of the media and the press; the cultural apparatus with sports events that also plant chauvinism in people’s minds; and religious apparatus with sermons, ceremonies and so on. The educational apparatus, however, is ‘silent’ (ibid., p.155), yet it is so elusive and at the same time intensive that it is much easier to influence especially the children who are most vulnerable. The importance that Althusser gives to superstructure is comparable to Gramsci’s conception that superstructure is essential in a massive upheaval or revolution.

In fact, there is no ISA that produces in us the belief that we are self-conscious agents. "That an individual is always-already a subject, even before he is born, is nevertheless the plain reality, accessible to everyone and not a paradox at all" (Althusser 1971, p.176). Thus, the subject is formed even before it is 'know-how wrapped in the ruling ideology' (ibid., p.155). Either way, it seems impossible for an individual to escape from being manipulated by the ruling ideology as it is born into this formation of society. The child will be given his father's name, will have an identity, be expected to display certain behaviors because of its gender etc. Thus, the individual will already find its places and acquire pre-determined roles as an ideological subject even before they are born.

2.2.2 Ideological Unconsciousness

In this respect, what Althusser opposes is the common assumption that ideology is a form of consciousness, in other words, it is imposed on the community without their knowledge. To explain the functioning and the structure of ideology, Althusser is first concerned with the imaginary form of ideology. "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (1969, p.162). Yet, when we say ideology is a matter of consciousness, what is meant is that "the lived relation between men and the world, including History, passes through ideology itself" (ibid., p.233). They need to be interpreted to discover reality of the world. As Marx points out, through ideology men become conscious of his place in the world and history. However, it is this ideological unconsciousness that men have relations with the world. Drawing from Lacan, he states that the real relations are highly associated with and invested in the imaginary relations "a relation that expresses a will (conservative, conformist, reformist, or revolutionary), a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality" (ibid., p.234).

The real principle of ideology depends on the relation between the real and the imaginary at the same time. So while the dominant class (the bourgeoisie) is ruling under the concept that 'all men are free, including the free laborers', and the social system functioning through this imaginary ideology seems to be working with the conscious consent of the

laborers on the surface, the reality is the fact that this is the law of a 'liberal capitalist economy', and the ruling class is exploiting the laborers under the concept of ideology of freedom.

Ideology is a slippery surface according to Althusser, which may absorb one in and mislead him when one tries to use it as a tool to reach his goals, believing that he is the master of it. In that context Althusser states that "Just as a people that exploits another cannot be free, so a class that uses an ideology is its captive too" (ibid., p.235). Therefore, like the structure of the unconscious and like language, ideology is what we assume we are in charge, but the real condition is the fact that we are ruled but not freed by the ideological apparatuses that we internalize. Thus, the individual participates in the practices of ideological apparatuses, adopts them and moreover freely chooses them as a subject. However, Althusser points out that each conscious action of the individual is "inserted into practices [...] practices are governed by rituals...within the material existence of an ideological apparatus" (ibid., p.103). According to what Althusser claims, every action of the subject is bound to the present system in the society. In a classless society, however, ideology would function as an "element in which, the relation between men and their condition of existence is lived to the profit of all men" (ibid., p.236).

In a nutshell, from Althusser's point of view, 'ideology interpellates individuals as subjects' (1971, p.175). Once they become a member of the society, they become socialized learning the cultural norms, or ways of behaving of the society (through religious, political, popular culture or school apparatuses) they are brought up in, which they cannot escape. And it is that way that ideology functions. In other words, most of the time, the subjects live through the rituals of the ISAs, ie. man is an ideological animal by nature. (ibid., p.171)

Regarding this, Eagleton states that the subject's utterances and actions should be interpreted as regards to the speaker's attitudes towards the world or lived relations to the world (1991, p.19). This aspect of ideology is essential in understanding and interpreting

the actions of the individuals or groups towards others, which may help us reduce the amount of prejudgment, especially towards a person or a group, who does not share our cultural, historical, social background².

As a result, in order to comment on an ideological statement, one should also consider that ideological statements involve certain beliefs and social values as well, that the reproduction of particular social system imposes on him or her. Similarly, Stuart Hall states that the implied meaning is open to different interpretations since the active interference of ideology may create different meanings (1980, p.133), which will be articulated in more detail in Narrative Theory Section. Thus, instead of showing anger and rage, one has to acknowledge the social aspects and context of the statement that has been made.

Ultimately, the way we interpret the ideological statements or actions dramatically affect the way we decipher the world around us. Thus, for this study, while trying to find a common ground for both the dominant and the non-Muslim minority groups in Turkey, emphasizing the importance of the dominant ideology and hegemony that construct the identity of both groups is highly important in overcoming any prejudice and conflict between them. Moreover, since cinema is an ideological product of the system, “the majority of films in all categories are the unconscious instruments of the ideology which produces them” (Comolli and Narboni 1992, p.684). However, there are some that try to break the hegemonic statements of the dominant ideology. In that respect, asking the questions “Do they express, reinforce, strengthen the very thing they set out to denounce?” and “Are they caught in the system they wish to break down...?” is significant in order to examine the effectiveness of the political criticism (ibid., p.687).

² Eagleton’s examples for ideological statements and their decoding are quite important in acknowledging how interpretation could differ from person to person. If one asserts “Tinkers are a flea-ridden, thieving bunch of layabouts”, that statement could easily be interpreted as “Down with tinkers”. Yet, one could learn to see things from different perspectives by getting rid of prejudgment and interpret it as “There are reasons connected with our relations to the dominant social order which make us want to denigrate these people” (Eagleton, 1991,p.19).

3. NARRATIVE THEORY

Narrative analysis is used to reveal the deeper connection of ideas and relationship in the society through the text. Narrative is everywhere; in religion, daily conversation, history, poetry, theatre etc. Moreover, most of the media texts are narratives as well; the news, commercials, reality shows, TV series and films. They all have story sequences. Narratives are constructed entities, which seem to replace the dull and ordinary world of reality.

Therefore, while analyzing films, narrative theory is necessary as Robert Stam puts it; narrative analysis “reveals the deeper system of cultural associations and relationships” since they are created by the narrative form. Sarah Kozloff argues that in order to find out the results about the “content or ideology” of a text, media critics should apply the narrative theory, and most narrative theory is formalist (1992, p.43). Moreover, how cultures choose to represent themselves through these narratives is also an important issue in narrative analysis (Taylor and Willis 1999, p.67). Therefore, especially by the media and film makers, narrative is an invaluable tool to convey the message to the audience and for the critics and academicians to analyze the underlying sociological and ideological implications behind the texts. In that respect, narrative theory will be a tool for this study to articulate the surface and the hidden political, cultural and historical meanings in the films, which will be analyzed in this study. Thus, in some context, narrative theory will be deployed in this study.

3.1 STORY

Narrative is fundamentally divided into two parts: Story and discourse. The story is “what happens to whom” and the discourse is “how the story is told” (Kozloff 1992, p.45). Discourse on the other hand is “...any speech-act supposing a speaker and a listener, and in the speaker an intention to influence the listener in some way” (Benveniste, cited in Todorov 1987, p.25). The story is “a series of events arranged in chronological order”

(Shlomid, cited in Kozloff 1992, p.45.). These events, however, change from one state to another as Todorov also mentions as equilibrium and disequilibrium. In other words, the story starts with the equilibrium (the moment of plenitude), where everything is satisfactory and stable, then with a series of events, we see disequilibrium, where the peaceful environment starts to shake and the hero is faced with difficulties and problems and finally there comes “a new equilibrium” or “a new state of affairs” with the resolution of events (Taylor and Willis 1999, p.76).

In the real world, everything seems to happen randomly; however, in stories they follow a sequence or a cause and effect relationship; succession and causality. Thus, the narrative forms try to meet the audience’s desire to predict causality through the sequence of events (Kozloff 1992, p.46). Moreover, the events in the story have differences in importance. Some are vital for the story’s development, which are called “kernels” by Chatman, and some are more routine events, “satellites”, which do not have a major effect in the story (ibid). In that respect, ‘what lies in the heart of the stories?’ is a key question in film analysis.

Narrative theory was founded by Russian formalist Vladimir Propp, including some other formalists. Propp studied the Russian fairy tales, and ordered them according to their structural form instead of their themes. According to him, narratives have a universal function. He studied one hundred tales breaking each of them into most significant parts, which he called ‘functions’ and formulated thirty-one functions to be present in every story. These functions are not events in the narrative, but the purpose they play in the story. The two events that are quite different on surface in two tales might play the same function. He added that certain functions in a tale take place at a particular time in the story. For example, at the end, the hero always gets married and is always rewarded (Propp 1995, pp.201-203).

Even though each story has different characters, they tend to fall into seven types of dramatic personae: the villain, the donor (the provider), the helper, the princess and her

father, the dispatcher, the hero (seeker or victim), and the false hero (Fiske 1987, p.137). This is called the sphere of action and each character can play several set of roles throughout the narrative. Propp's narrative model might not be valid in today's commercial narratives produced by popular mainstream movies; moreover, it can be applied especially to the narratives of TV series and news stories. In that respect, they can also be applied to films of Yeşilçam Era and popular soap operas in Turkey, which repeatedly use certain stereotype characters, motives and situations that appear again and again with similar sequence and a similar lesson. Moreover, I suggest that this stereotypical structure keeps repeating itself in the films of some Turkish films after the 1990s.

Todorov's idea of narrative is also closely related with the struggle between the hero and villain. Ideological forces shape the narrative rather than the individuals. Thus, for Todorov, disruption and equilibrium are the most important elements in a narrative. The disruptive force is usually the villains in the capitalist system who are against the dominant rule such as "trade union members, left-wing social activists or social-issue demonstrators", while the heroes who comply with the dominant ideology and help maintain the stability of the system and the equilibrium are mostly "servants of the state, the army, judiciary or the police force" (Taylor and Willis 1999, p.76). This model is, thus, useful in questioning the ideological implications in a narrative.

For most of the films whose plots are based on an ideological background such as the conflict between the dominant ideology and the subordinates, Todorov's idea of narrative might seem quite applicable. Fiske argues that the suggestion that the disruptive forces are the workers and unions serves to position the reader (audience) against the villain; therefore contributes to the maintenance of the dominant ideology (1987, p.139). The arguments about Todorov's conflicting forces maintain this model can be mostly used for news texts, television police series or television advertising but not for other kinds of texts whose narrative organization is totally out of the conventions, like avant-garde films (Taylor and Willis 1999, p.78). In that respect, Todorov's narrative model might be used in favor of the status-quo in popular culture. Nevertheless, as Fiske suggests "To present a critical view of

the social order, it would be necessary to take it out of the realm of the taken-for-granted, to 'nominate' it, to represent it directly and critically, and thus to demythologize it. Most television narrative does not do this" (1987, p.140). Therefore, in order to have an alternative perspective in film analysis, establishing what or who involves forces for social change through Todorov's narrative model would be useful.

Kozloff argues that narrative models are not solely sufficient to analyze a media text if it is to be examined to its full extent. She states that since the narrative theory focuses on the text itself, it does not deal with where the story comes from "for instance, the history, organization, and regulation of the broadcast industry, the influence of networks, or the contributions of individual professionals" and the psychological and sociological effects it leaves on the audience (1992, p.43).

For this reason, as well as focusing on the structure of the text itself, the historical, sociological and ideological analysis of the society is also necessary for a more objective critique of a text. The formalists are not concerned with the content, and consequently not the ideological and political connotations of the work. As a result, narrative analysis will be a subordinate theory to be used together with other theoretical frameworks.

3.2 DISCOURSE

When discourse is in the question, interpretation and subjective point of view are emphasized. "Discourse is the genre in which the effort to earn this right of expression, with full credit to the possibility that things might be expressed otherwise, is preeminent" (White 1985, p.2). Discourse moves back and forth, as its meaning suggests, "between the alternative ways of reality" inspired by the traditions of the society it is born in, by the language of the writer used at a particular period or the ideology he is trying to establish (ibid., p.4). Thus, as White suggests, discourse is a tool for mediation. As Kozloff points out narrative is not what we witness on screen or read in books, but it only becomes

narrative when we communicate the event through a teller. A narration, therefore, should have both a teller and a listener (1992, p.55).

Literary narratives have six of these participants; real author, implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader and real reader. The real author is the writer that has written the story, like the auteur of a film, and the implied author is the imaginary conception of the writer on the reader's mind. Unlike the narrator, the implied author does not have voice and has no direct communication. "The implied author establishes the norms of the narrative [...]. The norms are general cultural codes [...]. The real author can postulate whatever norms he likes through his implied author" (Chatman 1978, p.149). Thus, the implied author subtly conveys the beliefs and views of the real author/auteur to the reader/audience. In that respect, the implied author has a very important role for a screenwriter or an auteur in a film to deliver his ideology.

On the other hand, the narrator is the voice-over telling the story, which can be divided into two; anonymous narrators and character narrators. Anonymous narrators are voice-over narrators that are not related to the story, whereas character narrators are one of the characters in the narrative telling the story. The narratee is the unspecified person that the characters in the story talk to as 'you' as if they are talking to an imaginary person in front of them. A narratee is usually used in TV shows as they are broadcast to the masses. The implied reader/viewer is the reader/audience whom the real author wants the message to be received. Every story or show has a target reader or audience to be addressed. Finally, the real viewer is the flesh and blood viewers (Kozloff 1992, p.59).

To Bakhtin, novel is a genre that cannot be thought without a variety of individual voices, dialects, language of the dominant discourse, of various circles, of the sociopolitical purposes of the present time and the past. The novel, different from the other genres, conveys the concept of *heteroglossia*, which comes from the diversity of languages and their interaction. The movement of the theme into other cultures and streams of languages by *dialogization*, and thus their interrelationships is an indispensable feature of the novel

(Bakhtin 1981, pp.262-63). In other words, polyphony is an essential quality that cements different voices; the author's voice, the narrator's presence, the speeches of the characters, which permit the variety of the voices to construct the different social layers of the novel.

However, unitary language, Bakhtin suggests, overcomes *heteroglossia* and strives to maintain a centralized "verbal-ideological thought", which keeps the officially recognized literary discourse and supports already established language. Therefore, unitary language unifies the cultural variety in the language providing a social centralization. This unifying way of discourse both diminishes the efforts of multi-voice and multi-cultural aspect of the society into a monologic utterance (ibid., pp.270-71).

3.3 ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Saussure maintains that the process of choice of words has two dimensions: syntagma (combination) and paradigm (selection). In the community, because of culturally established norms, there are conventional syntagmas and these combinations inform us about the conventions that structure the meaning of the media texts (Taylor and Willis 1999, p.21). These meanings can be changed by taking one paradigm out of the syntagma and replace it with another selection. Signs and their combinations are customary. Thus, the connection between the signifier (the word, the sound, image etc) and the signified (the concept, the meaning, the thing indicated by the signifier) is made by convention. Therefore, even though the images that the camera shows might seem objective, we should bear in mind that those images are also affected by the codes and conventions; thus, the meaning might change as the cultural values and norms of the society change. "Semiotics enables us to realize that all media texts are mediated using codes and conventions of the sign systems in which they communicate" (ibid., p.22). For this reason, we can never talk about a pure media text liberated from these social conventions of the society.

Barthes similarly argued that the signifier, which he called denotation, is influenced by the culture and beliefs of the society. And the signified, which he called connotation, is the

result of the cultural meanings that are generated with the beliefs and the values of that society. Accordingly, he gave the example of a 'red rose' which would be a kind of flower in a particular color in its denotative meaning, whereas the connotation of 'red rose' is romance.

Second-order signification, which Barthes called connotation, is born from the cultural meanings within a system, and the necessary data should be present about a specific society in order to arrive at a connotative reading about that text. Barthes argued that connotative meaning is so much associated with cultural meaning that it cannot escape from being ideological. Moreover, Barthes pointed out that since these connotative meanings are ideological, they contribute to making societal power relations seem neutral and normative (ibid.). Thus, media texts, by neutralizing these power relations such as class and gender, familiarize the society with these relations, which the dominant power wants to achieve in order to avoid any revolutionary changes against the hegemonic norms.

Stuart Hall, in his article on "Encoding/Decoding"³ states that the circulation and the distribution of the product in mass communication are realized in a discursive form. Hence, in order for the product to be effectively delivered, the discourse must be translated into social practices. "If no 'meaning' is taken, there can be no 'consumption' " (1980, p.128). The meaning must be articulated in practice in order to have effect. Thus, the interpretation of mass media texts by different social groups is stressed since each moment and each social group has its own conditions of existence.

The 'lack of equivalence' between the source and the receiver results from the different codes and structure of the broadcaster and the audience. In this way, the interpretation process depends on the audience reception. According to Hall, without codes discourse is not well articulated. Some of the codes may be so widely used in a society that they may appear natural; however, even apparently natural visual codes are culturally specific. Hall maintains that both denotative and connotative meanings convey ideological value. In

³ Originally published as 'Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse' in 1973.

literal meaning, since the ideological value is strongly fixed, it is universal and natural. On the other hand, in the implied meaning, with the participation of the codes, the sign is open to articulation and we encounter the active intervention of ideologies (ibid., pp.131-133). “The connotative levels of signifiers”, Barthes remarked, “have a close communication with culture, knowledge, history [...]” (ibid., p.134).

There are various ways of interpreting a text in connotative meaning. Yet, the dominant, preferred readings convey the institutional, ideological, social and cultural practices and beliefs, which should be referred through the codes, as Hall remarks. At the connotative level, though not one-sided, orders of social life, economic and political power and ideology must be analyzed since the entire social order is implanted in them (ibid., p.134).

Nonetheless, connotative reading of a text depends on in which context the signs are shown and there are variable different meanings of one sign. Therefore, it is clear that there is not one possible way of textual interpretation. “A complete awareness of one’s total environment” is definitely needed (Terni cited in Hall 1980, p.135). The position of the reader such as gender, religion, class, sexuality, race, education and occupation has an effect on the interpretation process (Taylor and Willis 1999, p. 26). However, this study will be limited to the encoding process only; the decoding process by the audience will not be analyzed. Moreover, the only method to decipher a text should not be semiotic analysis. It should be supported by other methods as well.

3.4 NEOFORMALIST FILM CRITICISM

Russian Formalists advocated that art should be made for the sake of art in that rather than conveying a message and being practical, a piece of art should be valued for its beauty and aesthetics. Film and other artworks, as Thompson states, renew our perceptions since watching a movie is totally a different experience than our daily lives. Playfully entertaining films can also stimulate our perceptions as well as art films. In that respect, neoformalists do not make any distinction between ‘high’ art and ‘low’ art in films.

(Thompson 1988, p.9) Formalists based their work on meticulous historical research and theoretical principles. In other words, they believed that the social conditions shaped the purpose of the art work.

It's certain that in order to make an analysis of a film, a certain approach and method should be employed. Some approaches, however, may dictate certain ways of analysis, but not the possibilities of film as an art. Neoformalist film criticism, on the other hand, does not rely on a fixed pattern that will directly take the critic to a specific result. Yet, a piece of art would somehow lend itself to results. (Thompson 1988, p.7)

While Barthes suggests that the media texts have the function of neutralizing and familiarizing the power relations in the society, Thompson points out that art has the important function of defamiliarizing the everyday perceptions of the society. The film's structure, materials, cultural articulations and the processes of defamiliarization are of utmost importance for the neo-formalist critic. The term defamiliarization was first used by the Russian Formalists to refer to art works that evoke renewing effects on the viewer's mental process. We are so used to perceiving certain objects many times in real life that they become habitual, "automatic" as Victor Shklovsky names it, to us. Thus, these objects, people or concepts become too familiar to us, and they even lose their meaning, and consequently the reason for their existence even though they might be fears, taboos, conflicts, etc... of that society. In Shklovsky's words: "The object perceived in the manner of prose perception, fades and does not leave even a first impression; ultimately even the essence of what it was is forgotten [...]. Habitualization devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war." (cited in Thompson 1988, p.10).

On the other hand, art defamiliarizes our perception of the everyday world of ideology and makes us perceive those in another realm, in a new content, so that those habitual forms get transformed and displaced taking place in a realm we are not accustomed to. In this way, making art achieves the aim of making us feel, notice and become conscious of things around us. This puts emphasis on not what is generally known and imposed but what is

perceived. Therefore, conventional beliefs and morals that have been imposed on the society for a long time give way to different points of views.

Thompson goes further and states that some art works as well tend to automatize if they do not change in the course of history and repeat themselves. Unoriginal artworks like B Westerns, which have lost their defamiliarization value due to stereotype repetitive patterns in the genre, are an example of automatization (ibid., p.10).

In that respect Yeşilçam movies in Turkey possess the similar pattern of familiarization in all aspects including the representation of non-Muslims. The stereotypical portrayal of non-Muslims appearing, as the evil character who aims to destroy the hero, or one of the many servants of a wealthy mansion is an example of habituation of the non-Muslim concept in order to attribute a conventional but mostly negative quality to it. Hence, these movies, devoid of a change in historical context, do not have a value of art for the Neo-formalists. After the Yeşilçam Era, starting with the 1990s in Turkish Cinema have there been some attempts to defamiliarize the audience with these stereotypical perceptions of Turkey. In this respect, this study aims to highlight the scope and the extent of this defamiliarization process achieved by the new Turkish directors.

3.4.1 Types of Meaning

Types of meaning Thomas Bordwell suggests – referential, explicit, implicit and symptomatic—“can contribute to the defamiliarizing effect of a film” (Thompson 1988, p.13). Neo-formalism enables us to have an understanding of the culture from which the text emerged.

Thompson suggests four types of meanings to be found in films: “referential, explicit, implicit and symptomatic” meanings. Referential meaning is created by constructing the diegetic world, which is constructing the images, words, sounds etc. to understand the work literally. “In constructing the film’s world, the spectator draws not only on knowledge of

filmic and extrafilmic conventions, but also on conceptions of causality, space and time and on concrete items of information (Bordwell 1989, p.8). Thus, the audience simply recognizes the identity of the aspects in the real world. It is the building of the world and the story of the film. Bordwell illustrates it with a verbal indication at the end of *The Wizard of Oz* with the line “There is no place like home” (ibid.).

Ira Bhaskar in his article, “History, Poetics, Narrative and Interpretation”, criticizes Bordwell for not taking into account the Bakhtinian historical poetics and critique of formalism, which claims that the work cannot be understood outside the concept of literature, ideology and socio-economic situation of the society. (1999, p.389)

Together with Bakhtin, Medvedev states that “theoretical sociological poetics” and “historical poetics” are closely related to each other and “the role of historical poetics is to prepare the historical perspective for the generalizing and synthesizing definitions sociological poetics.” (ibid., p.406) Thus, according to Bhaskar, what is missing in Bordwell’s ideas about interpretation is the lack of “unity of ideological and historical life’ (ibid., p.389) According to Bordwell, “economic, political or ideological processes” could be assessed in symptomatic meaning, which Bhaskar disagrees pointing out Bakhtin’s view that “form and structure are as ideologically shaped as theme and content” (ibid., p.390), in that interpretation of a text should directly be related to narrative. The reason is that, the culture and the historical background of the narrative has created it and interpretation of the text deals with not only understanding of the narrative but also the acknowledgement of the beliefs, representation and the organization of the society and the environment, according to Bhaskar.

What Bordwell suggests about the limited audience-text interaction to interpret the text is a matter of criticism for Bhaskar, in that according to Bakhtinian perspective, together with reader/audience interaction, ‘ideological horizon’ of the text is also in effect (ibid., p.392).

Bhaskar also claims that comprehension is not only understanding the story of the narrative and what kind of effects it has on the society, but also acknowledging why it has these effects. Both of the implicit and explicit meanings in the narrative associate with a deeper segment in the society that has its roots in the past. Thus, comprehension and interpretation of a narrative are closely linked to each other.

Consequently, what Bhaskar claims is that “historical poetics” of narrative cinema is never adequate without the concept of historical and cultural interpretation. (ibid., p.393). Bhaskar has a point in that the interpretation of a film cannot be devoid of the historical, ideological, sociological and cultural implications of that society the film is made in. However, Bordwell does not totally ignore this concept in that the symptomatic meaning involves the economic, political and ideological interpretations. Moreover, according to different critics the priority of the use of those four different meanings can change.

4. HISTORIOGRAPHY AND CINEMA

Where there is no narrative Croche said, there is no history.

(cited in White 1989, p.5)

The writing of history has been discussed for many centuries leaving the historians and the philosophers of history with debates about whether historical writing represents pure reality or whether it is a form of constructed narrative. However, it would be too unrealistic to claim that a historian can totally avoid his cultural, political and social background and depict the events with absolute objectivity.

Bayle said in his *Historical Dictionary* that “history, generally speaking, is the most difficult composition that an author can undertake, or one of the most difficult. It requires a great judgment, a noble, clear and concise style, a good conscience, a perfect probity, many excellent materials, and the art of placing them in good order...” (Cited in White 1975, p.49). And he goes on to maintain that however true to life the historian tries to write, the truth will never escape being just a fable or romance that devoid the facts. “...the more a person endeavors to give faithful and true relations, the more he runs the hazard of composing only defamatory libels” (ibid). As White points out “historians in general, however critical they are of their sources, tend to be naive storytellers” (ibid., p.8 fn6). Hence, to White, this naivety protected the historian from the dominant militant idealistic doctrines in philosophy and science (White 1985, p.28).

As a result, as many historians, along with Hayden White, suggest there is no single point of view about any subject that is being studied, but there are multiple. And this variety derives from the different minds looking at the past events and different cultural and intellectual backgrounds. Thus, we would not be realistic if we were in pursuit of a single “raw fact” (ibid., p.47). However, this does not mean that every historian should write his own story of the past. In that respect, what White suggests is that the historian, like the

artist, should be careful about the choice of the metaphors he uses in ordering the world; in other words, he should neither shovel them with too much information nor refrain from the use of them only until he realizes the metaphor does not stand for the data anymore. While historical narration derives from phenomena or events that are valid empirically, they need to be fictitiously formed in order to be coherent. Thus, it is indispensable for historical writing to have a narrative quality (Iggers 2007, p.2).

4.1 THE IDEAS OF MARX AND FOUCAULT ON HISTORICAL NARRATION

Marx's theory is based on social history and historical analysis. "[...] Men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history'"; eat, drink, and fulfill the daily necessities that he has to satisfy in order to survive. And the production of these needs in order to sustain human life is, according to Marx, the first historical act of men. To provide history with a materialistic basis is so important in Marx's view that this was started only by the English and the French since they wrote the histories of civil society, of commerce and industry. "[...] The 'history of humanity' must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange" (Marx 1845). Thus, in Marx's view, history is basically considered in terms of the class antagonism. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx 1848). Instead of focusing on the significant personalities and meta-narratives, Marx suggested, focusing on the dialectics of social processes. The materialistic connection of men with each other creates history, which could only then be free from any political and religious influences, and the fundamental factor is men's needs and the mode of production (Marx, 1845). And this was seen as the foundation of human society and historical development.

Historical writing, for Foucault, who interprets history separate from Marx, is a creation, which brings the historian to a powerful position since the narration has an effect on the reader whatever his/her political stand is. Historical narration usually tries to justify a certain version of the present thus the past would be understood and retold through the knowledge of the present, and the present would be explained through the past (Poster

1984, pp.75-76). In that respect, many historical schools are under the critical evaluation of Foucault.

If the discourses do not need to find their material force somewhere else, as Foucault considers them as powers by themselves, then the focus on the intellectual ideas of the elite will shift to the ordinary discourses of disciplinary institutions. In this way, the masses in every walk of life will be affected by these ideas. “Foucault is therefore opposed to a central doctrine of historical materialism upon which the concept of ideology rests: the distinction between the base and the structure” (Poster 1984, p.87). In other words, Foucault argues for detotalizing the historical theory since the point of view of the history writer- any particular subject- will always remain biased and will never reach the sufficient totalization of the field.

Marx borrows dialectics of Hegel and employs it in a different way. He uses dialectics in order to acknowledge, in our daily lives, how something has appeared, developed, and to learn where it stands in the system it belongs to. However, how the reasoning about these connections should be done without distorting the connections and how much importance will be given to them is quite a challenge (Ollman 2008, p.31). Marx states that dialectics is both “critical and revolutionary in nature”. It is revolutionary because it helps us to see the present as the moment which we only go through since it forces us to see from where the society comes from and to where it leads. In a process where everything and everyone is connected to each other, we have the power to make a change as both the subjects and the victims of the process. Thus, we question what changes take place today and will take place tomorrow. Moreover, dialectic is critical because it helps us criticize the roles we have played so far in the process. In Marxist terms, as the first step, we must realize where we really belong to in the class struggle and after our enlightenment brainstorm about what action to take to serve our interests in the best way (ibid., p.44). Therefore, Marx believes that in order to understand what caused present conditions of life, we should start by analyzing the present, and study history backwards towards the past (ibid., p.135).

4.2 THE ANNALES SCHOOL

Historical writing which emerged as a professional discipline in the 19th century was based on narrative and events, whereas in the 20th century the new formation of historical writing, which is social science oriented, emphasized the social structures and transformation processes. Rather than focusing on events and leaders of the world, this new approach dwelled on the social conditions where these historical figures came out (Iggers 2007, p.6).

The foundations of the Annales School, the journal *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, which emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, 1929, was founded by French historians, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch. At those times, the historical publications produced by the scholars and professional historians who mostly focused on political history were quite rare (Roberts 2006, p.79). Febvre criticized the mainstream historians stating that “specificity, dating and nationality are words which need to be struck off the historian’s vocabulary list” (cited in *ibid.*, p.81). Solely providing documentation, fact gathering and writing accounts to serve political and nationalistic ends were what Febvre criticized in historical writing.

Revolting against the mainstream national political histories, Febvre and Bloch studied subjects outside traditional historical narratives and employed a comparative understanding of European history benefiting from geography, sociology, psychology, economy, linguistics, anthropology etc. (Burke 2002, p.24). For example, under the influence of Paul Vidal de la Blache, who arrived as a teacher in *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in 1877, they thought that they could use geography to acknowledge history and the societies better. Vidal brought the idea of the relation between geography and society, and claimed that geographical landscape, which is an artifact of the society, is formed by the latter that lives in it (Bentley 1999, p.108).

Bloch realized the tendency of the historians to go back to the relics of the past and start from there to narrate history as they are used to documenting the past; however, he believed

in doing the opposite; in that, like a genealogist, he took present as his initial point, and moved backwards, from certainty to the less certain, like what Marx had suggested.

Fernand Braudel, the successor of Febvre, in his book *On History* states that history, which shapes the destiny of the people, makes Man as well as Man makes history, yet we hardly know who makes history; it is most of the time silent and ambiguous (Braudel 1992, p.31). Braudel goes on to compare history as traditionally written to a firework display, whose “pale lights glow, go out and shine again, all without piercing the night with any true illumination” just like the events after which the darkness prevails (1992, p.32). Thus, traditional historical writing, according to Braudel, cannot illuminate humanity through its narrow imagery and lack of interdisciplinary approach. Moreover, since the events should be analyzed through a broad range of historical evidence over a long period of time, “there is no single and simple flow of collective time; there exists a collective time which has a great amount of speed, and a great amount of slowness; thus, it has nothing to do with the pace of the [...] traditional historical time (ibid., p.34). History, which is much slower than the history of civilizations, in Braudel’s view, is the history of Man’s relation with his land that has sustained through the relics of time (ibid).

Annales School gave inspiration to many researchers and historians all around the world with its innovative regressive and comparative methods of historical narration through interdisciplinary collaboration and quantitative methods. The school was successful in using “the microcosm of France as a laboratory for the whole world” (Roberts 2006, p.87). By 1961, more than forty percent of the history theses in France were on economic and social history (ibid., p.84).

4.3 THE HISTORICAL NARRATION OF NON-WESTERN SOCIETIES

After the Second World War, with the collapse of colonialism, non-Western societies came to a realization that they also have a history of their own. Hence, grand narratives started to vanish; instead, a new kind of historical narrative started to emerge where women,

minorities and social groups who were not involved in historical narrative before began to be represented and to find a way to voice their demands. This new approach on historical writing focused on daily life experiences and conditions, which was considered as cultural studies. Thus, a new platform, which enabled the different layers of the population to uncover their own identities, was created (Iggers 2007, pp.7-8).

Guha, in that respect, criticizes the Western perspective of Hegel on World-history, who advocates that history can be made only when there is a state to write about, and that World-history possesses a moral license, which justifies the deeds of the great men of history (Guha 2002, p.4). “The Renaissance formula, ‘no writing, no history’... was updated by 1830 ‘no state, no history’ (ibid., p.11). According to Guha, the “world-historical deeds” such as the exploitation and abuse of the continents, non-Western cultures and the poisoning of the environment are the main consequences of how the great men of history had built empires and usurped the colonized populations through the language of imperialism (ibid., p.4). Because of this statism now, the representation of the colonial past is trapped in captivity.

Guha suggests that there needs to be change and challenge, and he challenges Hegel by asking why he excluded India from world history by claiming “it still does not have a history” (ibid., p.8). Guha’s challenge of the Western World History is illustrated by the first piece of work on Indian history written by a Bengali in his own language published back in 1801 (ibid., p.10).

Homi Bhabha, in his article entitled “Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation”, denies the linear relationship between the event and the narration of it since temporality and hybridity prevails the modern nation. Thus, according to Bhabha, the people of the imagined communities of the modern nations are not narrated in a horizontal space; there is not one single explanation or origin. “Their [modern-nation people’s] metaphoric movement requires a kind of ‘doubleness’ in writing; a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a

‘centered’ causal logic” (Bhabha 1990b, p.293). Accordingly, the constant movements in the social and cultural condition of the modern societies naturally break the homogeneity as Derrida states “the present is no longer a mother-form [mother-tongue or mother-land]” (ibid). In other words, the modern societies are no longer uniform, but ambivalent – due to mass migration of communities from the mid-nineteenth century in the west, and colonial expansion in the east—, and so is the historical narration that once was equal to certainty. “To write the story of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs modernity” (ibid., p.294).

4.4 LITERARY ASPECT OF HISTORICAL NARRATION

In conditions where identity becomes the core issue, it seems quite unlikely for a historian to have an understanding and interpretation outside his own culture and language through which he perceives the world. Therefore, according to White, historical narratives are “verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more in common with its counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences” (1985 p.82). White also points out that, as it is the case in a novel or a play, some of the events in historical narratives are suppressed or devalued while some others are emphasized through the use of characterization, repetitive patterns, tone and point of view, alternative methods of description and so on. What is more, a single historical event might become tragic, comic or romantic if conceived from different perspectives in the hands of different historians. White believes that this is the result of the “historian’s decision to *configure* them according to the imperatives of one plot structure or mythos rather than another” (ibid., p.84).

Hence, according to the decision of the historian, one plot structure and order of events among many alternatives is preferred and employed to create a new interpretation of the past. By this way, the historian familiarizes the reader with what is unfamiliar to him in terms of its temporal distance to the reader, but at the same time lets him decode the

narrative icons that suit his cultural background and memories. Thus, historical narrative is a mediator between the memories and cultural identity of the reader and the past events.

Narratives about the cultures/nations have always possessed the ambivalent quality since the image of the nation is mostly imaginative and highly symbolic, which makes the powerful historical idea of the nation in the west. As the representations of the social life; ‘youth, the everyday nostalgia, new ‘ethnicities’, new social movements, ‘the politics of difference’ alter, there appears inconsistency in the knowledge of narration. “The emergence of the political ‘rationality’ of the nation as a form of narrative – textual strategies, metaphoric displacements, sub-texts and figurative stratagems—has its own history” (1990a, pp.1-2). Thus, history is a continuing process, which is always in progress, altering the narration into different directions; therefore, it sustains its equivocal, Janus-faced, quality.

White maintains that techniques of figurative language is an essential point to be considered in historical texts; in that, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony are the types of discourse that compose the significant information in the narration (White 1985, p.95). That is to say, the different interpretation of the same data by different historians is hidden in the fact that they use different methods of narrating an event. By this way, narration becomes a vital concept in writing history. Referring to the great history writers, White states that “we must look to the specifically literary aspects of their work as crucial, and not merely subsidiary, elements in their historiographical technique (ibid., p.97).

The nation-state era nationalized the past and made it relative; hence, every society created its own nation specific historical narration that it preferred to remember. In other words, every nation made up its own modern action movie scenario sorted out neatly in which the bad characters are explained through their being the “other” (Mahçupyan 2005, pp.21-22). Since historical narration is similar to the narrations of literature in the respect that it reproduces the past in a subjective perspective, the similarity between historical narrative and the narrative of historical/period (ideological) films should be considered as well.

It is quite meaningful, in that respect, to evaluate films that are based on part of a nation's history, in terms of the non-Muslims in Turkish history. Those films that will be analyzed later have a director, a script writer, and a producer who have their own background, perspectives about the world and their own ideological interpretation of the historical events. Therefore, we can also find similarities between these two kinds of narrators, both interpreting the past in their own way. Thus, a director of a historical or an ideological film can also be considered as a narrator of history. We might be skeptical about whether a historical narrative can lack objectivity. In the same fashion, without doubt a cinematic narrative depicting a scene from the past is subjective. Therefore, while analyzing such films, we should unquestionably consider the cultural and political background of the film maker, the social and political environment it is made in and also the production company responsible for the supervising and funding of the film.

Nietzsche believes that man is a being who is not able to forget. Unlike the animals in a herd which live in the present immediately forgetting what they see, and hide nothing – therefore; honest and lives *unhistorically* –, man by not letting the past go feels the burden of it on his shoulders, - thus never in the present moment and natural. Even the child, who is playful and free of the pressures and denials of the past, will soon be caught by it when he learns to say “It was,”. “That password with which struggle, suffering, and weariness come over human beings, so as to remind him what his existence basically is—a never completed past tense” (Nietzsche 1874, p.4). Thus, the individual destroys the present by having lost his ability to forget, which leads him to self-denial and self-destruction.

In order to lessen the burden of the past, a person or a culture ought to possess a certain degree of what Nietzsche calls *plastic force*, which helps him to find a way of “reshaping and incorporating the past and the foreign, of healing wounds, compensating for what has been lost, rebuilding shattered forms out of one's self” (ibid., p.5). Thus, the historical people, Nietzsche mentions, are the ones who go back to the past only to understand the present; in this way the meaning of existence is revealed naturally in the course of its own

process. Those people or cultures, even though, have a history are not a slave of their past, but employ it for the service of living (ibid., p.7). In that respect, history is no longer a burden to cause conflict or struggle, on the contrary, a tool to learn to desire the future with only hope. “For we wish happily to concede that the super-historical people possess more wisdom than we do, if only, that is, as we may be confident that we possess more life than they do” (ibid., p.8).

Ranjit Guha states that each individual brings along his own past with him as his tool for the communication with the other. “History stands, [...] for the experience of what he has been so far as a particular being in body and soul [...] and also determines the other with whom he will be involved in that game [...]. Each will bring his own history to the process of recognition as an essential condition of its mutuality” (2002, p.21). Thus, this knowledge of history of the other enables the individual to make an assumption of him, and what the individual is connecting with. By this way, each grasps the other’s past for a better understanding and mutual recognition through the knowledge of other’s history. If, according to Guha, the writing of history constructed its principles on such means, there would be no culture or a society whose narrative is so small or simple for the prose of the world (ibid., p.22). Deriving from this perspective of Guha, knowing the history of an individual is knowing his identity and acknowledging him through the codes that have been operating in the narratives of his story, which distinguishes him from the grand narratives imposed on the world history and allows the ‘other’ to articulate the way he behaves in the society. “Understanding is a process of rendering the unfamiliar, or the “uncanny” in Freud’s sense of that term, familiar” (White 1985, p.5).

4.5 CINEMA’S “HISTORICAL” ROLE IN SOLVING THE CONFLICTS IN THE SOCIETY

This mutual understanding of an individual’s past is a crucial point in solving the conflicts between societies with different identities in a world where the concept of identity has become one of the rising issues, and is being discussed through various media and

academic platforms. Cinema is another communication means to bring different societies together and provide a ground for people to have the opportunity to articulate each other through their experiences and look at identity issues from different perspectives. Film's power to gather a variety of cultures together stems from its ability to reach many different societies at the same time in its own cultural environment but allowing the viewers to interpret the same conflict or social problem. In this way, a ground for the encounter of the other's experience could be achieved, and this could lead to a better understanding in coming to terms with what one is not.

To Guha, World-history constructed by the nation-states of Europe during colonialism has been promoted to others' histories. And this strategy of consciously constructing a past narrative with force and consent on colonized countries was so successful that there was no opportunity for other alternative representations. Therefore, "history is shaped within the ideology, dominant mechanisms, the authority, dominant language and grand narratives" (Akbal Süalp 2006, p.43). When the representation of even a single fragment of the society is obstructed or jeopardized, then, the minorities who cannot speak for themselves in those social and political conditions look for ways to be represented by the organic intellectuals, if they are lucky enough to have some amongst them, or someone else to voice their demands and rights. Süalp questions the function of the intellectual and points out his complicity in constituting the 'Other' as the silhouette of himself. She goes on to state that we should be critical about the intellectual's stand in the world, critical thinking, antagonist position and pioneer role in the society (2004a, p.69).

In that respect, film directors who can critically approach the issue of representation in the narratives they construct, and who are aware of the dominant social, economic and ideological discourse in that society, have a chance to question the dominant ideology and defamiliarize the society with what has been imposed by the grand narratives. Beyond any doubt, however, like the history writer, the cultural and political identity of the film director is significant in that this gives a vital clue about why some identities are represented but some are not or for what purpose and to what extent he is representing the silent groups.

4.6 HISTORICAL NARRATION IN TURKEY

Durukan states that the Ottoman history, as well as the Turkish history, has usually been considered as with no history and being passive like the other non-Western countries of the world. Ottoman historians being under the influence of the Western historians became passivized and could not establish their own original narration (2003, p.58). The modern historical writing in the Ottoman Empire, Ersanlı maintains, started together with the nationalist movement in Europe towards the end of the 19th century (2006, p.22).

Nation-state movement particularly in Europe influenced the new Ottoman and Turkish historical narration. However, Ersanlı points out that after the first ten years when the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, the Turkish historians did not follow the new movements and the interdisciplinary point of view of the Europeans, especially French and German, in historical writing. They stuck to French romanticism, positivism, and German historicism, which had used an epic way of narrating events. The German historians focused on the essence of national identity more than politics and the political past with the influence of historicism, which affected especially the Eastern Europe and other Eastern countries since historicism expressed the ideals of the oppressed nations under oppressive governments. To the French, patriotism was the emphasis as a political point of view, so exaggeration and dramatization was quite common. Consequently, Turkish historians at the beginning of the Turkish Republic Era did not follow a critical and philosophical approach, which would have been a more difficult way to choose (*ibid.*, pp.26-44).

Together with the concepts of modernization, dependence, world system etc. that the Western discourse imposed, the official Turkish History Thesis also started to be influenced by the Ottoman Empire in terms of its Islamic roots. The Ottoman historicism in the 16th and 17th centuries was composed of a mixture of religious propaganda, the deeds and victories of the Sultans and the army, heroic stories, and legends in the form of a political recollection of events in an epic narrative (*ibid.*, pp.52-53). As Ersanlı points out, the rich writing style that the Ottoman historians used in different languages, Persian and Arabic,

could not continue in the early Republican era - due to the reforms that legislated Turkish language - ,yet the non-questioning and non-criticizing way of historical narration about the ruling power prevailed with only a superficial improvement. (ibid., p.68).

In the late 19th century, during the spread of nationalist movement in Europe, the Ottoman Empire had its share, too. In order to prevent the Empire from falling apart, after the efforts to emphasize the Islamic solidarity, efforts to establish a Turkish identity started to take effect by some orientalist and Turkish historians (ibid., p.74).

After the IInd Constitutional Era in the Ottoman Empire, 1908, with the influence of nationalist movements Turks before the Ottoman Empire started to be searched. Moreover, with the contribution of laicism and modernism, historical writing developed and made it possible to revise the educational system as well. The study of Turkish history became organized and institutionalized with the foundation of Turkish Association in 1908 by Yusuf Akçura and his friends. The magazine that was published during that period with the same name contributed to the Turkish nation's political power and an effort to establish the grounds to prove a Turkish history based on scientific methods. They mostly focused on simplifying the Ottoman language and the development of Turkish language (ibid., pp.91-94). Together with Akçura, Fuat Köprülü also defended the idea that historical writing should include geographical, ethnic and social phenomena as historical evidence contrary to what some historians of that period tried to do. By searching for the Turkish roots in history, the nationalist intellectuals aimed to create a Turkish identity, where the Ottoman people could find a common means to unite and satisfy their needs of belonging in the modern era.

Leftist liberalists criticized the Republican Era advocating that the state, from the beginning of the establishment of the Republic, suppressed the civil society through both *İttihat ve Terakki Party* and the single party regime. Their thesis was that the establishment of the Republic was not dissociation from the Ottoman Empire but a continuation of it in terms of state/ society and state/ economy relations. Thus, according to them, “the transformations

that took place in the early Republican Era were superficial, and did not bring changes to the society and state relations”. Therefore, they looked at Turkish history in the same way (Savran 1986, pp.177-176).

Yet, Savran totally rejects this thesis and states that Turkish Republic is a leap towards the bourgeois society; thus, it represents a historical detachment. He maintains that we should differentiate between the official ideology and the dominant ideology. In order to evaluate the historical events independent from the dominant ideology- determined by the class conscious relations-, we should assess the ideas and historical events that the official ideology - Turkish Thesis - has introduced. According to Savran, therefore, we should not analyze our history through our sympathy or empathy, but with an approach beyond simple polarizations and complexes (ibid., pp.195-196).

As for the historiography in the Republican Era, Keyder points out that the Greek and Armenian populations were hardly mentioned in the history text books until the last decade when the scholars started to be interested in the ethnic diversity of the Empire. To Keyder, the problem with Turkish historical narration was that it lacked the necessary discussions and agreements between the nationalist elite and the public. “The major problem with nationalist historical writing in Turkey was that it did not take into account popular experience or sentiments” (Keyder 2004, p.48). Since the intellectuals ignored the public opinion, they followed a biased route in historical writing negating the previous existence of the Christian populations in Anatolia. “There are silences in every nation’s history that underlie an active effort to forget” (ibid). Deriving from this thesis, Keyder goes on to support the claim that forgetting and ignoring some events and communities is also a part of Turkish historical writing. Thus, what needs to be done by the intellectuals, the historians, now is to embrace our differences who have been one of us for centuries. “The remedy of the condition of illness nourished mutually by nationalism is possible by taking in the ‘other’ beside us morally” (Mahçupyan 2005, p.23).

A similar approach to Turkish historical narration is taken by Taner Akçam, who suggests that Turkish historical writing needs a new historical perspective and consciousness that is free from social amnesia (1995, pp.10-11). The Turkish society deals with its pain regarding the past events through forgetting; as a result, those events which we never want to speak about become taboo subjects. “The pain of remembering is the main reason of our forgetting” (ibid., p.13). However, we can never run away from our past even though how painful it might be.

Every state has a “foundation myth”, which cements the society together, just as Turkish Republic does. To Akçam’s view, nevertheless, this should not mean suppressing what really took place in history to the depths of our collective subconscious, but to be able to speak about it, what has been forgotten should be enlightened through a new kind of narrative approach (ibid., pp.15-17).

This naturally brings up the question of whether history is written in a more judgmental and biased way by the historians than the authors of literary works. In that respect Timur, who analyzed the Ottoman/Turkish novels during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, states that in a period when historical writing had not gone beyond the official historical thesis, our novelists, especially the ones who wrote about history and the society, approached the transformation the Empire went through in a more unbiased manner (1991, p.7). This, as Timur maintains, results from the artistic nature of literary writing that involves more freedom and creativity. Therefore, the qualities of art might lead the artist to come up with works deprived of the suppression of the dominant ideology; a work that can be free from any prejudices. Yet, of course, this time history will be narrated from the point of view and the background of the author himself, even if less affected by the dominant ideology.

Consequently, whether it is a historical narration or a literary work on history, it is a slippery subject to evaluate the accuracy or the objectivity of the work. Yet, this ambiguity together with the amnesia that has prevailed the society through the long years of suffering

and struggle in Turkish history started to be evaluated from different perspectives, which might heal the wounds and bring back the memories in the reminiscence of time.

5. THE HISTORY OF NON MUSLIM MINORITIES IN TURKEY

In order to analyze the representation of the non-Muslim minorities in Turkish films after the 1990s, it is necessary to provide a brief introduction regarding the minority issue in Turkey and who is considered a minority depending on what criteria. As the main objective of this study is to analyze how the non-Muslim minorities in Turkish cinema are represented, I will limit the frame of my research solely to the examination of the three major minority groups - Greeks, Armenians and Jews - which are also accepted as the main minority groups in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, yet have problems with representation. Moreover, sharing the same fate with non-Muslims, a brief history of the Muslim Turkish exchanges of 1915 is also the concern of this chapter.

5.1 WHO IS A MINORITY IN TURKEY?

In Turkey, contrary to valid standards concerning minorities all around the world, the word minority is attributed to three groups of non-Muslim citizens according to the Lausanne Agreement; that is, the Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews. Baskın Oran, in his book *Turkiye'de Azınlıklar* maintains that there are three reasons for this kind of classification (2004a, p.47).

Firstly, Oran states that since 1454, one year after the conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans, the Ottoman Empire had been based on the idea of religious unity, Islam, not language or nationality until the First Constitutional in 1839. Thus, as the Turkish Republic is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire, the concept of Islamic unity, the *millet* system, still maintained its influence. In this system, the Muslim majority was considered as the first class majority, and the non-Muslim community as the secondary class minority resulting in non-Muslim citizens to be considered as the minority later on after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (ibid., p.48). The term *millet* was used to mean the religious

community until the 19th century, when it started to be used for the word nation (Braude and Lewis 1982, p.12).

Secondly, Oran goes on to suggest that the non-Muslims started to be considered as the 'other' more obviously by the Muslim majority when the non-Muslims were protected by the European governments during the decline of the Empire and thus the Western countries took the advantage of interfering with the Empire's inner affairs. Consequently, this created a prejudice against the non-Muslim communities (2004a, p.48).

Last but not least, the collapse and the reduction of the Ottoman Empire caused distress and discomfort, and even after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the fear of disintegration maintained, which brought about intolerance towards other ethnicities. As a result, non-Muslim citizens were not considered as a part of the nation, but as the 'other' since they were thought to lack the qualities of religious and traditional values. However, in the Lausanne Conference the non-Muslim citizens were given privileges to secure their rights internationally. (ibid., pp.48-49).

5.2 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF NON-MUSLIMS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Ottoman Empire accommodated communities from different ethnicities and religions; therefore, the Empire had to provide them with some legal and social laws and regulations under the status called *millet*, which in Arabic meant "the person who accepts a definite statement or a holy book" (Akyılmaz 2001, p.671). Hence, the communities in the Ottoman Empire were classified according to their religions, not their ethnicities or nationalities. While the word *millet* was used to define rather the religious identities until the 19th century, after this period ethnical and lingual qualities were also included to define the term with the unifying and egalitarian reforms of the *Tanzimat* (1838-1878) (Akgönül 2007, p.39).

“The *millet* system emerged gradually as an answer to the efforts of the Ottoman administration to take into account the organization and culture of the various religious-ethnic groups it ruled” (Karpas 1982, p.141). Karpas states that through the *millet* system, on the one hand the maintenance of religion, culture, and ethnicity was allowed within these communities; on the other hand, their fusion into the administrative, economic and political system was enabled (ibid., p.142).

According to Islamic civil law, which was in effect during the first era of the Ottoman Empire –from the establishment of the empire until the 1839-1856 *Tanzimat Firman-Dhimmis* (*Zimmis*), non-Muslims, who had accepted the auspices of the Ottoman Empire, possessed different political and legal rights from the Muslims. The term *dhimma* means the right for protection, and *dhimmis* had a special agreement with the Ottoman Empire, which meant life and property immunity, the freedom of conscience and worship were under the auspices of the government. However, in return, the *dhimmis* had to show loyalty to the state and pay the poll tax called *jizya* (*cizye*) (Akçam 2002, p.61). The Ottoman Empire in the medieval age allowed the *dhimmis* to practice their own religions in their own worship places, run their own affairs; however, they had to “recognize unequivocally the primacy of Islam and the supremacy of Muslims” (Braude and Lewis 1982, p.5).

In civil law and inheritance law, non-Muslims were allowed to employ their own laws, however; in terms of criminal law, they were subject to Islamic criminal law. Every nation in the Ottoman Empire, called *millet*, had its own high-ranking clergyman who was responsible for order and management of that particular ethnic group. In that respect, these privileged non-Muslim groups were quite autonomous in their private affairs, yet those clergymen were answerable to the Sultan (Akçam 2002, pp.61-62).

Dhimmis possessed the freedom of thought conscience and religion. They had the right to practice and also protect their own religion with no pressure from the state. Non-Muslim communities were allowed to do their rituals and religious ceremonies, and their temples were under the protection of the state. Moreover, they could pass their religion and beliefs

on to their children freely (Akyılmaz 2001, p.678). Yet, *dhimmis* were not considered equal with the majority of Muslim citizens in the Empire until the first signs of the reformation process⁴.

Dhimmis were deprived of some rights that the Muslims did have. For example, they could not marry a Muslim woman or when a Muslim murdered a non-Muslim, he was not executed. They could not build a new church or toll their bells. Moreover, they could not ride a horse or carry a gun. There were limits to their clothing as well. They were not allowed to wear certain type of fine clothes or white turban as the Muslims did, but were obliged to wear certain colors depending on their ethnicities. For instance, the Armenians had to wear red, the Greeks black and the Jews blue hats and shoes. However, “it is difficult to find a consistency in the travelers’ accounts concerning the clothing habits of the non-Muslims, especially in terms of color” (Argit 2005, p.6)⁵.

Besides, they had to paint their houses different colors than the Muslims did and their houses or Holy places could not be higher than the Muslims’. All these restrictions were strictly employed in that the violation of the Holy Law resulted in imprisonment or even death penalty (Akçam 2002, pp.62-64).

Consequently, the main objective was to emphasize differentiation and to despise the non-Muslim groups so that they would always remain as minorities. If tolerance means the absence of discrimination, “the old Ottoman Empire was not tolerant since non-Muslims were not the civic and social equals of the followers of the dominant faith, but were subject to a number of legal disabilities” (Lewis 1968, p.355). However, Lewis also maintains that there might have been a lack of equality between the minorities and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, but there was not persecution.

⁴ Akçam states that the first signs are the Serbian uprising in 1804, the following Vienna Conference in 1815, and 1829 Edirne Agreement, which enabled the Christian communities to take part in the government affairs for the first time (2002, p.67).

⁵ For instance, Braude and Lewis point out that they were to wear distinguishing emblems on their clothes - yellow emblem for Jews- and even in public baths they were to put on some distinguishing signs on their necks (1982, pp.5-6).

To demonstrate who is the dominant group and who is not was also important in terms of establishing the status of the variety of citizens in the Ottoman Empire. Akçam states that this cultural and political background that points out the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens determined the Armenian- Muslim conflict later on (Akçam 2002, p.64).

The economic position of the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire especially in Istanbul is also essential to understand the position of the non-Muslims in Turkey later on and why they were not always welcome by the Muslim majority. “They possessed skills which the Muslims ... either did not possess or did not care to acquire. In certain periods we find non-Muslims heavily engaged in trade and finance...” and in the later centuries dirty trade (Braude and Lewis 1982, p.9). Alexis Alexandris states that during the second half of the 19th century, especially due to the Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty in 1838 (*Tanzimat Firman*), the Ottoman non-Muslims - mostly Greeks and Armenians- dominated the foreign trade with Europe creating a new bourgeoisie of traders, brokers, moneylenders and commissioners in Istanbul and other important centers of the Empire. For example, “the famous Galata bankers (*sarrafs*) were predominantly Greeks and Armenians” (Alexandris 1992, p.31).

Therefore, during the period of 1876- 1909, the Galata bankers, who kept control of the finance in Istanbul, lent great amounts of money to the Sublime Porte (Bâb-ı Âli) and various other ministries of the Ottoman Empire when it was going bankrupt owing to the extravagant spending of the Sultan and the states people. Alexandris maintains that the Sultans also consulted the Greek and Armenian bankers and financiers on a regular basis (ibid). Stefanos Yerasimos in his book *Az gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye* provides some numbers about the economic position of the different ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire.

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Percentage of capital investment</i>
Greek	50
Armenian	20
Turkish	15
Foreign nationals	10
Jewish	5
(<i>ibid.</i> , p.32)	

Despite all the discrimination taken place in the Ottoman Empire against the non-Muslim minorities, the fact that these groups held so much financial power and a large share of capital investment in the Empire contributed significantly to the hostility and disgrace against these non-Muslim communities.

With the help of capitulations and agreements after the wars, the non-Muslim ethnicities gained some rights in the Empire. After the first agreement with France in 1535, the French and its alliance citizens had some privileges so that they would not pay taxes and would benefit from significant tax discounts in trade. This definitely affected the status of the Ottoman Empire in its foreign affairs negatively with the demand of the other non-Muslim ethnicities and the uprisings, which created conflicts with the government and these minority groups. In the 19th century, the process which had started with the capitulations went on with the agreements the Ottoman government made with European countries that provided more privileges and political rights for the non-Muslim communities.

5.3 THE REFORMS OF THE 19th CENTURY

With the influence of the French Revolution in 1789, the unity of so many different ethnicities under one umbrella started to collapse and the Ottoman Empire was forced to make more reforms concerning the equality, citizenship, basic human rights and the freedom of the non-Muslim minorities. Later in the 19th century, in order to keep the Christian citizens unified, the Ottoman government brought *Tanzimat* Reforms, 1839-1876,

by which “the center of power now shifted from the palace to the Porte, the bureaucracy” (Zurcher 1993, p.50).

Tanzimat Firman promised four important reforms:

1. The guarantees for the life, honor and the property of the sultan’s subjects.
2. An orderly system of taxation to replace the system of tax farming
3. A system for conscription of the army and
4. Equality before the law of all subjects; whatever their religion.

(*ibid.*, p.51)

Especially, with the criminal legislation that was passed in 1840, all the Christian communities became equal under Ottoman law. Furthermore, the representation of the *Zimmis* in the city council by the clergy of each community started to be employed (Akyılmaz 2001, p.682).

These policies are thought to be brought not to be executed but in order to “halt the growth of nationalism and separatism among the Christian communities” (Zurcher 1993, p.50). Moreover, Akçam states that the promised reforms were not in clear details and somewhat ambiguously formulated and that the fact that the realization of the equal rights was completed only after the 1880s is a clear evidence of its superficiality (Akçam 2002, pp.69-70).

With the 1856 *Islahat* Reforms, all the rights and privileges that had previously been given to the Christian communities were once again confirmed and more rights were provided. They would be freer to practice their religious ceremonies and would not be forced to change their sects (Akyılmaz 2001, p.683). In terms of military reforms, the Christians were also required to serve for the army; however, later on this was changed to: the ones who would not prefer to do a military service must pay a special tax instead (Zurcher 1993, p.57). Different from the early *Tanzimat* Reforms, second-generation reforms brought a more laicist approach to the administration of the religious communities by allowing them to choose non-clerical representatives for the administration of their provinces (Akçam

2002, p.71). In terms of tax reforms, the abolition of *ciziyé* can be mentioned, which contributed to the efforts of equality for different ethnicities in the falling Empire.

Due to the rights given to the Christians in the 19th century, the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire got more restless than ever before about the non-Muslim communities; thus, rage and hostility grew. Christians, once considered as inferior citizens of the Empire, were now equal with the Muslims, having some privileges under the protection of the foreign countries. Moreover, the fact that they were not obliged to fight in the wars helped them to do trade more easily and get wealthier when there was not much competition with the Muslims who were at war (Akçam 1994, p.61).

In short, with the Constitution of 1876, for the first time, all the people in the Ottoman Empire were identified under the title the Ottoman and were all pronounced equal under law. However, Akçam maintains that although all these rights and reforms were passed to guarantee the rights of the non-Muslims, still the state's religion was stated as Islam. Thus, this became an issue of duality and went on to become a conflict until the Republican Era (2002, pp.72-73).

The Ottoman Empire accommodated a variety of sub-cultures: Turkish, Kurdish, Georgian, Abkhaz, Armenian, Albanian, Rum, Jewish, Bosnian, etc. And all these identities had been recognized by the Ottoman Empire. Their ethnic and cultural differences had not been interfered; thus, in return these communities sustained their respect towards their Sultan and the dominant identity, the Ottoman. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, when Turks became the new dominant identity, the non-Muslims having a totally different ethnic and religious background; and the Kurds considering themselves not religiously but ethnically different from the Turks, the assimilation of the minorities seemed quite difficult (Oran 2004, p.134).

5.4 IMPORTANT EVENTS REGARDING THE NON-MUSLIMS IN MODERN TURKISH HISTORY

In terms of the historical narration, regarding the non-Muslim minorities in modern Turkish Republic in order to attain an objective point of view and to reveal the events from different perspectives, this study aims to benefit from various resources, both Turkish and foreign researchers, scholars and some witnesses. By doing so, the films on non-Muslim minorities and Muslim Exchanges in Turkish cinema can be analyzed with unbiased background information.

5.4.1 The Relocation of Muslims during World War I

Before WWI, in various parts of Anatolia, the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East were there conflicts. During the 1855-66 Crimean War around one million Muslims migrated to Anatolia and Rumelia. 1877-78 Ottoman-Russia war resulted in many more losses and migration of many more Muslim citizens back to Anatolia (Akçam 2002, pp.156-157).

The Kars Region was occupied by the Russians, Armenians and English respectively between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, including the first years of WWI. Kars, Ardahan and Batumi Regions were under Russian occupation during the Russian War. In spite of the Russian assimilation efforts, the region kept its Turkish identity. However, because of the pressures of the Russians, the population of Muslims in the region decreased to half, and over 100.000 Muslims had to migrate to Anatolia (Eroğlu 1999, p.6). By the end of the Russo-Turkish War, between 2000 or 3000 Armenian families left the Eleşkirt Valley alone and joined the Russian troops into Russian lands. After the abandonment of 50.000 Armenians in the Crimean War, 25.000 more Armenians left the Ottoman Empire for Russian lands (McCarthy 2002, p.71). Greater than 70,000 Muslims came from the Caucasus; Kars and Ardahan areas in order to escape from the Russian destruction (McCarthy 1995, p.113).

Moreover, the situation was not much different for Muslims in Bulgaria. During 1877-78 War, Russian troops massacred massive Muslim civilians in Bulgaria. “The death of Bulgarian Muslims fell into four categories – battle casualties; murder by Bulgarians and by Russian troops; denial of the necessities of life, leading to starvation and death from disease; and deaths caused by the refugee status of the Bulgarian Muslims” (ibid., p.66). The initial objective of the Russians was to ensure the Slavic Bulgaria after the war by means of clearing the Muslim Turks from the region through murder, rape and destruction (ibid., p.68).

McCarthy states that more Muslim refugees died of disease on the way to Ottoman lands than were murdered by Russians or Bulgarians. The doctors, insufficient in number to take care of the refugees, stated that “ by April of 1878, 160,000 refugees had come to Istanbul; 60.000 had been removed to other areas, and 18.000 had died...Of the 4,000 sheltered in St. Sophia Cathedral, 25 to 30 died daily” (ibid., p.81). Between 1877 and 1879, approximately one million Bulgarian Muslims fled their homelands, 600,000 of whom returned to their homes, and 500,000 settled in the Ottoman lands. 260,000 Muslim refugees died (ibid., pp.90-91).

The Balkan Wars also caused great sufferings for the Muslims between 1912 and 1913. Muslims were the majority in the Ottoman Balkans before the war. However, the existence of a good number of Christian population in the Balkans was enough for Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece alliance to clear these territories from Muslims (Shaw 2000, p.49).

In 1911, the percentage of the population of Ottoman Europe was as follows:

Muslim	51
Greek	25
Bulgarian	19
Other	5

(McCarthy 1995, p.136)

In 1912, thousands of Muslim Turks were murdered or tortured during the invasion of Aegean Islands and Macedonia and were forced to take refuge at first in Salonika and

Edirne, and later in Istanbul due to the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Balkan States (Shaw 2000, pp.50-51). Therefore, there was a growing rage against the non-Muslims with the loss of land and the loss of many Muslim communities before and after 1912-13 Balkan Wars. Especially, owing to the loss of Balkan lands, “a violent nationalist military thought surrounded the public” (Akçam 1994, p.78). Similarly, many non-Muslims suffered and had to leave their homelands in and around Anatolia, which will be mentioned in the later sections of this study.

5.4.2 The Events of 1915

With the outbreak of war in Caucasian front, the Armenian volunteer groups led by the Armenian committees fought against the Ottoman Empire. Recep Şahin, in his book *Tarih Boyunca Türk İdarelerinin Ermeni Politikaları*, states that “while some Armenians fought with the Russian Army, the others were revolting against the Ottoman government and attacking the Muslim public in the area” (cited in Bilgi 1999, p.16). Gal G. Korganoff, an Armenian military officer, states that “From the very first days of WWI, the Armenians responded in great excitement to the calls of the Allies to join them. For this purpose, [...] large groups of volunteers were coming from everywhere in order to establish independent troops” (cited in Timur 2007, p.53). Also, some Armenians were conspiring against the Ottoman government about its military conditions. As Richard G. Hovanissian mentions in his book *Armenia, on the Road to Independence*, Armenians “played an important role by ‘spying’ on the Ottomans” (ibid., p.54).

Armenian rebellions caused massacres in Muş and especially in Van region. The Tashnak-Sutyun Committee⁶ members turned Akdamar Monastic School into the headquarters of

⁶ **Hinchak (Hınçak), Dashnak (Taşnak) and other Parties:** The aristocrat Armenian capitalists and the Patriarch had been in good terms with the missionary schools manipulated by the American government. And these schools had been mounting a Christian propaganda against the Muslims and the Turks in Europe. (Tural 2001, p.15). These Armenians were involved in establishing revolutionary Armenian nationalist associations towards the end of the 19th century (Halacoğlu 2008, p.1). The organization, *Amira*, established by the rich Armenian aristocracy, was exploiting and dehumanizing the poor Armenian youth, which resulted in these young Armenian people to go to Hinchak (Hınçak) and

the rebellion against the Ottoman Empire, supported by Russia. In February 1915, the Armenian bandits attacked the Muslim villages in Van and massacred people. In April, they attacked the city of Van and destroyed many state buildings. Hundreds of the citizens of Van had to flee to the West. According to the archives of General Staff, ATASE, more than half of the population, 200, in and around Van was massacred (Süslü, Öğün, Serdar 2000, pp.4-5). “Within a few months after the war began, these Armenian guerrilla forces,

Dashnak (Taşnak) Parties in order to express themselves. These young groups of people were trained to become activists and provocateurs against Muslim communities in Revan, Bakü, and Tiflis. During WWI, when the Russian army invaded the North; Artvin, Batum, Kars, and the South; Erzincan, Erzurum, Elazığ, Van, these young groups in Russian uniforms destroyed the Turkish houses and killed the people there (Tural 2001, p.6).

Hinchak Party was founded by the Russian Marxist Armenians in 1887 in Geneva. The main objective of the committee was to establish “Turkey Armenia” and to unite it with Russia and Iran Armenia. The party, which was well-organized in the Ottoman Empire, had been given great support from the Russian consulates. Its method was to change the governmental system of “Turkey Armenia” and start riots through propaganda, terror, and its raider and rebellion units (Karakoç 2009, pp.60-65).

According to what a Hinchak committee revolutionist member states, the Hinchak mobbed all around in the Ottoman Empire aiming to kill the Turks and the Kurds, burn their houses and villages and retrieve to the mountains. Seeing this, the raged Muslims would attack the defenseless Armenians. Therefore, Russia would invade the Ottoman lands in the name of humanity and Christianity (ibid., p.69).

Tashnak Committee, the representative of Armenian nationalism, (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) was founded in 1890, Caucasia, the Russia Armenia. They considered themselves as social-democrats, socialist-revolutionists and nationalists. This party aimed to unite the new Armenia, the Revolutionary Armenakan Party, and the Hinchak Party. The objective was sole independence through rebellions. It tried to create hostility against the Turks, and spread propaganda to the world about massacre and genocide against the Armenians. Tashnak Party was the first ruling party of the Republic of Independent Armenia, which was founded in 1918 (ibid., pp.71-80). After the 30-year governing of the Tashnak Party, Turks decreased by seventy-seven percent, Kurds ninety-eight percent, and Yezidis forty percent in Armenia (ibid. p.85). When WWI broke out, with the collaboration of Russia, France and Britain those Armenian armed groups attacked the Muslim villages, which brought about the process of forced exile of the Armenians (Halacoğlu 2008, p.21).

The aim of these committees was to terrorize the Muslim villagers with fear, and force them to leave the Eastern Anatolia (Öztuna 2002, p.51). The riots went on in Muş, Van, Diyarbakır, Adana and spread to Istanbul until 1908, the 2nd Constitutional Period. The Armenians supported by Russian weapons, raided Adana for 4 days. The Muslims responded severely against killings and destruction of the properties of Muslim villages. As a result, 17.000 Armenians and 1.850 Muslims died (ibid., p.57).

“As well as the Armenians, the Greek communities were also accused of betraying or having the potential to betray the Ottoman state even if neither of the groups encountered the Ottoman army during the last two years of World War I. And this suspicion reached its peak with the 1915 Armenian relocation” (Akgönül 2007, p.43). Akgönül maintains that Fener Greek Patriarchate was mostly blamed for the root of the betrayals. The cheerful welcome of the Izmir (*Smyrni*) Greeks during the Greek occupation of Izmir did not contribute to the already destroyed reputation of the Greek community in the Aegean region (ibid., pp.43-44).

operating in close coordination with the Russians, were attacking Turkish cities, towns, and villages in the east, massacring their inhabitants” (Sonyel 2001, p. 111).

McCarthy states that because of the war in the Eastern Anatolia, many Muslim villagers had to evacuate their lands with the march of Russian troops and the Armenians. He claims that more than 1 million Muslims were relocated. Thus, the Muslim population decreased by sixty-two percent in Van, forty-two percent in Bitlis and thirty-one percent in Erzurum (2002, pp.75-76).

As the violence escalated, on April 24, 1915, the government ordered that the Armenian committee centers be closed down and the leaders be arrested. In May of the same year, the vice commander-in-chief Enver Pasha applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to remove the Armenians in the East- Anatolian Region to Syria, which was also an Ottoman land at the time (Bilgi 1999, p.7). On the other hand, Akçam states that the initial destination was Halab, where the ones who could make it alive would be sent to the concentration camps. The ones who could get out of the camps would be sent to Syria and Mesopotamia (2001 p.145).

With a temporary article passed by the Minister of the Interior, Talat Pasha, without the consent of the Parliament, decided to relocate the Armenians. This was done in order to secure both the lives of the Muslim civilians and the Ottoman soldiers in the region (Bilgi 1999, p.17). Another popular explanation is that the Armenians were expected to stage a revolution in the densely Armenian populated provinces (Halaçoğlu 2008, p.35). Yet, Akçam emphasizes that by the help of some telegraphs sent by Bahattin Şakir, known to be the person responsible for the organization of the Armenian slaughter; it was planned long before (2001, p.138). According to Ottoman archives, “orphaned women and children, artisans, members of the army, and Protestant and Catholic Armenians who were not members of the illegal organizations” were not removed (Halaçoğlu 2008, p.50).

By a 15-clause Act of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Armenians started to be resettled on the condition that they would not make up more than 10 per cent of the Muslim

population in the villages they were located in. Moreover, in the 15-article instructions, their lives and properties would be under the protection of the Ottoman State. However, these promises could not be kept and many Armenians died or were killed. Akçam points out that in some regions, they were allowed to take their possessions with them, whereas in some others selling and purchasing of the Armenian properties were strictly prohibited. Furthermore, any Muslim citizen who was involved in such relation was also punished in some regions (2001, p.144).

The number of the Armenians died or killed is around 300.000 according to the Turkish sources (Bilgi 1999, pp.17-18). Yet, this number is much higher to some Armenian and Western historians. An American historian, Justin McCarthy states: “Taking into account both my personal accounts, and what an Armenian delegation which was in Anatolia in that period reported, I think 600.000 Armenians died” (cited in Timur 2007, p.16- f.3). Halaçoğlu states that 400.000 Armenians were forced to move to other Anatolian villages while 700.000 were sent to exile in the provinces including the ones migrated to Caucasus. Moreover, before the war some 50.000 Armenians fled to the USA between 1899 and 1914 (2008, p.60). Thus, the number of Armenians, out of 1.3 million according to Turkish sources and 2.1 million to the Armenian church, who managed to survive the deaths and killings was around 600.000 (Akçam 2001, p.146).

On the other hand, some other researchers criticize the historical narration, which strictly defends the Turkish thesis without turning to any different or alternative method or narration. Bozarslan claims that this self-defense, which is arbitrary, is quite impossible to shake. “It is not possible to picture another plan, a different narration, since that could abolish the [...] historical causality that sustains their beliefs” (2008, p.112).

Akçam criticizes the fact that in almost all the common Turkish resources, the reasons for the loss of so many lives are explained through only external conditions. Besides, he believes that Turkish historical narration is deprived of looking at history objectively in that to them “there was never a mass execution, yet an instigated Muslim community (Akçam

1994, p.85). Thus, according to Akçam, the deportation and killings had been planned acts of the state and it was controlled by the headquarters.

The dislocation process also contributed to the idea of the establishment of a National Economy. The Christian communities, as mentioned before, used to control trade in the Empire and possessed valuable properties. In pursuit of establishing a “Turkish and Muslim” middle-class in Anatolia, the removal of the Christians from Anatolia resulted in the dispossession of this community and the transfer of their properties and wealth to the Turkish Muslims (Bozarslan 2008, pp.98-100).

As a consequence, even though there may be different interpretations of the resettlement plan, it is clear that it had quite a lot of traumatic effects on both the Armenian and the Muslim communities. While doing research on the topic, I have sadly seen that the history of modern Turkish Republic books did not include this event as even a subtopic. Moreover, some of the Turkish researches, including the Turkish History Publications, mentioned the Turkish thesis with almost the same words and explanations deprived of considering and deeply discussing different points of views, which corresponds to the subjectivity of historical narration. However, in order to attain objectivity, I tried to use sources which involve different perspectives.

5.4.3 The 1923 Greece-Turkey Compulsory Population Exchange

“The migrants are real as much as the nation-states” (Daniel and Knudsen 1995, p.vii). This criticism shows a lot about the policies of the nation-states regarding the population exchange and how much attention they want to give to this issue in historical narration. Historical narration is an indispensable tool to serve the national interests of the states. Thus, historical writing, especially regarding the minority issues in both Turkey and Greece, involves “producing mutual suspicion, fear, and lack of trust as direct concomitants” (Hirshchon 2004, p.11).

Yıldırım points out that the historiography of Turkish-Greek compulsory population transfer started to be established by the American and European academicians between the two world wars. However, since their argument was based on a nationalist approach, they all agreed on the fact that this plan of exchanging minorities was the first legal and successfully organized execution, which contributed to the homogenization of the two nations (2006, p.10). Recently, academicians who try to articulate and bring solutions to the conflicts in the Middle-East focused on the main reasons of Turkish-Greek forced migration, and the term “ethnic separation engineering”, which meant the issue of “ethnic unmixing through ethnic cleansing”. Thus, to these academicians, Turkish-Greek population exchange was regarded as the best historical example of ethnic cleansing (ibid., p.18).

The migrants “were considered as the passive actors of the nation-state applications” in historical narrations (ibid., p.21). Yıldırım goes on to state that the migrants in the historical arena are mentioned not for the sake of their own good and betterment but for the sake of the nation-states’ own benefits (ibid). This fact can also be traced when the history of forced migration was rewritten from different perspectives of both Turkish and Greek national narration of history.

For the Greek historians, the event was an “Asia Minor Catastrophe”, which was narrated to remember the suppression, defeat and becoming a victim, whereas to Turks, it was connected with victory, rebirth and establishment of the Turkish Republic almost disregarding the sufferings of the migrants. “Lausanne was not only a convention, a protocol or an agreement, but also a birth certificate (of a nation)” (Akgönül 2007, p.48). As a result, while the Greek historians saw the forced migration as something to remember in details to establish the ethnic homogenization, the Turkish historians preferred to forget the social, economic and political consequences of the event and emphasized the importance of the establishment of the new nation-state (Yıldırım 2006, pp.22-27).

According to Baskın Oran, the excesses of nationalism era started in the 1920s and continued until the 1990s (2004, p.111), and with the decline of Eastern European regimes at the beginning of the 1990s, The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) underlined the importance of three criteria; religion, language and *ethnic* minorities – instead of the concept of “racial minorities” of the 19th century. Thus, with these developments in the world, after 1990 the minority rights have improved a great deal (Oran 2004a, p.22).

1. A procedure from “the prevention of discrimination” towards “the protection of the minorities” started.
2. While the governments in the past had the “passive, negative” responsibility for the minority protection that refrained them from any acts of discrimination, now the governments have an “active, positive” duty as to protect the minorities distinctively, and even creating the conditions of it (ibid., p.23).

In that respect, after the 1990s with the influence of critical approaches in the social sciences, some Turkish researchers started to reconsider the Turkish-Greek population exchange taking into account the sufferings and problems of the migrants and the cons and pros of this event brought to the country (Yıldırım 2006, pp.32-33). Moreover, since they were critical about the establishment of the nation-state in Turkey, they also emphasized the socio-economic change and the ethnic and religious homogenization in the society’s structure (ibid, p.34).

“The 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey involved the relocation of about 1.5 million people” (Hirschon 2004, p.3). Like the Armenian resettlement, this forced migration had profound effects on the social, cultural and economic lives of the two nations. Before and during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, due to the loss of Ottoman land in the Balkans, a large number of Christians, who were living in Anatolia left for different parts of Greece and the Balkans, and some 2 million Muslims had to move to Anatolia leaving their properties and land to start a new life with the waves of growing influence of nationalism. “Between the Balkan Wars and the First World War,

130,000 Greeks from the Empire were repatriated in Macedonia, the Greek islands and mainland Greece and a similar number of Muslim refugees, mostly from Greek-occupied Macedonia, arrived in Anatolia” (Keyder 2004 p.42).

The establishment of a state-nation for both Greece and Turkey could only be possible through the homogenization of the population. Therefore, right after the Balkan Wars, the Ottoman statesmen, especially the Turkish nationalist *İttihat and Terakki* Party members Enver, Cemal and Talat Pashas, were involved in the ethnic cleansing of Anatolia (Yıldırım 2006, p.36). Similarly, the Greek officials, under the leadership of Venizelos, were in pursuit of the *Mega Idea*, the Great Idea of Greece, in the lands they considered the Greeks were dominant in number. Thus, both leaders of these nations were looking for ways of removing the minority groups from their territories. “The destiny of the minorities in the regions, where the Ottoman Empire managed to keep land and where Greece just occupied, was determined in an environment in which Hellenistic and Turkish nationalistic policies prevailed” (ibid., p.39).

Oran states that the Allies, especially Great Britain, proposed the compulsory exchange of the minorities. Lord Cruzon’s main reason to support the exchange was that the Allies wanted stability in the new national-state era with as little minorities as possible in Europe (Oran 2004b, pp.98-99). Under these circumstances, an exchange of the minority populations seemed quite indispensable. *İttihat and Terakki* Party’s leading officials, Enver, Cemal and Talat Pashas, signed an agreement with Greece in 1914 to ensure that the *Rums*⁷ in Western Thrace, West coast of Anatolia and the Black Sea, and the Muslims in Macedonia are exchanged. Yıldırım, however, points out that the documents and data about

⁷ Since the Ottoman Empire was ruled with the *millet* system, the Orthodox Greeks were called *Rum* or *Romios*. Similarly, the Greek Orthodox citizens who remained in Turkey under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne were also called *Rum* (Hirschon 2004, pp.xii-xiii). “The Rums were usually bilingual but their mother tongue was Greek” (Oran 2004, p.98). In this study, the word *Rum* will be used in that meaning.

On the other hand, Cretan Muslims who moved to Ayvalık and Cunda call themselves *mübadil*, which means exchanges and it is the term that is used for 1923 migrants. Whereas the ones who were forced to migrate from Greek Macedonia and who settled in Muradiye call themselves *muhacir* (refugees) which is used as the main word for the Muslims who were forced to migrate to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey from the Balkans and the Caucasus (Hirschon 2004, pp. xii-xiii).

the agreement are so few that how the requirements of the agreement are executed is quite ambiguous. He also maintains that the initial plan to transfer the minorities on a voluntary basis through the Ankara Agreement could not be realized because of the outbreak of WWI (2006, pp.39-41).

The houses that were abandoned by the Greeks were either destroyed or given to the Muslim refugees who came from the Balkans and the Aegean islands (Keyder 2004, p.42). Thus, the preservation and protection of the properties, where both of the minority groups left unattended could not be carried out. While the uncertainty prevailed, during WWI, the pressure on the *Rum* and Muslim minorities escalated as well. Deportation in the Ottoman Empire did not mean that *Rums* would move out of the borders. Many *Rums* were forced to go inland at least about 6 hours away from the coast. Moreover, it is known that many *Rums* had to leave the Black Sea Region for Russia (Yıldırım 2006, p.42ff).

At the end of WWI, the conflicts between the *Rum* and Turkish nationalists ended with the massive migration of the *Rums* from Anatolia. “The final wave was in the late summer of 1922, when under the most adverse conditions more than half a million Greek Orthodox left Turkey and took refuge in Greece” (Keyder 2004, p.43). The Convention on the Exchange of Populations was signed on 30 January 1923 applied only to the 150,000 to 200,000 Greeks- mostly inhabiting in the Black Sea and interior regions- who had not migrated yet (ibid.)⁸.

⁸ The first two articles of the agreement are as follows:

Article 1: As for the 1st May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory..

These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without the authorization of the Turkish Government or of the Greek Government respectively.

Article 2: The following persons shall not be included in the exchange provided for Article 1:

- a. The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople (Istanbul).
- b. The Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace.

Turkey was, at first, against the exclusion of Istanbul Rums in the exchange in Article 2. Yet, the insistence of Venizelos and George Curzon on the issue of keeping the Rums in Istanbul was successful, and Turkey agreed to comply. In other words, Turkey agreed on the Fener Patriarchate to remain in Istanbul as well since the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate would definitely guarantee the existence of an Orthodox community there (Akgönül 2007, p.49). Thus, Greece and England would still have a possibility to interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey.

After WWI, without exception all the agreements protecting the minorities were based on 'race, language and religion'. Nevertheless, in the Lausanne case, contrary to what many writers and politicians point out, Oran states that it is not 'religion' that was accepted as the criterion to define minorities in Turkey, but the term 'non-Muslim' (2004a, p.62).

To some academicians, Lausanne Peace Conference created the issue of minority communities in Turkish Republic. The Christians, who had been considered as minorities in the Ottoman Empire, were actually a substantial minority in Anatolia. Keyder points out the significant proportion of the Christian population in the territory that is now Turkey in 1913 as one out of five persons, whereas by the end of 1923 it dramatically fell to one in forty (2004a, p.43). As it is clear from these figures, a very insignificant number of Christian minorities was left in Turkey after the First World War. Therefore, "it would not be wrong to state that Lausanne Conference not only verified the minority issue, but also legalized and developed it" (Yıldırım 2004, p.45). Akgönül states that "The Lausanne Convention established a minority regime that is applied to some of the group of citizens" (2007, p.57).

All Greeks who were already established before the October 30, 1918, within the areas under the Prefecture of the city of Constantinople, as defined by the law of 1912, shall be considered as Greek inhabitants of Constantinople.

All Moslems established in the region to the east of the frontier line laid down in 1913 by the Treaty of Bucharest shall be considered as Moslem inhabitant of Western Thrace (Hirschon 2004, p.282).

Akgönül also puts the emphasis on the issue of mutuality in the Treaty of Lausanne pointing out that this mutual, so called positive, rights for both *Rum* and Muslim citizens, who were exempt from being exchanged, are far from even being treated equal. After the agreement was signed, many articles in it were not executed properly respectively by both governments. The non-Muslim minorities were never forced to do anything to go against their religious beliefs. Nevertheless, although it was specified to the contrary in the Lausanne Conference, they were not allowed to work in state positions and some certain jobs. Yet, this law was supposed to be specific to only foreigners (ibid., pp.54-60). For example, the non-Muslim personnel who worked at government railways were made redundant in 1930 (Güven 2005a, p.3).

Similarly, Article 2 was a failure in the respect that the host-states, in pursuit of establishing a homogenous nation, never treated the minorities as a part of the whole but with their differences from the majority of the citizens. Whenever there was a conflict between Greece and Turkey, the sufferers of the disagreements were usually the exempted minority population in both Greece and Turkey. “The respective minorities never felt themselves as a component part of their host-state, and the host-states persisted in considering them as an alien element to be ejected” (Oran 2004b, p.110). As a result, the Greek-Turkish minorities could prosper only when there is peace and mutual understanding between the two states.

Oran also maintains that against article 40 in Lausanne Convention, the theological schools were shot down and raising clergymen was prevented. Moreover, the economic support that was promised in article 41 was not provided (2004a., p.69).

Even though the compulsory population exchange might be considered to have some short-term positive consequences such as preventing further massacres as some academicians point out, in the long-term the sociological, psychological and cultural effects of it cannot be denied. First of all, the traumatic event brought about a feeling of separation and a lack of communication between these communities. “The loss of shared experience is accompanied by growing ignorance of the ways of others” (Hirschon 2004, p.10). This

leads to growing degrees of intolerance and prejudice against the 'other', whom one does not have much opportunity to know and get along with. Through loss of communication (once existed) with the 'other', the gap between the difference, and consequently prejudices grew tremendously leading to "suspicion, hostility and the inability to cooperate" (ibid.).

The population exchange had some economic effects on both Turkey and Greece as well. Both ethnic groups' way of living and economic situation was totally different. This is obvious in M. Celal Bayar's words in the Parliament: "The lifestyles and economic conditions of those arriving [Muslims] are not similar to those of departing [Greeks]: those departing are mostly tradesmen or merchants. However, those arriving are generally farmers" (Aktar 2004, p.89). The Greeks and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were dealing mostly with trade, and they ran a great deal of the financial activities. Therefore, the migration of the Greeks and Armenians from Turkey was a great financial loss for the country. "The most productive elements of the population, and a good deal of the entrepreneurial know-how, had left the country for good" (ibid, p.81). With the departure of most of the Christians enabled Turkey to be independent in its domestic affairs; however, the fact that the Great Powers cut their financial support was damaging for its economy.

For both the Orthodox Christians of Anatolia and the Muslims of the Greek, the forced exile was traumatic due to the fact that the number of people affected and suffered by it was tremendous. Most importantly, the "yearning for 'lost homelands'" many years after the expulsion continued (Hirschon 2004, p.9). "The wealth possessed before the exchange has become the stuff of myth, and the past, in which the 'homeland' has become almost utopian, is glorified (Köker and Keskiner 2004, p.203). The language of the homeland prevailed in the dim memories of the elderly, quite faded in their middle-aged children and perished in the collective memories of the grand-children's generation (Clark 2006, p.23).

Language is a significant component of identity; thus, if one community loses its language, it loses its identity for good together with the collective memory attached to that identity. In the process of striving to fade the internal grievances of the things that are lost, suppression

plays a fundamental role. However, suppression and forgetting might result in an explosion in the form of a journey in search of the forgotten self.

Along with the longing for the homeland, yearning for the lost ones during the march and deportation process was another traumatic event for the migrants. There was a great number of Greek Orthodox Christians in the Black Sea Region, around Samsun, Trabzon etc. Some tried to flee to Greece by vessels from Samsun through Istanbul. However, the ones who could not escape were forced to march to the South-East of Anatolia, which lasted for about seven months. The mass deportation of thousands of *Rums* from the North to the South was not easy since they went through freezing cold as well as scorching heat. What is more, there was another conflict for parents in that they either had to leave their children to Turkish-Muslim families for them to lead a relatively secure and comfortable life, or take their children with them risking their lives. They were “a group of 8000 Christian villagers whose numbers had been reduced to barely 6000 through abductions, exposure and disease by the time they arrived in South-Eastern Anatolia” (Clark 2006, p.71).

The escalation of anti-Greek and anti-Muslim measures in both Greece and Turkey brought about more prejudice and intolerance among the citizens leading the nationalist organizations such as *Türk Ocakları* (the Turkish Hearths) to organize more nationalistic enforcements to cleanse the Christian population totally from Istanbul and Anatolia. Thus, the Christians in the Black Sea region today is erased from the local heritage and the collective memory of the dwellers with hardly any trace as well as the Muslim faith has been erased from the Greek cities once they dwelled (ibid p.75). This ‘ethnic unmixing’ in especially Istanbul prevailed through further shameful events, which will be the subject of the following sections.

5.4.4 The Wealth Tax (1942-1943)

Not surprisingly, as the Muslim world, compared with the Christian world, became weaker and poorer, the positions of the non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim state deteriorated. (Braude and Lewis 1982, p.10)

The issue of the Wealth Tax did not attract any attention of the researchers or scholars until the end of 1980s. And the first researches, which were done on one of the taboo subjects of the Single-Party Period (1923-1945), were not very welcome by both the elites and the businessmen of the period complaining that bringing these subjects up after many years is unnecessary. Yet, the first documentation which was published in 1951 was provided by the period's district treasurer Faik Ökte, (Bali 2005, pp.19-23).

The war years brought tremendous financial burden for Turkey; therefore, the government decided to launch some extensive emergency programs to fix the economic situation. While the agricultural production and the availability of raw products in the country were scarce, great fortune was being made by the merchants, brokers, and agents in Istanbul, who were mostly non-Muslims. They made this fortune exempt from taxation "partly because of tax evasion, but mostly because of the absence of any effective modern system of tax assessment and collection" (Lewis 1968, p.297).

The Capital Tax Law was passed on 11 November, 1942 under the management of Prime Minister, Şükrü Saraçoğlu and President, İsmet İnönü. Initially, the Wealth Tax was claimed to balance the economical status of the Muslims, who went to fight in the war and the non-Muslims who stayed in big cities like Izmir and Istanbul and earned great unfair profits "through black market dealings, price speculating and hoarding" (Bali 2005, p.36). Another explanation was to acquire some capital for the Turkish Treasury in the war time economy (ibid., p.37).

It has been stated in the previous sections that non-Muslim minorities had always been dominant in trade and economic arena in the Ottoman Empire, and this situation was not

much different after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. “The capital levy was conceived and applied in a manner neither normal nor justifiable” (Lewis 1968, p.297). Thus, as a continuation of the ‘Turkification’ project, the Capital Tax Law is aimed at the non-Muslim bourgeoisie, especially the Jewish and the *dönmes*⁹ who were all densely populated in Istanbul after the massive emigration of the Greeks and Armenians from Turkey. According to the figures provided by Faik Ökte, the Director of Finance of Istanbul, the total number of taxpayers in Istanbul at the time was 62,575, which corresponds to fifty-four percent of entire Turkey (Aktar 2000, p.140).

Among the total number of obliged taxpayers in Istanbul, the ratio of non-Muslim citizens to the Muslims was around 9 to 1. In other words, the non-Muslim taxpayers made up of eighty-seven percent of the population of Istanbul - 54.377 people – whereas this proportion was only seven percent in Muslims – 419 people – in the region. The rest, six percent, was a mixture of non-Muslims and foreigners (ibid., p.154). These figures almost deny the official statements of the government claiming that the Capital Tax Law aimed to reduce the money circulation and “tax the excessive profits earned by those taking advantage of the difficult war time” (Bali 2005, p.36). However, in the memoirs of Barutçu, the Prime Minister Saraçoğlu expresses his views on the Wealth Tax at CHP (People’s Republic Party) group meeting in these words: “This law is at the same time a revolutionary law. We have encountered with the opportunity that will give back our economic independence. Thus, by eliminating the foreigners who dominate our market, we will give the Turkish market in the hands of the Turks” (1977, p.263). With a similar policy in mind, the government had also applied the ‘21Kura’ Forced Military Service/ Work Battalions in 1941¹⁰.

⁹ Jews converted to Islam in the 17th century.

¹⁰ After the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938, İsmet İnönü was chosen the new President of Turkish Republic by the Grand National Assembly. İnönü’s policy was to remain impartial towards the coming war. He first signed a treaty of alliance with Great Britain and France on 19 October, 1939. Later on, however, when German troops expanded in the Balkans and came very close to the borders of Istanbul, on 18th June, 1941, Turkey signed a friendship and trade agreement with Germany (Lewis 1968, p.295).

With this Turkish-German peace agreement, Turkey and Germany started to have good relations in politics and trade. They had one more thing in common; the minority issue and the growing nationalist policy against

The amount of the tax that was determined by the commission was final and not subject to appeal on any condition. The determination of the tax delinquents and the amount of tax to be paid was not accordance with objective rules and regulations but to the officials' discretion (Kafaoğlu 2002, p.56). The Capital Tax delinquents were obliged to pay their taxes in 15 days. In the case of expiration of the deadline, they had to pay an interest of one percent for the first week and two percent for the second. The ones who were not able to pay the amount determined for them faced confiscation of their property for the payment. 1869 number of delinquents who did not pay their share in one month were arrested and brought to Sirkeci camp in Istanbul. 1229 of them were dispatched to the labor camps in Aşkale on stuffy trains to break stones for the new roads. The remaining 636 paid their tax loan while waiting in Sirkeci or in Aşkale. 21 died in debt working in Aşkale (Aktar 2000, pp.148-151).

The non-Muslim tax defaulters, including the ones over the age of 55, were put to hard labor in very harsh weather conditions in different regions of the east of Turkey; Van, Erzurum, Zigana Mountain, Bitlis, Elazığ, Kop Mountain, Diyarbakır, Siirt and Palu. The

those minorities. In that period, some German military officers visited Turkey to train the Turkish soldiers (Akgönül 2007, p.102). And this contributed to a more disadvantageous position of the minorities. "Every success of the Germans has provoked stiffness in the Turkish attitude towards its minorities" (Cited in Bali 2005, p.101).

In a report prepared by the People's Party before the Second World War, according to the statistics of 1935, there were 108.725 *Rums*, 57.599 Armenians and 56.876 Jews in Turkey, and ninety percent of the non-Muslims lived in Istanbul. Non-Muslims dominated in export, many industrial sectors and trade; thus, it was emphasized that the number of Greeks, Armenians and Jews had to decrease in Istanbul in order for the economy to shift to the Turks (Akgönül 2007, pp.104-105).

In 1941, the non-Muslims between the ages of 20 and 40 were taken to military service like criminals before even being able to inform their families. "Among them, there were many who had done their military service before. Yet, this was never questioned" (Pinto, 2008, p.32). They were taken to camps and forced to do hard labor in worker uniforms, and never given a weapon or received military training. They lived in very unhealthy conditions, which caused some deaths. However, the real number of deaths and other details are not very clear since we depend mostly on oral narrations of the people who experienced it (Akgönül 2007, pp.108-110).

Consequently, Labor Battalions of 1941 was only the tip of the iceberg. "There was only one reason for this decision to be taken; to prevent the non-Muslims to do trade" (Pinto 2008, p.32). Yet, in order to achieve this, unfortunately, harsher laws and conditions were awaiting the non-Muslim minorities.

tax-payer would earn 250 kuruş a day, 60 kuruş of which would be deducted for living expenses, and the rest would count for their tax debts. These figures were irrational since a taxpayer who had to pay 500-600 thousand Turkish Liras would have to work around 1600 years to pay off his debts (Akar 1999, p.110). Thus, it was obvious that it was a law enforced to clear the non-Muslims from the social and economic grounds. “The ones who returned lost their dignity and confidence [for the government]” (ibid., p.137).

In March 1944, the Wealth Tax was abolished one year after the German troops lay down arms, which caused the decrease of pressure on the minorities. Racist Pan-Turanian movement supported by German capital and propagandas was prohibited. The government broke off diplomatic relations with Germany. However, the suspects of the Wealth Tax were proved innocent and were not imprisoned (Ahmad 2007, p.121).

The Turkish Press also contributed to the justification of the Wealth Tax. “ Especially the head columnists whose political opinions are different from each other such as Ahmet Emin Yalman, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, Yunus Nadi, Ethem Izzet Benice and Zekeriya Sertel praised this execution of the government” (Kafaoğlu 2002, p.57). For instance, Sertel, in his articles, impatiently wanted the government to impose the tax immediately to satisfy the expectations of the citizens who are reactive to unjust gain (Akar 1999, p.56). There were also caricatures in the newspapers of that time depicting Jews as the war profiteers and hoarders.

The tax delinquents were classified as Muslims (M), non-Muslims (G for *Gayrimüslim*), *Dönmes* (D) and foreigners (E for *Ecnebi*), where each was taxed differently. The amount of the tax determined for the non-Muslims was way over their wealth. “Many businessmen were ruined by assessments greater than their total possessions” (Lewis 1968, p.299). With the order of the Prime Minister Saraçoğlu, the tax of the non-Muslims was inflated five times or even ten times. Contrary to what had been announced before by Saraçoğlu, the Wealth Tax affected the low-income non-Muslims, too. Thus, it was now clear that this law

was definitely aimed for the dispossession of the non-Muslims no matter what their level of income was (Akar 1999, pp.80-81).

To provide the other point of view about Capital Tax Law, I believe, the words of historian Professor Avam Galanti, one of the leaders of Turkish Jewry, would be quite necessary.

If we were to only weigh our possessions, not our property, and the lives of all the individuals of our community, we could still never make up for your rights [earned from] centuries of [spilled] blood and military service. Take the tax you have received...This tax is not even a fraction of what we owe (cited in Bali 2005, p.57).

The capital levy might naturally have a reason as such. Moreover, many European governments in the war time collected wealth taxes from its citizens who earned unjust gains. However, the way it was imposed, the injustices in the collection of the taxes, and especially the fact that it aimed the non-Muslim minorities were what this law differentiated from the others in Europe (Akar 1999, p.54).

According to the figures provided by Aktar, around ninety percent of the property was sold by the non-Muslims and foreign nationals to pay the Wealth Tax. The most valuable of these properties belonged to the Jews. The massive buildings of cultural centers in Beyoğlu, and commercial buildings (*hans*) in Eminönü, Sirkeci and Beyoğlu changed owners over a night. Again Aktar's figures demonstrate that approximately seventy-eight percent of this property was purchased by Muslim/Turkish groups. Thirty percent of these Turkish companies were state-owned or semi-state-owned organizations, which purchased the most valuable properties in Istanbul at that time (Aktar 2000, pp.203-205). As it is obvious from these figures, the 'Turkification' project of the commercial and the industrial sectors was accomplished.

The Capital Tax Law did not bring a solution to the economic decline of the country whatsoever, yet in terms of its unjust and ambiguous application it created an insecure environment for the non-Muslims. "Industry, commerce, all economic life can only live by

breathing an atmosphere of confidence; with the capital levy this atmosphere was poisoned” (Lewis 1968, p.301). The non-Muslim citizens once more realized that they are mere half-citizens and guests in Turkey. Acknowledging that they had no future in those lands, many of them migrated to European countries; recently founded Israel or the USA (Aktar 1999, p.207). What is more, with the imposition of this unjust tax, the reputation and the dignity of Turkey abroad was shattered. İnönü and Saraçoğlu hoped that the void due to the loss of the non-Muslim tradesmen would be compensated by new Muslim tradesmen. However, Turkey could not recreate its entrepreneur class until the 1970s. Saraçoğlu’s dream was to realize this in 1943-44. With a delay of 30 years, Turkey paid a big price (interview with Aktar by Neşe Düzel, 2001).

5.4.5 “6/7 September Events” (1955)

It should be restated here that Istanbul was the most densely populated non-Muslim area that was left in Turkey after the historical events in Turkish Modern History. After the Capital Levy of 1942, there were still 138.417 non-Muslim citizens who spoke Greek (67.593), Armenian (42.657) and Jewish (28.172) as their mother tongue in Istanbul according to the census of 22 October 1950. Throughout the whole country, this number was 179.034; Greek (89.472), Armenian (52.776) and Jewish (35.786) (Dündar, 1999: 186-187). Moreover, 53.000 citizens who spoke Turkish as their mother language stated that their second language was Greek (ibid., p.191).

As for the political development, the Single-Party Period was over with the victory of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1950. The supporters of the Democrats were mostly the magnates, the peasants, the new commercial class and the old religious class. Also the non-Muslims were in favor of the DP due to the Republican People’s Party’s (CHP) fiscal program of 1942 and the new party’s attitude towards more freedom and commercial interests (Lewis, 1968: 317). The new Parliament, dominantly composed of MPs from DP - 408 seats compared with 68 seats of CHP, 1 from National Party and 9 independents (ibid., p.312) -

elected Celal Bayar as the President and Bayar designated Adnan Menderes as the Prime Minister (Ahmad 2007, p.55).

DP liberals favored free enterprise and political liberalism against state control over economy, which gave hope to the business people, land owners, the peasants and the critical intellectuals. The relationships now seemed to settle between the non-Muslims and Menderes government. (Güven 2005a, p.4). This new liberal environment was also supported by the economic growth through a boom in foreign commerce, agriculture and the rate of employment. The five percent tax deduction on minority institutions introduced by the İnönü government was now being continued by Menderes' easy loans for business. "By 1950-1951, the Greek businessmen, great and small, were part of the dynamic new developments in the Turkish economy...their input in the Greek community's institutional life was to have a remarkable effect" (Vryonis 2005, p.17).

Nevertheless, with the Muslim religious revival that had been growing steadily for some years, in the long run the rebirth of Greek business fortunes and prosperity would change the situation of the non-Muslims again. With the new law passed in May 31, 1950 concerning to restore autonomy to the *ephoreies*, the community in Galata attempted to reclaim their properties they had lost with the Capital Tax Law. However, the government kept refusing to give up these properties. Besides, the *Rums* had made a rapid economic stride and regained some of the properties they had lost in 1941, Capital Levy (ibid., pp.18-19). "At the time of the September 1955 events, there were more than 4,500 shops owned by Greeks in greater Istanbul" (ibid., p.20).

Towards the end of the 1950s, the government faced some economic difficulties with the rising inflation. At that time, Cyprus had become a subject of conflict between Turkey and Greece in international arena; thus, Menderes government used it as a tool to divert the public attention away from the political and economic problems (ibid., p.5).

The British policy regarding Cyprus and Turkey was to encourage Turkish nationalism and delay a possible Turkish involvement in the issue. Thus, Turkey did not take a serious stance on the Cyprus issue in the early 1950s. Proving this, in 1950, Foreign Minister Necmeddin Sadak stated that “there is no issue regarding the Cyprus conflict...” (Akgönül 2007, p.195). It was not until September 1955 that Turkey had to prove to the Turkish Cypriots that Cyprus conflict is a national issue for Turkey. During this time, Greek Government not being able to receive any support from Britain, started to ally with Makarios in 1953. On April 1st 1955, the Greek National Organization of Cypriot Fighters, EOKA, began its military campaign against the Turks in Cyprus (ibid.).

The first disputes began when the Committee for the Defense of Turkish Rights in Cyprus asked the Patriarch of the Greek minorities of Istanbul and Cyprus, Athenagoras, to intervene with the political actions of the leader of the Greek Cypriots, Archbishop Makarios. When the Patriarch took a neutral stance stating that he is a religious leader, but not a political one, the Turkish press, especially *Tercüman* and *Hürriyet*, criticized him severely for his failure to control the Archbishop. He was also accused of committing treason against the Turks and supporting the *megali idea* of Greece (Alexandris 1992, p.253).

The Muslim Turks, raged against the neutral stance of the Patriarch and the non-Muslim citizens in Turkey, started their anti-Greek riots and violent actions ostensibly because of two rumors in the Turkish press. The first claimed that there would be an attack on the Turkish minorities in Cyprus on 28 August by the Greek Cypriots. The latter was a news bulletin in the state radio on September 6, 1955, informing the public that there had been a bomb attack on Atatürk’s birthplace in Thessaloniki, which was also announced in the pro-government afternoon daily, *Istanbul Express* (ibid., p.256).

One day before the riots, September 5, 1955, Adnan Menderes told Hikmet Bil, the leader of ‘Cyprus is Turkish Association’ (KTC), that he had received a cryptic telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, who was in London Conference at the time,

about his desire for an “uncontrollable” Turkish public opinion because he needed more demonstrations in Turkey for him to fight for better conditions in London Conference (Güven 2005a, p.62).

On September 6 late afternoon, with the leadership of some student unions and KTC, there was a demonstration at Taksim Square followed by a violent march in Istiklal Street aimed at the shops owned by the non-Muslim citizens (ibid., p.13). Alexandris states that the angry crowd managed by the provocateurs was “discontented villagers, who traveled in lorries the previous day from the nearby Anatolian and Thracian villages (1992, p.257). The provocateurs were carrying Turkish flags, photos and busts of Atatürk and Celal Bayar, galvanizing the public to join them against the non-Muslims. “They were joined by the city’s *lumpen-proletariat*, the bootblacks, porters, apartment janitors and mendicants” (ibid.).

In a very short time, the violent acts of the group, around 100.000 in number, spread to Kurtuluş, Şişli, Nişantaşı, where most of the non-Muslim citizens lived, with a variety of tools of vandalism in their hands (Güven 2005a, p.13). Thousands of people had wooden sticks of the same size in their hands as if they were distributed to them before coming to Taksim and Beyoğlu (Akgönül 2007, p.201). The raged group destroyed and looted many shops, offices, houses, schools, churches and cemeteries. “Istiklal Street [...] was littered with wreckage of furniture, refrigerators, radios and other goods” (Alexandris 1992, p.257). Vandalism was out of control and not confined to only Greek property any more, but that of the other non-Muslim minority groups as well.

The leaders of the groups knew which properties to attack since they all had lists of the non-Muslims’ names in their hands. A couple of weeks before the events started, the names and the addresses of the non-Muslims had been taken from the headmen of the neighborhoods. Moreover, some time before the events, the houses of the non-Muslim had been marked with a cross sign, GMR (*Garyrimüslim Rum/ non-Muslim Rum*) or expressions like “Türk Değil” (not Turkish), “Türk” (Turkish) (Güven 2005a, p.16).

“The grand plan already existed, however, since only in this manner can one explain the extraordinary coordination needed to bring non-Istanbulis to the scene by land and sea, and then incorporate them into the larger body of the attack” (Vryonis 2005, p.95). Patriarch Athenagoras stated in his testimony at Yassıada Trials of 1960-1961¹¹ that he had received a phone call from Kerim Gökay – the Governor of Istanbul at the time – two hours before the outbreak of the violence assuring him that the Patriarchate would be safe. A witness also testified at Yassıada that Fatin Rüştü Zorlu – the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time – and Menderes agreed on the violence before Zorlu’s departure for London negotiations (ibid., pp.96-97). The night the events took place, the President Celal Bayar and the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, were waiting at Haydarpaşa train station ready to set off for Ankara fully informed about the events by Ethem Yetkiner, the General Director of Security (ibid., pp.121-122). Thus, the pogrom was organized carefully in full knowledge of the state officials. Therefore, the police officials not only kept their passive stand towards the violence but also showed sympathy for the vandals (Güven 2005a, p.20)¹².

The Greek deputy of Istanbul, Alexander Chatzopoulos, stated that as his house, near a police station, was being ransacked by the rioters, the gendarmes stood still and did nothing (Alexandris 1992, p.262). As stated by some police officers in Yassıada trial, they were ordered to stay inside the police stations after 5 pm. that evening and not allowed to go out and intervene with the violence going on just beside them (Güven 2005a, p.23).

The government finally announced martial law late the night of September 6th in the three big cities, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, where the events occurred, and the police forces started to intervene with the riots. However, the damage was done and some groups

¹¹ Yassıada Trials condemned Menderes and his government for their roles in the destruction of Greek property and institutions.

¹² An anonymous Armenian witness, B. E. who lived in Pangaltı, near Taksim, cites what he sees about the event of that night. Protestors divided in groups attacked and broke down the doors of stores belonging to Greeks, to Armenians. They entered inside and threw out everything in the street. They shouted, “We do not need merchandise of infidels!” I slowly began to understand; the security forces did not intervene, therefore the government was well-aware of what was going on. (Vryonis 2005, p.126)

continued their violent acts in different parts of Istanbul (ibid., p.30). On September 7, Menderes refused any involvement of the government with the pogrom, but took the communist agitators responsible for the events. Two days later, 2214 people were arrested in Istanbul and Izmir (Alexandris 1992, p.260). Celal Bayar also stated “it could be said that last night Istanbul and the country was exposed to a communist plot, provocation and a heavy coup” (cited in Nesin 2004, p.38)¹³.

Looting was uncontrollable on the night of September 6, after the shops were attacked¹⁴. 1500 theft incidents were reported to the police until September 11, 1955. Apart from that, many *Rum* women were raped during the violent acts. The head doctor in Balıklı Hospital stated that 60 women were treated due to rape incidents. Some *Rums* were killed or died during the events as well. According to the Turkish press, the number of deaths was 11, whereas according to the reports of Helsinki Watch Organization, it was 15, five of which were of the clergy (ibid., pp.38-40).

The government promised to compensate for the financial loss of the non-Muslims. To pay for the loss of the citizens, the government founded a committee called “Aid for the Victims Committee”, to which many Muslim and non-Muslim businessmen donated a substantial amount of money (Akgönül 2007, p.207). According to October 16, 1955 *Cumhuriyet* Daily Newspaper, 4.433 citizens applied for payment of damages, which made a total of 69.578.744 TL. The committee paid 615 citizens a total amount of 413.125 TL until October 16, 1955 (Tarih ve Toplum, 1986, p.14). By the end of 1957, 3.247 citizens and corporations were paid a compensation of 6.533.856 TL totally. A total amount of 885.425 TL was transferred to schools, churches and some charities (Güven 2005a, pp.44-

¹³ Aziz Nesin was one of the suspects of the so called communist riot, who was arrested as well.

¹⁴ The riots caused a significant amount of damage although no official figures are provided. According to the Greek sources “1004 houses, 4348 shops, 27 pharmacies and laboratories, 21 factories, 110 restaurants, cafés and hotels were destroyed during the night of 6 September. . .The mob of Istanbul gutted 73 churches, 26 schools, and 5 athletic clubs” (Alexandris 1992, p.259). 61 of the 95 Rum-Orthodox churches in Istanbul were totally destroyed, 8 of which were set on fire (Güven 2005a, p.35).

45). However, the total amount of compensation for the loss could never be paid by the government.

“6/7 September Events” was the beginning of the fall of the Democrat Party and the crisis would grow with the Yassıada trials of the Menderes government (Akgönül 2007, p.210). The Greek Government made oral and written protests against the pogrom. Turkish-Greek relations had seriously been damaged. Yet, with the soothing responses from the Turkish Government, the tense atmosphere turned into the expectations of the Greek officials from Turkish Government (ibid., pp.214-215).

On 7th September, 1955, 87 members of KTC in Istanbul, and people who were related to this organization including Kamil Önal, Hikmet Bil etc. were arrested. More than 3000 related member of the organization including Izmir branch were arrested due to their provocative acts in the riots against the non-Muslims (Güven 2005a, p.63).

Five years after the pogrom, the High Court’s *gerekçe*, rationale, was composed. With the Yassıada trials Adnan Menderes, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, and Hasan Polatkan were hanged, and many government officials and DP members of the parliament were convicted due to the Events of September 6/7, 1955, together with some other accusations (Vryonis 2005, p.123).

The Events that were experienced by the non-Muslims have remained in the collective memory of the minorities of Turkey for a long time. However, the immediate reaction of the Rum community was that they would stay in their homeland, Turkey. *Emvros* newspaper, which had been destroyed on 6/7 September, started publishing the newspaper again one week later stating their feelings about the Events.

We will stay here, in our land. We, the Rums, will stand up from where we had fallen and stay where we are to rebuild our churches, bury our dead, and fix our schools, work places and houses. We will stay in this country where we were born and grew up, and where our

grand-parents and parents have their graves, “even if they have been destroyed...” (cited in Akgönül 2007, p.216)

Thus, the first reaction of the Rums was their insistence to stay. If we go back to the demographic situation of the period, we will observe that in the short term, as *Emvros* states, no significant changes were observed in the non-Muslim population figures compared to the census of 1950. According to 23 October 1955 census, there were 209.000 Christians and 46.000 Jews in Turkey. The number of citizens who spoke Greek (80.000), Armenian (56.000) and Jewish (38.000) as their mother language was 174.000 in Turkey. 57.000 Turkish speaking citizens claimed Greek was their second language. And the number of Greek speaking citizens in Istanbul was 65.000 (Dündar 1999, pp.196-202).

According to the census of 23 October, 1960, the number of citizens who spoke Greek (65.000), Armenian (52.000) and Jewish (19.000) as their mother language fell to 136.000 in Turkey. 82.000 Turkish speaking citizens claimed Greek was their second language. And the number of Greek speaking citizens in Istanbul decreased to 49.000 (*ibid.*, pp.206-209).

Therefore, we can interpret that the number of non-Muslims stayed the same between 1950 and 1955 right after the Events; however, it decreased between 1955 and 1960 in Turkey but not vanished. Although after the riots of 6/7, the Greek community was encouraged to stay in their homelands, in the long-run the effects of the demographic cleansing of Turkey dramatically started to be observed. 1960 national census is a clear sign of the disappearance of the non-Muslims from the lands of Turkey.

The pogrom has once again showed that the policy of Turkish Republic does not support the existence of non-Muslim minorities in Turkish lands. The migration of the non-Muslims after 1955 showed “the end of religious pluralism in Turkey” (Güven 2005a, p.176). Güven states that the “Events of 6/7 September” caused the Rum, Armenian and Jewish minorities to leave the country in large numbers (*ibid.*). However, Akgönül claims that in contrast to what many scholars think the Turkish Rums did not leave the country

after the events of 6/7 September. “The fact that Turkish Rums have nearly vanished in Turkey now is not the result of the short term effects, but the long-term effects of the *Events*” (Akgönül 2007, p.223).

As a result, the mindset of Modern Turkish Republic added another dark mark on its history, which created fear, mistrust, disappointment and more suppression amongst its non-Muslim citizens. However, it is in a nation’s hands to heal the wounds with the acknowledgement that the society’s truths could be produced through the existence and the contribution of the “other”. According to Mahçupyan, it is essential to face the mentality behind the dominant approach to history in order to face history itself. In order to do this, we should, on the one hand, objectively try to perceive the phenomenon from a distance; on the other, approach the emotional state of it from within. And this ostensibly paradoxical approach could only be functional in a democratically speaking culture (Mahçupyan 2005, pp.37-38).

Looking from within and distancing yourself to have an objective point of view is a healthy way of understanding the ‘other’ mutually. Thus, films are a way of doing both at the same time for the communities; to put themselves in other’s shoes and also have a more objective approach towards the ‘other’ through the characters. By this way, we could free ourselves from the haunted figures of history that have been sleeping in the dark corners of our attics and turn our ‘other’ into one of us.

6. NATIONALISM AND THE TRACES OF NATIONAL CINEMA IN TURKEY AFTER THE 1980s

Nationalism and nation-state has always been a core issue in the history of the Turkish Republic. Thus, the traces of national identity have been dominant in the visual forms of representation like cinema. In order to articulate the mechanisms of nationalism in Turkish cinema; namely its myths, memories, symbols etc., it is necessary to highlight the major discourse on nationalism and cinema with respect to nationalism.

The concept of nationalism has been a significant topic of discussion among many theorists especially in European countries which struggle to avoid decentralization and unite the fragmented communities under one rule again. The discourse of nationalism is striven to be achieved through the symbols of the country's flag and the national anthem, media and of course cinema, which provides integration and meaning. Benedict Anderson defines nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (2006, p.6). Anderson suggests that nation is imagined because the members of a community will not know, meet or see most of the citizens, but only have the image of them in their minds (ibid.).

Following Anderson, Higson states that the public sphere attributes nation a meaning and the media shape it. (2000, p.64). These imagi'nations' established to create a discourse of belonging and unity is constructed by the governments. This nation identity is established so effectively through its traditions, rituals and cultural commonalities that even the diasporic communities, displaced from their homeland, still feel the common sense of belonging. Different, yet alike, these imagined communities' living in separate geographies shows how effective this unnatural invention is since nationhood is an arbitrary concept which struggles to convert the fact of homelessness into the realm of a rooted community (ibid., pp.63-64). Ernest

Gellner argues that “nationalism invents nations where they do not exist and not the other way round” (Hayward 2000, p.88). According to Gellner, nationalism, in fact, imposes homogeneity while on the surface advocating cultural diversity (2006, p.120). Accordingly, similar to Gramsci’s suggestion of consent to secure hegemony, for Gellner, voluntary contribution, consent and will constitute a significant factor in the formation of a nation as well as force, coercion and fear (ibid., p.53). As a result, both Gellner and Anderson stress that “nations are ideological constructions seeking to forge a link between a self-defined cultural group and the state, creating abstract or imagined communities that we loosely refer to as ‘the nation’ (ibid., p.89). As a quite effective means of disseminating beliefs and ideals, cinema has had an indispensable role in establishing and maintaining nationalism in a state.

6.1. RECENT DISCOURSE ON NATIONAL CINEMA

The national cinema dealt with the “promotion of non-Hollywood cinemas promising varieties of ‘otherness’- of what is culturally different from both Hollywood and the films of other importing countries”, and the idea of national cinema was unproblematic until the 1980s since it focused on cinema within the national borders (Crofts 1998, p.385). National cinema functioned as a medium for states to suppress variety of ethnicities in the country and impose one single identity on its people, which is the national identity. “National cinemas have always been one of the most powerful spaces where the nation and the other have been imagined, narrated, displayed and spoken on behalf of” (Akbal Süalp 2005, p.51). Thus, instead of polyphony and difference, there was a monochrome identity and homogeneity. This is the strong pressure of dominant ideology of the ruling class in order to protect the local culture and economy in an essentialist manner.

In the 1980s, rethinking of the nation-state and nationalism emerged with the ideas of Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawn, Smith and Higson, who defined nation-state as an imagined community. Hill states that the national cinema went into a crisis with the boom of the Hollywood blockbusters in European box offices between the 1980s and 90s (2001 p.27). Thus, the idea of nation-state and national cinema started to be even more problematic after the

1980s, with “the global spread of corporate capital...and the further weakening of national and economic boundaries” (Crofts 1998, p.386).

British cinema is an example of this change in national cinema in that it started to reflect a more heterogeneous representation of identity in the 1980s and 1990s, rather than the traditional unifying national identity. National cinema, in its traditional sense, was associated with the homogenization of the national myths, national identity and anxieties. Nevertheless, today it is more concerned with questioning the issue of nationalism. Namely, the British directors started to depict the idea of “being English” through a more polyphonic manner, involving the national, regional and ethnic identities (Hill 2001, pp.33-34).

On the one hand, a national cinema mirrors the nation itself, its past, present and future, its cultural heritage and traditions as well as its sense of common identity and continuity; on the other hand, a national cinema claims its difference from other national cinemas, asserting its sense of ‘otherness’. According to Higson, this formulation is problematic since “it tends to assume that national identity and traditions are already fully formed and fixed in place” (2000, p.67). Moreover, he goes on to argue that national cinema takes borders for granted and assumes that they are effective in preserving political and economic developments, cultural practice and identity. Nevertheless, these borders are “leaky” (ibid.) since it is quite difficult to prevent migration even in most authoritative states. Thus, it is hard to achieve an indigenous community in a state, so it is a fact that across the borders and also within them “the modern cultural formations are invariably hybrid and impure” (ibid.). Besides, the mobility of the directors and the producers, co-productions, the distribution of films abroad and the reception of them in other countries by a variety of audience all affect the multi-national formations of films, which makes them one step away from being national. This growing sense of multiple identities in a state weakens the possibility of a national cinema after the 1980s.

6.2. THE DISCOURSE OF NATIONAL CINEMA IN TURKEY

The presence of multiple voices has always been the issue in Turkey, yet the representation of the different ethnicities has not taken place effectively in Turkish cinema. Until the 1980s, the invasion of national cinema in Turkey was apparent. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the process of building a nation state functioned as a censor mechanism to suppress the polyphony of different ethnicities and welcome the representations of a Turkish nation and its discourse to make the audience establish a nation consciousness. The disavowal of the ethnic identities and the repression of diversity were observed in Turkish cinema as well.

In their article, Robins and Aksoy state that “On the one hand, it was a matter of finally killing off the imperial past[...] on the other hand, there was the necessity to valorize the new national ideal in the heart of a dead empire where the notion of national identity [...] had no popular roots” (2000, p.206). Thus, the suppression of hybrid cultures to create a nation state from above meant repressing the collective memory of all the citizens. Related to collective memory of the citizens of a state, Anthony Smith states that “nations are a product of territorialisation of memory [...] the importance of national amnesia and getting one’s own history *wrong* (is essential) for the maintenance of national solidarity” (cited in Hayward, 2000, p.90).

Robins and Aksoy suggest two mechanisms that keep the nations together; one is the mechanism of repression which is associated with silence. In other words, in order to be a nation and not to be threatened with exclusion from the group, the citizens must preserve their silence about “the originary act of symbolic institution” (2000, p.205). Here Robins and Aksoy refer to Freud’s mythical scene of the murder of the father, which enables the group [sons] to have a common experience, the silent agreement that ties them together. The second mechanism is the privileging and the positive valorization of the members of the group, which helps to idealize the notion of the nation (ibid., p.206).

These mechanisms which brought about the repression of the Ottoman culture, together with the variety of ethnicities and identities, helped create one single identity; that is being a Turkish

citizen. During this Turkification process, national cinema was in effect (being influenced by the European national state model), imposing the national ideals on the citizens of the Turkish Republic.

Nevertheless, Turkey possesses a diversity of cultural identities, which is difficult to suppress for a long period of time. As Robins and Aksoy state, the 1980s was the beginning of the period when these identities could no longer be silenced, and Turkish cinema started to provide a means for proliferation in personal identity themes (ibid., p.215). The 1980s were the years when Turkey was going through political, economic and cultural changes. After the military coup of 1980, “Turkey experienced two important socio-political crises, one ethnic and the other one religious. On the one hand, Kurdish rebels gathered under the illegal Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) started an armed rebellion...against the Turkish army. On the other hand, the coalition governments with Islamic parties in the 1990s led to political crises” endangering the “*laicist* nature of Turkey’s regime” (Arslan 2005, p.240). ‘Turkification’ and the modernization of Turkey from above entered a crisis especially in the early 1990s; thereby “a gap between the modernizing elite and the voiceless masses” occurred (Çağlar Keyder cited in ibid., p.240). Again as cited by Arslan, Nurdan Gürbilek states that “1980s were characterized by two contradictory tendencies: the suppression of the voices and the boom of different voices” (ibid., p.242). Those were the years of the rise of “new cinema” producing both art and popular films dealing with ethnic minorities and transnational cinemas (ibid., p.245).

With the boom of the different voices in cinema, we can talk about political films coming into the limelight, which deal with the issues of belonging and identity. *Suyun Öte Yanı* (Tomris Giritlioğlu, 1991), *Güneşe Yolculuk* (Yeşim Ustaoğlu, 1999), *Bulutları Beklerken* (2005), *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (Handan İpekçi, 2001) *Yazı Tura* (Uğur Yücel, 2004), *Çamur* (Derviş Zaim, 2003) are some of the political films, in which the idea of belonging to a community or a territory is fragmented and destroyed. Through the personal experience of the individuals, these films challenged the notion of imposed national identity by unveiling the existence of ‘cultural diversity.

Some of the new Turkish directors mentioned above stuck to their historical and social ties and made films to remember and come to terms with the past looking at history in a wider perspective (Akbal Süalp 2008, p.51). These films reject the imposition of a homogenized nation, require change and question the possibility of change by remembering the past, accepting the cultural differences and getting rid of the national amnesia surrounding the society for years.

7. FILM ANALYSES

7.1. *ACROSS THE WATER /SUYUN ÖTE YANI*

7.1.1 Director: Tomris Giritliođlu

Tomris Giritliođlu was born in 1955 when her parents were living in Konya for her father's compulsory service. Her father, from Antakya, was a state officer, who had to travel a lot for work until he was finally promoted to the position of the head of the 5th Supreme Court. Giritliođlu spent her youth in Ankara, spending most of her time with her revolutionist communist friends in the cafeteria of Ankara University when she was in high school, and later where she studied English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University. Aycan Giritliođlu, her husband, was an active communist of the time, and the head of the News Department at TRT, the official state TV channel, until 1971 when he had to flee to London during martial rule. Giritliođlu started her career as a translator in TRT and moved on to become a documentary director in later years there (Kalyoncu 2000).

During her active communist years and through her husband, Tomris Giritliođlu witnessed the loss of close friends and was very affected by it. She also states that her father-in-law was one of the pashas who massacred Rums in Crete (ibid). All these shaped her view of life and works in later years. Giritliođlu's trilogy about the non-Muslim minorities started with *Suyun Öte Yanı/ Across the Water* (1991), followed by *Salkım Hanım'ın Taneleri/ Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds* (1999) and *Güz Sancısı/ Pains of Autumn* (2008).

7.1.2 The Plot and Analysis of the Film

The first film of the trilogy, *Across the Water*, takes place in the early 1980s, when people are taken to prison because of their political beliefs, in Cunda - a small island in the North-

West of the Aegean Sea off the shores of Ayvalık, part of Balıkesir province in Turkey. Cunda is very close to the Greek island Lesbos, the capital of which is Mytilene.

Ertan (Selçuk Yöntem), who is on trial for his political beliefs, comes to Cunda with his wife Nihal (Nur Sürer) for vacation. The owner of the motel they stay in, Mrs. Sıdıka (Meral Çetinkaya), is a *mübadil* (an exchange), who had to move to Cunda from Greece in 1924. Nihal's grandma is an exchange, too; therefore, an intimate friendship starts between the couple and the old woman in no time. The dark memories of the past begin to come to light one by one, which will be both grievous and stirring for the three of them.

The film opens with a disruption; an old woman who does not want to leave her home holding the front door handle tightly. She does not let go. Her son kisses her hand, and she starts to cry. Then, she is carried by her son to a boat waiting by the dock. There are all kinds of people (speaking in Greek), pets and a coffin being carried on shoulders. The soldiers amongst them accompany the refugees to the boat. The music is sad; clarinet playing in the background. The scene is frozen many times and the colors turn into sepia as if the day belongs to a shady past now. The boatman shouts "Cunda! Cunda! Hurry up! It's leaving right away". Then, we acknowledge that those were the Muslim migrants of Turkish-Greek compulsory exchange moving to Turkish borders, Cunda. The film goes back and forth between the past and present through smooth transitions as such.

Now, it is Nihal and Ertan who are taking the boat to go to Cunda, where a different kind of journey starts for them. The relation between Mrs. Sıdıka and the couple opens many locked doors stuck in the past; thus the themes of pain and suffering, yearning for the lost home, forgetting and remembering, and cultural commonality come to the foreground in the film. Turkish and Greek cultures have many things in common even though it has been neglected by the governments of both countries. They lived together side by side in both Turkish and Greek lands for a long time. In the film, the director especially wanted to emphasize this common ground through the food, music, dance, history, language and geography. When Nihal and Ertan arrived at Mrs. Sıdıka's motel in Cunda, the first real conversation they have is about the food, which exists in both cultures.

Nihal: The *Istifnos* look nice.

Mrs. Sıdıka: Do you know them?

Nihal: I do. We had a neighbor from Crete.

Mrs. Sıdıka: Do you know *Radika*¹⁵, too?

Nihal: I do. I even know *Shevket-i Bostan*¹⁶. It is cooked with lamb in lemon sauce...

Mrs. Sıdıka: You really do know. If you really like them, I can make a salad of them.

Nihal: I'd love it. Cretans are good cooks.

Mrs. Sıdıka: We eat a lot of herbs. There are many kinds of herbs in Crete. They are sweet and delicious. Everything is so lavish. Crete's water and soil is sweet. It is so beautiful.

Nihal: How old were you when you first came here?

Mrs. Sıdıka: I was young, about 13 or 14. We came during the 1924 Exchange.

Nihal: My grandma came at that time, too.

Mrs. Sıdıka: From Crete?

Nihal: No, from Kariferia.

Mrs. Sıdıka: Oh, that's Macedonia.

Nihal: Their language is a little different from us.

Both: They speak Hellenic.

Mrs. Sıdıka: Do you speak it?

Nihal: A little. My grandma used to speak it well.

Mrs. Sıdıka: (She shows the picture of the house where she was born in Crete.) If I go to Crete, I can find my house and my neighbor, too.

In the drawer, Nihal finds an old book, *Odyssey*, which was left by a Greek lawyer ten years ago. Nihal starts to inquire about this mysterious man, and Mrs. Sıdıka starts a journey back in her memories.

He was a good man; he was joyful and very humorous. "We're friends" he used to say. "We're very much like each other. Our songs, our food, even our fates resemble" "Well", he said, "we resembled each other in every way; *cacık, musakka, yalancı dolma*... They are all ours, *Radika*, too".

Songs and dance are another common cultural form between the two communities in *Across the Water*. The film is woven around the lives of individuals who were greatly

¹⁵ Chicory: A European plant whose bitter leaves are eaten in salads.

¹⁶ Milk Thistle: An Aegean plant with yellow flowers.

affected by the 1924 Turkish-Greek Exchange. The romantic relationship between Mrs. Sıdıka and her Greek lover had to end in a traumatic way because of Mrs. Sıdıka's dramatic departure from Crete when she was so young. This is remembered again through a musical instrument, lute. In one of the flashbacks, the Greek boy wants to give the lute to Sıdıka when she is leaving for Cunda in 1924, but the soldiers don't let him and the lute falls into the sea. Years later the Greek song, "Samiyotisa", sang by Nihal with the company Arab Mustafa playing the lute symbolically becomes a tool for remembering the past. Nihal knows this Greek song from his Greek friends she had when she was small. They start to sing it together.

("Samyotisa, samyotisa. Pothe thapas ti Samo... ?)

Girl from Samos, girl from Samos, when will you go to Samos?

Let me come and take you in a boat with oars of gold.

The mole on your face is a piece of gold

Your love made me break into forty-two pieces."

Samos is a Greek Island in the North Aegean Sea. At Mrs. Sıdıka's house, Nihal sings the same song with her as well. "Do you remember 'Samyotisa'?" says Nihal to her. Mrs. Sıdıka is astonished and content by how well Nihal can sing the song. It creates an emotional bond between the two women with similar memories coming to the surface with the loved and lost ones.

Nihal: We used to sing it in Yeşilköy with girls and Manol in the café. Then came 6th -7th September. My friends left, Manol left. The café was ruined. I was left alone.

Mrs. Sıdıka: We used to dance with "Samiyotisa", too, long long ago in Crete. I used to sing, and he used to play it.

This Greek song is sung by the ones who lived through the compulsory Exchange of 1923, longing for the loved ones, and back in the homeland where they were born. Hence, it is used in the film to evoke those feelings in the hearts and memories of the characters, which bind them together like an invisible tie. Folk songs are used in the other films of the trilogy for the same purpose. The lute is a connotation of the yearning for the loss.

Therefore, *Across the Water* is a film of longing and remembering. The sufferings of the exchanges are uncovered one by one when the film unfolds. When Nihal finds the Greek lawyer's book, the *Odyssey*, she starts to read and understand the notes he has taken long ago. "They, who were the Modern Odysseys, added their tears into the wine-colored sea [the Mediterranean]. They did not go pillaging across the sea. They wanted freedom, peace and friendship. They yearned for their lovers, fell far apart". These poetic notes he had taken in his book summarizes how much the people actually wished peace and solidarity instead of fight and bloodshed as the outcome of the war between Turkey and Greece. Wine-colored sea clearly represents the violence of the war between the two countries. The Aegean Sea like a bridge between them is a geographical common ground between their people. This commonality is unfortunately stained with blood that caused the pain and longing for the people.

Mrs. Sıdıka: He used to miss Greece so much. ... He said there was great cruelty in Greece. They did a lot to us in Crete, too. You wouldn't believe if I told you. There were many brides (showing her breasts).

Nihal: They cut their breasts?

Mrs. Sıdıka: No, their nipples. Every night they let a rumor out: "We slaughtered Kemal". We used to hide behind the door and wait wondering if our father would come home safely.

Ertan: Here?

Mrs. Sıdıka: Here? No, here we were treated fairly.

Ertan: And what happened here before you came?

Mrs. Sıdıka: My Goodness! There were blood stains all over the house. They would have slaughtered us all if it weren't for Mustafa Kemal. I have his bust painted every year.

Thanks God, there is no cruelty here. They still come here to take refugee.

The sufferings and cruelty that the people lived through during the war are emphasized many times through Mrs. Sıdıka's words in the film. Yet, the director in that respect is a little biased since she underlines the violence in Greece and how the Turks suffered. The house Mrs. Sıdıka lives in seems to reflect the dark memories of her past; it is always so dark and gloomy as if waiting for someone to uncover it by opening the curtains or the dower chest in the attic. Nihal is the one to expose those memories to light, which creates a ground for Mrs. Sıdıka to come to terms with her past. As Mahçupyan points out "the

processes of mutual and shared catharsis are the tools for our liberation not only socially but also individually” (2005 p.38). The two women stand for the purification of the society and the individual from their haunted past through mutual communication.

Nihal and Ertan are constructed as the vehicles through which the director communicates with the audience. As mentioned earlier, remembering and forgetting is an important concept that is underlined in the film. Wherever they go in the island, they encounter a person or a place that reveals something from the past like Pandora’s Box. The stream of remembrance is repeated in a sequence when Nihal wants to take a picture of an old lady by the ruined church in the island. Annoyed by it, she screams: “Do not touch me!”. The young local girl next to her says: “Leave her alone, she is sick”. In another scene, when they go back to the old church, they come across the old woman and the local girl again and witness how traumatically the old woman lives in the past; the times when she used to live back in her home in Greece before the 1923 Exchange.

Old woman: Let’s go home (in Turkish). Let’s go home and cook delicious meals. Our guests will be coming soon. I have to clean the house, too (in Greek).

Nihal: Is your home somewhere else?

Local girl: No, it is here. My grandma came from Crete during the 1924 Exchange. She still talks about Crete. Her mind is not as clear as it used to be. She got ill once. The doctor came here to take her temperature, but she would not let him. She was afraid they could take her bag away.

Ertan: What is in it?

Local girl: Soil from Crete. (The old woman keeps speaking in Greek.)

The soil that she holds on to in her small cloth bag is a signification of the yearning for the lost home she still depends on. After all the traumatic experience of loss, this old woman stands for the longing for the lost home. Moreover, sticking to the language that is the only proof to her lost identity is very vividly portrayed through this old woman. Language is one of the most important elements of cultural identity. Thus, the trauma of relocation and loss is observed through the language her memories allow her to speak; the one belonging to her nearly lost Cretan identity.

Another character Nihal and Ertan come across during their stay in the island is an old man in a café to whom a boy brings some flowers asking if it is the one he is looking for. The old man says “Aslip olsun”/ “Yazıklar Olsun” meaning “Shame, I don’t need that”. When Nihal asks the boy’s mother why he said that, she replies: “I don’t know. There was a flower in Mtylene called *Avunya*. My father misses that flower very much”. It seems as if the little boy’s attempts to find the flower his grandfather misses so much back in Mtylene are useless since it is not the flower he is longing for; it is the homeland where he will never be able to go back. As a result, the symbols used for longing and remembering the lost past are various in the film.

Seeing the little boy, Nihal goes back in time and remembers her memories with her grandma. “I just remembered; my grandma used to say that [Aslip olsun] to me when I was a child, especially when she was angry. I wonder if this boy will remember it, too. Five years later when Ertan comes back to the island by himself, he bumps into this boy in front of the café and asks him if he remembers the flower he was looking for. He, as we might expect, looks at him with blank eyes. As much as longing and remembering, forgetting is an important issue in *Across the Water*. In five years that have passed, this little boy is not the only one who has forgotten things. Mrs. Sıdıka does not remember Ertan when he gets back to the motel five years later. Furthermore, the local girl does not remember Ertan, and when he asks about her grandma, she says she is dead. He asks her what they did with her bag, and she replies they threw the soil over her grave and buried the bag with her. Ertan gets so upset and moved by the answer that he leaves the place.

The fact that in five years people forget some of their memories has connotations with the mind’s preference of keeping some memories while letting go of others. All these characters shared some of their traumatic past experience with Ertan and Nihal, which is not easy to cope with. And when Ertan comes back to the island, he sees that there seems to appear an invisible cover over these characters, who tend to forget easily. Suppressing the traumatic experience is very frequently seen in societies with a dark past, which has been the case in Modern Turkish history for many years. What the people cannot deal with as a

society tends to repress it and act as if it never happened. Thus, what Giritlioğlu tries to do is to focus on the issues of remembering and forgetting mingled with each other so that we, as the audience, should see that as much as we tend to forget, we also tend to remember.

In order to bind the past and the present, the director used many flashbacks from the memories of the characters. Also, the image of the Greek lawyer is seen through the eyes of Ertan in the places they walk in the island. Thus, the transitions from the present to the past and from the past to the present construct the rhythm of the narration. With the smooth camera movements, the same scene, once the present, becomes the past where the Greek lawyer walks by himself in the island. Those smooth transitions are similar to the switches of the brain from one moment to another through associations. This unfamiliar way of switching of time in the narrative also contributes to the defamiliarization process in the film. While the director distorts the familiar linear plot of filmmaking through this narrative style, she also defamiliarizes the values, culture and common knowledge established by the dominant ideology of the two nations; Turkish and Greek, as two different communities.

In *Across the Water*, the island of Cunda is associated with living in exile since almost all the characters come to the island to take refuge. The narratives of accented films “are driven by a desire either to recapture the homeland or to return to it” (Naficy 2001, p.27). Mrs. Sıdıka is in exile as she is a *mübadil*, a Cretan Muslim who moved to Ayvalık and Cunda during 1923 exchange. Her memory switches back and forth between the past, her homeland Crete, and present. Her memories about her homeland are burdened with the feelings of sadness and separation, and this alienation is supported by the dim atmosphere of the house she is living in. Confinement is achieved through the dimly lit rooms and the dark attic of the house. The large wooden chest in the attic is quite symbolic of these dark memories of her past waiting to be uncovered. Remembering the past reveals her nostalgic longing for the homeland. Not only Mrs. Sıdıka, but many other characters are in exile there for many different reasons as the island is a border between Turkey and Greece. Ertan, as one of the thought criminals of 1980 military regime, uses the island as a means to escape from prison and take refuge in Crete; the Greek lawyer flees from Greece to take

refuge there; and the old lady and the old man are still living with the memory of their homes. Thus, the island becomes a place of temporality and restraint, where everyone comes and leaves for a purpose beyond their will.

When Ertan gets back to Cunda, he sees many lobsters caught and hanging in the air by the fishing rods, and his hands start to shake. This has connotations with his own fears and feelings of being stuck in a trap now that he is the one to take refuge in the island like the Greek lawyer. At first, his aim is to flee to Greece through Cunda with the help of Arab Mustafa, who will take him to Crete by boat. However, at the last moment, the imaginary scene of his possible Christian funeral in Greece gives him pain, and he does not want to be one of the immigrants that lost their homeland forever.

Overall, *Across the Water* is a film that is able to merge the present and the painful past with smooth transitions of stories by an old woman in exile and the mythic visions of a communist convict. The themes of longing for the lost homeland and remembering the grief of the past find their remedy in the rediscovery of common traditions and culture of the two communities. In that respect, *Across the Water* has clear premises about what the nation states neglect to put forward in order to heal and reconcile with all the wounds of the past.

7.2. MRS. SALKIM'S DIAMONDS/SALKIM HANIM'IN TANELERİ

Sing me a song in your language

No matter whose it is

So long as the wail is yours

I may not understand it

But let it be in your language

(Yılmaz Güney cited in Dönmez-Colin 2008, p.89).

Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds is the second film of Giritlioğlu's trilogy, which is centered on the Capital Levy of 1942-43 harshly imposed on the non-Muslim minorities living in Turkey. It was based on the book of the same name by Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, who was a parliamentary deputy with ANAP (The Motherland Party) in 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections. He

worked as the Vice President of ANAP, as well as the Minister responsible for TRT, Press, and Privatization, which might have been the main reason why the film received financial support from TRT.

7.2.1 The Plot and Analysis of the Film

The film opens in a train station in Istanbul with the dispatch of the tax delinquents to Aşkale labor camps by the soldiers in 1943. Then, it goes back to one year earlier, 1942, to the arrival of Durmuş (Zafer Alagöz) and Nimet (Derya Alabora) to Istanbul from Niğde, a town in Anatolia. Durmuş is a greedy, ambitious man, who dreams about opening a store in Istanbul and become rich quickly. He comes to Istanbul together with his wife Nimet, and stays at Bekir's (Güven Kıraç) place for a while. Halit Bey (Kamran Usluer), a wealthy businessman in Istanbul, sells Durmuş and Bekir one of his shops to support them in starting their own business since Bekir has been a loyal employee to him for a long time. Still not satisfied and becoming much greedier, Durmuş has negative manners towards the non-Muslim tradesmen, who dominate business in Istanbul. He might be considered as one of the servants of the state who helps maintain the stability of the system, actually a false equilibrium.

Durmuş: Those infidels possess those beautiful shops, and now are we going to work as a porter for them? What do we lack, man? We both have money and the brains. We will take over those shops from them.

He is so fearless that for his own interests, one day he murders a debt collector in the *han* (a commercial building) he works at and steals his money. The moment of plenitude is destroyed by Durmuş's act of murder, and after this stage all his actions will create an opposition against the non-Muslims in the narrative. On the other hand, his wife, Nimet is a decent honest woman, whose only aim is to settle down and find a flat to live in. At this point, it will be more efficient to analyze the film through the relationships between the characters since I observe that those relationships form a microcosm for entire Turkey at the time.

Initially, the relationship between Durmuş and Nimet is so unbalanced that they represent the two different poles of the Turkish-Muslim society of the time. Durmuş stands for the “to-be-created/strengthened Turkish bourgeoisie” (Karanfil 2006, p.66) since in the end he manages to possess all the wealth and property he has dreamt of by the help of the harsh Wealth Tax imposed on the non-Muslims. The aim of the Republican Government was achieved; the power and wealth of the non-Muslims shifted to the hands of the Muslim Turks. The voice of a state officer overheard throughout the scenes in the film, where capital tax is being imposed, exposes quite a lot regarding the economic and political policy of the government on the issue.

Capital Tax Law will be imposed severely. They [non-Muslims] should not forget that they are just guests here. According to some, we have passed this law to suppress them. The world must acknowledge that we are Turkish, Turkists and will be more and more Turkist every day¹⁷. (ibid., p.66)

Nimet, on the other hand, demonstrates a different stand towards the non-Muslims in her life. In Nimet’s character, the director balances the extreme villain representation of the Muslim character, Durmuş, and points out the good-hearted, helpful woman, who can judge between the right and wrong and even stand against her own husband because of his evil deeds. Her intellectual superiority over her husband Durmuş, who is presented as an illiterate villager from an Anatolian town, is another opposition between the couple. During a fight between them, Nimet utters the words “You have never been my equal”, which clearly shows the different class backgrounds and motives of the couple.

The small world of this couple eventually represents the general attitude of the Muslim society in Turkey. There are some who function as the supporters of the dominant ideology; therefore, they believe that they can only survive by destroying the ‘other’, whereas some others have the point of view that to live in peace embracing the ‘other’ is essential.

¹⁷ This speech used in the film, was made in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey by the Prime Minister of that period, Şükrü Saraçoğlu.

The relationship between Nimet and Levon (Uğur Polat) is quite essential in terms of commonalities between the two communities. Nimet is sensitive towards the non-Muslim neighbors, and especially Levon, who helps them find a flat and a shop for Durmuş to start his own business. Levon is an Armenian – though a Jew in the novel – who owns a small cloth store. He is the brother of Nora (Hülya Avşar), Halit Bey's wife. Mutual understanding and respect is established between the two by abolishing their differences.

Nimet: Are you from Istanbul?

Levon: As much as everyone else is. In three generations, we emigrated from Harran to Aydın, and then from there to Istanbul. Was it hard for you?

Nimet: In fact, it was easier than I thought. Many things have changed since my childhood in Niğde. People have left.

Levon: It's OK. We all meet here.

...

Nimet: (Looking at Nora's portrait) We used to have non-Muslim neighbors in the past. My mom used to tell their stories all the time. I liked to listen to them.

Levon: Few of them are good stories.

Nimet: Yes. There are all sorts. But I guess I only kept the good ones.

Later on, when the Capital Tax Law is imposed, she is worried about Levon and goes to his shop to ask him whether he is affected badly. Through Nimet, we get to know Levon better. Levon is an introvert man, who keeps his sufferings and feelings inside, but starts to reveal them when he meets Nimet. Even when he encounters the fact that he will have to go to Aşkale due to the high tax imposed on him, he keeps his stillness and complies silently. This is when we learn the reason behind his silence and resignation. Because of his Armenian identity, the things he went through have made him become silent. In a way, he seems to speak for the whole community; they had to accept the destiny they could not alter.

Nimet: In fact, I get a little angry with you.

Levon: Because I've consented to my destiny? You are right. But we, as a nation, are really exhausted, I guess.

The silencing of the homogenizing policy of the Republican Government is felt here dramatically, not specifically through an event that suppresses Levon, but as a consequence

of a budding love between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim woman. The community is tired of carrying the burden of its identity as a minority, and therefore, has given in long time ago.

On the other hand, the intimate relationship of the two seems like an antagonistic resistance against the unfair impositions of the powerful state, the protagonist. The resistance is never in the form of a physical uprising throughout the film since none of the characters shows a sign of revolt, yet the close relationship between Nimet and Levon is the backbone of the narrative to propose that conflicts between two communities could be resolved through love and goodwill. Even though the state uses all its apparatuses to get the consent of its minorities and assimilate them via demographic engineering, there is one thing the system cannot reach; the intimate feelings of the people.

Levon's sister, Nora, is another key figure in the film even if her appearance is so vague and her existence depends on the fragmentary past experiences she recalls throughout the film. Nora has a mental condition she has been suffering from for twenty years. She is silent most of the time, but when she speaks, she utters words that obviously come out of her dark traumatic past she is stuck in. Throughout the film, we receive frantic short flashbacks into Nora's memories where she is frightened and trying to run away from Zabit Pasha, Nora's father-in-law. Zabit Pasha, a figure whom we only see below the waist, seems to be a rich powerful landlord and his dominance is so strong that even his wife cannot attempt to save Nora from being raped by this figure.

This scene is nothing to do with sexuality but mere mechanic intercourse during which Zabit Pasha whispers in Nora's ear "I had told you that my son could not fertilize you, and I would do it myself". Nora, a non-Muslim had been inseminated by her own father-in law, a very dominant figure in the family and town, which probably causes her to lose her chastity and become silent for the rest of her life. The act of rape has been used in the homogenization policy of the governments, especially during the war time. Thus, the rape scene stands for the Turkification project of the state over the non-Muslims. Nora, whose

husband is infertile, has to be fertilized by another male figure in the family in order to sustain the race and suppress the identity of the 'other' among the majority, just like what the dominant ideology is doing towards the minorities. In this way, multi voices are silenced and multi ethnicities are homogenized, and Nora's silence as well as her Brother Levon's, represents this assimilation process of the official nationalist discourse.

Many of the characters are truly affected by the wealth tax in the film. Halit Bey is at first able to pay the 15.000 Lira tax imposed on him as he is a Muslim. However, Nora, his wife, is required to pay five times as much since she is Armenian (Jewish in the novel), and that is when he starts to get concerned about the situation, which seems quite hard to rationalize.

Halit Bey: It's fine to demand 15.000 from me, but from Nora, they demanded 75.000.

Levon: Nora is in the non-Muslim list, Halit Bey. Of course, her health condition was not searched; it is totally arbitrary.

Halit Bey: Besides, there is no point in objecting.

Levon: A couple of people have objected, yet we have no other choice but pay the amount that is on the lists.

Later on, the process, which would destroy Halit Bey's life starts with the weird fact that he is actually a *dönme*, and therefore, is also considered a non-Muslim. The amount he has to pay is over 100.000 Liras.

Tax officer: Where are you from?

Halit Bey: Mardin.

Tax officer: You were born and raised in Mardin, but your grand-father immigrated from Üsküp.

Halit Bey: What difference does that make?

Tax officer: It makes all the difference Sir. Look, it says here your grand-father Izak converted to Islam later on.

Halit Bey: So what?

Tax officer: You are a *dönme*. So wealth tax that is executed to non-Muslims is imposed on you.

Halit Bey: I am Turkish!

Halit Bey's appeal against the size of the tax and the last words he utters to the tax officer is quite meaningful: "I am Turkish". He receives a devastating blow from his own country, which first shoots him through his wife's identity and later his grand-father's. This arbitrary taxation process obviously makes certain to clear all the non-Muslim related identities and open space for the new Turkish bourgeoisie. The tax officer's polite and respectful tone of voice at the beginning changes dramatically, and turns into a cynical one when he sees that Halit Bey is actually a *dönme*. This is an indication that the apparatus of the nation state is trying all the ways, sensible or not, to maintain homogeneity. In the end, having lost his entire wealth and his wife, Halit Bey eventually dies in the harsh conditions of Aşkale camp.

In *Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds*, the open space, Aşkale labor camp is a metaphor of the alienation of the non-Muslims. The fact that it seems timeless and frozen in time in the midst of the massive mountains covered with snow, is a clear representation of exile. Thus, ironically, the open space becomes a metaphor of imprisonment. The tax delinquents are taken to this totally abandoned land by the military forces to alienate them from the rest of the nation. Therefore, this huge disconnected geography, boundless of time and space becomes associated with a sense of anxiety for both the characters and the audience. Halit Bey dies there in agony while longing for her ill wife, Nora. Instead of tranquility, the vast space here is a metaphor of disruption, agitation and destruction.

Halit Bey's death coincides with his dear wife, Nora's (she commits suicide), and this is one of the most lyrical scenes of the film. The Orthodox funeral scene of Nora accompanied by the funeral dirge is synchronic with Levon's carrying the dead body of Halit Bey on his back. The dramatic effect of the Orthodox funeral chant lasts until both Nora and Halit Bey are buried; the first in a coffin under the earth, and the latter under the snow. The scene ends with the burial of both. This scene is quite meaningful since both characters are shown to be buried through one single ritual even if their religions are totally different from each other. The director here wants to emphasize that ethnicity, religion, culture or nationality does not have any value or significance because everyone is going to

end up in the same place whatever their differences are. This scene gathers Nora, Halit Bey, Bekir and Levon together spiritually. Thus, the connotation of the funeral is meeting at a common ground.

I found it necessary to refer to Karakoyunlu's novel regarding this scene since Nora is Jewish in the book, yet her funeral is an Orthodox one. "Mrs. Nora was buried in an Orthodox ceremony. Everything happened in a rush. The faithful Jewish girl, who wanted to throw herself at Moses' arms, was delivered to Jesus' arms" (Karakoyunlu 1998, p.160). There have been many debates and criticisms on why Giritlioğlu preferred to show Nora and Levon (Lui in the novel) as Armenians in the film, which I will refer to later.

The only character who has benefitted from the wealth tax is Durmuş, who took over most of Halit Bey's property, and even his mistress, Nefise. There are two "mirroring" scenes with Durmuş in the narration. First, when he arrives at the mansion for the first time with his wife, astonished at what he sees as a broke villager with nothing in hand except for his ambition. Later on towards the end of the film, he arrives at the mansion again as the new owner of the house proud of what he has achieved. He sarcastically talks to Bekir, his friend from Niğde and the long-time right-hand man of Halit Bey, in front of the mansion: "Has Halit Bey gone? [...] Have you told him who bought the mansion? You should have told him. He would be happy that no foreigner owned it". Those words are so significant that they summarize the whole concept of the Capital Levy of 1942-44 in Turkey. The wealth switched owners; from the foreigners and non-Muslims, to the Muslim Turks, and this case was no exception. The property did not go to a foreigner, but a Turkish villager, who had no idea about trade or business before he came to Istanbul. "These two mirroring scenes one in the beginning, the other towards the end of the film resemble the transfer of the economic wealth from the non-Muslims to the Turks, which in return, underline the creation and the strengthening of the Turkish bourgeoisie" (Karanfil 2006, p.65).

The folk song "Sarı Gelin" which is sung by a Turkish sergeant in Aşkale camp, Erzurum, in Armenian language deserves mentioning. The source of this folk song, Turkey or

Armenia, is a controversial issue; however, many Turkish sources claim that it first appeared in North-East Anatolia, Erzurum (www.erzurumlu.net), which is quite close to Armenia, whereas some other sources claim it originated in Armenia. Therefore, it is quite possible that both communities sang this folk song, and internalized it as their own cultural heritage. Yet, my aim here is not to find out where its origins are but to emphasize the fact that through this folk song actually the director reminds us that Turkish Muslim and non-Muslim cultures have a common heritage; culture, traditions, music, memory, history etc. just like the song “Samiyotisa” in *Across the Water*.

Sarı Gelin (The Blonde Bride) is the daughter of Christian Kıpçak Bey who lived by the banks of River Çoruh. The folk song is the love story of a Muslim boy from Erzurum and this blonde girl. In the film, the song first started to be played by clarinetist Artin (Murat Daltaban), a tax delinquent, in Aşkale camp with a flute given to him by a shepherd. The dialogue between them is interesting. Artin wants to have the flute in exchange for his watch, but the shepherd declines the offer saying that he will not need it here in the mountains anyway, yet agrees to give the flute to him for free.

A similar kind of positive atmosphere is repeated later on when Artin starts to play the folk song in Armenian in the labour camp at night. His music is accompanied by a Turkish soldier (Yavuz Bingöl) singing “Sarı Gelin” in Turkish. Astonished by this, all the convicts go out to join him by the fire. Artin cannot hold his tears watching the soldier sing it so sincerely. This scene is so significant in that, as aforementioned, the folk song has a connotation of how similar the two cultures are with their music, memory, traditions and history. Once living in harmony on the same land, they almost reflect that commonality still in effect as if trying to enlighten the authorities who are responsible for all this conflict.

This song is not mentioned in Karakoyunlu’s novel, instead the sergeant sings a song that is called “İstanbul’dan Üsküdar’a Yol Gider” (A Road Goes from Istanbul to Üsküdar), which is an Istanbul origin song, and the soldier singing it does not have an idea of Istanbul since he has never been there. However, through “Sarı Gelin”, Giritlioğlu creates a discourse

inspired by the traditions and the geography of both Turkish and Armenian cultures. When Todorov's idea of narrative is concerned, as mediators, the folk song as well as the city of Erzurum, provides a common ground for the disruptive forces of the dominant system; the non-Muslims, and the heroes who comply with the dominant ideology; the servants of the state or the army. Contrary to what is expected normally, the two forces come to terms through a folk song they can both associate with in a geography where it originated. "Sarı Gelin" also speaks to the implied audience, who the director wants to communicate her ideological perspective with. It speaks to the biased ones -against the 'other' - that have forgotten their connection with it. Hence, the director through the use of this cultural tool hopes to challenge the effects of the dominant discourse imposed on them. The implied author is revealed through the powerful language of the song that promises peace and compromise.

The resolution of the film does not come with the revenge of the 'other' from the dominant rule since the minorities in the film have been silenced. On the contrary, the resolution comes with the new equilibrium; that is, the shift of the economic power to the new Muslim bourgeoisie, represented by Durmuş, who has not existed as dominantly before. The non-Muslim community received a big bow from the state as a message to leave the wealth and the trade to the hands of Muslim Turks. All the non-Muslim characters either died or they were repressed to make them even more silent.

7.2.2 Criticisms on the Film

Mrs. Salkım's Diamond's, a production of TRT, the official state channel, had a budget of around 500.000 dollars, twenty percent of which was sponsored by TRT (Mahçupyan 2005, p.92). It is highly significant that a film, which brings up a conflicting issue between the non-Muslim minorities and the state, is supported by a state channel. This might bring about some concerns about the reliability and objectivity of the film, which I will point out later. On the other hand, this might also be a signification that finally the dominant discourse is shattered by one of the dominant ideology's own apparatuses, a state channel, through a film. Yet, the fact that the author of the novel, Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, was the

Minister responsible for TRT, Press, and Privatization in 1999 may indicate that to sponsor such a film (that is against the ideology of the nation-state) is not a radical step coming from the state, but an effort of a personal initiative.

Moreover, the heated debates that were provoked by some nationalist politicians and columnists especially after the film was shown on TRT in 2001 are a clear support of what is aforementioned. *Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds* obviously hurt the benefits of the dominant discourse. One of the criticisms was that it is unacceptable for TRT to show a film, which is totally against the official Turkish History Thesis. Ahmet Çakar, an MP of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) at the time claimed that TRT had banned the broadcast of the film twice, but it was broadcast by the permission of Yücel Yener, the chief executive of TRT of the time. Çakar said “The ones, especially Mr. Yücel Yener, who have given the enemies of Turkey a trump card that will abolish the Turkish official history thesis on the claims of Armenian genocide, betrayed our country” (radikal.com.tr). In the same article, he also asks why and how Karakoyunlu accepted the changes made in the scenario.

This and similar debates caused Yücel Yener to send RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) a letter that Vural Tekeli, the Vice Executive of TRT, was dismissed from his post. In this way, Yücel Yener and TRT would come clean, and avoid a possible penalty and further discussions against them. However, Vural Tekeli had resigned from his position on 1 February, 2001 (Bilallar, 2003 www.habervitrini.com). As a result, the main point to focus on here is that a film that seems to have consent from the state, turns out to be banned when it receives criticisms and reaction from the public. And this shows the ideological state apparatuses are in control of the society when a threat to the dominant ideology is felt.

On the other side of the coin, this and similar debates regarding the film are put forward to provoke and manipulate the public against any healthy rethinking about our past. The fact that a film receives so harsh criticisms from the nationalist politicians may actually show

that it challenges the dominant ideology and tries to bring a different point of view than the official history thesis.

There are some other criticisms regarding the film. One of the main characters, Nora, as well as her brother Levon, who is portrayed as a Jew in Karakoyunlu's novel was changed into an Armenian in the film. To those criticisms, which claim that the scriptwriter of the film, Ethem Mahçupyan, an Armenian, distorted the historical truths, Mahçupyan's reply is clear. The Capital Tax Law was imposed on all the non-Muslims at the time, not only Jews. Besides, for him, those who criticize the film harshly cannot distinguish between historical truths and a novel, which does not have to promise absolute truths (Mahçupyan 2005, p.94). "Historical novels and films, as long as they maintain the conventional historical phenomena, can develop unlimited number of stories and place it within the history in the background" (ibid.).

Ishak Alaton, the Jewish businessman whose father had also been sent to Aşkale, was thought to be a bridge between Giritlioğlu-Mahçupyan and the Chief Rabbi in order to get the permission to shoot the Jewish synagogues and cemeteries (Bali 2005, p.141). Alaton states that the Turkish Chief Rabbinate did not allow the Jewish sites to be shown in the film. Hearing that, the leaders of the Armenian community used this opportunity to transform the major non-Muslim characters in the film into Armenian characters (ibid., p.146).

The fact that the major non-Muslim characters are Armenians might make the film biased against the other minority groups. Focusing on one community and building the narrative around this group only in order to depict them deeper could have been understandable if the historical period that the film takes place concerned only Armenians. The supporting characters from Jewish or Greek communities could have been added in order to sustain a balance among the non-Muslims who all suffered from the burden of this tax. By this way, the narrative could have been better woven with minorities depicted in variety. Thus, it is possible that Mahçupyan, as the scriptwriter of the film wanted to privilege the Armenian

community by focusing on their religious and cultural background in the film. What is more, an Armenian story would always raise debates and thus the popularity of the film among the public.

Criticisms were made against *Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds* by the academicians and researchers claiming that the film consciously avoided the criticism of the ideology of the government of that period. Ayhan Aktar states:

To avoid presenting the political mood of the period in a film which claimed that the Capital Tax would be 'used as a backdrop' strikes me as strange as 'going water skiing without getting wet'. But at least one quarter of the film occurs at Aşkale. Giritlioğlu and her friends wish to explain the Capital Tax to us 'without cluing us in' (cited in Bali 2005, p.173).

Another critique comes from Ferhat Barış; "I think that Tomris Giritlioğlu has insistently avoided taking any sort of political stance in her last film [*Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds*], and she focused as much as possible on the characters themselves" (cited in Bali 2005, p.173fn). Moreover, Mıgırdıç Margosyan maintains that at the beginning or at the end of the film, some kind of written information could have been given for the audience who is not very familiar with Capital Tax (ibid.). All these criticisms are proper, and it is important to point out that instead of becoming more political and critical in years, Giritlioğlu have come up with a film, which possesses a less dominant ideological message but a more popular TV series-like drama with her next film *The Pains of Autumn* (2009).

All these debates considered, to my point of view, the film does not opt for a polarization; on the contrary, it aims to face our history and embrace it. Yet, the fact that the Armenian community has been made the dominant figure, emphasized with the Turkish-Armenian song "Sarı Gelin", by no means brings about heated discussions in Turkey, which it did. Thus, the film stands at a slippery surface as to popularize and fetishize the minority community, either on purpose or unconsciously, in order to gain benefit out of it since it is a well-known fact that the Armenian community is more open to reactions and discussions in Turkey. The on-going debates about the film and its later broadcast on TRT could be

interpreted as the success of the film in terms of the box office. On the other hand, those debates have enabled a new discussion platform among the researchers, journalists and the public as well, which, I believe, is an important step for Turkey to start thinking and speaking about the past. “Despite all this, Turkey seems to have started come to terms with its past” (Aktar 2001).

7.3. MUD/ ÇAMUR

Mutual and shared purification processes are the tools of our freedom not only as a society but also as an individual (Mağcupyan 2005, p.38).

7.3.1 The Director: Derviş Zaim

Derviş Zaim is an acclaimed Turkish director, who was born in Northern Cyprus, Limasol, in 1964. He was educated in Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, the faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. He did his master’s at Warwick University, British Cultural Studies Department. Between 1992 and 1995, he made and produced some programs for TV channels. He wrote a book called *Ares Harikalar Diyarında*, which won the Yunus Nadi Award in 1992 (www.kameraarkasi.org). His first feature film he shot with a small budget, *Tabutta Rövoşata*, (1996) won him many awards and a good reputation as a director. Following *Elephants and Grass/Filler ve Çimen* (2000), *Mud/Çamur* (2002), which won the Unesco Award in Venice Film Festival in 2003, is Zaim’s third film. With *Waiting for Heaven/Cenneti Beklerken* (2005) and *Nokta* (2008), Zaim established his own cinematographic style as one of the independent directors after the 1990s. Zaim’s films are made of short but genuine stories that develop into big themes. Zaim employs color and open spaces as an important aspect of his cinematography.

7.3.2 The Plot and Analysis of the Film

Mud is a film woven around a Turkish soldier, Ali (Mustafa Uğurlu), in Northern Cyprus, who for some reason lost his voice and tries to find his remedy in the mudflat he is guarding. He discovers the goodness of the mud when some crippled people, a dwarf and an old woman, Oya (Tomris İnceer), comes to the restricted military zone to ask for some mud, and Ali starts to put some on his throat during his shift there. One day, realizing Ali's condition, Oya brings him an amulet and tells him to bury it deep in the mud. While doing what the old woman tells him to do, Ali, by chance, finds a historical Cybele statue in the mud and asks Halil (Bülent Emin Yarar), the fiancé of his sister, Ayşe (Yelda Reynaud), to take it to her for good luck. However, none of them knows the catastrophe this statue, worth 5-10 thousand Turkish Liras, will bring in their lives.

Mud opens with a quite symbolic scene where a high-ranking officer's highly effective speech to his soldiers who stand at attention is heard. The commander reminds his soldiers the official history thesis of Turkish Republic about Cyprus stating how Turkey brought peace to Cyprus that has maintained for 30 years now.

Soldiers! Remember what Cyprus was like 30 years ago. On this island, on Cyprus, there was no security of life or property. You Turks lived under Greek threat. There were massacres, raping, uprooting and loss. They had said that when the Turkish army got here, they wouldn't find any Turks alive to save. The Turkish army came to the island. And they made you a region where it is safe to live. Now the Greeks live in their own region in the South, and the Turks live in their own region in the North in peace. And it's been the case for 30 years without anyone getting hurt. But according to some news we've received recently, the Greeks are again taking up arms. This is why we must get ready.

The words and the way the commander dictates them to his soldiers is very symbolic in that it demonstrates a clear microcosm of how the nation-state uses its ideological state apparatuses, the army, in order to impose on the society how the state protects and saves its people from the dangers and enemies especially coming from other countries. Therefore, through fear and the risk of a possible attack that is

implanted in the minds and the systems of the people again and again, the state wins the nation's consent naturally.

Commander: Repeat now!

Soldiers: We must be ready!

Commander: Again!

Soldiers: We must be ready!

Through this dictation, the soldiers are made to believe in what they have to do now: Get armed and fight for their freedom! However, as the troop repeats "We must be ready", Ali faints all of a sudden as if his subconscious is reacting against this strict imposition, and in a way resists giving his consent to the dominant ideology's impositions. Seeing this, the commander orders other soldiers to take him away with no sign of emotions or pity. This scene is shot from a high angle, the symmetry of the soldiers in straight rows, which gives the effect of control, order and discipline that the military strives to sustain. Yet, when Ali is taken away, the empty space that is left where he has stood before seems to emphasize that the result of the resistance against such a system is merely non-existence.

This scene, as well as having connotations with repression, is also related with the difficulty of dealing with the traumatic memories of the past. "Since 'being ready' triggers the possibility of the fact that the past burdened with trauma is pulled from the memories of the past and experienced from scratch, Ali abandons his voice the moment he utters those words loudly" (Akbal Süalp 2007, p.122). Süalp maintains that throughout the film we encounter the physical and psychological results of the past experiences on the people of Cyprus, which cannot be voiced (ibid).

Ali is war wounded and he got nearly killed by the Rums during Greek-Turkish War of 1974. He was found in a well, shot from three different parts of his body, with 80 other dead bodies, including his father. And 30 years later while he is doing his military service, he suffers from some health conditions, which the doctors cannot explain. He cannot speak due to a problem in his throat; he itches all the time, and faints under the sun. All these inexplicable health conditions, based on past traumas, might be a signification of his

resistance to military oppression, war and the overall system. He seems to be conforming to the requirements of the system with his silence, yet he becomes a passive activist through his fainting, itching and calm behaviors. Thus, he is the disruptive force in the system that hurts the equilibrium.

Ali's inconformity comes with his mere existence and nature; he does not aim to change the system or plea for a more peaceful world, yet his existence in his small world naturally creates this urge. When he is on guard duty in the mudflat, seeing the locals asking for mud from the military territory, he decides to rebuild the fence two meters back so that the locals and also he can get as much mud as they want. Because of his unlawful act, he is sent to military jail by the Turkish-Greek border where he got shot on the leg by a Greek soldier from the other side. Thus, Ali, in spite of his non-conformist actions, is a silent/silenced individual, but still a threat to the dominant rule since he still carries the burden of the memories of the ethnic war that have stayed intact for all these years. This is confirmed with Derviş Zaim's words which goes "The basis of my creating a protagonist who cannot speak lies in the long-time isolated history of Turkish Cypriots" (Zaim 2003, p.32).

On the other hand, Temel (Taner Birsnel), a childhood friend of Ali and Ayşe, strives hard to find a common ground for both Turkish and *Rum* communities on the island of Cyprus. At first, he manages a project, sponsored by some Swiss organizations, which involves the exchange of both Turkish and Greek citizens' statue installations to be placed in the statue owner's old house on the other side before Cyprus was divided. Thus, this symbolic presence of the statues would help bring peace between the two communities. One of the statue models is Ali, whose cast is singing with a microphone in front of him. Temel shoots the moment when Ali first sees his statue as he frequently shoots the important moments with his web-cam like a documentary.

(Temel filming and narrating) This is Ali. He's next to his statue that will go to the Greek side tomorrow. The statue will be placed in his old house. The house he himself cannot go to due to social and political reasons. If Ali could talk, he might talk about this but we're talking instead of him now.

Dedicating himself to peace projects between Turkish and Greek people is the way Temel tries to handle with the dark memories of his past. During the war, Temel, aged 16-17 at the time, lost many of his relatives. Raged and galvanized by the feelings of vengeance, he killed two unarmed *Rums* he found hiding, and buried them in the mudflat where Ali is now guarding. In one of his confessions to the web-cam, he tells the painful story of the event crying: “In the war for vengeance. *Rums*...Because they were *Rums*. Their graves are in the mud never been opened. Nobody knows. Except for the ones who did it”. Akbal Süalp explains the traumas of the characters in the film by suggesting that the narrative is full of neurotic indications since they strive but cannot come to terms with the emotional trauma. Thus, “the barbaric and the oppressed always switch places in great sufferings” (2007, p.122).

Therefore, mud is a metaphor of both death and rebirth. For some, the mudflat is a place for hope for a new life and recovery from illnesses, but for some others, it is a place which only reminds them of the trauma of the past. Oya gives birth to a baby and Ali regains his voice after putting on some mud; on the other hand, Ayşe loses her baby trying to bury Ali’s leg cast in the mud, and Temel is shot there in the mudflat by the mafias. The last image Temel sees before he dies is the skeletons of the bodies he shot years ago. This final confrontation of Temel with his painful past brings about his own death. Therefore, the metaphor of mud is associated with contradictory signifiers in the film.

The project of exchanging statues turns out to be impractical and a little unsuccessful since some local Turks bring the statues back to Temel complaining that they cause restlessness and hostility among the neighborhood. The houses of the locals who keep the statues of Greeks were attacked and called a traitor. Halil is also sarcastic about this project which he finds useless.

Halil: (sarcastically) So, people who hate each other are going to send each other statues. Ali’s statue will be put in your old house. The Greeks are going to look at Ali’s statue, think about Ali and there is going to be peace. And peace between Turks and *Rums* will occur in this way. That’s garbage, eh?

Temel: It's better than doing nothing. (in the background Ali is playing clarinet)

Halil: You're going to stir things up.

Halil even asks Ayşe to give the one she keeps at her house back to Temel and give him back the money she took in return. However, Ayşe refuses to do so since she feels guilty and sorry about occupying those people's house and property. The Greek man's statue has a TV in his arms with a video recording. He says:

I used to sit on the veranda of my old house and drink coffee [...] I used to sit on my rocking chair. I haven't done it for 30 years. Everybody is to blame for things turning out this way, and me too. I stole some Turkish goods in 1963, but does that legitimize the fact that I lost my homeland never to see it again?

Feeling very sad, Ayşe admits that she has stolen furniture from other houses, too. However, she kept some photos of the Greek guy that he left while running away. These scenes are significant since the feelings of longing for the home and carrying the burden of loss and agony inside due to the trauma of the war comes to light through a peace project. And in this process, there are people who support it since they wish to break away from the chains of the past as well as some others who still stick to the past memories of suffering and vengeance, and do not want to do any cooperation with it.

Temel is one of the most affected one by the war of 1974; that is why he is engaged in quite irrational acts. For instance, he throws the returned statues into the sea and collects them there. However, when the project turns out to be ineffective, he takes them back from under water one by one and lies next to them on the beach. The high angle of the camera indicates that he becomes one of the statues he has collected. In a way, Temel strives to find ways to get rid of his pangs of conscience. "Freedom exists as much as we are able to control our destiny" he utters. He tries to be free from his past through the actions for peace, through which he thinks he might be the master of his destiny he could not control thirty years ago.

The next project that Temel carries out when the first is not quite successful involves collecting of the sperms of both *Rum* and Turkish men who lost their families. They put the

photos of the sperm donors and their stories on the walls of the room they keep the sperms. The building they preserve the sperms is also significant in that according to what Temel says it is a sanitary treatment center where “Turkish and Greek sewage is treated into clean water and then used for agriculture. The excrement of two ethnic groups that absolutely hate each other is purified. Greek sewage is piped here from the other side. And then it is mixed with Turkish sewage to make clean water”. In that respect, Zaim sarcastically creates a common space for both communities in the manner that none of the films I have analyzed made. This novelty in content breaks the stereotypical narratives of dealing with the trauma of the past and defamiliarizes the audience with the dominant discourse that has been narrated before.

The idea of making clean water from the sewage of both communities is associated with uniting/mixing and then purifying together; the formula for peace comes from cleaning of the sins/crimes that were committed once. And in order to clean them, the two nations should come together on a common ground and face their ill deeds and rage against each other. The sperm preservation project and exhibiting the donors also refers to some absurd but at the same time very meaningful point in that sperm is associated with new life and the possibility of implanting these sperms to a woman’s womb means creating a new life from somebody who experienced death to its limits.

At the end of the film, when Ali and Temel are killed by the mafia, Ayşe realizes what the project aims and implants Ali’s frozen sperms into the frozen ovaries of Oya’s daughter. Ayşe cannot have a baby since her ovaries are damaged by her last miscarriage, but by placing the fertilized ovary into her womb, she has twin boys from her own brother’s sperms. Having babies from two dead people is quite an absurd way of emphasizing rebirth. Zaim expresses his ideas regarding the absurdity in his films as follows: “I like to tell the stories of the people who are stuck/ cornered but who try to get out of the situation and conditions they are stuck in. I like to express this through black humor and irony” (*Mud*, DVD extras, 2003). The twins are a signification of Temel’s urge to control destiny and Ali’s vain hope for a child. The dreams of both men that were forgotten long ago because

of the pains of the past are realized ironically through Temel's seemingly unrealistic project. Ayşe, like Cybele, is a fertility figure, mythically breaking the chains of what her fate imposes on her and continues her generation.

This is a rebirth film. In the finale, the reason why I allow only the female character to live and show her with small children might be related to this. Similarly, the reason why I depicted her as a doctor specialized in artificial insemination, and the use of Cybele cult as a motif might also be this [rebirth]" (Zaim 2003, p.34).

Black humor is a key word in *Mud*, and the amusing music accompanies the absurd deeds of the characters that make the painful atmosphere of the past rather more bearable. Black humor; thus, prevents the audience to identify with the characters fully, and by doing so enables them to see the big picture without the interference of mere emotions. All these tools Zaim employs serve to defamiliarize the perception of the audience about the issue of Greek-Turkish Exchange.

However, there are some scenes that highly speak to the emotions of the audience for the purpose of looking at the past from the point of view of the Greeks. The role-play scene where the supervisor of the meeting asks the others, who were present in the Greek-Turkish War, to role-play and put themselves in the Greek soldiers' shoes. Ali tells the story from the other side's point of view and tells them that after the massacre, together with some other Turkish soldiers, he captured some Greek soldiers and killed them in a well in the mudflat and took their personal belongings. Finishing the story, Ahmet in the meeting stands up in rage and shouts at Ali that it was vice-versa of what he told had happened in 1974, and it is nonsense to tell the story from the Greeks' point of view. Actually, Ali and Ahmet had been found in the mud almost dead.

You're going to put yourself into somebody else's shoes, eh? Three bullets went into you in '74 Ali! And just the other day you got another one into your leg. Those Greeks, would they put themselves in your shoes? Would they ever think about how Ali feels?

This scene is significant due to the fact that Zaim attempts to bring novelty to Turkish Cinema by putting one in the shoes of the 'other' even if he receives harsh criticism. In this scene, the fact that Ali does not do anything to control his destiny is also questioned. Yet again, his only outrage against this destiny comes out when Ayşe loses her baby while trying to bury the cast leg of Ali. He asks her sister to go to the mudflat and bury the cast leg deep since he believes in the divine healing power of the mud that to him would heal his crippled leg. Yet, when it turns out that this act of believing in the power of outer forces caused Ayşe's miscarriage, Ali goes back to the mudflat and breaks the cast leg he takes from under the mud in rage. Thus, this is a metaphor of breaking his unquestioned agreement with destiny and taking control of his life.

7.3.3 The Final Comments on the Film

Even though such dramatic scenes appear in *Mud*, still the overall mood of the film is sarcastic; one that prefers to stand one step behind the level of what the characters experience and remain as a rather distant observer. The themes of peace, rebirth, deep traumas of the past, longing for the lost home and commonality are similar with especially Giritlioğlu's *Across the Water*. Zaim states "I had in mind the themes of Cyprus, illness and recovery since I know that the people of Cyprus have gone through a trauma; more or less, consciously or unconsciously due to the Cyprus issue" (www.biglook.com). Yet, the way Zaim deals with the issues of pain and suffering is innovative compared to *Across the Water*.

In *Mud*, it is possible to find traces of surrealism, symbolism, and a realistic narration. While writing the scenario, I thought such an attitude would help the reality of what the film depicts reach the audience in a more panoramic, compact, dramatized and socially understandable way (Zaim, www.sinema.com).

Illness referring to the traumas of the Cypriots is healed through the concept of rebirth, which is symbolized by the ruined temple in the mudflat. Zaim benefits from the different cultural and mythical commonalities of the Northern Mediterranean region such as Cybele, statue installations, the voice of ezan (call to prayer in Islam) and the church bells. "The Cybele Temple of the ancient times and the military land of present lie next to each other.

The *Rum* guy's statue is put in the Turkish guy's place, and the Turkish guy's in the Rum's [...]. In short, the place circulates among a variety of cultures and time zones" (Zaim 2003, p.34).

This is a film of coming to terms with the past with a touch of irony, humor and absurdity, which gives a different dimension to the audience's perception regarding the pain of others. The film suggests the realization of peace and freedom might come through taking control of the individual's own life and realizing the common cultural aspects of the communities they live with while breaking the narrative constructions the audience is already familiar with. Looking at the events from the point of view of the 'other' is a very significant aspect of the film, which makes it innovative and unique.

7.4. WAITING FOR THE CLOUDS/ BULUTLARI BEKLERKEN

We lived in the mountain. We were being killed, and we killed. We were being burned down, and we burned. In the end a truce was made in 1922, and we came down to Greece by sea from Samsun.

My sister was caught when the war ended. The Turkish army came to the place where we were. In the ensuing battle my sister, a young girl, was captured. A baker from Kavak took her and adopted her. He raised her as though she were really his child.

[...]

*'Oh uncle, our mother was a Greek woman, and she became a Turk. What does that make us?'*¹⁸ (Clark 2006, p. 65)

7.4.1 The Director: Yeşim Ustaoglu

Yeşim Ustaoglu was born in 1960, near Kars, North-Eastern part of Turkey, near the Armenian border where most of the population is Kurdish, a Muslim minority group in Turkey. She went to university in Trabzon, a city in the Black Sea Region. "My childhood,

¹⁸ Michael Papadopoulos interviewed in Kiriya village near Drama in 1964 by the Center for Asia Minor Studies.

a very significant part of my life, was spent in the Black Sea” (Ustaoğlu 2005, p.61). Therefore, she is familiar with the culture and the fabric of the society in that region mingled with the *Rum* minorities and the Kurds. “I have always been interested in the patchwork that actually makes up Turkish history and culture” says Ustaoğlu in one of her interviews (Simon, www.facets.org). “The people influence me. The things that happen in life affect me so much. The agonies of mine as well as others’ really affect me” (Ustaoğlu 2005, p.63).

Ustaoğlu began making films when she was studying architecture, and she had written many stories before she decided to make films. She has four feature films, a documentary and many shorts to her credit. *The Trace* (1994), *Journey to the Sun* (1999), *Waiting for the Clouds* (2004) and finally *Pandora’s Box* (2008) are her four feature films. *Journey to the Sun*, which is about a friendship between a young Turkish and a Kurdish boy, both of whom are Anatolians but somehow misplaced in the big cosmopolitan city of Istanbul, marked a turning point in Ustaoğlu’s directorial career. She is one of the new generation filmmakers who are more sensitive of the social and political issues of Turkey.

Bulutları Beklerken/Waiting for the Clouds (2004) is inspired by Yorgos Andreas’ novella *Tamama*. It is a film about a Turkish woman remembering her real Greek identity years later, and coming to terms with her past. “The past, the secret, the pain felt because of the secret and all the agonies lived through in the past merge in a woman’s life” (Ustaoğlu 2005, p.61). Eleni (Rüçhan Çalışkur) was one of the Greeks living in Trebolu before WWI. She and her family were forced into exile to the south after WWI. Eleni survived the exodus of 1925 and was adopted by a Turkish family in Mersin, a south coast city, having to change her name and religion to adjust to her new way of life. Whereas, her little brother, Nikos, preferred to stay in the orphanage in the barracks until he left for Greece. However, Eleni has never forgotten her little brother Nikos, whom she was scared to go with. This separation left her with a terrible guilt that she had to suppress until her step-sister, Selma (Suna Selen), dies of old age years later.

7.4.2 The Plot and Analysis of the Film

The film starts with black and white real footage of the non-Muslims being deported by ship, which hints at the underlying theme of the film: the exodus of the non-Muslim minorities. The story is set in Trebolu – hometown of Eleni – in 1975, years after Eleni and Selma had moved to this fishing village to set her heart at rest. At the time, outsiders are still regarded as infidels, particularly in this corner of North-eastern Turkey where intolerance and suspicion reign supreme. Turkey is ruled by military-supported right-wing government¹⁹.

Eleni and Selma have quite a normal life, in good terms with the neighbors until one day Selma passes away. The film reaches its turning point after the loss of Selma. This is a significant kernel in the film since Selma has been the only connection that bounds Eleni to her Muslim identity. With the death of Selma, there is no tie or any reason for Eleni to hold on to her Muslim identity any more. When some long-concealed photos seem to evoke troubled memories, Eleni starts an inner journey to find out her real identity that she has suppressed for fifty years. She stops talking to anyone. She retreats to her tiny shack in the highlands slowly breaking down. During this period, the memories of her past become overwhelming. The memory of her mother language returns, and she starts to speak only Greek, calling for her long-lost brother, Nikos' name.

One day, through her neighbor's son, Mehmet (Rıdvan Yağcı), Eleni is introduced to a long-time exile Tanassis (Dimitris Kaberidis), who escaped to Greece during the exodus with the other orphans, but was forced to run away to Russia when he joined the partisans. Seeing Eleni's agony, Tanassis thinks he can find where her brother lives in Greece now that Tanassis is back in his country. After a while, Eleni receives a letter from Tanassis explaining where Nikos lives. This letter unlocks Eleni's buried past and spurs her to a journey to Thessaloniki. Restoring her identity, Eleni comes back to her feet and goes to

¹⁹ In the 1970s, Turkish life was still full of political and social upheaval. The Soviet Union was a threat to the government and the communists were carefully watched.

Thessaloniki to encounter her brother, her past. Yet, Nikoss (Yannis Georgiadis) does not recognize her stating that she is in none of the pictures from his childhood. However, silently Eleni shows him an older family photograph she has been keeping for all those years, in which both of them, as children, are there. The photograph comes alive as an old film: sister and brother at play. The past is enlightened and memories are recovered.

In *Waiting for the Clouds*, we encounter the clash between the ultimate authority and the subordinates, which is shadowed forth right from the beginning. With some old footage of 1915 deportation of the *Rums* carried out by the soldiers, the power of the dominant is felt really closely. Moreover, right after this footage, the first scene begins with TV news on the only channel people can watch, the government channel, TRT, informing the public, at the same time the audience, about the five-year-in-a-row census that is taking place that day and obliging the Turkish people to stay home. The director has added some old black and white footage of soldiers marching to increase the effect of the government pressure.

The TV presenter says as the voice of the government: “To secure order, curfew will be respected until sundown (showing soldiers with guns). All citizens are instructed to cooperate with officials. Failure to cooperate will result in punishment”. Even the way the TV reporter speaks and the words she uses contribute to the effect of the subtle repression and fear the government forces try to impose on the public. Thus, as Gramsci points out, the use of the media to establish order is a very effective way of gaining the consent of the public. TV, as one of the Ideological State Apparatuses, is a kind of silent agreement between the dominant power and the public, which on the surface serves the purpose of facilitating the consensus. Nevertheless, it is clearly highlighted by the director that by taking advantage of the consensus and the media, the government is trying to apply direct use of force, which no one in the society would think of opposing. Thus, the news stands for the imposition of the dominant ideology on the public.

The mass media affirm the sense of belonging to the national community by ensuring that the whole nation is watching (reading) the same news at the same time, which even extends

over the borders to imagined transnational communities such as the immigrant enclaves [...] (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p.90).

There is another important issue about this footage which states that the consensus that is carried out will determine the figures on language and religion. The fact that the Turkish Republic had not included all the minorities in the consensus before demonstrates how the minorities and the unofficial history of Turkey were ignored. On the other hand, this can also be associated with how the governments in general indirectly control the public by determining and making record of the different ethnicities among the society. When the census officers come to Ayşe's home and ask her name and her family's name, the sad and deep expression on her face is quite noticeable. The information she gives to the authorities does not represent her real identity, but one that she has been carrying on her shoulders in order to stay alive. They never uncovered her real identity to anyone, even to Selma's husband.

The officer: Father's name?

Ayşe: Suleyman

The officer: Mother's name?

Ayşe: Aysel

The officer: Place of birth?

Ayşe: Mersin

She answers as if she is supposed to reply that way. She can neither embrace her real identity and family nor deny her Turkish identity. It is also strange how the government officials behave when suddenly Selma gets sick: they go on asking questions as if nothing vital or fatal is going on. This is an indication that the implied director tries to emphasize that those officers are a part of the dominant ideology. Therefore, since they are the servants of the system, they are responsible for the maintenance of the nation-state.

The first scenes of *Waiting for the Clouds* are full of references to hegemonic tendencies of the nation-state especially on the minorities. The next scene metaphorically refers to the displacement of the non-Muslims after WWI as Ayşe tells the story of a little girl to Mehmet, who is scared of the gremlins, and who asks for soothing.

Once upon a time, there were many gremlins here. The village was cursed. The gremlins crawled out at night. They whispered into people's ears. Everyone moved beyond the mountains to get away from the gremlins, but there was no freedom from the curse. There was a little girl among them. She lost her entire family in a snowstorm. She was lost, alone and freezing. Then a fairy came. The fairy gave her a halo. It kept her warm. The fairy then offered the girl a third eye. She would never get lost again.

The story is symbolic of the forced migration process Ayşe went through when she was a little girl. Through this story, Ustaoglu foreshadows the main conflict in the narrative; the army; the servants of the state as the gremlins, and the Rums; the disruptive force in the society as the little girl. Thus, the 'domination' was in force rather than 'hegemony' at those times as Gramsci pointed out, which ignores the consent of the subordinates and leads to a chaos and fear in the society.

The parts of the film where Eleni dominates Ayşe and starts to recall her childhood years in grief, is so symbolic in that it denotes an upheaval of the real self against the authority. Eleni, after being silenced and forced to suppress her identity for many years, finally comes to a realization and remembers what she has once lost breaking her chains of inner conflict once veiled. As Althusser states ideology is not what we consciously accept but something that is imposed on us without our realizing it. Thus, as well in Eleni's case, the whole identity she has carried almost all her life is sadly what is imposed on her. She could not speak her language nor grow up with her real family repressing even the guilt she carried deep inside. "In fact, while living on the lands she belongs to, she can neither speak her own language nor express what belongs to her" (Ustaoglu 2005b, p.44).

It is time for rebirth for Eleni now that Selma, the last tie with her constructed past left her all alone. It is a significant why Eleni has not dared or needed to inquire about her identity before. It is quite predictable that she was treated as one of the family members in her foster family, and Selma was a dear person to her. However, this consent of accepting the identity she put on for her own sake comes loose when she loses the only person dear to her in her life. This loss brings back another traumatic separation she experienced with her long-lost

brother, Nikos. By silencing and isolating herself from the rest of the society, Eleni, in a way, clears herself off her ideological role of being a Muslim woman, and gradually assumes her real self that she was supposed to possess long ago. Unveiling and remembering her Greek identity, Eleni clashes with the norms of the society she was born in, and starts to live in total isolation. Thus, the director also points out that reclaiming one's mother tongue and real ethnicity/identity forces one to isolation. The only character, though, who is able to communicate with her even in her isolation, is Mehmet as he is also the one to help her out in finding her brother, Nikos. "Mehmet, who signifies the long-lost brother, Nikos, is also a figure of hope in the film with his child world trying to understand everything" (Güven 2005b, p.56).

"If the language cannot speak, and share what it has to say, it is in exile" (Akbal Süalp 2004b, p.31). For Eleni, this is definitely the case. She was deported from the lands she was born in and forced to forget her identity, her language. Even if she went back to her homeland, Tire, years later, she cannot speak it any more. Her mother language, Greek, disappears in the dark corners of her memory, still in exile until when with another trauma (the death of her sister), she switches from her Muslim identity back to her original Greek self.

During the recovery of her past, when she first encounters Thanasas along with Mehmet, Eleni starts to tell how she lost her family during the war. "I see my mother in the clouds carrying Sofia on her back. Her head bounces lifelessly. I can't tell if she is alive. Father isn't there to protect us anymore. He was shot with the other rebels, remember?". We are informed that Sofia is abandoned by her mother because of hard weather conditions. Eleni tells in Greek that together with her little brother Nikos, they walked weeks and weeks to reach Mersin in the cold fearing their lives every night. And this is how she finally utters her real identity; "I am Eleni Terzidis, the daughter of Prodromos and Marika Terzidis", as if only now she can give the true answer to the questions of the consensus officers when

they came to inquire about her identity. According to Dönmez-Colin Tanassis is a figure of catharsis who helps Ayşe to come to terms with her past, her real identity, Eleni (2008, p.114).

These words are so significant to the film in that they reveal how a fake identity, which is imposed on an individual to expect to display certain beliefs and ideologies, collapses in the end. Eleni cannot escape her real identity concealed by the ideological state apparatuses, namely family and school, which subtly built her a new identity she should carry to survive in the society she lived throughout her life. Moreover, freeing herself from that identity she carried for many years is deciphered by the neighbors as she totally lost her mind, which dragged her to more isolation.

As for the ISA, family, school and finally the media are emphasized by the director quite clearly. First of all, the family is an important factor for Eleni to become Ayşe and conform to the life of a Turkish-Muslim society. She was found and adopted by a Turkish family on the way when the two siblings were about to die. When the government ordered to collect all the non-Muslim orphans to be sent away, she was given a Turkish name and her identity was covered. That is how she survived and lived for 50 years without speaking any Greek. Accordingly, the impact of the family is very significant on an individual's exposure to ruling ideology.

Secondly, another educational state apparatus, which is the school, is what Althusser, as well as Ustaoglu, puts the most emphasis on since it has replaced the religious apparatus. In *Waiting for the Clouds*, we come across with some important classroom scenes, where the Turkish identity is imposed on the primary school students through various ways. For instance, in one of the scenes the students are asked to take out what they have brought to class for the 'Turkish Products Week', saying in chorus "Turkish products are the best products", the students all at once show the fish (anchovy, a local fish of the Black Sea) they have caught in the rain a short while ago. In another scene, we see the same students singing a song in chorus about how courageous and heroic the Turks are.

If surrounded by the enemy,
If abandoned on their own,
Would the Turks give up?
Turks never give up!
Until the end of time
Turks never give up!

However, the song is ironically intervened by Mehmet's peeing his pants and being punished by the teacher. Finally, in another scene, the students are standing in rows in the school garden repeating 'the oath' as it is a custom to do every Monday before starting the lessons in every Turkish school in Turkey. The last lines of the oath go: "My existence is for the good of Turkey; how happy is the one who can say I am a Turk". Once again we come across a nationalistic indoctrination of the school on kids. However, Mehmet sneaks out of the back row to join his friend, and he cuts school. Later on, we see him wiping out his poor grades on his end-of-year grade sheet and replacing them with high grades just to get a chance to go to the highlands with his mother for the summer vacation.

All these school scenes have the purpose of underlining the educational system used as a state apparatus in a society to instill the idea of the nationalism on the society. Yet, ironically, Mehmet, who is the closest confidant of Eleni, spoils or ignores the system rules/tools as if he is not conforming to the society's norms. He is in that respect just like Eleni, who turns out to be a non-Muslim, in other words a member of the minority group. So in a way, Mehmet escapes the rituals of the dominant ideology that the society naturally imposes on him as well as his confidante, Eleni.

Mehmet, being an independent figure, is a disruption according to Todorov's idea of narrative. He destroys the equilibrium in the system he lives by skipping school, peeing in class while his class-mates are all singing a nation-conscious song. He also has a friend, an orphan boy, a little older than him, who is dreaming that one day his communist father will come back from Russia, where he thinks he fled, and take him. Even when this boy goes to prison, Mehmet helps him escape from the prison and leave the town on a boat. Therefore,

as a key figure in the film, Mehmet has intimate relations with the characters standing on the edge of the society. All his actions and his friendships display the character of Mehmet to signify the central disruptive force in the film since he destroys the equilibrium of the system.

The village is also significant in that it seems to be a port/border which many of the characters escape from or take refuge in. Eleni was deported from that village many years ago with her family and came back there many years later like a refuge since she uncovers her real identity, and it is not possible to live as she used to any more in a homogenized society. Mehmet's friend is an orphan, the son of a communist, who fled to Russia or died. Mehmet's friend lives in the village in spite of the villagers' reactions against keeping a communist's son. Tanassis is a long-time exile, a communist, who happens to visit his old friend in the village. All these characters meet at this village covered with mist and clouds as if they can hide from the dominant system prevailing.

An important aspect that Ustaoglu uses in her film to emphasize this disruption is the landscape of the region. Ustaoglu states that "the natural scenery of the area - green wild mountains enveloped in rain and mist - was aimed to be a prominent visual element, and the mysterious nature of these locations was considered to help reflect the inner mysteries of the characters" (ustaoğlufilm.com). The cloud-wreathed landscapes of the village that seem to veil the mysteries of the characters later on turn into a tool that reveals them. The wild geography of the region contributes much to the effect of the journey of Eleni in search of her own past. Like the mist and the clouds covering the mountains and the sky, Eleni's own identity is waiting for her to uncover in the mist of her unconsciousness.

7.4.3 Final Comments on the Film

Waiting for the Clouds, with its beautiful vast landscapes of Tire, emphasizes the timelessness through the "long shots, mobile framing and long takes that situate the characters within their open settings, preserving spatiotemporal integrity" (Naficy 2001, p.153). "Several aspects have changed considerably over the years, but in the mountains,

time does not exist. Their isolation preserves the culture of the inhabitants. The main character, Ayşe, can only exist in an environment where there is no time” (Ustaoğlu 2006, p.134). The protagonist, Eleni (Ayşe), suffers from the loss of her family as much as she does for the loss of her homeland, thus Tire, her home, is where she comes back after years of exile in a southern town, Mersin. Moreover, her long-lost family is closely associated with her homeland. Thus, the long takes of the mountains of Tire, where the concept of time is lost, are closely connected with her longing for the past, and her hometown once she had been exiled from. The vast open space of the mountains is symbolic of her identity recovery; on the other hand, ironically claustrophobic since her homeland is the space that she feels imprisoned psychologically. Her exile is not concerned with physical premises but in her mind. Her language, her identity, and her past are all in exile. Her homeland with dark clouds covering the sky becomes her prison. For this reason, the beautiful landscape of the homeland at the same time represents her confinement. Eleni’s small dark shelter in the highlands also reinforces the idea of her soul and identity under control of the authoritarian regime.

The old Pontus-Greek woman, a deportee, Eleni encounters in Thessaloniki is the final key figure that Ustaoğlu employs in order to show the alternative life of Eleni if she had left for Greece 50 years ago. This old woman keeps her Pontus-Greek identity and accent and misses her home, still remembering the favorite tree near her lost home where she wants to be buried. Ustaoğlu states that “What is homeland? Who is a foreigner?: The film tries to find answers to the thorny questions of identity and nationalism” (cited in Dönmez-Colin 2008, p.114).

Waiting for the Clouds, with its multi-layered and multi-voiced depicted characters, all of which represent a microcosm of the society is quite successful in focusing on the rarely emphasized subjects in cinema, remembering and reconciling with our painful past. Ustaoğlu achieves this by defamiliarizing the stereotypical concept of the non-Muslims in the minds of the audience. She prefers to look at the past from present for the audience to evaluate the pain and suffering of dislocation from a distance through the character of an

old Greek woman. “I wanted to see what might be the wound of pain and separation caused by the past on us and the generation after us or to see how it is like to carry this secret and the responsibility of conscious” (Ustaoğlu 2005b, p.43). While she is doing this, as almost scarcely done in Turkish Cinema, Ustaoğlu strives to make the audience see from the point of view of the ‘other’ as Zaim did in *Mud*. Therefore, with a successful attempt to remember the trauma of the past from a Greek woman’s point of view, the film “poses the question that a national community (and cinema) can never pose: the question of change and the condition of possibility for change” (cited in *ibid.*, p.115).

7.5 GÜZ SANCISI/ PAINS OF AUTUMN

7.5.1 The Plot and Analysis of the Film

Autumn, 1955 of Istanbul is experiencing a tense political atmosphere, in which the events in Northern Cyprus has become a means to provoke the public to revolt against the non-Muslims, especially Rums in the country. Behçet (Murat Yıldırım) is the only son of a wealthy landlord, Kâmil Efendi (Tuncel Kurtiz), who is an influential extreme nationalist. Because of his father, who has deep connections with the intelligence, Democrat Party (DP) government is interested in Behçet, who is under the influence of his father’s marginal ideals and beliefs. He is a research assistant at a university and a member of “Cyprus is Turkish Association” led by Kemal Bey (Hüseyin Avni Danyal), who is a retired bureaucrat of the single-party regime and the father of Behçet’s fiancée, Nemika (Belçim B. Erdoğan).

The person that will wake him up from the wrong political direction he is dragged into is Elena (Beren Saat), who is peeped by Behçet across her flat. Elena comes from a totally different background. She is a childlike *Rum* (Greek) courtesan, who is served to high-ranking bureaucrats by her own grand-mother (Zeliha Berksoy). Behçet and Elena’s destinies meet at a political atmosphere in which they are at the opposite sides of the scale. Behçet is so lost that he even watches his best friend, Suat (Okan Yalabık), die because of his communist ideas against the nationalist ideology. However, this love affair Behçet has with Elena finally changes him to react against the ill-deeds around him.

The film opens with the preparations for the looting the night before it takes place. Some men, in the middle of the night, are marking the walls of some apartments with Red Cross signs. One of them walks around with a list of addresses in his hand. There are pieces of cloth, paper and dolls everywhere on the ground. A newspaper headline on the ground says “The USA supports Turkey in the case of Cyprus”. And this is ironically how it supports Turkey.

Behçet, in his new flat, peeps through the window of Elena, who is getting ready for her client. Through showing Behçet as a silent viewer from the very first scene, *Pains of Autumn* as a film clearly positions itself as the silent spectator of the historical events (Cengiz 2009, p.88). When the phone rings, Behçet, who is mesmerized by her beauty, trips in the dark room and hits his hand against his father’s portrait on the wall. He turns on the lights and answers the phone. The glass of the portrait is cracked and his hand is bleeding. This first scene of the film is so significant that it foreshadows the catastrophic events coming in the very near future. There will be much more shattering and breaking throughout the course of the film. This broken portrait symbolizes the broken stores, houses and lives of the non-Muslims on 6/7 September, 1955. Also, it is a sign that the relationship that seems to be working fine for the moment between Behçet and his dominant father, who is one of the responsible figures of the pillage, will be shattered.

Behçet seems to be content about the comfort and privileges his father and Kenan Bey provide him with. For instance, they have arranged a furnished flat for him in Beyoğlu. His childhood friend, Suat, is released from custody thanks to Kâmil Efendi’s efforts and yet again it is Kâmil Efendi that used his influence to get a job for Suat as a research assistant at the university.

Behçet: I’m very happy with the house, thank you. It’s all thanks to Kenan Bey and your efforts. Did you talk with them for Suat? Sorry to have bothered you with it but this time I was really concerned. The brochure he was handing out was about labor rights I think... Thank you dad, I kiss your hands with respect.

In return, Behçet serves his father and his men in “Cyprus will remain Turkish Association” as a nationalist against the non-Muslims of the country. He is engaged to be married to Kenan Bey’s daughter, which will legalize his position in the community beyond his will. All this is happening as if he is only watching his life from far apart, and he does not have any power to change things; yet he does not even think about whether he wants to. Thus, he has given his consent to the hands of the dominant powers who take care of his life for him just like the consent Gramsci emphasizes in order for the dominant ideology to sustain hegemony. As long as Kâmil Efendi and Kenan Bey have the consent of Behçet to control and lead his life, he is a pawn in the political battle.

Through Behçet’s character, the passivity towards the father figure is questioned by maintaining a mutual bond between the spectator in the film and the audience watching the film. Behçet, who cannot go against these two authority figures, is associated with the audience/the society who similarly cannot go against the authority of the state despite its open wounds, and who similarly remains as a silent spectator (ibid., p.88).

In this battle, Behçet is clearly the disruptive force. He is a communist, who tries to bring the filthy acts of the capitalist system, the DP government, under spotlight and spoil their plans to homogenize the nation. He writes for *Havadis*, a newspaper which is directed by Ömer Saruhan (Kenan Bal), a deputy of the government party representing the moderates. Thus, Suat might be as well considered as the organic intellectual, conscious of his class that will have the power to beat the current system. Suat comes from the peripheries and lives and dies for his ideals. It is his ideals that might have brought change in the morals and values in the capitalist society that Behçet lacks.

Behçet: You’re writing in a right-wing newspaper under a pseudonym.

Suat: It’s a proper newspaper. It might be right-winged but at least it has the sensibilities of the people’s common sense, not their bullying and tough side.

Behçet: They say Ömer Saruhan has a lot of influence over Menderes.

Suat: Yes, I hope that is the case. He is the only one with a different opinion on the Cyprus issue. He says it is possible to co-exist.

Behçet: The Association has the same view, just be careful about what you’re opposing.

[...]

Suat: Come over here, (pointing at the nationalists protesting) do they look like you?

Behçet: I've got involved in this because of my ideas. People are dying in Cyprus.

Suat: Listen you, most of that news is bullshit. Listen Mr., things aren't the way you think they are [...]. Who are you? Who are these people? A bunch of people in hysteria [...] They are using you but you're not even aware of it.

The bugs that Behçet tries to kill in his flat, in that respect, mirror the situation he is living in. He is the bug that the nationalists play with and manipulate. He is not aware of really what is going on around him, where he thinks he belongs to, and what the Association's real intentions are. He lives his life just like the bug that wonders in the house without any aims and any control of his life he is leading. One day, he might fall into a trap and get hurt.

Behçet represents much of the public at the time, in sleep, without any ideas of the dominant ideology's, and the USA's intentions on the Cyprus case. The public are all galvanized by the violence that takes place in Northern Cyprus and divert this anger towards their own non-Muslim citizens. Thus, the state apparatuses; army, police and media are all utilized to clear the non-Muslims off the country.

"Cyprus will remain Turkish Association", which Behçet is a member of, abuses the nationalist feelings of the public all throughout the film. In a way, the association stands for the ideology of the government, who cannot stand the existence of the 'other'. The members of the association shout out the slogans that clearly foreshadow the violence that awaits the minorities.

(In chorus) It's either partition or death! Partition or death!

Ferit, a member of the association (Umut Kurt): Turkish Cypriots will not be abandoned to their destiny. We did it 33 years ago, and we can do it again. We'll sweep Greeks to the sea.

Cyprus is Turkish and will remain Turkish. (In chorus) Cyprus is Turkish and will remain Turkish!

These slogans are a reflection of the mentality of the government at the time. During one of the demonstrations in Beyoğlu, Elena runs amongst them and starts to defend herself

fearlessly. “Aren’t we Turkish citizens? Don’t we live here?”. A man from the raged crowd replies her with an insolent remark: “Leave it off! You fucking infidel bitch!”, which summarizes how those nationalists, and therefore the government see the non-Muslims. The first time Behçet reacts against something wrong in his life is this inhuman treatment of the Association. This is one of the kernels of the narration, which both starts the love affair between these two characters coming from totally different backgrounds and also the first breaking point that promises a common ground for the two communities to live together.

The person who first rubs in the sad truth against Behçet’s face is Elena’s grandmother. He is so weak that he even watches his best friend, Suat, die in the hands of the nationalists and runs away. This refers to the fact that the society refrains from speaking about the recent past events and ignores the fact that it has happened. “You’re just a spectator in this life” she says the night when Suat dies, and Behçet goes to see Elena. The two Greek women, Elena and her grandmother, are the ones that could only shake him from his blindness and submissiveness. Thus, the film has a premise that the ‘other’ has a function of mirroring ‘you’, reflecting to the individual his weaknesses and completes them more than anyone else can do in his environment. In other words, the ‘other’ compensates for the weaker and more submissive side of the individual that turns himself into just a spectator in life. Elena, as well as her grandmother, sees the weakness of Behçet and embraces it by accepting him in her life no matter how passive he is to take control of his own life or how far away from her his stand in life is.

In that respect, the ‘infidel bitch’ becomes the ‘helper’ in the story. The fact that she is a courtesan is a stereotype of the Yeşilçam films, in which the non-Muslim female characters are depicted as either villains or desirable fetish figures that help the Muslim hero. Like Nora in *Mrs. Salkım’s Diamonds*, Elena is also suppressed and almost raped by the state figure. She is a prostitute, yet her grandmother in a way obliges her to do it. When she is in bed with Kenan Bey, she is totally passive, almost ignorant of what is happening with the man on top of her as if she is raped by him just like Nora. The indecent position of these

two non-Muslim women, mirroring the Yeşilçam non-Muslim women, reproduces the stereotype attributed to minorities in Turkish films. Thus, in this way, the film fails to bring an innovative perspective towards the depiction of the non-Muslims in Turkish Cinema.

Kenan Bey is a retired wealthy bureaucrat influential on the Prime Minister; similarly, Zabit Pasha is a wealthy landlord, once an influential figure of the state, in full control of all the family members. In that respect, the fact that the two authoritative figures have a sexual intercourse with the Christian women against their will also represents the pressure and dominancy of the nation state over the non-Muslim communities in the country. The state is the violator of the rights of the non-Muslims. Moreover, through fertilizing the female, the dominant ideology in a way homogenizes the nation.

The organic intellectuals, Ömer Saruhan and Suat, who are against the provocation and manipulation of the public that the Association tries to achieve are murdered by the deep state. In that case, the job of bringing justice to the country is imposed on Behçet, who in the end comes to a realization that he should change his world. We see the first signs of it when he has a fight with İsmet on the edge of a cliff. Behçet voices his opinion against the evil deeds of the Association for the first time and makes his mind up about going public.

Behçet: Yes, I know a lot and soon others will know, too. I'm not a part of your filth any more... You're a filthy murderer.

İsmet: Are we any different from each other.

Behçet: Yes, we are on the same boat. We move forward by stepping on dead bodies.

After this first step Behçet takes forward, he becomes the new disruption who is able to go against the dominant rule. The next step is to confront his father, the dominant nationalist figure in his life. The symbolic act of killing the bug in his flat is a sign that he wants to clear off his burdens by freeing himself from the authoritative figure that has chased him for all his life.

Kâmil Efendi: Things did not go right.

Behçet: They did not go the way you wanted.

[...]

Behçet: I love her. She's the most precious thing in my life.

Kâmil Efendi: You love her. A Greek... A prostitute! I've given you my entire world!

Behçet: I don't want your world any more.

Kâmil Efendi: There's no other world! There just isn't!

There is no other world for the nationalists other than the nation state they want to maintain at the cost of anything even if it means to hurt people. Kenan Bey uttered similar words to his daughter Nemika when she is outraged by the murder her father planned ostensibly for the sake of the nation. "When the nation's interest is at stake, the rest is detail". Thus, Behçet, like the society that has given its consent to the state, has been silent and obedient to what is happening around him for the sake of his own interests.

Behçet, in his small world represents a microcosm of Turkish society. Once a spectator, who contributed to the murder of his friends and watched them die in his comfy life, later rebels against all the values his life is made up of. His house, in other words, his life, rots day by day with the result of the meek actions of him. He sees bugs in the house and after the murder of Suat, the house is flooded with water. All these signs are the warning signals of his rotten life, his helplessness and weakness to react against it. Behçet, in that respect, might be considered as the Turkish public, in their comfy lives, who watched and contributed to the looting and destruction of the non-Muslim property on 6/7 September, 1955.

His late efforts to save his loved one, Elena, from the hands of İsmet, the deep state, do not become successful. However, he puts effort to change his life, to save Elena due to the deep love he feels for her. This seems to be the premise of the film in that peace between the two communities is possible through love. However, the implied director tries to communicate with the implied audience through the conventional codes that the nation-state has been imposing. "How much have we improved since Karaoğlan²⁰ and the Byzantium

²⁰ Karaoğlan is a hero of the Uygur Turks of the 13th century depicted in Turkish comics and later adapted to Yeşilçam films. He is also famous for attracting women and having sexual intercourse with many non-Muslim women.

princesses who yield to him?” (Özgüven 2009). Therefore, the reproduction of the weak, devalued non-Muslim woman in need of help does not contribute to alter this negative image about the non-Muslims.

As typical of Giritlioğlu, the elegiac anonymous folk song “Ben Seni Sevdiğimi”, played as the closing credits move across the authentic pictures of the Event, seems to be an elegy for Greek-Turkish communities. The folk song performed by Cem Yıldız in Turkish and Beren Saat (Elena) in Greek, (“Tin Patrida M’ehasa”), suggest peace between the two communities by remembering the shameful events of the past. However, because of the lack of a new perspective towards the non-Muslim minorities in the film, the song and the images only add to the emotional blackmail effect.

7.5.2 Criticism on the Film

Overall, *Güz Sancısı* does not come up with a real suggestion to the veiled events of the past organized by the deep nation, the government itself, nor openly displays the identities of the organizers. Kamil Efendi, Kenan Bey and İsmet are not very clearly identified as to who they refer to in the real life or who they exactly work for. “The characters are depicted so superficially, on the other hand, the thing that should be told about them is insufficient. What is the nationalist ‘team’ the male characters in the film belong to, who are they composed of, what is their function in the Events?” (Özgüven 2009). Instead of questioning the relations between the organization members more deeply, the director chooses to focus on the love affair of the Muslim and Greek protagonists, and merely used the events of the past as a background décor for this love affair.

The only non-Muslim characters, Elena, a prostitute; her grandmother, a former prostitute; and Yorgo, an old man in love with the grand-mother, do not suggest a multiple perspective of the minorities in the film. The director is absolutely free to choose the identity of the characters; however, in a period film like this, a director has the responsibility to show the overall qualities of the communities of that period. The main non-Muslim character being the prostitute does not necessarily harm the reputation of a community. Yet, in a society

like Turkey, where the minority issues have started to be discussed in public only recently, the reproduction of the stereotypical non-Muslim woman image in Yeşilçam films does not suggest a radical change in the public opinion of the non-Muslims. What is more, we do not observe a deep characterization of the non-Muslims; namely their character development: inner journey, relation with the past, conflicts, fears, catharsis etc...The lack of a deeper depiction of these components displays a fetishist point of view about the minority characters, which recreates the 'other'.

Therefore, I believe that *Pains of Autumn* by depicting the only minority characters as the beautiful, attractive women satisfying the sexual desires of Muslim men turns them into fetish objects and more importantly the 'other'. '6-7 September Events' is all about the looping of the properties of non-Muslims in Istanbul, yet the depiction of only a few non-Muslim characters, unfortunately, does not show the audience a healthy picture of the whole, the Armenians and the Jews, not to mention the fact that the Turkish audience is not very familiar with the recent history of Turkey.

8. CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the five significant Turkish films regarding the non-Muslim minority issues and the Muslim exchanges; pain, suffering, remembering, forgetting, longing for the lost homeland, memories of the past, replacement and displacement come up as the main themes of these films. What is more, nation-state policies that involve homogenization, Turkification, suppression, creation of mute voices, and at the same time the consent the characters give to what they cannot change are observed as the common underlining issues of the directors in these films. Todorov's idea of disruptive force, the non-conformists, who are against the dominant ideology are constantly in conflict with the 'heroes' of the system; that is the conformists, who help maintain the stability and equilibrium.

These disruptive forces are significant characters in the films which trigger catharsis in the blockage of the rather mute and dislocated characters, yet this is compensated by mutuality and commonality between the communities, which can be classified as music, food, history, language, geography and collective memory.

History is constructed as much as a national identity. Therefore, questioning this particular history is questioning the constructed identity. Reflecting a mirror into the veiled past and trying to confront with it leaving the prejudice aside means the purification of societies and freeing themselves from the burden of the constructed past and constructed identity which are imposed on them. Film, in that respect, is quite an effective means of reconstructing the past. The characters' suffering, longing, lacking, remembering, hoping, striving etc. all touch a ground on the viewer's collective consciousness, which either enable them to see what they might have forgotten; alternatively it might merely echo what has been imposed on them.

Regarding that slippery surface, Akbal Süalp asks "Why is the director's confronting himself, his society and the landscape of the social experiences as an individual so rare in

the practices of Turkish Cinema?” (2007, p.124). In that respect, it is an ignored fact that the films that were made to deal with the issues of Turkey’s traumatic past are quite scarce. The films that were analyzed in this study were all made after the mid-1990s, when the issues of different ethnicities and heterogeneity started to be discussed in Turkey. The only five Turkish films – three of which were made by the same director – that construct their main narratives on non-Muslim minorities or Turkish-Greek Exchange suggest bringing up the idea of commonality between the Muslim and Christian communities in Turkey. In that, regardless of their different religions and ethnicities, many years of sharing similar experiences in the shared lands, Muslim and non-Muslim communities built a common culture and a mutual connection. Therefore, those films employ these cultural commonalities and shared destiny in order to remind the audience what they have long forgotten through the impositions of the ideological apparatus of the state. The collective memory, which is reconstructed by the state that uses all its ideological apparatus to dominate the spaces of memory, is reconsidered via the remembrance of common culture, history, food, songs, experiences and geography.

Having considered this, let us now turn to differences between the ways these directors approach the issue of remembering the traumatic events of the past. Among the five films, two of them made by Giritlioğlu, namely *Mrs. Salkım’s Diamonds* and *Pains of Autumn*, are period films that take place during the Events. Having analyzed these two films together with the heated debates they have provoked, I have come to the conclusion that the stand they take look slippery and problematic. In both films, even though Giritlioğlu tried to remind the audience about the dark corners of Modern Turkish History, she cannot avoid reproducing the stereotypical non-Muslim image the Turkish society has been exposed to in the Yeşilçam films. The depiction of the non-Muslim women in *Pains of Autumn* is sexually immoral, physically attractive, weak and repressed characters. Elena induces Behçet to act against the nationalist ideals of the state, and she leads him astray. She is a sexually attractive woman who is served to high-ranking bureaucrats of the state by her own ‘amoral’ grand-mother. And in the end, Elena is killed by the secret state organization. This conventional depiction of the non-Muslim women fails to defamiliarize the perception

of the society about the non-Muslims, thus reconfirms the otherization of the non-Muslim community.

Similarly, *Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds*, as a period film, provoked intense debates since the Jewish characters in the novel were converted to Armenians in the film. Moreover, the silent non-Muslims, who yield unconditionally to the unfair impositions of the state, remain without a voice until the end of the film. Karakoyumlu states during a debate on TV about history and cinema that when a period in history is narrated in a novel- or a film, it becomes a feast (2010, NTV). Therefore, the fact that the non-Muslim characters are depicted so superficially and stereotypically in Giritlioğlu's films is a confirmation that the cinematic narrative is influenced by the constructed historical narrative of the dominant ideology. Thus, as two of the pioneering efforts to make historical films regarding non-Muslims in Turkish cinema, these period films still conform to the homogenizing policies of the nation state.

On the other hand, the other three films, *Across the Water*, *Waiting for the Clouds* and *Mud* employ a different approach; that is, they look at the past from the present. This approach enables the directors to distance themselves from the historical events and focus more on the characters and their individual experience. In this experience, the director can confront the audience with the past which they mutually share with the characters who are experiencing an inner journey of remembering and coming to terms with their pasts. The narrative can thus free itself from confinement in the past and thereby retains its place in the collective consciousness.

There are common points in these films that defamiliarize the audience's perception of non-Muslims and the deportees of Turkish-Greek Exchange. First of all, the element that triggers the memories to be confronted is significant in these films; the arrival of the couple in *Across the Water*; Mehmet, the little boy, in *Waiting for the Clouds*; and the handicapped people in *Çamur*. There is something that disrupts the system, which provokes remembering. These characters in the supporting roles are the people that the system pushes

aside and punishes. Ertan, in *Across the Water*, is a communist pursued by the police to be imprisoned upon capture; Mehmet in *Waiting for the Clouds* is a little boy who is punished by his teacher and later helps his friend escape from prison; the handicapped people in *Çamur* ask for mud from the soldiers, who treat them vulgarly like the rest of the society might do due to their physical appearance.

These characters, as the disruptive forces of the state, induce the protagonist to remember and confront his past through an inner journey of settling the painful traumas of the past. In the end, the knot is resolved; the protagonist finally breaks away from the burden of repressed feelings of guilt and pain, and is therefore purified. The use of surreal space and the massive, empty landscape also contributes to the catharsis that the audiences experience.

With all this in mind, the current analysis shows that the Turkish films regarding the non-Muslim minorities and the Muslim Exchanges started to be made after the mid-1990s with a critical approach against the dominant ideology of the nation-state. Yet, the way that the directors of these films prefer to approach these issues is different. Since the period films narrate history through the director's –and the scriptwriter's – perception of today, just like the historians do, they cannot avoid their subjective point of view that changes some 'facts' about history, or upsets some communities while satisfying others. Even if they strictly adhere to what the history narrates, there is still the problem of which historical narration to follow; the official history thesis or the alternative sources. In that respect, Giritlioğlu's *Mrs. Salkım's Diamonds* and *Pains of Autumn*, as the first examples regarding their subject matter, cannot defamiliarize the audience against the stereotypical qualities of the non-Muslims imposed on the society by the Official Turkish History Thesis. They merely reproduce the common stereotypes of non-Muslims, and reconfirm the common belief that they are 'others' by approaching the non-Muslim characters from a distance. On the other hand, the alternative approach of bringing the past to today's atmosphere, in other words, the effects of the past traumas on the characters living today, is a more effective means of dealing with the past. The other three films, *Across the Water*, *Waiting for the Clouds* and

Mud, in that respect, could on the one hand defamiliarize the audience against the conventional norms about non-Muslims; on the other hand, could help unchain society from their collective memories of the past, which would contribute to perceiving the other points of views, thus suggest more polyphony and heteroglossia in the society.

Today, when the era of nation-states have declined; started to be questioned; and hence popularized, the films which challenge the policies of the nation-state in Turkey continue to be made even though they are still not in much demand amongst the public. Yet, the increasing number and the polphonic quality of these films seem to attract more attention in the near future thanks to the pioneering examples and some others such as *Sonbahar/Autumn* (Özcan Alper, 2008), *Min-Dit* (Miraz Bezar, 2009), *Yüreğine Sor/Ask Your Heart* (Yusuf Kurçenli, 2010) etc.

In that respect, I believe it would be worth exploring the representation of some other ethnic groups in Turkish Film to raise public awareness on the issue. Besides, it would be quite beneficial for Turkish Cinema studies to examine the non-Muslim representation in Yeşilçam Era since I have found pretty hard to find academic sources on the issue. What reactions these films regarding the confrontation of the past receive from the public, and how do the disputes on these films appear in the media are some other good starting points for further study within the field.

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