

**REPRESENTATIONS OF MINORITIES IN CONTEMPORARY TURKISH
CINEMA UNDER THE SPECTRUM OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY**



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ABSTRACT

REPRESENTATIONS OF MINORITIES IN CONTEMPORARY TURKISH CINEMA UNDER THE SPECTRUM OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

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This dissertation discusses representations of minorities in contemporary Turkish cinema under the spectrum of postcolonial studies. Turkey is among a few countries that has never been colonized, yet, it has been subjected to a kind of colonial pressure in terms of its relations with Europe particularly during the modernization period in the late-Ottoman and Early-Republican era. In the last few decades, this unique position has increased the debates on Turkey's postcoloniality, especially in the fields of history and international relations. This dissertation is based on Homi K. Bhabha's argument that postcolonialism is not a phenomenon of the past but rather an area of relations that manifests itself especially in the cultural sphere today. And because no culture has remained unaffected from colonial experience, one way or the other, when it comes to center/periphery relations and minorities in contemporary societies, it is possible to discuss these societies regardless of whether they have a colonial past or not. With regards to this dissertation, the transformation in the representations of minorities in new Turkish Cinema that emerged in the 1990s has a central importance. In this context, the dissertation uses Edward Said's concept of orientalism, Bhabha's concepts of mimicry, mockery, hybridization, and Third Space, and Hamid Naficy's accented cinema as its theoretical framework and aims to analyze the representations of minorities in nine films. The selected group of films is classified according to Naficy's categorization of journeys of identity; journeys of quest, homeseeking, home founding and return.

Keywords: Contemporary Turkish Cinema, Postcolonial theory, Representations of minorities, Orientalism, Accented cinema

ÖZ

POSTKOLONYAL TEORİ AÇISINDAN ÇAĞDAŞ TÜRKİYE SİNEMASINDA AZINLIKLARIN TEMSİLLERİ

Göztepe, Mustafa Orhan
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Bu çalışma Çağdaş Türkiye Sinemasında azınlık temsillerini postkolonyal teori ışığında tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Postkolonyal teori her ne kadar sömürge sonrası ilişkilere odaklansa da, Türkiye'nin özgün durumu; bir yandan sömürge olmaması öte yandan Avrupa ülkeleri ile ilişkisinin Geç-Osmanlı ve Erken-Cumhuriyet dönemlerindeki modernleşme sürecinde baskın bir politika olarak kendini göstermesi açısından bir çeşit sömürgevari baskıya maruz kalması, son yıllarda postkolonyalizm tartışmasının özellikle tarih ve uluslararası ilişkiler gibi alanlarda yapılmasına olanak tanımaktadır. Bu çalışma, Homi K. Bhabha'nın postkolonyalizmi geçmişle ilişkili bir olgu olmaktan çıkartarak günümüzde özellikle kültürel alanda kendini gösteren bir ilişkiler alanı olduğu varsayımından yola çıkmaktadır. Dolayısıyla günümüzde hiçbir kültür, o ya da bu şekilde sömürge deneyiminden uzak kalmamış olduğu için günümüz toplumlarında çevre ve taşra ilişkileri ile azınlıklar söz konusu olduğunda bu toplulukların sömürge olup olmamalarına bakılmaksızın ele alınmalarına olanak tanınmıştır. 1990'lı yıllardan itibaren ortaya çıkan Yeni Türkiye Sineması açısından da kimlik temsil rejimlerindeki değişim, merkezi bir öneme sahiptir. Bu bağlamda, Edward Said'in Şarkiyatçılık kavramı, Bhabha'nın terminolojisinde yer alan taklit, parodi, melezleşme ve üçüncü alan kavramları ve Hamid Naficy'nin aksanlı sinema olarak tanımladığı sürgün veya diaspora deneyimlerinin sinemada nasıl şekillendiğine ilişkin çalışması, tezin teorik çerçevesi olarak belirlenmiş ve ele alınan filmlerdeki azınlık temsilleri bu çerçeve üzerinden incelenmiştir. Çalışmada yer alan filmler, Naficy'nin kimlik yolculukları sınıflandırmasına göre kategorize edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çağdaş Türkiye Sineması, Postkolonyal kuram, Azınlıkların temsilleri, Şarkiyatçılık, Aksanlı Sinema

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi
CUP	The Committee of Union and Progress
DVD	Digital Video Disc
MGK	Milli Güvenlik Konseyi
MKM	Mezopotamya K�lt�r Merkezi
OPDA	Ottoman Public Debt Administration
TBMM	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
TSK	T�rk Silahlı Kuvvetleri
Y�K	Y�ksek�ğretim Kurulu

Chapter 1

Introduction

The right to narrate might inhabit a hesitant brush stroke, be glimpsed in a gesture that fixes a dance movement, become visible in a camera angle that stops your heart. Suddenly in painting, dance, or cinema you rediscover your senses, and in that process you understand something profound about yourself, your historical moment, and what gives value to a life lived in a particular town, at a particular time, in particular social and political conditions. (Bhabha 2003, p.180)

Identity is not a natural existence. It is also not fixed in time and space. It is constructed in and through discourse concerning different relations of power. Therefore, identity is always ambivalent. It is in-between these moments of ambivalence, identity constructions become visible in the cultural context through representations. According to Hall, (1997) “[r]epresentation is a complex business and, especially when dealing it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilizes fears and anxieties in the viewer, at deeper levels than we can explain in a simple, common-sense way” (p.226). Cinema as a representation system does not only produce but also reflect existing identities through hybrid characters and ambivalent narratives. Homi Bhabha (1994) suggests that the homogeneous narratives of the nation are disseminated and deconstructed through the narratives of exiles, emigres, minorities and marginalize peoples. Therefore, in order to understand the narratives of minorities within cinema in Turkey, first, it is necessary to understand *Yeşilçam* tradition.

Yeşilçam is the name of Turkish film industry, which lived its heyday in the 1960s as the sole mass entertainment. With its star-system, high box office revenue and over three hundred films that were produced annually, *Yeşilçam* was a profitable ideological force to be reckoned with. Since the mid-1960s, rural-to-urban migration was one of the most discussed topics in *Yeşilçam* cinema. Both in comedies and melodramas, *Yeşilçam* managed certain tensions and dreams of the transient population regarding modernization/westernization through films set in both the big city and the countryside. It is a common trope in *Yeşilçam* to represent the downfall of its migrant population, who for economic reasons, had to migrate to the big cities in

the West. Once in the western city, migrants face socio-economic problems (Güçhan 1992, p.168) and films most often have bleak endings. Regardless of genre, these films, which dominated *Yeşilçam* productions in the 1960s and in the 1970s, conveyed anxieties closely related to the processes of Westernization and modernization. With the Arabesque films (Kuyucak-Esen 2019, p.126) of 1970s, the issue of migration and the character of the ignorant migrant became even more widespread. These films banalyzed the already-constructed dichotomy of the rich and immoral urbanite / poor and moral migrant. Although these films approach internal migration as a social phenomenon that continued with gradual speed from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, their approach to their subject matter is reduced to the stories of “climbing the social ladder without addressing or questioning the underlying socio-economic and political reasons for rural-to-urban migration. Late-1970s also saw the production of films about immigration especially about *gastarbeiters* who immigrated to Germany (Ulusay 2008, p.162).

With such a strong stereotype and dichotomy of the East and the West, it is important to look at how the land itself that is associated with a particular group of people is represented because in terms of the representation of Kurdish minorities, *Yeşilçam* relied on its most common trope, the dichotomy of the East and the West. According to Koçer and Göztepe (2017) “until the 1990s, *Yeşilçam* constructed the rural/East as hostile, uncivilized, untamed and backward with its snowy mountains, barren lands and hellish steppes; a place governed by feudal lords in the land and bandits in the mountains” (p.55). Kurdish population who are represented to live in the rural East were constructed accordingly. Illiterate and sickly, they were the people from the mountains who can be “recognized by their black shalvar (loose pants), their poverty, and their lack of proper discourse in the official language” (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 91) and from their “archaic feudal customs involved *başlık parası* (bride's treasure), *kuma* (second wife), *berdel* (bride exchange), bloodshed, and smuggling” (Yücel 2008, pp. 35-61). In both comedies and dramatizations set in the big city or in the countryside, being Kurdish as an ethnic character was not addressed. Rather, these films “used Kurdish characters and the geography of their homeland without giving a name or language, but rather with an Orientalizing gaze” (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p.91). Kurdish was demonstrably evoked through the use of Kurdish names, an oriental pronunciation, and the mention of oriental urban areas as the characters’ main

residence, thus linking the characters' personalities to a topographical space: The East. Kurdish characters were developed as Turks living in the East and communicating in Turkish. Müslüm Yücel (2008) investigates representations of Kurdish identity in Turkish cinema and claims that until the 1970s, Kurdishness was manifested by superficial side characters who are always portrayed by Turkish actors. Even though migration and the realistic tendency in Turkish cinema make Kurdish characters apparent in the films, their representation was limited and almost always they were constructed as “janitor, helper, toady and runner” (Yücel 2008, p. 250). A particular exception to this common trope is Yılmaz Güney whose films address the Kurdish issue and convey the fears and oppression of the population in a socio-realist aesthetic and narrative style.

Even though, their representations were either non-existent or stereotypical, minorities have a significant place for *Yeşilçam* industry. Because they worked within the cinema industry “from production to movie theater management, from acting to direction of photography, from directing to editing in almost every field and lead the way” (Balcı 2013, p.61). Yet, they were never given the leading roles and minority issues were not discussed. Rather minorities remained in secondary roles and utilized as comedic purposes, as people who have funny accents and customs. This is also in tune with the eulogy show tradition in the Ottoman culture and entertainment life. Dilara Balcı compiles the examples of minority representations in *Yeşilçam* up to 80s. She (2013) argues that “Greek, Armenian and Jewish representations are present in Turkish cinema; but those characters have been presented to the audience with generalities, simplifications and stereotypes that have been constructed for centuries, rather than a realistic perspective” (p.231). In addition, Balcı (2013) highlights the fact that until the end of 1970s, minorities went under a process of Turkification, lost their identity, or were antagonized through negative stereotypes (p.235).

The 1970s was a time of economic problems, which exacerbated with global economic crisis and the rise in oil prices. In addition, Turkey was witnessing a severe political instability due to the conflict between the left-wing and the right-wing ideologies and their political parties. The conflict in the parliament soon resulted in deadly conflicts in the streets and on September 12th, 1980, Turkey witnessed yet another military intervention. Amidst all the socio-economic and political chaos, *Yeşilçam* struggled to continue film production and turned away from its family-

oriented melodramas and comedies to low budgets films and adult entertainment. However, the 1980 *coup d'etat* wiped out the film industry as it did to many aspects of cultural life in Turkey and it was not until the 1990s that cinema in Turkey started to regain its place in the entertainment industry.

The 1990s was a turbulent era for Turkish socio-economic and political life. In the economy, Turkey witnessed a very high unemployment, interest and inflation rate and the increase in domestic and foreign debts. Internally terrorism peaked in 1993, was first stopped in 1994, and was taken under military control in 1997 (Oran, 2018, p.222). The Kurdish issue became a hot topic in Turkish politics. Politically, the tension between the President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit arose due to the intervention of the army to the politics and the corruption in bureaucracy. After this huge crisis between the two top bureaucrats, foreign investments for up to 7.6 billion dollars have left the country. Nearly one million people became unemployed, and the banking interest rate became %700. 1990s was a decade of six coalition governments, five prime ministers, two deep recessions that were followed by the infamous major market crash of 2001.

In a time of such social, economic, and political instability, it is quite common to see the number of film production decrease. Accordingly, Turkish cinema industry, which was already struggling with the fall of its studio system in the late 1970s and the difficulties of the 1980's military intervention in terms of censorship and massive loss of funds, 1990s were quite problematic. Yet, from the ashes of its studio system arose something new, a new group of filmmakers, unbound with the studio system, working as collectives, and exploring new issues that has not yet been tackled in *Yeşilçam* before. Referring to the new political films of 1996-2005, Asuman Suner (2006) suggests that films of that period choose to depict concrete social/historical events and question the hegemonic ideology regarding those events explicitly (p. 253). Those new political films problematize “the national belonging” and “the national identity” in a different way (Suner 2006, p.289). Suner accentuates the description of Robins and Aksoy on Yeşim Ustaoglu's *Güneşe Yolculuk*: “It poses the question that a national community (and cinema) can never pose: the question of change and the conditions of possibility for change” (Robins and Aksoy 2000, p. 205). Asuman Suner (2006) claims that since the second half of 1990's, Turkish cinema began to change in two directions; its popular mainstream cinema changes with the support of large

distribution / screening opportunities and its art-house cinema begins to be funded and recognized with attention and prestigious awards from national and international film festivals. According to Suner (2006), *Eşkiya* (Turgul, 1994) and *Tabutta Rövaşata* (Zaim, 1996), according to Attilâ Dorsay, *Amerikalı* (Gören, 1993) and according to Zahit Atam, *C Blok* (Demirkubuz, 1994) and *İz* (Ustaoglu, 1994) are among the first indicators of a new era of filmmaking; an era which is marked both by spectatorial interest for domestic productions and by the unusual treatment of social context (Suner 2006, pp. 36-37; Dorsay 2004, p.14; Atam 2011, p.83). These films, unlike previous ones, were the harbingers of a new style and unprecedented content. In terms of representation of minorities, Balcı (2013, pp. 235-236) argues that non-Muslim minorities have new possibilities for representation since the beginning of 1990s.

Even though in terms of cinematic productions, representations of minorities were discussed, and domestic audience started to return to domestic productions, 1990s were, as aforementioned, a turbulent time in politics and economy. After the market crash in 2001, the parliament decided on another early election to be held in November 2002, from which the newly formed *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party) (AKP) came out as the sole ruling political party. Its success was cheered with these hopes and the belief that AKP could finally close the book on the turbulent 1990s. Coming from a place outside the relatively familiar political traditions of Turkey in many aspects, AKP was an important factor and a game-changer in Turkish politics. It promised economic and political stability, consolidation of civil society, elimination of deficiencies in fundamental rights and liberties and a pluralistic participatory democracy that sparked the debates on multiculturalism in Turkey in the early 2000's. The debates on multiculturalism have flourished since the early 2000's. In fact, it can be argued that the discussions on ethnic identities, which were ignored or oversimplified as socio-economical, educational, and regional justifications by the official political discourse since the foundation of the Turkish Republic started to gain visibility in the 2000s. One major step was AKP's Democratic Initiative, which was initiated in 2009. The Initiative aimed to improve standards of democracy, freedom, and human rights particularly for ethnic groups such as Armenians, Kurds and Romas and religious minorities of Alevis, Greek Orthodox, and Caferis. According to Koçer & Göztepe (2017), "most of the initial developments

were in the domain of language”¹ (p.57). On 4 April 2013, the government announced the “Commission of Wise People” which included intellectuals, academics and influencers who were assigned to explain the public the steps AKP government was ready to take on the Kurdish issue. In Gramscian terminology, the members of this commission acted as organic intellectuals and aimed to manufacture consent from the majority of the society for the Initiative and minority rights. Even though the initiative ended by mid-2015, its moderate atmosphere created a new cultural space that “allowed old but suppressed issues to be discussed in literature, television programs, music and film, among others” (Köksal 2016, p.136). One of the areas where it is possible to see the effects of the Initiative is in the field of visual arts in general and in cinema in particular. Accordingly, the political dynamics of 2000s led to the emergence of the concept of Kurdish cinema. The term is located into Kurdish spoken productions and “a responsibility to narrate the Kurdish issue but with an explicit and direct representation” (Çiftçi 2009, p.267). The mutism or the denial to speak are common allegories reproduced from Zeki Ökten’s *Sürü* (1978) to Yavuz Turgul’s *Eşkiya* (1996) to signify the prohibition of Kurdish language. Suner (2006) approaches the new political films with Hamid Naficy’s concept of accented cinema (pp.253-290). Özgür Yaren (2008) reexamines this concept with examples from European exilic and diasporic cinema. Ayça Çiftçi (2015) focuses on Kurdish films in Turkey’s socio-political context in the 2000s in *The Politics of Text and Context: Kurdish Films in Turkey in a Period of Political Transformation*. Müjde Arslan’s edited book, *Kürt Sineması*, brings together examples of Kurdish cinema that have transnational tendencies, use Kurdish language, and repeat themes such as “rootlessness, snow, frontier, mutism and pains” (Arslan 2009a, pp. xviii-xix). Arslan’s book that pioneered various academic work on the Kurdish cinema is not limited to the films produced in Turkey. It also draws attention to the discursive partnership in films produced in different countries. Another scholar who studied Kurdish cinema is Sebahattin Şen. In *Gemideki Hayalet*, Şen (2019) builds his study on Kurdishness and ways of envisioning Turkishness in relation to it. According to Şen (2019),

national identity, which felt inadequate, incomplete, delayed and ultimately

¹ Turkey’s first state-owned Kurdish language television station, *TRT Kurdi*, initially named as *TRT 6* (2009–2015) started broadcast in January 2009 and Kurdish was used in election campaigns. AKP passed several pieces of legislation approving, for example, the rights of universities to teach the Kurdish and Zazaki languages and allowing prisoners to speak with their visitors in languages other than Turkish

Eastern in the view of the West, could imagine itself as a modern and Western subjectivity, through which the Kurdish representations reflected in the imagination screen of cinema can compensate for its lag and deficiency” (Şen 2019, p.57).

Şen’s study is based on the regimes of representation of Turkishness and Kurdishness concerning national identity, the development process and their relationship with certain historical situations and ideological discourses in Turkey’s cinema since 1960s. In the last chapter of the book, Şen (2019) argues that during the period between 1990s and 2000s, some films break the traditions of representation regarding identity and produce new ideas and emotions (p. 271). He criticizes films like *Vizontele* (Erdoğan & Sorak, 2001), *Vizontele Tuuba* (Erdoğan, 2003) and *Beyaz Melek* (Kırmızıgül, 2007) that turn Kurdishness into an authentic asset. For him, the orientalist representation regime in these films reproduce the Kurdish perspective; those films set up a “self-colonialist look” that compares itself to Turkishness and looks through it. From this point of view, Şen does cite the concept of self-colonizing in the sense of a culture “succumbed to the cultural power of Europe and the west without having been invaded and turned into colonies in actual fact” (Kiossev, 2011, para. 1) but he is more likely to use the term like self-orientalism by accepting a discourse that objectifies Kurdishness itself and makes it reconstruct itself according to this discourse. In the last pages of his work, Şen (2019) argues that some of the films produced after 1990s “are broken the colonialist representation regime and its movements in different ways” (pp.283-284). Yücel finalizes his work with the existence of a group of directors who reflected representations of Kurdishness both politically and culturally in the Turkey’s cinema after 2000s. Therefore, the nine films that are selected for analysis in this dissertation are produced in this period of social discussions on ethnicity with regards to national identity.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Despite continuing social and political significance, little scholarly research has been done on the cinematic representations of minorities in cinema in Turkey through the framework of postcolonial studies. The dissertation attempts to contribute to this field through analyzing the regimes of cinematic representations in New Turkish Cinema between 1996-2013. The films selected for analysis are *Güneşe Yolculuk* (Ustaoglu, 1999), *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom* (Karabey, 2008), *Gelecek Uzun*

Sürer (Alper, 2011), *Güneşi Gördüm* (Kırmızıgül, 2009), *Bahoz* (Öz, 2008), *Işıklar Sönmesin* (Çelik, 1996), and *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (İpekçi, 2001), *Jin* (Erdem, 2013) and *İz* (Aydın, 2011). The aim of the study is to analyze representations of identity in general and ethnic identity in particular and to suggest that identity is not a fixed, homogenous, stable and originary concept but rather produced in-between power relationships that are always in a flux. This also makes identity constructions ambivalent and paves the way for opening Third Spaces of enunciation that produce cultural hybridizations.

1.2 Methodology

Serpil Kirel (2018) states that “when thinking about representations in films or looking for orientalist representations, the first thing to do is to turn to the cultural material and carefully examine the arrangement of the story and characters in the film and how space is used” (p.497). Accordingly, the dissertation will analyze nine films in relation to the concepts orientalism, subalternity, racial stereotyping, fetishism, mimicry, hybridity, parody, ambivalence, Third Space, pedagogy of the nation and performativity through the narratives, characters, and spaces in the sample group of films in order to reveal the themes and patterns. The main theoretical framework will rely on Hamid Naficy’s “*Accented Cinema*” and Homi Bhabha’s “*Location of Culture*”. The dissertation will use discourse analysis for film analyses in relation to the socio-economic, political, and cultural discourses of their times. Discourse analysis involves exploring the ways in which identity is constructed through different socio-economic and political conditions and reveals patterns and breaks from those conditions, both of which is essential parts of wider discursive practices within the films’ narrative and visual styles. The dissertation will also use textual analysis to investigate the cinematic aspects of the films such as lighting, *mise en scène*, use of music and camerawork in order to highlight the particular discourses that are coded within the frames.

1.3 Overview of Chapters

Chapter Two starts with a literature review on the definitions and the relationship between colonialism, imperialism and modernity and continues with the discussions on postcolonial theory. The literature review on postcolonial theory is divided into three sections. The first part focuses on Edward Said’s canonic works on orientalism

and Frantz Fanon's theories on colonialism and race. The second part is dedicated to the discussions on subalternity through the works of Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The dissertation assigns a central prominence to Homi K. Bhabha. Hence the third part focuses on Bhabha's "*Location of Culture*", with particular attention to the chapters; "The Other Question", "Of Mimicry and Man", "The Commitment to Theory", and "DissemiNation".

After the discussions on postcolonial theory, Chapter Two presents a literature review on film studies from the perspective of postcolonial theory and criticism. The discussion starts from Third Cinema and continues with a literature that is dedicated to postcolonial analysis of national cinemas such as France, Algeria, Taiwan, United States, Germany, and Turkey. The main axis of postcolonial cinema is explored through Hamid Naficy's work on journeys of identity and border films in "*An Accented Cinema*", which is also, along with Homi Bhabha's "*The Location of Culture*", is the main theoretical framework of the dissertation. As Naficy (2001) argues, "journey narratives tend to dominate in certain literary and cinematic traditions" (p.222) and they constitute a main element in accented cinema. Naficy's discussion on journey narratives is important because the films that are selected for analyses are examples of journey narratives with regards to their narratives and style.

The third chapter of this dissertation discusses the coloniality and/or semi-coloniality of the Late-Ottoman era and the postcoloniality of the Early-Republican era of the Turkish Republic through the scholarly work in the fields of international relations, history, and sociology. It aims to explore the ambivalent narratives of nationalism starting with the nationalist movement in the Ottoman Empire, which continued into the early years of the Turkish Republic. The main axis of investigation constitutes the discussions on Turkish nationalism, Turkish language, race, and culture. The chapter, later, involves a discussion on the socio-political history of minorities in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic in order to set the ground for the main analysis of the dissertation, the representation of minorities in contemporary Turkish cinema.

Chapter Four, Five and Six analyze nine films that primarily center on the representations of minorities. They are categorized under three chapters concerning the categorization of the motivation of journeys of Hamid Naficy. Although the categorization of chapters is derived from Naficy's theoretical framework, the analyses

are made within the terminology of postcolonial theory, mainly from Homi Bhabha and the literature review of Chapter Three with regards to the socio-economic and political history in Turkey. Accordingly, the methodology of film analyses is both discourse and textual analysis.

Çakırlar & Güçlü (2013) argues that the period in the 1990s led to the emergence of New Turkish Cinema and they suggest that “the cultural life of Turkey during the 1990s, was characterized by a marked growth in nationalist and militarist ideologies on the one hand, and a visible clash of identity politics functioning through the religious and ethnic differences on the other” (p. 168). Accordingly, “the collision of these socio-political discourses led to a crisis in the collective national identity which, in turn, determined the thematic and aesthetic elements of the new Turkish cinema” (Çakırlar & Güçlü 2013, p.168). The nine films that are analyzed in this dissertation are products of this period when different forms of identities such as religious, ethnic or gender were widely discussed within the socio-cultural and political spheres.

The sample group of films also received positive reactions within the industry and critics mainly because they signaled and revealed a sort of transformation in the regime of representation with regards to ethnicity. Firstly, this transformation became the catalyst of the visibility in minority representations in cinema. In other words, with this transformation, minority characters were no longer side characters who are insignificant to the story but rather *they* became the main storyline. Secondly, the transformation challenged both the various ideological misrepresentations produced by official discourses and the stereotypes that were constructed by *Yeşilçam* film industry. One of the main positive receptions of the films in this dissertation was about their progressive narratives in terms of their representations of Kurdishness. While it is important to praise the ways in which these films increased the visibility of minority representations within cinema in Turkey and reflected on the past and present traumas and problems, their existence cannot be exempted from the socio-economic and political discourses and climate of their times. More importantly, this dissertation argues that even though all the films in question have aspects that can be considered more or less progressive, they are not fully exempted from radically internalized discourses such as orientalism or colonialism particularly with regards to their depictions of the East and characters.

The fourth chapter discusses three films that involve the protagonists’ journey

from the Western coastal cities of Turkey to the Eastern region. These films are Yeşim Ustaoglu's *Güneşe Yolculuk* (1999), Hüseyin Karabey's *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom* (2008) and Özcan Alper's *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* (2011). All three films focus on the journeys of western characters² to the East for various reasons. While, each film has its own characteristic elements, their narratives follow a particular pattern. The perception of reality created in the audience orientalist discourse. The narrative of the western travelers' journey to the East is widely open to the criticism of a certain orientalist gaze. The western eye is an explorer, looking for potential differences, which is necessary in order to construct its own difference from its Other. In addition, through the investigating eyes of their protagonists, the spectators discover 'the truth' about the East. This 'truth' is morbid and is constructed to define the East in relation to death and the impossibility of surviving in the West as an Eastern. Other aspects such as highlighting culturally and historically significant landmarks of the East, cultural heritage and zoomorphism are also among the orientalist aesthetic of these films. Moreover, all three films in this chapter are explored through Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry, mockery, racial stereotyping and fetishism and Hamid Naficy's "journeys of quests, homelessness and lostness" (Naficy 2001, p.223).

The fifth chapter discusses four films that involve the protagonists' inward and/or outward journeys. These films are Mahsun Kırmızıgül's *Güneşi Gördüm* (2009), Kazım Öz's *Bahoz* (2008), Reis Çelik's *Işıklar Sönmesin* (1996), and Handan İpekçi's *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (2001). The following part is divided into two groups according to Hamid Naficy's categorization of accented films. The first group analyzes *Güneşi Gördüm* and *Bahoz* as conciliatory films of decent relations, which involve "outward journeys of escape, home seeking and home founding" (Naficy 2001, p. 223). In addition, the second group of films, *Işıklar Sönmesin*, and *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, are discussed as films of consent relations that focus on "self-made and contractual affiliations" and as inward journeys. In terms of postcolonial theory, the films are examined through Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry, Third Space, hybridity, pedagogy of the nation and performativity.

² The phrase "western characters" are used in this dissertation to refer to the characters who are from the western coastal cities of Turkey and live in the Aegean and the Marmara Regions. Accordingly, the phrase "eastern characters" refer to the characters who are constructed to be from the eastern regions of Turkey. It is important to highlight the fact that both phrases are used to designate geographical indicators.

Chapter Six analyzes Tayfur Aydın's *İz* (2011) and Reha Erdem's *Jin* (2013) as journeys of return and homecoming. Accordingly, the main argument revolves around the depiction of East as the place of return. In the analysis of *Jin*, the East is investigated in ecological terms as a place that is destroyed by human interventions. And *İz* is explored through Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity in relation to the consequences of mix-ethnicity relationship and the fear of assimilation.

The final chapter is reserved for conclusions and further suggestions.



Chapter 2

From Colonialism to Postcolonialism

Postcolonial theory “is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century” (Elam 2019, para. 1). Accordingly, it challenges economic exploitation, ownership of knowledge, which is inherent within Western colonization (Bhabha 1994; Loomba 2005) and it “analyses the metaphysical, ethical and political concerns about cultural identity, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, subjectivity, language and power” (Mambrol 2016, para. 1). Inspired by the poststructuralist thought of decentering, postcolonial theory and analysis challenge the universality of western literature, deconstruct colonial narratives, and empower counter narratives of opposition through concepts such as hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, and alienation. In order to understand the scholarly literature on postcolonial theory, it is necessary to provide a background on colonialism first. Yet, colonialism is very much connected to the socio-economic and political history of Europe in relation to the Enlightenment, the rise of logic and reason, the idea of modernity, capitalism, and imperialism. Therefore, the dissertation will first delve into the relationship between modernity, capitalism, imperialism, and colonization.

2.1 Colonialism, Imperialism and Modernity

The best way to understand the concepts of colonialism and imperialism is not to reduce these terms to a single meaning, but to relate their changing meanings to historical processes. Imperialism is defined as the defense of imperial interest. In its early usage in English, this term was used to mean command or superior power. While imperialism is a system of exploitation of labor, physical conquest of territory, or the political or cultural binding of nations, colonialism “can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods” (Loomba 2005, p. 8). In other words, colonialism is a “forceful occupation of a weaker state or country by a stronger and sometimes much more developed state; the imposition of foreign administrative governance on the weaker State; economic exploration and exploitation, political dominance, cultural and linguistic domination and social oppression, and suppression of members of the colonies by the colonizers” (Ifejirika 2017, p. 1). Both colonialism

and imperialism are about “political and economic control of a dependent territory” (Kohn 2017, para. 1) and involve the subjugation of the colonized societies. While colonialism “usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin” (Kohn 2017, para. 1), imperialism is about how one “country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control” (Kohn 2017, para. 1). Edward Said (1994), perhaps, highlights the difference between the terms most clearly: “imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; colonialism, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” (p.10).

Lenin links imperialism and colonialism to capitalism and suggests that imperialism is a stage of capitalism. He suggested that in the West due to the growth of industry and financial capitalism, ample amount of capital was created, and it was not possible to invest this capital where there was limited labor. Colonies, on the other hand, were rich in human resources and labor but lacked capital. Therefore, Western economies thought they could sustain their own growth by subordinating non-industrialized countries. The need of capitalist states for new resources created colonies, which also became new markets for these states in search of opportunities to profit shifting. That is how colonialism provided wealth and industrial development in Europe. From this perspective, it can be argued that Lenin predicted that Western capitalism would eventually pave the way to exploitation. “It is this Leninist definition that allows some people to argue that capitalism is the distinguishing feature between colonialism and imperialism” (Loomba 2005, p. 11). Ania Loomba (2005) argues that capitalist/modern colonialism differs from pre-capitalist colonialism (p. 10). According to Loomba (2005, p. 9):

modern colonialism is different than pre-modern colonialisms because the former “was established alongside capitalism in Western Europe”. “Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered—it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries....Thus slaves were moved from Africa to the Americas ...In whichever direction human

beings and materials travelled, the profits always flowed back into the so-called mother country.

If there is a “so-called mother country”, then there is a familiar place where everything began, a center. If there is a center, there is also a periphery and hence a division of space, a dichotomy of a space reserved for the imperial, the colonizer, and a space in the periphery for the colonized Other. The boundary between the center and the periphery was drawn particularly by the idea of modernity.

Hegel used the word modernity first of all in historical contexts, as an epochal concept: The new age is the modern age. This corresponded to contemporary usage in English and French: “modern times” or *temps modernes* denoted around 1800 the three centuries preceding. The discovery of the “new world”, the Renaissance and the Reformation – these three monumental events around the year 1500 constituted the epochal threshold between modern times and the middle ages (Habermas 1987, p. 5).

Based on Hegel, Habermas approaches modernity in relation to the beginning of the modern age. In this sense, modernity has everything to do with the Enlightenment, Renaissance, Cartesian philosophy of reason and logic and Newtonian law of motion and universal gravitation, all of which also paved the way behind the idea of the separation of church and state, sovereignty of reason, advancement and improvements in science and technology. These “European” ideas became the catalyst of the assumption that modernity is essentially European and “in European thought [Europe] was always constituted as the seat of culture and this meaning is readily transferred to the imperial/colonial relationship” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 123). When the definition/ assumption of modernity is attached to a geographical notion, everything that is in that center’s/metropolis’ periphery is constructed to be backward. The term metropolis, then, would refer to the center in terms of proximity to colonial periphery and discursively constructs the dichotomy between the colonizer/the one in the center and the colonized/ the one in the periphery.

According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2007, p.32) this is an essential aspect for the perseverance of colonialism because “colonialism could only exist at all by postulating that there existed a binary opposition into which the world was divided”. Therefore, “the gradual establishment of an empire depended upon a stable hierarchical relationship in which the colonized existed as the other of the colonizing

culture”. The Other in this equation was the one who fell behind in the race toward modernity while the West, the Enlightened, was the one who severed its roots from the dark Middle Ages and the reign of religion and hence leaped to an age of reason, science, and technology. This discursively constructed superiority gradually resulted in the West to represent the East in its opposite image and paved the way for the colonial process. This is in tune with Boris Groys’ definition of how Europe defines itself as the creator of the universal humanistic values and externalizes all non-European culture (Groys 2008, pp. 174-175). It is also the reason why the “geography of difference ... represented not geographical fixity, but the fixity of power” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 32). Accordingly, the center was constructed as Europe and “everything that lay outside that centre was by definition at the margin or the periphery of culture, power and civilization” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 32). Gradually, “this sense of the superiority of the present over the past became translated into a sense of superiority over those pre-modern societies and cultures that were ‘locked’ in the past – primitive and uncivilized peoples whose subjugation and ‘introduction’ into modernity became the right and obligation of European powers” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 131). Colonialism as a discourse became synonymous with bringing “the margin into the sphere of influence of the enlightened centre [and provided the] principal justification for the economic and political exploitation of colonialism” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 32).

This is the reason why modernity is closely related to colonization. It is inherently about drawing boundaries. It is “the imperial regulation of land, the discipline of the soul, and the creation of truth” (Turner 1990, p.4). Moreover, it is a discourse “that enabled the largescale regulation of human identity both within Europe and its colonies” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 131).

In other words, modernity emerged at about the same time that European nations began to conceive of their own dominant relationship to a non-European world and began to spread their rule through exploration, cartography and colonization. Europe constructed itself as ‘modern’ and constructed the non-European as ‘traditional’, ‘static’, ‘prehistorical’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 131).

Due to the European nature of the Enlightenment project, the ideas of progress, civilization and hence modernity became essentially Eurocentric. This is the reason,

why until the mid-1950's, the road to modernity for the so-called pre-modern nations, has been assumed to constitute one single linear path; following and mimicking Europe.

It is this discursive relationship between colonialism and modernity that was challenged by postcolonial theory. This unmasking of the Enlightenment meant that “the universal categories and concepts at the heart of much of Enlightenment’s thought have been put to work by both European and non-European intellectuals and activists to criticize the injustices of their societies as well as imperialism itself” (Ivison 2020, para. 5). The center/periphery dichotomy was also challenged by postcolonialism that called “into significant attentions whole epoch in the relationship between the West and the developing world, an epoch which played a vital role in the institutionalisation and strengthening of the metropole-periphery, center-margin dichotomy” (Osundare 2002, p. 42). Homi Bhabha (1994, p.171) states that:

postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of “minorities” within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic “normality” to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, race, communities, peoples.

Moreover, “decentering the West” has become an important aspect to destabilize and dethrone Europe from the sole ownership of modernity with the rise of theories on multiple modernities. According to Kaup (2006, p.129) decentering the West is a moment and the “periphery seizes this moment as another kind of opportunity unthought of in Europe”. Ballantyne (2008, p.54) argued that it is “the diverse civilizational legacies ... (that) gave rise to multiple models of modernity”. This approach suggests that the road to modernity is not singular but rather multiple. The need to decenter the West from the arguments on modernity was championed because “(the) dismantling of centre/margin (periphery) models of culture calls into question the claims of any culture to possess a fixed, pure and homogenous body of values, and exposes them all as historically constructed, and thus corrigible formations” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 33). One of those models of alternative modernity is presented by Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (1999), who argues that it is simply impossible to completely abandon the Western concept of modernity. However, when

we look at modernity in relation to culture, “different starting points for the transition to modernity lead to different outcomes” (Gaonkar 1999, p.15). Therefore, it can be argued that “at every national or cultural site, people rise to meet modernity and appropriate (it) in their own fashion”. This process is what Gaonkar (1999) calls “creative adaptation” which enables people to “make themselves modern, as opposed to being made modern by alien and impersonal forces and where they give themselves an identity and destiny” (p.16). Nilüfer Göle (2000) also highlights the importance of decentering the West and emphasizes the concept of coeval time in order to understand modernity in the non-western context (p. 45). To sum it up, it can be suggested that postcolonial theories argue that as prevailing and significant as the western idea of modernity has been, multiple, creative, or alternative modernities will flourish and as a result, significant inquiries regarding how to comprehend them will persevere.

2.2 Postcolonialism

After World War II, the world was divided between the two superpowers, the Western and the Eastern Blocs. The rest of the countries that were not included in these blocs were labeled as the Third World. By the mid-1940's colonialism started to collapse throughout the world. India, Indonesia, Philippines, and Burma proclaimed their independence one by one. In 1952 in Bolivia and in 1959 in Cuba, social revolts took place and attracted attention from the countries of the Third World. The other issue occupying the world's interest was the American Vietnam War from 1955 to 1975. The war revealed a unique experience of global disobedience with the participation of intellectuals discussing and criticizing their own country's official policy. This period is marked especially with its revolutionary aspect caused by the national liberation movements and the rise of countries with socialist or prone to socialist agendas. One of the most important waves of liberation came from North Africa. After much resistance and struggle, the French colonies gained their independence. The establishment of new states affected the former colonies in the region as well as the countries in continental Europe with overseas colonies.

Yet, the national tendency of the Third World theory is a paradoxical issue. Benedict Anderson (1991) describes nationality as a “cultural artifact of particular kind” created in a complex historical social network towards the end of the eighteenth century and defines the nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”. (Anderson 1991, pp. 4-6). Nation is indeed an

imagined community for its members in order to have an image of the Other in their minds without having met them and this image will always be limited because it can never embody an entire totality of human population. Therefore, as an imagined community, the nation can only include the majority. Anderson (1991) states the era that those new nations appeared after the Second World War as “the last wave” and remarks that almost all those new states have a European language-of-state inherit from their imperialist past. He also indicates that the administrative system of these States continues to share similarities with the colonial period and often even administrative staff remains the same. Anderson (1991) explains this situation within a process: the colonial power in a country needs a large number of people to work within the administration; those people should be able to speak the settler’s language. The education system does not only teach the language but also European history, fulfilled with a national liberation discourse particularly after the end of the nineteenth century. This process continued with the creation of a new colonial intellectual generation educated in a European system of nationalism. (Anderson 1991, pp.113-140) On the one hand, the colonial power is blown up by its own bomb, creating a generation of well-educated nationalists; on the other hand, nationalism of the old colonies owes their liberation to the ideas coming from the colonizer. For this reason, the Third World is a reminiscent of the outmoded stages of the First World cultural development. Frederic Jameson’s statement to call all Third World texts as “national allegories” (Jameson 1986, p.69) is attached inseparably to this role of the Third World intellectual who also has to be “a political militant, the intellectual who produces both poetry and praxis” (Jameson 1986, p.75). Jameson does not take this responsibility in a negative way and explains that the Third World culture entirely embraces the experience of the collectivity while describing individual stories and experiences. Aijaz Ahmad (1987) criticizes Frederic Jameson for “positivist reductionism” by ignoring “periodization, social and linguistic formations, political and ideological struggles” (Ahmad 1987, p.4). This reductionism can only lead to an insuperable division “between those who make history and those who are mere objects of it” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p.85). According to Ahmad (1987), the difference between two worlds is “absolutized as an Otherness” and the complex heterogeneity of social formation of the second finds appearance only in a singular identity of experience of colonialism and imperialism. Ahmad finds this approach as over-

valorization of the national ideology. (Ahmad 1987, pp.8-10). In France well-known public figures like Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Ricoeur, Jean Genet, Jacques Ellul openly placed themselves on the opposite side and spoke against their country's official policies, risking not only their reputation, but also becoming vulnerable to pursuits by the secret police, lawsuits, and imprisonments (Adams 1998).

It is within the socio-political history of decolonization after the Second World War that the term "postcolonial" started to be uttered firstly by historians. As a term, postcolonialism deals with "the effects of colonization on culture and societies" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2007, p. 168). Whether due to the disintegration of empires, the solidification of regions and commonwealths or both, postcolonialism is also at the center of modern political thought due to its relation to the modern state. It is a theory that is

concerned with forms of political and aesthetic representation, ... committed to accounting for globalization and global modernity, ... invested in reimagining politics and ethics from underneath imperial power and ... interested in perpetually discovering and theorizing new forms of human injustice, from environmentalism to human rights (Elam 2019, para. 1).

The term is used with hyphen (post-colonialism) or without the hyphen (postcolonialism). In this dissertation, the term will be used without a hyphen, as postcolonialism, not only because "used with a hyphen, post-colonial, the term is seen as indicating the historical period aftermath of colonialism" (Sugirtharajah 2006, p. 8), but also, and perhaps even more importantly, because neither colonialism nor the interrogation of colonial discourses, dominant power structures and knowledge produced are an issue of the past.

There is also another paradoxical issue about the term; described in the study of Ranajit Guha which is about the ex-colonized and it is with regards to the opposition of the denial of their own histories, but rather calling all those multiple communities as post-colonial. This approach also defines the experience of colonialism in a single way and ignores the particularity of each colonial experience. According to Dirlik (1994), "the significance of postcolonial is not transparent because each of its meanings is over determined by the others" (p.332). The Third World term, predecessor of the postcolonial, permitted to fix a position not geographically but at least structurally in the sense of societal location of the Third World. Ella Shohat

(2000) indicates that the term postcolonialism is not explicit because it covers more than one position: “the ex-colonized (Algerian), the ex-colonizer (French), the ex-colonial-settler (Pied Noir), or the displaced hybrid in First World metropolitans (Algerian in France)” (p.13). Dirlik (1994) defines this situation by saying that postcolonial intellectuals produce “the identity of the postcolonial is no longer structural but discursive” (p.332) and the postcolonial discourse. Moreover, De Alva (1995) separates the term postcolonialism from colonization because he argues that people who lived in colonial states were exposed to various pressures before the postcolonial period as well. This claim; supported by the poststructuralist understanding of history, argues that oppressed peoples come together not from a single history, but through multiple histories. These multiple definitions of postcolonialism lead to a lack of policy, the fragmentation and mobility of communities make imperceptible the functioning of global capitalist system Therefore, maybe, it is more liberating to think about the temporal debates of the postcolonial/post-colonial through Aijaz Ahmad’s argument. When we

push the use of the term colonialism back to ... the Incas, the Ottomans and the Chinese well before the European colonial empires began; and then bring the term forward to cover all kinds of national oppressions ... Colonialism ... becomes a transhistorical thing, always present and always in process of dissolution in one part of the World or another, so that everyone gets the privilege, sooner or later, at one time or another of being colonizer, colonized and postcolonial – sometimes all at once. This manner of deploying the term has the effect of leveling out all histories so that we are free to take up any of the thousands of available micro-histories, more or less arbitrarily, since they all amount to the same thing, more or less (Ahmad 1995, p. 31).

2.3 Postcolonial Theory and Criticism

Postcolonial theory and criticism appeared on the academic stage in the late 1980s. However, academic discussions on colonialism and its effects, the new version of colonialisms and decolonization have their roots in the years that follow the Second World War. The idea of race has been more of a social reality (Miles 1989, p. 71), a concept that “receives its meanings contextually, and in relation to other social groupings and hierarchies, such as gender and class” (Loomba 2005, p. 105). Racial stereotyping was very common in the 16th and 17th centuries. During this period,

Christian identity was developed against Islam, Judaism, or paganism. This situation made religious difference an indicator and a metaphor of cultural, ethnic, and racial differences (Chew 1937). These old ideas were reworked intensively and extensively in the process of colonial expansion, which “was coterminous with the development of a modern capitalist system of economic exchange ... [and] meant that the perception of the colonies as primarily established to provide raw materials for the burgeoning economies of the colonial powers was greatly strengthened and institutionalized” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 40). It is because of this process “the relation between the colonizer and the colonized was locked into a rigid hierarchy of difference deeply resistant to fair and equitable exchanges, whether economic, cultural or social” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, pp. 40-41).

Although different European powers had different colonial initiatives, the stereotypes of “others” produced by each attempt were very similar (Loomba 2005, p. 93). As Ania Loomba (2005, p.105) argues, “colour is taken to be the prime signifier of racial identity” which meant that gradually race became the main marker of difference in constructing the Others. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007, p.41) state:

In colonies where the subject people were of a different race, or where minority indigenous peoples existed, the ideology of race was also a crucial part of the construction and naturalization of an unequal form of intercultural relations. Race itself, with its accompanying racism and racial prejudice, was largely a product of the same post-Renaissance period, and a justification for the treatment of enslaved peoples after the development of the slave trade of the Atlantic Middle Passage from the late sixteenth century onwards.

In addition, the relationship between nation and race was extended by science. Science insisted on linking biological characteristics such as skull, brain size and facial features with races, which became the catalyst of the rise in racism. The debate about race has magnified stereotypes of extreme sexuality, barbarism, and violence. Civilization and primitiveness began to be studied under fixed conditions. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, the word race was expressed through words that express unity such as lineage, family, and home. This unity came to be associated with the concept of nation once it is utilized as a synonym with caste. Thus, the scientific racism of the 18th century strengthened the connection of race with culture and history as well as the concept of nation (Miles 1989, pp. 89-91).

2.3.1 Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. In his work, Frantz Fanon did not use the term postcolonial, yet his research has been crucial for the beginning years of what later would be named as postcolonial theory. Fanon generated ideas for the people of colonies as a theoretician of the Third World. He affected protest movements in Europe and was engaged in the Algerian liberation movement. In both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon analyzed the subjective consciousness of the colonized people who were affected by colonial oppression and “developed his idea of a comprador class, or élite, who exchanged roles with the white colonial dominating class without engaging in any radical restructuring of society” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 91). His work, which was considerably inspired by his career as a psychiatrist, dwells on the psychological state of the colonized nation and the issues of race and racial identity.

Largely inspired by the *Négritude* movement Aimé Césaire declared Europe as “morally, spiritually indefensible” on the grounds of slavery, torture, imprisonment, oppression, murder and briefly all applications that allow colonialism to remain standing (Césaire 2001, p. 32). Fanon shares the idea that the colonizer’s dominant self-image of superiority turning colonized people into non-humans. According to him, there is an explicit segregation, even a contradiction between the settler and the native. Their reciprocal relation entails that the settler creates the native by force and “owes its very existence to the soil and the subsoil of the underdeveloped world” (Fanon 1963, p. 55). However, the reason why Fanon is critical of Césaire's concept of *Négritude* is mostly related to his interpretation of the revolutionary period he experienced. According to Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001, p.110), “*Négritude* was the celebration of Blackness, of being Black, of specifically African culture and African values that sought to reify a pre-colonial African past”. Fanon rejected the idea of reification. He describes this state of introversion as a “blind alley” (Fanon 1963, p. 212) As Homi Bhabha (1994, p.9) suggests:

Fanon recognizes the crucial importance, for the subordinated peoples, of asserting their indigenous cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed roots. But he is far too aware of the dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures to recommend that “roots” be struck in the celebratory romance of the past or by homogenizing the history of the present.

It can be argued that, while some nations seek to eradicate all aspects of the colonizing infrastructure in an attempt to invent a pre-colonized history, traditions and overall, a new heritage in order to construct a national identity, others seek to conciliate the very imperialist heritage with their newly invented traditions. Fanon suggests, “the first step for colonized people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past” (Barry 2002, p. 193). In other words, Fanon suggests that both the colonizer and the colonized need to decolonize themselves. While the colonizer needs to accept the brutality of imperialism, the colonized needs to overthrow the colonizer not only from their lands but also from their mindsets in order to achieve a real liberation. This is because “for centuries the European colonising power will have devalued the nation’s past, seeing its precolonial era as a pre-civilised limbo, or even as a historical void... [so much so that] children, both black and White, will have been taught to see history, culture and progress as beginning with the arrival of the Europeans” (Barry 2002, p. 193). In other words, civilization became synonymous with Europe.

Jean Paul Sartre (1963) wrote the Preface of *the Wretched of the Earth* and argued that “not so very long ago, the earth numbered two thousand million inhabitants: five hundred million men, and one thousand five hundred million natives” (p. 7). This dualist way of thinking calls in different forms (settler-native, colonizer-colonized, Occident-Orient, North-South, the West and the rest...), and is quite problematic because Sartre categorizes the inhabitants as men and natives. In other words, one can only be native or man. This duality suggests that the native is not a man hence s/he is not human. Moreover, s/he, who is man, is immediately superior to s/he, who is native and un-human. In addition, in his work on antisemitism, Sartre states, “[t]he Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew” (Sartre 1995 p. 49). In other words, the Jew is constructed through discrimination and ‘being Jew’ is reduced to a hypothesis. Even though Fanon is inspired by Sartre, he is also critical because he argues that Sartre’s ideas ignore both the impact of economy in general and visual economics in particular in various discriminatory practices. Unlike the Jew, the black is colonized because s/he is black. “The cause is the effect; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich” (Fanon 1963, p. 5). The emphasis on race in Fanon is clearly associated with colonialism as a part of social reality and blackness is equivalent to the colonized one. The dehumanizing effect of the colonial system overrules the universal liberating dreams of forced occidental

developmentalism. Fanon (2008) states, “the black is not a man. There is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, ... the black is a black man” (Fanon 2008, pp. 1-2). Still the conception of blackness or *négresse* is not meant to unite under the Pan-Africanism mirage. While discussing the West Indians identity, which he knows closely, Fanon deals with periodizing the repositioning of the assumed European belonging of West Indians, by associating themselves with Africa since the 1930s considering the effects of wars, international politics, and local cultural transformation. In this sense, although blackness is a determining factor that cannot be ignored for Fanon, it is not an integrated concept. According to Fanon, both nationalism and the racial community, pose a threat to individualization. In other words, both the idea of racial collectivism in the example of Africanism and the tendency of nationalism, especially in the decolonization processes of North African countries jeopardize one’s freedom or individuality. Fanon’s existential tendency leads him to propose individuals and social groups to establish a new consciousness in order to realize themselves, by being aware of the existence of their unconscious and abandoning the illusion of attempting to whiten themselves (Yeh 2013, p. 212). The problem here is that the institutional colonial system they lived in is extremely dominant and their struggle models are affected by the system they clash with from time to time.

The colonial state, as Fanon describes it, derives its capital accumulation from colonial labor for which it does not pay. This system does not need ideological apparatuses to legitimize itself and the racial segregation is an established order. The state uses pure force if it is necessary and does not need to explain it. Perhaps Fanon’s most problematic issue is on violence. At heart of Fanon’s work lies the idea of liberation, which can be achieved by decolonization; the only possible way for the native to become a “man”. In addition, the only method of liberation is through violence, which is portrayed vividly and in detail in Fanon’s work. According to Fanon (2008), the struggle against colonialism is both legitimate and necessary because “[the Negro] cannot conceive of life otherwise than in the form of a battle against exploitation, misery, and hunger” (p. 174). Moreover, “the colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation” (Fanon 1963, p. 21). In other words, the only form of struggle against the colonizer is to resort to violence that originates from the colonial state itself,

because violence is not a creation of the native but a reflection coming from the settler. Many liberation movements accept Fanon's texts, as manuals because of this tendency toward violence. National liberation movements with extreme actions use Fanon's name with respect to commit violence, yet, there is no statement in Fanon's work that legitimizes terrorist cells, encourages violence against civilians, or declares that he is in favor of sabotage. He clinically discusses these cases as "borderline" and notes that "such borderline cases pose the question of responsibility in the context of revolution" (Fanon 1963, p. 185). Fanon focuses on the ways in which he can treat traumatized patients regardless if they are the colonizer or the colonized, because he believes that the main reason for behavioral and mental disorder in militants or government officials is the experience of colonialism.

Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Fanon (1963) emphasizes that "[h]istory teaches us that the anticolonialist struggle is not automatically written from a nationalist perspective" (p. 97). Therefore, the type of nationalism in Fanon's work is what Said defines as "critical nationalism", "that is, formed in an awareness that pre-colonial societies were never simple or homogeneous and that they contained socially prejudicial class and gender formations that stood in need of reform by a radical force" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 91). Said (1978, p.323) argues that according to Fanon, "unless national consciousness at its moment of success was somehow changed into social consciousness, the future would not hold liberation but an extension of imperialism". Fanon's contribution to the development of what later was defined to be postcolonial theory is significant. Yet, it was Edward Said, who set the groundwork for postcolonial theory by laying out the complex manifestations of power structures between Europe and the Orient and provided a methodology to dismantle them. In his seminal work, "*Orientalism*", Said brings forth the ways in which the Orient has been and is still being constructed according to European thought. According to Said:

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience (Said 1978, pp. 9-10)

Europe's construction of the Orient is "based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident" (Said 1978, p. 10), and since the eighteenth century, this distinction has been accepted and acknowledged as "the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, epics, social descriptions and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, mind, destiny, and so on" (Said 1978, pp. 10-11).

Even though Orientalist discourse is created from scholarship, doctrines, and imagery, more significantly it originates from institutions. According to Said, orientalism is a way of "dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it settling it, ruling over it" (Said 1978, p. 11). This way of "dealing" is the epitome of the concept of discourse in Foucauldian terms. Said takes Foucault's concept of discourse to explain and deconstruct a system created by Europe to justify their colonial existence in the Orient. Drawing its examples from the representations of the Orient in the western novels, travelogues and arts, Said argues that Orientalism is a discourse that constructs and represents the Orient in relation to Europe.

Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe (Said 1978, p. 15)

In these literary and artistic works, while Europe is represented to be "rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion" (Said 1978, p. 57), the Orient is irrational, backward, exotic, brutal and primitive. It is important to note that Orientalism is a totalizing discourse in the sense that the Orient is considered to be a space that is homogenous and there are almost no differences between races, cultures or ethnic groups (Said 1978). These discursive constructions are mechanism of power and hence "the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 153). Accordingly, these discursive constructions are never neutral. Instead, they are utilized to exercise control which makes orientalism a "systematic discipline by which European culture was able to

manage-and even produce-the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (Said 1978, p. 11). After all,

At the heart of European culture during the many decades of imperial expansion lay an undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism. This accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; it studied them, it classified them, it verified them, ... but above all, it subordinated them by banishing their identities, except as a lower order of being, from the culture and indeed the very idea of white Christian Europe. This cultural process has to be seen as a vital, informing, and invigorating counterpoint to the economic and political machinery at the material center of imperialism. This Eurocentric culture relentlessly codified and observed everything about the non-European or peripheral world, and so thoroughly and in so detailed a manner as to leave few items untouched, few cultures unstudied, few peoples and spots of land unclaimed (Said 1994, pp.221-222).

Even though the Orient is a cultural invention, “it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was essentially an idea or a creation with no corresponding reality” (Said 1978, p.13). On the contrary, the Orient consists of a multiplicity of experiences defined geographically and historically. Therefore, the Orient does exist. Yet as a discourse, it “is more valuable as a sign of the power exerted by the West over the Orient than a ‘true’ discourse about the Orient” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 153). According to Said, the contrariness between Orient and Occident is misleading on purpose, since there is no evidence of two clashing cultures. In this case, Said’s work differentiates from the understanding of Otherness created by the separation of “us and them”. The Orientalist discourse appears in European culture by defining itself, but it is not a self-image of Europe. European identity was deeply clarified by defining the Orient as the Other and constructed this identity by using all civilized instruments, from literacy to humanities, from military power to governmental institutions. For Said, however,

studying relationship between the ‘West’ and its dominated cultural others is not simply contemplating and laying out the different ways of inequality in power relations, it is also a point of entry into studying the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves (Said 1978, p. 191).

He defines the movements of resistance and opposition coming from Frantz Fanon as a potential for Europe, because policies are shaped not only in non-European territories but also in its own land, in European countries, from outskirts to minority habitations, since the existence of those movements. As stated so far, both Frantz Fanon and Edward Said are the starting points in the discussions on postcolonial theory. Yet from the beginning of the 1980s, postcolonial theory started to become an academic field of its own through the works of scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ranajit Guha, Bill Ashcroft, Ania Loomba, Homi K. Bhabha who influenced scholarly work race theory and gender studies.

2.3.2 Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Antonio Gramsci coined the term subaltern in his book *Prison Notes* to refer to “non-hegemonic groups or classes” (Hoare and Nowell-Smith 1999, p. 20)³. Accordingly, these groups are under the subjugation of the hegemonic bloc by consent or by force and “are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a State” (Gramsci 1999, p. 202). Therefore, it is vital to understand

1.the objective formation of the subaltern social groups, ... 2. their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, ... 3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups, ...; 4. the formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce, in order to press claims of a limited and partial character, ... 5. new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups, but within the old framework; 6. those formations which assert the integral autonomy” (Gramsci 1999, pp. 202-203).

Gramsci suggested that just like the history of hegemonic classes, the history of the subaltern classes was also complicated and “necessarily fragmented and episodic” (Gramsci 1999, p. 206), because they are always under the oppression of the hegemonic class. This means that they lack the authority to represent themselves and have limited access to socio-economic, political, and economic resources. The only permanent solution is revolution, which is not only difficult but can only occur after a long battle within the civil society. Moreover, for a revolution to happen, Gramsci argues the subaltern classes need to form an alliance and need to win the consent of other classes within the society through the leadership of the proletariat (Hall 1986, p.

³ Hoare and Nowell- Smith (1999, p. 20) write that “it is difficult to discern any systematic difference in Gramsci’s usage between, for instance, subaltern and subordinate” because he refers to subaltern groups sometimes as subordinate or instrumental.

16).

The term subaltern was introduced to postcolonial theory through the works of scholars of the Subaltern Studies group, which is “a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Guha 1982, p. vii). The group published a series of volumes under the title of *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* and studied the “history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity as well as to the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems—in short, the culture informing that condition” (Guha 1982, p. vii). Subaltern Studies Group delved into Indian historiography particularly because, it was Gramsci, who studied the history of subaltern groups and argued the importance of historiography as a methodology. Accordingly, Guha (1982) recognizes that “subordination cannot be understood except as one of the constitutive terms in a binary relationship of which the other is dominance, for subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up” (p. vii). Guha argues that the Subaltern Group “functions both as a measure of objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of that role” (Guha 1982, p. vii). In other words, he notes the significance of the assumption that the “historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—colonialist elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism” (Guha 2000, p. 1), which both occur because of British colonialism. In that sense, the group functioned “both as a measure of objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of that role” (Guha 1982, p. vii). This concern, according to El Habib Louai (2012, p. 6) “originated from the assumption that the writing of Indian national history has been controlled by colonial elitism as well as nationalist-bourgeois elitism which were both produced by the British colonialism in different historical periods”. “Such historiography suggested that the development of a nationalist consciousness was an exclusively élite achievement either of colonial administrators, policy or culture, or of élite Indian personalities, institutions or ideas” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 199). Guha elaborates this issue by addressing the historiography and philosophy of history of modernization in India and argues that “such writing cannot acknowledge or interpret the contribution made by people on their own, that is, independently of the élite” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 199). Moreover, such writing is related to the

discussions on the concept “people without history”, which is a colonial discourse that suggests the inferiority of the conquered communities who lack such writing. Gradually this discourse of those without history became of those without state. Guha examines a discussion centered on Hegel who glorifies the state as the reality of the will. In the nineteenth century, even though the existence of early attempts to write Indian history came to be known, historiography was not accepted as a science according to Western standards. Guha (2000) criticizes Hegel of putting the Oriental at the bottom of world-historical realms (pp. 35-37) and blind European idea from any perceptivity of an outside.

According to Guha, in terms of mobilization the élite and the subaltern prove to be very different. While élite mobilization is vertical, subaltern mobilization is horizontal. In addition, élite mobilization is “characterized by a relatively greater reliance on the colonial adaptations of British parliamentary institutions and the residua of semi-feudal political institutions of the pre-colonial period ... [whereas subaltern mobilization relies on] the traditional organization of kinship and territoriality or on class associations” (Guha 2000, p. 4). In addition, Guha finds subaltern mobilization relatively more violent and spontaneous in comparison to the “legalistic and constitutionalist ...cautious and controlled” orientation of the élite mobilization (Guha 2000, p. 4). The one main line of argument that is present and common within the Subaltern Studies Group is on the issue of resistance against élite domination. According to Guha the bourgeoisie failed to speak for the nation, which means that what the Subaltern Studies Group studies is “the study of this historic failure of the nation to come into its own ... the study of this failure which constitutes the central problematic of Indian historiography” (Guha 2000, p. 6).

Arif Dirlik (1994) argues that the debates from India on historiography “are not discoveries” (p.340). Rather they are “the application in Indian historiography of trends in historical writing that were quite widespread by the 1970s, under the impact of social historians such as E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, and a whole host of others” (p.340). Dipesh Chakrabarty widely responds to this assertion by describing mostly Guha’s entire study on Indian history. The influence of 1970s British Marxist historiography on Guha is undeniable, yet even though Hobsbawm is interested in the ways in which social movements prone to anticolonial revolts, he does not see the revolts as “social banditry and primitive rebellion”. Rather he calls them prepolitical.

Chakrabarty (2002) argues that Guha insists on the idea that “at the beginning of every peasant uprising, there was inevitably a struggle on the part of the rebels to destroy all symbols of the social prestige and power of the ruling classes” (p.10). Even if the tendencies of two historians seem similar, Hobsbawm unwillingly repeats the European periodization that creates exclusion from history by putting them in a past without politics. In addition to this, Guha differs also from Marxist theory by refusing the hypothesis of unified society to the single axis of class, or even triple axis: class, gender, and ethnicity.

In her own canonical work, “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” Spivak reflects on Ranajit Guha and his work of rethinking “Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of the discontinuous chain of peasant insurgencies during the colonial occupation” (Spivak 1988, p. 283). Spivak’s first criticism is related to “the autonomy of the subaltern group, which ... [has] fundamentally [an] essentialist premise” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 200). Spivak’s second criticism is that “no methodology for determining who or what might constitute this group can avoid this essentialism. The ‘people’ or the ‘subaltern’ is a group defined by its difference from the élite”. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 200). In an attempt to answer for the criticism of essentialism, Guha identifies a wide range of groups within Indian society. He categorizes Indian society in four groups and uses the term elite “to signify dominant groups, foreign as well as indigenous. The dominant foreign groups included all the non-Indian, that is, mainly British officials of the colonial state and foreign industrialists, merchants, financiers, planters, landlords and missionaries” (Guha 2000, p. 7). “The dominant indigenous groups included classes and interests operating at two levels. At the all-India level [and]... at the regional and local levels” (Guha 2000, p. 7) and they are also considered to be among the elites. According to Guha, the fourth group is the true subaltern classes, and the term is synonymous with “people”, “the social groups and elements included in this category represent the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as elite” (Guha 2000, p.7). Yet, for Spivak, this classification makes the issue more problematic because if the task of the researcher as projected in Guha’s work is “to investigate, identify and measure the *specific* nature of the degree of *deviation* of [the dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local level] from the ideal [the subaltern] and situate it historically” (Spivak 1988, p. 284), then this research becomes

“essentialist and taxonomic” (Spivak 1988, pp. 284-285). Moreover, Spivak (1988, p. 285) asks “what taxonomy can fix such a space?” suggesting that “for the ‘true’ subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself” (Spivak 1988, p. 285). In other words, it is not possible to construct a place that would provide the subaltern with a voice since such a place/category would immediately be occupied by “many other possible speaking positions” (Ding 2011, p. 20).

In “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*”, Spivak continues her criticism by putting forward a critique of the West’s investigation of different cultures through a totalizing Western gaze and framework, which is fundamentally in its economic interest. She argues that the knowledge produced by the West about the Third World is a commodity that has no reference in the sense that the knowledge that is produced is hegemonic and has colonial vocabulary. Spivak proposes to dismantle the binary oppositions such as subject/object and self/other, Occident/Orient, majority/minority through deconstruction in Derridean terms, as well as to bring forth the question of gender into postcolonial critique. Investigating the concept “double efface(ment)” in relation to femininity in India, Spivak (1988, p.287) argues that “both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant”. She utilizes the example of Indian Sati, a practice of burning the female widow alive in the pyre together with the dead husband, a practice that was outlawed by the British. The abolishment of the practice did not involve any female Indian voice. It was decided and executed by British male elite. According to Spivak, even though many lives were saved, the abolishment of the Sati practice is still an example of colonial agenda of “white men saving brown women from brown men” in an attempt to establish a modern, civilized, rational society that would preserve the interests of the West. For the abolishment of the practice manifested the “truth” that Indians are barbaric, cruel, and far from evolved, in the sense that they are irrational to the point of taking the lives of women after their husbands die. “In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak 1988, p. 287). It is important to highlight the fact that Spivak’s argument that the “subaltern cannot speak” (Spivak 1988, p. 287) should not immediately mean that there is no possibility for the subjugated or marginalized groups to resist. Neither this should mean “the subaltern

only has a dominant language or a dominant voice in which to be heard” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 201. Rather,

Spivak’s target is the concept of an unproblematically constituted subaltern identity, rather than the subaltern subject’s ability to give voice to political concerns. Her point is that no act of dissent or resistance occurs on behalf of an essential subaltern subject entirely separate from the dominant discourse that provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks. Clearly, the existence of post-colonial discourse itself is an example of such speaking, and in most cases the dominant language or mode of representation is appropriated so that the marginal voice can be heard (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p.201).

2.3.3 Homi K. Bhabha. Homi Bhabha (1994) argues for the importance of theory at the Third Cinema Conference in Edinburgh in 1986, where he presented “*The Commitment to Theory*”. Bhabha opened his lecture with his take on the debate around the polarization of theory and activism. Bhabha:

There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged. It is said that the place of the academic critic is inevitably within the Eurocentric archives of an imperialist or neo-colonial West... Must we always polarize in order to polemicize? (Bhabha 1994, p.19)

This polarization, according to Bhabha (1994), resembled “that ahistorical nineteenth-century polarity of Orient and Occident” (p.19) and suggests that the relationship is more complex and involve multiple interplays. Rather than exclusion, Bhabha advocates for a mutual inclusion of theory and activism and argues that “there are many forms of political writing whose different effects are obscured when they are divided between the ‘theoretical’ and the ‘activist’” (Bhabha 1994, p.21). Bhabha (1994) gives the example of a leaflet and suggests that while “the leaflet involved in the organization of a strike is [not] short on theory, ... a speculative article on the theory of ideology ought to have more practical examples or applications” (p.21) because both of them are “forms of discourse and to that extent they produce rather than reflect their objects of reference” (Bhabha 1994, p.21). Both the leaflet and the article are contributions and they “exists side by side” (p.22). Moreover, Bhabha (1994) highlights the importance of theory when he suggests that “textuality is not

simply a second-order ideological expression or a verbal symptom of a pre-given political subject. That the political subject - as indeed the subject of politics - is a discursive event is nowhere more clearly seen than in a text" (Bhabha 1994, p.23). Referring to theory, Bhabha argues:

It makes us aware that our political referents and priorities - the people, the community, class struggle, anti-racism, gender difference, the assertion of an anti-imperialist, black or third perspective - are not there in some primordial, naturalistic sense. Nor do they reflect a unitary or homogeneous political object. They make sense as they come to be constructed in the discourses of feminism or Marxism or the Third Cinema or whatever, whose objects of priority - class or sexuality or 'the new ethnicity' - are always in historical and philosophical tension, or cross-reference with other objectives (Bhabha 1994, p.26).

In other words, all political movements, such as Third Cinema "is always a process of translation and transference of meaning" (Bhabha 1994, p.26). Therefore, there are no positions that has a permanent and fixed truth in them. This is the main contribution of theory: "This emphasis on the representation of the political, on the construction of discourse, is the radical contribution of the translation of theory ...[whose] vigilance never allows a simple identity between the political objective and its means of representation" (Bhabha 1994, p.27). This does not mean that Bhabha (1994) neglects to consider the amount of cultural capital Europe has been harvesting over decades. Bhabha (1994) argues:

A large film festival in the West - even an alternative or counter-cultural event such as Edinburgh's 'Third Cinema' Conference - never fails to reveal the disproportionate influence of the West as cultural forum ...as place of public exhibition and discussion, as place of judgement, and as market-place. An Indian film ... wins the Newcastle Festival which then opens up distribution facilities in India ... A major debate on the politics and theory of Third Cinema first appears in Screen ... An archival article on the important history of neo-traditionalism and the 'popular' in Indian cinema sees the light of day in Framework ... Among the major contributors to the development of the Third Cinema as precept and practice are a number of Third World film-makers and critics who are exiles or emigres to the West (Bhabha 1994, p.21).

In this world where we witness “the shifting margins of cultural displacement”, cultural practices such as theory, text, cinema, etc., can become more productive spaces when they are not considered in oppositional but in negotiative terms –, not exclusive of each other but inclusive- because “forms of popular rebellion and mobilization are often most subversive and transgressive when they are created through the identification with oppositional *cultural* practices” (Bhabha 1994, p. 20).

2.3.3.1 The stereotype and “The Other Question”. In “The Other Question”, Bhabha (1994) discusses stereotypes constructed within racial and colonial discourses in relation to Sigmund Freud’s conceptualization of fetishism. According to Bhabha (1994), just like identity, a stereotype lacks any sort of purity or fixity. Rather, it is “a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation” (Bhabha 1994, p.70). Accordingly, it would not be productive to approach stereotypes as fixed points of reference, which are either positive or negative. Rather, “the point of intervention should shift ... to an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse” (Bhabha 1994, p.67). Bhabha (1994), then, argues “for the reading of the stereotype in terms of fetishism” (p.74).

fetishism is always a ‘play’ or vacillation between the archaic affirmation of wholeness/ similarity - in Freud's terms: ‘All men have penises’; in ours: ‘All men have the same skin/race/culture’ - and the anxiety associated with lack and difference - again, for Freud ‘Some do not have penises’; for us ‘Some do not have the same skin/race/ culture.’ Within discourse, the fetish represents the simultaneous play between metaphor as substitution (masking absence and difference) and metonymy (which contiguously registers the perceived lack) ... the scene of fetishism is also the scene of the reactivation and repetition of primal fantasy – the subject’s desire for a pure origin that is always threatened by its division (Bhabha 1994, pp.74-75).

Bhabha first recognizes the apparent difference between the racial and sexual fetish; skin: As “the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, [skin] is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as 'common knowledge' in a range of cultural, political and historical discourses” (Bhabha 1994, p.78). Second, Bhabha (1994) makes the connection between sexual fetish and “the ‘good object’; ... the prop that makes the whole object desirable and lovable, facilitates sexual relations and can even promote a form of happiness” (p.78). Bhabha (1994) then argues that racial fetish and

stereotype “facilitates colonial relations and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised” (p.78). What is important, according to Bhabha (1994), is to “see the place of fantasy in the exercise of colonial power” (p.79). And in order to see that, one needs to examine “the construction of the signifier of ‘kin/race’ in those regimes of visibility and discursivity” (p.79).

2.3.3.2 Hybridity and “Of Mimicry and Man”. A hybrid is “a cross or a mixture” (Young 2005, p. 8). Young traces the term hybridity “in various Victorian discourses of race and miscegenation, combining attraction and repulsion” (Hazan 2015, p. 16). He argues that in these works, hybridity is related to intra-racial fertility and colonizer’s desire toward the colonizer, which fluctuates between attraction and repulsion. It also illustrates how much colonial discourses are interpenetrated by sexuality through “images of transgressive sexuality, of an obsession with the idea of the hybrid and miscegenated, and with persistent fantasies of inter-racial sex” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 36). Therefore, according to Young (2005, p. 8) “theories of race were thus also covert theories of desire”. Young calls for a cautious use of the term because it has been very much adopted by the colonialist discourse of racism. He (2005) argues: “we are utilizing the vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right as much as the notion of an organic process of the grafting of diversity into singularity” (p. 10). Another criticism toward the term is related to its understanding as a discourse to define a cultural exchange between different cultures. Even though hybridity does not discredit the hierarchy that is inherent in imperialism and colonialism, which favors the colonizer, its utilization has been generally reprimanded. This is mostly because it suggests invalidating and ignoring relations of power as well as recreating assimilationist policies. It is, perhaps, more productive to approach the concept of hybridity through Papastergiadis’ question: “should we use only words with a pure and inoffensive history, or should we challenge essentialist models of identity by taking on and then subverting their own vocabulary” (Papastergiadis 2015, p. 258).

Ania Loomba (2005) suggests that no matter how much “imperial and racist ideologies insist on racial difference, they catalyse cross-overs, partly because not all that takes place in the ‘contact zones’ can be monitored and controlled” (p. 145). The term contact zones, as used by Mary Louise Pratt (2008), describes “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly

asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (p. 7). Loomba (2005) suggests that an inquiry about hybridity is an inquiry about “in-betweenness, diasporas, mobility and cross-overs of ideas and identities generated by colonialism” (p. 148). This way, hybridity, “is celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference” (Hoogvelt 1997, p.158). That is also the reason behind the idea of why Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007, p. 108) define hybridity as “the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization”. Stuart Hall approaches hybridity as new ethnicities. Accordingly, he argues that there are no essentially black or white identities but rather “a real heterogeneity of interests and identities” (Bhabha 2015, p. 25). As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) argue in *“The Empire Writes Back”*, “it is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor is it possible to create national or regional formations entirely independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise” (p. 196). Homi Bhabha approaches hybridity as a process. He argues that the colonizers fall short in their mission to redefine the identity of the colonized toward a homogenizing framework with their socio-economic and political policies. Because of this failure, a new hybrid identity, which is not recognizable to them, emerges. This new cultural hybrid identity, according to Bhabha, has neither an essentialist nature nor a fixed character. Rather it “emerges from the interweaving of elements of the colonizer and colonized challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity” (Meredith 1998, p.2). Bhabha (1994):

Hybrid is about resistance and challenge to the colonizer ...It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power (1994, p. 112).

This brings to mind another important term in postcolonial theory which is closely related to hybridity; ambivalence. First “developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite” ... [the term] “describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes

the relationship between colonizer and colonized” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 10).

The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer. Rather than assuming that some colonized subjects are ‘complicit’ and some ‘resistant’, ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 10).

As a result, ambivalence has the potential to break apart colonial power because it goes against the colonial need to construct obedient subjects who internalize the values of the colonizer. This situation leads one to think about another important aspect, mimicry, and Homi Bhabha’s, another canonic text, *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*. According to Bhabha (1994), “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (p.86). In other words, colonial discourse encourages colonial mimicry since the process involves the colonized to embrace the cultural values, economic structures, and political inclinations of the colonizer. Yet, “the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (Bhabha 1994, p.86). Therefore, according to Bhabha (1994), mimicry is

the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power ... [and it is] also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledges and disciplinary powers (Bhabha 1994, p.86).

This double articulation may also lead to the emergence of the unwelcomed state of mimicry; mockery. Bhabha (1994) argues that the spaces of fluctuations in-between mimicry and mockery are very important since it is within these spaces “where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that my instances of colonial imitation come” (p.86). This is mainly because mockery, and parody, is in close proximity to mimicry.

It is important to highlight the fact that mimicry is not simply “the familiar exercise of *dependent* colonial relations through narcissistic identification so that, as

Fanon has observed, the black man stops being an actional person for only the white man can represent his self-esteem” (Bhabha 1994, p.88). It is also not, “what Césaire describes as colonization-thingification behind which there stands the essence of the *présence Africaine*” (Bhabha 1994, p.88). The impact of mimicry, or to use Bhabha’s words, its menace, comes from its “double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of ... the partial representation / recognition of the colonial object”. In other words, the menace of mimicry lays in its potential to interfere/disrupts colonial authority because it holds the potential for mockery. Bhabha (1994) gives examples from texts such as Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo* (1904), Naipoul’s *Mimic Men* (1967) and argues that they all include examples who are

the appropriate objects of a colonialist chain of command, authorized versions of otherness. But they are also, the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as 'inappropriate' colonial subjects (Bhabha 1994, p. 88)

According to Bhabha (1994),

the visibility of mimicry is always produced at the site of interdiction [which] is a form of colonial discourse ... at the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed; a discourse uttered between the lines and as such both against the rules and within them (Bhabha 1994, p.89).

Accordingly, “the desire of colonial mimicry ... [is also] an interdictory desire” ... [and] it has strategic objectives”. Bhabha calls these objectives, “the metonymy of presence”. “In mimicry, the representation of identity and meaning is rearticulated along the axis of metonymy” (Bhabha 1994, p. 90). Bhabha (1994, p.91) claims, “mimicry, like the fetish, is a part-object that radically revalues the normative knowledges of the priority of race, writing, history”. Similar to how “fetish mimes the forms of authority at the point at which it deauthorizes them ... mimicry rearticulates presence in terms of its ‘otherness’, that which it disavows” (Bhabha 1994, p.91) and such contradictory articulations of reality and desire - seen in racist stereotypes, statements, jokes, myths- ... are the effects of a disavowal that denies the differences of the other ... In the ambivalent world of the "not quite/not white,"

on the margins of metropolitan desire, the founding objects of the Western world become the erratic, eccentric, accidental objets trouvés of the colonial discourse - the part-objects of presence. Black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body (Bhabha 1994, pp.91-92).

2.3.3.3 Third Space and “The Commitment to Theory”. According to Bhabha (1990), “all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity” (p. 211). Therefore, “the significance of the term does not come from the fact that one can “trace two original moments from which the third emerges” (Bhabha 1990, p. 221). The importance is that, hybridity ...is the ‘third space’, which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives” (Bhabha 1990, p.221).

The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation ... makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process. ... It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricised and read anew (Bhabha 1994, p. 37).

Thus, Third Space is productive because it initiates “new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation” (Bhabha 1994, pp.1-2) by distorting, deconstructing and challenging the conventional classifications of culture and identity through translation and negotiation. Therefore, Third Space is not exclusive but inclusive. Cultural identity produced within the Third Space does not involve dichotomies such as self/Other, master/slave, colonizer/colonized, First World/Third World, black/white. Meaning produced within the Third Space is ambivalent and beyond cultural borders and located in-between existing referential systems and antagonisms. Therefore, hybrid identity presents an opportunity, because of its “innate knowledge of transculturation, their ability to transverse both cultures and to translate, negotiate and mediate affinity and difference within a dynamic of exchange and inclusion” (Zriba 2019, p.83).

we are always negotiating in any situation of political opposition or antagonism. Subversion is negotiation; transgression is negotiation. ... and

hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them (Bhabha 1990, p.216).

If hybridity involves ambivalence and mimicry, then, the statements that are produced within the Third Space are inherently ambivalent as well. In other words, an intervention of the Third Space “quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People” (Bhabha 1994, p. 37). Therefore, the ambivalent space that is opened up by the Third Space “may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 108). It is important to add that, Bhabha (1994) does not see cultural difference “as the *source* of conflict ...but as the *effect* of discriminatory practices-the production of cultured *differentiation* as signs of authority ... [and this] changes its value and its rules recognition” (Bhabha 1994, p.114).

Hybridity can occur as a result of belonging to at least two different cultures; for example, as a result of migration (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989, p.9). The migrant population in this sense can still develop hybrid identities without having been exposed to colonization. Migrants are uprooted from their homes, migrate to a host culture, experience displacement and as a result of being exposed to two different cultures, form hybrid identities. According to Fanon, colonized people need to find a way to get in touch with their pre-colonized identity and self. This sort of search is possible for the fact that “the past continues to speak to us” (Hall 2000, p. 395). Yet, it “no longer addresses us as a simple, factual ‘past’, since our relation to it, like the child’s relation to the mother, is always-already ‘after the break’” (Hall 2000, p. 395). In other words, colonized or not, migrants’ sense of belonging to their origin is in flux, for “identity is a matter of becoming as well as of ‘being’” (Loomba 2005: 152). Therefore, there is simply no returning to a pre-colonized self because there is no such past “which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity” (Hall 2000, p. 394). This is partly because “colonialist categories of knowledge had the power to make us see and experience colonial and postcolonial identities ourselves as Other” (Loomba 2005, pp. 152-153).

2.3.3.4 Nation as narration and “DissemiNation”. Homi Bhabha (1994) offers

a critique of the “horizontal” (Bhabha 1994, p.141) and “linear narrative” (Bhabha 1994, p.173) of nation as constructed by Western historicism and argues that such historicized readings are essentialist and signify “a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity” (p.140). In addition, such a horizontal approach, construct homogenizing narratives for nations, perhaps more commonly for the Third World. As a counterargument, Bhabha (1994) offers the concept of “temporal dimension” and argues that temporal dimension “serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussion of the nation as a cultural force” (p.140). In other words, he suggests that a nation is a narrative, a cultural elaboration, which unfolds in time. Moreover, Bhabha suggests that the homogeneous narratives of the West are disseminated and deconstructed through the narratives of exiles, emigres, minorities and marginalize peoples. Therefore, rather than constructing the dichotomies of colonizer/colonized, black/white, First Nation/Third World and such, it is more productive to look at difference as “complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (Bhabha 1994, p.2). Accordingly, Bhabha argues, “the concept of the ‘people’ emerges within a range of discourses as a double narrative movement” (p.145). In this sense, people are simply more than “historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference” (p.145). Therefore, when thinking about people belonging in a nation, one needs to think in “double-time”;

the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin *in the past*; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people (Bhabha 1994, p.145).

In other words, the nation as “a system of cultural signification” (p.148) and a “narrative strategy for the emergence and negotiation of those agencies of the marginal, minority, subaltern, or diasporic” (p.181), brings forth the possibility of other narratives to flourish. It also makes the nation ambivalent because of the possibility of unbalanced and opposing subaltern temporalities that may emerge from different strategies. In other words, in addition to being pedagogically consolidated, the nation also constructs itself performatively from the “scraps, patches and rags of

daily life” (Bhabha 1994, p. 145). This performativity brings forth temporality of the in-between so that “the boundary that marks the nation's selfhood interrupts the self-generating time of national production and disrupts the signification of the people as homogeneous” (Bhabha 1994, p.148).

People of the nation emerge from these strategies, and they are not homogenous but because they emerge from subaltern temporalities, they are “in a language of doubleness that arises from the ambivalent splitting of the pedagogical and the performative. The nation, then, is split between the official pedagogical narrative and the performative narratives that resist it. Bhabha:

such an apprehension of ‘double and split’ time of national representation... leads us to question the homogenous and horizontal view associated with the nation’s imagined community. We are led to ask whether the emergence of national perspective – of an élite or subaltern nature- within a culture of social contestation, can ever articulate its ‘representative’ authority in that fullness of narrative time and visual synchrony of the sign (Bhabha 1994, p.144).

It is precisely, the split “between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative” (Bhabha 1994, p. 145) that brings forth the ambivalent nature of nation. In addition, this ambivalence and liminality, in relation to pedagogy and performativity, is what provides “a place from which to speak both of, and as, the minority, the exilic, the marginal and the emergent” (Bhabha 1994, p.149). In other words, distinction between pedagogy and performance constructs a space where minority discourses flourish; “the margins of the nation displace the center; the peoples of the periphery return to rewrite the history and fiction of the metropolis.... The bastion of Englishness crumbles at the sight of immigrants and factory workers” (Bhabha 1994, p.6). “The people will no longer be contained in that national discourse of the teleology of progress; the anonymity of individuals; the spatial horizontality of community; the homogenous time of social narratives; the historicist visibility of modernity” (Bhabha 1994, p.151). Bhabha gives the example of John Akomfrah’s *Handsworth Songs* (1986), a documentary about the riots in London and Birmingham in 1985 due to the subjugating policies of the state on black communities. Bhabha suggests that there are two important moments in the film:

the arrival of the ship laden with immigrants from ex-colonies, just stepping off the boat ... followed by another image of the perplexity and power of an emergent peoples, caught in the shot of a dreadlocked Rastafarian cutting a swathe through a posse of policemen during the uprising (Bhabha 1994, p.156). It is between these two images, Bhabha finds the displacement of narrative: “It is the time of oppression and resistance; the time of the performance of the riots, cut across by the pedagogical knowledges of State institutions” (Bhabha 1994, p.156).

2.4 Postcolonial Film Criticism

Films are “inevitably constructs, fabrications, representations” and cinema is one of the best means to understand how identities are represented. It has become quite common for the First World to exploit and objectify minorities and hence provide an illusion of power “while making the inhabitants of the Third World objects of spectacle for the First World’s voyeuristic gaze” (Stam and Spence 1983, p. 4) through cinematic narratives. In addition, misrepresentation of oppressed groups through racial, ethnic, national, and sexual stereotypes has been common since the early years of cinema. As Orientalism teaches us, while the European construction of the Orient/East/Third World is pre-modern, malevolent and hellish, its occupants, the Others, are constructed as savages, barbarians, and corrupt. Besides misrepresentation, there is also the issue of “lack of representation” and the exclusion of the depiction of historical and political events such as political revolts and rebellions against slavery, racism and/or sexism. When racial groups are represented, even in 1970s, it is mostly under vulgar representations, even exploitations. In other words, while Afro-American actors became new stars, it was to attract a new customer base while keeping the patterns of prejudice intact with black exploitation films. Stam and Spence (1983) argue that the process of stereotyping is reversed only with the appearance of Third Cinema.

2.4.1 Third Cinema. At the end of the 1960s, a series of manifestos appeared in Latin America suggesting new aesthetic approaches that relocate cinema to a central and powerful position. In this particular historical context, one can identify many different viewpoints towards cinema in Latin America but all of them share similar approach of rejecting mass commercial conventional cinema. Glauber Rocha’s “*An Aesthetic of Hunger*” was published in 1965 and it is among the canonic texts on Third Cinema. Rocha’s manifesto is a call for rebellion and resistance against European culture in general and cinema in particular and it aims to “make the public aware of its

own misery” (Rocha, 1982, p. 14). Rocha (1982) argues that the originality of Latin America was coming from its hunger:

the hunger of Latin America is not simply an alarming symptom: it is the essence of our society. Herein lies the tragic originality of Cinema Novo in relation to World Cinema: our originality is our hunger, and our greatest misery is that this hunger is felt but not intellectually understood. ... Cinema Novo narrated, described, poetized, discoursed, analyzed, aroused the themes of hunger: characters eating the earth, characters eating roots, characters stealing for food, characters killing for food, characters running away in search of food, ugly characters, dirty, ravaged, inhabiting ugly houses, dark and dirty. (Rocha 1982, p. 13).

According to Rocha (1982), Europeans and most of the Brazilians cannot understand hunger: “For the European it is a strange tropical surrealism. For the Brazilian it is a national shame” (Rocha 1982, p.13). Rocha (1982) also argues that this hunger will never end with mild reforms from the government “therefore, only a culture of hunger, by undermining and destroying its own structures, can qualitatively surpass itself. The most noble cultural manifestation of hunger is violence” (p.13). Rocha calls this violence revolutionary and addresses it as “an aesthetics of violence”. It is revolutionary because “it is the moment when the colonizer becomes aware of the colonized: only when confronted with the sole possibility of expression of the colonized, *violence*, can the colonizer understand, through horror, the strength of the culture he exploits” (Rocha 1982, p.13).

Julio García Espinosa’s “*For an Imperfect Cinema*” was published in 1969 and it discusses the function of the artist and defines a revolutionary position for the artist within the society. Espinosa (1979) makes the distinction between popular art and mass art. “Popular art needs and consequently tends to develop the personal, individual taste of a people. On the other hand, mass art requires the people to have no taste” (Espinosa 1979, p.25). The only solution is for the masses to actually produce art themselves. Espinosa rejects what he calls a narcissistic and commercial exhibitionism and puts forth the opposite: an imperfect cinema:

A new poetics for the cinema will, above all, be a "partisan" and "committed" poetics, a "committed" art, a consciously and resolutely "committed" cinema — that is to say, an "imperfect" cinema. An "impartial" or "uncommitted"

(cinema), as a complete aesthetic activity, will only be possible when it is the people who make it (Espinosa 1979, p. 25).

Almost simultaneously to Espinosa's text and in tune with the spirit of the era, Solanas and Getino's manifesto "*Towards a Third Cinema*" brings forth the idea of a revolutionary cinema, which goes against the grain of Hollywood since it sees Hollywood as an extension of imperialist influence. Solanas and Getino (1970) argue that the illumination of the masses can be possible with the achievement of the revolution. However, for the revolution to happen, there is a dire need to search and find a self-culture that is purified from the effects of colonial powers. Also, if revolution is synonymous with anti-imperialist struggle, the kind of revolutionary cinema, as discussed by Solanas and Getino will serve to spread revolutionary ideas that would facilitate the need for change in the masses. This way, cinema becomes a form of action, a tool for illuminating masses.

[T]he revolution does not begin with the taking of political power from imperialism and the bourgeoisie, but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense the need for change and their intellectual vanguards begin to study and carry out this change through activities on different fronts (Solanas and Getino 1970, p.1).

Solanas and Getino list some methods such as rejecting the language of the colonizer, not using the tools of the system, or questioning the revolutionary contents of each new cinema. Another important aspect is the national character of the revolution in terms of geography. There can be different problems and different solutions for different geographical locations. This does not mean isolating Argentina from the rest of Latin America. It simply means that "the knowledge of national reality" is extremely important because it allows the transference of experience, considered as the most important form of dialogue between people. According to Mike Wayne (2001), to understand the "stimulating" writing of Solanas and Getino one must locate its position in the industry of Argentinean cinema. Wayne (2001) refers to the existence of a First Cinema starting with the 1910s. Even though it began with a progressive perspective, starting with the early 1940's, Argentinian cinema became Europeanized because of the inflow of foreign and Argentinian middle-class capital. The two military coups d'états, even if they did not lead to the prohibition of production, have led to what appears to be self-censorship in the contents of films. In those conditions, Argentinian

cinema could not mention the problems that were encountered because of social and political conflicts (Wayne 2001, pp.118-119).

Robert Stam (2003) reminds us that Third Cinema is just one of the many alternative models against the dominance of Hollywood. Stam (2003) lists three tendencies of Third Cinema from the Caribbean to Latin America: “(1) their constitutive hybridity; (2) their chronotopic multiplicity; (3) their common motif of the redemption of detritus” (p.32). As the point of convergence of all, Stam (2003) argues for “Brazilian aesthetics of garbage” (p.32) that literally and figuratively produce films about garbage; the redemption of detritus creates an art of recycling and pastiche using recuperated waste materials (Stam, 2003, pp. 32-37). In that sense the garbage becomes a database of cultural residue, which can interpret social customs and values.

2.4.2 Postcolonial cinemas. Paula Amad (2013) focuses on the importance of the gaze and analyzes what she calls “visual riposte, which extends beyond formal or stylistic analysis to embody the authors’ ethical intent to return, or at least to interrogate, the gaze” (p. 52). Amad (2013) draws relations between colonial powers’ “right to look without being looked at” (p. 52) and the perspective of the Foucauldian panoptic surveillance system and claims that in a postcolonial age the returned gaze has some specific cinematic codes allowing it to explore censored locations. Through an analysis of African cinema, Amad (2013) investigates who has the right to look, or film, in Africa and when Africans will be able to look at themselves and the others. She suggests that the fall of “the absolute tyranny of the sovereign gaze” will help the passive spectator to turn into an active witness: “Symbolizing the refusal of spectatorial gaze theory, the figure of visual riposte replaced the ‘absolute tyranny’ of the sovereign gaze and the coherent subject with the “errant” decentered look of a fragmented subject” (Amad 2013, p. 62).

David Murphy and Patrick Williams (2007) also focus on African cinema in “*Postcolonial African Cinema: Ten Directors*”, a selection of films from postcolonial African filmmakers. Their work is important because it brings together the African context to cinema studies and postcolonial analysis. Stuart Hall, in “*Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation*”, also focuses on exploring the connection between cultural identity and cinematic representation. Hall (1989) focuses on the ways in which cultural identity can link the past and the future and on how films offer a way

into reminding the past to their audiences. Hall is interested in how Afro-Caribbean identity develops socially after the 1970s and argues that

cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark. It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return (Hall 1989 pp.71-72)

Rather, cultural identity was “always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture” (Hall 1989, p.72). Therefore, cultural identity is always political. Highlighting Jamaican cultural identity and belonging, Hall (1989) argues that after the 1970s, the “great majority of Jamaicans discovered themselves to be ‘black’ - just as they discovered themselves to be the sons and daughters of slavery” (p.75). The Caribbean identity, according to Hall, is not only depended on a territory but on a complex relationship of heterogeneity, diversity, and hybridity. For his expectation from Caribbean cinema, Hall (1989, p.80) reminds that “identity is constituted not outside but within representation” and cinema has the possibility to unveil and discover different parts and histories of the cultural identities: Hall (1989, p. 80) “cinema, not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which is able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover who we are”.

In terms of postcolonial cinema in France, Caroline Eades (2006) suggests that French colonial and postcolonial cinema is strictly separated by a specific date; April 17th 1962. *The Évian Accords* and the referendums in France and in Algeria resolved the war, which lasted for eight years by the recognition of Algeria’s independence from France which also meant the collapse of the French colonial empire. For Eades, all the films produced after this particular date can be considered under the notion of post-colonial cinema. She defines the French post-colonial cinema as “all the films made on the French colonial empire, after its fall, from the point of view of the ‘ex-colonizer’” (Eades 2006, p.11). By the 1970’s in France, films that depict “a more antimilitarist point of view” (Hayward 2005, p.249) and the representation of French intervention is no longer legitimized. Hamish Ford (2012) discusses the strategies of

resistance in postcolonial films with three examples. He does not make a differentiation between these films in relation to their geographical location or the geographical location of the events that were addressed in the films (Ford 2012, pp. 74-75). He is particularly interested in the presence/absence of subject positions and the representation of the colonizer and the colonized. The First film is *Camp de Thiaroye* (1988) that is a semi-autobiographical work by Osumane Sembene and Thierno Faty Sow. The film is a critique of French colonialism and depicts the events that took place in Thiaroye, Dakar from November 30th to December 1st in 1944, which later were known to be the Thiaroye Massacre. The film is important for Ford because it provides three subject positions: colonizer, colonized and African French Army soldiers. The second film is Gillo Pontecorvo's *the Battle of Algiers* (1966), which takes place during the Algerian revolution between 1954 and 1962. Ford (2012) analyzes the distinct binary opposition between the Algerian revolutionaries and their tactics and the French Army. The last film is Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005) that principally portrays the ex-colonizer after colonialism's official end. James Penney (2010) readdresses *Caché* through the concept of postcolonial guilt and analyzes the opening sequence in detail. He (2010) argues that the choice to use a hidden camera is an exemplary cinematic rendering of the encounter with the gaze in the Lacanian sense (Penney 2010, p.7). Penney (2010) argues that for Lacan, shame originates from an encounter with the gaze and settles his analysis on the trajectory of the protagonist and the gaze of the camera during the film. Will Higbee (2007) in his article "*Locating the Postcolonial in Transnational Cinema: The Place of Algerian Émigré Directors in Contemporary French Film*" discusses the works of Merzak Allouache, Abdelkrim Bahloul, Okacha Touita and Mahmoud Zemmouri who are Algerian émigré directors producing films in France. According to Higbee, all of these directors produce films, which can be categorized under postcolonial cinema because they are about colonial history, exile, diaspora and their own experiences. Even though the films of Zemmouri and Allaouache are particularly related to the relationship between France and Algeria, the methodologies of each filmmaker are different because even though all of them belong to a colonized country, their heritages are different.

In the frame of Vietnamese postcolonial cinema, Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992) presents scripts, interviews, and visuals of three of Trinh T. Minh-ha's films: *Reassemblage* (1982), *Naked Spaces: Living is Round* (1985) and *Surname Viet Given*

Name Nam (1989) and focuses on political cinema, the representation of trauma and historical events. Trinh T. Minh-ha's (1993) second book, *Cinema Interval*, is a set of collection of her interviews as a filmmaker. She focuses on the interlinking of language to image and the space between visual, textual, and audio. The interviews also explore the importance of film as a cultural frame, which represents the collective identity and memory. Rebeca Weaver-Hightower and Peter Hulme (2014) collects a set of essays on postcolonial films of the later 20th and early 21st centuries from different producers and different geographic and cultural contexts. They focus the common aspects among different colonial experiences from all over the world as depicted in cinematic narratives while at the same time reflect the reality of the colonial crimes and how postcolonial film production establishes a narrative of the reality from an eastern point of view with different film analyses.

Vuslat Demirkopan's (2014) study on Fatih Akin's cinema is another interesting case in relation to postcolonial cinema. Akin is described as "a diasporic Turk living and working in Germany" who displays a "double consciousness" due to "his transnational existence as a filmmaker and his contested national and cultural belonging" (Erdoğan 1998, p. 27) Demirkopan generalizes the second generation of Turkish-German filmmakers by their attempts to celebrate "the pleasures of diasporic hybridity by pointing out how migrants negotiate alternative lifestyles and attitudes within the nation" but does not forget to add that this celebration of diasporic spaces is not uncritical (Demirkopan 2014, p.204). With reference to Fatih Akin's *The Edge of Heaven* (2007), those alternative lifestyles provide a countercultural alliance as only productive forms of politics. Stam and Shohat (2014) underline this inclusion of Turkish-German population within the postcolonial frame through their difference from immigrants in France and in the United Kingdom, who are "products of postcolonial karma" (Stam and Shohat 2014, p.282) though Turkey was not really a colony.

So far, the dissertation discussed postcolonial films from different regions such as Latin America, France, Vietnam, Caribbean, Germany, Africa and Algeria but examples of postcolonial cinema can be discussed through genre as well and perhaps more commonly the genre of science fiction. Gerald Gaylard's (2010) literary criticism on science fiction demonstrates a powerful correlation between the postcolonial and science fiction. Gaylard (2010) analyzes Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) through

discussions on imperialism and colonialism. *Dune* tells the story of a rebellion in a galactic empire by the native people living in a desert planet. The community model comes apparently from Arabic and Islamic cultures. The main problem of the story is the characteristic of the rebellion, which is quite apocalyptically nationalist. A male who is a white messianic outlander leads the rebellion. Despite the Orientalist cliché of the white male savior, Gaylard calls the novel “eco-postcolonial” (Gaylard 2010, p. 34) and argues that the nature of multiple and cross-linked events prevents the totalizing singular analysis of nationalism. While Slavoj Žižek’s draws attention to post-9/11 discourses on terrorism and illegal immigration in Alfonso Cuarón’s *Children of Men* (2006), Shohini Chaudhuri (2012) examines the film through British and US policies on the War on Terror, such as the illegalization of migration, arbitrary detention at Abu Ghraib Prison and biometric identity cards and argues that in *Children of Men*, the stereotypical implication of the white male protagonist rescuing a black woman “undercut a subversive narrative strategy” (Chaudhuri 2012, p.197). According to Chaudhuri (2012), postcolonial theory is a powerful tool to explain the new politics and policies that produce a contemporary form of imperialism for many national states such as Britain. Rebecca Weaver-Hightower (2014) also focuses on the science fiction genre with the concern of the policies on multiculturalism. The first film she discusses is James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009), where the white man from the evil industrial empire of corporations, another Orientalist cliché, saves colonized, blue-skinned natives until the white male savior transforms his body and voluntarily becomes an indigenous. The second film is Neill Blomkamp’s *District 9* (2009), which tells the story of an alien population that accidentally lands on earth and is obliged by force to live in as refugees in camps. Weaver-Hightower (2014, p. 250) defines the film as “an allegory of apartheid” with regard to the history of South Africa where the film is from. In her analysis, she focuses on the concept of hybridity and argues that unlike *Avatar*, the protagonist of *District 9* becomes an alien involuntarily and racial discrimination gets visible during the process.

2.4.3 Hamid Naficy and “An Accented Cinema”. In terms of analyzing cinema in Turkey, Hamid Naficy’s “*An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*” (2001) has become an important tool for many Turkish film scholars, such as Asuman Suner, Müjde Arslan and Özgür Yaren, who study cinema in Turkey in relation to Naficy’s theoretical framework; particularly whenever films deal with ethnic or

religious minorities. Naficy (2001, p. 4) underlines particular aspects of “the accent”. One of them is style. According to Naficy (2001, p. 20) style, in general, is formed based on particular issues such as “regulations governing censorship, technological developments, the reigning mode of production (cinematic and otherwise), availability of financial resources, and the choices that individual filmmakers make as social and cinematic agents”. Accordingly, the elements of accented style come from similar issues.

Naficy (2001) first categorizes the style of accented cinema as “film’s visual style; narrative structure; character and character development; subject matter, theme, and plot; structures of feeling of exile; filmmaker’s biographical and sociocultural location; and the film’s mode of production, distribution, exhibition, and reception” (p. 21). Later, he elaborates more on visual style, character, subject matter, and themes. According to Naficy (2001) narrative as a component of visual style in accented films are “fragmented, multilingual, epistolary, self-reflexive, and critically juxtaposed narrative structure”, characters are “amphibolic, doubled, crossed, and lost” and filmic examples of accented cinema have subject matters and themes “that involve journeying, historicity, identity, and displacement; dysphoric, euphoric, nostalgic, synaesthetic, liminal, and politicized structures of feeling” (p.4).

Naficy (2001, p.21) categorizes accented cinema into three parts – “exilic, diasporic, and postcolonial ethnic films”. He also furthers his categorization by differentiating accented feature films and accented experimental films. According to Naficy (2001, p.21) while accented feature films are generally “narrative, fictional, feature-length, polished, and designed for commercial distribution and theatrical exhibition”, accented experimental films “are usually shot on lower-gauge film stock (16mm and super-8) or on video, making a virtue of their low-tech, low-velocity, almost homemade quality”. He also suggests that accented experimental films are often “nonfictional, vary in length from a few minutes to several hours, are designed for nontheatrical distribution and exhibition and tend to inscribe autobiography or biography more, or more openly, than the feature films” (Naficy 2001, p. 21).

Another important aspect of accented cinema according to Naficy (2001) is on the issue of “decent relations and consent relations” (p.8). Naficy (2001, p.8) explains decent relations as films that emphasize “bloodline and ethnicity” whereas films of consent relations focus on “self-made and contractual affiliations”. The main

difference between the two categorizes is that “while the former is concerned with being, the latter is concerned with becoming” (Naficy 2001, p.8). Therefore, films of decent relations are conciliatory, and films of consent relations are contestatory (Naficy 2001, p.8). Finally, it is important to highlight that “journey narratives tend to dominate in certain literary and cinematic traditions” and they constitute a main element in accented cinema (Naficy 2001, p.222). This dissertation analyses nine films, which can be considered as journey narratives because their narrative structures follow the theoretical framework as theorized by Hamid Naficy where he outlines the characteristics of accented films in relation to journeying and provides several examples to ground his theoretical framework.

2.4.3.1 The direction and the motivation of the journey. According to Naficy (2001), accented films are not only about journeys that

take exilic and diasporic subjects physically, psychologically, or metaphorically out of home countries and deliver them elsewhere or return them to their points of origin. There are also "journeys of identity" that displaced people inevitably undergo once they arrive in the new lands. Like other journeys, these internal journeys are composite and serial, since most exilic conditions involve multiple motivations and evolutions” (Naficy 2001, p. 237)

In other words, characters

undergo transformation, or their transformation is hindered, by the legal status with which they enter the new country and by the work they do there, the activities they undertake, the associations they form, and the media they produce and consume, as well as by the host society's historical perception and current reception of them. Many accented films deal with these status shifts, the desire embedded in them, and their cost to the travelers (Naficy 2001, p. 237).

Accordingly, the first element in thinking about journey narratives is the motivation and the direction of journeying (Naficy 2001, p.222). The motivation of a journey in accented cinema may be the reason for an “exploration, pilgrimage, escape, emigration, or return” (Naficy 2001, p. 222). Yet the motivation of the journey may change during the film or may involve more than one motivation. Naficy (2001, p. 222) argues that this is an example of the “composite and evolutionary” nature of

accented films. For instance, “exploration may involve quest, wandering, search, homelessness, or even conquest and colonization” (Naficy 2001, p. 222). It is also important to point out that the motivation in the beginning of the film does not necessarily have to be the same motivation at the end. Naficy (2001, p.222) argues that “once initiated, journeys often change character: begun as escape, for example, a journey may become one of exile, emigration, exploration, or return”. The direction of the journeys can be divided into three other categories:

- “outward journeys of escape, home seeking, and home founding
- journeys of quest, homelessness, and lostness
- and inward, homecoming journeys” (Naficy 2001, p. 223).

However, it is important to highlight the fact that journeys can be physical or psychological or both at the same time (Naficy 2001, p.223). In other words, the direction of the journey can be inward or outward (Naficy 2001, p.223). Yet, this is not an either / or situation for outward journeys and inward journeys can happen after one another or even simultaneously. For example, “Güney’s *Yol* (1982), Naderi’s *Manhattan by Numbers* (1993), and Tarkovsky’s *Nostalgia* (1983) are not only about physical journeys but also about psychological journeys into deep despair”, whereas “Solanas’s *The Journey* is an example of an inward journey into the individual psyche and the national and regional history” (Naficy 2001, p. 223).

Firstly, outward journeys of escape, home seeking, and home founding can have different effects on the traveler. They can be “meliorative and redemptive experiences ... triumphalist, progressive ...—from known to unknown, civilization to wilderness, and restriction to freedom” (Naficy 2001, pp. 223-224). They can also be assimilationist as in the case of *To Sleep with Anger* or resistive as in *Daughters of the Dust*. (Naficy 2001, p. 224). Home-seeking journey’s especially “Westward journeys of the Third World populations ...are structured by loss” (Naficy 2001, p.224). Secondly, journeys of quest, homelessness, and lostness may take different forms and they can also be transformative, may involve “journey of self-discovery, or rite of passage” (Naficy 2001, p. 226), or may lead to nowhere at all. Thirdly, inward, homecoming journeys, according to Naficy (2001) involve a “return to the homeland [which] is a structuring sentiment” (p. 231). Yet return always involves anxiety for the characters about “what they will, or will not, find once they get back. Indeed, return is rarely the grand homecoming that many of them desire, for both the exiles and the

homelands have in the meantime undergone unexpected or unwanted transformations” (Naficy 2001, p. 232).

2.4.3.2 Borders and border crossings. Borders have a particular importance in accented films and “some of their key moments of border crossing occur in certain empirical border places that are cathected with affect, such as airports, seaports, and railway stations, and which act as portals to other places and times” (Naficy 2001, p. 238). Moreover,

Depending on the nature of the journey and the crossing—whether it is legal or illegal, accomplished openly or clandestinely, with false papers or valid documents, and undertaken voluntarily or involuntarily—these portal places are charged with intense emotions, involving fearful escapes, tearful departures, sudden entrapments, devastating rejections, joyful arrivals, and a euphoric sense of liberation that cannot be recuperated easily (Naficy 2001, p. 238).

According to Naficy (2001) many accented films are deterritorialized and therefore they are “deeply concerned with territory and territoriality” (p.5). Hence, Naficy (2001, p. 6) calls “borders, tunnels, seaports, airports, and hotels and vehicles of mobility, such as trains, buses, and suitcases” as “transitional and transnational places and spaces” and considers them as important aspects of accented films. The main reason of Naficy’s emphasis on this aspect is because he considers these places and spaces to be privileged sites of “journeys of and struggles over identity”. Regardless of their categorization, journeys of identity, according to Naficy (2001, p.6) are “physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical”. Naficy (2001) gives particular importance to journeys of identity which “old identities are sometimes shed and new ones refashioned” (p.6), for according to Naficy (2001) in the best examples of accented films, “identity is not a fixed essence but a process of becoming, even a performance of identity” (p.6). Naficy (2001) categorizes the characteristics of border films as follows:

The plot involves significant journeying and border crossing and use of border settings. The story deals with characters from the borderland regions, regardless of the setting. The story deals with border subjects who live on the border. The film is shot on location in the borderlands, regardless of the plot. The story makes significant reference to the borderlands or to the problems of

ethnic or national identity. Border subjects make the film themselves. The film crosses generic and narrative boundaries (Naficy 2001, p.238)

The films that are analyzed in this dissertation are all border films in relation to Naficy's definition for each one of them constitutes the above aspects. According to Naficy (2001, p. 240) "by providing access to adjacent countries and cultures, borders are places not only of transition but also of translation and transgression". Therefore, "sister border cities ... are sites of intensive intermeshing of politics, cultures, economics, media, and identities. They are also sites of struggle over both immigration issues and human traffic" (Naficy 2001, p. 240). Naficy (2001) suggests that "border spaces tend to fire up the human imagination, for they represent and allegorize wanderlust, flight, and freedom" (p.243).

Naficy (2001) suggests that hotels and motels are "transitional places of residence" (p.248). They are spaces where people stop and wait for things to happen, to pass or wait for people to come or go. They are also spaces of fear and anxiety if the wait is related to crossing a border. They are mostly claustrophobic and shabby. Hotels "both shelter immigrants and refugees and nurture manipulative shifters, loan sharks, corrupt officials, and coyotes of all sorts who prey on their uncertain status and apprehensions" (Naficy 2001, p. 248).

While anxiously waiting in the drab hotel, the exiles engage in talk, games, drinking, making phone calls, writing and receiving letters, listening to the homeland's music, and watching television. The roar of passing cars outside and the arrivals and departures of 'guests' underscore the transitoriness of their lives on the run (Naficy 2001, p. 248).

In addition to tunnels, hotels, airports and motels, vehicles such as cars, trains, ships and planes are also related to border spaces/crossings. Unlike a hotel, these vehicles are "mobile spaces" and but similar to a motel, they are also "symbols of displacement" (Naficy, 2001, p.257), places where the passengers would find the time to plan or dream about their possible futures, get sleep and rest, or contemplate on their lives. And

since these vehicles travel through countryside and wide-open spaces and between countries, there is always a dialectical relationship in the accented films between the inside closed spaces of the vehicles and the outside open spaces of nature and nation. Inexorably, vehicles provide not only empirical

links to geographic places and social groupings but also metaphoric reworkings of notions of traveling, homing, and identity (Naficy 2001, p. 257).

Naficy (2001) suggests that with almost every travel, there comes the image of suitcase which “is a contradictory and multilayered key symbol of exilic subjectivity: it contains souvenirs from the homeland; it connotes wanderlust, freedom to roam, and a provisional life; and it symbolizes profound deprivation and diminution of one's possibilities in the world” (p.261). For instance, in Atom Egoyan’s *Next of Kin* (1984) the suitcase becomes a metaphor to demonstrate that “there is a slippage between descent relations and consent relations, and that routes are freeing while roots can be stifling. The portable suitcase is preferred to the house—and, for that matter, to the home and the homeland” (Naficy 2001, p. 263). Another example is from Teyfik Başer’s *40 m2 Germany*. According to Naficy (2001) the film has “brief or extended suitcase scenes, in which homesick refugees and exiles—especially women—go through suitcases while lovingly caressing, selecting, examining, and reading their contents and remembering the people and places they have left behind” (p.263).

Chapter 3

Postcoloniality of the late- Ottoman Empire and the Early-Republican Era

On October 30th, 1918, The Mudros Armistice was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies Forces of World War I. It meant an immediate surrender and “paved the way for partition of the empire’s remaining territories” (Karčić 2020, p. 471). The Allied occupation of Istanbul began in November 1918. The Mudros Armistice became the catalyst of the national resistance movement. The Amasya Declaration (June 22nd, 1919) and the Erzurum Congress (July 23rd 1919) declared “Ottoman lands within the Mudros Armistice lines ...indivisible” (Karčić 2020, p.474) and rejected any kind of mandate and tutelage. In March 1920, the British army entered the Ottoman Parliament, and the Sultan officially dissolved the Empire. Zarakol (2011) argues that this move by the British was a “strategic mistake” because “soon after, on April 23, the nationalists opened their own assembly in Ankara, and Mustafa Kemal was able to claim that, since the Ottoman Parliament had been closed unconstitutionally, the Ankara Assembly was the true representative of Turkish people” (Zarakol 2011, p. 127). While the nationalist movement was at war with the Allied Forces, on August 10th, 1920, Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Sèvres. The nationalist movement rejected the treaty and defeated the Allied Forces after two years of resistance (1920-1922). On October 11th, 1922, Mudanya Armistice was signed between the nationalist movement and the Allied Forces. In October 1922, the Turkish army entered Istanbul. On June 24th, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne, which “recognized the new borders of modern Turkey” (Zarakol 2011, p. 127) was signed between the nationalist movement and the Allied Forces. On October 29, The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed.

Some scholars in various fields such as international relations, sociology, history, and cultural studies address Ottoman Empire as “semi-colonial” or “colonial” and discuss the founding years of the Turkish Republic through postcolonial theory. This chapter offers a literature review of this historical episode and its relations to race, nationalism and culture. These discussions on late-Ottoman modernization are significant to understand the debates on the postcolonial tendencies of Turkey in its formative years. Afterall, Turkey’s “history of modernization and Westernization, extends back to the institutional reforms of the late Ottoman era and epitomized by the establishment of a secular nation-state under Kemalism in 1923” (Bozdoğan & Kasaba

1997, p.3).

3.1. The Late-Ottoman Era and the discussions on colonialism

According to Niyazi Berkes (1954) “it was only at the beginning of the 19th century that the feeling of dissatisfaction which had run through the 18th century turned into a decision to introduce Western methods” (p.379). Gürbüz (2003) argues that this dissatisfaction was due to the failure of “the Ottoman self-recovery reforms..., [following which] the Empire turned its face to the West to apply advanced Western military and economic reforms” (p.496). “The Ottoman Empire’s geographical proximity to Europe made the encounter between the two civilizations all the more intimate and the threat all the more imminent” (Erçel 2016, p.81). In other words, “the figure of the Ottoman ... was an *extimate* Other of Western identity. This extimacy was mutual, also haunting Ottoman ... elites who regarded Europe simultaneously as something to be emulated and as the archenemy” (Erçel 2016, p.81). Yet, according to Erçel (2016), Ottoman Empire tried vigorously to maintain the autonomy of the Empire “even when its survival necessitated the mimicry and adoption of the very model of Western modernism that they simultaneously despised and admired” (p.81). Ussama Makdisi (2002) calls this ambivalence, “Ottoman orientalism” because the modernization efforts of the Empire were essentially orientalist. Makdisi (2002) refers to *Tanzimat*, as “a period when the Ottoman state sought to redefine itself as more than an Islamic dynasty, as a modern, bureaucratic, and tolerant state – a partner of the West rather than its adversary-” (p. 770). Yet while doing so, they “created a notion of the pre-modern within the empire in a manner akin to the way European colonial administrators represented their colonial subjects” (Makdisi 2002, p.770).

Berkes (1954) argues that, after the *Tanzimat* edicts, “it became an established policy to abolish old institutions which were found to be incompatible with corresponding modern institutions and to found new ones on the European models” (p. 379). One of the most visible examples of this established policy was in the domain of education. In 1827, for the first time the Ottoman Empire sent officially four Muslim students abroad, to Paris. As a part of modernization reforms, some of the bureaucrats, high-ranking diplomats, and army officials were sent to European cities to observe their military and educational systems as well their public administration. Others were trained in the newly formed westernized institutions that aimed to provide an education

similar to western standards in the 18th century⁴ and in the 19th century⁵. According to Erdoğan (2015) “the Ottoman Administration entrusted their future administrators in the hands of Western educators, thinking that an education system that copies the West would help them recover from the fall” (p.132). Most of the institutions were not limited to Istanbul. Sultan Abdulhamit facilitated the foundation of Hamidian schools, which were opened in distant and small towns of the Empire. Moreover “interestingly, almost a large number of Abdulhamit's political opponents graduated from ... [them such as] Ziya Gökalp from Diyarbakır and Abdullah Cevdet from Arapgir” (Gürbüz 2003, p.499).

Here, it is important to mention that institutions that offered a westernized curriculum were present before the 19th century⁶. And according to Erdoğan (2015) “it was not only the non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman State, but also the Muslim elite that exerted efforts to give a Western education to their children” (p.132). Vedat Gürbüz (2003) gives the example of the Military Engineering School where Muslims were trained in French. “The distinguished families of Istanbul competed with each other to send their children to this school” (Gürbüz 2003, p.496).

In terms of international relations, starting with the late 18th century, Ottoman Empire began to send resident ambassadors to European capitals and establish embassies. These developments “increased political transactions between the Ottoman Empire and Europe and helped the presence of Western thought in the Empire” (Gürbüz 2003, p.497). According to Liebisch-Gümüş (2019), Ottoman Empire entered an era of internationalization “as an independent state” (p.19) in the 19th century and “maintained permanent diplomatic missions in the capitals of Europe, and the Congress of Paris (1856) confirmed its membership in the European Concert of

⁴In 1734, *Hendesehane*, a school of geometry and engineering, in 1773, *Mühendishane-i Bahri-i Hümayun*, the naval engineering school, in 1793 *Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun*, the military engineering school was opened. (Gürbüz 2003, p.497).

⁵ In 1827 School of Medicine (*Mekteb-i Tıbbiye*), in 1827 the Imperial Music School (*Muzika-i Hümayun*) and in 1834 School of Military (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*) were opened by Sultan Mahmud II (Akşin 1994, p.27; Gürbüz 2003, p. 498). In 1859 School of Political Sciences and Public Administration (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*) were opened, “followed by Schools of Finance and Law in 1878, Fine Arts in 1879, Commerce in 1882, Civil Engineering in 1884, Veterinary Science in 1889, Police in 1891, Customs in 1892, and a new improved Istanbul Medical School in 1898” (Gürbüz 2003, p. 499).

⁶ After the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, Fatih Sultan Mehmet permitted the non-Muslim population the right to open schools and *Saint Benoit*, which was opened on November 18th, 1583, was the first school that provided a wide-ranging curriculum – from mathematics to fine arts- (Kılıç 2005, pp. 261-262). In the almost three centuries since the foundation of *Saint Benoit*, until the declaration of *Tanzimat* in 1839, 40 schools were opened. From 1839 to 1903, the number of Western schools skyrocketed to 600 (Kılıç 2005, p.265).

Powers” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.19). Yet, this internationalization and modernization efforts were “profoundly asymmetric and was shaped by European imperialism” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.20). Moreover, Ottoman Empire had many “traumatic encounters with the West (first exclusively equated with Europe) ... [which] have some similarities to the plight of the colonized” (Sandrin 2021, p.234). These encounters made apparent “the constant devaluation of the Ottomans’ civilisation, religion, political organisation, and race; interferences in the domestic affairs of the Empire; ... wars; ... and occupation and dismemberment of the Empire’s territory” (Sandrin 2021, p. 234). According to Liebisch-Gümüş (2019), even though Ottoman Empire “never fell under direct European colonial rule ... [it] was the target of imperialistic infiltration and colonial scheming from the nineteenth century up into the post-1918 years ... [through] international bodies” (p.15). This “imperialist infiltration” leads to “the Ottoman experience of semi-colonial status vis-à-vis the western world” (p.33). In international politics, Ottoman Empire “had never managed to negotiate a level playing field ... On the contrary, its international commitments had paved the way for increased European encroachment on Ottoman sovereignty” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p. 18). One of the most apparent examples of this asymmetry is the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA), which was founded in 1881. OPDA’s “board of directors was composed mostly of foreign nationals who represented the European creditors ... collected the Ottoman state’s taxes and redistributed the revenue to its bondholders ... [and granted] them considerable control over Ottoman state finances” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p.20). In a way, OPDA was “an international body that undermined the Ottoman Empire’s sovereignty” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p. 20). There is also the debate on capitulations - “a series of contracts between the Ottomans and European (later also American) governments that granted special rights to nationals of the contracting states living in the Ottoman Empire as well as to their Ottoman intermediaries” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p.21). Fisher-Onar, Liu and Woodward (2014) argue that it is possible to approach Ottoman Empire within the framework of postcolonialism because it “had been subject to a Capitulations regime on the part of European powers for almost a century” (p.23). Turan Kayanoğlu (2010) suggests that capitulations are a form of “legal imperialism”;

the extension of state’s legal authority into another state and limitation of legal authority of the target state over issues that may affect people, commercial

interest, and security of the imperial state... It extended Western legal authority into non-Western territories and limited non-Western legal authority over Western foreigners and their commercial interest” (Kayanoğlu 2010, p.6).

According to Liebisch- Gümüş (2019), another reason for the asymmetrical relations with Europe is the discourse of ‘standard of civilization’, which “legitimized foreign intervention into non-Western societies that allegedly lacked civilization in the European sense and therefore did not merit respect as truly sovereign entities” (p.21). Through this discourse which “resonated from the Peace Conference in Paris to the League of Nations in Geneva”, ... [the Allies Forces of World War I] justified their partition plans for the Ottoman Empire by allegations of the Turks’ incapacity to rule justly” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p. 23). Cemil Aydın (2007) presents a similar argument. Aydın (2007) suggests, it was believed that “a new Ottoman political initiative proving the ‘civilized’ nature of the empire could avoid further European hostility and intervention while securing European support for the process of domestic reform” (p.19). Yet, it was precisely “this illusion ... [that] drove them to accept the nineteenth-century Standard of Civilization ... and simultaneously undermine, by their own hands, the already weak hold the Ottoman government had over its territories” (Zarakol 2011, p.119). Similarly, Cemil Aydın (2007) approaches the proclamation of *Tanzimat* as the “clear acknowledgment of the existence of a Eurocentric international society and its legitimizing discourse of universal civilization” (p.19). He (2007) argues that in addition to and simultaneously with the acceptance of the universality of the “standard of civilization”, “the Ottoman elite agreed that they themselves were less modern and less civilized than the Europeans and hence needed rapid reforms in order to develop the same direction in a short period of time” (p.24). Namık Kemal argued likewise, when he suggested that there would have been no repercussions if the leaders of the *Tanzimat* understood that there were actually no contradictions between Islam, Ottoman socio-economic and political infrastructure and westernization. Yet, they were confused “with regard to these three elements” (Berkes 1954, p. 380). “In their administration, they did not apply any of the principles of modern democratic regimes” (Berkes 1954, p. 380). In addition, they “unnecessarily undertook economic and political obligations toward European powers which robbed the Ottoman state of all independence and integrity (Berkes 1954, p. 380). Similar to Namık Kemal, Ziya Gökalp also argued that the problem was the assumption that Islam and Ottoman

political infrastructure were not compatible with modernization, science and democracy. “The main reasons why they were thought to be so were, first, the fact that all of these traditions had lost their original functions, and secondly, that the imposing penetration of European imperialism prevented their smooth adaptation” (Berkes 1954, p.380). Zarakol (2011) mentions the discourse of “the sick man of Europe”, created by the West with regards to the Ottoman Empire, and argues that this discourse was accepted and internalized by the Ottoman elite. And the rush to find a cure, only accelerated his demise. In other words, according to Zarakol (2011) it was not the wars and battles that were lost in the field, but rather the “gradual acceptance of and aspirations to the Standard of Civilization” that paved the way for the collapse of the Empire (p.119).

Moreover, the Ottoman administrators “failed to pursue their program of modernization wholeheartedly as well as to understand the full scope and nature of the social transformation in which they were involved” (Berkes, 1954, p.379). Doğu Ergil (1979), argues that Ottoman Empire became economically dependent on the West before the 18th century. It happened particularly after the “capitalist world economy, whose essential feature is ever-expanding production for a world market, emerged in Europe in the 16th century” (Ergil 1979, p. 190). And Ottoman Empire “was late in terms of transferring the resources, humans and products, from the periphery to the center, in comparison to its Europeans counterparts” (Deringil 2013, pp. 165-218). When capitalism reshaped Western national economies, it also became the catalyst of the fall of Ottoman feudalism particularly by circumnavigating “major trade routes (silk and spice) that linked the Occident to the Orient through the Ottoman domain” (Ergil 1979, p. 190). And once the Empire came into contact “with the full-grown European expansionist economy and politics” (Berkes 1954, p. 379) in the 18th century, its own economy and politics started to crumble. As a result,

by the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had lost almost all of its territories in Europe. This created a backlash against the liberalization reforms and strengthened various reactionary ideological currents among the Muslim elite such as pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism (Zarakol 2011, pp. 122-123).

To sum up, it can be argued that the Ottoman Empire’s relations with the European powers were ambivalent. This ambivalence led to mimicry; “the desire for a reformed,

recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (Bhabha 1994, p.86). Michaela Wolf (2000) offers an analysis on the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that can be applied to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Wolf (2000) reminds us that “colonialism was not restricted to the countries and peoples of the “Third World” (p. 127), and for empires like Austro-Hungarian, “decolonization affects both the colonized and the colonizer: both feel fragmented, dismembered, exhausted, inferior, and weak. The new situation is marked by ambivalence on both sides” (Wolf, 2000, p. 128). Accordingly, it would come as no surprise that a new national state that arose from the ashes of an empire “remains determined from the outside as the empty spaces inside are filled with nationalism, fundamentalism and essentialism” (Wolf, 2000, p. 128).

3.2 Early-Republican era and the discussions on postcolonialism

Erdoğan (2015) argues that Turkey’s postcoloniality is not a “straightforward” issue for two reasons: Firstly, Turkey was never colonized by European forces but was occupied after the World War I. Secondly; Turkey “is the heir to an empire... [and] the unequal relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Europeans paralleled colonial dynamics in many ways, from the nineteenth century onwards” (Erdoğan 2015, p.6). Moreover, the Turkish War of Independence to which the country owes the idea of unity involved an anti-colonial rhetoric, which referred to the “independence from proposed colonization” (Young 2015, p.110). Therefore, modernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire “had a profound impact on the Kemalists’ incentives and strategies for internationalization after World War I” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p. 17). As a result, in its international relations, the new government pursued an integration policy to Europe⁷, that was not “unconditionally integrationist. It is better described as a balancing act aimed at the symmetric internationalization of the sovereign nation-state in the making” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.28). In terms of the modernization reforms, Early-Republican elite had a different vision.

⁷ “Turkish officials generally embraced international integration throughout the interwar decades. In 1924, only one year after the founding of the new Turkey, Turkish politicians joined several newly created international bodies, among them humanitarian organizations like the League of Red Cross Societies and the Save the Children Union, as well as technical organizations like the International Railway Union. Further accessions to membership in the 1920s included the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Council of Scientific Agriculture, the International Institute of Sociology and Social Reform, the International Touring Association and the International Association of Museum Officials” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, pp.24-25).

The fall of the Empire did not only mean the dissolution of the Ottoman socio-political order, but it also meant that “the frame of commonly accepted meanings vanished ... [and] when the script a collectivity already ha[d] is shattered, a new story about that political community has to be forged” (Sandrin 2021, p.237). That new story was quite complex, and it involved replacing the idea of *ümmet* (religious community) with *millet* (nation) and discursively inventing a racialized Pre-Islamic Turkish history, Turkish national culture and Turkish language through a series of modernization reforms.

Şerif Mardin (1971) argues that “religion in the Ottoman Empire was the mediating link between local and social forces and the political structure” (p. 205). Accordingly, the core of Early-Republican modernization was about rupturing that mediating link with its entire socio-political and economic infrastructure. Accordingly, the first wave of reforms was toward secularization and they “targeted the Islamic institutions within the state apparatus” (Taşpınar 2005, p.22). In 1922, the Sultanate and in 1924 the Caliphate were abolished. The final move was to remove “the clause declaring Islam as the Turkish state’s official religion. The seal was therefore closed on the dismantling of institutional Islam” (Taşpınar 2005, p.23). The immediacy of these reforms lied in the idea that

any kind of opposition to secularist reforms could only be mobilized in religious form. They therefore feared that the Caliphate could become the rallying point of a counter-revolutionary Islamic backlash. Moreover, the Caliphate, as an institution that had its theoretical base in a supra-national concept of solidarity was, of course, inimical to the interest of the nationalist movement” (Taşpınar 2005, p. 22).

The second wave of reforms was toward westernization. Education was westernized and “secularized through the Law on the Unification of Education enacted in 1924” (Taşpınar 2005, p. 23). “The legal system ... [was constructed] along European lines” (Taşpınar 2005, p.22) with the adoption of Swiss Civil Code and Italian Penal Codes in 1926. There were also reforms of “physical correction” (Sandrin 2021, p.240), such as the Hat Law of 1925. Ali Bilgiç (2016) gives the example from Mustafa Kemal who, in one of his speeches, approached the *fez* as “a sign of ignorance, fanaticism and hatred to progress and civilization and to adopt in its place the hat, the customary headdress of the civilized world” (Bilgiç 2016, p. 118). According to Taşpınar (2005),

the Hat Revolution, along with

the adoption of Western calendar, clock, numerals and weight measures and the ban on reciting the call to prayer (ezan) in Arabic, ... [declaration of] Sunday the official day of rest instead of Friday, the traditional day of observance in the Muslim World” are examples of “the symbol-oriented, sartorial aspect of Kemalist secularism (Taşpınar 2005, p.23).

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss each reform of the Early-Republican era. Yet, it is important to highlight that, in addition to being secular in nature; they were reforms of modernization along the lines of westernization. Şerif Mardin (1997) refers to the Early-Republican era modernization as a project and argues that their source was “western, foreign ... [with] no identifiable philosophical foundation. Its Jacobinism ... was pragmatic and practical” (p. 65). Arguing from the same vein, Çağlar Keyder (1997) suggests that in the eyes of the founding elite, modernization “was a total project: one of embracing and internalizing all the cultural dimensions that made Europe modern” (p. 37). Moreover, “Ottoman and Turkish modernization was ... an elite-driven, consensus-based, institution-building process that took its inspiration exclusively from the West” (Bozdoğan & Kasaba 1997, pp.3-4). This “elite-driven” process also “designated to educate the masses in the rudiments of modern politics” (Karpas 2004, p. 227). Accordingly, “the ruling elite became self-acclaimed educator to ‘enlighten’ the rest of the society” (Kavakçı 2016, p.60). In other words, they knew “what is best for ‘archaic society’ which needs to be salvaged from backwardness” (Erdoğan 2015, p.127). Yet, Said (1993) reminds us that imperialism “was a cooperative venture; and a salient trait of its modern form is that it was (or claimed to be) an educational movement; it set out quite consciously to modernize, develop, instruct, and civilize” (p.223). That is how, according to Kavakçı (2016) the ruling elite became “the modernizer-westernizer-enlightener while the rest of the society represented the one in need of modernizing-westernizing-enlightening” (p.60).

This is a common attitude in the elites of a new nation state, which had experienced colonialism of any kind. Erdoğan (2015) traces this tendency back to the Young Turks and the nationalist movement of the late- Ottoman Era and their focus on Turkish language. For instance, referring to Arabic and Persian, Namık Kemal “wrote as early as 1866 that Ottoman Turkish had fallen...under the domination of another language” (Morgan 2007, p. 27). He believed that “language should educate

the people and for that reason it should be in a form that people could understand” (Gürbüz 2003, p. 506). Therefore, he combined the “new Western thoughts with Islamic traditions and introduced them to the people, using relatively simple language in the press” (Gürbüz 2003, p. 506). Ziya Paşa “called for a simplification of the administrative and legal language, so that even the uneducated might be able to understand it” (Heyd 1954, p.10). It is important to highlight the anxiety in the term “to fall under the dominance of” and the solution/gratification that was proposed through “education”, “simplification” and “introduction”. It should be highlighted that “this initiative to emancipate Turkish from Arabic and Persian became part of the nationalist movement” (Morgan 2007, p.27). So, it was very much related to nationalism as well. İbrahim Şinasi, “used common Turkish words instead of their Ottoman counterparts” in the pieces published in his newspaper (Morgan 2007, p. 27). In *Türk Yurdu*, “meanings of the new words were explained with footnotes. The journal wrote about some little-known Turkic tribes in its publications ... [and] The Ottoman Empire was called the Turkish State” (Gürbüz 2003, p. 508). Then, it can be argued that modernization and the task of ‘enlightening’ the society went hand in hand with the idea of nationalism. After all, they were a generation who mostly graduated from modernized/westernized institutions of the Empire. And they “would ultimately establish the Republic of Turkey” (Erdoğan 2015, p.133). Therefore, a same attitude toward language can be traced in the Early-Republican era. Yunus Nadi claimed that “thanks to alphabet reform, the country will irrevocably be forced to face modernity” (Taşpınar 2005, p.24). Arabic letters were considered as an obstacle toward westernization, modernization and becoming powerful. In the Assembly, Refik Bey (MP of Konya) stated that Arab letters “blocked the path of progress for centuries” (Bilgiç 2016, p.116). Therefore, replacing the Arab letters “with new letters and words—letters of the powerful, who defined acceptable ways of being and thinking” (Sandrin 2021, p.240). Yet, as Said (1993) suggests, nationalism is “a deeply problematic enterprise” (p.223) because “when it got people out on the streets to march against the white master, nationalism was often led by lawyers, doctors, and writers who were partly formed and to some degree produced by the colonial power” (p.223). And when this new elite “in effect have often replaced the colonial force with a new class-based and ultimately exploitative force, instead of liberation after decolonization, one simply gets the old colonial structures replicated in new national terms” (p.223).

Accordingly, for the new nationalist elite, “the superstructures of the colonialist mentality seemed to be the only recipe” (Erdoğan 2015, p.133).

They frowned upon the way that the mimicked Western nation state wrote its history, and argued against their myths, and institutions, ... they considered them to be superior in their minds, and designed and established the new nation states replicating their mode” (Erdoğan 2015, p.133).

There was another factor that made language the most complicated reform of the Early-Republican era; its relation to race. Morgan (2007) explains the state-sponsored desire to associate Turkish language with European languages as “the desire to resist the prevalent theories of European superiority and necessary dominance, [whose] variations ...run throughout colonialist philosophy” (p.26). In the domain of language, Turkish scholars who were trained in western capitals were familiar with Friedrich Max Müller’s popular Western theory of comparative philology⁸, which categorized Turkic languages as agglutinative; belonging “to nomads and agrarian societies” (Morgan 2007, p.26). According to the theory, Turkic languages were not “inflectional”; that honor belonged to the Indo-European languages. According to Aytürk (2005) one of the main purposes of the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) and the Turkish Linguistic Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu*) was to “combat the condescending views of Western scholars on the scientific platform” (p.103). Of course, this western linguistic categorization did not simply mean “inferior” linguistically, for the new nationalist elite, it also signified a racial inferiority. And the newly formed nation had to find or invent concrete proof that would exonerate them from this shame. The next part of the chapter discusses those attempts and, later, their consequences.

3.2.1 Race. Büşra Ersanlı (2002) argues that “the main tenets of Kemalist historiography with respect to the history of the Turkic peoples in general ... were officially formulated between the late 1920s and the late 1930s”⁹ (p. 115). The Turkish

⁸This popular concept, expressed most succinctly by Friedrich Max Müller, involved three tiers of language development. Isolating languages, which contain mostly free-floating units of meaning that function as separate words, belonged to the most uncivilized groups; agglutinative languages, in which words are formed by joining units of meaning, to nomads and agrarian societies; and inflectional languages, in which words are modified to express qualities like gender and number, to those nations fit for modernity. Unsurprisingly, most Indo-European languages and all of those spoken in Europe are inflectional, while Turkic languages are agglutinative. This theory made a significant contribution to the continuing dominance of European states over populations in Central Asia and elsewhere. (Morgan 2007, p.26).

⁹ “1. Ottoman history is insufficient to explain the origins of the people of the new Republic; for while

Historical Society and Turkish Linguistic Society were the institutions behind this official formula, which resulted in the Turkish History Thesis, and it was “based on a racialized conception of the history of all civilization at the center of which lay the Turkish race, culture and language”¹⁰ (Altınay 2004, p.22).

The First Turkish Historical Congress (1932) and the Second Turkish Historical Congress (1937) were devoted to establishing that the Turks were equal – if not superior- to Europeans in terms of civility and they “physically” look like Europeans. The main argument was that “Turks were indeed a white Aryan race” (Xypolia 2016, p.118). It was a “state-sponsored systematic effort ... to prove the identicalness of the Turkish race and the ‘white’ race by verifying that ancient Turks were the ancestors of the modern European” (Xypolia 2016, p.118). The physical similarity was constructed through racial features. Accordingly, it was argued that a Turk “is tall, has a long white face, a straight or arched thin nose, proportioned lips, often blue eyes, and horizontal and slanted eye lids and is one of the most beautiful examples of the white race” (in Bilgiç 2016: 113). Here, it is important to highlight Afet İnan. She was an influential member of the Turkish Historical Society. In her memoirs, she wrote about a discussion she had with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk that took place in 1928.

in 1928, in French geography books, there was a statement about Turks belonging to the yellow race and, thus, having a secondary status in European thinking in terms of their genotype. I showed it to him [Mustafa Kemal] and asked: “Is this true?”. He said: “No, this cannot be true. We need to work on this. You should study this” (Altınay 2004: 22).

modern Turkey is a national state, Ottoman society consisted of a wide variety of ethnic groups. 2. Turkic history goes back to pre-Ottoman and the pre-Islamic times; Central Asian Turks migrated to Anatolia and the Middle East in general, thus establishing links between their old and new homes. 3. Turkic peoples have created the most ancient civilization of the world, which has influenced all other notable cultures. 4. The Turks have no connection with the ‘yellow race’ or with the Mongols; quite to the contrary, as Aryans, they belong to the white race. 5. Except during the period of expansion between 1450–1600, Ottoman political life showed grave defects; in the later stages, and especially during the last two centuries of the Empire’s existence, ‘corruption’ was rife. 6. A revolutionary break therefore become necessary, politically as well as culturally” (Erşanlı 2002, pp.115-116).

¹⁰ “The main arguments of both these can be outlined as follows: The original homeland of the Turks is not Mongolia, but Turkistan. Turks are not members of the Mongoloid ‘yellow race’, but of the brachycephalic white race. Neolithic civilization was first created in Central Asia by the Turks. Due to climatic changes (mainly drought), Turks of Central Asia migrated to different part of the world and introduced Neolithic civilization to Asia, Europe and America. The Turks developed the early civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Early civilizations in Anatolia (Asia Minor) such as those of the Hittites were also of Turks origin. Turkish language is the oldest language of high culture and is the origin of Sumerian and Hittite languages. The Turks have formed many states in history” (Taşpınar 2005, pp. 22-23).

İnan did study this claim as a partial fulfillment of her Ph.D. degree in Anthropology at the University of Geneva in Switzerland in 1939. Her dissertation was titled “On the Anthropological Character of the Turkish People and Turkish History” and “was based on anthropometrical research on the ‘skulls’ of 65 thousand ‘Turks’ ...[and] the main argument being that the Turks were a brachycephalic (broad-headed) race, a characteristic that defined the ‘white’ race” (Altınay 2004, p.22).

The Turkish History Thesis was completed in the Second History Congress. Three issues were accepted and they “have formed the basis of the new textbooks and the population policies of the Turkish Republic from the 1930s onward” (Altınay 2004, p.23). Those issues were:

- (1) development of an ethnic / racial understanding of ‘culture’, (2) glorification of the Turkish ‘race’ as the basis of civilization and high culture in world history, and (3) formation of a ‘dual geographic framework’ whereby Central Asia is the ‘main’ homeland, while simultaneously the current location of Turk /(Anatolia) is claimed to have Turkish origins long before the Ottoman Empire (Altınay 2004, p.23).

While the first issue focuses on the racialization of culture, the second issue has more to do with elevating the Turkish race as the source of civilization and high culture throughout the world. While all three issues are deeply related to race, the third issue discusses the origins of Turks as Central Asia which “aimed at the marginalization of Ottoman and Islamic influences in Turkish history” (Altınay 2004, p.23) and distancing Turkish race from Ottoman and Islamic influence. Yet, according to Altınay (2004), there was another aspect. The third issue was important for the Muslim populations who were not granted minority status with the Treaty of Lausanne. So, “the Kurds, the Laz, and the Çerkes were no longer ‘sibling nations’ but Turks who had ‘forgotten’ their Turkishness or were in ‘denial’ of their Turkish origins” (Altınay 2004, p. 23).

In Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Thesis, “race was the organizing category” (Altınay 2004, p.22). And at the core of Early-Republican nation-building “lay an exclusive Turkish-Muslim identity, not an inclusive concept of citizenship” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p.40). Accordingly, “Turkishness was embodied in a package with specific attributes. This construction was founded upon ‘sameness’” (Kavakçı 2016, p.56). The intention behind this “sameness” was to construct

“a religiously, ethno-linguistically, and ideologically uniform nation” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.40), which “by no means tolerated [the] country’s heterogeneity” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.40). So, where did this leave the ethnically and linguistically diverse population of the Ottoman Empire that the new Republic inherited? In order to analyze the consequences of the Early-Republican policies toward minorities, we must first understand the definition of minority in Turkey.

3.2.2 Minorities of the Empire and the Republic. In the Ottoman Empire, as a policy of integration, “the Catholic Armenians, the Orthodox Greeks and the Jews, were designated as constitutive *millets*” (Erçel 2016, p.75). The dominant discourse toward minorities was based on the idea of tolerance, commonly referred as *Pax-Ottomana*. As minorities, their religious activities were regulated through institutions¹¹ and they had civic rights and autonomy “in organizing their administrative, fiscal and legal affairs” (Erçel 2016, p.75). The newly founded Turkish Republic continued the Ottoman tradition of identifying minorities based on religion rather than ethnicity or race. The Treaty of Lausanne defined the official definition of Turkish citizenship as “Turkish ethnicity, the Turkish language and Sunni Islam” (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p.14). It also defined non-Muslims as minorities, and they were granted with various civic rights¹². And since Muslim populations such as Syrians, Arabs, Kurds, Laz and Circassians, were not considered as minorities, according to Lausanne, they were bound to the “condition of Turkish speaking and adopting the Turkish culture (Oran 2018, pp. 167-168) and “underwent a process of cultural assimilation in the state’s attempt to homogenize the nation” (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.55). Keyder (1997) argues that modernization and the construction of nation states go hand in hand in the Third World and “it was such nationalism-from-above that constituted the founding ideology of the new Turkish republic” (p.42). Erdoğan (2015) refers to Stephen

¹¹The institutions are the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, the Armenian Gregorian Patriarch of Constantinople and the Chief Rabbi of the Jews. The Sultan appointed a chief leader to each of these institutions and recognized their community status. These institutions arranged ‘ecclesiastical matters such as ownership and maintenance of religious and educational building, conduct of religious services; and operation of millet schools ...their religious leaders and ecclesiastical cadres became entitled to regulate their communal activities as they deemed fit. They became fully in command of ‘matters concerning the personal status of millet members such as recording births, marriages and deaths, the collection of taxes according to the state’s records; adjudication of heritance cases, and other civil cases that might arise between members of the same community’ (Erçel 2016, p.75)

¹² Civic rights included “setting up charities and religious social institutions; opening, managing, and supervising schools; having education in one’s own language; and performing one’s own religious rituals” (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.55).

Howe's definition of internal colonialism to describe the "mental codes of the ruling secular nationalist cadres" (p.137) in the Early-Republican era. Internal colonialism is defined as

a system where a single nation state or the social groups in the center use the power apparatus of the economic, social, and cultural capital to exercise psychological or physical power over an ethnic, sectarian, linguistic or class-based community from the periphery of the society (Erdoğan 2015, p.129).

According to Erdoğan (2015) with internal colonialism, "the dominant social groups of the colonialist Western European countries kept the diverse identities of the social groups in the periphery of its own national borders under control and excluded from the political sphere those that resisted homogenization and internalization of the habitus of its bourgeoisie" (Erdoğan 2015, p. 132). Yet, internal colonialism does not only involve the "colonizing of the economic resources of a particular social group by a minority in the center. Internal colonialism also deprives a broader population in society from the cultural and social capital that would help them flourish" (Erdoğan 2015, p. 135).

Westernized education system and the press were utilized as tools for nation building. The press "had consistently supported the new regime and Western-oriented policies. The journalists reflected the Jacobin and elitist spirit of modernization in their articles and columns" (Yılmaz & Burak 2011, p.117). In the field of education, Erdoğan (2015) gives the example of "the 'Talleyrand plan', and later Ferry's secular, compulsory, free national education program that prohibited education in languages other than French" (p.130). These policies, according to Erdoğan (2015), "minimized regional belonging and linguistic and religious differences" (p.130). Similar approach can be recognized in the formative years of the Turkish Republic, which regarded the nation as a homogenous entity "deriving from ethnic unity and this unity would be expressed in a single voice" (Keyder 1997, p. 42). That single voice was the one "with a 'secular habitus' ..., from the Sunni sect of Islam, and regarding his ethnic origin he had to be a Turk who had adopted Western values" (Erdoğan 2015, p.134). Accordingly, "the ethnic components that fell outside this identity frame, mainly the Kurds, were Turkified by force" (Erdoğan 2015, p.134). Not only were they omitted from political representation, "since they were unable to master the official language, they were excluded from the education system" (Erdoğan 2015, p. 135). They became

“linguistically mute and culturally non-existent” (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.55) and “remained as cheap laborers (Erdoğan 2015, p.135). Then, what needs to be done with a population who are “unable to improve their economic, cultural and social capital’, ‘uneducated’, ‘distant to the bourgeois (someone who has adopted Western values, in the context of Turkey), taste and lifestyle’, and ‘deprived of aesthetic values’”? (Erdoğan 2015, p.135). “In the mental codes of the ruling secular nationalist cadres, it was deemed legitimate to “modernize” or “civilize” the helpless and deplorable people “despite the people, for the people” (Erdoğan 2015, p.135). Kavakçı (2016) argues likewise and suggests that the experience of Kurdish population during the early years of the Republic¹³ was “double colonization” (p.67), which “meant that first they needed to be transformed into Turkishness ... before he/she would be transformed into a European” (p.67).

The nationalist elite fought an independence war against the Western powers with “anti-colonial and anti-imperialist rhetoric and discourse” (Erdoğan 2015, p.8), for the sake of resisting cultural assimilation, yet their modernization reforms were along the lines of westernization and their policies toward minorities resisted “by no means tolerated their country’s heterogeneity” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p.40). It is important to highlight the fact that the idea of Turkishness and the linear modernization along the lines of westernization still constitutes a strong part of Turkish history and collective consciousness.

Images and photographs of *La Turquie Kemaliste* in the 1930s, the propaganda films of the 1950s, and countless other representations of the official history of modernization still offer the most powerful tropes of this ethos of the making of a thoroughly modern nation out of the ruins of an old empire (Bozdoğan & Kasaba 1997, p. 5)

The images of progress for the sake of westernization are very prolific and they are

¹³“Cultural magazines and Kurdish-language newspapers were closed, and the editors and writers were charged with communism and separatism. Speaking Kurdish was outright barred. Using and naming newborns Kurdish names... was banned. Kurdish names [of villages] ... were all altered to Turkish ones. The vernacular used in the new republic accommodated pejorative terms about Kurds. These were gradually included into the rhetoric of daily life” (Kavakçı 2016, p. 70). In the daily rhetoric and popular culture “Kurds were also referred to as ‘mountain Turks’. Here the insinuation was that the Kurdish people were an uncivilized human species, less than a human being, living in the wild life” (Kavakçı 2016 p.71).

spread throughout the cultural realm. It was an “attempt to penetrate into the life-style, manners, behavior and daily customs of the Turkish people, beyond the transformation of the state apparatus” (Göle 1996, p. 58). In terms of gender, the image of Keriman Haris and Kemalist women who paraded in shorts and skirts with their newly found liberation despite the “patriarchal nature” (Tekeli 1995, p.12) of the Civil Code, which resulted in the “continuation and the replication of patriarchal norms and practices in the private realm” (Durakbaşı 2000, p. 148) are familial images. In the field of the arts, “the spectacular performances of the national theatre, symphony orchestra, opera, and ballet” (Bozdoğan & Kasaba 1997, p.5), the western architecture of the capital, Ankara, as well as other major cities (Bozdoğan 1997); in literature, the “secularization of the spiritual world” through poems of Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul and the dedication in their writing to “rescuing the society from poverty and darkness, fighting against Western imperialism and rebuilding the society and the state” (Kayıran 2004, p. 116) are examples of the cultural aspects of the western-oriented nation-building reforms. Images of engineers, builders, farmers; “proud scenes of agriculture, railroads, factories, and dams” (Bozdoğan & Kasaba 1997, p.5) are example of the westernization of the infrastructure. All of these enormous attempts to build a homogenous nation state along the lines of westernization can be summarized with a small piece of paper; the stamp. The stamps of the Early-Republican era which were designed to represent the four main aspects: “the Western, modern and liberating leader figure; ... nation’s Central Asian Turkish origins and the ancient civilizations in Anatolia; the perspective of the new Turkish state on women...; and the heavy industry move in the economic field and agricultural modernization” (Yılmaz 2019, p. 230). Yet, according to Erdoğan (2015), the “effort to be like the one that they wanted to emancipate from” (p.134) is not simply a paradox; it is a sign of ambivalence; an ambivalence which could be observed in the novels of Peyami Safa (İlikan-Rasimoğlu 2012), Halide Edip Adıvar (Kanter 2020) and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (Nil-Mustafa 2013; Kaya 2019). And to understand this ambivalence, and to conclude this chapter, we should return to Ziya Gökalp.

As a figure that is both glorified, inspired by and severely criticized, Gökalp is, perhaps, the most influential figure of inspiration of Kemalist nation building. His ideas were integral in transforming the multi linguistic, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Empire to a nation-state. In his seminal work, *The Principals of Turkism*

(*Türkçülüğün Esasları*), Gökalp argues that in terms of being a modern state, Turkey is “far behind the European nations” ... and therefore, it should take the necessary steps to “catch up with them in civilization” (Gökalp 1970, pp. 109-110). Yet, in doing so, Turkey must avoid cultural assimilation in the face of Western civilization. In order to avoid such a fate, it is important to construct a particular national culture because “when we enter European civilization, we will inherit ... an international civilization” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p. 34). After all, according to Gökalp, this is exactly why *Tanzimat* failed. It “failed because it tried to adopt the civilization of Europe without building the national culture” (Gürbüz 2003, p. 513). Here, it is critical to understand what Gökalp means by civilization and culture.

In Gökalp’s definition “civilization refers to modes of action composed of the ‘traditions’ which are created by different ethnic groups and transmitted from one to another” (Berkes 1954, p.384) Culture, on the other hand, “is a natural community based on strong feelings of belonging” (Liebish-Gümüş 2019, p.34) and “composed of the ‘mores’ of a particular nation and, consequently, is unique and *sui generis*” (Berkes 1954, p. 384). Therefore, while civilization is “a group of nations sharing – via imitation and exchange – similar social structures, concepts, technologies, and systems of knowledge” (Liebish-Gümüş 2019, p.34), “culture is “essentially national ... [and] varies from nation to nation” (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.34). And civilization, without a cultural basis, would only mean imitation that would eventually lead to cultural assimilation. That is why, Turkey, need to “take a dual path to modernity: it should adopt the institutions of “European civilization” and the model of the secular nation state, but at the same time cherish a distinct national culture” (Liebisch- Gümüş 2019, p. 34). Needless to say, the Early-Republican modernization reforms along the lines of westernization, the appropriation of history, the invention of language with the Sun-Language Thesis, the arguments that “Turks ... had never been through a barbaric phase, and had founded many states and civilisations throughout history (Sandrin 2021, p.240), the portrayal of Ottoman Empire “as an archaic and traditional civilization, which was, by its essence, antithetical to the rule of law, democracy, the Enlightenment and modernity in general” (p.73), and finally, the process of constructing a homogeneous Turkish national identity and culture are deeply related to the ideas of Ziya Gökalp. After all, “for the Kemalist elite there existed only one civilization, and it meant European civilization ... and Turkey had to be a part of it in

order to survive” (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003, p.5). And their “main goal ... was to gain national independence from the Western imperialist states and elevate the national culture to the level of the Western civilization” (Erdoğan 2015, p.134). So, they “tried to reshape the state subject to the modern values based on both modernization and westernization which were canonized’ and even ‘sacralized’” (Kendirici 2017, pp.340-341) and hence “accepted the ‘norms’ produced by the West as being universal and the ‘European gaze’ as the authoritative standard by which *one should be judged*, or alternatively, against which *one should rebel*” (Erdoğan 2015, pp.6-7).

Ziya Gökalp died on October 25th, 1924. One might wonder what his reaction would have been if he had witnessed the ambivalence that marked the Early-Republican modernization and made it possible to discuss it through postcolonial theory. Within the framework of postcolonial theory, “the glorification of the pre-colonial past prior to the arrival of Western hegemony and modernity ... is typical of colonized intellectuals” (Erçel 2016, p.78). After all, as Fanon (1963) suggests,

this passionate quest for a national culture prior to the colonial era can be justified by the colonized intellectuals’ shared interest in stepping back and taking a hard look at the Western culture in which they risk becoming ensnared. ... perhaps this passion and this rage are nurtured or at least guided by the secret hope of discovering beyond the present wretchedness, beyond this self-hatred, this abdication and denial, some magnificent and shining era that redeems us in our own eyes and those of others (Fanon 1963, pp.148-149).

Chapter 4

Eastern Journeys of Quest

This chapter discusses three films that involve the protagonists' journey from the Western coastal cities of Turkey to the Eastern region. These films are *Güneşe Yolculuk* (Ustaoğlu, 1999), *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom* (Karabey, 2008) and *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* (Alper, 2011). The following part presents an analysis of the sample group of films through textual and discourse analysis based on postcolonial theory through the framework of Edward Said's orientalism, Homi Bhabha's mimicry, mockery, racial stereotyping and fetishism and Hamid Naficy's "journeys of quests, homelessness and lostness" (Naficy 2001, p.223).

4.1. *Güneşe Yolculuk*

Güneşe Yolculuk tells the story of two young men who meet in the middle of a street fight in Istanbul. Berzan (Nazmi Kırık) is a street hawker who sells audiocassettes of Kurdish music and Mehmet (Nevruz Baz) works as a controller of water leaks. Alienated from the big city and from all its possibilities, both men live in poor conditions and are represented as examples of subalternity. Their shared disassociation to Istanbul and the various forms of prejudice they face amplify their relationship and create solidarity between them. Mehmet and Berzan's relationship develop during their conversations about their birthplaces, their loved ones, and their lives. Geographically, they represent the west and the east. Mehmet is from Tire, a district of Izmir Province in the west coast of Turkey and Berzan is from Zorluç, the East. Here, it is important to highlight the fact that Zorluç is not a 'real' space. Rather, it is a fictional and "imaginary settlement" (Turan 2019, p. 176). In the film, when Mehmet asks Zorluç's whereabouts, Berzan replies by saying that it is "somewhere near to the Iraqi border". The lack of physical existence of Zorluç, creates an ambivalent situation in terms of its oppositional relationship to Tire. It is possible to argue that diegetically, the village was destroyed because it was submerged during the construction of a dam; a social reality which is a common trope in cinema in Turkey, most famously narrated in the opening scene of Yavuz Turgul's *Eşkiya* (1996). However, the physical absence of Zorluç expresses "the disappearance of a whole culture and history" without mentioning whether the place is imaginary or not (Dönmez-Colin 2006, p. 134). Özlem Köksal (2016) draws attention to a

cinematographic aspect in the film regarding the non-existence of Zordu. She points to the two signs, which are in the entrance of the village. Zordu and *Susuz* (waterless).



Figure 1. The two signs: Zordu and *Susuz*.

While *Susuz* remains intact, *Zordu* hangs loosely. It can be argued that the sign of *Zordu*, just like the village itself will be lost eventually. In addition, the presence of the sign, *Susuz*, indicates that the name of the village has been translated into Turkish. According to Merve Kavakı (2016), as a part of the Turkification process, it was a common state policy toward minorities to Turkify the names of villages during the early years of the Republic. Accordingly, “Kurdish names [of villages] ... were all altered to Turkish ones” (Kavakı 2016, p. 70). There is also an irony in the scene. Kksal (2016) states that although the name was changed to *Susuz* (waterless), the village was flooded.

In terms of narrative structure, *Gnee Yolculuk* is split into two parts with the death of Berzan. While the first part depicts the circumstances of the two men’s acquaintance in Istanbul and the conditions and reasons that make it impossible for them to survive there, the second part follows Mehmet’s journey to the East as he travels from Istanbul to *Zordu* in order to bury Berzan. The film opens with the first scene of the second narrative line as the camera shows the upside-down images of a man carrying parts of a coffin. Asuman Suner (2006) claims that this opening scene works as “a parentheses enframing the whole narrative” (p. 268). The parts of the coffin that are reflected on water in reverse and the ambiguity that comes with this sort of reflection give the scene a dream-like aesthetic and feeling. In terms of narrative, the scene is a flash-forward to the death of Berzan, which indicates ‘death’ as *the* destination starting from the beginning of the film.

4.1.1 Racial discrimination and stereotyping. Berzan and Mehmet are the protagonists in *Güneşe Yolculuk*. While Mehmet is the main character, Berzan remains a secondary character since his own journey or transformation is not a part of the filmic narrative. Yet, he is the most important element and the catalyst in Mehmet's transformative journey.

Mehmet is born and raised in the west coast of Turkey. He is a slender man with a dark complexion and black hair and simply because of his physical appearance he is considered to 'look like' a Kurdish man. Right from the beginning of the film, Mehmet faces ethnic discrimination and prejudice simply due to the color of his skin. For instance, in one scene, we see Mehmet as he sits at a local coffee house, which is packed with people cheering to a national football game. After Turkey wins the match, people roam the streets to celebrate victory. However, soon, celebrations take a foul turn. The cheerful crowd becomes violent, jump on top of a car, and starts breaking its windows because they think, the driver inside is not cheering enough. Apparently, there is a 'proper and acceptable' way to cheer after a national victory in a football game and neither the driver nor Mehmet could rise to that level of enthusiasm. Mehmet pushes one of the vandals aside to protect the people inside the car. This very act, together with his physical appearance, get him into trouble. In other words, Mehmet's physical attributes such as his dark hair and skin color, lead to the assumption that he is a Kurd who would not cheer for Turkey in a national game. It is significant to emphasize the fact that Mehmet is not Kurdish. He is as 'west' as he can be; he is from İzmir, a coastal city by the Aegean Sea. His name is Mehmet, a very common Turkish name, which is also a metonymy to signify the Turkish soldier, *Mehmetcik*. Yet, he finds himself in the middle of a street fight because of his dark skin. Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that skin is "the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, [and] is the most visible of fetishes" (p.78). Accordingly, Mehmet is 'mistaken' for a Kurdish man and faces discrimination purely based on the color of his skin, making this scene an example of how racial and ethnic stereotypes as well as prejudice work within the society. This aspect is a repeated narrative element throughout the film. One other example is the scene leading to Mehmet's arrest by the police. When the police find an unattended bag full of guns in the bus, they immediately assume that it belongs to Mehmet because apparently, he is the only 'shady looking dark-skinned man' in the bus. In addition to the guns, police also find

a cassette that has recordings of music in Kurdish, a present given by Berzan, which further complicates Mehmet's situation in the eyes of the police. Even though Mehmet is from Tire, the police refuse to believe him because of the color of his skin. Therefore, they arrest, interrogate and torture him only to find out that he is not the suspect they are looking for and release him in a miserable condition. Yet, just one day after a police raid, the door of the common workers' room where Mehmet lives, is marked with a red "X" sign.



Figure 2. The "X" mark on Mehmet's door

This certain demarcation has a particular symbolic meaning. In 1978, in the cities of Malatya, Sivas, and Kahramanmaraş, the doors of Alevi citizens were marked by an "X" in villages, where different sects of Islam lived together. This act was understood as a threat both to Alevi families and to the other Sunni families who "let" them live there. Müjde Arslan (2010) refers to the same sign in relation to Kurds and argues that the Kurd is always "the one who immigrates to work in Istanbul because of the murder of his/her family and as for in Istanbul he/she is marked by the cross on the door" (p.113). According to Homi Bhabha (1994), skin is "recognized as 'common knowledge' in a range of cultural, political and historical discourses" (p.78). Therefore, it can be argued that in the context of the film, Mehmet's door is marked because he is presumed to be a Kurd. The film does not present the consequences of this act except that it follows Mehmet everywhere. After finding work in a car park, he is given a small place to stay. Right after his first night, in the morning, Mehmet finds out that his door is once again marked with an X. The same "X" also appears at the end of the film in Berzan's village. In other words, whether in a city like Istanbul or in an imaginary space like Zorlu, people are marked, threatened and forced to leave their

lives in order to survive.



Figure 3. “X” mark on the houses in the village

With every prejudice Mehmet faces for “not looking Turkish enough”, with every conversation he has with Berzan and especially after Berzan’s death, Mehmet gradually understands the pain and trauma that comes with being Kurdish as well as the impossibility of surviving in the west as an Eastern man. It is equally important to accentuate the fact that it is not only the ultra-nationalist crowd or the police that judge Mehmet by the color of his skin. Berzan does it too. When they first start to talk about where they are from, Berzan is surprised to learn that Mehmet is born and raised in the West coast.

The film constructs Kurdish identity as something that is essentially politically engaged through Berzan’s characters. In other words, it is pre-suggested that because Berzan is Kurdish, he would immediately be politically engaged. For instance, in one scene, Mehmet sees Berzan on television, with a group of people, who are arrested for protesting the hunger strikes in prison. Until that scene, the film does not discuss hunger strikes, Berzan’s motivations regarding these hunger strikes or the reason for his attendance in the protest that leads to his arrest by the police. Yet, we see him at this protest, which suggests that due to his identity as a Kurdish man, it is possible to expect him to have political engagements. Moreover, Mehmet is also not surprised to see Berzan on television under these circumstances. In other words, based on his ethnicity, it is “natural” and given for Berzan to protest and be politically active. Another example takes place in a scene during a bus ride. After quitting his job, Berzan starts to work for a long-distance bus company. During one ride, Berzan helps a woman by hiding her identification papers whilst a military control. The film does not

provide any history or background information if Berzan and the woman are acquaintances. Therefore, there is not any sufficient explanation why Berzan helps her to avoid the military police and meet with a man, who escorts her to the mountains. It can be argued that in addition to the protests Berzan attends, he also has a connection with the organization with regards to his political engagement in the Kurdish issue. This sort of representation is another form of stereotyping. It constructs a homogenous Kurdish male identity, and it fixes it in time and space. It creates an essential category for identity, which is only open to its opposing side of the dichotomy. This type of representation is another way of stereotyping, and it is not productive to approach stereotypes as fixed points of reference, which are either positive or negative. As Bhabha (1994), a stereotype is “a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation” (p.70).

The most significant moment between Berzan and Mehmet take place immediately after Mehmet moves in with Berzan. It resembles a rite-of-passage ritual; After Mehmet arrives to Berzan’s house, Berzan takes Mehmet to the bathroom and washes him with his own hands. The act of washing is like a ritual of initiation. After the bath, together with a Kurdish friend, Berzan and Mehmet dance to Kurdish music. The dance is primitive and ecstatic, almost like a rave. It is transcendental and transformative. It can be argued that without being fully aware, Mehmet wakes up the next morning as *one of them*. Right after this ritualistic scene of rite-of-passage, Berzan goes out to attend another protest. This time he does not come back. Mehmet finds out that he is killed. In mourning, Mehmet claims Berzan’s body from the morgue, dyes his hair blonde, says farewell to his girlfriend loads Berzan’s coffin to a stolen pickup truck and starts his journey to Berzan’s village, Zorluç. Müjde Arslan emphasizes the trope of death in relation to the Kurdish characters. According to Arslan (2010), the Kurd is always “the one who is the decedent, with a coffin with no interest, with ‘the dream of returning to his/her land’ that never realizes” (p.113). Even if the generalization of singular events in the film seems problematic, in a diegetical point Arslan is quite right because the selected films also repeat this particular pattern of death and desperation of Kurdish men.

4.1.2 Representing the East. Mehmet’s journey to Berzan’s village is the second narrative line of the film, which starts at the beginning of the film with the upside-down images of a man who is carrying a coffin. We, now, know that this is the

image of Mehmet carrying the coffin of Berzan. As Mehmet travels, we first notice the change in the scenery. The monumental and historical landmarks of Istanbul start to disappear one after the other. As Mehmet travels away from Istanbul toward the east, we witness large wastelands, instead of modern buildings. The source of transit gradually changes from cars to trains and to construction vehicles. As the modern image of the west disappear, the camera starts to depict the East as the “foreign land away from the “center/ the West” (Koçer 2020, p. 161). Another difference between the representation of the West and the East is about the scarcity of people. East is not crowded; it is a deserted wasteland with yellowish and barren landscape. It is almost sterile. There are not any modern architectural landmarks; rather we see deserted villages and homes in ruins, which are marked with the same red “X” sign. The East is also silent. It is as if even when the East speaks, no one can hear a noise, words uttered there are in silence. They are unknown and cannot be understood. When it speaks, it is not in Turkish, like the villager at Hasankeyf. The only sign of law is signified to be an oppressive and discriminatory one. And there is nothing rational or civil about it. Every time an officer of the law approach Mehmet, it is with the same suspicion. And this attitude is not only toward him. In one scene, Mehmet picks up three children who are hitchhiking to get to the next city to deliver newspapers. It turns out the newspaper is the Kurdish journal, *Gündem*, and as soon as they see a roadblock by the army, they understand that the vehicle will be stopped and searched so they jump out of the vehicle and run away.

Mehmet’s final stop before reaching Zorlu is a deserted eastern town, which seems to be under military blockade. He checks into a hotel room. Naficy (2001) calls hotels as “transitional and transnational places and spaces” (p.6). However, more importantly, hotels are privileged sites of “journeys of and struggles over identity”. When Mehmet looks out of the window, the images change into archival footage. Together with Mehmet, we watch the footage of destruction and pain. Homi Bhabha gives the example of John Akomfrah’s *Handsworth Songs* (1986). He suggests that between images of real-life footage and fiction lay the displacement of narrative: “It is the time of oppression and resistance; the time of the performance of the riots, cut across by the pedagogical knowledges of State institutions” (Bhabha 1994, p.156). In *Güneşe Yolculuk*, in-between the images of archival footage and fiction, Mehmet decides and his journey and struggle over his identity is finalized. As the images

subside, Mehmet washes the blonde color off his hair, revealing his natural dark color. Throughout the film, we watch Mehmet's identity in a state of ambivalence represented by the color of his hair. He dyes his hair blonde before he starts his journey to the East, assuming that he can move freely as blonde man. Yet, he faces the same suspicion and the same discrimination regardless the color of his hair. Because it is his skin color that draws the attention. Therefore, it can be argued that when he washes the blonde color off his hair, he not only assumes a new identity for himself, but also accepts the fact that his skin color will always make him a target. According to Naficy, accented films are constitutive of journeys of identity and these journeys are inward, outward, or both. In *Güneşe Yolculuk*, the motivation of Mehmet's outward journey is a quest to bury Berzan in his hometown. However, Mehmet's journey is also inward because after the discriminatory experiences, he undergoes an inward transformation. Accordingly, in the next scene, when he takes the train to go to Zorluç, Mehmet comes across a young man from Tire, his hometown, who is on his way to complete his military service. When asked where he is from, Mehmet tells the young man that he is from Zorluç. He no longer considers himself to belong to Tire. The military police step on the train, search the railway cars and look at Mehmet with one last suspicion. His fellow townsman vouches for him by saying that they are traveling together. When Mehmet arrives in Zorluç, he sees that the village has been submerged so he drags the coffin and leaves it on the water. The last image of the film is a sunset behind a military watchtower.

4.2. *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*

Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom (Karabey, 2008), tells the story of Ayça (Ayça Damgacı), an amateur actor living in Istanbul, who tries to reach her boyfriend, Hama Ali (Hama Ali Khan) who lives in Iraq during the American invasion in 2003. The film is partially based on Ayça's real life experiences. Yet, the screenplay is structured both by Karabey and Damgacı and some added story lines are fictional (Sert 2018, p.32).

Ayça's desire to reach Hama Ali is the main storyline of the film. Living in two different countries and trying to sustain a long-distance relationship requires good communication. Hama Ali's method of reaching out to his beloved Ayça is by sending her video home system (VHS) tapes. These tapes are Hama Ali's own recordings and are composed of his own images addressed to Ayça. Each VHS tape has a similar

aesthetic, which resembles homemade videos of the 1970s. They are mostly raw and amateur imagery of Iraq and short comedic performances by Hama Ali. Ayça, on the other hand, seems to be writing letters to Hama Ali. Her letters are narrated from her own voice with juxtapositions of her daily routine. The images from her daily routine involve images of rainy days in Istanbul. They construct a feeling of depression, loneliness, and despair, which is similar to Ayça's mood as she also feels lonely and depressed without Hama Ali by her side. Yet, at the end, we realize that those letters are parts of Ayça's journal and even though they are addressed to Hama Ali, they were never sent to him. This does not mean that Ayça does not try to reach Hama Ali. On the contrary, the whole film is the story of her journey to Hama Ali. Spiritually, Ayça dances to Kurdish music in her house, in order to connect with Hama Ali's thoughts and dreams and uses the telephone to hear from him. Perhaps, trying to connect with him spiritually is easier since no matter how many times she tries, her call cannot be placed due to technical difficulties. During these failed attempts, Ayça also realizes that she has a language barrier; she does not speak Kurdish and to reach Hama Ali, she will have to understand the language somehow. Therefore, she goes to *Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi* (MKM) and buys a Kurdish-Turkish dictionary. Yet even the dictionary would not be enough to communicate in Kurdish with the long-distance telephone operator. As a result, Ayça decides to take on a quest to go to Iraq. This is where the journey of the female western protagonist to the East, starts. Since she has no idea where to begin and how to travel the distance, when she comes across an Iraqi artist / immigrant named Soran (Emrah Özdemir) at MKM, she asks him to tell her how to get to Süleymaniye. Like Ayça's Armenian neighbors, who approach Ayça with extreme paranoia and caution, Soran and the other illegal immigrants who live in miserable conditions under great poverty and oppression, are representations of subalternity. Unfortunately, Soran cannot help her because he is an illegal immigrant and is no position to help anybody. Later, out of coincidence, Ayça meets Azad (Cengiz Bozkurt), who illegally smuggles people to Iran. He tells Ayça that the smart thing she can do is to go to Urmia, an Iranian town near the Iraqi border. He tries to convince Ayça that she has a better chance at reaching Iraq from Urmia than the Turkish-Iraqi border town Habur. Yet, Ayça refuses and begins her journey to Habur. When she reaches Habur, she learns that the Turkish-Iraqi border has been closed for transit. No one is allowed to pass, and it is unclear when the border will be reopened

for transit. Refusing to accept failure, she decides to try to meet Hama Ali in Urmia, Iran just like Azad recommended. After she crosses the Iranian border, the film presents us with a bleak image of Iran. In Urmia, Ayça feels oppressed for being a single woman and faces gender discrimination. She is harassed at night on her way to the hotel and even if she wears the headscarf, she is constantly warned about covering her head in the correct manner. First, the officials in the Iranian border, then, on the way to Urmia, the Azeri driver and finally, people at a restaurant while she eats lunch warn Ayça about the clothing rules. As a result of the oppression and danger she feels being alone in Iran, she reaches Hama Ali by the telephone, and they agree to meet in a nearby border town. Ayça arrives there but Hama Ali is not present, so she waits. The day turns into the night, but there is still no sign of Hama Ali. A nearby storeowner sees Ayça and invites her inside his store to warm herself up. As they sit and watch the news on television, Ayça starts to cry. The translation of the news on the television is not given; therefore, it is not clear if Ayça cries because she learns the death of Hama Ali from the television program. She cries anyways. The last scene is shot like a video letter. It is another VHS tape from Hama Ali to Ayça. As he describes the road, he is taking to meet Ayça, he shows the mountains: 'It's like paradise', says Hama Ali. Gunshots are heard, the video camera falls and the film ends. Hama Ali is killed on his way to Iran to meet his beloved Ayça.

The Iraqi invasion by the United States military is one of the main issues of the film. The film has many scenes where Turkish newspapers deal with the issue through headlines. We also learn from the news that TBMM is voting to decide whether to be a part of the invasion or stay out of it. If TBMM decides to be a part of the invasion, this would grant the American army permission to enter Iraq through Turkish land. The issue of invasion is also important in the sense that it becomes a cinematic tool to depict both characters' point of views. Hama Ali and Ayça approach the invasion from different perspectives. While Hama Ali supports the American military action on Iraq, Ayça attends peaceful demonstrations in the streets of Istanbul to protest the American action. The film does not provide Ayça's motivations in joining the protests. It is not clear if she is there because she cares about the lives and well-being of the Iraqi people or she is there because the military action would make it difficult for her to meet with Hama Ali. Even though her motives are not clear, the difference of opinion between the two characters is significant.

Hama Ali's first reaction to the invasion of his home country is positive. In his VHS tapes, he tells Ayça that the Iraqi and the Americans will fight side by side to defeat Saddam Huseyin. However, once the invasion starts, Hama Ali changes his perspective towards the American "aid". Hama Ali, who used to wait impatiently for the American military to arrive and "liberate" the Iraqis from the Saddam Hussein regime, starts to seem worried about the ongoing situation. In his next video, he tells Ayça about his anxiety regarding the rising death toll among the Iraqis and the escalating violence in his city. In other words, the invasion, which was supposed to "liberate" the Iraqis and facilitate his journey to Istanbul to meet with Ayça, now, becomes a major obstacle for their union since he clearly tells on the video that the borders are closed and he cannot leave Iraq. In terms of filmic narrative, it can be suggested that Hama Ali is represented as an Iraqi and Kurdish man who made a wrong decision to support American action against Saddam Hussein's regime. Yet, what is more significant is the orientalist nature in Hama Ali's way of thinking. The video, where Hama Ali changes his perspective on the invasion, opens up the film to an orientalist reading since it suggests that, while Hama Ali and the Iraqi Kurds could not understand the possible American threat, the West and Ayça, a western woman, could. In other words, what the East failed to comprehend, the West easily figured out. While the more rational, intellectual, and enlightened Westerners could see the underlying problems and devastations an American invasion could bring to Iraq, the Iraqis themselves, could not see it coming. For sure, it can also be argued that different parts of the world, due to different socio-economic and political discourses, interpret the same situation differently. Yet, within the context of this film, it is more likely that the difference in opinion places the East and the Eastern population in an inferior position in relation to the West and presents them as a community who could not differentiate right from wrong.

4.2.1 Identity and truth of the East. Another important issue in *Gitmek* is the representation of Kurdish identity as deterritorialized and transnational. It is not a national identity because it does not belong to any particular country. Rather it is spread throughout the Middle East. According to Koçer & Göztepe (2017), "the transnational nature of Kurdish identity is presented through Ayça's relationships and exchanges with other characters that place her in the middle of a complex territorial and national/ethnic network" (p.59). For instance, In Iraq, Hama Ali does not define

himself with his national identity. He chooses to call himself a Kurd, not an Iraqi. In Turkey, the illegal immigrants and Soran who live in Istanbul are also defined by their ethnic identity rather than their nationality. In Turkey, Diyarbakır, the taxi-driver Ayça meets also calls himself a Kurdish man. In Habur, the Turkish woman of Kurdish origin, with whom Ayça comes across, speaks only in Kurdish. Stuck by the Turkish-Iraqi border, in the hopes of uniting with her son when/if the borders reopen, she tries to communicate with Ayça through a man who voluntarily translates Kurdish to Turkish. “The Iraqi immigrants, the woman at the Turkish-Iraqi border, the Iraqi Kurd Hama Ali and the Iranian Kurdish man at the end of the film become examples of the transnational nature of Kurdish identity” (Koçer & Göztepe 2019, p. 59). In *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*, borders hold a particular importance. Even though the widespread identity may suggest the artificiality of national borders, they are far from being artificial. According to Naficy (2001) borders are portal places, which “are charged with intense emotions, involving fearful escapes, tearful departures, sudden entrapments, devastating rejections, joyful arrivals, and a euphoric sense of liberation” (p. 238). We see men, women and children sitting by the Turkish-Iraqi border, in despair and misery, waiting for it to open, day and night. We listen to Ayça’s journal entries as she describes her rage against the borders and desire to literally destroy them by bombs since they are the obstacles that stand between her and Hama Ali. We watch Ayça’s struggle every time she tries to cross a border and perhaps, most significantly, we watch Hama Ali die near the Iraq-Iran border. “In this sense, borders suggest deportation for illegal immigrants, obstacles for Ayça, anxiety for the Kurdish woman waiting in Habur and death for Hama Ali” (Koçer & Göztepe 2019, p.59).

In *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*, Ayça comes across with so much pain from so many different people. Yet, she remains indifferent. In the scene, which takes place in taxi ride to Habur, she makes small talk with the taxi driver. The driver complains about the constant checks of identification papers that take place in Diyarbakır by the military. Ayça does not seem to understand why vehicles are constantly stopped and searched and people are required to present identification papers. Since she has never faced similar experiences in her entire life, she can neither understand the reasons behind these checks nor the threat they pose to certain communities. Therefore, she tells the taxi driver that she thinks these acts are normal. It is normal for *her*, because she sees them on television, she reads them on the papers,

but she has not once, contemplated on why these practices are enforced on some people, and not on others. For her, these controls are something normal, not something that should be problematic. Another example of Ayça's indifference regards the illegal Iraqi immigrants in Istanbul. Even though she seems to be interested in the ongoing invasion in Iraq, she does not seem to care about one of its major consequences; illegal immigration. She sees the living conditions of the immigrants and remains unaffected by this experience. She sees Soran, the painter she meets at MKM, apprehended by police on television, yet she does not react or try to help him in anyway. In Habur, she sees families being torn apart, mothers in tears, separated by their children, just stranded in the border, amidst the chaos, in a place where time seems to have stopped for them. The misery of illegal immigrants, their poor living conditions, their arrests and deportations are not issues that she chooses to focus and problematize. For her, the only thing that matters is to reach her beloved Hama Ali. In the beginning of the film, Hama Ali asks Ayça, referring to Iraq, if she can live there. Ayça answers 'why, (...) not as long as we are with our loved ones'. The question constructs the East as an inhabitable and rough place, which can only be tolerated as long as we have our loved ones with us. No wonder, Hama Ali is the only one, for whom Ayça sheds a tear. With Ayça's apathy, the film fails to connect the Kurdish issue to the oppression in Iraq, which leads to immigration to Turkey, and the oppression of Kurds. They seem like regular issues that coexist in this particular geography. Besides her indifference, Ayça's attitude toward the people she meets in her journey is also problematic. Like the western outsider, who finds the eastern traditions exotic and without any prior knowledge toward the foreign culture, she dresses herself up in traditional clothes and dances with the locals at a wedding near the Turkish-Iraqi border. Just like a tourist, she tries to talk in Kurdish with her very limited knowledge with a woman on the bus, chatting with the drivers as if she is a part of the community. She dances the *halay*, a traditional group dance, to socialize with the locals. She does expose sincerity, but she fails to understand and question all she has witnessed in her journey to the East. As a result, she continues to normalize the oppressive state apparatus. After all, how can she understand these practices if they have no threatening or life altering results for people like her? Overall, it can be argued that the "truth" of the East, as constructed in all of Ayça's "unproblematic" encounters, does not change Ayça's motivations and perspective toward major issues. She remains a western bystander, a western woman

in love with an eastern man until the end. Accordingly, Ayça's journey does not have an inward nature like Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*. Hers is an outward journey of quest that does not involve a particular transformation.

4.2.2 Mimicry and mockery. Müjde Arslan suggests that the representation of the Kurdish masculinity changes with this film. According to Arslan (2009b) even though Kurdish men are still represented as subjugated and poor individuals who work in low-paying jobs and live under socio-economically difficult situations, they are also painters, lovers and, can even 'fly' in Superman costumes (p. 310).



Figure 4. Hama Ali as Superman

Even though Arslan romanticizes the representation of Kurdish masculinity and assigns a positive angle to Hama Ali posing to be Superman, it is also possible to approach this scene with another perspective, one that would allow a postcolonial reading. For sure, when Hama Ali mimics being Superman, the image is both surprising and funny. It is surprising because Hama Ali is a character of subalternity. He is an Iraqi and lives there during an American invasion. It can be argued that his identity can be regarded as in a relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. Then, when he mimics being able to fly in Superman costume, his identity construction becomes ambivalent. According to Bhabha (1994), "the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (p.86). Then, Hama Ali in a Superman costume, mimicking to fly, is an example of mimicry through excess. It is "the sign of the inappropriate ... and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers" (Bhabha 1994, p.86), because, as we know, Superman can

fly, Hama Ali cannot. Yet, Hama Ali can mimic the powerful Superman and turn him into parody. By disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse, Hama Ali disrupts its authority because that is what holds the potential for mockery.

There is another reading of Hama Ali's mimicry of Superman. Ella Shohat (1991) argues that "[c]inema, itself the product of Western scientific discoveries, paid considerable attention to the master narrative of the progress of Western civilization" (p. 42). Therefore, it is possible to argue that the technical superiority of Western commercial cinema is a reason for its existence. The low density, poor visual effects and overall bad technical quality of the VHS tape can be regarded as a resistance to the technically superior American cinema. This aesthetic is fully compatible with Third Cinema. On the other hand, it can be argued that Hama Ali's performance as Superman is bound to slide to comedy for, he and the East do not have the necessary technical means to create realistic and dramatic effects of a man who can fly.

As the American invasion continues, Ayça acts in a theater play. In the play, Ayça and another actor pretend to be Western journalists who present news from the war zone in Iraq. The choice of name for the male foreign character of the play is George and it is a reference to the President of the United States of America during the Iraq war in 2003; George W. Bush. What is more interesting in terms of postcolonial reading are the outfits of the characters. In the first rehearsal, Ayça wears a tuxedo and a black headscarf



Figure 5. Ayça acts in a theatre play

In the second rehearsal, she wears a red evening dress and a black headscarf. The male actor wears a white suit, a white military helmet and a black and white *keffiyeh* both times. Both characters' outfits are combinations of western outfits with distinguished

eastern signs like the headscarf and *keffiyeh*.



Figure 6. Ayça's outfit in the play.

First, the play can be read as a criticism toward West in relation to the American invasion. After all, the reason for the war in Iraq is the presence and invasion of American military there. In the play, both Ayça and his co-actor act as if they are Western journalists. Their job is supposed to present the news. Yet rather than broadcasting the devastation of the war, they tell funny stories while wearing a headscarf and *keffiyeh* together with an evening dress and a suit. Ayça's transformation into an oriental woman in the play is unsuccessful, even as a parody. Second, is the issue of mimicry, which stems from Ayça's representation of herself as a Westerner in the play. Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that "the success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace (p.86). Hiding behind the exaggeration and the complexity of her grotesque image, it is not possible to tell who Ayça is. There is a level of ambivalence that is inherited in her image as western journalist in the play. While Ayça's appropriation can be regarded as inappropriate enough to disrupt colonial authority in the play, in the film, due to her apathy and ignorance toward oppression and subjugation, fails to do so. In that sense, Ayça is not like Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*. She does not assume a completely different identity in the light of the experience of her journey. Yet, as the following analysis will demonstrate, she is also not like Sumru (Gaye Gürsel) in *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, in the sense that she is not the keen observer who is set out to discover "the truth" behind the truth.

4.3. *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*

The title of the film, *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* (Alper, 2011), is a reference to *Karanfil*, a lyrical poem of Murathan Mungan about the people who are far from home. The film tells the story of Sumru, a young female ethnomusicologist who arrives in Diyarbakır to work on her academic research on elegies. Yet, once she starts to meet with the relatives of unsolved murder victims, she abandons her initial research and starts collecting and documenting real-life experiences. During the process, she confronts her own trauma of losing her beloved Harun (Osman Karakoç) a fact that, later, becomes the catalysts of her outward and inward journey. The film gradually explains Harun's story, yet the opening sequence provides a background to Harun and Sumru's relationship with him.

The film starts with helicopter noises on a black screen, which is followed by a tracking shot of a horse running in slow motion. Later, juxtaposed on the title of the film, we see Sumru in the middle of a group of young people inside a train compartment, as they sing the Turkish version of "Venceremos", a Chilean popular song written by Claudio Iturra for the 1970 election campaign of Salvador Allende. The camera cuts to Sumru and Harun. They make jokes about the scarf that she wears, which is a present from Harun made by his mother. Then, Harun gives Sumru a letter and tells her to read it later. The camera cuts to present time, where we see Sumru staring from the window of a train. Naficy (2001) calls "vehicles of mobility, such as trains," as "transitional and transnational places and spaces" (p.6) where the protagonists' struggles for their identity occur. Accordingly, like Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, in *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, Sumru watches the images of wastelands from the train, as we hear the contents of the letter in Harun's voice. It is a farewell letter, but it does not explain much about the reasons of his departure. All we can tell is that he went to the Eastern part of Turkey where he is from. Therefore, when Sumru's journey to Diyarbakır is accompanied by Harun's voiceover, it can be argued that even though Sumru is journeying to the east to work on her research, her journey is all about Harun. As the letter ends, Sumru arrives in Diyarbakır's train station. Trains are privileged sites of "journeys of and struggles over identity" and they are "physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical" (Naficy 2001, p.6). Accordingly, this opening scene suggests that even though Sumru's outward journey to Diyarbakır is to work on Eastern eulogies, her inward journey is similar to Ayça's in *Gitmek*:

Benim Marlon ve Brandom. She is a female protagonist who travels to the East in search of her love. The main difference between the two characters is while Ayça's journey is outward; Sumru's journey is both outward and inward.

Edward Said (1994) argues that the "Eurocentric culture relentlessly codified and observed everything about the non-European or peripheral world, and so thoroughly and in so detailed a manner as to leave few items untouched, few cultures unstudied, few peoples and spots of land unclaimed" (p.222). It can be argued that Sumru's presence in the East as a researcher and an academic from a western coastal city of Turkey is a familiar pattern for any orientalist work. She is the investigating eye of the foreigner, who in this case, is not merely a tourist but also an academic. In Diyarbakır, Sumru spends her days sightseeing and collecting sounds of the streets with her equipment. In her hotel room, she listens and transcribes her notes from Rize, a place she previously visited for her research. After a small sightseeing, she arrives at a cultural center and asks for permission to interview women who tell the tragic stories of the lost loved ones through political murders, disappearances, and the stories of evacuated villages. Being an academic and an ethnomusicologist place her in a power position in a Foucauldian sense in two ways. First, it legitimizes her presence as a researcher. Second, the findings of her research would "unveil" the "truth" about the East. In terms of power/knowledge, she is able to define the objects and subjects of knowledge through her investigation on elegies of the East, based on her "professional" point of view, an ethnomusicologist. The scene where Ahmet (Durukan Ordu) and Sumru are introduced to each other reveals another example of orientalism but this time, the film presents a self-reflexive attitude toward the issue. Ahmet and Sumru meet in a café so that Sumru can learn more about Diyarbakır in order to further her research. Therefore, the first question Ahmet asks Sumru is related to the context of her research. Sumru tells him that she is collecting elegies of the east to examine them. After learning Sumru's academic research topic, Ahmet responds sarcastically by saying 'Now the Kurds are objects of sociological research, wow!' Ahmet's response highlights the self-reflexivity in the film for two reasons:

First, it demonstrates a sarcastic and perhaps saddened response to the objectification of the Kurdish people as an interest for academic research by 'foreign' researchers, which, in a way, is useless because it does not contribute to any sort of situational improvement in the region. Second, it

becomes a kind of self-criticism on the part of the film because the film crew, just like an academic, comes to the area, aims to shoot the best possible film and then leaves the region without addressing the existing problems in any tangible way (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.62).

The film is clearly self-reflexive toward orientalism and in this sense, Ahmet's representation of Kurdish masculinity is particularly important. Yeşilçam has a long history of representing Kurdish character in pejorative terms and with an orientalist gaze. In *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, Ahmet is an educated man. He is literate, sophisticated in his knowledge on literature, poetry, and film. He is constructed as having cultural capital that is a refreshing in terms of the representation of Kurdish characters within cinema in Turkey. Dziga Vertov's Kinoglaz Manifesto from 1923 is hanging on Ahmet's wall. Together with Sumru, Ahmet recites poems of Andrei Voznesensky. They listen to the recordings of Forough Farrokhzad's poems and talk about Theo Angelopoulos films. In other words, intellectually they are on the same page and have similar cultural capital.

Even though Ahmet's character is different in comparison to the representations of Kurdish masculinity in *Yeşilçam*, it is still ambivalent. Moreover, this ambivalence opens Ahmet's character to a postcolonial reading. Before introduced as a guide, Ahmet and Sumru meet by coincidence. In one of her first walks, Sumru comes across Ahmet, as he sells digital video discs (DVD) at his street bench. When he sees Sumru, he tries to flirt with her, yet, when the words come out of his mouth, they do not mean anything. The words sound like French, yet they are not. In other words, Ahmet speaks in gibberish. He is unable to speak, and it is not because he is mesmerized by Sumru's beauty and falls in love with her. As an example of subalternity, he does not have the words to speak to a western woman. He simply cannot speak. Another possible reading can be related to the concept of mimicry. Ahmet's inability to speak can be regarded as mimicry. He introduces himself with a made-up language that resembles French, a European language, that he knows little or nothing at all. He tries to mimic the accent but without the content. His imitation continues throughout the film as a parody. When he is alone at home, he first tries various mimics in the mirror, and then repeats Jean-Paul Belmondo's movement in *À Bout de Souffle* (Godard, 1960) that turned into a leitmotif.



Figure 7. Ahmet mimicking Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Ahmet also mimics Robert de Niro in *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976). Looking at his reflection at the mirror, he speaks in Kurdish: “A little Mastroianni, Belmondo, or even better De Niro? Look at that mug! You see a girl from Istanbul and suddenly, you think you’re hot shit! But you ain’t shit, my friend”.

A similar argument can be suggested regarding the zoomorphism in *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*. The film starts with a very symbolic scene; a horse running in slow motion. This is followed by the opening scene, which takes place in a train, where we see Harun and Sumru. The horse reappears at the end of the film, after Sumru finds out about Harun’s death. As she slowly walks and disappears by the frozen lake, the horse, which manages to survive alone in those living conditions, accompanies her. The “truth” about the horse and what it represents is told almost at the end of the film when Ahmet and Sumru go to Siyasümbül to look for Harun. There, they meet with the village headman (*muhtar*). Sumru asks him to listen to a recording of a military action that took place near Siyasümbül. The village headman remembers and describes the day of the military attack on the village. He also tells them that as a punishment, the military executed all the livestock and they had to watch the massacre. One animal escaped, he says, “when that horse got free, we felt as if we were freed with him”. The one horse that managed to escape is the same horse we see at the beginning and at the end of the film. The relief the villagers felt when the horse escapes to its freedom and independence is a direct association of an animal with a population. Fanon emphasizes repeatedly the dehumanization of the native by the colonizer to turn him into an animal. According to him, “the terms, the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms” (Fanon 1963, p.42). When considered through the concept of zoomorphosis, the film associates the ‘black’ horse, its escape, the massacre of other

livestock, and uses animals as signifiers of minorities. In addition, the image of a horse as a metaphor follows Ahmet throughout the film. For instance, in one scene, we see Ahmet standing in front of a horse graffiti on a wall. And in another scene, a man approaches Ahmet's DVD stand and asks if he has a copy of, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (Pollack, 1969).



Figure 8. Ahmet in front of a graffiti of a horse

In other words, *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* portrays the desperation of Kurdish people through the image of an animal that runs for its life. It is argued here that this sort of zoomorphism, which is commonly used by the colonizer to depict its subjects, is a part of a terminology that minorities also internalize. Yet, the difference lies in the way colonizers and minorities approach and utilize this terminology. For the former, there is a calculated construction of defining colonized people as animals in order to exclude and strip them off from any human quality. For the latter, zoomorphism presents a resistance or criticism to the discourse of the colonizer that dehumanizes them. Perhaps Yılmaz Güney presents a good example when he titles his film as “*Sürü*” (The Herd). Here, Güney associates a group of people with a herd because of the socio-economic conditions that compel them to exist in poverty and misery, not because Güney has internalized any sort of colonial discourse. Güney treats this group as a sample of all Kurdish people and metaphorizes it as a herd that is taken for sale. In this sense, it is noteworthy that zoomorphism can be used in terms of both discourses: In the hands of the colonizer, it is strategy of dehumanizing people for the sake of legitimizing colonial rule, and in the hands of minorities, it becomes a tactic to demonstrate and condemn the inhuman living conditions caused by that very rule.

4.3.1 Facing trauma. Ahmet and Sumru's relationship evolve over time and they become good friends. They walk around the city together, exchange stories about

themselves, visit the Armenian Church, which is in ruins. There, they meet with Anto Dayı/ Antranik (Sarkis Seropyan), a public figure and the last Armenian in Diyarbakir. Yet, what really brings them closer and becomes the catalysts of their own inward journey starts when they discover an enormous archive of video and audio records from the family members of unidentified murder victims. Together, they watch hours-long archival footage and interviews, which gradually transform Sumru into changing her research from collecting elegies to documenting real life footages at the Memory Center. In addition to watching the footage, Sumru decides to make interviews with the family members of victims. The process of listening to other people's pain is twice excruciating for Sumru because listening to them, makes Sumru remember Harun repeatedly. Sevcen Sönmez (2015) argues that *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* is "a film that uncloaks unmourned pains, investigating, gathering together and opening the door to mourning" (p. 29). In addition, she suggests that as Sumru learns more about other people's traumas, she gradually discovers her own. Koçer & Göztepe (2017) find Sönmez's analysis very productive yet they argue that the research "neglects the fact that Ahmet goes through a similar process throughout the film since he is also present in the interviews and at the documentation centre. Ahmet's past, and the death of his father, is not revealed until almost the end of the film" (p.63). The last footage Ahmet and Sumru watch together is a military attack on a village in Siyasümbül, Harun's village, which looks like a recording from the 1990's. Since Harun went to the mountains around the same time, Sumru understands that Harun died during that attack. Just like the way Ayça watches the news on television in a small grocery shop near the Iran-Iraq border and silently cries at the end of *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*, Sumru watches the military raid in Siyasümbül in silence. Later, she conducts an interview with a woman who has lost her husband. After she tells the story, she asks Sumru directly who *she* is looking for. Sumru does not reply but the empathy emergent during the interview helps Sumru to come to terms with her loss. On that very night, we see Sumru in her room. Inside her room is dark; shot in reverse-light while the other interiors in the film are well lit. She is mostly shot facing the window of her room, which is covered with iron bars, resembling a dark prison from which she is trying to emerge. As she remembers the memory of Harun, nights turn into day. And Sumru makes the decision to go to Harun's village in Hakkari. Sönmez (2015) also highlights the risk of representing the pain of the others, which can be interpreted as a

tool to manipulate the audience without fully comprehending the totality of the facts. Yet, it can be argued that the film prefers to refer to real interviews instead of recreating dramatic and fictional scenes. Making use of oral history as a production strategy provides a realistic tone and also creates a sentiment of honesty. According to Sönmez (2015), due to this strategy, the film tries to share an experience and creates an empathetic identification rather than retraumatizing the event for the audience. It is through this process of recognizing and admitting the past, - the fact that she is not going to Hakkari to find Harun alive-, Sumru overcomes her pain and sets on the journey to find Harun's grave. She asks Ahmet to come with her. Reluctant at first, Ahmet agrees so they start the journey from Diyarbakır to Hakkari.

In addition to his character traits, the film also discusses Ahmet's past. It takes Ahmet almost the entire duration of the film to talk about his past. As he drives to Hakkari, he tells Sumru about the news he heard on the radio about a mass funeral ceremony and the protests in Hakkari, when he was a child. He finally opens up and tells Sumru that his father was "shot in the middle of the street" that day but he does not provide any additional context. It can be argued that just like the way the archival footage and the interviews unlock Sumru's traumas about Harun, Sumru's sorrow and suffering unlocks Ahmet's own pain and trauma. The film does not give any reason regarding the death of Harun and Ahmet's father, but it is implied that their deaths are unsolved and constructed to bring forth ethnic struggles.

After the truth about their past traumas come to light, they reach Siyasümbül. There, Sumru asks the village headman to listen to the recording she found at the center about the raid in Siyasümbül. After talking with the village headman, Sumru learns that Harun is dead. "I remember", the headman says, "One day, they brought corpses of many men. They asked if we could identify them. We said we did not know any one of them. I remember, seeing a photograph of a young woman in one of the dead man's pockets". Sumru does not see the photograph. It is long perished. Yet, in her gut, she knows that it is Harun's picture, and the woman is herself. After all, the time of the recording and the disappearance of Harun coincide. The couple stays at the headman's house for the night. The scene, here, is particularly important since the cinematography is in complete contrast with the dialogue. The room they stay is completely dark, just like the scenes inside Sumru's room. This darkness can be read as a metaphor of the hopelessness, loneliness, and desperation within Sumru in particular and the situation

of the people in the village in general. However, at the same time, what Ahmet and Sumru talk about is very optimistic. Sumru asks Ahmet how he thinks the future will be in twenty-five years. Ahmet answers with how he wishes it would be. He talks about a peaceful and just country where different groups of people live together in harmony. It is important to highlight the socio-political and cultural atmosphere in Turkey during the film's production. The period known as the period of Democratic Initiative officially started in 2009. It was a period of hope and expectation, particularly in terms of minority issues¹⁴. By mid-2015, the Democratic Initiative ended but the period "allowed old but suppressed issues to be discussed in literature, television programs, music and film, among others" (Köksal 2016, p.136). After that night, with the first light of the next morning, we see Sumru as she walks on the snowy mountains. She arrives to a small cemetery where she searches for Harun's grave. Unaware of Ahmet's gaze, Sumru kneels in front of a grave. We see Harun's name on the headstone. She takes off her scarf that was given to her by Harun, binds it to the headstone, gets up and starts walking. At the end of the film, we see her walking on the frozen lakeside. Like Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Sumru's journey is also inward and outward journey of quest. Yet, unlike Mehmet who undergoes a transformation of identity, Sumru's inward journey is about closure through facing Harun's death. The common aspect of all characters is that their outward journeys of quest, are also "journeys of homelessness and lossness" (Naficy 2001, p.223). Sumru wanders on her own on a frozen lake, Ayça cries inside a small shop somewhere in Iran by herself and Mehmet watches Berzan's coffin all alone, as it slowly drifts away from him.

¹⁴ "Most of the initial developments were in the domain of language. Turkey's first state-owned Kurdish language television station, TRT Kurdi, initially named as TRT 6 (2009–2015) started broadcast in January 2009 and Kurdish was used in election campaigns. AKP passed several pieces of legislation approving, for example, the rights of universities to teach the Kurdish and Zazaki languages and allowing prisoners to speak with their visitors in languages other than Turkish. Other changes followed, such as the construction of an independent human rights institution and the creation of an Anti-Discrimination Committee as well as the implementation of national mechanisms to prevent torture. On 4 April 2013, the government announced the names of celebrities, intellectuals, writers, and academics who were chosen for the "Commission of Wise People" and tasked with enlightening the public on the Kurdish Initiative through meetings, talks and symposiums in all seven regions of Turkey"

Chapter 5

Escape, Home Seeking and Home Founding Journeys to the West

This chapter discusses four films that involve the protagonists' journey from the Western coastal cities of Turkey to the Eastern region. These films are *Güneşi Gördüm* (Kırmızıgül, 2009), *Bahoz* (Öz, 2008), *Işıklar Sönmesin* (Çelik, 1996), and *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (İpekçi, 2001). The following part is divided into two groups according to Hamid Naficy's categorization of accented films. The first group analyzes *Güneşi Gördüm* (Kırmızıgül, 2009) and *Bahoz* (Öz, 2008) as films conciliatory films of decent relations, which involve "outward journeys of escape, home seeking and home founding" (Naficy 2001, p. 223). And the second group of films, *Işıklar Sönmesin* (Çelik, 1996), and *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (İpekçi, 2001), are discussed as films of consent relations that focus on "self-made and contractual affiliations" and as inward journeys. In terms of postcolonial theory, the films are examined through the theoretical framework of Homi Bhabha.

5.1 *Güneşi Gördüm*

Güneşi Gördüm tells the story of a Kurdish family who is forced to leave their village that is in an Eastern border town and migrate to the west; namely to Istanbul in Turkey and to a not designated city of Norway. The members of this crowded and extended family of fourteen, separate into two groups and take different paths toward their future. The first group; three brothers, Ramo (Mahsun Kırmızıgül), Mamo (Murat Ünalmış) and Kadri (Cemal Toktaş), their father, Haydar (Erol Demiröz), Ramo's wife, Havar (Demet Evgar), and their five children migrate to Istanbul and start a life there. However, the only future that Istanbul brings to them is filled with misery, loss, and heartbreak. In the end, they take the train back to their village. The second group; Ramo, Mamo and Kadri's uncle Davut (Altan Erkekli), his wife, Gülistan (Şerif Sezer) and their sons Azad (Serhat Çağlayan) and Berat (Buğra Gülsoy) immigrate to a city in Norway, apply for asylum and start a life with prospects.

5.1.1 The dance of the subject pronouns. There are two main issues in the film. First is the migration of the family from an Eastern border town and the second one is their experience in the modern city life. For the former, the reason of the migration is constructed to be an ongoing conflict which is signified by the phrase used in the film; "caught between two fires".

The film chooses to address the TSK as the army in the scenes that take place in the East. When the family migrates to Istanbul, instead of the name of the subject, the film uses subject pronoun, “they”. The most apparent example can be given from the scene where Kadri talks about how came to Istanbul to his friend Can. Kadri: “They emptied our village, they told us to leave”. The Kurdish group is always addressed with a subject pronoun. The conflict between two sides is discussed in non-politicized ways and the situation of the villagers is defined with the phrase, “caught between two fires”. The fact that the characters in the film know who is in conflict with whom helps the film legitimize this particular omission. In order to depict this in-betweenness, the film creates particular situations. For instance, the film opens with the scene of a helicopter attack by uniformed military personnel, which signifies the state and the army. It seems that the target of the attack is a cave on a mountain road. However, the same mountain road is used by villagers, like Ramo and Mamo, in order to take their products to the nearby town to sell. The attack happens while Ramo and Mamo are passing through that road, yet they manage to escape unhurt. The helicopter pilot tells the other one: “Stop, they are villagers, do not shoot”. Even though the sentence has a subject, villagers, what the pilot abstains to pronounce is that they are not “the threat”, they are the “innocent”. When Ramo and Mamo reach the village, they tell the others that they were once again “caught between two fires”. Another example can be given with regards to Davut and Gülistan’s youngest son Azat’s disability. When Azat steps on a mine, he loses his leg. As a result of “being caught between two fires”, he becomes disabled at a young age. After the “accident” Gülistan stops speaking. Her mutism is a reaction to the ongoing conflict in the region. Throughout the film, Gülistan only speaks twice; when she sees Azad walking with a prosthetic leg in Norway and when she sees her eldest son, Serhat before he is killed. This scene with Serhat is particularly important because it is an example of the way the conflict tears down Davut’s family.

Davut and Gülistan has two sons. While the older brother, Serhat, leaves home to “go to the mountains”, the younger brother, Berat, serves in the TSK at a time of intense conflict. To explain Serhat’s choice to join the Kurdish group, the film omits the actual subject and replaces it with a topographic space; the mountains. It is important to highlight the fact that, for Berat, the military service is not simply a mandatory training that all male citizens go through. For him, serving in the military is constructed as an honor; a civic duty to the motherland. The same is true for Serhat.

When his father, Davut tries to persuade Serhat to abandon the “mountain” and come back home, Serhat responds by saying that he believes in the cause and “there is no way back from this struggle”. Even though, both brothers are placed in opposite sides in an ongoing conflict, which tears apart the family, the film is not particularly sympathetic or antagonistic towards any side. While Berat is appraised by his family and other soldiers for performing his military duty, Serhat is honored by naming Ramo’s only son after him. Another example regarding this issue takes place in a pivotal scene, where Serhat and Berat run into each other at their father’s house. Even though the lighting of the scene leaves Serhat in the dark and Berat in the light, constructing what may constitute as a dichotomy of good and evil, as shown in Figure 10, Davut is positioned in the middle of the frame with equal distance to both of his sons. In other words, it can be argued that he is very much saddened by the idea of losing any one of his sons and does not favor one cause over the other. He only asks Serhat to come back home.



Figure 9: The two brothers and the father

In the same pivotal scene, the younger brother Berat asks Serhat what would happen if they met in battle one day. Serhat responds with an answer that suggests that family ties between two sons remain secondary and that they would eventually kill each other if they came face to face: “If I were to be killed, I’d be a terrorist. If you were to be killed, you would be a martyr”. This is the last time; the two brothers would speak. Serhat reaches for the door. Gülistan, who has remained mute for many years, tries to stop him by breaking her silence. She tells her “Don’t go” in Kurdish. Soon after Serhat leaves, explosions restart. In the morning, the colonel arrives to the village and interrogates the villagers on the last night’s attack. Davut recognizes the body of his

son Serhat lying with others next to the four coffins of soldiers covered with Turkish flags used to signify their “martyrdom”, as Serhat had predicted.

The second important issue in *Güneşi Gördüm* is migration. In the film, military officials regularly visit the village. In their visits, they “request” two things from the villagers. The first is Serhat’s surrender and second is the evacuation of the village. It is important to highlight the fact that these evacuations “urges” do not come as orders but rather as requests by the extremely sympathetic army officers. Captain Caner (Yiğit Özşener) even proposes to find jobs for them in his family town. Still, the villagers become anxious every time the subject comes up. They tell the officials that they are not equipped with the tools to survive in the city. Even though the military officials are constructed as understanding, after a while, the Colonel (Zafer Ergin) orders the village to be evacuated in two months. It can be argued that although the entire process of migration seems persuasive, the impetus is a strict military order. Arslan (2009c) criticizes these scenes in terms of dishonesty and denial because they hide the forced migration of the 1990’s (pp. 312-313). After the family “decides” to migrate, Captain Caner thanks them and tells them that someday they will be able to return home safely. In other words, *Güneşi Gördüm* depicts forced migration as a temporary resolution rather than a definitive decision. Moreover, as the family leaves, Captain Caner tells them that their home and land are entrusted to the military’s safekeeping. In other words, Captain Caner suggests that Ramo’s home is “entrusted to them”. It is interesting to see the ambivalence in Captain Caner’s sentence. On the one hand, he represents the state policies that force the family to migrate and on the other hand, he defines himself as if he is the guardian of these lands until they are returned to their owners. It is very different from the settler-colonized dialectic revealed by Fanon (1963, pp 51-52). Similarly, Captain Caner’s compassion for the villagers and his suggestion to find them job opportunities is also ambivalent. On the one hand, he puts the interests of the state above those of individuals and implements the orders. On the other hand, with a “middle-class sense of virtue”, he tries to create individual solutions to mitigate the devastating consequences of the orders. It is possible to discuss Captain Caner’s ambivalence through Joanna Faulkner’s work on the “Aboriginal problem” which suggests that “the spectacular treatment of indigenous issues avoids responsibility for the colonial relationship that engendered (and continues to engender) inequity” (Faulkner 2014, 152).

It can be argued that while *Güneşi Gördüm* defines the direction of the outward journey, it does not clearly define the motivation of the journey. It fluctuates between escape and exile. The family wants to escape the conflict, which is mentioned regularly with the phrase “caught between the two fires” yet because their forced to migrate, there is also the issue of exile. Naficy (2001) remarks that “in accented films, the westering journey dominates because it reflects the trajectory of the movement of a majority of the filmmakers and displaced populations” (p. 225). When considered in terms of the history of cinema in Turkey, the topic of rural-to-urban migration to the western industrial cities in Turkey has been a Yeşilçam classic which has been evaluated within the peasant-urban or traditional-modern dialectic (Kuyucak-Esen, 2019, pp.97-107). It can be argued that similar to most Yeşilçam films about rural-to-urban migration, *Güneşi Gördüm* barely touches on ethnicity and instead mentions the socio-economic difficulties that lead to rural-to-urban migration. It mentions that the economic activity is animal husbandry but does not discuss the lack of agriculture. It shows that Ramo’s wife needs medical care but does not contemplate on why there are not any proper hospitals. It problematizes the lack of education opportunities for the children but does not contemplate on the reason for the closing down of schools. The closest it gets to discussing any of these situations is through education, possibly the safest choice. Ramo is constructed as a loving father who is very much motivated to send his children to school. So, the chief commander asks why they are not at school even though they are old enough to receive mandatory education. Daring and courageous, Musto (Emre Kınay) tells him that the schools are all closed and the nearest one is forty kilometers away. He, then, turns to Ramo and makes a little gesture as shown in Figure 11.



Figure 10: Ramo makes a hand gesture

In other words, Musto is only able to state the obvious; the schools are closed. Yet, he refrains from commenting on the reason for the situation although it is known that the schools are closed due to security reasons and the ongoing conflict in the region. The hand gesture, therefore, becomes a silent attempt to show his frustration. Despite this semi-criticism from Musto, the chief commander responds to Musto with yet another sentence without an object: “This is what will happen here, the conditions do not allow”. It can be argued that “the conditions” such as the illiteracy of the children, Azat’s disability, Serhat’s death, lack of medical care, are not presented as the reasons behind the family’s migration. They are not discussed as consequences of the ongoing conflict. In addition to omitting any discussion regarding ethnicity, this sort of approach also creates an Orientalist construction of the East. Accordingly, in *Güneşi Gördüm* is constructed as a threatening and topsy-turvy place that denies its inhabitants any legitimate educational or business opportunity. It is a place of hardship and struggle with no sign of a modernized economy. There is no possibility for any kind of productive work / employment in the East. It is portrayed as barren and hostile to fertile land. There are no factories, no job opportunities and because of the hostile climate and underdeveloped infrastructure, barren lands are represented to be unsuitable for agriculture. The villagers raise chickens, produce cheese from the milk of their cattle and they sell it in nearby towns. Therefore, it can be argued that this type of socio-economic representation is a classic pattern in various orientalist representations of the East by Western filmmakers. Whether it is the depiction of a “realist” depiction of a bazaar in *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996) or the “imaginary” bazaar of Tatooine in *Star Wars Episode I- The Phantom Menace* (George Lucas, 1999), the economic activity of the East is trade.

The East is also constructed as backward due to the patriarchal power dynamics. It is represented as a place where gender roles are strictly defined through patriarchal relations. In *Güneşi Gördüm*, the whole village is an extended family where women’s lives are structured around bearing sons, cooking, and cleaning. Men, on the other hand, are the sole decision makers who travel to other villages to sell the products women produce in some sort of pre-modern hunter-gatherer mode. There is also strict gender segregation as well as a structured public and private sphere dichotomy. Men and women do not talk to each other unless they are married. While men remain

indoors and communicate with outsiders, women are placed indoors. It is important to mention here that even though the film constructs masculinity as superior to femininity and gives authority to men to shape others' lives, they are not represented as Eastern male despots, women beaters or hyper-sexualized villains as most orientalist works tend to do. Instead, male characters in the film are constructed as respectful and caring towards women, especially towards their wives. For instance, Ramo and Havar have four children, all of them girls. Even though Ramo's biggest wish is to have a son, he neither disowns his daughters nor gets upset with Havar. He remains by her side, faithful and caring to her throughout the film. Yet, when it comes to male-to-male relationships, the same "caring" attitude disappears. When the youngest brother of Ramo and Mamo, Kadri, does not walk, talk or behave as masculine as he "ought to be" and befriends a transvestite after they migrate to Istanbul, Mamo beats him, curses him and locks him up inside the house. In other words, even though patriarchal relations conform women in indoors and organize specific gender roles that associate femininity with the private sphere, what patriarchy cannot tolerate is still not the incapacity of bearing a son; it is the divergence from heteronormativity. In other words, *Güneşi Gördüm* simply constructs the East as a place of socio-economic difficulties and constructs it as pre-modern. The lack of critical analysis on the underlying reasons of those difficulties, gives the film an orientalist nature. The East is constructed as a place without medical care and education opportunities. And it is automatically assumed that the people living there are illiterate and ignorant. Amidst the lack of education, jobs, or any kind of decent living conditions, they cannot do more than a simple hand gesture.

5.1.2 Representing the West. In *Güneşi Gördüm*, there are two different representations of the West: Istanbul and Norway. Even though Istanbul is still to the west of the border village the whole family migrated from, it is still in Turkey. On the other hand, Norway geographically is as west as it can get. While both Istanbul and Norway bring forth particular difficulties, it is only in Norway, the family finally finds peaceful and "modern" living conditions. Therefore, both locations will be analyzed separately.

The part of the film in Istanbul starts with Ramo and his family's arrival with plenty of hope. They find accommodation and work. Ramo's daughters make friends with the neighborhood children. Havar, who is ill due to post-delivery complications,

starts to receive proper treatment at a modern hospital. Ramo and Mamo find work at a fish market. In other words, they try their best to adapt to the modern city life. Yet, tragedy strikes after a picnic on the coast. As they walk along the streets, they discover an uncanny device in a store window; a washing machine. At home, the family lines up in front of it and watches it function. The washing machine is an uncanny creature because as the family looks at it, it also looks back at them. In other words, the void that casts its gaze on the family is framed like a barrel of gun. The modern device becomes the catalyst of the destruction in Ramo's family and the beginning of a series of events that lead to Ramo's decision to return "home".



Figure 11: The washing machine

One day, Ramo leaves the children with his blind father to go to work. He warns the children to stay at home while he is away. Meanwhile, Havar remains at the hospital. The eldest two girls leave the house to play with their friends on the street, leaving the two young ones, one of them mentally retarded, at home. One of them notices that their baby brother, Serhat, defecated himself. In order to clean him, they decide to wash him in the washing machine and accidentally cause his death. After Serhat's death, Ramo stands in trial for negligence. The public prosecution decides that Ramo and his father are innocent, but they are still incapable of looking after the children, so Ramo loses the custody of his five girls. The children are placed in the orphanage. The film closes with the juxtaposed images of the orphanage's administrator, who cries reading Ramo's letter stating their decision to go back home and Ramo's family's journey by train back to the village.

The other victim of the modern city is Kadri. When the family arrives in Istanbul,

Kadri finds a new friend, Can / Cansu (Cem Aksakal) who is also a transvestite sex worker. As he gets closer to Can, Kadri comes into terms with his own queer identity. He starts to cross-dress, puts on makeup, and feels peaceful among his new circle of friends. Yet, when his brother Mamo sees him talking to Can, he beats Kadri mercilessly and prohibits him from leaving the house. Now outside the closet, Kadri puts on make, while he is in the family house. Mamo finds it out and once again beats Kadri while screaming transphobic and homophobic slurs. Faced with intolerable prejudice and violence, Kadri leaves home and goes to live with Can. Can warns him about the risks of their way of living but Kadri's final decision is to live as a woman. So, he starts to live with a transvestite group and takes the nickname "*Kezban*", which generally signifies ignorant village girl. Soon, one of the transvestites in the group starts to complain that Kadri does not provide any sort of contribution to the house and pressures him to prostitution. Even though Can/Cansu does not allow Kadri to work, he starts anyway. Meanwhile, Ramo and Mamo search for Kadri in the shady streets of Istanbul in order to force him to come back to their house. One night they come across Kadri and Can/Cansu in a bar, but they manage to outrun them. The next day, Kadri shows Can what he took from his hometown as a souvenir; a dried snowdrop flower. He tells Can/Cansu that if the snowdrop flower knows that it will be the end of it, it still turns to the sun because of its love for it. The next night, Kadri comes across with his brothers on the street. Yet, the brothers do not recognize him because he is cross-dressed. Without looking at his face, they show Kadri his own photograph and ask if he knows the person and his whereabouts. Kadri responds that he may know him and makes an appointment to meet them on the Galata Bridge in a few hours. When they meet on the bridge, Kadri turns to them and shows his face just like a snowdrop flower. Mamo recognizes him and points a gun towards him. With no fear, Kadri starts to take off his clothes in front of their eyes and explains that God has created him like that. Ramo begs Mamo not to kill him, but Kadri provokes Mamo to shoot. Kadri dies, with the first light of the sun with the sun drop flower in his hands.

There is ambivalence in Kadri's story line because it is not clear if his death is the result of their migration to the western city. The first time the film gives a clue about the sexual orientation of Kadri is while the family is still in the village. In one scene, we watch Kadri imitating the anchorwoman on the television. In other words, he has always been outside the heteronormative determination and the city only

became the catalyst of his coming out. Therefore, it can be argued that Kadri came out of the closet and embraced his queer identity because they migrated to Istanbul and befriended Can/Cansu. The diverse lifestyles in a cosmopolite city like Istanbul give him the opportunity to meet a transgender group, with which later he gets involved. Yet, even if they remained in the village and Kadri was caught acting out of the lines determined by heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity along with strong patriarchal power dynamics would probably dictate a similar sort of ending for him. It should be highlighted that when Kadri describes his situation to Can, he says that his unacceptance is not related to a custom or a tradition but rather related to the strict and rigid characters of his brothers, particularly Mamo, whose sole purpose is to abuse him through beatings and humiliations. Therefore, it can be argued that similar to how *Güneşi Gördüm* remains an orientalist attempt to depict the East, it also ignores the discrimination, prejudice and violence toward LGBTI persons. The film discusses Kadri's tragedy as an individual example that is caused by the "backwardness" of Mamo, who is simply a bad apple in a basket of shiny, juicy and fresh ones. If *he* were different, everything would have been different.

It is also possible to offer a postcolonial reading of Kadri's mimicry of the television anchorwoman. Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that mimicry is "the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which appropriates the other as it visualizes power" (126). According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) mimicry leads to a blurred copy of the colonizer that can be quite threatening" (p.114). In the scene discussed, Kadri's imitation of the woman he watches on television is interesting not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of imitating a western woman. Rey Chow (2010), while discussing modern Chinese history, states that the process of modernization/Westernization continuously refers to experiences of dismemberment or castration. According to Chow (2010), "modern non-Western subjects can be said to be constituted primarily through a sense of loss—the loss of an attributed 'ancient' history with which one 'identifies' but to which one can never return except in the form of fetishism" (p. 116). It can be argued Mamo who cannot get married is terrorized with the fear of castration in the face of Kadri's queer mimicry. After all, Mamo's status as a single man is not appreciated with the patriarchal relations since it may suggest undesirability, and result in the loss of male authority.

Unlike Ramo's family, Davut's family finds peace and prosperity in the west. Their outward journey to Norway ends well. They apply for asylum and start to benefit from social welfare. The whole family starts to work in a market and finds a place to live. They find a peaceful life far from all conflict. Davut hangs Serhat and Berat's photographs on the wall; finally, both sides of the conflict are side by side. Nedim helps Azat to get a prosthetic leg. Gülistan who sees her son walking starts to talk. According to Naficy (2001), "the direction of the journey has profound empirical and symbolic values that shape not only the travel but also the traveler. This is because significant journeys tend to be meliorative and redemptive experiences" (p. 224). Norway brings physical and psychological healing to Davut's family, whereas Istanbul brings consequences to the detriment of Ramo's family. Perhaps, compared to Norway, Istanbul is not west enough. The main reason for this difference lies in the depiction of state apparatus in two countries. The state apparatus in Turkey forces the family to migrate the Istanbul. The male justice of the court in Istanbul decides to take the custody of the girls from Ramo, whereas the justice system in Norway grants Davut's family asylum and help them with their integration economically and socially. There is one aspect that is worth highlighting here. Ramo, in the last letter addressed to the orphanage's administrator, makes a distinction between what he calls mother-state and father-state. He suggests that while the former is nurturing, the latter is oppressive. This is exemplified in the film through the construction of female agents of the state as helpful such as the female doctor who operates on Havar and the female administrator of the orphanage. Ramo writes in his letter that the oppressor father-state is the cause of their misfortune. Yet the reason of oppression along with whoever faces oppression remains uncertain. Moreover, the lack of education and medical care and the poverty of the family are constructed as "local" problems of the East and are normalized. If Ramo and his family had lived in Istanbul, Havar could have received proper care before she got too ill, the girls could have gone to school, and the newborn son could have been alive because the mentally retarded daughter and the blind father would have gotten proper care. So, Ramo's family does not faces discrimination, the tragedies do not happen because of their identity. They simply happen to them because they are migrants. In this sense, the film is very fatalistic: Downfall is simply the fate of the migrant. The next film is also an outward journey to the West. However, it is different from *Güneşi Gördüm*, in the ways that it clearly depicts the reason of

oppression and who faces it.

5.2 *Bahoz*

Bahoz tells the story of Cemal's (Cahit Gök) inward journey of identity, who goes to Istanbul to study economics after passing matriculation exams. Even though the film takes place in the early-1990s¹⁵, the tone of the film is defined by the political climate of the first decade of the 2000s when the existence and legitimacy of Kurdish minorities and language are approved through state policies. Therefore, the possibility of existence of *Bahoz* needs to be discussed in relation to this new socio-political climate. The film starts with the announcement of Cemal's success at the matriculation exams. On the way to Istanbul, Cemal finds a piece of rock, which stays with him like a talisman until the end of the film. In Istanbul, Cemal meets with a group of students who are mostly Kurdish and are referred to as "the patriots". The film introduces them to the audience before Cemal meets them with the scene, where we see Ali (Asiye Dinçsoy) and Helin (Ali Geçimli) as they look at a document on the wall, which shows the cities of new students. They are looking for new students, like Cemal, who are from the eastern cities in order to recruit them. After Cemal meets with the group, he embarks on an inward journey of awakening.

5.2.1 Discrimination. Cemal experiences ethnic discrimination inside and outside the university campus. At the university, he faces discrimination from two groups; The Turkish Left and the Turkish bourgeoisie. Turkish Left approach Cemal to recruit him however once they find out that Cemal is from Tunceli and hence a Kurd, they abandon Cemal. In other words, under the assumption that since Cemal is from Tunceli, he must be Kurd, they give up on him. It can be argued that despite the similarities in their ideological backgrounds, Cemal and the group do not produce the same political discourse. Cemal does not agree with their political agenda. Their protests toward the policies of the Higher Education Council / *Yükseköğretim Kurulu* (YÖK) and their canteen boycotts seem insignificant. Perhaps, one the best examples takes place in the scene at the police station when Orhan (Selim Akgül) and Cemal are taken under custody. An older man, Adnan, is taken under custody. Adnan tells Orhan and Cemal that he wants to go abroad after serving fifteen years in prison due to

¹⁵ The film presents a headline from a newspaper, which writes about the murder of Musa Anter on September 20th, 1992. Therefore, it can be argued that Anter's murder marks the diegetic time of the film.

politics. When asked why he wants to leave the country, he tells Orhan and Cemal that, “these people are not worth saving”. As a character who is constructed to be from an older generation of the Turkish Left, Adnan’s renunciation reveals the distinction; unlike the Kurdish movement, the Turkish Left is unable to form a political base at the university or in the society and hence becomes desperate which leads to the loss of meaning in their cause.

Second group of students who discriminate Cemal is the Turkish urban bourgeoisie. Cemal meets Emel during a class in economics. She invites him to go to a discotheque with her upper-class urbanite circle of friends. Similar to a classic Yeşilçam film, Cemal who comes from the eastern part of Turkey and is constructed to belong to a different socio-economic class, is humiliated and outcasted by the urban bourgeoisie. When Emel’s friends belittle Cemal by making jokes about his difference, Cemal understand that he is not welcomed there, despite Emel’s affection.



Figure 12: Emel’s friends making fun of Cemal.

The film presents the dichotomy of the upper class and lower classes with the depiction of the two different canteens. The “canteen of the rich” as expressed in the film is well lit, is equipped with better utensils and has various sorts of food, while the “canteen of the poor” is depicted as a slightly dark, humid space with limited eating possibilities. In the canteen of the rich, we hear “All that She Wants”, a pop song in English from “Ace of Base”, a European band whereas in the “canteen of the poor”, we hear, the leitmotif of the Left in the film “*Ortadoğu’nun Yolları*”, known also as “*Ertuğrul’a Ağıt*”, a folk song in Turkish language. What is worth mentioning is that in the “canteen of the poor”, there are student groups from many different ideological

backgrounds. In other words, Cuba Canteen is the place where every political group; leftist, fundamentalist, feminist, and Kurdish, get together. There is only one group that does not go there; the upper class. Therefore, even though in their ideological views, the groups in the Cuba Canteen differ drastically, they are the same in terms of their economic background and depicted as a united front against bourgeoisie.

In addition to the aforementioned student groups at the university, the main source of discrimination and threat in *Bahoz*, is depicted as the state apparatus in general and the police in particular. They are constructed to be oppressive inside and outside the university. They follow the group members, raid their homes, throw them out of their dorms, take them into custody, hold them at gun point, beat them, torture them, and even kill them. Cemal's first encounter with the police takes place at the entrance of Istanbul University. His status as a newcomer to the big city is symbolized with the image of Cemal as he holds his papers with one hand, and a big suitcase with the other. Fascinated with the city and the campus that awaits him, Cemal passes the security checkpoint at the entrance of the university without presenting his papers. The police at the checkpoint hail Cemal and warn him that he needs to present his papers otherwise; he would be entering the campus illegally. After Cemal hands the police officer his papers, the police look at Cemal with suspicion and ask Cemal to confirm that he is from Tunceli. In other words, once Cemal's Kurdishness is confirmed in the eyes of the police with regards to his birthplace, he is directly regarded as a suspect who would be involved in illicit actions and hence needs to be warned pre-emptively to act properly. In other words, the moment he steps into the university campus, Cemal crosses the threshold to marginalization, to Otherness, which he will gradually accept, embrace and at the end, even make peace with it.

As Cemal is being interrogated, "a typical modern-looking, urban Turkish family—a blond girl wearing a pink two-piece dress and her parents—walks past the gates without any questions or interrogation. This selective treatment stands as an example of discrimination by appearance" (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.60). Similar to Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Cemal faces discrimination. The only difference between the two characters is that while Mehmet experiences discrimination based on his skin color even though he is not a Kurd, Cemal faces discrimination because he comes from Kurdish-populated city in the East, even though he does not define his identity as a Kurd. This act of harassment by the police is Cemal's first encounter. He is still a naïve

newcomer who is unaware of the reason of this particular harassment. This does not mean that he is oblivious to his ethnic identity. “In his hometown of Tunceli, he speaks Kurdish with his parents and his mother’s name is Kurdish. However, because everyone in Tunceli experiences ethnic discrimination equally, he does not perceive himself as a part of a minority” (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.61). Therefore, “only after he comes to Istanbul does Cemal witness how people can be humiliated for speaking Kurdish in public. This is demonstrated with the scene that takes place on a bus. Cemal witnesses a conversation between two men who are telling each other jokes in Kurdish. As Cemal smiles at their jokes because he can understand them, other passengers on the bus get irritated and harass them for being too loud and coming from the East. They label the two Kurdish men as separatists, order them to speak in Turkish because “this is Turkey”. In other words, society that is socially hardened by political prejudices and spewing hatred, does not embrace “people like him” and see them as potential criminals. Therefore, only after Cemal migrates to Istanbul, he realizes that “the discrimination he has been exposed to is not an experience that the entire society shares—only the minorities” (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.62). The actions of the police toward Cemal, which start with harassment, escalate to beating and torture and this escalation in discrimination paves the way for Cemal to be more active in the group.

5.2.2 The awakening. Cemal’s repressed ethnic identity awakens due to his experiences with discrimination in Istanbul as well as the efforts of the members of the patriots. After Cemal and the patriots meet, the group tries to bond with and recruit Cemal because he is Kurdish. So, they invite Cemal to their gatherings and visit him at his dorm. Each member of the group tries to reach Cemal with a different approach. Müslüm (Bertan Dirikolu), who thinks Cemal is a lost cause because “he is deeply assimilated”, laugh Cemal down sarcastically. Abdülbaki (Feyzullah Gürdaş) jokes with Mehmet about his denial of Kurdishness. Ali uses dialectic method and Helin chooses aggression. For instance, during one of those visits, Müslüm recommends Cemal a political novel. Cemal tells him “he is not interested in those topics”. Surprised, Müslüm asks, “How is that possible, aren’t you a Kurd?”. Cemal answers by insisting that he is not a Kurd but an Alevi. Even more surprised, Müslüm laughs at Cemal and sarcastically says, “so you say you are from Dersim, but you are not a Kurd.” Tunceli is the Turkified name of the city of Dersim. It is situated in the Eastern Region of Turkey. Its population is mainly Kurdish but they prefer to identify

themselves through their religious identity as Alevi. Cemal and his family's cultural identity as Alevi is demonstrated through a slow pan, as the camera reveals the entire wall of the living room. We see a picture and a plate of Ali, the religious leader of the Alevi sect of Islam; a *baglama* or a *saz*, a musical instrument commonly used by Anatolian Alevi folk singers and a print photograph of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Abdülbaki tries to reach Cemal through teasing him. In the scene that takes place at Emel's house, Müslüm asks Cemal if his mother speaks any other language besides Kurdish. Cemal responds that his mother speaks Kurdish and, in return, asks Müslüm "just because they speak Kurdish, do they have to be Kurds?". Abdülbaki teases Cemal by saying, "No, they can also be English". Ali chooses a different approach. Instead of mocking Cemal like Abdülbaki, Ali tries to reason with him with a dialectic approach. He asks Cemal the name of his mother. Cemal says that it is Zere. Then Ali asks the name of Cemal's mother as stated in her identification papers. After a brief pause, Cemal replies, "It is Zübeyde". In other words, Ali tries to create a situation where Cemal would realize, on his own, the oppressive state policies that led to the change of Cemal's mother's name. Mesut Yeğen (2014) provides a detailed history on the issue. Based on the reports which were prepared by various state institutions such as the General Inspectorates, Chief of Staff and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Yeğen (2014) writes that the Eastern Reform Plan (*Şark Islahat Planı*) of the Early-Republican era, "Turkified surnames, village names and prohibited giving children Kurdish names. In 1934, the Third Article of the Surname Law prohibited the use of '[names of] rank and civil service and names of tribes, foreign races and nations' as surnames" (p.67). The same policies continued in the 1970s. "Article 16 of the Population Law, which was enacted in 1972, prohibited naming newborns with "names that do not comply with our national culture, moral rules, customs and traditions and wound the public" (Yeğen 2014, p.67).

Helin's approach toward Cemal's denial is aggression. During an encounter at the university, Helin gets angry when Cemal offers to pay for the magazine the group publishes but adds that he does not read these kinds of literature. "We are not interested in your money," says Helin, angrily, "we want you to understand the truth about yourself". Cemal raises his voice, "I know the truth about myself, and I don't need these magazines to know myself. "I am not Kurdish". And he tells something that sounds like a blasphemy to Helin: "Don't the Kurds come from Turkish race?"

Furious, Helin slaps Cemal in the face. The group members criticize Helin for slapping Cemal. They believe that Cemal's denial of his Kurdish identity is not uncommon among the Kurdish population. It is, in Mesut Yeğen (2012) terms "a state of Turkish Kurdishness" (p. 182). After all, Cemal is very much aware of the fact that he is a Kurd. Yet, "being a Kurd is not something that he needs to express and question explicitly and communally" (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.61). After Helin slaps Cemal, Cemal takes a long hiatus. During his absence, he reads political novels and literature and contemplates on the history that led to the change of his mother's name in her identification card. He ponders why regular checks of identification papers "are not applied to every member of the society and that his attire, accent and hometown can make him a target of suspicion" (Koçer & Göztepe 2017, p.62). According to Zahit Atam (2013), Cemal tries his best not to rebel, but eventually, the resilient Cemal succumbs to loneliness, begins to read the magazine of the group, which he threw aside before (para. 8) and one day, goes to the Cuba Canteen to sit with the patriots voluntarily. When Cemal returned to the group, they were getting ready to organize a protest. Despite their reservation, they ask Cemal to join them. *Bahoz* completes Cemal's awakening with a scene of rite of passage where he throws a Molotov cocktail into a bank.



Figure 13: Cemal at a protest

Bahoz is a particular case in Kazım Öz's filmography. Even if it is not a typical example of mainstream cinema, it certainly is the most conventional film in his filmography. This notion of convention partly comes from the film's usage of teen movie genre. Most teen films take place in high school or college. *Bahoz* takes places at Istanbul University among a circle of friends. There are many scenes inside the

university campus. Other times, they are at Emel's house, talking, discussing, singing, and dining together. They make jokes about each other and laugh at one another.



Figure 14. The gathering of friends.

Even though their discussions have a strong political aspect, they are not without funny moments. For instance, in one scene, while one member gives an indoctrination lecture on the history and politics to the new recruits at a university lecture theater, a stranger who is not from the group enters the classroom and sits with them. The group immediately, starts to pretend as if they were taking a course in English language. Similar to most teen movies, *Bahoz* is a coming-of-age story and has the classic tropes of a teen movie such as peer pressure, rebellion, the experience of first love, alienation, the struggle to fit in and teen angst. The film also constructs its characters from the stereotypes of teen movies such as the new boy; Cemal, the girl next door; Rojda (Havin Funda Saç), the boy next door; Ali, the rebel; Halil, the misfit, Müslüm, and the class clown, Abdülbaki. One of the key themes of teen movie genre is the question of maturity, which is “a problem within teen film rather than a set of values” (Driscroll 2011, p. 66). Cemal's coming of age is constructed through a series of political events such as protests, indoctrination classes, and police arrests and through emotional moments such as witnessing the ethnic discrimination toward Kurds, the cross-class conflicts, his first platonic love, and the betrayal of a friend. Two conventional themes of the teen movie genre, alcohol usage and sexuality, also come up in the film but in a very non-conventional way. Alcohol consumption and romantic relations are prohibited and are even presented as reasons for removal from the group.

Bahoz is usually cited as a Kurdish spoken film even though most of the time the

spoken language is Turkish. Yet, language is constructed as the most important aspect of identity. When Ali says Tunceli, Helin snaps at Ali: “It is not Tunceli. It is Dersim”. Apologetic, Ali replies, “I meant, the way the colonizers say it” to which Helin adds, “those who colonize, dominate our language as well”. The members of the patriots speak Kurdish regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, yet most of the times, they speak in Turkish among each other. The situation of the language shows similarity to the concept of hybridity. Bhabha describes the position of ex-colonies as “the hybridity of its mother tongue, and the heterogeneity of its national space” (Bhabha 1994, p. 60).

Hamid Naficy (2001), in his work on Yılmaz Güney, remarks that “in the accented cinema, the nation is not always imagined as a timeless, boundless, and primordial home” on the contrary, the oppression, surveillance and control can constitute “the key chronotope of homeland” as a prison (p. 181). *Bahoz* with its heavy oppressive ambiance constructs Istanbul as a prison. It suffocates the audience with images of dark, humid prison cells, dim-lit interrogation rooms, packed dormitories and horrid images of torture and violence. In addition, even though the characters are mostly university students, their construction are similar to immigrants or exiles in accented film. Their social participation to the modern city life is weak and they experience discrimination and oppression. Besides, they live in poor conditions at dormitories and communal houses and the lack the necessary sources of financial income.

The only time, Cemal feels a sense of freedom and peace is when he is on a ferry as he crosses the Bosphorus. These scenes depict a different image of Istanbul as a beautiful and vibrant city and involve moments of ease for Cemal. Yet, the two times Cemal takes the ferry are both after he is taken under custody and tortured. In order to understand the reason for Cemal’s ease when he rides the ferry even after such traumatic experiences, it is necessary to analyze one of the first and final scenes in *Bahoz*. Determined that he can no longer stay in Istanbul, Cemal, quite literally, turns his back to the university, and runs away from it. In the following shots, we see the open road, the mountains, and the barren lands, which suggests Cemal’s arrival to the East. Finally, we see Cemal, on a ferry, literally crossing to the “other side” with the same ferry that he took at the beginning of the film. It can be argued that the ferry reminds him of a familiar feeling, a sense of belonging, or even memories of a home. That is why, in a close up, the film shows a similar sense of ease, relief and peace,

tough in a much more alleviated version, in Cemal's face as he rides on the ferry, possibly to Van.



Figure 15. Cemal on a ferry to the East.

In addition, in the beginning of the film, we see the same ferry bringing a coffin and at the end, we see it bringing a married couple. It can be argued that while the ferry in the beginning, along with the storm signify death, the ferry to return signify a new beginning, a union, like marriage, for Cemal.



Figure 16: Funeral on the ferry as Cemal travels West



Figure 17: Wedding on the ferry as Cemal travels East

A stranger approach Cemal on the ferry and asks if he is Cemal from the village. Cemal tells him that his name is Mahmud and walks away. This is similar to Mehmet's encounter with a fellow townsman in the train to Zorduç. In *Güneşe Yolculuk*, the man on the train tells Mehmet that he is from Tire and asks where Mehmet is from. To that, Mehmet replies by saying that he is from Zorduç, even though he is from Tire. Similarly, in *Bahoz*, Cemal tells his fellow townsman that his name is Mahmud. Whether they choose a new name of a new hometown, what Mehmet and Cemal both find after seeking it for the duration of the film, is home. That is when they complete their inward journeys of escape, home seeking and home founding.

Cemal skips the small piece of stone he carries with him throughout the film over the water. The camera follows the stone as it skids over the water and then, tilts up to the mountains. Cüneyt Cebenoyan (2008) argues that through the crane shot and Cemal's decision to go to the mountains, *Bahoz* dignifies violence and the racism. Similarly, Osman Akınhay (2009) suggests that the film is risky because every word has a potential to become propaganda tool (p. 295). Zahit Atam (2013) offers a different perspective and argues that *Bahoz* is successful in depicting the multifaceted nature of fascism through demonstrating Cemal's awakening as a social issue which is initiated *collectively* by both his friends and his enemies (para. 9). In other words, Cemal is literally dragged into the storm – the name of the film- from both sides at an increasingly accelerating speed. Perhaps, it is more productive to understand the

ending in postcolonial terms. Due to both reproducing the discourse of armed resistance with its shot of the mountains and highlighting the possibility of a peaceful unity, *Bahoz* offers two possible readings with regards to its ending. Cemal's choice is not finalized. He is not the same person he was when he left his father's house. His identity construction is depicted as a process, and it is ambivalent. His intentions are not defined clearly. Also, even though the mountain is glorified, and the idea of resistance is romanticized with the upward movement of the crane, going to the mountains as a way of political resistance is not exactly offered as *the* solution because *Bahoz* depicts the desire for cohabitation. After all, even though temporarily, Cemal and his group make Istanbul home before they are stuck between death, treason, and the mountain.

5.3 *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*

Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk (İpekçi, 2001) tells the story of the relationship between Rıfat Bey (Şükran Güngör) and Hejar (Dilan Erçetin). Rıfat Bey is a retired judge who lives alone after the death of his wife. He has a son who lives abroad but he does not come to visit him. Besides Sakine (Fusun Demirel) who comes to clean up his flat regularly and help him with his choirs, Rıfat Bey is alone. Hejar is a young Kurdish orphan. Her story starts at the beginning of the film with her arrival to Istanbul. Hejar's relative, Evdo (İsmail Hakkı Şen), brings her to the flat of a lawyer, who is helping a couple hide from the police. Coincidentally, the lawyer lives across the hall from Rıfat Bey. Already harboring two persons of interest, the lawyer refuses to take Hejar under his care but Evdo insists. He says that he would take Hejar without any hesitation, but he already has seventeen other children living under his roof. The lawyer agrees. Evdo gives her, his address and telephone number and leaves Hejar. Here, it is important to draw attention to the difference in Rıfat Bey and Evdo in terms of their names. As a retired judge, Rıfat Bey holds a respectable place within the state apparatus. Therefore, he is never called only by his name, Rıfat, but always with the addition of an honorary title, "*Bey*" (Mister). Evdo, on other hand, does not receive any sort of honorary title. He is not even addressed with his full name, Abdülkadir. His name is an abbreviation.

Rıfat Bey's inactive and peaceful life changes one night, when the lawyer's flat is raided by the police. Rıfat Bey hears the persistent ringing of his doorbell. Together with Sakine they open the door. The second the door is opened, armed police officers enter his house, push him aside and order him to stay still at gunpoint. Furious, Rıfat

Bey tells them that he is a retired judge, and they must get out of his house. After all, as a judge, he has always been above in the hierarchy and is not used to being ordered what to do. Rather, he has always been the one who orders everyone what he or she must do. However, his threats and statement of his status do not have any effect on the police. In addition to not being intimidated, the police officer tells Rıfat Bey that he knows who he is and refuses to leave Rıfat Bey's flat. Gunshots are heard. As the police leave his flat, Rıfat Bey watches the last moments of the raid from the peephole and witnesses the extrajudicial execution of the lawyer. Rıfat Bey and Sakine look out of the window. Several ambulances arrive at the scene. Meanwhile, the police officers start to search the lawyer's flat, as they are convinced that everyone in the flat are dead. During the search, we see, a small hand slowly opening a cabinet from inside. Terrified and in shock, we see Hejar. Very silently and calmly, perhaps due to the shock she is in, Hejar gets out of the cabinet and passes quietly from one room to the other, without being noticed by the police. While Rıfat Bey angrily types a letter of complaint which is titled "Police State or State of Law?", Sakine opens the door. There, slightly wounded and covered with blood, stands Hejar. Sakine slams the door on Hejar, runs to Rıfat Bey's study and utters: "A child". Together they rush to the door, open it and let Hejar in. Hejar enters Rıfat Bey's house like a ghost. This is how Rıfat Bey meets Hejar and embarks on his inward journey that would forever change his life.

5.3.1 Pride and prejudice. *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* is based on the relationship between two characters that are constructed through highly metaphorical binary oppositions. Rıfat Bey is an elderly man and Hejar is a young girl. Rıfat Bey comes from a poor rural family from the West. Yet, through education, he was able to move up in the socio-economic ladder and became a judge. His high-ranking position within the state apparatus, not only provides him with respect but also with a voice. In the scene where Rıfat Bey witnesses the extrajudicial execution of the police, he immediately writes a letter of complaint. The film does not make it clear if Rıfat Bey writes that letter because he questions the extrajudicial acts of the police toward his neighbors or because the police treated *him* with disrespect. Yet, it is still proof that he can voice his opinions. Hejar, on the other hand, is illiterate and uneducated and comes from a Kurdish family from Diyarbakır. She does not have a voice. And as the film will soon reveal, in her case, it is even better to remain mute.



Figure 18: Hejar on the background

Hejar's representation as a character of subalternity is amplified with her invisibility and silence. She is out of focus in the background in most of the scenes when Rıfat Bey is on the foreground as exemplified by Figures 14 and 15.



Figure 19: Hejar on the back seat.

When Hejar first comes inside Rıfat Bey's flat, Rıfat Bey assumes that she cannot speak because she is traumatized. In other words, it is incomprehensible for Rıfat Bey to even think that Hejar might not speak Turkish. It must be the trauma that renders her mute. It is only after she utters her first word, "mom" in Kurdish that Rıfat Bey realizes Hejar does not speak Turkish. Unlike *Güneşe Yolculuk*, skin is not the main indicator in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*. Even though Hejar's eyes, hair and skin are as dark as Mehmet's, she only faces prejudice and oppression when she speaks. When she is silent, she is noticed neither by Rıfat Bey nor by the police officers. After all, that is how, she miraculously escapes from the police raid. A few days after the police

raid, Rıfat Bey catches Hejar as she tries to run away. In front of the open door, they come face to face with the same police officer from the raid. The officer becomes suspicious, but he does not “see” Hejar. She is physically invisible to his eyes. Her only distinguishing feature is her language and as long as she remains silent, she is safe from danger. The other character that hides in silence is Sakine. When Hejar first comes to Rıfat Bey’s house and utters the words “mom” in despair and fear, Sakine runs and hugs Hejar by responding in Kurdish. Rıfat Bey, quite irritated and angry, asks Sakine which language they are speaking. Sakine responds by stating that it is Kurdish. Learning that Sakine who has been working with him for more than ten years, is Kurdish, comes to Rıfat Bey as a total shock.

Besides the opposition of visibility / non-visibility and subalternity/dominance, another opposition between Hejar and Rıfat Bey is related to their approach toward state policies on minorities. Hejar is considered as a natural born suspect whose family has been torn apart by state policies on minorities, which Rıfat Bey highly values. Accordingly, Rıfat Bey’s prejudice toward Kurdish minorities in general and Hejar in particular is grand and deeply rooted. For instance, after finding out that Sakine is Kurdish, Rıfat Bey gets very angry and yells at her. Sakine starts to cry. Quite apologetic, she pleads her case: “What can I do, Uncle Rıfat, huh? You’ve known me for ten years, that’s who I am”. Moreover, right after this particular revelation, Rıfat Bey asks Sakine if she knows the people living across the hall. It can be argued that Rıfat Bey assumes that Sakine must have something to do with the people of interest *because* she is Kurdish. Another example can be given from the scene at the restaurant. Rıfat Bey and Hejar go to a restaurant to have dinner. He leaves Hejar alone to call Evdo. During his absence, one of the waiters offers her a piece of chocolate. Hejar accepts the gift. However, when Rıfat Bey sees the chocolate in Hejar’s hands, he immediately assumes that Hejar stole it. Furiously, he yells at her until the waiter tells him what actually happened.

Despite his constant scolding, it can also be argued that Rıfat Bey cares for Hejar, otherwise he would not take her into his flat. Therefore, it can be argued that his attitude toward Hejar fluctuates from compassion and disgust. And the only way to get rid of all his negative feelings toward Kurdish minorities in general and Hejar in particular, is to transform Hejar into an “acceptable” version of herself. As a result, he tries to reform Hejar’s image, rid her off from the aspects that he finds inappropriate,

excessive, and uncultivated. His position as a self-appointed educator is reminiscent of the Early-Republican nationalist elite, who also assumed the position of the educators of the country. Accordingly, in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, the modernized and enlightened self-appointed educator Rıfat Bey, takes on the mission of modernizing Hejar and her image. He tries to teach her table manners, appropriate ways of social conduct and buys her “proper” clothes to wear. Yet, he never asks if she gives him her consent. After all, as the enlightened national male subject within the state apparatus, who could know better? According to *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, Hejar could. She might be young, but her pride is as grand as Rıfat Bey’s prejudice. And gradually Rıfat Bey understands that in order to be successful in this particular modernizing mission, first, he needs to break Hejar’s resistance. So, he yells, punishes, and even slaps Hejar. Every time Rıfat Bey scolds her, Hejar pushes back. She breaks the frame of a military officer’s picture as a resistance to all that Rıfat Bey stands for. When Rıfat Bey attempts to cut her lice-infected hair, she rises screaming. Similarly, when Rıfat Bey does not let her ride on the swing in the playground, she throws her hat on the floor, takes off her coat, and refuses to wear it. Spivak (2007) explains that when the aborigines slowed down the construction of a riverbed, the company owners who oversee the construction simply thought that the aborigines are lazy. They did not even consider that there might be other concerns behind this resistance. According to Spivak (2007), it was later understood that the aborigines slowed down the construction as an act of cultural and ecological resistance (Spivak 2007, p.56). Similarly, Rıfat Bey cannot also understand why Hejar resists. In his mind, he is doing a good deed.

The most important characteristic of Rıfat Bey is that he is the embodiment of Kemalist ideology of the Early-Republican era. His behaviors conform to an enlightened positivism. In this sense, Rıfat Bey draws a modernist nationalist portrait influenced by rationalism attributed to European thought or the Enlightenment. His actions and statements are the rational outcome of a coherent national discourse. He seems to be secular in every aspect of his life. His daily newspaper is *Cumhuriyet*, which is highly associated with Kemalist ideology. Even his birthday is 29 October, the day of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. Yet, above all else, Rıfat Bey is a firm believer of the idea that every Turkish citizen must speak Turkish. Therefore, even though reforming and modernizing Hejar’s table manners, her clothing and even cleansing her lice-infected hair are important, nothing compares to Rıfat Bey’s biggest

task: teaching Hejar Turkish. This is where Rıfat Bey and Hejar clash the most. Throughout the film, we watch Rıfat Bey's aggressive attempts to teach Hejar Turkish and her refusal to learn. Early-Republican reforms on language incorporated the idea of Turkish nationality and Turkish race with the particular vision of creating "a religiously, ethno-linguistically, and ideologically uniform nation" (Liebisch-Gümüş 2019, p.40). This sort of nationalist vision, according to Liebisch-Gümüş (2019), "by no means tolerated their country's heterogeneity" (p.40). Therefore, in the Early-Republican era, "Turkishness ... was founded upon 'sameness'" (Kavakçı 2016, p.56). Accordingly, "the ethnic components that fell outside this identity frame, mainly the Kurds, were Turkified by force" (Erdoğan 2015, p.134). Language was among the most important aspects of the Turkification process. That is the reason why, Rıfat Bey, as the embodiment of Early-Republican state policies, insists on teaching Hejar Turkish. This is also the reason why he gets furious when Sakine tries to communicate with Hejar in Kurdish. That is also the reason why, as a person of minority who has been affected by those state policies for decades, Hejar, resists speaking Turkish. She remains mute, makes a sour face, yells, cries, and curses in Kurdish but she does not speak Turkish, as long as Rıfat Bey forces her, scolds her, and mistreats her. The film highlights the fact that Hejar's mutism does not stem from a type of disability. Mutism is a strategy. It is a conscious choice and perhaps, one of the best examples regarding this argument is highlighted in the scene where Rıfat Bey takes Hejar shopping.



Figure 20: Rıfat and Hejar shopping for clothes

After a calm and peaceful shopping spree, Hejar makes her first and biggest compromise. She repeats after Rıfat Bey, the words; hat and shoe in Turkish. Yet, a few seconds later, Rıfat Bey gets angry again and blames Hejar for a lie he told to the

salesclerk. In the scene, the salesclerk asks Hejar her name. She does not reply. Perhaps, afraid that Hejar may speak and suddenly “becomes visible” or ashamed that she may speak in Kurdish, which would reveal her ethnic identity, Rıfat Bey barges in and tells the salesclerk that Hejar does not speak Turkish. This answer makes the situation even problematic for Rıfat Bey because the salesclerk asks him *the* most dreaded question: “Really, is she not a Turk?”. This is where Rıfat Bey resorts to a lie: “Turk, she is a Turk, but she lives in Germany”. In other words, Rıfat Bey acts as if Hejar does not speak Turkish because she was raised in Germany. Apparently, it is understandable and forgivable not to know how to speak in Turkish, as long as a Turkish person lives in Germany. Yet, it is never acceptable if that same person lives in Turkey. Therefore, it is not clear whether Rıfat Bey is ashamed of himself for lying – having the need to lie- or genuinely afraid that Hejar might speak and as a result become visible. Regardless the answer, the result is the same. He blames Hejar because of his lie. Scolded by Rıfat Bey, Hejar wipes the smile on her face, looks at Rıfat Bey with rage, refuses to repeat the words of hat and shoe and instead screams in Kurdish.

According to Chatterjee (1993), there is a general dilemma inherent in nationalism that also explains Rıfat Bey’s ambivalence. Although nationalism is itself rational, the internalization and identification of it, is an emotional process. That is why “if nationalism expresses itself in a frenzy of irrational passion, it does so because it seeks to represent itself in the image of the Enlightenment and fails to do so. For Enlightenment itself, to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideal, needs its Other” (Chatterjee 1993, p.17). Accordingly, Rıfat Bey can only exist through his Other, his opposition. Moreover, as the incarnation of the spirit of the state, Rıfat Bey is a product or an “historical 'object' of a nationalist pedagogy” (Bhabha 1994, p.145). He represents the horizontal, homogenous and “linear narrative” (Bhabha 1994, p.173) of a nation as constructed by Western historicism. Yet, according to Bhabha (1994), the homogeneous narratives of the West are disseminated and deconstructed through the narratives of exiles, émigrés, minorities, and marginalized peoples. That is where Hejar’s character comes into the picture. Unlike Rıfat Bey, Hejar represents the temporal dimension of a nation that “serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussion of the nation as a cultural force” (p.140). In other words, in addition to being pedagogically consolidated, as represented with the character of Rıfat Bey, the nation also constructs itself performatively, as represented with the character

of Hejar. Then, it can be argued that the nation and the national narrative are inherently ambivalent. The nation's ambivalent narrative is continuously produced in-between "the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative" (Bhabha 1994, p. 145). In *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, Rıfat Bey's the continuous efforts to integrate Hejar into the pedagogical narrative of the nation and Hejar's repetitive performance of resistance create an ambivalent national narrative.

Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that rather than constructing the dichotomies of colonizer/colonized, black/white, First Nation/Third World and such, it is more productive to look at difference as "complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (Bhabha 1994, p.2). *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* is all about constant negotiations between Rıfat Bey and Hejar. He apologizes to Hejar, when the waiter at the restaurant tells him that Hejar did not steal the chocolate. He buys a medical shampoo, washes Hejar's hair to get rid of the lice instead of cutting it. He takes her to the swings even though it was late at night. He asks Sakine's help with translation in order to communicate with Hejar. When Hejar starts to cry after a brief dispute, Rıfat Bey panics and calls Sakine and learns his first word in Kurdish 'negirî', meaning 'don't cry'. Hejar, on the other hand, gives Rıfat Bey his pills, when he has a small heart attack. She does not protest when Rıfat Bey takes her shopping. She accepts to wear the sweater, pants, shoes, coat, and hat Rıfat Bey buys for her. She even repeats two words in Turkish: hat and shoe. When she realizes that she broke Rıfat Bey's heart, Hejar starts to cite all the Turkish words she knows, to please him.

In addition to these literal negotiations, *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* includes one particular internal negotiation for each character. Rıfat Bey's internal negotiation is represented in the film with two pieces of paper; the one with the phone number of the police officer who oversaw the raid, and the other is Evdo's phone number, which Rıfat Bey finds in Hejar's pocket. Until almost the end of the film, Rıfat Bey fluctuates between calling the police and calling Evdo to come and take Hejar. Every time, Rıfat Bey gets angry, he attempts to call the police on Hejar. One time, he even takes Hejar to the police station but when they arrive, he changes his mind. Other times, he decides to call Evdo to tell him to come and take Hejar away. He even, goes to Evdo's house. As an example of subalternity, Evdo lives in the periphery of the city and in very poor

conditions. He tells Rıfat Bey that he is the only survivor from his family. Pérouse (2008) emphasizes the desolateness and the exclusion of the neighborhood in the film (p. 315). In other words, it can be argued that migrant minorities who face exile or forced migration bring the misery of the rural to the urban city and they are bound to live in the periphery and face social exclusion. Evdo, still unaware of the police raid and the fact that Hejar now lives in Rıfat Bey's flat, mentions Hejar. He says that he is happy because "at least one little girl is staying with a cousin. She has good place to live. She will be saved". Then Evdo says something Rıfat Bey can relate: "We were caught between two sides, sir. One is the state, and the other side is the guerrilla. What can we do?". Similar to every character in *Güneşi Gördüm* and Evdo, Rıfat Bey is also torn, or, perhaps, "caught between two fires": his compassion for a little Kurdish orphan and his dedication and faith in the state and its apparatus. There, at Evdo's run-down house, Rıfat Bey's negotiations end. There, he decides to adopt Hejar.

Hejar's most significant internal negotiation takes place at the end of the film. After learning about the police raid, Evdo comes back to the apartment to look for Hejar. He comes across Rıfat Bey at the entrance of the building. Understanding that Evdo came looking for Hejar, Rıfat Bey invites him to his flat and tells his decision to adopt her. Evdo accepts. At that moment, something happens that both men did not expect. Hejar rejects being adopted. When it comes to the choice of living with Rıfat Bey or with Evdo, Hejar chooses the latter. She leaves behind the possibility of a life at the center of the modern city, a chance to get a good education, which could lead to various employment opportunities. She leaves behind a man she genuinely cares for, a reformed man, who has been transformed by this little Kurdish orphan. She gives up dining at fine restaurants, fishing trips with Rıfat Bey, who, in tears, tells her "you can come" in Kurdish. She lets go everything to be with her people, regardless of what might come next and what is in the cards for her. The negotiations are over. Hejar changes into her old clothes, holds Evdo's hand and says farewell to Rıfat Bey. It can be argued that *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* presents two inward journeys of "home seeking and home founding" (Naficy 2001, p.223) through the characters of Rıfat Bey and Hejar. They both undergo transformations yet, at the end, through Hejar's inward journey and her final choice to go with Evdo, *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* becomes a conciliatory film of decent relations that emphasize "bloodline and ethnicity" (Naficy 2001, p.8) because it "is concerned with being, ... [rather than] with becoming"

(Naficy 2001, p.8).

5.4 *Işıklar Sönmesin*

Işıklar Sönmesin tells the story of Captain Murat (Tarik Tarcan) and Seydo (Berhan Şimşek). It takes place in the mountains near an unidentified eastern border of Turkey. Captain Murat is sent to the region to track down a Kurdish group, which is led by Seydo. As Seydo's group tries to find a way to cross the border amidst a snowstorm, Captain Murat's troops find them. During the engagement, an avalanche falls on all of them due to a grenade explosion. Captain Murat and Seydo survive without harm. Zozan (Sermin Karaali), who is the third and the last survivor of the avalanche, suffers from a gunshot wound. Soon after Captain Murat captures Seydo and Zozan, and Zozan dies. Captain Murat and Seydo, find themselves in a situation where they must face their differences in the cold snowy mountains; an Eastern chronotope in cinema in Turkey. Şengül (2012) in his study of the image and discourse of the East in the New Turkish Cinema states that "mountains have been an important iconographic element in the films of *Doğu*, signifying either resistance (against suppression) or unconquerability and unreachability (by the security forces)" (p.8). In *Işıklar Sönmesin*, both Captain Murat and Seydo struggle against the harsh weather conditions, freezing temperatures and the heavy snow in the mountains. Therefore, the mountain turns into a place where they put aside their differences and try their best to coexist by resisting the mountain. This struggle against the nature turns the mountain into a contact zone. According to Pratt (2008) contact zone is "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (p.6). Accordingly, while both Captain Murat and Seydo are imprisoned in strong and unbreakable rhetoric and their communication mostly consists of one-sided declarations that turn into fights, the mountain becomes a common home; a place where they could eventually come to terms. *Işıklar Sönmesin* is also cited as the only film that was produced in the period of intense conflict during 1984-1999 (Yücel 2008, p. 238) and along with *Güneşe Yolculuk*, it is among the first examples of a series of films that deal with identity crisis created by ethnic differences.

5.4.1 The war of identity. In order to discuss what Seydo calls "a war of identity", *Işıklar Sönmesin* utilizes the character of the village guard (*korucu*) as a representative of the oppressive state apparatus besides the military personnel in the

region in the opening sequence in the film. After a panoramic camera movement of the snowy mountains, the camera focuses on a bus loaded with villagers, having a small talk in both Turkish and Kurdish. The bus driver suddenly hits the brakes when an armed group stops them by firing Kalashnikovs into the air. At the end of the vehicle, we see two men in panic. The older man hides the younger one under a blanket. Seydo orders the villagers to get off the bus one by one and later orders his men to search the bus. When one of them finds the man hiding under the blanket, he yells, "It's Apo, one of the village guards. The intel is right sire". After Seydo affirms Apo's identity, he announces that being a village guard is treason and its punishment is death. The guard's father interferes and begs for forgiveness. Seydo refuses. In his eyes, by choosing to be a village guard, Apo has betrayed his people and in return, received economic support and protection from the state: "Fighting against us and taking salary from the state is treason". Fearing for his life, Apo tries to run away and is killed by Zozan. That is when Seydo finds himself between the gaze of Zozan and the gaze of an elder member of the group. When Apo is shot, the elder member turns the other way in sadness while Zozan turns to Seydo for justification for her action. In this "battle of identity", Seydo is stuck between his fierce rhetoric and the death of a fellow Kurd. Seydo fluctuates, sighs, and looks at Apo's father. Even though his world is black and white, the reality of the situation is dire anyways. He pulls himself together and addresses the crowd: "This case is our case. We expect your help, not betrayal. Such is the end of the betrayer." Yet, Seydo understands that he needs to address the elephant in the room. He approaches the elder member as the group takes refuge inside a cave. The elder member explains his reluctance and hesitation regarding Apo's murder quietly and carefully: "I knew his father", he says referring to Apo. "He is a shepherd in these mountains, just like me". For Seydo, Apo is a collaborator of the state, "He is not like you, if he was, he would have been with us". The old man explains Apo's dilemma and position through socio-economic reasons and tells Seydo that there is not much to go on with in these barren lands and there are no proper means to feed their children, and Seydo affirms. He is certainly not happy about the idea of being in a position to punish a fellow Kurd, but he lays out his reasons and backs them with concrete arguments: "That is true, but this does not mean that he had to take his son to the state and make him a village guard and betray his own people". The elder man shakes his head, "That much, I do not know. What I know is that we are shooting at

each other”. The camera turns to the other members of groups who silently listen to the conversation between Seydo and the elder man. Their silence can be read as a sign of their hesitation as well. In fact, it can be argued that they might even share the same feelings with the old man. Seydo calms down and says “I hear you. I’m also not pleased.” Yet even though Seydo wavers for a second in front of his group, he does not falter when this time Captain Murat asks why they are killing their own people. “This is a battle identity,” says Seydo, as he shows the mountains, “There lies in front of you the righteous cause of the people whom you oppressed and ignored”.

There are two pivotal scenes, one for each side of the conflict, which offer a solution to the ongoing conflict in the region through clearing out the “bad apples”. The first example is the death of Apo. Zozan shoots him without Seydo’s permission. The second scene takes place soon after when the military troop gets ready to prepare an ambush. Amidst the snowy mountains, Captain Murat orders the troop to take position but warns them to hold fire until he calls the Kurdish group to disarm and surrender. Nonetheless, one of the soldiers opens fire without Captain Murat’s authorization. Unlike Zozan and the soldier, Captain Murat and Seydo are constructed as leaders who are dedicated to their ideals but are also reasonable and negotiable. Both realize the risk of avalanche in the snowy mountains and try to act cautiously. Captain Murat is sensible enough to call for surrender before shooting. He is also committed to arresting Seydo so that he can have a trial, rather than executing him when he has the chance. Similarly, instead of blaming Apo for treason even after his identity is confirmed, Seydo asks Apo if in fact he is a village guard. After Apo confirms, Seydo once again asks if he knows they will not accept the institution of village guardianship, and Apo confirms. Seydo is also very displeased when Zozan shoots Apo. Moreover, even though Seydo accuses Apo of treason, the film does not make it clear how or “if” Seydo would actually punish him. In other words, if there had not been for the few “bad apples” on both sides, and if only everyone could have been like Captain Murat and Seydo, perhaps, things would have ended peacefully. Yet, the suggestion that bad apples, like Zozan or the trooper who fires his gun and causes the avalanche, spoil a barrel of good ones is an oversimplification of the issue. This is “the superficial solution” (Sönmez 2015); *Işıklar Sönmesin* proposes for the ongoing conflict in the region, defending the righteousness of oppressive systems through blaming a few bad apples. At least, it does so before it introduces the character of

Haydar (Tuncel Kurtiz), at the end of the film.

Haydar is a lonely old man who has chosen to remain in his village after its evacuation. He lives on the edge of insanity with his granddaughter Dilan (Meltem Şimşek). Haydar presents a glitch in the perfectly constructed dichotomy between Captain Murat and Seydo. He represents the people who suffer from the conflict. After Haydar captures both men, he asks who they are. Captain Murat and Seydo identify themselves and defend their position in the ongoing conflict. To their surprise and perhaps fear, Haydar blames both for what has happened to everyone in the region: “What kind of spite is that?”, he asks yelling to both men. In the eyes of Haydar, there are no “few bad apples”; *everyone* is to blame. As he harshly criticizes them and tells them the consequences of their actions, “Everyone’s gone, animals were burnt, the stoves went out, the lights went out”, the village is attacked. The film chooses to obscure who attacked the village. Besides, Haydar’s death and the danger Dilan finds herself in render that information insignificant. With the appearance of Dilan, Captain Murat and Seydo become totally symmetrical with their acts and rhetoric. In that sense, the film manages to equalize them in a humanistic stage beyond all rationalization about their position. In other words, through this newly formed symmetry on the frame as well as the fact that Haydar blames both parties for the pain they both have inflicted on the native people, the film puts equal blame to both sides presenting them as neither totally right nor totally wrong.



Figure 21-22: Balancing the characters

In the final scene, Captain Murat and Seydo catch Dilan from two sides and run away. The image freezes as two men carry Dilan on their shoulders to save her from the fires of the attack. She is like a sacred cup, almost like the Holy Grail. The freeze frame immortalizes this moment and suggests the possibility of peace.



Figure 23: The rescue of Dilan

5.4.2 Paralanguage and the Third Space. Regardless of the symmetry the film presents with the final scene, there is a clear asymmetry of power in *Işıklar Sönmesin* between Captain Murat and Seydo. According to Sönmez (2015), the film “seems to have an egalitarian and critical perspective” (p. 73) but “while military strength and power are unfolded and framed with exaltation, militants are depicted as down, powerless and weak” (p. 75). Similar to the military officials in *Güneşi Gördüm*, Captain Murat is constructed as extremely polite. He visits the village, shakes hands with everyone, smiles at the children, and asks about their families. When he stops vehicles to check for identification papers, he is almost apologetic. He welcomes the villagers, tells the bus driver to turn the music up so that people can relax. There is no insult, no harassment, none whatsoever. When we compare Captain Murat’s attitude to Seydo toward the villagers at the beginning of the film, it is possible to see the difference. Captain Murat’s courtesy is in deep contrast to the crude attitude of Seydo. Moreover, Captain Murat does not resort to violence, allows Seydo to take Zozan with them, gives his coat to keep her warm, and helps Seydo carry and bury her when Zozan dies. Captain Murat’s extreme politeness and kindness is unrealistic and according to Sönmez (2015), it makes the film unsuccessful in its attempt to approach the Kurdish issue from both sides. Sönmez (2015) also suggests that *Işıklar Sönmesin* reconstructs the official discourse. It is argued here that in addition to the glorification of Captain Murat’s character, the film reconstructs the official state ideology through Captain Murat’s eloquent articulation of himself. He blames Seydo for treason, banditry, separatism, killing his men and deceiving people very eloquently. Seydo also pleads

his case; he blames Captain Murat for killing his men and forgetting the bond between the two sides. He does not falter, but he is not well spoken like Captain Murat. As a result, Captain Murat's representation of the official state discourse becomes more developed than its counter discourse. In that sense, the relationship between Captain Murat and Seydo remains asymmetrical: With his weapon and non-conciliatory discourse, Captain Murat is the dominant side.

Yet, the eloquence of Captain Murat does not convince Seydo and Seydo cannot change Captain Murat's views. They do not listen to each other but only blame one another. There is no room for contemplation so all the dialog that exists in the film is unconstructive; the characters only speak in order to legitimate themselves. Unlike Rıfat Bey and Hejar in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, Captain Murat and Seydo cannot open up a space through communication. Therefore, perhaps, one needs to think beyond words; the oppressive and offensive adjectives, the subjects of hierarchy, objects of hate and resentment and look for a space that allows a postcolonial reading of the relationship between Captain Murat and Seydo. Perhaps, it is necessary to go beyond verbal communication by taking vocabulary and grammar out of the equation. After all they involve inherently oppositional phrases, internalized and normalized views of one another through the construction of binary oppositions of the oppressive military / separatist guerilla. In other words, rather than discussing their dialog which renders both to one-dimensional and even cartoonish characters, it is more productive to listen to the "Third Space" that is opened up through the paralanguage between Captain Murat and Seydo.



Figure 24-25: Paralanguage

According to Bhabha (1990), "third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives" (p.221). Then, paralanguage, as an example of Third Space, "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricised

and read anew (Bhabha 1994, p. 37). Accordingly, “the histories, the meaning and symbols of culture” that constitute the strong internalized views of each character toward one another are displaced by gestures, body languages and facial expressions, the tone, and the pitch of their voices and hence they are “appropriated, translated, rehistoricised and read anew” (Bhabha 1994, p. 37).



Figure 26-27: Paralanguage



Figure 28-29: Paralanguage

The existence of paralanguage as Third Space is productive because it distorts and challenges the conventional classifications of identity through “translation and negotiation”. There are no strict dichotomies within the Third Space such as the binary oppositions of the oppressive military / separatist guerilla. Because the meaning produced within the Third Space is ambivalent, an intervention of the Third Space “challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People” (Bhabha 1994, p. 37). In that sense, paralanguage facilitates moments that bring forth the possibility of some sense of change in the homogenous stories and histories of both Captain Murat and Seydo’s unyielding rhetoric. Those moments are ameliorative like the glances they exchange with each other throughout the film.

Chapter 6

Journeys of Return and Pilgrimage

This chapter discusses *Jin* (Erdem, 2013) and *İz* (Aydın, 2011) as journeys of return and homecoming. Accordingly, the main argument revolves around the depiction of East as the place of return. In the analysis of *Jin*, the East is investigated in ecological terms as a place that is destroyed by human interventions. And *İz* is explored through Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity in relation to the consequences of mix-ethnicity relationship and fear of assimilation

6.1 *Jin*

Jin starts with a shot up in the clouds followed by the images of forest and animals. In a fix frame in the forest, Jin (Deniz Hasgüler) appears hardly visible, hidden by green leaves. Suddenly gunshots break the peaceful silence of the forest. The trees are being shot at and animals run away. Even the fog that covers the mountain withdraws from the valley. An armed group moves along by stealth in the forest and takes refuge in the caves. During the night, Jin sits by the fire as another woman sings a Kurdish folk song about her longing for family. Jin hugs the woman, waits until the end of the song and then slowly leaves the campsite unnoticed. Jin deserts her group because she misses her family and decides to return to them. Throughout the film, she tries to take the journey home repeatedly but as soon as she leaves the mountains and arrives at the plains, she cannot escape from the harassment of people. And every time, she runs back to the mountains where she hides out of sight, under air strikes, gunfire, and helicopter noises with the animals. She never tries to rejoin her group; she even hides from them on several occasions. Therefore, *Jin* is both a journey of escape and a journey of return, not to her family, but back to the nature.

In the film, the representation of nature is very different from that of *Işıklar Sönmesin*. The mountains are full of life; trees, leaves, rivers, birds, and beasts, they all live together in this green forest. The mountains are not barren; they are almost like a forest, a safe haven for both the animals and Jin. Like self-sufficient individuals, animals all live in harmony in their environment. So does Jin; she knows her way in the forest. She knows all the good hiding places. Her camouflage helps her to be invisible in the nature; she is almost never noticed. Every time, Jin runs away from people, hides from a gunfire or bombing, she climbs on trees, hides behind the leaves,

sleeps, and takes shelter inside caves. Jin's main motivation is to return to her family. However, her journey in the film reveals that her family is the forest and the animals she keeps returning to for protection and shelter. *Jin* differs from *Işıklar Sönmesin* in this sense. Seydo and Captain Murat struggle together against nature and the mountain. They try to survive against the cold, the snow, the avalanche, and overall, the threat that arises from the geography and the nature. For Jin, the situation is the opposite. The nature keeps her alive against man; it keeps her company/accompanies her, embraces, and cherishes her, even in death. This is mostly due to the mutual communication between Jin and animals, a communication, which is not possible with people. Her troubles and the situations that put her life in danger do not come from animals or nature. She smiles at a deer, helps an injured donkey, and feeds a bear with an apple. She even calms the bear who is frustrated from the noises of gunfire, calling it “comrade” and saying, “do not fear anymore, it’s finished/over”. When she sees a hawk in the sky, she traces its nest on a treetop. Jin steals eggs from the nest, but when she notices the bird’s call, Jin understands her fault, takes only one and puts the rest back in the nest. In return, the hawk’s song distracts the soldiers under the tree so Jin can remain unnoticed. Together, they watch a military troop as they patrol the area. One of the soldiers starts singing a folkloric song from Neşet Ertaş, “*Yalan Dünya*”. The hawk stops singing and together with Jin, they listen. She hides from an armed group in a cave with a bat and lynx. She sleeps peacefully as a snake passes by her. Like in *Little Red Riding Hood*, she travels in the forest with her red headscarf and even allows the bed-ridden old woman to take her pills, a reference to the grandmother in the fable. When she is attacked and almost raped, the horse reacts by neighing and rearing to his beats. In other words, Jin cannot be distinguished from the other creatures of the forest. In return, the bear, the donkey, the lynx and the deer show their respect and wait around her dying body to keep her company when she dies, as one of them.



Figure 30: The death of Jin

It could be argued that the “invented innocence” of these animals stems from an inherent purity. This purity may stem from the fact that animals try to live among themselves peacefully and do their best to stay away from the traumatic encounters with the humankind and all of the tragedies they cause to each other and to the environment. Yet, they fail miserably because both animals and Jin are scared and terrified by the constant cacophony of bullets, grenades, bombs, and helicopters. Jin is exposed to violence with all the other creatures of nature. She is not only chased like an animal but with the animals, as one of them. She slithers with the snake, hides with the bear and the lizard, shares fear with the deer, the turtle and the mantis. She listens to the gunfire with the hawk and is injured like the donkey.

During the entire film, Jin runs away from men who harass her, try to rape her, and hides from conflict, bombs, air strikes and bullets. In other words, she is oppressed by men who wield the weapons of destruction. The important point that needs attention is that men become a threat to Jin only after she takes off her camouflage and wears the casual clothes she steals from a cottage.



Figure 31. Jin in camouflage



Figure 32: Jin in casual clothes

The shepherd (Şahin Pişkin) makes a pass at her; the male employee of a bus company at the terminal where Jin goes to buy a bus ticket harasses her. The housekeeper (Sabahattin Yakut) of the cottage Jin works at threatens to call the military officials and turn her in because she does not have proper identification papers. When he approaches Jin to rape her, she resists. So, the housekeeper beats her and threatens *her* by saying that he can label her as a terrorist even though he does not know the fact that she actually is one. The military officials arrest her during a control of identification papers. At the military post, the translator tries to rape her and once again, threatens to label her as a terrorist. In other words, except one truck driver (Yıldırım Şimşek)¹⁶, all her encounters with the men result with verbal, physical and/or sexual harassment. Every time Jin manages to escape and runs to the home and shelter that she knows would protect her, to the nature. Therefore, when compared to Jin's relationships with people, the mutual respect among animals for one other is more substantial. In that sense, it can be argued that they are more civilized in terms of the respect to each other's right to exist. Battle becomes a human-specific transgression because it violates the boundaries between nature and civilization in terms of the fact that it takes place *in* nature, disturbing its own peace. And it brings conflicts and anxieties that are already present within society to the center of nature, through violence by all possible means.

The only time, she can voice her opinion and be assertive and empowered is in the scene with the injured soldier (Onur Ünsal) in the forest. Their dialogue is mostly

¹⁶ Unlike other men, the truck driver treats Jin kindly, mentioning that he also has a daughter. He leaves her at a crossroad and advises her not to take any vehicle other than a bus, especially and warns her to never take a truck.

unilateral and the soldier's attempts to communicate with Jin remain in vain. The only time he receives a reaction from Jin is when he mentions that he never knew his father. Jin yells aggressively: "I never knew my father either. They took him when I was two years old. He didn't even own a gun, my father. He never came back". Soldier gives her condolences but Jin gets angrier, "What do you say; he doesn't even have a grave". It is not clear if Jin is really depicted as the dominant side of the equation because she is powerful or because the soldier is powerless due to his injuries. Regardless, Jin does not treat him the way she is treated by men. Rather than inflicting pain, she drags the soldier inside a cave, gives him food and water, attends his wound, lets him call his mother with his cell phone and even shows him the road he should take to reach his troops.

Kelen and You (2022), in their study of anthropocentric ethics of animal poems written for children, argue that "anthropomorphism and zoomorphism are essentially the one rhetorical strategy. To some degree, to make animals human is to make humans animal (and vice versa)" (p.5). The film in question is not a simple fable. The animals do not develop human characteristics such as the bear does not represent strength, the deer does not indicate delicateness or weakness, or the snake does not mark healing or transformation. Therefore, it is not possible to discuss the transformation of an animal into a metaphor over a human quality. Yet, "it is often possible to apply to a particular character in a story a 'sliding-scale' analysis revealing how human or how animal that character is purported to be" (Kelen & You 2022, p.5). Accordingly, it can be argued that the common characteristics of all animals that Jin encounters can be attributed to Jin who communicates with them. Just like Jin, all animals are alone and disturbed by people in nature. Moreover, "the projection of a spectrum from animality to humanity has historically had strongly moral, especially class and race-based and gender-based, connotations" (Kelen & You 2022, p.5). Therefore, it can be suggested that animals constitute the natural inhabitants of the geography. The apparent absence of people is well-depicted, and people are replaced by animals. And because the lands are fulfilled by the presence of the animals, it can be suggested that animals become the natives of the forest. They have been living there before the people who, with their guns, bombs, grenade, and air strikes, start to disturb the peace and balance of the forest. According to John Berger (1980), "the animal has been emptied of experience and secrets, and this new 'invented innocence' begins to provoke in man a kind of nostalgia" (p.12).

The debate on ecology from a postcolonial perspective is a relatively recent issue. The exploitation of the land and nature, the conversion of forests into agricultural areas for economic and political reasons, the effects of pollution due to mining are discussed in postcolonial theory with ecocriticism due to its anthropocentric origination. This anthropocentrism manifests itself precisely in the dichotomies of culture-nature, civilization-savagery, and human-nonhuman. Huggan and Tiffin (2010) point out “the inextricable link between racism and speciesism” (p.18) and highlight the zoocriticism, which “is concerned not just with animal representation but also with animal rights, and this different genesis and trajectory from that of ecocriticism necessarily informs its intersection with the postcolonial” (p.18). Naturally, Frantz Fanon was critical of naming colonized people with the descriptions used for animals because this sort of zoomorphism would justify colonial domination. However, animals living in their natural habitats are natives of this geography as much as Jin is. While they try to survive alone in the wild, away from people, unable to understand the atmosphere of terror people brought down on their habitat, they accept Jin as one of their own and ceremoniously honor her death.

Jin's director Reha Erdem states that the harm, which is done to nature due to the three decade-long conflict, has not been discussed yet. He draws attention to the dimension of this disaster regarding the loss of animals, forest fires, and climate change. As a director who can be considered among the auteur tradition, Erdem's body of work focuses on the depiction of the oppressive patriarchal relations, and he has been deeply interested in nature and environment. Accordingly, in *Jin*, the discussions on ethnicity are deferred by a more prevailing issue of gender dynamics, the subjugation and oppression of femininity and the destruction of the nature. It has a female protagonist who used to be a guerilla. Right at the beginning of the film, Jin leaves her group and never tries to go back to them. She does not consider them her family, she does not belong there, and she takes on a journey to return home. In other words, “the reality” and “the realist approach” are broken at the beginning of the film when Jin leaves the Kurdish group and makes her way in the mountains. After that, she does not belong to any organization, family, or group. In addition, the only sign linking her to the Kurdish group is her rifle, a Kalashnikov that she never fires and her camouflage that helps to stay unnoticed in the nature. And Reha Erdem chooses an unrealistic, almost surreal style when he depicts the mountains and the forests. He

integrates fantastical elements, references to fairy tales and fables as he discusses the relationship between Jin and the animals. This is completely different than the realist attitude and style in Turkish cinema when it comes to the representations of ethnic identity since the 1990s. This does not mean that the film ignores the Kurdish issue. Perhaps, it does not discuss the unidentified murder victims like *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* or *Güneşe Yolculuk* or *Bahoz* does, but we see the white station wagon car. Jin speaks in Kurdish, more than the Kurdish characters in *Işıklar Sönmesin*. She is checked for identification papers, taken under custody, and even though the source of Jin's problems is misogyny and patriarchy, she is threatened to be labelled as a terrorist similar to most films in this dissertation. And perhaps, more than any other film, which claims to have expressed the Kurdish issue with candor and realism, the gunfire, the bombs, explosion, air attack, helicopter noises in *Jin* do not ever stop. The conflict is there, taking lives off screen. Do we always have to watch the stories of opposite sides in conflict to understand its/their terrifying existence and continuation?

Jin's journey is motivated by escape. She changes her clothes from the camouflage to casual clothes, which are signs of Jin's desire to travel further and escape. Yet, despite all her efforts, her journey always ends in disappointment. Jin's journey reveals the constraints of women's existence in a male-dominated society. We see strength and resilience in Jin at the beginning of the film, yet they fade away the more she encounters the patriarchal society and toxic masculinity. Therefore, every time she gathers her strength and travels to the plains from the mountains, she returns fearing for her life and integrity. Men harass her, beat her, and try to rape her. Every time she escapes, she finds shelter in the forests. Jin is not lonely and defenseless when she returns to the nature. That is why, unlike any other film in this dissertation, the female protagonist's journey of return does not have a linear structure. She wanders, moves forward, and returns repeatedly until the end of the film when she eventually dies.

6.2 İz

Iz is a loose adaptation of Yavuz Ekinici's short story, *The Fig* (2016). It has a two-structure narrative. The first part of the film takes place in Istanbul and focuses on the life of a Kurdish family. After finding out that she has terminal cancer, Şeristan (Melahat Bayram) tells her son, Mirza (Necmettin Çobanoğlu) that she wants to return to her native town. Mirza accepts her mother's dying wish and Şeristan, Mirza and

Mirza's son, Hevi (Bilal Bulut), embark on an outward journey of homecoming. The second part of *İz* depicts that journey to the East. The main issue of the film is fear of assimilation, and it is discussed through language, infertility, and the reconciliation of the relationship between a father and a son during their journey of homecoming.

6.2.1 Infertility and the loss of language. The film utilizes language as the most fundamental aspect of ethnicity. Accordingly, throughout the film, Şeristan, Hevi and his two sisters, who live in Mirza's house, speak in Kurdish with each other and call each other with their Kurdish names. In the public sphere and in the presence of state representatives such as doctors in hospitals, local administrators in public offices and professors at universities, they speak Turkish. Similar to *Bahoz*, the Turkification of names is also highlighted. In the scene at the beginning of the film, Şeristan's granddaughters rush to the hospital when they learn that Şeristan was ill. They ask about Şeristan to the woman in charge of patient care, but she cannot find Şeristan's records. The girls realize that they have used Şeristan, her Kurdish name, instead of her Turkish name as registered in the identification papers, Sultan. So, when they renew their request and ask for Sultan, the system was able to recognize Şeristan. The importance of language as a means of resisting assimilation is most explicitly constructed with the relationship between Mirza and Hevi. Quite similar to Rifat Bey in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, who at the beginning of the film could not stand to hear a word in Kurdish, Mirza in *İz*, gets very angry every time Hevi speaks in Turkish. Mirza's fury as well as his fear can be explained with the state policies toward minorities with regards to the prohibitions on language, which started with the establishment of the First General Inspectorate¹⁷ in the Early-Republican era. Mesut Yeğen (2014) discusses several separate reports¹⁸ that were written by the Parliament, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Chief of General Staff and the General Inspectors

¹⁷ In order to regulate the state policies, General Inspectorates (*Umumi Müfettişlikler*) were founded, and they served between 1927-1952. These institutions were regional governorships that had authority over the civil, military and judiciary in the region where they were established, and they were directly subordinate to the Presidency of Turkey. The First General Inspectorate continued to exist between 1927-1952. Its center was Diyarbakir, its region included the provinces of Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Elazig, Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt, Urfa and Van.

¹⁸ The first report was prepared by the Çankırı deputy Abdülhalk Renda, who went to the region with the approval of Prime Minister İsmet İnönü. The second report was prepared by Deputy of Internal Affairs Minister Cemil Ubayddin. The third report was prepared by the Chief of General Staff. Yeğen (2014) also mentions two other reports "which seem to have been written by the General Inspector Abidin Özmen. Based on all the information Oriental Reform Plan was prepared and implemented (Yeğen 2014, pp.55-62)

until the early-1940s. Renda Report, for instance, drew attention to the density of the Kurdish population in the region east of the Euphrates (*Firat*) and offered particular policies such as “making Turkish language dominant” (Yeğen 2014, p.57). Another example is the Avni Doğan Report of 1943, which stated the “presence of a language other than Turkish and a wish that was contrary to the wishes of the Turks in the First General Inspectorate zone” (Yeğen 2014, p.60). Yeğen (2014) also discusses the Oriental Reform Plan, which proposed punishment for “those who use a language other than Turkish ... by the crime of opposition and resistance” (Yeğen 2014, p 59). The other example that highlights the correlation between assimilation and the loss of language concerning the socio-political history in Turkey is highlighted with the character of the village guard (*korucu*). The village guards are constructed as the dominant force in the East. In their journey to take Şeristan’s coffin to her native village, Osman, Mirza and Hevi arrive at a checkpoint controlled by village guards (*korucular*) who are armed with automatic rifles. The village guards question them about their destination and the content of their cargo. It is important to highlight the fact that while the village guard speaks in Turkish, Osman and Mirza reply in Kurdish. Mirza tells them that he is taking his mother’s coffin to the old village to bury her. Yet, the village guards do not grant them passage. Moreover, they warn Mirza and Osman about talking in Turkish. Osman silently reveals his contempt: “Look at this bum. As if he speaks Turkish very well”. It can be argued that the scene shows Mirza and Osman’s resentment and anger toward the armed village guards. In the eyes of Osman and Mirza, they are not only the representatives of the oppressive state apparatus but also the living and breathing proof of the continuation and acceptance of those policies by the Kurdish population. That is why; Osman calls them “collaborators”.

Mirza’s anxiety toward Hevi’s assimilation is exaggerated because Hevi is the only male family member beside himself. Accordingly, he is the one who would “continue” the bloodline after Mirza’s death. Therefore, in the patriarchal hierarchy, Hevi would be the head of the family, the one who is supposed to keep the family together. According to Papastergiadis (2015), “whenever the process of identity formation is premised on an exclusive boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’, the hybrid, born out of the transgression of this boundary, figures as a form of danger, loss and degeneration” (p.259). It is this possibility of degeneration due to hybridization that worries Mirza because the film presents the consequences of the loss of language and

assimilation with a dire example from Hatice and Bekir. Bekir speaks Turkish at Mirza's house. When he is spoken to in Kurdish, he always replies in Turkish. At home, Bekir and Hatice speak in Turkish. They live in an apartment flat, which is very different from Mirza's house. Mirza's house has traditional *divans* while Hatice and Bekir's living room has sofas. Mirza's family dines on the floor and eat with their hands whereas Hatice and Bekir has a dinner table and kitchenware.



Figure 33: The living room in Bekir's house



Figure 34: The living room in Mirza's house

It can be argued that Bekir attempts to decorate his house flat similar to the westernized condominiums of the Turkish urban bourgeoisie. Naturally, he fails because the only example of the taste and the status of Turkish urban bourgeoisie is constructed through the expensive car and the modern interior design of Buse' house; a level Bekir desires but can never reach. Bekir's flat only reveals his colonial mimicry.



Figure 35: Interior from Buse's condominium

According to Bhabha (1994), “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p.86). Bekir’s apartment “is not even quite like” Buse’s house. First, regardless of his desire, Bekir is constructed as a character who is “distant to the bourgeois (someone who has adopted Western values, in the context of Turkey), taste and lifestyle, and deprived of aesthetic values” (Erdoğan 2015, p.135). Bhabha (1994) argues that the spaces of fluctuations in-between mimicry and mockery are very important since it is within these spaces “where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double” (p.86). This is mainly because mockery, and parody, is in close proximity to mimicry. Yet the tastelessness of Bekir’s apartment is not like Hama Ali’s performance as Superman in *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*. It is also not similar to Ahmet’s mimicry in *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*. Bekir’s apartment is tasteless, and its decoration reveals the magnitude of Bekir’s failed attempts to modernize and turkify himself. So, his mimicry can neither produce difference nor open up a possibility to threaten its “disciplinary double”. So, what is the punishment of Bekir’s crime in *İz*? Bekir and Hatice cannot have children.

Zélie Asava (2017) analyzes the representations of mix-race couple in American and French cinemas and argues that even though mix-race couples are present in those cinemas, “many American films continue to pathologize interracial sex as: incest ...; the uncanny ...; doomed ...; or unrepresentable” (p.154). In *İz* the “pathology” is not related to race but to ethnicity, or more precisely, to being married to a Kurd who is assimilated. When Hatice and Bekir consult a doctor to find out why she cannot get pregnant, the doctor tells them that Hatice’s uterus is damaged from abortion so the embryo cannot attach to the uterus. It can be arguable that Bekir’s assimilation

provokes infertility. Robert Young (2005) analyzes the theory of evolution and racial theories of the 19th century and argues that the prevalence of the view that hybrids resulting from the merging of different species will be sterile. According to Young, for many ethnologists working during the period, “Europeans and Africans, for example, were to them clearly of different races, even of different species, which was supposedly proved by the fact that the hybrid product of unions between them, were, like the mule, infertile” (p.71). It is possible to say that Bekir’s assimilation turns him into the most hybrid character in the film. When Hatice learns that her uterus is damaged due to the complications of abortion, she turns her head, looks at Bekir and leaves the doctor’s office in silent rage. When they return to their flat, she blames Bekir: “You decided and we did it, as we always do. This house, this furniture, these curtains... Everything is how *you* wanted. We live the way *you* want. *We* don’t exist. *I* don’t exist. There is only *you*”. It can be argued that Bekir, who has lost his roots, gave up on his language, chose to indulge himself in the western lifestyle, and as a result, is assimilated, causes the misfortune of Hatice. Even though the reason for infertility is Bekir’s decision, Hatice must endure the consequences because by giving up her language and deciding to marry Bekir, she has led herself to disaster.

The other character that signifies a threat to the family in general and Hevi in particular, is Buse (Tarçın Çelebi). Buse is the only person Hevi shares the traumatic aspects of his life. She is the only one who knows how his family came to Istanbul, why he changed his name and how he understood his difference from the Mehmetts and Berks of Istanbul. Hevi opens up to Buse because he is in love with her, and he confesses to her that he knows that it is an unanswered kind of love. In *İz*, Buse and Hevi’s relationship is reminiscent of the ambivalence in *Yeşilçam* melodramas at first. A typical *Yeşilçam* melodrama promotes the idea of cross-class love and marriage. Koçer (2012) argues that “the rich and the poor are clearly marked with different codes and values and the love between them is belittled and presented as impossible making ‘belonging to different worlds’, a repetitive line” (p.68). Yet, the economic gap between them and the fact that they belong to two different classes cannot stop the characters from being together at the end of the film. Moreover, according Kılıçbay & Onaran-İncirlioğlu (2003) the rich are “reeducated” (p.203) because as s/he starts to uncover the honor and integrity of the eastern migrate, a quality that is not present in the excessively westernized circle of her friends and family, s/he starts to see beyond

the migrant's economic inferiority. This is not what happens in *İz* with regards to the "impossible love" between Hevi and Buse, because not every westernized upper-class female character can be reeducated. In order to construct the same dichotomy of the eastern lower class migrate and the western upper-class urbanite, *Yeşilçam* presents the "excessively-westernized female". This discursively constructed female character comes from an upper-class family, is sexually active and brings misery to the man in love with her and to herself. She is the *Yeşilçam* femme fatale who is usually punished at the end of the film. In *İz*, Buse is a modern adaptation of this *Yeşilçam* classic. Her economic superiority is constructed through her expensive car and condominium. The socio-economic and cultural barrier between them is so strong that sometimes they cannot even communicate; leaving each other's questions unanswered. Buse also belittles Hevi's feelings for her. She mocks him when she sees that Hevi wrote her name on his arm. She teases with him even though she has no intention to pursue a relationship. She even takes Hevi to her house and has sex with him. Yet, immediately after, Buse tells Hevi to "get dress, get out and never call" her. Robert Young (2005) argues that hybridity is related to the colonizer's desire toward the colonizer, which fluctuates between attraction and repulsion. Buse's desire sparks after Hevi tells her about his traumas. She is intrigued by the existence of this man who is completely different from her. Yet, soon, her disgust and contempt for Hevi resurfaces and she kicks him out of the house with resentment toward herself for what she has done. Hevi, completely torn apart and extremely full of rage, comes back to his father's house and find out that Mirza has already bought the ticket that would take Hevi to the East. Hevi's refusal is, of course, pointless.

6.2.2 The father, the son and the East. Hevi and Mirza live completely different lives and desire different things. Mirza is a lonely and a silent man who deliberately avoids contact with the outside culture and lifestyle in the western city and intentionally alienates himself as a means of protection. He is distant to everything that is "foreign" to him. Everything that he has not experienced, used or tried before he migrated to Istanbul is a threat for his existence. For instance, when Mirza tells the family that they will go to Batman by train, Bekir suggests that taking a plane would be a better and more comfortable choice. Mirza responds that they came with a train, and they will return with a train. Even though the plane could be a faster way to get to Batman, especially considering Şeristan illness, Bekir does not even consider it.

Mirza's interaction is limited to his regular visits to the local coffeehouse and the mosque and even in those places, we do not see him interact with anyone. He does not socialize outside the family, does not have a job and it seems like he only listens to the advice of the mosque's *imam*. Hevi, on the other hand wants to fit in. He attends university, wears ripped jeans and an earring, reads book on "how to speak well". He even tells Buse that he changed his name: "I was Hevi at home, Kemal at school." All these acts are bad omens for Mirza. He feels like he is losing his only son. So, he resorts to scolding and yelling and pressuring him to "act properly". He even throws Hevi's cell phone out of the train window so that he does not hear Hevi speak Turkish during their journey to the East. Yet, due to their lack of communication, what Mirza does not realize is that Hevi remembers his past. He remembers the day his family migrated to Istanbul: "One day we moved away. I thought I could take everything with me. But I had to leave behind my home and a photograph of a woman who looked like my mother". And he also knows that the move was not voluntary but forced: "I thought everyone was crying because of the move. Just like how I learned the reason for everything, I learned the real reason for their tears after many years." Similar to Cemal in *Bahoz*, Hevi knows he is a Kurd. He is not oblivious to it: "When I came here, I was sent to school to learn a language I did not speak". Yet, he also knows that he is different from the society he desperately tries to be a part of and knows that he will never have the same opportunities. Referring to the time he started school in Istanbul, Hevi says, "that's when I understood that I started my life with a huge defeat in comparison to the Mehmet sitting on my right and to the Berk on my left". In other words, despite Mirza's assumption, Hevi is fully aware of his ethnic identity. Yet, Mirza is determined to grant his dying mother her final wish; to be buried in her native village and to prevent Hevi's assimilation as reflected in Şeristan's cautionary message when she laments by stating that "the children have changed... we have changed." That change, which has already cost Şeristan and Mirza so much; "So many people died, for what? We were all plundered anyways", is *the* source fear that led Mirza to buy that third ticket to Batman for Hevi. Therefore, in the eyes of Mirza, the journey to Batman is Hevi's pilgrimage and a rescue mission to save him. Little does Mirza know that the journey will actually be the grand homecoming for both of them.

6.2.3 The homecoming. Şeristan dies before the train could reach Batman. Mirza and Hevi get off the train in Diyarbakır, buy a coffin and find a minibus to get

to Batman. They bring the body of Şeristan with a pickup truck to Mirza's daughter, Fatma's house. There, Fatma, her husband, Osman, and Hevi oppose Mirza's decision to take the coffin to the old village, but Mirza intractably refuses. Mirza, Osman and Hevi leave the next day. Soon, they are stopped by the village guards and refused safe passage. So, they turn back and go to the nearest village where the villagers also tell Mirza that they should not go to the old village but rather bury Şeristan there. Mirza opposes again. He takes a horse, ties the coffin on top of it, wake Hevi up and together, they leave the village in the middle of the night, despite Hevi's oppositions. It seems like everyone opposes Mirza's decision; his relatives, villagers from nearby towns, and even his own son. But nothing challenges Mirza like the East. The East is relentless. Troubles pour down on Mirza and Hevi, as the Eastern rain pours down on them. Due to the conditions of the roads, their car overheats, and its spark plug cable fails. The horse that carries Şeristan's coffin gets stuck in the snowy as they were trying to pass the mountains on foot. The snow gets thicker; the wind blows harder. And Mirza and Hevi keep fighting the snow and dragging the coffin. When they pass the snowy mountains, the barren lands offer them no refuge besides cold, ruined caves and dangerously slender suspension bridges. And we watch Mirza and Hevi through a telephoto lens, as they appear so small and so distant from sight, silently carrying Şeristan's coffin in the middle of nowhere.



Figure 36: The road to the roots

Yet not even the East breaks Mirza's will. After the difficult journey, Mirza arrives at his father's grave. He says, "forgive me father", walks past his grave and continues toward a big tree standing further ahead. There, under that tree, Mirza and Hevi bury Şeristan. This is the scene that reveal Şeristan's secret; a secret, which is only known by Mirza; the secret of Şeristan's, and naturally, Mirza's, Armenian identity. From

Şeristan's voice over, we listen to how her first husband, Arto, and her entire Armenian family were killed in an attack to their village and how she was taken and married off to Mirza's father. She narrates her pain and sorrow for keeping the truth from Mirza for all these years but now that she is terminally ill, she needs to Mirza to promise her to bury her in the Armenian cemetery along with Arto.

When Edward Said analyses the texts on journeys to the East, he focuses on memories of pilgrims. The nature of these texts is spiritual by definition because the purpose of the pilgrimage is to achieve "to the Holy Sepulcher, that beginning and end point of all time and space" (1978, p. 178). Accordingly, the writers' experiences of pilgrimage in the East are internal journeys that are independent from the social context because there is nothing to discover in the social reality; these empty and abandoned places are dysfunctional administratively, unproductive economically and ungovernable politically. So, the East can only be explored as a spiritually forgotten no man's land, not through reason and rationale. That is why; the family photographs on the living room wall at Fatma's house do not make an effect on Hevi, when Fatma asks if Hevi can recognize himself. That family and that home in those photographs no longer exist. There is nothing left besides ruins and cemeteries. That is why, without the pilgrimage to the ruins from his childhood, Hevi will never be able to reach and confront his traumas head on. And it is in those ruins *İz* makes its finale and concludes the spiritual inward journey of homecoming for both Mirza and Hevi.

It is only after Hevi experiences firsthand his father's relentless spirit, unyielding will, his commitment to his roots and his dedication to his family and identity that Hevi starts to understand the East. After all, the East is like his father, if not the same. So Hevi runs towards his old village, now emptied and in ruins, and finds his broken-down home. There, as he lies on the ground and watches the sky, like he used to when his whole family was still living there, Hevi's inward journey ends. It ends at a border, by a cliff where his childhood used to stand. There, in front of an opening, which used to be window, the father and the son stand side by side as equals. Their relationship is ameliorated in silence. Their return is both a homecoming and a home founding.



Figure 73: At home



Chapter 7

Discussions and Conclusions

If we focus on the last two decades of the theoretical debates on postcolonial theory, it is possible to say that the term is often referred to with adjectives such as ended, dead or outdated. The reason for this referral might be related to the fact that the canonic texts of postcolonial theory, the Holy Trinity, by Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, were published before the 2000s. In addition, postcolonial theory has already become an established field of study in particular areas of academic inquiry such as Comparative Literature and historiography. Moreover, scholars such as Ahmad (1995) and Dirlik (1994) brought forward notable conceptual criticisms to postcolonial theory and its inconveniences due to its popularity have been addressed by Bayart (2010). Yet, as Sunil Agnani (2007) states in a roundtable discussion on the end of postcolonial theory that even though “postcolonial as a historical term was extended to a type of criticism ... [it] does not mean the term is bankrupt” (p.639). Accordingly, it is possible to suggest that the end of theory does not necessarily mean the end of criticism. There has been a series of articles that were published in the journal, *New Literary History*, that perhaps offer a refreshing and new perspective with regards to the applications of postcolonial criticism. The most significant of these are Dipesh Chakrabarty’s (2012) work which investigates the politics of climate change, Robert JC Young’s (2012) work on the necessity of theory which “ceaselessly transformed in the present into new social and political configurations”, and Stam and Shohat (2012)’s study which is centered on the criticism and actions from indigenous peoples on contemporary problems of culture, property, power, energy, wealth, and equality and the reasons why European thought can no longer ignore them. All these articles, perhaps, are reminders of the words of Stuart Hall from many years ago:

[P]ostcolonial is not the end of colonialism. It is after a certain kind of colonialism, after a certain moment of high imperialism and colonial occupation in the wake of it, in the shadow of it, inflected by it, it is what it is because something else has happened before, but it is also something new (Drew 1999, p.230).

In terms of cinema studies, Homi Bhabha’s works presents examples of film analyses yet the main focus of Bhabha is the theory itself. When we look at Hamid

Naficy's "*An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*", it is possible to find particular analytical tools that can be utilized to analyze films from a postcolonial perspective. Along with many single articles over the years, the publication of compilation books such as *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* in 2012 and *Postcolonial Film: History, Empire, Resistance* in 2014, show the wide range applications of postcolonial theory in cinema studies. Yet, it is important to highlight that in terms of theory, cinema has not generated its own postcolonial *film* theory. The analytical tools and terminology that are used to analyze films are from postcolonial theory rather than film theory. Therefore, it is perhaps more appropriate to talk about postcolonial criticism rather than postcolonial theory with regards to film analysis. After all, as discursive formations, films help us understand how social issues, historical events and identities are imagined. Places are scenery, characters are actors, and events are stories. It is also impossible to say that they are innocent, after all the imagination is "the great inbuilt instrument of othering" (Spivak 2003, p.13).

Chapter Two discussed the relationship between modernity, imperialism and colonialism and moved forward to present a literature review on postcolonialism and postcolonial theory. The theoretical framework of the literature review on postcolonial theory started from Frantz Fanon and Edward Said and continued with Ranajit Guha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. The literature review focused on the concepts of orientalism, subalternity, racial stereotyping, fetishism, mimicry, hybridity, parody, ambivalence, Third Space, pedagogy of the nation and performativity. In Chapter Three, it is argued that the scholarly work and debates that focus on the colonial and semi-colonial state of the late Ottoman Empire and the postcoloniality of the Turkish Republic are quite new and these issues are particularly discussed through the academic work in the fields of international relations, sociology, historiography, and cultural studies. This lively and exciting approach to the relations between the Late-Ottoman era and the Early-Republican era with Europe, constitutes the literature review in Chapter Three, with a specific focus on minorities.

Chapter Four, Five and Six consist of analyses of films. Nine films were selected for analysis, and they are categorized under three chapters with regards to the categorization of the motivation of journeys of Hamid Naficy. Although the categorization of chapters is derived from Naficy's theoretical framework, the analyses are made within the terminology of postcolonial theory, mainly from Homi Bhabha

and the literature review of Chapter Three with regards to the socio-economic and political history in Turkey. Accordingly, the methodology of film analyses is both discourse and textual analysis.

Chapter Four explored the protagonists' journeys from the Western coastal city of Istanbul to the East in *Güneşe Yolculuk* (Ustaoğlu, 1999), *Benim Marlon ve Brandom* (Karabey, 2008) and *Gelecek Uzun Sürer* (Alper, 2011). They are “journeys of quests, homelessness and lostness” (Naficy 2001, p.223) and also examples of border films. Despite having a clear destination and motivation, the protagonists in these films are in a state of homelessness and lostness as they are stuck in a kind of displacement in terms of their final destination. In *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*, Ayça travels around the southeastern part of Turkey, crosses the border to Iran in order to reach Hama Ali, as Hama Ali tries and fails to meet with her. The film ends for Ayça, in an unidentified border town, in-between Iran and Iraq, as she cries in front of a television in a store whereas Hama Ali dies in the mountains as he tries to cross the same border to reach Ayça. In *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, Sumru goes to Diyarbakır for her academic research but ends up in the mountains as she searches for Harun's grave. Moreover, in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Mehmet travels to Zorluç, a village that does not exist geographically, in order to take Berzan's coffin to his native town to bury him. In other words, in all the three films, the characters' journeys end in an unknown place, either nonexistent geographically as in *Güneşe Yolculuk* and *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, or constructed as being in the middle of nowhere with no proper geographic indicator as in *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*. It can be argued that the East is a place, which is undetermined, uninhabited, but more importantly imagined.

Regardless of their categorization, journeys of identity, according to Naficy (2001) are “physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical” (p.6) and Naficy (2001) gives particular importance to journeys of identity in which “old identities are sometimes shed and new ones refashioned” (p.6). In the best examples of accented films, “identity is not a fixed essence but a process of becoming, even a performance of identity” (Naficy 2001, p.6). Similar approach can be seen in Said's work where it is suggested that the journey to the East is a spiritual one. The Western character goes on pilgrimage in ancient holy places and abandoned settlements. It is an emotional journey, which facilitate the travelers to reach maturity by experience. They more or less adopt the behavior, the language and even sometimes

the names of the natives. Only with such a level of identification, they can develop understanding. Kaplan (2008), in his work on cross-cultural encounters in Australia, states that, “[t]his “going native” (or indigenization) is a very complex kind of cultural “mingling, “a special sort of “contact zone”: it requires a complete reversal of identity for the white person yet does not overcome the cultural and historical gap that exists between the cultures” (Kaplan 2008, p.50). Accordingly, the journeys transform the protagonists physically or mentally. The astonishment of the exploration emphasizes the cultural difference between the characters that come from the Western cities of Turkey. Gradually the protagonists discover not only the underdevelopment or economic difficulties of the East but also witness the political oppression through the presence of armed security forces and the constant checks for identification papers. In *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*, even though Ayça remains ignorant to the discriminatory and oppressive policies with regards to the subaltern characters she meets during her journey, she learns Kurdish and socializes with local people. As she moves from one border to another, she turns into a refugee like the other characters of subalternity in Turkey and abroad. In *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, Sumru, by listening to the stories of the relatives of the victims develops empathy for those families and as a result, she unveils and faces the traumas of her personal loss. The most apparent transformation happens to Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*. He changes his name and physical appearance, even claims Zorluç as his native village after he witnesses, and experiences discrimination. Perhaps, the most significant motivation for the transformation of the protagonists is the death of a close acquaintance who is either Kurdish or chooses to be a part of a Kurdish group. In *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Berzan is killed during a protest. In *Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom*, Hama Ali is killed in the mountains. In *Gelecek Uzun Sürer*, Harun is killed during a military attack. So, the journeys of the protagonists become funerals, grieving processes, where they come to terms with the acceptance of their losses. Mehmet carries Berzan’s coffin to Zorluç. Sumru visits the grave of Harun and says her goodbye and Ayça accepts the impossibility to reach Hama Ali.

Chapter Five presented an analysis of *Güneşi Gördüm* (Kırmızıgül, 2009), *Bahoz* (Öz, 2008), *Işıklar Sönmesin* (Çelik, 1996), and *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (İpekçi, 2001). *Güneşi Gördüm* and *Bahoz* are conciliatory films of decent relations that involve “outward journeys of escape, home seeking and home founding” (Naficy

2001, p. 223). They involve the protagonists' journeys to the West from the East. The Kurdish family in *Güneşi Gördüm* is forced to migrate from their village. One part of the family chooses to migrate to Istanbul and the other part goes to Norway. While the former is devastated in their attempts to integrate into the modern lifestyle in Istanbul, the latter find peace and prosperity in Norway. In *Bahoz*, Cemal leaves Tunceli to go to Istanbul after he passes the matriculation exams. Even though Cemal's journey to the West is not related to forced migration, it can be argued that the film makes it clear that he is actually escaping from difficult socio-economic conditions of the East. Similar to Ramo's family in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Cemal in *Bahoz* also returns to the East. Neither *Güneşe Yolculuk* nor *Bahoz* involve the protagonists' journeys of return, rather they focus directly on the traumas they witness and experience in Istanbul. Therefore, they are not discussed as journeys of return but rather journeys of escape, home seeking and home founding. *Güneşi Gördüm* does not discuss ethnicity as the reason for the protagonist's unsuccessful integration to the city. The characters do not face discrimination but rather suffer from adaptation issues. *Bahoz* is different because similar to Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Cemal, in *Bahoz* faces discrimination. The only difference between the two characters is that while Mehmet experiences discrimination based on his skin color even though he is not a Kurd, Cemal faces discrimination because he comes from Tunceli. *Bahoz* is also an inward journey of identity because similar to Mehmet in *Güneşe Yolculuk*, Cemal sheds his identity as an Alevi and refashions a new one, which is his ethnic identity. Therefore, his life in Istanbul initiates a process of becoming.

The other two films in Chapter Five are *Işıklar Sönmesin* and *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* and they also present journeys of "home seeking and home founding" (Naficy 2001, p.223). Unlike in *Bahoz* and *Güneşi Gördüm*, the characters in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* and *Işıklar Sönmesin* remain in the city or in the mountains. Therefore, they are not outward journeys but rather inward journeys of identity. Both films have two protagonists, Hejar and Rıfat Bey in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* and Captain Murat and Seydo in *Işıklar Sönmesin*, who are constructed to represent the two sides of the binary opposition of state and minorities. In *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, Hejar is a young Kurdish orphan and Rıfat Bey is a retired judge. In *Işıklar Sönmesin* Captain Murat is a military official and Seydo is the leader of a Kurdish group living in the mountains. Both films interrogate state policies toward minorities, the

prohibitions of Kurdish language, the oppressive state apparatus, and the official discourse regarding the military presence in the East through the relationship between their protagonists. Both films take place in a single location; the mountains in *Işıklar Sönmesin* and Rıfat Bey's flat in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*. In *Işıklar Sönmesin*, the existence of paralanguage as Third Space is productive because it distorts and challenges the conventional classifications of identity through "translation and negotiation" and make it possible to discuss the film without the binary oppositions of the oppressive military / separatist guerilla. Because meaning produced within the Third Space is ambivalent, an intervention of the Third Space "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force" (Bhabha 1994, p. 37) and facilitates moments that bring forth the possibility of some sense of change in the homogenous stories and histories of both Captain Murat and Seydo's unyielding rhetoric. Similarly, in *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk*, Rıfat Bey's the continuous efforts to integrate Hejar into the pedagogical narrative of the nation and Hejar's repetitive performance of resistance create an ambivalent national narrative. Because, in contrast to Rıfat Bey's representation of the horizontal, homogenous and "linear narrative" (Bhabha 1994, p.173) of a nation as constructed by Western historicism, Hejar represents the temporal dimension of a nation which "serves to displace the historicism" (p.140). In other words, the Third Space that emerges in-between Rıfat Bey and Hejar, disseminates and deconstructs the homogenous narrative of the nation. And make it possible for the nation's ambivalent narrative to be produced in-between "the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative" (Bhabha 1994, p. 145).

Chapter Six analyzed *İz* and *Jin*. They are both journeys of return and homecoming. According to Naficy (2001), "every journey entails a return, or the thought of return. Therefore, home and travel, placement and displacement are always already intertwined" (p.228). This aspect of accented films of return is apparent especially in *Jin*. Although Jin begins her journey of return to her family, she cannot find her way back. Home is no longer where her family resides. Home is the mountains and the forest, in the nature, together with the animals that are the only living beings that cause Jin no harm. *İz* is a father/son journey of return to the native land. In this sense, it presents a narrative in which the migrant can return to the source, perhaps one of the rarest examples of its kind. Mirza and Hevi reach their abandoned village after

many encounters and struggles, all of which are common chronotopes of the East. The idea of return to the origins is very striking for *İz* because of the hybridization of the characters during the return journey. The anxiety of the migrants about their return in accented films, “is tempered by their worries about what they will, or will not, find once they get back” (Naficy 2001, p. 232). Moreover, there is also the anxiety in return because even though the place of return somehow remains the same, the exile who journeys to the origins is not. Therefore, “return is rarely the grand homecoming that many of them desire, for both the exiles and the homelands have in the meantime undergone unexpected or unwanted transformations” (Naficy 2001, p. 232). As a father/son journey trope, *İz* depicts both the transformation and the reconciliation of Mirza and Hevi. Hevi’s forced pilgrimage to the East because of Mirza’s extreme fear of Hevi’s possible assimilation is the motivation of the journey. Yet, like the best of journey films ... [*İz*] interweaves multiple journeys” (Naficy 2001, p. 232). It intertwines Hevi’s inward journey to his roots with Mirza’s “journey of self-discovery with a journey of history” (Naficy 2001, p.232), the history of the Armenian and Kurdish minorities. Amartya Sen (2007) argues that “[t]he realization that each of us can and do have many different identities related to different significant groups to which we simultaneously belong appears to some as a rather complicated idea. But, (...) it is an extremely ordinary and elementary recognition” (p.45). The revelation of Mirza’s Armenian identity is both ordinary and complicated at the same time yet, together with Hevi’s newly found excitement regarding his ethnic identity, it is what equalizes the father and the son at the end of the film.

There is another main character in all nine films. It is the East, as a place of origin and / or return, the depiction of the East constitutes a significant place in the analysis. East is a place of absence. The schools are closed. There are no proper medical institutions. There is no advanced technology in the East. There, Superman cannot fly without becoming a parody of their Western versions. East is deserted, mostly due to state policies regarding forced migration and relocation of minority population. It is depicted with the scarcity of people. It is not crowded; it is a wasteland with yellowish and barren landscape. East is also silent. It is as if even when it speaks, no one can hear its voice, words uttered there, are uttered in silence or in painful eulogies. Law is oppressive and subjugating in the East. It is not rational. It is discriminatory. The vehicles are stopped and searched. People are constantly stopped

and checked for identification papers. Animals are killed and massacred. East is the place where people are “caught between two fires”, depicted in strict dichotomies and accordingly divided by definitive nouns as betrayers, collaborators, or heroes. It is the destination of and to death. It is the place of submerged villages, abandoned homes, lost stories. Its mountains are glorious yet tough, its wind is strong, and its snow is deep. It is not possible to preserve love. There are no happy endings for Harun and Sumru or for Hama Ali and Ayça. Harun, Şeristan, Arto, Serhat and Jin lie under its trees in shallow graves. In its freezing waters, rests Berzan and under its heavy snow, in its mountains, Hama Ali, Captain Caner and Seydo’s friends are buried, perhaps, together with Hejar’s parents and Cemal’s comrades.

As a final remark, it is not a coincidence that the films that are selected for analysis in this dissertation are produced until the middle of the first decade of the 21st century. Since the mid-2010s, films that discuss ethnicity in general and Kurdishness in particular have drastically decreased in number. It can be suggested that this disappearance is related to the changes in the political atmosphere in Turkey. That is why, the period of relative freedom until the mid-2010’s became the catalyst of the emergence of films on minority representations in contemporary Turkish cinema as well as their criticism and analyses. Moreover, as I am writing the conclusion of this dissertation, Turkish Republic is getting ready to celebrate its centennial in 2023. An heir to a six-century old empire, Turkey, still continues to struggle with its postcolonial identity, its ambivalent stand toward Europe, its desire and anxiety toward westernization / modernization. And, artist, through various forms of visual arts, such as the films that were discussed in this dissertation, continue to narrate their nation and minorities. After all, as Bhabha (1994) suggests, the main contribution of theory is the emphasis on the representation of the political, on the construction of discourse” (p.27) and this dissertation is commitment to that theory, regardless on the debates of its demise.

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