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THE REPRESENTATION OF THE SACRIFICIAL MOTHER IN TURKISH FILMIC MELODRAMA BETWEEN 1965 AND 1990

Master's Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the representations of the sacrificial mother in Turkish filmic melodramas between 1965 and 1990 from a feminist perspective. During this time, mother images were one of the prominent features of filmic melodramas in Turkey. These images were constructed through the interaction between the film as a cultural product and social, economical and historical developments of the film's geography. In this study, the feminist movement in Turkey will be taken as one of the major sources of influence regarding general representations of the mother, and the sacrificial mother in particular.

Keywords: Motherhood, Sacrifice, Melodrama, Yeşilçam

ÖZET

1965-1990 YILLARI ARASINDAKİ TÜRK MELODRAMLARINDA FEDAKAR ANNE TEMSİLLERİ

Şener, Gül

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Annelik, Türk melodramlarının ve özellikle de Yeşilçam'ın önde gelen temsillerinden biri olmuştur. Bu annelik temsilleri; kültürel bir ürün olarak film ile içinden doğduğu coğrafyanın toplumsal, ekonomik ve tarihsel dinamiklerinin etkileşimiyle inşa edilmiştir. Bu çalışmada; Türkiye'deki feminist hareket genel anlamda annelik temsillerinin ve bu temsillerin bir alt kategorisi olan fedakar anne imgelerinin yaratılmasında önemli bir etki unsuru olarak ele alınacaktır. Tezin amacı, 1965-1990 yılları arasında Türk melodramlarındaki fedakar anne imgelerini feminist teori açısından incelemektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Annelik, fedakarlık, melodram, Yeşilçam

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Mother is a saint; because the effort expected by her is extraordinary ... motherhood is obligatory. All mothers' mission is the same, all mothers must "devote themselves wholly to the sacred mission", "sacrifice their own needs and wishes for the sake of the family", and ultimately all mothers can only emancipate if "they give themselves to the motherhood duties".

Badinter (1992, p.217)

What makes motherhood as one of the hot topics of the feminist studies is that it was and still is a multidimensional issue for women, an intersection of the personal and universal, unity and difference, public and private, reproduction and resistance, oppression and empowerment. Motherhood can be an outcome of a woman's reproductive capacity but surely the extent of its definition goes beyond mere biology. Based on the feminist perspective that motherhood is not a biological end but the sum of culturally constructed norms, rituals, beliefs, values, symbols and myths; and in parallel with the idea that the conception of motherhood differs according to social milieu and the historical context in which women mother; this work aims to scrutinize how dominant ideologies foster some meanings of motherhood over others and how motherhood is institutionalized through cinematic representations in Turkey. Within this framework, the work will delineate identities and subjectivities that Turkish melodramas ascribe to women as mothers, with special attention to self-sacrifice, and alterations in these identities in relation to feminist influence.

Considering the interaction between film as a cultural product and the social dynamics that shape it, self-sacrificing mother images in Turkish filmic melodramas cannot be left outside the social transformations. From this perspective, this thesis tries to analyze images of the sacrificial mother in selected melodramas (from 1965 to 1990) with regard to different phases of feminist movement in Turkey and taking 1980 as a breaking point. This paper does not intend to manifest a cause-and-effect relationship but rather a parallelism between

the portrayal of sacrificial mothers and changes generated by the feminist movement in terms of women's daily practices, social and economic rights, etc.

This work takes 1980 as a dividing line for the sacrificial mother figures in selected Turkish filmic melodramas, after which, it is argued, portrayal of the sacrificial mother has differed. This 1980 shift cannot be generalized into a whole body of Turkish melodramas; this assumption is valid within the confines of the films analyzed in this paper. To make such generalization necessitates a broader research of Turkish filmic melodramas and inclusion of more films in the research sample.

Although there is a body of academic research and literature regarding the representation of women in Turkish cinema, analysis of images of motherhood remains largely unaddressed. With that in mind, this thesis seeks to contribute to the existing body of work an in-depth examination of the self-sacrificing mother.

Within the confines of this thesis, the first chapter assesses motherhood as an ideological institution, examining the definitions of motherhood, and exploring various feminist approaches to motherhood. In which ways does patriarchal ideology "hail" motherhood? What kinds of discourse encircle mothering? What meanings does ideology construct around motherhood? Where does self-sacrifice stand in this body of meanings? The first part will be guided by these questions. The second chapter will focus on the connection between melodrama as a women's genre and motherhood images, and selected films will be analyzed. The films included in the sample were selected primarily based on their year of production (between 1965-1990), their genre (melodrama) and the central character of the story (sacrificial mother). The final chapter includes a conclusion and suggestions for further study.

2. MOTHERHOOD

2.1. DEFINITIONS OF MOTHERHOOD

Motherhood has always been contested terrain. Its definition has varied over time, along with the socio-historical, cultural and economic contexts that have shaped it. From this perspective, motherhood cannot be explained in universal terms. However, dominant ideology projects a universal model of motherhood by making diverse meanings invisible and producing its own discourse, in which motherhood is inherent in women's nature and its meaning is not subject to change. Such an essentialist model positions motherhood and womanhood as synonymous identities. In patriarchal world, women are considered to be "born with a built-in set of capacities, dispositions and desires to nurture children" (Hall 1999, p.337). This vision holds that motherhood is the natural track of life, a biological destiny. In that sense; motherhood for women, by definition, is an instinctual fact.

Other than as an inscription of nature, motherhood continues to be defined as the ultimate state of physical and emotional accomplishment and as fundamental for all women (Ussher 1990). This view of mothering as "the ultimate in relational devotion" (Arendell 2000, p.1192) is circulated through various mechanisms and institutions of patriarchy into every layer of the society, where it becomes so romanticized and idealized that the lived experience often fails to correspond to the myth. As Thurer posits, women "are haunted by the cultural ideal: the mommy whose love for children is unconditional" (1994, p.xv). In the realm of the patriarchal culture, the delight of mothering lies in this unconditional selfless love, the driving force in appropriate child rearing. Woman as mother realizes herself through her dedication to the emotional tie between herself and her child. Her own individual needs and interests must be reconciled with, or put aside in favor of, those of her offspring. Winnicott describes her as the mother who "loves to let herself be the baby's whole world" (1973, p.83). The story of this perfect mother is repeated through different historical contexts. For each period, the patriarchy continues instruct the mother on how to think, feel and behave.

Many scholars agree on the women's movement contribution to the shifting definitions of motherhood. However, even feminists have conflicting opinions on the subject. Feminist scholars and writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Juliet Mitchell and Shulamith Firestone criticized motherhood as a source of oppression and devaluation for women, arguing against mothering as an indispensable part of a woman's self. They opposed idealization of the notion of mothering and proposed counter-approaches and alternative meanings. Others such as Nancy Chodorow, Julia Kristeva, Adrienne Rich, and Sara Ruddick emphasized its empowering aspects and revalued difference. Their view assigned agency to mothers and cherished motherwork. This new perspective affected later approaches where mothering was seen as "a socially engaged enterprise that seeks to affect cultural change in the home through feminist child rearing and the world-at-large through political/social activism" (O'Reilly 2004, p.10).

The roots of the concept of the "modern mother" these feminist arguments grew upon goes back to French philosopher and novelist Jean Jacques Rousseau and his novel *Emile* (1762), in which he proposed a new organization regarding child-rearing and introduced new conception of motherhood. In its Rousseauian sense, "the child is a sacred, noble and innocent being" (Hays 1996, p.26). Children are born and live as unselfish creatures until they are corrupted by the larger society. Rousseau proposed that they should be saved from the "deceit, vanity, anger and jealousy" (1964, p.36) of the outside world, and assigned this protective duty to the mother, whom he considered to be the sole provider of parental care, love and work. Thurer specifies this new mother, who came into the picture in the wake of the eighteenth century Romanticism, as "morally enhanced mother" (1994, p.191): she was altruistic and self-sacrificial, possesing the qualities that only "an angel in the house" could have. To reach this new standard for motherhood, a woman was expected to teach her child virtue, to establish a bond based on deep affection and to take responsibility for all his social and emotional needs. According to Hays, such designation of motherhood gave rise to cultural contradictions in child rearing for women first in Western Europe and then in America (1996, p.26). However, it is important to assess that what Rousseau envisaged regarding motherhood was intended for aristocratic and bourgeois

white women. Lower-class women in Western society, out of economic necessity, were not subject to follow Rousseau's lead. The child-rearing model of *Emile* dominated the scene throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century until Freud's conception of "*subjectivity*" was adapted into the motherhood discourse, an adaptation which generated a new meaning: motherhood started to be discussed in terms of a child's formation of the "I". Like Forcey who recognizes mothering as "the main vehicle through which people first form their identity and learn their place in society" (1994, p.357), scholars began to approach motherhood from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Although every society, throughout its history, redefines the good mother within the context of its own mythology, encircled as it is with rituals, beliefs, expectations, norms and symbols, and then reinvents motherhood in its own terms, definitions of motherhood share a commonality: "nurturing and caring for dependent children and training them" (Arendel 2000, p.1192). Motherhood has also been a primary identity for women in Turkish society. According to Islam, a woman is a believer, wife and mother. Islamic tenets glorify motherhood; define it as the highest status a woman can attain within society and advise Muslims to respect it under all circumstances. This tenet can be found reflected in the Islamic *hadiths* like "Heaven lies below the feet of the mothers" (*Cennet annelerin ayakları altındadır*), that implied to love and serve one's mother is exalted above any other love or duty. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, defined motherhood as a woman's primary identity and emphasized its significance by saying that "if one thinks that a mother's arms are where a child takes its first education, one understands its importance" (Tezel 1983, p.14). The education he speaks of involves not only serving child's basic physical and emotional demands but also providing a suitable foundation for the child as a future citizen of the new Republic. A mother's exclusive care for the child is not just for the good of the child but also for the good of the nation. From this perspective, motherhood becomes an institution with specific meanings and principles attached to it rather than a daily practice.

Adrienne Rich, in her influential book *Of Woman Born,* makes a distinction between two meanings of motherhood. Rich differentiates between mothering as *experience* and motherhood as *institution*. The former represents "the *potential relationship* of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children", while the latter "aims at ensuring that potential – and all women – shall remain under male control" (1986, p.13). According to Rich, the institution of motherhood is a site of oppression for women. A woman's own experience of mothering, on the other hand, is where female power lies and where new feminist possibilities can develop. Through experience, she stresses, women connect with their body and their children. "To destroy the institution is not to abolish motherhood. It is to release the creation and sustenance of life into the same realm of decision, struggle, surprise, imagination and conscious intelligence, as any difficult, but freely chosen work" (Ibid., p.280), she wrote.

In Rich's view, motherhood as *institution* is a product of modern patriarchy that delegates the responsibility of being the chief caregiver to mothers without giving them the power to set their own terms according to which they will mother. Most women still live within the realm of this "powerless responsibility" and its institution that, according to Ann Oakley, rests on three premises: "that all women need to be mothers, that all mothers need their children and that all children need their mothers" (1974, p.186). This institution "has a history and has an ideology" (Rich 1986, p.34).

The following section will delineate the interaction between motherhood and ideology within Western dichotomies of public versus private, love versus labor and nature versus culture, which tend to define the social mechanisms and historical factors that assigned women to one end of these hierarchical binary oppositions, usually the lower one.

2.2. MOTHERHOOD AS IDEOLOGY

Raymond Williams states that the term ideology can be used to describe three different things: (1) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group; (2) a system of illusory beliefs – false ideas or false consciousness – which

can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; (3) the general process of meanings and ideas (1985, p.152-157). According to Hayward, "ideology is at the interface of language and political organization" (2006, p.215). Althusser describes ideology as "a system of representation existing and having a historical role within a given society" (Cited in Stam 2000, p.134). What Williams implies with meaning and ideas, Hayward with language and Althusser with representation reflect a common theme: ideology governs our perception of things and concepts, signifies certain understanding of the world through images and myths. To understand the dynamics behind ideologies one has to ask such questions as "whose language, whose voice, whose interpretation is authorized and heard?" (Pope et al. 1990, p.441).

Ideology functions through *interpellation*. For Althusser, a subject is "called" or "hailed" by social structures and practices through interpellation (1971). Subjects are assigned an identity that is accepted as natural and inevitable. This selected identity makes all other available subject positions invisible and becomes the norm. It is reproduced through dominant institutions (school, law, family, media, etc.) and shaped by the economic, political, socio-cultural demands of the society defining it.

What then is the link between ideology and motherhood? How ideology interpolates women as mothers? According to Adrienne Rich, this is "a sacred calling that demands of women maternal 'instinct' rather than intelligence, selflessness rather than self-realization, relation to others rather than the creation of the self" (1986, p.42). Ideology while signifying certain ideas dominating within the society and encircling individual subjects also organizes the thinking mechanisms of people.

Adorno stressed that "the power of ideologies resides in the fact that people resonate differently with them. The same ideology can satisfy very different needs, and different ideologies can resonate with the same need" (Bassin et al. 1994, p.4). Barbara Katz Rotman, in her examination of cultural understanding of motherhood in America, elaborates that the ideology of motherhood is part of

complex web of three essential ideologies: patriarchy, technology and capitalism (Ibid., p.139).

Rich (1986, p.57) identifies patriarchy as:

> *The power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men – by force direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.*

Patriarchal ideology positions women as essentially different from men, more nurturing and caring, naturally suited for child care because of their innate qualities of endless self-sacrifice. Pildes (1978, pp.1-2) describes mothers defined by the patriarchy as "mothers of perfection";

> *... the ones whose understanding and sympathy never fail, whose only desire in life is that we be happy, and who never make us feel guilty because that is her only reason for existing – mothers as angels – beautiful and soothing presences who have no human needs or flaws.*

This idealized mother is not a subject with her own needs and does not have separate interests from her offspring. Feminists criticize motherhood as ideology on the grounds that it is a source of oppression "a social mandate and a compromise of woman's independence" (Umansky 1996, pp.2-3), and opposed to the division of labor between man and woman, which they claimed helps sustain ideologies that validate gender hierarchy. In the dominant definition of mother, "woman is conflated with mother, and together appears as an undifferentiated and unchanging monolith". Men however fill multiple roles (Glenn 1994, p.13).

In Western culture, understanding of mothering works across binary oppositions: male-female, mind-body, nature-culture, reason-emotion, public-private, and labor-love. According to Glenn, these oppositions are hierarchically interdependent and one side of the dichotomy is always stronger than the other. She indicated that mothering has been characterized by the notions of the subordinate side and proposed to deconstruct the opposition as necessary to the critical analysis of motherhood (1994, p.12). The next chapter examines these binary oppositions that positioned mothering as a natural part of the female world,

placed it within the boundaries of private domain of family and encircled it with deep emotions and sacrificial motivations.

2.2.1. Private versus Public

Institutionalization of motherhood is reinforced by marriage and family as well as law, social policy and cultural representations. Within the historical context, transformations in the discourse of mothering are closely linked with that of the family. The ideology of the family implies the "monolith family" that functions on a division of labor based on sex: "a breadwinner husband and a full-time wife, and mother as the only legitimate family form" (Thorne 1992, p.4). This specific conception of family, its prescribed division of labor and their economic exigencies brought about the division of domains between sexes as private and public.

Various historians, feminist and otherwise, have suggested that the beginning of traditional family arrangement that "maps the function of 'nurturance' onto a collectivity of specific persons (presumably 'nuclear' relations) associated with specific spaces ('the home') and specific affective bonds ('love')" (Collier et. al. 1992, p.36) corresponds to the Industrial Revolution, and thus the development stage of capitalism. It is one of the historical eruptions that marked a major shift in the familial institution, an eruption that affected the world of the maternal in Europe and in North America. The Victorian era had already marked the home as sanctuary, the mother as the resident of this domestic heaven protected from the ills of the outer world, but with the Industrial Revolution the economic split between home and workplace was realized. Large-scale factories became the center of society's economic activity that had once been organized around household production, a shift that transformed the family from an economically productive unit into a consumer unit, and led to the dissolution of the traditional family structure. In other words, the terms of domesticity were changed. Women as wives and mothers of the pre-modern mercantile-class were deprived of their roles as producers in the old pre-industrial economy and became the consumers in the new middle-class bourgeois home (Kaplan 1992, p17). By the nineteenth

century, the popular conception of motherhood was against the idea of the "working mother" and in favor of the "mother at home". Capitalism's placement of employement outside the home assigned men as wage-earners and women as primary care-givers within the family. The public domain became the arena of men and the private domain that of women. While the public realm was described as "cold, competitive and individualistic", the private realm was glorified as "warm, nurturing, and communal" (Hays 1996, p.33). Women as mothers became permanent residents of this sentimental retreat called home, where their role was transformed from that of production to "reproduction". Reproduction entailed activities that women as mothers conducted and relationships they negotiate in maintaining other members of the nuclear family.

Since society in the early nineteenth century was moving towards "impersonal relations and the competitive pursuit of self-interested gain" (Ibid. p.34), women's work – as solely responsible for childcare – within the household became more and more invisible. Women's economic significance decreased while their emotional care was acclaimed to be irreplaceable. In other words, individuals who were obliged to work for wages in impersonal settings needed an anti-competitive space in which they could satisfy their need for emotional support and fulfillment. Women were the ones to carry out these "expressive functions" in the family (Collier et. al. 1992, p.45).

One of the major challenges to the dichotomy of private (female) – public (male) came from feminist theorizing. Feminists stood against it on the grounds that the split was ideological rather than physical, and had caused a society-wide division based on gender and class, reinforced inequality between sexes, rendered women more dependent on men by depriving them of "newly valued resources such as income, status-giving work and political authority" (Thorne 1992, p.6). This approach can be found voiced in the feminist motto "the personal is political" by which they tried to encourage discussion of the problems women face in the private domain and the ideological nature of the private.

The centrality of the private – public distinction in feminist theorizing can also be found in Adrienne Rich's analysis of motherhood as *institution*:

Rich (1976, p.13) asserted:

> *This institution (of motherhood) has been a keystone of the most diverse social and political systems. It has withheld over one-half the human species from the decisions affecting their lives; it exonerates men from fatherhood in any authentic sense, it creates the dangerous schism between 'private' and 'public' life, it calcifies human choices and potentialities. In the most fundamental and bewildering of contradictions, it has alienated women from our bodies by incarnating us in them.*

According to Rich, the concepts of public and private are integral to the institution of motherhood, the former implying the inner domestic domain and the latter the outer world. She states that the domestic realm is a social construction that restricted and isolated women, denying them participation in the society at large and public recognition (Stevens 2004, p.53). From Rich onwards, feminist discussion of public-private dichotomy deepened and widened. Since the nineteenth century ideal of full-time, housebound motherhood could not maintain its grip on women due to the lived experience of the capitalist industry, the boundaries between public and private became blurred. Over the years, one breadwinner family arrangement left its place to working parents of later twentieth century.

Like Rich, Glenn also takes that the categorization of public and private within an oppositional framework belongs to the ideology. However, in today's parlance, lived experience of mothering is not exclusive to the private domain. Its definition and execution mediates private and public. In Glen's account, mothers are at the boundaries of each. They "coordinate family and school schedules, negotiate services from a variety of agencies and institutions; and take part in political organizing to gain resources needed to nurture children and others" (1994, p.16).

Ideological dichotomies upon which motherhood is constructed are in close relationship within each other as well as with each other. What happens in the public impinges upon the private, and public-private is linked to labor – love or nature – culture. To position mothering in contrast with economics leads one to define it as originating from love or altruism. This reinforces the view that mothers should be self-sacrificing at all cost. Dating back to the Industrial Revolution, the traditional stay-at-home/good mother construct, with her self-

denying affection towards her child, holds a considerable sway in the collective psyches of today's societies. This period of economic and social turnover not only paved the way for the public – private contrast but also for the love versus labor dichotomy.

2.2.2. Love versus Labor

The identification of woman with "the heart" parallels the emergence of modern mother ideology that originated with Rousseau in late eighteenth century Europe and reached its peak in nineteenth century North America. As mentioned earlier, the seeds of this emotionally exalted mother were already planted in the Victorian Era, when the virtues of true womanhood were considered "piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness" (Kaplan 1992, p.24). Those four key qualities together signified woman in American culture and this "Cult of True Womanhood" promised women power and happiness within the domestic domain. Women thus secured were expected to provide their husbands and children with constant moral and emotional support. In this manner, "they would participate in creating a more virtuous world" (Hays 1996, p.30). Victorian theorists claimed that a mother's love and affection was a woman's most important duty. During those times "home was where the heart was", or as others called it, "a heaven in a heartless world". The definition of womanhood idealized by male writers of the era was also voiced by some of their female counterparts.

Maria McIntosh (1850, p.77) described the ideal wife and mother as follows:

> *Her husband cannot look on her…without reading in the serene expression of her face, the Divine beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart". Her children revere her as the earthly type of perfect love. They learn even more from her example than from her precept that they are to live, not in themselves, but to their fellow creatures, and to the God in them…*

As may be seen in McIntosh's words, love expected of mothers also had religious implications. Some feminist writers (see Folbre and Rich) claimed that the new emphasis on domestic virtue was the reflection of fears about the clash between the new economy's logic of personal interest and the traditional religious values. From this perspective, Rich deemed "home" the center of "religious obsession"

(1986, p.44). Woman as mother and full-time homemaker became the exemplification of religion as well as of social ethics.

Moving from the moral to the economic realm, industrialization's separation of domains between men and women added another dimension to the Victorian ideal of womanhood. While the separation has sentimentalized women's work within the domestic domain, it has simultaneously rendered it invisible by reinforcing gender-based labor division. The concept of "work" came to signify labor market activity; therefore, it was an activity performed by men in the public space. Theirs was paid work. Women's tasks, on the other hand, were limited to bearing and rearing children and overseeing daily maintenance of the household. Moreover, they were expected to emotionally support their husbands as well as devote themselves entirely to their children, embodying a domestic role whose main pillars were love and altruism.

Equating home and woman with moral imperatives can be viewed as a social counterbalance to the competitive nature of a market economy. According to Folbre, nineteenth century social thought recognized that the economic devaluation of unpaid household labor is often rationalized by compensation of its moral value (1991, p.465), claiming that the new domesticity of the period divided the world between the moral (private) and the economic (public). In her words, "family labor, whose aim [is] fulfillment of God-given responsibilities not economic efficiency, whose motive [is] not self-interest but love" (Ibid. p.467). The ideal woman of the era was intrinsically loving and caring, and therefore had to be excluded from the struggle and ambition of the commercial realm, effectively alienating them from the public realm of a society in which everything was assessed in terms of financial success and power. Within the gendered arrangement of the family, she became dependent on her husband's wage-earning power. In that sense, the new politics of family brought the economic exploitation of women. Kandiyoti described this arrangement as a "patriarchal bargain" between men and women that varies through cultures and historical moments. She claimed that the traditional nuclear family is inscribed with a patriarchal bargain in which women seek men's economic support and protection in exchange for

domestic services and subordination (1988, p.277). Although the term "bargain" implies a relationship between almost equals, women, for the most part, stand on the weaker side of the equation.

In sum, the Victorian regime defined proper society as one in which women were subordinate to men's rule. Following the idea that women's entry into the public arena would deprive society of important social veins of love and altruism (as the basic attributes of the family and hence women its primary representative), nineteenth century social thinking supposed that women's place was in the home. One of the important figures of social thought, Herbert Spencer, claimed that home and public were complementary domains. Women's intrinsically softer hearts were needed to balance the impersonal and economically aggressive aspects of the public realm. Therefore, women's "natural" place within home was a necessary complement to men's world of competition (Spencer cited in Rosaldo 1980, p.402). Within the scheme of Victorian social organization, the naturalness of the associations of women-home-love and men-public-labor was explained in terms of women's biological role as child bearers. This reproductive given was assumed to keep women closer to nature, and their social roles, as wives and mothers, were accepted as unchanging aspects of the society. Men, on the other hand, were believed to be the representatives of "human progress, control over nature and development of culture" (Bates 1983, p.183).

2.2.3. Nature versus Culture

The Victorian view of women as devoted mothers and as dutiful wives has been a common cultural stereotype within Western social thought. Everywhere, women found themselves excluded from important economic and political activities and, as an extension of their culturally assigned social roles as mothers and wives, had less power and authority then men, their activities not valued as highly; consequently, these pillars of love and altruism became entangled in a universal sexual asymmetry. In the second half of the twentieth century, feminist thinkers began searching for the social origins of the sexual imbalance between men and

women (DeBeauvoir 1952, Chodorow 1966, Ortner 1972, Rosaldo and Lamphere 1973).

When Sherry B. Ortner asked the question "Is female to male as nature is to culture?" (1972, p.5), her aim was to investigate this sexual asymmetry from an anthropological perspective. She was not the first to elaborate the nature-culture distinction: Lévi Strauss, in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949) analyzed the difference between nature and culture in terms of human behavior. Reflecting upon Strauss' articulation of the distinction, Ortner explored cultural evaluations leading to women's universal devaluation as a "second sex". She tried to explain inequalities of the sexual ideology in the light of the general traits of human existence, common to every culture.

At this point, it is important to give an account of what these thinkers mean by "culture". Strauss defines culture as the amalgamation of "language, tools, social institutions, systematized aesthetic, moral or religious values" (1971, p.6) and draws the line between nature and culture (despite its acclaimed difficulty) in terms of "biological heredity versus external tradition" (Ibid. p.8). Ortner, more broadly, equates culture with "the notion of human consciousness and its products" (1972, p10). Her argument holds that women's biological capacity to lactate and bear children, their traditional social roles dictated by their bodily functions and their "feminine personality" come to define them as more "a part of the nature" than men (Ibid. p.12), who are regarded as the representatives of culture. While a woman's body destines her reproduce life, men's lack of biological creativity gives them the opportunity to create through cultural projects (technology and systems of thoughts), which are seen as transcending nature. Ortner identifies the connection between women's reproductive capabilities and nature as ideological and arbitrary, because there is no reason to see women and children as an inseparable unit with joint needs or to cast women as the sole provider of the child care. As DeBeauvoir envisaged, biology gains significance only as interpreted by actors in society and associated with certain modes of action (1989, p.34). Thus, biological facts and differences between men and

women signify a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority when assessed within the framework of culturally defined value systems.

However, woman also participates in culture through her conscious processes and involvement in social life. Ortner sees women as intermediaries between culture and nature in the sense that they are the primary agents of socialization for children in addition to their role as the primary caregivers. She asserts that a woman, by teaching her child social manners and how to behave in a social environment, initiates a child's transformation into a cultured individual (1972, p.18).

Another determinant that affects the woman-nature association is the social context in which woman performs her biological functions. She is seen as belonging to the domestic domain and is regarded as a monolithic entity, a unitary dyad with her children. Within this framework, the alignment of woman with domestic (family) in contrast to public (society) positions her closer to nature. Rosaldo similarly emphasized the private-public dichotomy as having close interconnection with nature-culture dichotomy, holding that what appears a natural fact must be understood in social terms (1980, p.397). The assessment of what is male and what is female, their difference and their roles, reflect an interaction between their physical predispositions and the culture-specific expectations, values, myths, symbols of any society. She claims that the institutional division of private-public underlies a sexual asymmetry that exists in almost all human societies (Ibid. p.397). A domestic domain surrounded by the activities of reproduction and familial bonds of affection incorporate women into a world where they are designated as mother as a result of their biological functions. Men, on the other hand, represent the public domain where they compete, establish impersonal bonds, and sustain interest-driven economic activities. Emphasizing the inequalities in the cultural evaluation of male and female activities, Margaret Mead recognized that "whatever the arrangements in regard to descent or ownership of property, and even if these formal outward arrangements are reflected in the temperamental relation between the sexes, the prestige values always attach to the activities of men" (2001, p.229).

Ortner's final unit of analysis in terms of women being closer to nature was on the psychological level. Women, besides having bodily and social functions distinct from those of men, are seen to have a different psychic structure. Drawing upon Chodorow's psychoanalytic assumption that what is called "feminine personality" as a reflection of the female socialization experience, Ortner claims that some attributes of feminine psyche, further emphasize the cultural view of woman as closer to nature (1972, p.20).

Women as mothers are, in general terms, responsible for the early socialization of children of both genders. However, boys and girls go through different socialization processes. Chodorow explains that the socialization of boys involves "positional identification" with father's male role in its social totality rather than a "personal identification" with father as a real individual. On the contrary, the girl is encouraged to personally identify with the mother, an identification that can reinforce the internalization of the female role identity (1971, p.49). Therefore, while the boys' identification process paves the way for taking up external and diverse role characteristics (to be socialized the boy has to be detached from the mother, has to externally identify with the father and has to enter into the social realm); girls' socialization entails personalism, particularism and fewer role choices. In other words, girls are raised to be mothers, trained within a social context that dictates motherhood as their natural role. All these socialization factors make women appear closer to nature than men.

The gendered aspect of the nature-culture dichotomy reflects an ideological world view in the sense that it reinforces sexual division of labor and women's devaluation, more or less, in every society. Western thinking continuously produces and reproduces the Victorian duality that women are closer to nature than men, which in turn, in its institutional embodiment, limits women's life choices, effectively confining them to domestic roles and activities. The distance between private and public, domestic and social, female and male seems to be an organizational and ideological necessity for societies to legitimize the difference in sex roles. As Rich voiced it, "patriarchy could not survive without motherhood

in its institutional form; therefore has to be treated as axiom, as 'nature' itself…" (1986, p.43).

In sum, women's mothering is an integral part of sexual division of labor. "Being a mother is not only bearing a child – it's being a person who socializes and nurtures. It is being a primary parent or caretaker" (Chodorow 1978, p.11). It has been assumed that motherhood is biologically self-explanatory. Traditional social theory claims that the social organization of gender is a natural outcome rather than a social construct: women were considered instinctually predisposed or physiologically suited for mothering. Some argued this position with the historical evaluation of societies and origins of man, some with psychoanalysis or socialization theories, and others with socio-economical transformations societies go through over time. These legitimizing ideologies, as well as institutions like school, family, media, law, and religion, contribute to the social reproduction of mothering as a natural given and as an extension of women's psychological traits. Women as wives and mothers are seen to reproduce future generations. This reproduction takes place within the physicality of the home through housework and child care, in addition to the emotional support provided for the husband and maternal relation to children. The demands of the maternal bond between mother and children are many, but love and altruism dominate in terms of the idealized maternal figure.

Although the conception of love was discussed within the framework of gendered love-labor dichotomy in previous sections, the subject of sacrifice remained untouched. The following section will analyze sacrifice as one of the main aspects of the "ideal mother" and the relation between sacrifice, gender and social organization.

2.2.4. Self-sacrifice and the Ideal Mother

Most definitions of female self-sacrifice continue to be legitimized through motherhood. A society's cultural and social economy emphasizes the value of caring for the needs of others through its institutions (religion, media, family, etc.)

and its mythology. The ideology of sacrifice is produced and reproduced according to the cultural, economical, social necessities of the time.

The word "sacrifice" derives from the Latin word *sacrificium*, which combines *sacer* "holy" and *facere* "to make". Sacrifice is the act of paying homage or honoring a divine entity with an offering of a material object or human flesh. Sociologist of religion Nancy Jay writes that in Greek mythology, the concept of sacrifice is first depicted in the story of Prometheus. The myth tells that in the Golden Age, people were all male, and dined with the gods; Prometheus divides the body of an ox in two and asks Zeus to choose the gods' half. To deceive him, he fills one side with the bones and covers them with a layer of fat, on the other side he puts the flesh and covers it with the stomach of the animal. Zeus, thus deceived, chooses the side with the bones. In revenge, he crafts an equally deceiving gift: the first woman. This woman, though physically beautiful, was flawed on the inside. Her name was Pandora and once she descended to live among men, she released all the evils: hunger, hard labor, disease, old age and death. After that, Greeks feasted on meat during ritual sacrifices and left the bones and fat - as the holy objects - burned for the gods (1992, p.21). As the story implies, sacrifice was once a way of connecting with the divinities and attaining a sense of oneness with them. A gift to the deity that demanded its return, sacrifice was an intermediary between human and divine realms. Robertson Smith, in his book *The Religion of the Semites* stated that the purpose of sacrifice was to establish and sustain the relationships of kinship between men and their gods (1972, p.284). Jay, in her examination of social contexts in which sacrifices are performed, stated that one of the aims of the rituals was to preserve the social organization in agricultural societies which ensured the continuity of inheritance from father to son. She argues that sacrifice in these societies was "a remedy for having been born of woman" (1992, p.xxiii). In Greek society women were believed to break the perfect patrilineal continuity. They were excluded from taking part in the sacrificing.

Over time, sacrifice transformed from an external mode of worship into an internal practice. In Christianity, for example, sacrifice is associated with spiritual

offering based on Jesus Christ's model. Imitating him involved suffering as expiation of sin and identification with his suffering on the crucifix. Therefore, physical suffering came to be regarded as something worth enduring, and as an integral part of sacrifice that was the key to moral world. Its social function transformed into something more physical than structural but kept its spiritual character.

Then, how a procedure exclusive to males, a ritual originally that used to legitimize a patrilineal descent, producing and reproducing forms of continuity between male generations came to be the index of women as mothers? How was sacrifice transformed into something symbolizing the ideal woman and good mother? Since it is known that the original meaning and rationale of the sacrifice has differed through time and cultures, it is appropriate to call sacrifice (in its conception in industrial era) a cultural construct, even an ideology. Women's depiction as agents of sacrifice was strongest in the middle and late nineteenth century when social messages were instructing women that their nature was nurturing, caregiving and altruistic. Western religious culture identified qualities like virtue and morality with self-sacrifice and women in Western societies were increasingly depicted as the embodiment of these Christian qualities. They were assigned to the sphere of the home whereas men dominated the much larger external, public domains. The domestic realm became the focus of sacrifice ideology. Virginia Woolf (1970, p.237) described woman subject to this ideology as follows:

> *She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it – in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others.*

The good woman or ideal mother ought to be by all means a self-sacrificing one. She held the highest spot in the hierarchy of morality among women. Self-sacrifice allowed her to transcend her existence and rationalized her devotion to domesticity.

Social thought examined idealization of self-sacrifice as a symptom of the new market economy and successive transformation in social relations, behavior patterns and concepts of human nature (Ehrenreich 1978, p.9). Industrialization introduced notions like rationality, individualism, independence, self-interest and pursuit of profit, notions around which Western life was restructured. The new order left no room for interdependence, communal connection or the morality of pre-industrial rule. Home, once the unit of production, was converted into a "soul unit" where one could experience emotion, compassion, affection, interdependence among members. Woman deprived of her earlier economic utility, was expected to stand for everything man was not. "Where he was calculating and ruthlessly egoistic, she was sympathetic, nurturing, and limitlessly altruistic – that is self-sacrificing" (Golden 1998, p.92).

Popular books and novels instructed women on what the new system and society expected from them. Sarah Stickney Ellis depicted for women the wildness of the economic world and advised them how to counterbalance its negative effects: "By cherishing and protecting the minor morals of life, by being like a second conscious for her husband while making home a place where he might keep as it were a separate soul for his family, his social duty, and his God" (Cited in Dijkstra 1988, p.10). When duty called, women were the ones to sacrifice everything for the sake of their husband, children and family in particular, and for the sake of the society in general.

Jay, in her interpretation of sacrificial rituals distinguishes between two different sorts of action: "[the] first one is 'instrumental action' which *does* things and [the] second one is 'expressive action' which *says* things or communicates meaning" (1992, p.4). For women, the act of sacrifice was an expressive action more than an instrumental one; it signified a woman's moral status and justified her attainment of ideal woman or good mother. Since sacrifice is more of an expressive action, equally important to the act of sacrifice and one who sacrifices is the interpreter. In this case, the interpreter can be defined as the sum of a society's cultural expectations, value systems, norms, traditions, and beliefs. As every such aspect is

seeped in the reigning ideology, what seems to be a choice for women, to self-sacrifice for the good of others, is an inescapable ideological imposition.

3. FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF MOTHERHOOD

Feminist theory poses one of the major challenges to the cultural implications of sacrifice and its attachment to motherhood. Feminist thinkers, from the 1960s onward have generated works criticizing motherhood as a source of oppression for women, and re-defining self-sacrifice as a self-negation and devaluation. This section will examine both Western and Turkish feminisms' approaches to motherhood and relation to women in general. The historical framework for this analysis will extend from the 1960s through the 1990s. Although there is a small feminist literature on motherhood in earlier periods, for most scholars and theoreticians (see Umansky, Snitow and Ross) the most influential and extended body of work on motherhood from within the feminist movement in America and in Europe dates back to the early 1960s. Second wave feminism, which spanned roughly from the early 1960s through the late 1970s, shifted the focus of feminist theory and activism from the legal inequality addressed by the first wave to what they saw as the cultural roots of the inequality fought by the previous generation. It was in this context that discussions about motherhood gained impetus and began to generate important literature.

Over the past decade, motherhood has held its place as one of the hot topics for feminism and feminist scholarship. As with motherhood, constant evolution according to socio-historical and cultural context makes it is difficult to fully define feminism. As such, feminism involves altered critical perspectives and different subject positions (lesbian, black, etc), and "is not single but plural" (Stam 2000, p.170). Although, various perspectives within feminism (i.e. liberal feminist, Marxist feminist, radical feminist, psychoanalytic feminist, socialist feminist, ecological feminist, postmodern feminist) sometimes contrast with each other, they all have one common goal that can be stated as the "desire to understand and change women's subordination" (Umansky 1996, p.6). Interpretation of this goal and the means to achieve it vary significantly within the movement, both among contemporaneous factions and over the course the movement's evolution. Empowered by this variety, feminism has produced an

incredibly multifaceted analysis and multi-perspective examination of motherhood institution and the practice of mothering.

Western feminism has been an important point of reference and a framework for feminist thinking in different social milieus and cultural contexts, and Turkey does not seem to be an exception. Studies on women in Turkey, together with local debates foregrounded by local, historical, political and cultural specificities overlapped to a degree with broader schemes generated by Anglo-American feminist criticism (Schroeder 2007, p.14). Therefore, an examination of claims laid by Anglo-American feminism about motherhood can lead to a better understanding of the feminist debate in Turkey, which will be the baseline for the analysis of filmic melodramas in Turkey in the third chapter.

3.1. WESTERN FEMINISM and MOTHERHOOD

In its Western context, the relationship between motherhood and feminist discourse can be defined as one of hate and love. Some feminist scholars have focused on motherhood as a social construction, an oppressive institution, an economic barrier to a woman's independence, a biological destiny as part of a negative discourse. Others see motherhood as a positive force and celebrated it as a blueprint of the bond between women, as a means of generating self-knowledge and as a source of empowerment (Umansky 1996, p.2).

Adrienne Rich, in her book *Of Woman Born,* observed as follows: "We know more about the air we breathe, the seas we travel, than about the nature and meaning of motherhood" (1986, p.11). The early 1960s was a time when feminist theorists started to give more attention to the topic of motherhood, to expand the boundaries of their work on motherhood and of their contribution to the shifting ground of the meaning of motherhood. Part of the reason of the expansion can be stated as an increasing entry of women into higher education, the establishment of academic women's studies departments and feminist thinking gaining grounds in related fields such as politics, sociology, history and literature.

Initially, second wave feminism's examination of motherhood centered on class and ideology. As the theories proliferated, it expanded to race, gender and sexuality. Early feminist texts were built upon the works like Virginia Woolf and *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir and *The Second Sex* (1949). Woolf believed that the role assigned to women is a restrictive one, intelligible only within itself. Women, according to Woolf, are assigned an impossible ideal, and that to cope with these expectations, a woman needs "a room of her own". De Beauvoir contended that "women are made not born": female reproductive capacities are the cause of her oppression.

Hansen fashioned the course of feminist thinking on motherhood between 1960 and 1990 into a three act drama: "repudiation, recuperation and an emerging critique of recuperation" (1997, p.5). Contributors of the anti-motherhood track were figures like Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett and Betty Friedan. They, like De Beauvoir, considered motherhood to be one of the major institutions oppressing women and preventing them from being autonomous; they saw a strong relationship between women's oppression and naturalization of motherhood as women's biological destiny. Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), criticized the system that assigned suburban American women the role of full-time homemaker, prevented them from becoming autonomous individuals and described home as "a prison" (Cited in Bassin et. Al. 1994, p.6). In her own words, "We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: I want something more than my husband and my children and my home" (1983, p. 32). In addition, Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970) called for a total dismissal of the tie between women and motherhood. She placed "the body" at the core of the inequality between men and women, and pointed out that women were oppressed by the physical implications of pregnancy. For Firestone, women's liberation lay in technology. She proposed that the human race be reproduced in test tubes rather than in uteri, concluding that this would be when the biological family would cease to define women's lives (Cited in Umansky 1996, p.32). For many, Firestone's argument was too extreme. Feminist scholar Ann Snitow called it a "demon text" on the grounds

that subsequent feminists have been apologizing ever since. She criticized Firestone in terms of her underestimation of motherhood and experience of having children (1992, p.36).

Hansen's recuperation act, which began in the mid-70s and continued until early 80s, involved actresses like Adrienne Rich, Nancy Chodorow, Dorothy Dinnerstein, Sarah Ruddick, Juliet Mitchell, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cioux and Julia Kristeva. This was a time of feminist embrace of the difference and practical reality in terms of motherhood. Feminist writings of the time explored the daily experience of motherhood. Rich's contribution to the positive discourse was her differentiation between the institution of motherhood and the experience of mothering. In her view, it was the patriarchal institution of motherhood which was the oppressor, not motherhood. Although motherhood brought pain, guilt, judgments and condemnations along with it, the experience of mothering promised new feminist potentials. Rich wrote, "It is to release creation and sustenance of life into the same realm of decision, struggle, surprise, imagination, conscious intelligence, as any difficult, but freely chosen work" (1986, p.280).

Snitow described this period as the "renaissance of the feminist intellectual work" (1992, p.38) in terms of diverse approaches to motherhood. While Rich foregrounded the experience of mothering, Chodorow emphasized the importance of the mother-daughter connection, the ongoing early childhood ties with the mother, and the shaping of gender-driven social relations with regards to mothering. Building on the psychoanalytic approach, she demonstrated that mothering provided girls and women with bonds and strengths that were not found in the male world. In addition, French Lacanian feminists (i.e. Irigaray, Cioux, Kristeva) proposed an *écriture feminine* that would give women a literary tradition through which they could express themselves. In Cioux's words; "There is always within her at least a little of that good mother's milk. She writes in white ink" (1976, p.881). Elaine Showalter defines this women's writing as "the inscription of the feminine body and female difference in language and text" (1981, p.185). These feminists believed that women can transcend the language of

the Father through a language that resembles the pre-symbolic communication between the baby and the mother, a language which would involve "play, disruptions, excess, gaps, grammatical and syntactical subversion, ambiguities, generic transgressions, fluidity" (Thurer 1994, p.208). Otherness, once considered a justification for oppression, became a unique female experience in the eyes of these thinkers. All of these positive perspectives recognized mother's agency and valued motherwork, contributing to the view of mothering as a site of power with the potential to generate cultural change. The psychoanalytic approach affirms that transformations in the traditional mothering arrangements will affect not only socialization processes of the sexes but also inner psychic structures that come to define "human desire, development and interaction" (Umansky 1996, p.3). Their analogy is based on the belief that if people were different, the larger society would be different and saw motherhood as central for changes in both.

Finally, third act of the feminist story of motherhood includes Sarah Ruddick's acclaimed work *The Maternal Thinking* (1980), in which she describes "maternal practice" and "maternal thinking". The book was the product of her quest for an answer to "Why women are so deeply committed to the mothering experience, even under very oppressive conditions?" (1980, p.40). According to Ruddick, motherhood produces a sophisticated way of thinking, born out of the primary demands of motherhood: protection, growth, and social acceptance. Maternal thinking involves nurturance and establishing bonds with others, aspects that are very important for a politics of peace. The power of Ruddick's theorization lay in its premise that maternal practice is an all-encompassing concept: anyone, male or female, can think maternally. She proposed that the connection between giving birth and motherhood be dismissed. In this way, motherhood could be defined as something other than a female activity and a means of devaluation for women (Bassin et. Al. 1994, p.11).

From their publication in the 1960s these texts greatly influenced the feminist debate not only in the West, but also in other cultural contexts. They can also be regarded as the products of the interaction between feminist thinking and the

social, political, economical and historical changes within their context. Most of the work produced in this period drew primarily from the women's liberation movement, but also others: New Left and counter culture (Beat Generation, Anti-Vietnam Hippie Movement, lesbian rights, sexual revolution, etc.) in the United States, youth movements in the West.

Umansky defined women's liberation movements as "protest movements" (1996, p.2). The first wave of Anglo-American feminists focused its attention and energy on political and legal rights that made it easier to demand more in different spheres of social life. In the United States, as in England, second wave feminists initially criticized the institution of family and traditional domesticity. While criticizing the institution of family, they investigated domestic – public dichotomy and the sexual division of labor. Motherhood was at the centre of the debate. Different schools of feminism, i.e. radical and social feminists, suggested the separation of sexuality from domesticity in order to achieve liberation for women. The body was the primary site of the struggle, as feminists began to investigate cultural mechanisms that attach particular meanings to female body. Apart from generating literature, second-wave feminists also focused on activism to keep their movement in the public consciousness. Feminist activists seized every opportunity to communicate their cause. The first widely reported activism was the protest against the Miss America pageant in 1968, when a radical group named a sheep Miss America, symbolizing the oppressive nature of the ideology behind the pageant, its attack on the female body. Another group distributed flyers with the headline "Bury Mother's Day". The flyer described the oppressiveness of motherhood and called women to become a WITCH, a resurrected woman. This woman was described by Umansky (1996, p.38) as follows:

> *A witch lives and laughs in every woman. She is the free part in each of us, beneath the shy smiles, the acquiescence to absurd male domination, the make-up or flesh suffocating clothing within yourself, you are a witch. You make your own rules. You are free and beautiful.*

Beginning in 1960, the demographic patterns in marriage and childbearing also started to change in the American society: the age of marriage increased and the birth rate began to drop (May 1988, p.221). Birth control pills gave women the

opportunity to control their reproduction rate. Meanwhile, most female college graduates began to enter the workforce and started to build careers, and women were confronted with the "career versus child" dilemma. By the 1970s, the media started to hear the feminist voice. Many of the major national magazines in America had published articles on the women's liberation movement. In order to raise awareness, feminists renewed their outreach efforts and started to organize conferences, launch demonstrations, and publish newsletters. These activities emphasized the common ideals and goals of feminists of different locations and cultures.

In the 1980s, the movement's momentum had slowed in America. England witnessed more or less a similar pattern, and it is argued that British feminism in the 1980s and 1990s had become deradicalized (Schroeder 2007, p.53). Although the spirit and aim of the movement was global, the historical advent of the movement is case specific. In other parts of the world, the movement had been shaped by the historical, economical, social and cultural context. As pointed out before, feminism is a pluralistic concept; variety in cultural milieus contributes to the diversification in the definitions of feminism and provides new perspectives for a better understanding. Although, the Western movement influenced feminist thought in Turkey, it has a recipe of its own. Sirman claimed that Western feminism occupied an important place in the evolution of feminism in Turkey, particularly in terms of the theories it generated and its presentation of the means and actors of the movement (1989, p.2). Turkish feminism's quest for its own voice will be discussed in the next section, with special attention to the concept of motherhood.

3.2. TURKISH FEMINISM and MOTHERHOOD

Feminist scholars tend to agree on three main periods regarding the debates concerning the position of women in Turkish society within the broader context of Turkish feminist movement. The first is the period of the Ottoman reforms implemented in the second half of the nineteenth century, a time of modernization in terms of administration, legislation and education. Modernization efforts were

based on the new ideas of the French Revolution, and Western models, and the process of modernization generated changes that affected women on a number of levels. The Land Reform Bill (18589 made the terms of property inheritance equal for men and women, and vocation and secondary schools for girls were opened. This was when the first feminists appeared (Tekeli 1990, p.142). Magazines started to be published by urban women from intellectual circles and first women's associations were formed. Ottoman intellectuals claimed that the traditional family structure, which was partially linked to the underdevelopment of the country, oppressed women and deprived them of the opportunity to improve themselves, which implied a need for better education. Tekeli pointed out that the motive behind this claim for change was not to free women from the gender relations in the family, but to aim for more democratic arrangement: well-educated women meant well-educated children, who were regarded as a means towards a civilized and enlightened, hence better, society (Ibid., p.142). In other words, the education and progress integrated into the traditional family within Ottoman system did not challenge the conventional roles of women as mothers and wives, but rather worked within these tropes to justify the new policies.

The second period during which debates intensified regarding the status of women in society and the meaning of womanhood was the early Republican Era. The newly-founded republic expressed its ideology in opposition to the Ottoman past: initiatives were taken to establish a Turkish identity via the glorification of the egalitarian and democratic traditions of pre-Islamic Turkish culture, with its imagery of equal and powerful women (Sirman 1989, p.10). These and other cultural reforms were initiated by the new ruling elite and named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Kemalist reforms included the separation of religion and state affairs, endorsement of European dress (1925), adoption of the Western calendar (1925), replacement of Islamic law by a secular civic code based on Swiss civic model (1926), the introduction of the Latin alphabet (1928) and granting of the right to vote to women (1934). All these developments reflected a desire to distance Turkey from its Ottoman past and turn toward Western civilization (Göle 1997, p.65). The New Republic's agenda was progress, modernization and

technological development. Within this context, the Republican order envisaged for women as "patriotic citizen[s]" (Sirman 1989, p.10). Kandiyoti, similarly, described the new Turkish woman as a self-sacrificing "comrade woman" who shared the struggles of her male counterparts. In literature she found expression as an asexual sister-in-arms, acting in the public domain without compromising her virtue. This image, according to Kandiyoti, encompassed both nationalist and Islamic discourses in terms of its strictly controlled sexuality as part of a collective identity (1989, p.141). Durakbaşa, on the other hand, depicted Kemalist female imagery as a combination of conflicting images: "an educated-professional woman at work, a socially-active organizing woman as a member of social clubs, associations, etc., a biologically functioning woman in the family fulfilling reproductive responsibilities as a mother and wife, a feminine woman entertaining men at the balls and parties" (Durakbaşa 1993, p.147). In that respect, the new woman seemed to be a multi-tasked, hybrid figure that united traditional expectations of the society and new regime's Westernization urges within herself. On one end, she represented an emancipated woman; on the other, she was a subject within the traditional gender role arrangements in the domestic domain. She mediated between them.

Granted equal status with men by state-led legal reforms, and gaining access to educational institutions, social and political domains, new Turkish women considered themselves the representatives of Republican ideology, positioned as pioneers of modernization and symbols of democracy. Called "state feminists" by many researchers, they had middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds, were of civil servant origins and were concentrated in urban areas. The new order encouraged them to enter the work force, especially as teachers, which complied with their Republican mission, that of educating the nation. Tekeli defined this new identity as a "tragic and schizophrenic illusion" (1990, p.145) on the grounds that it was not chosen by these women themselves, it was a state-sponsored identity that did not represent the general conditions of women in the country.

The values of motherhood were still an important part of women's identity. Although state ideology encouraged women to work outside home, they were expected to practice their profession without disregarding their traditional duties as supportive wives and good mothers. It was toted as their obligation the nation and as a marker of their primary function in the nation building process. They were the ones expected to raise the nation's next generations of citizens. In that sense, employment outside the home had not changed women's roles within the home to a great extent. Therefore, official state ideology, although promoting women's entry into public domain and their access to education and work, it maintained the pre-Republic cultural tradition of gender identities. At this point, one important remark was made by Ayşe Durakbaşa: she pointed to motherhood's new conceptual framework by Republican women and stated that motherhood came to be recognized as a mere "biological function" and its traditional value was de-emphasized (1993, p.144). Although women's traditional roles remained intact, the Republican model created a hierarchy among women's overall assigned roles. Their public and social responsibilities were considered as superior to their traditional roles and domestic responsibilities.

Most of the professional and academic women in this period did not associate themselves with feminism. They believed that a woman's movement was not required since the Kemalist regime gave them what they needed: equal rights, access to the public domain, social and political acceptance. In a sense "Kemalism served as feminism" for these women (Durakbaşa 1998, p.152). Tekeli pointed out that this fostered a passive attitude among women. They became accustomed to expect the state to provide whatever was necessary to improve their condition. As a result, they did not attempt to engage in activist efforts for the attainment of their needs. She defined this approach as "the state knows best what is in the interest of women" and claimed that it started during the single party period and continued after the multi-party system in 1946 (1990, p.153).

The 1970's was a time of political upheaval, a period of tension between right and left wing ideological groups. Issues like imperialism, economic and social

injustice, inequality and class exploitation occupied Turkey's political agenda. Women were one of the underprivileged segments. Within left-wing circles, a new debate concerning women came to the fore towards the end of the decade. Turkish Left linked the oppression of women to the underdevelopment of the socio-economic conditions of the country shaped by feudal relations (Berktay 1995, p.251). Women were called to be part of this anti-state ideology, which promoted humanitarian and egalitarian causes, in order to fight class exploitation. To fight side by side with their female peers, left-wing activists created their own imagery of woman and came up with the "sister" *(bacı)* stereotype. It denoted "an unsexed, depersonalized kind of woman comrade" (Ibid., p.252). Not until the 1980s could feminism come to the forefront of the public consciousness.

The third period in which the "woman question" was accepted as part of the public debate was after the 1980 military coup. The military regime banned all political activities, including any action by labor groups, students, civil servants, political parties; this paved the way for women to execute their political will at the national level. The new women's movement challenged the patriarchal organization of the society as the source of women's oppression. They fought for a more radical structuring of the society through which women's liberation could be achieved, and defended the "reshaping of social relations and legitimization of women's rights to self determination" (Arat 1994, p.109). New feminists, predominantly middle-class, educated and urban, started to raise their voices by speaking in public debates, writing in feminist publications and engaging in protests and awareness raising events, in short by implementing activism in every possible way. This was one of the major differences between new feminists and the earlier generation: they wanted to have an independent women's movement. Earlier versions were subordinate to other ideological agendas like Kemalism or socialism.

The 1980s, after the military coup, witnessed the implementation of liberal policies by the new government. The so-called "Özal era", named after Turgut Özal, the leader of the Mainland Party that won 1983 elections, was a period

"marked by new attempts to define and regulate social order, through efforts to redefine modes of legitimate participation within the political domain" (Sirman 1989, p.15). In parallel with the state's liberalization initiatives, feminist search for a new identity involved individualism as one of the most significant themes. Liberal feminists (also referred to as Kemalist feminists or egalitarian feminists) called for restructuring the dominant social organization via equality and solidarity as well as individualism. They revolted against the living practices of their mothers, and believed in the power of civil society to generate change and liberate their gender. However, liberalism was not the only discourse within the new feminist movement. Radical and socialist feminists had their own approach to the "woman's question" and their own problematization of patriarchy. Socialist feminists claimed that the source of gender inequality did not lie solely in ideology but rather in the gender and production relations. Radical feminists differed from their liberal and socialist counterparts in their questioning of female sex and sexuality in relation to male-female power relations. They stood against the essentialized notion of womanhood (mother, wife, comrade, asexual sister-in-arms) of the earlier periods and challenged existing female stereotypes (Schroeder 2007, p.90). Their anti-essentialist approach influenced cultural representations of women.

In the late 1980s, Turkey saw the emergence of private television and radio channels. These developments sped up the proliferation of public debate on woman's question, around the issues regarding gendered nature of everyday life, traditional division of sex roles, new female identity. Mainstream press started to contribute to the circulation of feminist goals, ideas, arguments and activities. In addition to daily publications for women, weeklies came to life. Television programs aimed exclusively at women began to be broadcasted. One women magazine stood out from the others in terms of its attempts to define womanhood outside male discourse: *Kadınca*. Editor-in-chief of the magazine was Duygu Asena, one of the prominent feminist figures of the period. Sexuality was one of the main themes of the magazine and discussed as a normal and valuable part of women's identity, rather than something belonging to the private domain or

subject to suppression. *Kadınca* advised women to get familiar with their sexuality and embrace it as an essential part of their existence. However, this was not the general picture with regard to the representation of women in mass media: traditional images were still much more widely reproduced. Women were depicted "either as devoted mother, faithful and good wife or as sexually available woman" (Saktanber 1995, p.154). Ideal womanhood was defined in terms of dedication to family and home life, altruism, good citizenry and asexuality. Working women, on the representational level, were considered successful to the extent that they managed to be businesswomen as well as perfect housewives and selfless mothers, an ideal that reminiscent of Kemalist portrayal of womanhood. From this perspective, all other possible identities of women had an "on the side" implication, self-sacrificing mother and devoted wife remaining unchanging (Ibid, p.154). Feminist thinking criticized these images on the grounds that they offered women limited identity choices along the lines of virtuous-available, dignified-fallen, pure-sexual dichotomies and perpetuated existing stereotypes.

The way media depicted the identities of women was directly related to the way in which women were socially defined. Also, this social description was in interaction with other important determinants such as individual experience. Motherhood, one of the central images of women, is a source of useful insights on how women perceived themselves and how they are culturally positioned. Bora claimed motherhood is a point of intersection between the individual and social (2001, p.78) and tends to reveal the relation between individual experience and social transformation. She conducted a survey of two generations of women in an attempt to explore the changing aspects of the definition of motherhood on the level of personal experience. The first group consisted of women who were born in the '30s and '40s, who had children during '50s and '60s: daughters of Republican women. The second group consisted of women who were born in the mid-50s and '60s. Her research found that the change in discourses between generations of women was exemplified in their expression of "duty" versus "success" (Ibid., p.79). The first group of women perceived themselves as part of family, rather than independent individuals. For the second group, on the other

hand, independence signified one's capability to control her life. To have control meant to exist in work life and in the public domain, not to be confined within the boundaries of the private.

The first group of women seemed to internalize their own mothers' altruistic behavior patterns, like putting the needs of their husbands and children above their own and shaping their life around those needs. The second group differed from the first in the sense that its members did not define themselves through their participation in a familial organization and saw sexual division of labor within family as a source of problems rather than complementary roles. One other important discrepancy between the two groups was how they perceived children. The first group of women defined motherhood as an identity that validate their existence. The second group associated motherhood with loosening their ties with life and perceived it as a setback. In their view, a traditional woman was "unproductive, dependent, the one who was afraid to maintain a life by herself, a complainer without doing much to change her condition, who saw her husband's success as her own" (Ibid., p.97).

In short, the differences between two groups of women reflected the considerable social changes of their period. The first group's definition of womanhood and motherhood is in close relationship with the Kemalist ideology's projection of an ideal, and that of the second group reflects the liberalization initiatives of the 1980s and feminist attempts. While equality between man and woman was of central importance to the first group, independence and having a life outside the home was the priority of the second group for their definition of womanhood. Sexual division of labor is valid for both groups but encircling different meanings. For the first group of women it signified "being equal but different". However, the younger generation assessed it as a problematic issue and talked about "having their own space" in life.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in today's parlance it is difficult to talk about a universal feminism and this also applies to Turkish feminism. Especially, in the

late ‘80s and afterwards, when the politics of difference within the feminist movement in Turkey began to be voiced more loudly and the conceptions of difference became a focal point of tension, “women who were not part of the feminist movement in the 80s began to develop feminist demands in relation to Kurdish and Islamist movements and have started to be organized around those demands” (Bora et. Al. 2007, p.8). Bora and Günal (Ibid, p.8) claimed that;

> *Kurdish women questioned the patriarchal traits of the nationalist movement in Turkey and the ‘Turkishness’ of the feminist movement; “Muslim feminists” on the other hand opposed the elitism of the feminist movement and tried to show that there was not a contradiction between the faith of the Muslim women and their refusal of the oppression as women.*

Hence, these various approaches to the feminist movement affected women’s understanding of themselves and brought different types of feminism into the picture. Although the politics of difference with regards to the feminist movement in Turkey became one of the hot topics for scholarly research, it reaches beyond the confines of this thesis.

4. SACRIFICIAL MOTHER IN FILMIC MELODRAMA

4.1. MELODRAMA AS A GENRE

Genre is a contested concept; attempts to define it have generated a number of different approaches within the field of film studies, while the matter remains unresolved. Deriving from French, the word "genre" means type or kind, an effort towards categorization. In other words, a genre can be considered "a collection of objects and beings exhibiting common qualities and similarities" (Abisel 1999, p.14). Similarly, in cinema, genre is a way of grouping films according to various characteristics and giving them a suitable label. However, genre is not just generic assembling. Steve Neale argues that genre does not only specify films in terms of type, but incorporates spectator expectations and speculation about a film's ending (1990, p.46). Entering the frame from the spectator's perspective, Leo Braudy stated that genre reflects the social and cultural concerns of the cinema audience (Cited in Hayward 2006, p.187). Gledhill added director to the equation and described "genre" as a "body of rules and expectations, shared by the filmmaker and the audience, which constructed its generic world and by which any new entrant was constructed and operated" (2000, p.223). Still, genre is more than mere taxonomy in addition to spectatorial and directorial predeterminations.

Genre also has to do with commercial imperatives (industry) and popularity (products of popular culture). From the start, industry has used generic conventions to organize the production and marketing processes. By repeating previously tested generic formulas approved by box office numbers, film studios are able to guarantee revenue and manage promotion activities (posters, film press releases, slogans) through specific fixed features of the films. Indeed, the emergence of genres was out of a need, on the part of Hollywood film studios, for standardization and product differentiation, in short, as the reflection of an economic imperative. For that reason, when one says genre, one commonly refers to mainstream commercial films in general and Hollywood films in particular. In the same way, Grant describes genre films as commercial feature films "which tell

familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations through repetition and variation" (1986, p.ix). They create attraction by way of an already known world inhibited by slight variations of stereotyped characters who re-live the same story and take action in an unchanging fashion.

From early forms of melodrama until cinematic rendition, music was a key ingredient in this repetition, as well as the establishment of some basic features, which include:

> ***(1)*** *a dramatic conflict between good and evil;* ***(2)*** *the eventual triumph of the former over the latter;* ***(3)*** *three principal character types or functions: hero, heroine, and villain;* ***(4)*** *a demonstrative and often hyperbolic aesthetic by means of which characters were typed, dramatic conflict was established and developed, and motive, emotion and passion were laid bare;* ***(5)*** *an often highly episodic, formulaic and action-packed plot, normally initiated and often driven by the villain, dependent for its initiation, development and resolution on fate, chance and coincidence, and characterized throughout by an overabundance of reversals and recognitions (Neale 2001, p.185).*

This list of attributes said to be exhibited in melodrama's historical evolution later gave way to various descriptions by film scholars. Elsaesser offered a basic definition of melodrama, describing it as "a dramatic narrative in which musical accompaniment marks the emotional effect" (1994, p.50). This description foregrounds the primacy of music as a source of meaning as well as for dramatic effect, and positions it as the defining element of melodrama as a genre. Nilgün Abisel (1989, pp.55-56) gave a more detailed articulation of melodrama. In her view, a film may be called a melodrama if it embodies the following generic traits:

> *...exaggerated characters (cruel bandits, people who only conduct misdeed, women who take pleasure in sacrificing themselves), powerful emotions (fear, revenge, obsession, passion), extreme actions that transform occasionally to violence (betrayal, beating, suicide, murder), big moral contradictions (good-bad, innocent-villain), striking and glorious settings (palaces, cities, columns), supporting contrasts in lighting, costumes and mise-en-scene and emotionally powerful and easy to remember music.*

What Abisel referred to as "glorious settings" and "supporting contrasts" are constituent of the conception of "spectacle", which was always an important part of melodrama. This formal excess (surplus of objects and décor) is often analyzed as an ideological function, a means to communicate what cannot be said. This

aspect of melodrama will be examined in later sections within the context of the introduction of melodrama into film studies.

When it comes to content, there are also some recurring themes which shape melodrama as a genre. Schatz defined it as a narrative where "a virtuous individual (generally a woman) or a couple (generally lovers) is depicted as victimized by oppressive and unequal social conditions; and a resolution is reached through marriage, success at work and nuclear family" (1981, p.22). Melodrama's centralization of family made it an attractive genre for women. Until the 1970's, when film studies concentrated on the subversive aspects of melodrama, it denoted a lowbrow Hollywood genre due to its popular appeal and its association with women. The question of gender is also a factor in the debate as to whether melodrama should be regarded as an expressive code rather than a genre and as to whether it can be considered progressive or not (Cook 1999, p.158).

As previously noted, genres diverge among themselves based on codes and conventions. However, it is not easy to assign each film to a specific genre. A film may exhibit qualities of more than one genre. From this perspective, genre reflects a problem of boundary (Gledhill 2000, p.221). In other words, it foregrounds the problematic of where one genre ends and the other begins. Melodrama exemplifies these floating boundaries in the sense that it denotes also a "mode" or a "style" crossing a range of different periods and forms. Melodrama is not one genre but multiple genres. Gledhill depicted melodrama "as a mode that embraces various Hollywood genres" (1991, p.207). The view which regards melodrama as a mode rather than a collection of common themes was first voiced by Peter Brooks in his book *Melodramatic Imagination*. He stated that "our concern… is not melodrama as a theme or set of themes, nor the life of the drama per se, but rather melodrama as a mode of conception and expression, as a certain fictional system for making sense of experience, as a semantic field of force" (1976, p.xiii).

From this perspective, melodrama can also be regarded as a meaning mechanism whose definition exceeds stylistic and thematic similarities. Brooks' envisioning of melodrama suggests an interactive body where a variety of factors interact with

each other. He defined them as aesthetic, religious and political. Hence, melodrama can be viewed as having a strong socio-cultural aspect besides its stylistic embodiment.

In melodrama, what is personal does stand for the social. It focuses on the individual dilemmas within the existing social structures and draws its material from everyday life. However, it is not a direct mirror image or definition. Nowell-Smith pointed out that "melodrama, as an artistic expression, does not reflect or describes social and psychic determinations. It *signifies* them" (1994, p.70). In other words, it tends to make sense of them and to create its own meaning.

4.1.1. Roots of Melodrama

"Melodrama" is a combination of the words *melos* and *drama* which implies drama with music. The first self-proclaimed melodrama was "*Pygmalion*" (Rousseau 1770) and the first person to use the word melodrama was Jean Jacques Rousseau. He used the word "*melodrame*" to explain the relationship between the visual and verbal economies of the play. In his own words, "a type of drama in which words and music, instead of going together, are heard alternately, and where the spoken phrase is, as it were, announced and prepared by the musical phrase" (Cited in Smith 1973, p.1). The roots of melodrama go back to the eighteenth century; it emerged first in France and Germany, and then spread to England and America in the next century. Elsaesser pointed out that the generic predecessors of melodrama, especially the American family melodramas of the 40s and 50s, were the eighteenth century sentimental novel which emphasized private feelings and internalized morals and the romantic drama of post-French Revolution (1994, p.45). Bourgeois melodrama depicted the ideological struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy and the ultimate victory of the bourgeois virtue against the evils of the nobility. This notion of "poetic justice" (Gledhill 1994, p.17) emerged as a substitute for the earlier emphasis on fate as the source of the tragic outcome. In short, the bourgeoisie appropriated melodrama as its own version of tragedy. It presented bourgeois characters. The tragic hero depicted as the member of an elite social group was transformed into

an untitled individual hero with flaws (Byars 1991, p.10). The bourgeois ideal of a society without any social pressure exerted on the individual subject and the bourgeois aim of a democratic social organization without hierarchy found its extension also in melodrama, which created its own world of equals. The story was told by a bourgeois author for a bourgeois audience and the subject of the story was everyday bourgeois life (Nowell-Smith 1994, p.71). In that sense, the author, the audience and the story reflected a relation of equality. Finally, what is social came to be expressed as personal which is one of the conventions of melodrama in its later cinematic form.

Peter Brooks explained that melodrama, as a means of communicating the values of the new order and establishing a moral identity, was the bourgeois way of filling the social gap which emerged after the vanishing of the institutions of the Church and the Monarchy, and their sacred myth (1976, pp.15-16). This description reinforces the common belief that melodrama gains popularity in times of social and ideological crisis. According to Byars, melodrama is one of the cultural modes that present the possibility of non-violent negotiation regarding social contradictions (1991, p.11). It uses shared values and symbols and represents social conflicts through simple polarities like good-evil, hero-villain, virtuous-corrupted. In this respect, it is regarded as an "in-house arrangement" (Neale 1990, p.22) for dealing with deeply disturbing aspects of social unease. What makes a work a melodrama is related to this capacity of converting unrepresentable material into something representable.

Depending on the social context and historical moment, this ability of melodrama to reveal what is repressed on the social level was regarded by some as subversive, by others as escapist. Feminist thinking emphasized its subversive aspect and claimed that melodrama offered avenues which reveal the ideology and patriarchal mechanisms behind the positioning of women as passive subjects. On the part of the audience, melodrama was claimed to create a cathartic space through identification. This constitutes its association with escapism.

Having emerged as a bourgeois genre in the eighteenth century, melodrama continued its development alongside nineteenth century capitalism and

modernism. Industrialization, urbanization and newly developed entrepreneurial economic system changed the way people lived their life and their perception of it. Family became the site of social pressure. The separation of the domestic and the productive domains led to a redefinition of the family as a moral unit with connotations like safe refuge, domestic heaven, etc. The new public-private contrast resulted in melodrama's association with the domestic domain. Cunningham, on the other hand, has noted that melodrama operated on both sides of the public-private equation. He stated (2000, p.193) that;

> *Melodrama is both a projection of deeply personal, individualized beliefs, fears longings, and hope into available forms of public discourse and a public winnowing, consolidation and conventionalization of types of morality, belief and praxis as they are represented in theatrical and political melodrama.*

In that sense, melodrama's use of the family functioned at this intersection of the personal with the social. The melodramatic family was a symbolically laden one which portrayed angelic women who protected the sanctity of their home from the perils of capitalist life and the hostilities of the outside world. It was a world where "wholly noncompetitive values and interests" (Grimstead cited in Gledhill 1994, p.21) were rewarded. These virtues and values were generally assigned to women who were expected to provide the fulfillment that the new economic world cannot. Kleinhans argued that this expectation could not be addressed within the boundaries of the family because the source of the need was outside the domestic domain. In his view, this contradiction constituted the essence of melodrama (Cited in Cook et. Al., p.160). The earlier emphasis on the struggle of the bourgeoisie against aristocracy was transformed into the victimization of the individuals by the capitalist system in the nineteenth century. Hence, melodrama's focus was now on the ones who suffered in the face of the bourgeoisie's success. Martha Vicinus noted that melodrama "sides with the powerless", while evil is associated with "social power and station" (1981, pp.130, 132). Grimstead, in a similar manner, stated that melodrama is the "echo of the historically voiceless" (Cited in Gledhill 1994, p.14). Thinking within the context of the nineteenth century, the "powerless" and the "voiceless" might stand for the newly emerging working class and women, two groups who experienced the most threatening effects of the unstable social and economical conditions. Vicinus claimed that

melodrama became popular among working class since it offered the means to make adaptation to capitalism easier by showing them how hardship can be turned into a triumph (1981, p.130). Women, on the other hand, became attached to melodrama for its depiction of the contradictions they face in their daily lives and the guidance it offered them on how they could manage to obtain a resolution through happy endings. The melodramatic plot and its conventional course of action suggested that "as the angel in the house, she was expected to sacrifice all for the emotional, moral and physical well-being of her husband and children" (Ibid, p.131). From this perspective, melodrama is conceived to operate within the realm of ideology in the sense that it is concerned with what is desirable/how things ought to be rather than what is actual/how things are (Gledhill 1994, p.21).

In short, while heading to the twentieth century, melodrama provided a cultural outlet for a large segment of Western society that felt unclear about the advantages of a new order that encircled them. The conflict between bourgeois family values and the economic and social imperatives of industrialization became the central problematic of melodrama. Social and political concerns of the period were reflected through simple clashes between good and evil, poor and rich, etc. which were represented in personal terms. The family was the focus of thematic attention where its might was checked over and over again under severe circumstances and within a realistic setting. These thematic conventions, in line with the social and historical context, dominated the American cinema throughout the silent era when works of D.W. Griffith exemplified the first cinematic melodramas.

4.1.2. Melodrama and Cinema

In terms of its institutional and aesthetic aspects, cinema's melodramatic inheritance is derived from earlier stage melodrama. As Gledhill asserted, "the pictorialization of the nineteenth century stage produced what were effectively moving pictures" (1994, p.23). The American filmmaker D.W.Griffith is a pioneer in adapting theatrical genres for the silver screen. Films of Griffith like *Broken Blossoms* (1919), *Way Down East* (1920) are considered to be successful

examples of cinematic melodrama. They have contributed to future melodramas by establishing various cinematic techniques and narrative models. In Abisel's (1989, p.47) words,

> *Griffith dissociated good characters and bad characters in a clear-cut fashion. His films presented traditional moral norms and tended to approve existing social arrangements. Even his criticism on the social system placed the source of the problem in the weakening the impact of these norms. His themes were based on morality, self-sufficiency, respect for family life, commitment to traditional gender roles.*

In this respect, Griffith's melodramas had successfully moved the political and social schemes onto a personal level, a move which became one of the main features of melodrama as a genre (Elsaesser 1994, p.47). In other words, melodrama takes the social crisis and reconstructs it within the private domain. Griffith set ideological conflicts in emotionally laden family contexts where "violence, becoming an orphan, rape, love, death, infidelity" (Ibid., pp.50-51) led the narrative. These content related conventions were repeated in later examples of Hollywood melodrama, after the introduction of sound.

Silent melodramas, in order to compensate for the lack of spoken dialogue, relied heavily on formal elements to increase expressiveness. As well as music, lighting, décor, acting, close-up, editing and camera movement were used to reach the aim. With the advent of sound and other technological innovations like color, wide-screen, deep-focus lenses, crane and dolly, melodramatic form become more visually sophisticated. Therefore, melodrama in its cinematic form successfully made the transition from silent to sound cinema at the end of the 1920s. However, Belton claims that "silent melodrama represented the melodramatic impulse at its purest and most powerful" (1994, p.118) in terms of its ability to express central dramatic information visually and to convey ideas and feelings without the existence of a verbal register.

The rise of consumer culture in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century affected the way film studios approached audiences in the early 1900s. They started to see film screenings as a means of attracting not only audiences but also customers. Therefore, film began to be viewed as a consumer product. Within this framework, women came to be regarded as potentially lucrative demographic.

As this consumer driven approach gained impetus over the years, melodrama as a genre offered Hollywood avenues to attract women into cinema theatres through emphasis on heterosexual love and deployment of famous star couples (Akbulut 2008, p.46).

Melodrama's heyday, concerning sound film and Hollywood, is claimed to be between 1930 and 1960 (Hayward 2006, p.240). According to Elsaesser, this peak is largely due to the Hollywood family melodramas of the 40s and 50s. He stated that American cinema of the 40s and 50s presented most elaborated and complex modes of significations through family melodrama (1994, p.52). Reflecting on Elsaesser's examination, Cook states that the constituents of the family melodrama were "its non-psychological conception of character and formally complex *mise-en-scene,* its containment of action within the family and consequent emphasis on private feeling and psychic levels of truth" (2006, p.158). These constituents helped family melodrama become a distinct genre in the post World War II period when American society was going through important social transformations and issues related to the American family became of primary narrative importance (Schatz 1981, p.228).

During this period, most of the influential family melodramas came from émigré directors like Max Ophuls, Douglas Sirk, Vincente Minelli and Nicholas Ray. The socio-historical context in which these directors were filming was an important denominator in terms of the social conflict reflected within family melodramas of the period. As Schatz points out in the absence of men who went to the war, women entered the workforce in large numbers. After the war, in the face of men's return, growing social unrest, urbanization and increasing educational opportunities, the nuclear American family started to disintegrate and generational conflicts came to surface (1981, p.126). Melodrama again, in line with its association with times of crisis, gave the best representations of this social unrest. In a time when traditional gender roles began to be questioned, family melodramas laid bare the main contradictions encircling family. Films of Sirk, Minelli and Ray supported and at the same time criticized the institution of the family and the gender roles it entailed. Elsaesser portrayed family melodramas of

the period as restricting the external action of the subject because "everything happened inside" (1994, p.52). The décor, colors, gestures mise-en-scene, in short formal features, became signifiers of dramatic conflict and provided getaways into characters' emotional and psychological states. This feature was also another convention of melodrama as a genre.

Women were the primal characters who were depicted under pressure within the diegesis of the films. This pressure was reflected through claustrophobic settings with an excess of décor. They were portrayed as trapped in this constraining atmosphere of the interiors, specifically home (Schatz 1981, pp.246-247). From this perspective, family and home stood for the social values and pressures encircling women. Elsaesser explained that in these domestic melodramas the power of social pressure was so intense that the range of strong action for the characters was limited. Instead, "impotent gesture, the social gaffe, hysterical outburst" substituted the action (1994, p.56). In other words, exaggerated acting, and no control over the course of the events – protagonists did not seem to be aware of their actions; extreme emotionalism represented characters' lack of external action. This can be cited as another recurrent feature of Hollywood melodramas of the period.

Laura Mulvey, in her examination of Douglas Sirk films, stated that the power of melodramatic form lay "in the amount of dust the story raised along the road, a cloud of irreconcilables which put up a resistance to being neatly settled in the last five minutes" (1994, p.76). Therefore, melodrama's ideological function operates through its depiction of internal contradictions, characters' dilemmas, their reactions to their conditions rather than its resolution. In this way, melodrama, on the one hand emphasized values necessary for the sustenance of social structures, while on the other hand it criticized those values at the personal level.

4.1.3. Melodrama and Film Studies

The interest of scholars in melodrama as a genre started in the mid-70s. The general perception of melodrama as a lowbrow genre in terms of its popularity and association with women (weepie, woman's film) delayed its recognition by

genre critics who were for the most part interested in "classic" genres like western or gangster film. It achieved public visibility through academic articles that appeared in British, American and French film journals starting from the late 70s. While scholars like Peter Brooks, Thomas Elsaesser, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith examined the genre from a neo-Marxist point of view, feminist critics like Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane investigated it from an ideological perspective through the psychoanalytic approach. They were followed by critics like Linda Williams and Tania Modleski who examined the female address within family melodramas.

At the beginning, examination of melodrama as a genre took shape within mise-en-scene and *auteur* criticism. Highly stylized film melodramas of directors like Sirk, Ray and Minelli were assessed within this context and their employment of "excess" as the signifier of sociopolitical contradictions was emphasized. Criticism of these sorts examined the fingerprints of the directors within their film based on their use of mise-en-scene. In the 70s, film criticism evaluated Hollywood from an ideological perspective and "looked to mise-en-scene for a formal play of distanciation and irony" (Cook 2006, p.157). Investigations on melodrama foregrounded the relation between film aesthetic and ideology, which for the most part have revolved around "the classic realist text" and how it reproduced bourgeois ideology.

The classic realist text, sometimes called also "classic Hollywood text" (Kuhn 1982, p.28), is "a filmic text in which a clear hierarchy orders the discourses composing the text, a hierarchy defined in terms of an empirical notion of truth" (MacCabe cited in Stam et Al. 1992, p.192). This hierarchy, in relation to film, is attained through "internal coherence, plausible and linear causality, psychological realism and the appearance of spatial and temporal continuity" (Ibid., p.192). Proponents of the approach that investigated the link between classic realist text and ideology asserted that these texts imposed the spectator a one dimensional bourgeois world view. Christine Gledhill (1994, p.8) explained that;

> *Classic realist texts reproduce bourgeois ideology because they implicate the spectator in a single point of view onto a coherent, hierarchically ordered representation of the world, in which social contradictions resolved through*

> *mechanisms of displacement and substitution. In this process, the spectator is interpellated as the individual subject of bourgeois ideology.*

What this theory suggested is that classic realist texts were inherently patriarchal. By contrast, Elsaesser, in his examination of family melodrama, argued that melodrama presented a way to criticize the society it represented. He argued that melodrama offered multiple subject positions where "spectators were able to see and evaluate contrasting attitudes within a given framework" (1994, p.66). His evaluation showed how melodrama's stylistic conventions (particularly excess) disrupted the suture mechanisms (narrative coherence, verisimilitude, spectatorial identification through emotional involvement) of classic realist texts. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith brought a psychoanalytical approach to the issue and articulated the difference between realism and melodrama. He built his argument on the relations of power, gender, sex and Oedipal drama. He stated that family melodrama dealt with generational and gender conflict. But these issues were what patriarchal texts like melodrama tried to suppress. Invoking the Freudian notion of "hysteria", he concluded that ideology was destined to fail in melodrama. Since, in melodrama, ideology worked through the transformation of unrepresentable issues into excessive *mise-en-scène*, Smith noted that these hysterical moments operated very close to the surface which caused a breakdown in realist conventions (Gledhill 1994, p.9).

While, for the most part, male critics were interested in the functioning of the bourgeois ideology within family in its melodramatic representation, feminist critics have dealt with the issue of female address and tried to explain how family melodrama functioned in terms of the images of women. The classic realist text reproduced female figures that stood both for the threat of castration and an object of desire which were replied by voyeuristic punishment or fetishistic idealization (Ibid., p.10). Feminist thinking asserted that female figures do not represent women but patriarchal needs and expectations regarding women. Laura Mulvey questioned the place of women in family melodrama and patriarchal mechanisms that oppressed and exploited them. She claimed that "patriarchal culture had consistently turned to domestic conflict as a safety valve for social problems arising from over-valuation of masculinity" (1994, p.75). For Mulvey, ideological

contradictions in melodrama are not hidden but overtly exhibited. In that sense, melodrama functioned on two levels. On one level, it served patriarchal ends by bringing a narrative resolution to the ideological contradiction. On the other, it performed a different function for women and offered them a chance to recognize those ideological contradictions which were suppressed in classic realist texts by patriarchal ideology.

The distinctiveness of Mulvey's argument lay in her categorization of the films as addressing a male and a female audience. At this point, Mulvey distinguished between two types of melodrama. The one where female protagonist's point of view dominated the narrative and motivated identification; and the other where male Oedipal problems were dealt through familial conflicts between generations and sexes (Ibid., p.76). Mulvey saw the progressive aspect of melodrama in the former where women's point of view was reproduced and identification was promoted. This kind of family melodrama as a form that addressed a female audience functioned to counterbalance the dominant male genres. While in the male version "irreconcilable social and sexual dilemmas" reached a resolution, the female version offered "a fantasy escape" by producing an excess. She found that these films that presented female victims were important for women, because they have focused on contradiction rather than resolution. In these films, female figures could operate within the confines of the patriarchal psyche and through it could resist their patriarchal function – i.e. "a mother who would keep her son with her, down in the Imaginary and in this way resist the mother's position as a patriarchal role" (Cook 2006, p.279). In Mulvey's (1994, p.74) words;

> *In the absence of any coherent culture of oppression, the simple fact of recognition has aesthetic importance: there is a dizzy satisfaction in witnessing the way that sexual difference under patriarchy is fraught, explosive and erupts dramatically into violence within the family.*

In short, what Mulvey suggested was to examine the contradictory nature of family melodrama where female frustrations were laid out as a way out of patriarchal limitations.

Mary Ann Doane, had built her argument on the same ground as Mulvey but she was interested in the reception side of the equation. She argued that victimized

female figures in melodrama offered women a masochistic point of identification. Doane presented two possible kinds of identification in which the female viewer could engage. First, over-identification with the passive female character which would lead to the already mentioned masochistic identification. On the other hand, women could also identify with the active hero and take up a masculine spectator position. Therefore, the female spectator, by oscillating between a feminine position and a masculine position, becomes a part of a transvestite viewing experience. While the male experience offered a sexual identity, the female version implied a "sexual mobility" which can be assessed as a distinguishable element of femininity in its cultural construction, Doane suggested (1990, p.48). At this point, she introduced the concept of "masquerade" as a counter position regarding female spectatorship which will redeem women from the patriarchy's available viewing experiences. She used "masquerade" to signify an excess of femininity that was constructed as a mask and which offered a non identity to the female viewer (Ibid., p.49). Kaplan described Doane's conception of masquerade as a "de-specularization" of the female body which would give the female spectator the opportunity to escape the erotic gaze (1992, p.68). Doane's argument added a new dimension to the female viewing experience by refusing to reduce the subject to a matter of proximity and distance.

The second wave of feminist work on the family melodrama has used spectatorship theory to claim that women were offered multiple identifications in these films, not merely identification with the victims. They argued that victims were part of a relation web with other female figures with which female spectator also identified. Therefore, they had multiple points of identification at their disposal and were able to shift between them. This way, the female spectator learns about "victimization, about women's deprivations and glimpses other female ways of being" (Ibid., p.68). Tania Modleski stated that women's bisexual nature "rooted in the pre-oedipality and her consequent alleged tendency to overidentify with other women and with texts, is less a problem for women than it is for patriarchy" (1988, p.8). Finally, Teresa de Lauretis maintained that feminist theory had to create a feminine vision rather than to look through the patriarchal ideology's fallacies (1987, p.2).

In short, film criticism regarding family melodrama can be regarded as a trajectory of attempts to define the genre and to chart the possibilities it offered to women in terms of representation and spectatorship. Feminist theorizing contributed considerably to the examination of family melodrama as a genre. It also extended its interest to maternal melodramas of Hollywood that diverge from family melodramas through the central theme of "the ritual of maternal suffering" (Viviani 1994, p.84) and maternal sacrifice; it tried to explain how these maternal melodramas constructed female images. In his examination of the ideologies at work in the maternal melodrama, Viviani described the subgenre as the site where "the role of mother is pivotal, suggesting something of the way issues around female sexuality and maternity can be dramatized as a displacement or resolution of class issues" (Cook 2006, p.161). The next section will detail feminist attempts to examine representations of women in melodrama in general and maternal melodrama in particular.

4.2. MELODRAMA and IMAGES OF THE SACRIFICIAL MOTHER IN HOLLYWOOD

Kaplan (1990, p.128) defined motherhood paradigms existing in Hollywood cinema as falling into four different categories:

> ***(1) The Good Mother****: She is all-nurturing and self-denying. She is totally invested in husband and children, she realize herself through them and is marginal to the narrative.* ***(2) The Bad Mother or Bitch****: She is sadistic, hurtful and jealous; she refuses the self-denying role and claims her own life. Because of her evil behavior, this mother often takes control of the narrative, but she is punished for her violation of the desired patriarchal ideal, the Good Mother.* ***(3) The Heroic Mother****: She suffers and endures for the sake of her husband and children. She shares the saintly qualities of the Good Mother but more central to the action, but unlike Bad Mother, she acts not to satisfy herself but for the good of the family.* ***(4) The Silly, Weak or Vain Mother****: She is the mother most often found in comedies, she is ridiculed by husband and children alike, and generally scorned and disparaged.*

In fact, all these categories generated from the main melodramatic contradiction between good and evil with regard to mother images. According to Kaplan, Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex can provide a psychic outlet for this polarization in terms of dominant mother representations. In Freud's theory, she claimed, the separation of the child (male child) from the mother could be

accomplished only through her symbolic representation constructed on two levels: good and bad. These two possible representations give the male child the opportunity to deal with the nurturing and penalizing aspect of his mother (1987, p.121). Theorizing within the psychoanalytic sphere, Dinnerstein explained that these split representations are projections of early childhood experience of "total dependency on the Mother who is not distinguished from the self" (cited in Kaplan 1990, p.127). Hence, her presence implied "the good" and her absence "the bad".

Hollywood maternal melodrama preferred a mother figure that oscillated between the Good Mother and the Heroic Mother. Kaplan stated that apart from the psychoanalytic discourse, these cultural representations of women as mothers were determined by various factors which are in constant interaction: gender, historical gender codes of the era in which the text is produced, codes of class and race dictated by a culture's industrial and technological level, and interconnections between texts concerned with aesthetic and formal conventions (1992, p.76). Within the melodramatic framework, women signified representations of unconscious processes besides dominant gender politics. Feminist theory appropriated some key concepts from the Lacanian psychoanalytic model in order to analyze text-driven unconscious processes in the spectators and ideological approaches to reveal the socio-political mechanisms behind motherhood representations. .

Kaplan distinguishes between maternal melodrama and woman's film in her analysis of maternal figures in Hollywood. The maternal melodrama is male-oriented, action-driven narratives that encourage identification with predominantly male characters who are in control of their surroundings; woman's film, on the other hand, have less linear narratives with specifically female address and resists dominant ideology. Jeanine Basinger, similarly, defined woman's film outside the confines of maternal melodrama and even positioned it beyond a particular label. In her view, a woman's film "is a movie that places at the center of its universe a female who is trying to deal with emotional, social and psychological problems connected to the fact that she is a woman" (1993, p.7).

According to Basinger, the success of woman's films lies in the fact that they tell the truth and this truth is all about the unhappiness of women (Ibid., p.7). Linda Williams was not so optimistic about the resistant character of woman's film and stated that "the device of devaluing and debasing the actual figure of the mother while sanctifying the institution of motherhood is typical of the woman's film in general and the sub-genre of maternal melodrama in particular" (1990, p.138).

Kaplan claimed that in early American cinema it was D.W. Griffith who planted the seeds of maternal melodrama (*Mothering Heart, True Heart Susie, Way Down East*), in which the good woman was equated with the ideal Mother type (1987, p.125). Griffith, and later Sirk, elevated the sanctity of the family, contributing greatly to the Americanization of the Victorian sacrificial mother concept, and rewriting it according to contemporary social, political and economical conditions. Griffith introduced traditional elements like "the secret, the illegitimate child, the rejected woman, the seduction, the silent love" in addition to "city-country dichotomy" (Viviani 1994, p.89), which would be used again in the '30s. While the films glorified rural life and values, the city was depicted as the source of all ills and false values. European melodrama's enormously potent destiny was replaced by an all-powerful society in its American version, which depicted for the most part a lonely individual (woman) who tries to resist the social constraints placed upon her. Society came to be the villain within the narratives.

Melodrama foregrounds the clash between social needs and norms and individual wants and desires. It is not a coincidence that most maternal melodramas in Hollywood centralized individual desires based on love and passion in contrast to social pressures, while emphasizing the increasing tension between the social and individual. Mother-son relationships were given a great deal of power and came to be equated with romantic love. For example, in maternal films of the '40s, whose roots can be seen in the eighteenth century sentimental novel and nineteenth century stage melodrama, mothers usually gave birth to an illegitimate child (an extra-marital birth) and sacrificed themselves for the sake of their (usually male) child in order to elevate him in society or return him to his noble roots (through

his father) (Kaplan 1992, pp.124-125). While sacrificing herself, she negates her existence and becomes an absent within the narrative. Patriarchal ideology in maternal melodrama, generally, promotes duty (to sacrifice one's self) over love or affection, and female figures, by choosing to obey this call reproduce patriarchal values.

In maternal melodrama, a mother's connection to a female child is more problematic in terms of patriarchal values. Kaplan stated that if the mother-daughter relation was mutual rather than a one-sided dedication of the mother to the female child, it became threatening to patriarchal narrative and needed to be disrupted. This kind of love had to be punished, Kaplan claimed, because it excluded men and generated a deep female-to-female bonding which posed a threat to patriarchy (1990, p.133). Films always depicted the psychic and social needs of the daughter as taking precedence over the mother's desires. In maternal melodrama, the mother often chooses to do what patriarchy judged appropriate rather than what she and her daughter might desire. Finally, patriarchy left her nothing but self-sacrifice for her daughter's upward mobility, educational conditions, prospect of a suitable marriage, etc.

As well as social-individual tensions, 1940s Hollywood maternal melodramas centralized romantic narratives where the moral imperatives of the bourgeois family clashed with romance. Some critics saw this as an economical choice rather than a reflection of a social psyche. The Hollywood industry recognized that the issues of melodrama resonated with its female spectators. This audience was often characterized as composed of "frustrated housewives, oppressed by the duties of motherhood and marriage, by sexual frustration and lost fantasies of romantic love" (Cook 2006, p.164).

The physical space of 1950s Hollywood melodramatic narratives was home and its social milieu was family and marriage. These post-war maternal melodramas reflected the fears and anxieties of a society in transition. Women were increasingly entering the workforce and the traditional bourgeois family arrangement was on the verge of change. Ryan and Kellner claimed that the world offered to women within Hollywood melodramas reflected a model of binary

representation. This twofold structure was established between career-love and career-marriage, and the protagonist's choice was generally between a career or children, or entering competitive public life or accepting a male's protection (1990, p.220-221). Therefore, narrative conflicts were portrayed through a dichotomy of love versus duty (Hayward 2006, 241). It is not so often that Hollywood mothers combined mothering with work. When this combination was attempted, the mother was generally punished. When she resisted her proper place, films usually repositioned her in a role that the patriarchy found suitable, and by doing so gave the female audience a warning about the possible outcome of an action outside their given position (Kaplan 1990, p.128). The physicality of home signaled claustrophobia for women who struggled to balance the social demands and personal desires. The domestic domain in which women and children were dominant protagonists was portrayed as the setting of their constant virtuous suffering. Women were depicted as helpless to shape events; their sole action seems to be surrendering through sacrifice. Since melodrama favors heterosexual coupling through marriage, the contradictory combination of "female independence (the willingness to confront social norms) and dependence (the need for male companionship)" (Byars 1991, p.149) provides a common line of narrative throughout the films.

4.3. MELODRAMA and IMAGES OF THE SACRIFICIAL MOTHER IN YEŞİLÇAM

Melodrama is also one of the main genres of the cinema in Turkey and influenced greatly by its Western counterpart through literary adaptations and remakes. Abisel states that Turkish melodramas drew greatly from the American cinema that produced the most spectacular melodramas: narrative convention that complied with local cultural values (2005, p.73). Therefore, what has been examined so far regarding Anglo-American melodrama in general and Hollywood melodrama in particular can offer insight into melodrama and motherhood images in Turkish mainstream cinema called Yeşilçam will be discussed.

Melodrama is one of the most popular and powerful genres in Turkish cinema, and has dominated the scene since the late 1950s. However, this does not imply that there were no examples of melodrama made before the 1950s. The difficulty of reaching earlier films and lack of extended archives cataloguing the films produced before that period necessitated that this body of work cite its filmic references starting from the golden age of Yeşilçam.

Various cinematic traditions have contributed to the development of the melodrama genre in Turkey. Alongside Hollywood melodramas, Egyptian films are often argued to be one of the primary sources of influence. Gürata, in his examination of the reception of Egyptian cinema in Turkey during the 1940s, indicated that these musical melodramas played an important role in the emergence of the movie-going habit in Turkey through their adapted soundtracks (Eyptian scores were dubbed in Turkish and voiced by Turkish singers) and melodramatic structures (2004, p.78). It was claimed that these films gave rise to various genres in Turkish cinema like musical melodramas and *arabesk* films starting from the early 70s (See Arslan 2006).

Dilek Tunalı stated that feature films in the history of Turkish cinema started with Western literary adaptations. Reworkings of popular novels for the silver screen continued throughout the 50s and '60s. In that sense, the history of Turkish cinema can be seen as a "history of melodramas" or a "history of repetition cinema" (*tekrar sineması*), Tunalı claimed (2006, p.174). The heyday of melodrama coincided with the Yeşilçam period of Turkish cinema in the 60s and the 70s. However, the periodization of Yeşilçam in particular and Turkish cinema in general is a problematic terrain. Various film historians and scholars (Giovanni Scognomillo, Alif Şerif Onaran, Nijat Özön, Agah Özgüç) were interested in this issue and each came up with their own timeline. The details of this debate are beyond the scope of this work; however, it would be beneficial to give a brief outline of the issue in order to grasp the historical framework of this thesis which starts from 1965 and ends in 1990 and includes melodramas produced during this period.

Nijat Özön's periodization has met with general acceptance. According to Özön, the historical trajectory of Turkish cinema was as follows: (1) Early attempts in the Ottoman period (1914-1922), (2) the period of theater-film-makers (1922-1939), (3) the transition period (1939-1950), (4) the period of film-makers (1950-1960), (5) the new Turkish cinema (1970-1987) (Cited in Arslan 2006, p.24). Erdoğan and Göktürk situated Yeşilçam in the period between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s which was "marked by a mode of production and film performance unique in the history of Turkish cinema" (2001, p.535). Ayça proposed another periodization and started Yeşilçam period from the 1950s, hence envisioning a similar historical framework with Özön.

According to Ayça, the 1940s were a period of transition, i.e., a "proto-Yeşilçam" era (1996, p.133), which was marked by the proliferation of the screening of American and Egyptian melodramas and dubbing of these foreign films. Within this framework, she identified "dubbing artists as the film-makers of the proto-Yeşilçam" in the sense that their work was not just translating the films but a way of transforming and appropriating them according to Turkish culture, she claimed (Ibid, p.134). Dubbing was done by people from a theatrical background and these people dubbed characters in foreign films in a prototypical manner. In other words, specific characters (good and bad, leading actors/actresses and supporting characters) had their specific voices with specific tonality and these voices became signifiers of the stereotypes for the Turkish audience. The spectators could tell if one character was good or bad just by hearing their voice (Akbulut 2008, p.97). This feature continued in the Yeşilçam period and became one of the formal conventions of its melodramas where voice was a source of meaning.

The 1950s was a period of political, economic and social development in Turkish society. Transition to the multi-party period was followed by economic liberalization: entrepreneurship was promoted and new technologies in agriculture were introduced. As a consequence, internal migration, urbanization and industrialization dominated social life and were reflected in cinema. Within the economic framework, film industry was not a beneficiary of state support. This led to a situation where production of films was solely dependent upon box-office

figures and constituted one of the fragilities of the film industry in Turkey. One other aspect of this relation of dependency was that producers had to be highly sensitive to the audience's taste and film preference if they wanted to produce more.

Audience preference showed its effects on different levels. One of them was film stars. With the spread of film theatres to rural parts of Turkey, especially Anatolia in the 1950s, rural audience potential became important for the producers. Ayça describes how regional theatre owners in Anatolia were ordering films to producers in Istanbul according to the audience's star preferences (1996, p.140). Therefore, similar to Hollywood, "scripts were written to suit the stars, not that the stars were chosen to suit the script" (Özön 1995, p.313). This led to another feature of Yeşilçam melodramas: stars were one of the signifiers of the films because the same stars performed the same roles. For example, Fatma Girik played "dynamic, vivid, active characters who did not give up easily and acted like a manlike Fatma", Türkan Şoray played "woman of the street or bourgeois beauty", Filiz Akın played "rich woman or bourgeois lady", Hülya Koçyigit generally depicted "home girls" (Scognamillo 2003). Kırel explained that the distribution of specific roles to specific actors or actresses reflected a "silent contract between the producers and the audience where the approval of the audience for such distribution was taken in an absolute secrecy" (2005, p.84). What is left for the actors and actresses was to play the roles as usual. Bülent Oran likened Yeşilçam actors and actresses to "an open book that was read over and over again and learnt by heart" (Cited in Scognamillo 2003). As a result, the audience knew before watching the whole film who was good, who was bad, who was funny, etc. Ayça similarly emphasized that the prototypical stars defined the narrative. As he indicates, "when the public wanted Türkan (Şoray), Yeşilçam told them an appropriate Türkan story; when the public wanted Cüneyt (Arkın), Yeşilçam told them a Cüneyt story" (1996, p.143). His description can be read as the epitome of the producer's motto of the time to legitimize the stability of the stars and their roles: "Public wants this!"

Martin Esslin (Cited in Kırel 2005, p.199) describes this close relationship between the stars and the audience and the repetition of certain narrative models in terms of "familiarity":

> *Masses like familiar pleasures, familiar faces, familiar characters, and familiar tone of voice. If they see a hero in a play, they want to see it again in the next adventure; in a form having slight differences compared to the previous one which will give them a story; enough to feel the curiosity for the unknown but also familiar enough to let them live the pleasure to meet a very valuable person again. For a brand new play, the audience had to think on it in order to decode its codes: who are the characters, what are their relations, when and where do they live, etc.*

Yeşilçam melodramas tried to obtain this familiarity through its repetitive narratives, its unchanging stars for specific characters, even its fixed locations, atmospheres and *mise-en-scène*. For example, lovers always met at the shores of the Bosporus or Pierre Loti; the rich family's home was always the same two-storey ex-Ottoman aristocratic mansion; the poor family without exception lived in a one-storey small wooden house. Tül Akbal Süalp asserted that Yeşilçam melodramas through these repeating *mise-en-scène*s create a language of their own; a language which is not a mimicry of the Western examples of melodrama but a genuine means of signification created by local narrative traditions of earlier times (1999, p.20). Within this framework, Akbulut explained them as part of "a shared repertoire by Yeşilçam films" (2008, p.108).

The key role audience played in Yeşilçam was also reflected in its definitions. Bülent Oran described Yeşilçam and its melodramas as "the mirror of Turkish society". According to Oran, these films mirrored the "Turkish people's psyche, their sorrow and happiness, economical and social depressions, what they expected from life, what they accepted and what they refused, their dreams" (1996, p.285) and tended to reproduce them. Since the primary criterion for the films to succeed was to win public acclaim, Yeşilçam tried to meet their expectations, their cultural formations, and their myths. Within this framework, Yeşilçam was defined as "a popular and populist cinema" (Ayça 1996, p.141).

The heyday of melodrama in Turkish cinema was from the 1960s until the mid-1970s. During this period film production skyrocketed with a similar unprecedented increase in film theatres, production companies and numbers of

film spectators. While during the 50s melodrama as a genre had built up some of its conventions, the 1960s was a period when melodramatic sub-genres had appeared among which family melodramas had the biggest share. Abisel defined family melodrama as "films that were produced for families and children" (2005, p.73). She stated that family melodrama was a generalization and included films that its audience was families, with special attention to women.

Kaplan stated that family melodramas were a reflection of the transformations that took place in the 1960s and the conflicts they brought to families and to women's lives (2004, p.12). Starting in the '60s Turkish society underwent important political transformations, the dominant social structure shifted and new classes emerged, all of which had important implications for the family. The most important political incidents of the period were the 1960 military intervention, the implementation of the new constitutional law and following elections where *Justice Party* (Adalet Partisi) won by a majority. During this period, the private sector was encouraged by the state, and the new Turkish bourgeoisie gained impetus. Migration from rural into cities transformed the demography of the urban areas in Turkey and rapid urbanization brought the conception of *gecekondus* (overnight dwellings built by the rural new comers) into city life. Modernization gave way to a rising consumer culture (Kırel 2005, p.27).

As a result of political and economical developments in the '60s, more women began to enter the workforce. However, traditional gender roles persisted and dominated the social life. Womanhood continued to be defined within the confines of the family and idealized as:

> *A modest, altruistic and timid person who undertook the most important role in the persistence of the institution of family as a result of her managerial qualities and her patience. She established the balance within the family and guaranteed the order with her tenderness, her warmth and her compassion (Arat 1992, p.639).*

This vision of womanhood has found a place within Yeşilçam family melodramas and has been continually reproduced through similar narratives in which women as mothers do whatever it takes to protect the sanctity of their families. Representations of women were also constructed in relation to family. There were

good women who loved and safeguarded their family and bad women who threatened the family. In Esen's words (2000, p.29):

> *At one end, there were women who were honorable, homemaker, mother to her children, asexual, full hearted, all forgiving, who felt oppressed but chose to shed invisible tears in order to keep the happiness of their home. At another end; there were women who had nothing but their sexuality, evil, enemy of the happy homes, vamp figures who seduced and manipulated men for their own wicked purposes.*

These representations share a common ground with Hollywood family melodramas that depicted women within similarly sharp categories. In Yeşilçam, women who gained recognition were the ones who belonged to the first category. Sharing the conventions of melodrama as a universal genre, Yeşilçam family melodramas constructed tropes of "self-sacrifice and endurance as an inevitable destiny" (Abisel 2005, p.74) for women. The love that constituted the main theme of the melodramas was legitimized through marriage that was a melting pot in which contradictions related to class differences or rural-urban dichotomies were invalidated and a social resolution was attained. Akbal (1999, p.20) described the social function that melodramas fulfilled from 1950s through 1960s:

> *Melodrama as a narrative means for nation-state and modernism to reproduce and diffuse itself, played an important role in reminding the basic common denominators for the building of an idea of nation, in structuring the consent in the face of conflicts and contradictions, and in reconstructing the female and male roles and similarities.*

From this perspective, the roles tailored towards women within a bigger social scheme continued to be based on tropes of the loving wife and devoted mother, perpetuated through melodramas and unquestioned by the female audience, which even found comfort in them. Arat claimed that this acceptance was out of necessity and derived from the fact that family in Turkish society was an institution without alternative. She (1992, p.63) stated that:

> *Even though family had lost its economical utility, all the functions related to love and reproduction and relationships are still performed within this domain. In this situation, it is extremely hard for a person, especially for women, to search for an identity outside the family. A woman without the protective shield of the family is marginalized and becomes and outsider in the society.*

Within this framework, it seemed nearly inescapable for Yeşilçam melodramas to present family-related narratives to a female audience in which women were

represented within their traditional roles and which involved "dissolving families, disappearing children, defamed mothers, couples who are unable to marry, husbands and wives whose pride defies their love" (Abisel 2005, p.75). Female characters depicted in these narratives were trying to take a stand against their fate and for the most part suffered until the story reached a resolution. Kathleen Rowe examined the conception of suffering within the context of melodramas and comedies and argued that patriarchal society positioned women within tears and loss. She claimed that melodrama does not only teach women under patriarchy how their destiny is bound up with suffering but also instructs them to find pleasure in the suffering. She says, "melodrama thus insists that women's deviance from the norms of our culture can lead only to isolation and tears, their pleasure can only come in pain, and the stories of their rebellion can be the occasions only of grief" (1995, p.51). Ahmet Oktay examined the issue from the audience's perspective and related the spectatorial pleasure of watching men and women who suffered to Ottoman traditions and stated that "despite the modernization attempts the society has maintained its general suffer-loving (*çileci*) identity" (Cited in Tunalı 2006, p.201). This identity also found expression in the *arabesk* films after the 1970s.

The long-suffering character was by no means the mother because she was the character who was expected to make the biggest sacrifices. Abisel (2005, p.87) examined the representation of mother figures in Turkish melodramas and came up with the following schematization for good mothers:

> *Mother mediates between family members. Sometimes she sacrifices herself for her children and becomes a killer. Children are the closest to heart for the mother. Women without children are doomed to unhappiness. ... Motherhood is the biggest barrier for a woman to leave her husband, hence she bears the burden. ...She assumes the most important role in keeping the family together. Mother's load increases if the father does not exist or has to leave for a while. These mothers are extremely powerful, enduring, determined and loyal.*

What this general picture portrayed was the negation of the self as the core quality of ideal womanhood. Yeşilçam melodramas' ideal woman had bore and reared children, protected them, served them, lived for them. Within this context, narratives of self-sacrifice offered the best outlet for melodramas to communicate

this type of womanhood. In the world of Yeşilçam melodramas women sacrificed themselves for the love of a man, for their husbands, for their families and children, or even for good of others.

Abisel pointed out the ideological aspect of these narratives and interested in the melodramatic mechanisms that naturalized the conditions of self-sacrifice for women. She stated that in melodramas "this hidden ideological aim is attained through narrative content, atmosphere, melodramatic elements that provide emotional intensity of the dramatic conflicts and dramatically overloaded dialogues" in addition to characters (1997, p.130). Adanır approached the issue of emotional intensity in Yeşilçam melodramas from a socio-cultural perspective. In these films, characters were portrayed as trapped within the extremity of the emotions like love, hatred, unhappiness, hostility. According to Adanır, this was a reflection of the Turkish society that was "a society of the margins" and he stated that "melodrama is a world of the emotions that belong to the extremes. A world where emotions like love to death or hate to death dominate the scene. … love that is not destructing or humanistic emotions somehow cannot not be the determinants of these films" (1996, p.12). However, this emotional intensity was a point of attraction for the audience and may be worked as a cathartic means as well as an ideological one. After all, "a good Yeşilçam film was one that made people cry" (Kırel 2005, p.273).

Cinema continued to be the primary vehicle for mass entertainment and melodramas as the most popular cinematic attraction until the mid-1970s when television's popularity started to increase considerably. At this time, Turkey was also experiencing a period of economic hardship. Considering that people went to the cinema as a family, it became an economic burden to buy at least four tickets to watch a movie. Therefore, families started to shift their habits towards watching TV at home. For a cinema that was largely dependent on box office revenue, such a development quickly led to a crisis. In addition to shrinking audiences, the transition to color films had increased the costs of filmmaking, making the condition worse. Movie theatres started to shut down. Producers, in order to generate profit, turned to a new target audience: male spectators. During this

period, sex films dominated the screens. Arslan claimed that sex films "resonated with mainstream Yeşilçam films" in terms of their "recurring stories of love between a lower-class and an upper-class character that ceaselessly offered a resolution through a heterosexual relation either by marriage or by death" (2006, p.115). Melodramatic patterns also continued as incorporated within the *arabesk* films of the 1980s, in which famous arabesk singers such as Orhan Gencebay, Ferdi Tayfur or arabesk child stars like Küçük Emrah, and Ceylan played the leading role.

The 1980s marked another period of transformation for Turkey. September 12 1980 military intervention affected all the layers of the society, with measures including the banning of political activities, a new constitutional law and a period of strict state control and inhibitions regarding different aspects of social life. Intervention and the subsequent three years of military rule became the reason for the sex films' disappearance from the screens; instead, *Arabesk* films became increasingly popular. The rising significance of the feminist movement in Turkey starting from the early '80s seemed to have had an effect on cinema: stories focusing on women's problems gained impetus. Esen described these films as emphasizing "women's dilemmas of becoming an individual, their expectations from marriage and from men, society's construction of womanhood" (2000, p.41). According to Esen, the '80s foregrounded two different categories in terms of the construction of womanhood in cinema in Turkey. Her first category involved *arabesk* films and Yeşilçam films. In these films, traditional constructions of womanhood were reproduced and women were represented within angel-evil or good-bad dichotomy. Her second category involved films that depicted women in their versatility. Women in these films "think, rebel, desire, manage work and motherhood" (Ibid., p.42).

Within the confines of this study, films examined regarding the 1980s belong to Esen's first category. Although Esen claimed that these films presented a traditional Yeşilçam style woman who is "passive, innocent, dependent [on] her husband, mother of her children, bound up with fate" (Ibid, p.43) and counted this image as the continuation of the earlier melodramas. The next section will

examine the previously mentioned mainstream representations of woman in general and sacrificial mother in particular that changed its appearance in parallel with the feminist movement in Turkey during the ‘80s.

5. FILM ANALYSIS

Ann Kaplan identified three main representational spheres regarding motherhood: historical, psychoanalytical and fictional (1992, p.6). According to Kaplan, the historical mother refers to the socially constructed mother, the mother in her institutional role. She describes her as "the mother that girls are socialized to become and that historical or real mothers strive to embody" (Ibid., p.6). The psychoanalytical mother signifies the mother through whom subjectivity is attained. Finally, the fictional mother is the amalgamation of the institutional and psychoanalytic mother. With regard to Kaplan's three primary mother discourses, while previous chapters focused on the theoretical framework of the historical mother, this chapter focuses on her third category, the fictional mother. In this respect, the sacrificial mother figure in Turkish filmic melodramas between 1965 and 1990 will be examined in terms of its relationship with economical, political and social changes in Turkish society. The analysis of these films will attempt to examine the parallelism between major transformations in social thought regarding motherhood and the shifts in the sacrificial mother imagery through underlining the binary oppositions that these films bring to the fore.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, melodrama in cinema in Turkey gained its impetus in the 1960s and soon became the primary site of mass attraction, especially for women. The close relationship between the increase in the female spectatorship and the rise in the popularity of the melodramas constitutes one of the departing points for the analysis. To examine the images of sacrificial mother within the films produced for women presents a fruitful topic for academic investigation. To this end, the following melodramas which have a plot based on mother child/children relationships and present a sacrificial mother figure as one of the central characters have been chosen. The selected films are *Ana Hakkı Ödenmez* (Osman F. Seden, 1968), *Anneler ve Kızları* (Ö. Lütfi Akad, 1971), *Bütün Anneler Melektir* (Orhan Aksoy, 1971), *Fatma Bacı* (Halit Refiğ, 1972), *Kızım Ayşe* (Yücel Çakmaklı, 1974), *Ana Ocağı* (Osman F. Seden, 1977), *Meryem Ana ve Oğulları* (Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1977), *Gülsüm Ana* (Memduh Ün, 1982), *Nefret* (Osman F. Seden, 1984), *Yavrularım* (Bilge Olgaç, 1984), Annem Bırakmam Seni (Temel Gürsu, 1987).

These films also present good opportunities for investigating the gendered nature of motherhood and sacrifice. Motherhood is represented as a biological destiny; and in that sense women are depicted as having no choice but to mother. More important than portraying motherhood as a woman's one and only option, these melodramas show women how to enjoy motherhood, how to find joy in pain and how to attain personal satisfaction through sacrifice. These films, while glorifying sacrifice as one of the main pillars of the ideal womanhood and good motherhood also legitimize it through their narrative resolutions. Maternal sacrifice is always justified and acknowledged by others within the story. The selection of films presents specifically fictional mothers who sacrifice themselves for their child/children, although women in melodramas also sacrificed for their husband, for their family and even for their community. Finally, as mentioned in the previous chapter, melodrama offers a world where the boundaries between characters are clear-cut and narrative conflicts are portrayed through various binary oppositions. To look at these binary oppositions in selected melodramas and examine how characters take positions in the face of these narrative complications will give us a chance to understand the world the films constructed.

5.1. BINARY WORLD OF MELODRAMAS and THE SACRIFICIAL MOTHERS

5.1.1. Rural – Urban

The internal migration and rapid urbanization that Turkey experienced in the 1960s can be seen reflected in melodramas. Films depicted hardworking Anatolian mothers that came to Istanbul with the hope of earning a living and providing their children with educational opportunities. In *Anneler ve Kızları* (Akad, 1971), Fatma (Yıldız Kenter) is an Anatolian woman who leaves her town after the death of her husband and comes to the city, intending to create a better future for her daughter Iraz (Leyle Kenter). She stays loyal to this ideal until the end, no matter what obstacles she faces. Fatma is humiliated by her own daughter, who accuses her of not adapting to urban life and not being open to changes, but Fatma acts according to her own truths and instructs her daughter on the important

things in life: being true to one's self, not to forgetting one's roots. Rural roots are portrayed as an asset that Fatma carries with honor. On the other hand, Iraz lives the rural-urban dilemma and bears the burden of in-betweenness. The narrative deals with the issue of belonging through Iraz, who voices her dilemma in a conversation with Aydın (İzzet Günay) as he tries to understand her hostility towards her mother. She replies: "She brought me to the city from the town, she made me neither urban nor rural, neither rich nor poor, neither servant nor master, neither educated nor ignorant". In contrast, Fatma always remains loyal to her rural values and traditions. When Iraz criticizes her motherhood and indicated that to love and caress was not enough to be a mother, Fatma replies to her daughter "I am what I am, why should I change?" Her fixed position and sense of self is also emphasized by her costume: throughout the film, Fatma wears the same dress and carries the same veil. Within this framework, her costume becomes a signifier of her static positioning.

The same story applies to Huriye (Yıldız Kenter) in *Kızım Ayşe* (Çakmaklı, 1974). Huriye is a courageous Anatolian woman who comes to Istanbul after her daughter Zeynep (Necla Nazır) enters university to study medicine. Huriye devotes herself to facilitating Zeynep's education, she sacrifices everything to make it possible for her daughter to finish the university and become a doctor: working double-shifts, maintaining the house and cooking. She never voices a complaint or rebels against her (admittedly self-imposed) condition, even when Zeynep criticizes her on the grounds that she does not grasp the dynamics of the urban life. Zeynep says to Huriye "The time has changed but you still continue to stick to your rural mentality". Huriye replies "I know that the time has changed, that's why I brought you to the city". However, for Huriye, coming to the city was a necessity only what opportunities it presented for her daughter.

Like *Anneler ve Kızları*, the urban and the rural are once again presented as opposing tropes in *Kızım Ayşe*. Mother figures persistently remind their children of the real motive behind their coming to the city – education – and advise them of their duty as child: to become an educated individual who will work for the good of the country, repeating the Republican ideal, that positioned women as

mothers who will educate their children to become good citizens. The republican imagery of womanhood recurs in films where mother figures are obsessed with their children's education and ready to sacrifice everything to attain this goal. In *Kızım Ayşe,* Ayşe's education is not only a source of pride for her mother but also for their rural community. Her mother Huriye constantly shares her educational accomplishments with her relatives in their hometown and makes them know that once Ayşe has finished her education and she has become a doctor, they will return and her daughter will work for the good of their fellow villagers.

The child who continues his /her education is seen as the mother's reason to live and completion one's education is projected as the mother's desire more than the child's own choice. If the mother has more than one child, the most academically promising one is depicted as her mother's hope for the future of the family. Within this framework, the child can be assessed as instrumental in terms of the affirmation of women's existence as mother. Since she cannot exist as a subject with her own desires she projects these desires onto the child. Commonly, the child gives up this ideal as a result of the urban disruptions: urban lifestyle, hedonistic friends, corrupted boyfriend or girlfriend from the upper strata. Once the child leaves aside his or her education, the mother becomes the heroic protector of the ideal she envisioned for her child. It is not only a fight for child's future but for the affirmation of her existence. The resolution is attained through the mother's sacrifice and child's consequent realization of the urban corruption of the urban. In *Meryem Ana ve Oğulları* (Uçanoğlu, 1977)*,* Meryem (Fatma Girik) stands against the mafia leader who misleads her son Kemal (Mahmut Cevher), a promising university student with a prospect of becoming a doctor. Kemal, after falling in love with the daughter of a mafia leader leaves school and upon discovering this, Meryem starts a public campaign and announces on television that her son has been deceived by the mafia and that she wants her son back. Kemal refuses his mother's calls. The resolution is attained when, as the last resort, Meryem murders the mafia leader, sacrificing herself for the good of her son who, at the end, realizes the corruption he was driven to. Similarly, in *Fatma Bacı* (Refiğ, 1973) and its later remake *Gülsüm Ana* (Ün, 1982)*,* the mother figure ends up in jail as a result of various events she faces in an effort to rescue her

children from corruption. The narrative economy of these texts reinstates the disrupted equilibrium through the children's recognition of their mother's right cause and the value of her sacrifice.

Akbal claims that in Turkish melodramas "the experience of modernization or the conflicts of capitalism were repeatedly represented through urban-rural opposition" (1998, p.11). From this perspective, in selected films, the rural always outlasts the urban with its traditions, values and is romanticized for its intimate and sincere communal relations. While rural stands for morality, purity, honesty, honor, etc., urban is portrayed as the source of all evil. If the child is a girl, urban misleads her by its hedonistic lifestyle where youngsters party all the time and numb themselves with drugs and alcohol and values like freedom and pleasure are valorized (*Anneler ve Kızları, Fatma Bacı, Kızım Ayşe, Nefret*). If the child is a boy, urban life drags him into mafia business where the prospect of earning money is high and he consequently becomes a gunman (*Meryem Ana ve Oğulları, Ana Ocağı*). Getting involved in illegal business is depicted as a means of upward social mobility, and thus the opportunity to break from working class attachments. In *Ana Ocağı*, when Fatma (Fatma Girik) learns about her son Kadir's (Kadir İnanır) involvement in the casino business, she expresses strong opposition, saying to her son "I want a job with honor". Kadir, on the other hand, sees it as an opportunity to earn money and gain power. In this case, urban is depicted as a representation of capitalist values, where money and power are considered to reflect the worth of the individual. However, in the end these aspirations only bring destruction to the family. Kadir becomes a part of a set-up and goes to jail; his sister is raped by his boss and commits suicide. Fatma, to save her son, and kills the mafia boss to avenge her daughter. Through self-sacrifice, Fatma saves her son from urban corruption. In that sense, the urban is portrayed as offering individuals a "false consciousness" that promises, but never delivers, social mobility.

Most of the time, the valorization of the rural is conveyed through dialogues as well as visual conventions. The pleasant nature of the rural life is reflected through depiction of happy family moments and reinforced by musical scores

with happy tones. In *Gülsüm Ana*, Gülsüm (Fatma Girik) remembers her rural life through flashbacks where everything was in its place. Every time one of her children lets her down, her disappointment is emphasized through her memories of life before the city. Urban problems are juxtaposed with the comfort of the rural, when complications arise; memories of rural life are like a shelter for the mother figures: when she needs help, always a villager lends a hand. In *Kızım Ayşe*, an old acquaintance who had become a factory owner after coming to the city and opens his house to Huriye and her daughter Ayşe when they were no longer able to support themselves. In *Gülsüm Ana*, Gülsüm comes to the city with her three sons, and an older villager finds her a place to live and a job as doorkeeper.

In sum, the narratives of these melodramas position the child as a battleground for the urban and the rural. Once the child leaves the rural realm and enters the urban one, things get complicated, and it is up to the mother to restore the equilibrium. She continues to carry her republican qualities that favor determination for an educated youth. The resolution is attained through the affirmation of her sacrifice, the degradation of the urban and the glorification of the rural.

As previously mentioned, the socio-historical context plays an important role in the definition of motherhood, and thus, to explain shifts in the depiction of sacrificial mothers in the 1980s, one should look the political and social context of the times. The context includes the bourgeoning feminist movement and values like individualism beginning to be discussed publicly, women's earlier entry into workforce in larger numbers and the urbanization process completing its development phase in Turkey. Within the melodramas analyzed for this thesis, one can see that fictional women as mothers carried parallelism to those changes.[1] In *Yavrularım* (Olgaç, 1984), Seher (Hülya Koçyiğit), a mother of six, is returning to Istanbul after working long years in Germany with her husband. She is a working mother who cultivates fish from a fish farm that she built in the garden of

[1] Within this framework, Kartal Tibet's *Sultan* (1978), Ömer Lütfi Akad's trilogy Gelin (1973), Düğün (1973), Diyet (1974) could be good outlets of examination in terms of how internati migration, urbanization and the entry of women into workforce had found echo in the representations of mother figures. However, my field of examination is specifically melodramas and because of this reason I left these urban-rural dramas outside my focus of attention.

their house. She is familiar with urban life and at ease with it. Although they live in the suburbs, Seher does not live isolated from urban life, but rather benefits from opportunities available to one in an urban setting. Throughout the film, she is seen as shopping with her husband, dining at restaurants, giving birth in a hospital. From this perspective, the urban-rural binary is not juxtaposed against each other but rather as complements to each other. Seher and her family sustain rural-like communal relations within their neighborhood while simultaneously being integrated into the city life. Seher, in that sense, is different from earlier examples of the sacrificial mother: she incorporates a rural way of living and the demands of the urban. Rural aspects show themselves in the interpersonal relations she establishes with other women in her neighborhood. The solidarity between fellow villagers (an older male villager who helps Anatolian mother in times of need) who came to Istanbul to make a living is replaced by solidarity among females who live in the same neighborhood in *Yavrularım*. This type of rural relationship, not so normalized in the 1960s and the 1970s, and marginalized and devalorized as a reflection of an inability to assimilate urban values, seems to find a place within the urban reality in the 1980s. Seher and her neighbor Safiye help each other with childcare and housework. When Seher discovers that she has cancer Safiye is the first person she asks for help. The urban, on the other hand, is where Seher's children get a better education; she and her husband earn their daily living and benefit from healthcare to social services.

In other films like *Anneler ve Kızları, Fatma Bacı, Kızım Ayşe, Meryem Ana ve Oğulları* the threat to the unity of the family is an external force and the dismantling of the family is caused by the ills of the urban life to which children are trying to adapt. Mother figures sacrifice themselves to fight the threat coming from the urban way of living. In *Yavrularım*, what tears the family apart is an internal threat, Seher.'s fatal disease. The narrative equilibrium is disturbed when Seher discovers that she has little time to live and she must search for ways to guarantee the future of her children. Resolution is attained through her decision to give her children to foster parents. Within this framework, the city offers her options to realize her decision. In that sense, urban is portrayed not as the villain but as the savior.

5.1.2. Private-Public

"In most societies the world of the domestic and familial is the world of women and that of the public and political world of men" (Lamphere 1974, p.97). As examined in the previous chapters, during '60s and '70s, feminists protested inequality in gender roles. In the period, "motherhood and house-related works were saved for women and women who desired to invest their life in politics, art, business, science were considered abnormal" (Waaldijk cited in Öztürk 2000, p.65). Rosaldo explained that "domestic refers to those minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organized immediately around one or more mothers and their children; public refers to activities, institutions and forms of association that link, rank, organize, or subsume particular mother-child groups" (Rosaldo 1974, p.23). In filmic melodramas this gendered assignment of the private and public domain manifests itself through interiors that enclose women. Elsaesser, in his assessment of Hollywood family melodramas, explained that the claustrophobic atmosphere of the bourgeois household reflected the "victimization and enforced passivity of women" (1994, p.62). Yeşilçam melodramas exhibit a similar pattern in terms of their construction of the private space as women's domain.

In the selected melodramas, especially those produced before 1980, private-public dichotomy is constructed through children. Children once again become a battleground where the values of public and private clash. The complications develop once the children enter the public domain, usually when they enter university or start to work. Children generally undergo an individual transformation when they first enter the public domain, but while children take multiple subject positions, mother figures do not change their initial position. Individual transformation of children is generally equated with degeneration or corruption. Basic positioning of the mother as the moral leader of the family is sustained throughout the films: she maintains her virtuous, nurturing, all-forgiving position and remains pure. Narrative solution is attained when the mother sacrifices herself to protect her children in the face of the threat from the public domain, and her children's recognition of her sacrifice. The ideology of the films normalizes her unconditional devotion to her children: mothers who subordinate

their desires and needs to those of their children are glorified. These ideal representations put forward unquestioned acceptance of home as women's domain, offers women the possibility of finding pleasure within that domain and warns them against the threats if they try to resist their given role.

In *Kızım Ayşe*, Huriye (Yıldız Kenter) and Ayşe (Necla Nazır) enjoy a happy mother-daughter relationship until Ayşe enters her childhood friend Melahat's circle of upper-class friends. Before they move to the house of Kazım Ağa (Şükran Güngör), an old acquaintance of Huriye's whose daughter Melahat she used to look after, Huriye and Ayşe lived in harmony. Huriye earned money working as a seamstress at home, while Ayşe studied at university to become a doctor. This is her mother's wish for her and she happily complies with it. She sustains her relationship with the boy she was seeing when they lived in the rural village, a relationship her mother approves of. However, when Ayşe starts to enjoy life outside her school and home, once she becomes part of the social life and enters the public domain, everything starts to fall apart and the narrative equilibrium is disturbed. External factors lead to Ayşe's break from the mother-daughter dyad: values like modernization, individual freedom, and quest for selfhood are presented as the rationale behind the break and portrayed as threats a woman should avoid. While Ayşe integrates into Melahat's life style, Huriye maintains her sense of self and loyalty to rural ideals. She is the representation of virtue and conscious. She constantly warns Ayşe about the dangers the life she chose can bring. As Ayşe increasingly draws away from domestic domain and the values it embodies, she is driven into destruction. The film complies with the gendered assignment of the private and public, equating the public domain as men's domain. Within this framework, Melahat's boyfriend Mehmet is the embodiment of the ills the public domain would pose for a woman who tries to leave her given role and acts outside of the traditional norms. When Melahat says that she is pregnant and asks him when they will marry, Mehmet makes it clear that he has no intention of doing so and insults her, calling her naïve for thinking that he would ever claim the child. Ayşe goes to his house in order to persuade him to marry Melahat, but he drugs her drink and tries to rape her. Huriye sacrifices herself for her daughter, kills Mehmet and saves Ayşe, while Melahat

dies as a result of post-abortion complications. In that sense, the film punishes her for stepping out of her prescribed domain. It affirms Huriye's idealized motherhood (all sacrificing, all forgiving, enduring and virtuous) and legitimizes the private as woman's domain. The narrative resolution is attained through Ayşe's return to her initial position: she finishes university, becomes a doctor and returns to her hometown with Huriye.

Films like *Anneler ve Kızları, Fatma Bacı, Kızım Ayşe, Meryem Ana ve Oğulları, Gülsüm Ana* portray sacrificial mother figures as unchanging safeguards of the domestic domain. Women as mothers are represented within home and seem to have no existence outside of it. They are constantly framed by walls, doors, staircases, and windows which emphasize the limitations the private domain exerts upon them. Usually they earn their living through jobs they can perform at home: they make dresses (*Kızım Ayşe*), they knit sweaters (*Anneler ve Kızları*) or they work as doorkeeper (*Fatma Bacı*). They are almost completely isolated characters with very limited access to the outside world. In *Fatma Bacı*, when Fatma finds out that her son will murder his father's killer she tries to prevent him from doing so. In the scene where she looks for her son in the streets of Istanbul, she seems like a newcomer, despite having come to the city years ago. She looks afraid and disturbed by the crowded streets and life outside, almost agoraphobic; she is portrayed as alien in the public domain and her uneasiness becomes a legitimization of her positioning within the domestic domain.

In the selected melodramas, mothering and working are rarely combined. When a female figure resists her traditional role as loving, caring and all sacrificing mother and chooses to pursue her own desires the film punishes her at the end. *Anneler ve Kızları* is worth examining from this perspective since it displays two different sacrificial mother figures. One is Fatma (Yıldız Kenter), the traditional altruistic mother who is in charge of children's care and housework; the other is Neşe (Neşe Karaböcek), who chooses to pursue her career in music in order to better support her child. Neşe takes Fatma at her house when she first comes to Istanbul and they built a life together. Their daughters grow up like sisters. The film idealizes Fatma as the all-nurturing, caring and loving mother, a multitasking

woman always available to fulfill the needs of the girls, manage the house, and never questions her condition. Neşe, on the other hand, is a woman who pursues her desire to become a singer with conviction and never compromises on her ambition. When Aydın (İzzet Günay) asks her to marry him, she rejects him on the grounds that she has to realize her dream and make a good living for her daughter. In that sense, she rejects the patriarchal ideal of womanhood as the loving wife and caring mother. She resists forming the nuclear family and refuses the gendered assignment of the domestic as woman's domain. Over the years, she becomes a famous singer and a public star. However, the film always depicts her living in guilt for not having enough time to spend with her daughter. In the scene where she and Aydın meet for the first time in several years she says to him "Fame and fortune are good things but I wonder was it worth it to be away from my daughter?" When Neşe finds out that her daughter is in love with her fiancée Aydın, she asks Fatma "What happened to us? Couldn't we make it work? Didn't we succeed in being good mothers?" The film reinforces dominant ideology through showing the audience what happens to a woman who steps out of her given position. Her daughter blames her for not being a good mother, leaving her when she was needed and neglecting her to pursue her career. In that way, Neşe is punished for her desire to exist as an individual within the public domain instead of domestic domain. Narrative economy of the film legitimizes that work and motherhood are incompatible for women. While Neşe is devalued as a working mother, Fatma's way of mothering is valorized. Ultimately, her daughter recognizes and values her self-negating, all forgiving and self-sacrificing features. In that last scene, the sanctity of the nuclear family is established with a new family in which Neşe, Aydın and the two girls are reunited. Neşe conforms to the norms, quits singing and takes over Fatma's place.

Ana Ocağı is another film in which the construction of the public-private dichotomy becomes more visible and gendered assignment of the private realm for women is emphasized. In the film the equilibrium is disturbed when Fatma's (Fatma Girik) husband is murdered over a business scam. Fatma had to take care of her two children, therefore takes over her husband's job, and starts using his truck to transport fruit to greengrocers. The scene where she shows in the market

place can be read as the representative of the assignment of the public to male and private to female. When Fatma comes to the marketplace, men who work there try to expel her on the grounds that it is no job for a woman. Fatma is surrounded by a crowd of men and is unable to escape the situation. This scene emphasizes that the public was the domain of man and any attempt from women's side to enter there would not be approved. Fatma who is nearly harassed by the crowd represents the victimization of women within the public domain. This victimization is reinforced in the scene where Fatma issue a complaint to the police department and asks for help by crying in tears. From this perspective, the film implies that the traditional assignment of woman under male domination continues also within the public domain. Woman cannot exist on her own within the public domain where she is treated as an outcast. Just as she needs support in the private domain, she needs protection in the public domain, as seen when Fatma starts working under the protection of the police. The private-public dichotomy is also reflected through Fatma's appearance and attitudes. Over the course of her transition from private to public domain Fatma is also transformed into an asexual female figure. To survive within the public domain she loses her feminine features at the beginning of the film and become a masculine woman. In that sense, the film shows that the public space is the domain of man and if a woman wants to exist within that domain she has to develop a masculine identity. Entering the public domain is presented as a necessity for Fatma rather than a choice. Her altruism is defined through the long years she spent in the harsh, competitive public domain.

Nefret displays a different sacrificial mother figure in terms of the public-private dichotomy. Fatma (Fatma Girik), is a successful business woman, and is the embodiment of the dilemma most women have faced since the 1980s: balancing work and motherhood. Unlike earlier examples in which children were the battleground, in *Nefret* the mother figure becomes the battle ground where the private and the public clash. Fatma is a working mother, managing the family company, while her husband is a struggling lawyer. They have a daughter named Hülya (Hülya Avşar) with whom Fatma has a troubled relationship. Fatma holds the breadwinner position at home. She and her husband have a distant relationship

and unhappy marriage: home is not portrayed in terms of its traditional function, a safe haven where all the members find refuge. It is transformed into an uncanny terrain where relations between family members are troubled. In that sense, the film breaks the myth of happy family and shows the inability of the family to accomplish its traditional function of emotional fulfillment. Home loses its function of reproducing the traditional values attached to it: love, compassion, care, personal relations, etc. Within this framework, the private domain is not a place of comfort but of conflict, a unit not of love but of hatred. The narrative equilibrium is disturbed when Fatma discovers her husband's infidelity and decides to divorce him. Her daughter Hülya blames her for the divorce on the grounds that she neglected her husband and her home for the sake of her career. Hülya, who hates her mother, becomes the voice of the patriarchy and tries to relocate Fatma within her traditional role as a loving wife and a caring mother. The film emphasizes Fatma's constant in-betweenness. She tries to find a balance between the clashing values of public and private, between working and motherhood. The demands of the competitive public domain and the familial exigencies of the private domain are seen to be irreconcilable. Economic independence, her position as a decision-maker within the family, her powerful persona within the public domain are all constructed in contrast to her traditional roles and the narrative economy of the film forces her to make a choice. Fatma accepts her boyfriend Fikret's (Bulut Aras) marriage proposal, with whom she has a business affiliation. While she sees this marriage as a way to solve their problems with her daughter, Hülya takes it as a means to get her revenge on her mother: she becomes involved in a secret affair with her mother's fiancé and gets pregnant. From this perspective, the threat comes from within rather than from an external force troubling the unity. Intrafamilial relations are the source of ills rather than a source of strength as Fatma oscillates between the public and the private. Although she seems uncompromising with regards to her career, in the scene where her fiancé Fikret proposes to her, she says: "I want to feel like a housewife. I want to spend time with my daughter. I want to make you happy. From now on, I want to live my womanhood. I want to go back home". Still "true" womanhood is defined through the private domain and the traditional

division of labor between sexes. When Hülya kills Fikret who refuses to accept the child and marry her, Fatma sacrifices herself for her daughter and claims the crime. The resolution is attained through Hülya's recognition of her mother's unconditional love and she confesses to the crime. Although the film's resolution legitimizes unconditional love and self-negation as attributes of ideal motherhood, it can be read as a text harboring resistance in terms of its revealing of the dilemmas that women face. Fatma is portrayed as having multiple identities: mother, wife, and business woman. However, she is divided between them, and the end, the film forces her to choose between duty and success, implying if you are a woman you cannot have both. This was one of the problems addressed by feminist movement in the 1980s that questioned traditional assignment of the private to women and their exclusion from public domain. Fatma, in that sense, personifies a woman trying to be an individual who is capable of making her own decisions without putting the needs and wants of others in front of hers, but at the same time a woman who cannot break from traditional roles set out for her by the patriarchy. As a mother, she is at the intersection of individual and social, private and public.

5.1.3. Love-Labor

The melodramas examined in this thesis present unconditional love as an intrinsic trait of motherhood. Motherhood is defined within the context of this basic value and a mother's sole duty is presented as loving and caring for her children.

The love and labor dichotomy emphasized within the context of this section's film analyses stands for the motherly love and labor. This pure and divine motherly love that has found a popular appeal in Turkish cinema through films like *Selvi Boylum Al Yazmalım* (Atıf Yılmaz, 1977) sometimes necessitates a mother figure forsaking her marriage and romantic love (*Ana Hakkı Ödenmez*) to save her child, to bear the burden of being separated from her child (*Bütün Anneler Melektir*), or to go to jail (*Kızım Ayşe, Gülsüm Ana*). Apart from this motherly love, female characters show lifelong emotional commitment to their husbands, even if he is dead or they are separated out of a misunderstanding. Therefore, the elimination

of the father figure does not imply his absence. For example, in films such as *Ana Ocağı, Gülsüm Ana, Meryem Ana ve Oğulları* the presence of the father is constantly implied through shots of his picture on the wall, a practice reminiscent of the rule of the Father governing the family. In *Meryem Ana ve Oğulları*, the scene in which the voiceover recounts Meryem's (Fatma Girik) coming to the city, the spectator is told that she will raise her children to be as brave, decent and hardworking as their father. The photo displayed in Meryem's room represents her unweavering commitment to him, and also the ever-present the patriarchy, the father-figure always watching and controlling her. Similarly, in *Kızım Ayşe* when Ayşe (Necla Nazır) tells her mother Huriye (Yıldız Kenter) that she will quit university due to economic problems, Huriye tells her that she will do whatever it takes to allow her to finish her education because it is her father's wish. Within this framework, the mother character in these films can be seen as instrumental in the sense that she serves the ideal envisioned by her husband when he was alive. Moreover, it emphasizes that even when there is no father figure materially present, the mother is not the decision maker within home but the executer of his decision, a trope, which foregrounds her passivism.

Sacrifice is always associated with motherly love. It is presented as an unquestioned act because any mother who loves her children is assumed to be willing to sacrifice to protect them. This altruistic love is always rewarded through the narrative solution – the husband or children recognizing the value of a mother's love. Thus a mother's heart is romanticized and exalted as divine, a key to heaven. An example of this dominant vision can be found in *Ana Hakkı Ödenmez,* a film that tells the story of a happy family which falls apart. Fatma (Fatma Girik) and Orhan (Ediz Hun) is a poor couple with a daughter who is critically ill and whose survival requires a prohibitively expensive operation. In order to save her daughter, Fatma sacrifices her own happiness and accepts the offer of the woman who is in love with her husband. In exchange for the life of her daughter, she gives up her husband, and it is only after she has suffered alone for many years that the truth is revealed. In the last scene where Orhan explains to his daughter the meaning of motherhood, he tells her "One day you will be a mother too and then you will understand that it is not possible to find something

equivalent to a mother's heart, you will understand that heaven rises under mothers' feet". Through the narrative resolution of the film, altruism and love once again find justification. A lifetime of pain and suffering is normalized since it was undergone to serve the needs of the child and family.

In the selected melodramas, the child is always at the center of mother's world. The sacredness of the child fixes women as mothers into a certain position and emphasizes their passivity. It denies them any personal ambition or individuality. These films seem to portray mothers and children as one entity. Narrative conflicts generally arise when the child tries to break this mother-child dyad and to leave the mother's circle of love (*Kızım Ayşe, Gülsüm Ana, Meryem Ana ve Oğulları, Fatma Bacı, Ana Ocağı, Anneler ve Kızları*). Although the children change position according to the exigencies of the narrative conflicts, as argued before, the mother figures do not change their initial position. They either fell under the category of "good or heroic mother" as Ann Kaplan's categorization suggests. These characters embody the traditional definition of a good mother: they invest themselves in their children and realize themselves through them (*Kızım Ayşe, Gülsüm Ana, Meryem Ana ve Oğulları*). Or else, as a "heroic mother" they suffer and endure for the sake of their children and husband (*Ana Hakkı Ödenmez, Bütün Anneler Melektir*). Their motherly love becomes the reason for their fixed position and their one-dimensional character. This adds to the stereotyping of the mother figures also, because they are not complex but predictable. Their action in the face of the narrative conflicts is always self-negating and self-sacrificing. Good motherhood is generally constructed over these qualities and mother figures do not question what is expected from them. This reflects another dimension of the issue: rationality versus emotionality. The mind is traditionally assigned to men and the heart to women, and this gendered division becomes more visible within these melodramas, *Meryem Ana ve Oğulları* for example. The narrative equilibrium of the film is disturbed when Meryem (Fatma Girik) discovers that the son to whom she has devoted herself is with the daughter of the mafia leader who already employs her other two sons. Her son tells her that he will marry his sweetheart, quit school and live in the house of the mafia leader. From that moment, Meryem is depicted as almost hysterical. The

scene in which she walks in the streets of Istanbul screaming that she wants her sons back portrays her like a lunatic, like a person who has lost her mind and is incapable of any intelligent, reasonable thought. In the public arena, the domain of men where rationality reigns, Meryem's excessive motherly love emphasizes her inability as a social individual.

Since to love is constructed as the sole duty of the mother and mother's heart as her strength, once the child rejects this loving mother character she is deprived of her main function and left without any reason to live. This is, sometimes made abundantly clear with the actual death of the mother, like in *Anneler ve Kızları*, and sometimes with the mother's estrangement and return to her hometown, like in *Kızım Ayşe,* and sometimes with excessive anger like in *Meryem Ana ve Oğulları*. In these films, narrative complications are more like impediments between a mother's love and her child. Within this framework, it is not surprising that the mother figure resists in the face of such complications, tries to return to the initial love circle that she established between her and the child, clings to her identity as a mother and rejects any other possible identities.

As love is defined as the sole duty of the mother and motherhood is the sole identity of women, working is not an individual choice but a necessity that life brings for these women. It is a matter of survival. In that sense, working becomes part of the mother's repertoire of sacrifice. It should also be emphasized that in most of the selected melodramas women are portrayed working in jobs they can perform at home. When mothers work in public domain, like in *Anneler ve Kızları* and *Nefret*, they are criticized by their children as not having loved them enough or having neglected them and the family for the sake of their work.

The association of women with the heart leads them to be the sole provider of the love presented as the main ingredient necessary to keep a family together. Usually, sacrifice that is made out of this love brings the narrative solution. That is why; when the father's death does not present a threat to the unity and existence of the family: he is not the provider of love, but labor, which is replaceable. Male characters are presented as incapable of the qualities as caring for and raising children. Therefore, when the mother figure dies the nuclear family faces the

threat of vanishing. In *Yavrularım*, when Seher (Hülya Koçyiğit) finds out about that she is going to die she first tries to find a new wife for her husband and then decides to give her children to foster parents. The scene in which Seher and her husband Cemal (Çetin Tekindor) discuss Seher's disease and what they are going to do about the children, Cemal asks Seher "You are their mother and you love them. I am their father, don't I love them?" and Seher replies "You love them but it's not enough, you need a woman and they need a mother". Therefore, caring is represented as more than a woman's duty a biological given, and mother's love is differentiated from a father's love; this love is defined as an intrinsic capability that cannot be performed by men. In that sense, love becomes a means of repression that confines women to be the ever-present caregiver and sole provider of whatever a child needs.

5.1.4. Nature-Culture

Patriarchal view holds that woman is closer to nature than man because of her physiological qualities and ability to give birth. This vision brings the definition of motherhood as the one who gives birth to a child. In that sense, motherhood becomes a biological destiny and womanhood is also described through this biological capacity by the patriarchal ideology. In the selected melodramas, motherhood as a biological imperative is one of the prominent themes and the reason for maternal sacrifice. Mothers negate themselves out of love and their love is presented as natural part of their roles as mothers. Since the mother is defined as the one who brings the child into the world, she is then expected to act in a certain predetermined way. The boundaries of what a mother "should" do for her child is unchanging and leaves women with fixed roles which brings about the stereotypical mother figures who, under different circumstances, act the same: "to sacrifice and do whatever it takes to protect and save her child". Melodramas foreground the primacy of being the biological mother, the "real" mother. Biological motherhood is juxtaposed with surrogate motherhood where the biological mother is depicted as an asexual "angel in the house", pure and ever-loving, while the surrogate mother is portrayed as sexually available, evil, selfish and inconsiderate (*Ana Hakkı Ödenmez, Kızım Ayşe, Annem Bırakmam Seni*). If

the child and the mother are separated for any reason, the child always longs for his or her biological mother. Even if the father is caring, the place of the mother cannot be filled by anyone but the biological mother herself (*Bütün Anneler Melektir*).

In the selected melodramas, as mentioned before, the mother is defined as the one who gives birth, with associations like pure, ever-loving, and self-negating. However, the ideological nature of this definition becomes clearer when the pregnancy does not happen within a marriage, at which point motherhood becomes a burden rather than "the biggest fulfillment of a woman's life", and her biological capacity becomes a curse. In *Fatma Bacı*, when Fatma (Yıldız Kenter) finds out that her daughter Halime (Fatma Belgen) is pregnant with the child of a married man, Fatma accuses Halime of being dishonorable and tries to keep her inside the house so that neighbors do not see her. Halime's pregnancy becomes a punishment because patriarchal ideology defines motherhood only within the confines of the heterosexual union, marriage. When Halime leaves home and come back with the news that her fiancé will marry her, Fatma becomes happy and acknowledges her daughter's pregnancy and her position as a mother-to-be. When pregnancy does not happen within the marriage, it generally leads to the destruction of the female character, as it did in *Kızım Ayşe*. When Ayşe's (Necla Nazır) best friend Melahat gets pregnant and is rejected by her boyfriend, her pregnancy becomes a curse. In her conversation with her boyfriend, she begs him to marry her so that the child would not be illegitimate. Therefore, the definition of motherhood is not valid unless the woman is married. If she is not, it becomes a matter of honor and she is punished, as in Melahat's case, who dies while having an abortion. The narrative economy of the film does not allow her to exist within a context outside of marriage. Within this framework, the sanctity of the marriage and the holiness of the child are protected and spectators are shown what happens if one tries to act outside of the patriarchal norms.

Assignment of nature to women and its association with concepts like heart, emotion, and instinct is valid for the construction of motherhood within the selected melodramas. The good mother is portrayed as the one who thinks with

her heart, who acts in line with her motherly instinct and puts the needs and wants of her child above her own. Within this framework, nothing replaces a mother's love and this love could only exist if the mother is the one who bears the child. The primacy of the biology is foregrounded in terms of the juxtaposition of surrogate mother versus biological mother. Although films depict both identities for women, filmic preference is generally for the biological mother, while surrogate mothers are depicted as inconsiderate and self-involved. *Kızım Ayşe* presents both mother images. While Huriye, the biological mother, is constructed as the ever-loving, ever-present and self-negating, Suzan, the surrogate mother of Ayşe's best friend Melahat, is portrayed as a self-involved woman. She plays cards with her friends all night, and she gets up late; she is not involved with Melahat. While Suzan is constructed as the representative of the West, degeneration and destructive freedom, Huriye is valorized as the protector of traditional values, good morals, and perseverance. The film reproves Suzan's way of mothering by punishing her with Melahat's tragic death. Huriye, on the other hand is rewarded for her determination to protect her daughter against external threats: Ayşe's recognition of her mother's virtuous qualities and her self-sacrificing nature brings the narrative resolution.

Bütün Anneler Melektir is another example in which the biological aspect of motherhood is emphasized. It tells the story of the reunion of a family divided over a misunderstanding. Selma (Hülya Koçyiğit) had to leave her husband Fikret (Ediz Hun) and her daughter Zeynep (Nergis Cansevdi) after being accused of infidelity. Fikret discovers the truth years later, finds Selma and asks her to return to their home. Since Zeynep is told that her mother is dead, Selma is presented as her father's future wife and her future step-mother, but Zeynep rejects her on the grounds that she is not her "real mother". Through Zeynep the film communicates the biological mother's importance to her child. The dialogues between Zeynep and Selma emphasize this main theme. She tells Selma that "every child needs its own mother and no child can be happy without its mother". Whatever Selma does to close the gap between her and Zeynep, she fails because Zeynep sees her attempts to bond as a threat to the unity of the family she has established with her father. She expresses that she does not need another mother because she is

satisfied with the memory of her mother, harsh words that Selma continues to accept with dignity. When she realizes that her daughter will not accept her as the new mother she sacrifices herself again and decides to leave the house. The film centralizes the child's needs and accordingly Selma, as the ever-loving and self-sacrificing mother, does not hesitate to lose her family again to preserve her child's happiness. Narrative resolution is attained when it is revealed that Selma is Zeynep's "real" mother after all. The film puts forward that no one but the "real" (biological) mother can satisfy the needs and desires of the child. It communicates that no other person, including the father, can perform the tasks of a mother: unconditionally loving and caring, unquestioning forgiveness, unhesitating sacrifice. Within this framework, motherhood is defined again within the confines of the biological production. The qualities like loving and caring are attached exclusively to women, who are believed to be born with these capabilities. The film legitimizes the traditional view that the child needs her mother, the mother needs her child and it is solely the mother who can satisfy the child's physiological and psychological requirements.

The mother-child bond is valorized within the films, especially the instinctive relation between mother as the person who brings the child to the world and the child itself. This deep innate bonding advances the view that women are closer to nature and the exclusivity of the mother as the primary caregiver. *Annem Bırakmam Seni* focuses on this aspect of motherhood as patriarchal ideology defines it, telling the story of a mother and daughter who are separated as a result of a scam. Fatma (Canan Perver) loses her mind after being told that her daughter Ayşe (Küçük Ceylan) is dead. However, her daughter is not dead but has been abducted by a couple. The narrative complications start afterwards: Ayşe feels the absence of motherly love. Her step-mother, whom she thinks is her biological mother, does not care about her. In the absence of such maternal love, Ayşe's grandmother (Adile Naşit) is positioned as her mother and becomes the source of love and care for Ayşe. The film, like earlier melodrama examples, positions the surrogate mother as evil and constructs a good mother figure for contrast. In this case, the grandmother. Adile Naşit's star personality reflects on the character; she is famous for the motherly characters she played in cinema, and the "good

mother" stereotype is empowered with her star persona. However, the film communicates that the mother's love cannot be substituted because Ayşe continues to verbalize her longing for her mother's care and affection. After long years of separation, Ayşe and Fatma meet coincidentally during Ayşe's trip to the countryside and from the first moment, Ayşe feels deep love for Fatma. The film reflects this peculiar bond between mother and child in an almost a mystical manner, as if an unseen force draws them to each other. Thus the film seems to suggest that the mother-child bond is a natural connection beyond rationality, further legitimizing the traditional view that woman as mother is closer to nature. The romanticization of the maternal love finds voice in Ayşe's dialogue with Fatma where she explains her irrational attraction to Fatma. Ayşe tells Fatma "You have such a powerful maternal love. I have never seen such love in my father, neither in my mother". Later, Ayşe tells to her friend that she has an unexplainable urge to call Fatma her mother. The resolution is attained with the revealation of the truth and Ayşe's discovery that that Fatma is her biological mother. Although the film's resolution legitimizes the patriarchal vision of motherhood as synonymous with the woman who gives birth to a child, its excessive portrayal of mother-love and exaggeration of a compassionate bond between mother and child betrays the ideological nature of such description. This complies with one of the argued features of melodrama revealing the oppressiveness of patriarchal ideology through excess.

The patriarchal description of motherhood based on the reproductive capacities of women is also present in *Yavrularım,* as seen in the dialogue. While expressing her ideas on motherhood, Seher (Hülya Koçyiğit) tells her husband that "the more children a woman has the more she becomes mother". Within this context, since motherhood is the outcome of biological capacities, it also leads to the traditional division of labor that assigns the tasks of loving and caring exclusively to women. This approach becomes more visible when Seher finds out that she is going to die of cancer. After this incident disturbs the narrative equilibrium, Seher does not consider her husband, the father, as someone who would be able to provide for her children's future, playing out the patriarchal view that only a mother that can satisfy the needs and wants of her children. Initially, she tries to find a future wife

and a mother in an attempt to refashion the nuclear family in preparation for her absence, in line with traditional gender roles. She suggests to her husband that he considers their widowed neighbor, who she believes would be a good mother for her children and a good wife for her husband. When her husband rejects this arrangement, she changes her position and decides to give her children to foster parents. From this point, the film breaks the norms of motherhood defined by dominant ideology. This solution puts forward a different approach to the definition of motherhood: within this framework, motherhood is defined not in terms of biology but in terms of love and care that can be provided by any woman with this capacity. This love and care is not presented as the outcome of some natural predispositions but as a humanistic quality that can exist in every woman. Although the film still does not consider a single father to be up to the task of raising a child, it attempts to dismiss the tie between motherhood and biology, between woman and nature. It continues to present the nuclear family as the ideal environment for the child, but delineates this ideal from biological parents. In that sense, the film presents an alternative view of motherhood and parenthood. Through the final scene, in which Seher is selected as the "mother of the year" for her choice of giving her children to foster parents, the film legitimizes the idea that the mother is not the one who bears the child but the one who cares for the child. She is still a sacrificial mother figure who gave up the time she could have spent with her children until her death, but Seher, unlike the other sacrificial mother figures, is the decision-maker throughout the narrative. She acts as an autonomous individual, following not her heart but her mind. This is another feature of the film that breaks the tie between motherhood and emotionality, woman and heart. She represents the power figure within the family, a dominating character rather than a traditionally passive of mother character in the face of complications. In this case, it is the husband who is the compliant figure.

Within this framework, *Yavrularım* and *Nefret* present similar mother and father figures. In *Nefret* also portrays a powerful mother figure, an individual with the capacity to make her own decisions: Fatma (Fatma Girik) decides to divorce her husband and chooses to raise her daughter alone. The source of her power is presented as her economical independence. The father figure is presented as weak

and unsuccessful which revokes his “right” to be the decision-maker within the husband-wife arrangement.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This thesis is based on the claim that rather than just a biological end, motherhood is a social construct, and that therefore its definition varies across cultures and time. From this perspective, the concept of motherhood cannot be though of as independent of the social and historical context in which it is situated.

Representations of the sacrificial mother in Turkish filmic melodramas between 1965 and 1990 thus reflect the social transformations that Turkish society went through during the period. Internal migration, urbanization, modernization, feminism, etc. affected the gendered nature of social roles and definitions of womanhood and motherhood in Turkish society. This thesis analyzed the ways in which these changes have found echo in the maternal representations of Turkish filmic melodramas, with particular attention paid to the rural-urban, the private-public, the love-labor and the nature-culture dichotomies. Maternal figures are analyzed in terms of the positions they took in the face of the narrative contradictions are constructed over the above-mentioned dichotomies, which I believe provide important insights as to why the cinema of the period preferred certain tropes of motherhood over others.

The rural-urban dichotomy constructed within films like *Anneler ve Kızları, Fatma Bacı, Kızım Ayşe* and *Gülsüm Ana* is presented over the clash between the mother and her children. Children, within this framework, are presented as a battleground where the warring values of the rural and the urban create constant personal dilemmas. While mother figures tried to recreate the rural way of life within the city, with all its manners, traditions, interpersonal relations, children tried to leave them behind and adapt to the urban culture in which they found themselves immersed. Within these films, “to remember one’s roots” is glorified through images of women as mother. This remembrance, on one end, functions as a means of maintaining the status quo in the sense that it rationalizes the difficulty of upward mobility for those who have migrated to the city, and softens the reality of the social hardship of adapting to new urban ways. On the other hand, it

presented women as a virtue to be protected at all costs. Within this framework, "good woman" or "good mother" is defined as the one who carries the old habits of the rural with her and never compromises them. The resolutions of the films also affirm this situation. The child/children are made aware of the pitfalls of the urban life and are saved by their mother's self-sacrifice when the situation becomes critical. Through this sacrifice, their mother shows them how to maintain one's virtue in the face of the city's corruption.

Urbanization showed its impact not only on life styles but also on the relations of production for the newcomers. Within the films, women as mothers who came to the city soon discover that their only option is to engage in manual jobs like housecleaning or door keeping, because the skills that they used to earn money with in the rural village (planting seeds, collecting the harvest, animal husbandry) had no validity in their new urban setting. "I do whatever I can to take care of my children" is one of the common lines in films that depict such mother characters. These jobs enclose her within the confines of the private domain; she is hardly seen outside of the home she works in or the apartment she is in charge of.

This foregrounds another dichotomy: the private-public. She leaves these isolated spaces only when there is a crisis that requires her personal involvement. Therefore, while the private realm is presented as a refuge, the public is depicted as a source of problems for women. However, in films like *Yavrularım* and *Nefret* we see the changes in such depictions: mother characters become businesswoman or entrepreneurs who are experts in what they do, part of the public life. They participate in executive meetings, go to restaurants and take vacations. They exhibit more complex identities other than being only a mother. This can be assessed as the impact of the second-wave feminist movement in Turkey that vocalized questions about women's identities, their participation in social life, their problems in the work life, etc. These films depict more versatile, empowered mother figures who have individual desires and the power to change the conditions of their life. Moreover, in contrast to the asexual mother figures of the previous period, these women exhibit their sexuality. In *Yavrularım*, Seher is

shown in bed flirting with her husband, and in *Nefret* Fatma after divorcing her husband, finds a boyfriend and falls in love with him.

However, there are continuities as well as changes in terms of women's position in the face of the public – private dichotomy of the 1980s. Unlike earlier examples, women are now portrayed within the public domain, they are familiar with the ways of this realm and they seem to be in control of their environment. However their womanhood and motherhood are still assessed through similar criteria like altruism, and unconditional love, which can be considered as the areas of pressure for women as mothers.

It is important to note that although in *Nefret* the mother figure is economically independent and seems more emancipated, she is constantly living in conflict between her career, family and love and is forced to choose between them. In this respect, she seems to have her career and her job as the only stable things in her life and rather than happiness, they bring destruction.

The stereotype of the "ideal mother" of the earlier filmic melodramas that emphasized the supremacy of the biological tie seems to change in films produced after 1980s. For example, in filmic melodramas like *Ana Hakkı Ödenmez* and *Bütün Anneler Melektir*, the "good" and "bad" mother definitions are constructed over "biological" and "surrogate" dichotomies. Surrogate mothers are depicted as indifferent, self-absorbed, in false consciousness with the "westernization" and "modernization", or else the child does not want the surrogate mother and claims that no one can take the place of the real mother. Biology, on the other hand, is depicted as providing women with the ability to know what is best interest of her child and to act naturally for the good of it. On the other hand, in *Yavrularım* we see Seher rewarded for giving her children to foster parents because she thinks they will provide the best care. Seher's decision to give her children away breaks the essentialized notion of motherhood that assigns the task of mothering to the biological mother. Instead, the film shows that another person can have the capacity to give the care and love that a child needs, and that motherhood is more about this emotional capacity and willingness to bear a child than simple biology. However, the notion of continuity that was mentioned earlier also applies to the

nature – culture dichotomy that exists in *Yavrularım*. It is evident that the definition of motherhood shows dissimilarities when compared to earlier melodramas, and in that sense Seher can be regarded as an unconventional mother example. But at the same time, her choice to give up her children to foster parents rather than leaving them with their father reflects the ideological view that man is the producer of culture and thus unable to fulfill the emotional, spiritual, "guiding" role of the idealized mother. Moreover, the film puts the nuclear family as the only legitimate setting in which to raise a child by denying the father the option of keeping his children with him after the death of his wife. When Seher tells him that she decided to give their children away he does not object to her decision which can be read as the affirmation of his traditional role as the generator of culture rather than an agent of nature.

The final dichotomy examined within the films was that of love – labor. This love implied motherly love, and is presented as the source of the self-sacrifice made for the good of the children or to preserve family unity. This motherly love sometimes necessitated mother figures to abandon their children for the others' good (*Ana Hakkı Ödenmez, Bütün Anneler Melektir*), to become murderers to save their children (*Fatma Bacı, Kızım Ayşe, Ana Ocağı, Meryem Ana ve Oğulları, Gülsüm Ana*), or the suffering that was brought by this divine love caused them to die (*Anneler ve Kızları*). In these films mother figures do not question their action, they just sacrifice themselves out of their motherly love, a sacrifice presented as a "call of duty" to protect the children who are presented as the center of their mothers' universe. However, mother representations in the films after 1980 reflect a different picture: motherly love is still one of the main motivators of the sacrifice, but the act of sacrifice is an outcome of rational decisions more than the emotional impulses or instinctive behavior. For example, in *Yavrularım,* before deciding to give her children to foster parents, Seher considers the realities of the situation, weighs her options and reaches a solution. She sacrifices the time she could have spent with her children until her death and gives them away for their own good. In that sense, the film presents Seher as a woman with self determination who can take multiple subject positions in the face of the contradictions, a multidimensional character. Similarly, *Nefret* also presents

a mother figure in control of the events that shape her rather than a passive entity acting according to the developments that life brings. Fatma rejects the ideological mother-child dyad and resists the role that her daughter Hülya tries to impose on her. The film differs from other earlier examples in the sense that it exhibits the dilemmas that Fatma goes through while trying to build a relationship with her troubled daughter. She oscillates between the motherly love that she has for her child and her own personal desires.

With all this in mind, my analysis shows that between 1965 and 1990 it is not the basic traits of motherhood – unconditional love and sacrifice – that seem to change through the representations of filmic melodramas, but women's relationship with motherhood and the definition of unconditional love and sacrifice in relation to motherhood.

Today, the stereotypical self-sacrificing mother images continue to be constructed and disseminated through serial TV melodramas. These melodramas are very popular among women and their mother representations still attract the female audience in large numbers. I believe it would be worth exploring what makes these sacrificial mother images popular and attractive within our time's social, economical and cultural context? What similarities and differences do they exhibit compared to earlier filmic melodramas such as the ones analyzed here? These questions can be good starting points for further study within the field.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: ***Ana Hakkı Ödenmez***

1968 / Director: Osman F. Seden / Cast: Fatma Girik, Ediz Hun, Önder Somer, Funda Gürçen.

Plot: Orhan (Ediz Hun) and Fatma (Fatma Girik) is a happily married couple with a baby. One day, the couple discovers that the baby has a fatal disease and needs to be operated on in order to survive. Not being able to find enough money for the surgery, Orhan and Fatma suffer in despair. At the same time, Orhan's boss's daughter is in love with him and is putting pressure on her father to find a way to unite and marry them. Then, Orhan's boss makes him an offer: he will pay for the child's surgery is Orhan will marry his daughter. Orhan declines the offer. Hearing that Orhan has rejected her father's offer, the girl goes to Fatma and repeats the offer to her. Fatma, after a hard decision making process, chooses her baby's life over her husband's love and after setting up a scene that will force Orhan to divorce her, leave the house. After long years in misery, she returns to see her daughter. However, Orhan's current wife (his boss's daughter) threatens her, saying that if Fatma does not stop seeing her daughter, she will stop paying for the girl's treatment. At the end, Fatma kills the boss's daughter. She goes to jail but the truth is revealed; Orhan forgives her and they are reunited as a family.

Appendix 2: ***Anneler ve Kızları***

1971 / Director: Ö. Lütfi Akad / Cast: Yıldız Kenter, Neşe Karaböcek, İzzet Günay, Leyla Kenter, Yonca Koray.

Plot: Fatma (Yıldız Kenter) is a widow who comes to Istanbul with her daughter Iraz (Leyla Kenter) after the death of her husband. Neşe (Neşe Karaböcek) is a single mother with a daughter who is trying to make a living by sewing pullovers in her house while practicing to become a singer. Their destinies overlap and Fatma starts to work for Neşe in return for food and shelter. The years go by and Neşe becomes a famous singer. Over the years, Fatma's relation with her daughter develops into a problematic one: Iraz blames her mother for not understanding urban life and not doing enough to adapt to the necessities of that life, and debases her as Fatma takes care of the daily affairs in Neşe's home. Fatma tries to find a way to reconcile, but Iraz rejects her. When Iraz leaves home Fatma gets sick and soon afterwards dies in sorrow. Iraz regrets her attitude towards Fatma but she is too late.

Appendix 3: ***Bütün Anneler Melektir***

1971 / Director: Orhan Aksoy / Cast: Hülya Koçyiğit, Metin Serezli, Ediz Hun, Nergis Cansevdi.

Plot: Selma (Hülya Koçyiğit) and Fikret (Ediz Hun) is a happily married couple with a baby girl named Zeynep (Nergis Cansevdi) who get divorced over a misunderstanding. Fikret believes Selma was unfaithful and tells his daughter that her mother died of an illness. The years pass and Selma becomes a famous singer, but suffers because she cannot see Zeynep. Meanwhile, Zeynep grows into a fine teenage girl. Eventually the truth is revealed and Fikret wants to get back together with Selma, a task which is complicated because Zeynep does not know that Selma is her biological mother. For the psychological health of their daughter, the couple decides not to tell her; therefore, Selma is introduced as her father's fiancée. Zeynep refuses Selma and has difficulties accepting her father's marriage. After long disputes and Selma's attempts to bond with Zeynep, Selma understands that she cannot live up to the fantasy of a dead mother and decides to leave the house for her daughter's happiness. However, before she leaves the truth is revealed and Selma, Fikret and Zeynep are reunited.

Appendix 4: ***Fatma Bacı***

1972 / Director: Halit Refiğ / Cast: Yıldız Kenter, Şükran Güngör, Fatma Belgen, Leyla Kenter.

Plot: After her husband is killed in a fight, Fatma Bacı (Yıldız Kenter) moves to the city with her three children and gets a job as a doorkeeper. The years pass and her children grow. Fatma's daughters always complain about the lack of money, how their income is scarce. Her oldest daughter, who works in a tailoring boutique, finds a married man with money, leaves the house and moves in with him. Her middle daughter, a fine art student, dates an upper-class boy and lies about her own background in order to enter his circle of friends. When Fatma finds out about it, she is devastated. Her youngest child, a boy who works in a car repair shop, is obsessed with his father's killer and plans to murder him after he is released from jail. Fatma Bacı does all she can to hold her family together, but she fails. Her daughters dissociate themselves from her and their life in the basement; her son is not interested in her plans to send him to Germany to work. At the end, Fatma shoots her husband's killer to prevent her son from becoming a criminal. She goes to jail, and her sacrifice is what finally brings her children together.

Appendix 5: *Kızım Ayşe*

1974 / Director: Yücel Çakmaklı / Cast: Yıldız Kenter, Şükran Güngör, Necla Nazır, Deniz Erkanat, Hamit Yıldırım.

Plot: After the death of her husband, Huriye Bacı (Fatma Girik), a hard-working and enduring Anatolian woman, moves to the city in order to provide a university education for her daughter Ayşe (Necla Nazır). She tries to make a living for both of them, but she cannot manage to earn enough money to cover their living expenses and Ayşe's education. As a last resort Fatma goes to Kazım Ağa (Şükran Güngör), whose daughter Melahat (Deniz Erkanat) grew up knowing Fatma as her milk mother. Kazım has become a successful businessman and invites them to live in his house. Meanwhile, Ayşe enters Melahat's circle of friends and starts to enjoy life outside school and home, which creates a tension between Fatma and Ayşe. Afterwards, Fatma returns to her hometown. Melahat, on the other hand, gets pregnant and her boyfriend refuses to acknowledge the child. Zeynep, intending to persuade him, goes to his apartment where he tries to rape her. Fatma saves her daughter. They are reunited after Fatma gets out of the jail.

Appendix 6: ***Ana Ocağı***

1977 / Director: Yücel Çakmaklı / Cast: Kadir İnanır, Fatma Girik, Hülya Tuğlu.

Plot: Fatma (Fatma Girik) and Rıza are a happy family with a son and a daughter. After Rıza is killed in a syndicate dispute, Fatma takes over his job and starts to make a living for her children. As years pass, the children grow. Her son Kadir (Kadir İnanır) works for a mafia leader, her daughter becomes a tailor. When Fatma discovers that Kadir does not go to his job, she becomes furious. She does everything she can do to find him a decent job, but fails. As the story evolves, Kadir gets lost in mafia business. Conflicting interests lead him get him tangled in a disadvantageous position: once the favorite hit man of the mafia leader, Kadir now becomes an enemy to eliminate. Fatma, in order to prevent her son from being killed, sacrifices herself and shoots the mafia leader. In the end, her son is saved and her husband is avenged.

Appendix 7: ***Meryem Ana ve Oğulları***

1977 / Director: Yücel Uçanoğlu / Cast: Fatma Girik, Mahmut Cevher, Erol Evgin, Serdar Gökhan, Meral Orhonsay.

Plot: After her husband is killed in a car accident, Meryem (Fatma Girik) comes to Istanbul with her three boys. While growing, two of them join the mafia and Meryem expels them from the house and severs communications with them. Her youngest, Kemal (Mahmut Cevher), becomes a promising medicine student. However, Kemal falls in love with the mafia leader's daughter and leaves the house. Meryem is infuriated. She appears on television and announces that the mafia leader stole her boys. The tension increases when the mafia leader asks the boys to prevent their mother from talking in the media. The boys decide to leave the mafia and return to their mother's home. Along the way they become involved in a gun fight and two of them are killed. Meryem accuses the mafia leader and shoots him to avenge her sons. Although her older sons were killed, she saves her youngest.

Appendix 8: *Gülsüm Ana*

1982 / Director: Memduh Ün / Cast: Fatma Girik, Özlem Onursal, Alev Sayın, Günay Girik.

Plot: After her husband's death in a blood feud, Gülsüm (Fatma Girik) moves to Istanbul with her children. Her only wish is to provide her children with a good education and a good standard of living. As a result of various events, her eldest daughter Zeliha (Özlem Onursal) gets involved with a married businessman and bears a child. Her other daughter, Elif (Alev Sayın), who is continuing her art education, enters the circle of her upper-class boyfriend, where her lower-class background makes her feel like an outcast. Gulsum's son tries to kill his father's murderer, and to save her son, Gulsum shoots the man. Her children recognize her value and unify once again along their mother's wish: her sacrifice brings the family together.

Appendix 9: ***Nefret***

1984 / Director: Osman F. Seden / Cast: Fatma Girik, Hülya Avşar, Bulut Aras, Metin Serezli.

Plot: Fatma (Fatma Girik) is a successful businesswoman who has been unable to attain happiness in her marriage. Apart from her unsatisfactory relation with her husband Metin (Metin Serezli), she also has a troubled relationship with her daughter Hülya (Hülya Avşar). When Fatma finds out about her husband's infidelity she files for divorce, which further strains her relationship with her daughter, as the Hülya blames her mother for the failed marriage. In revenge, Hülya gets involved with her mother's new boyfriend Fikret and gets pregnant. However, Fikret does not agree to marry her and suggests keeping the relationship a secret in order to marry Fatma for financial reasons. Hülya shoots Fikret and Fatma confesses to the crime to save her daughter. Metin reveals the truth behind their divorce and says to Hülya that he is the one to blame. Hülya understands the value of maternal love and Hülya confesses to the crime. Fatma, Metin and Hülya make peace and the family is reunited.

Appendix 10: ***Yavrularım***

1984 / Director: Bilge Olgaç / Cast: Hülya Koçyiğit, Çetin Tekindor.

Plot: A worker's family returns from Germany to Turkey for good. Seher (Hülya Koçyiğit), Cemal (Çetin Tekindor) and their five children buy a house in the suburbs, and build a blow fish farm in their garden, in which Seher breeds fish to sell, in order to build a new life. The family's happiness is disturbed when Seher is diagnosed with a fatal disease and finds she must plan for her children's future. As much as she wants their children to be with their father, she doubts that this solution will be for the best. As a result, she decides to give her children to foster parents, where she believes they will get the best care and have better educational opportunities. Before she dies she completes the procedures and is selected "the mother of the year" for such bold action.

Appendix 11: ***Annem Bırakmam Seni***

1987 / Director: Temel Gürsu / Cast: Küçük Ceylan, Adile Naşit, Canan Perver, Cemal Gencer.

Plot: Fatma (Canan Perver) and Kadir (Cemal Gencer) are happy newly weds expecting a baby. Kadir goes to Arabia for work, and Fatma starts as a cleaning lady in the house of a young couple. After Fatma gives birth, the couple kidnaps the baby girl and Fatma goes mad. The couple's intention is to swindle the grandmother (Adile Naşit), who refuses to acknowledge the man whom her daughter married without her consent. The coming of the baby melts the ice within the family. Ayşe (Küçük Ceylan) grows under the loving protection of her grandmother. However, she always longs for a maternal love that she has not been able to find in her mother. While visiting her best friend's farm she sees Fatma and instantly an unexplainable connection between them is established. Eventually the truth is revealed and Fatma and Ayşe reunite.