

Early Republican Period of Turkey in Yeşilçam Cinema

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Abstract—Among the historical Yeşilçam dramas in Turkey, the films that narrate the tales of the Independence War and the Foundation of the Turkish Republic reserve a respectable portion. There are 64 films produced between 1923 and 1974 that represent the historical period. The dominance of nationalist discourses on the historical films to narrate the Independence War and the Foundation Process in Yeşilçam Cinema broadly reflects the discourse of the official historiography of Turkish Republic. The antagonistic representation of the non-Muslim groups and ethnic diversities in Ottoman society in the historical Yeşilçam films of Independence War would be interpreted through the impact of nationalism in Turkish politics. The prominence of the nationalistic discourses to structure the filmic historiography of the Early Republican Period in Yeşilçam Cinema exhibits the impact of the official state ideology on the culture and society in Turkey until the 90s.

Keywords—Historiography, historical films, early republican period of Turkey, Yeşilçam cinema.

I. INTRODUCTION

AMONG the historical dramas of Yeşilçam Cinema in Turkey the films that narrate the tales of the Independence War and the Foundation of the Turkish Republic reserves a respectable portion. There are 64 films produced between the years 1923 to 1974 that represent the historical period. Yeşilçam is the name given to the mode of popular film production in Cinema of Turkey. The Yeşilçam mode of production springs in the last years of Early Republican Period and gradually diminishes through the 1980s.

The Independence War is the struggle to remove the European Occupation that follows the truce of Mondros in 1918. The Lausanne Contract signed with the parties to participate in war in 24th July 1923 marks the official ending of the war. The Independence War is followed with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey [28]. The Modernization and Westernization project as the key structure of the Republican Developmentalist state ideology is implemented through the Kemalist reforms. The period that covers the Independence War, Foundation of the Republic and the Kemalist reforms is called the Early Republican Period. The period starts with the beginning of Independence war whereas the end of the period is marked with the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1938, the chief commander of war and the founder of the Republic.

Once the mainstream film narrates a historical event, the representation of the past bears the characteristics of the contemporary culture in its historiographical practice. Hence the filmic representation of history in mainstream films reflects

the contemporary perspectives in its expression. By the same token, the historiographical performance of commercial films influences the historical consciousness of society both through the effect of filmic experience and their wide circulation. The representation of past in mainstream historical films are bound to shift in accordance with the emergent discourses to trigger social change.

The dominance of nationalist discourses on the historical films to narrate the Independence War and the Foundation Process in Yeşilçam Cinema broadly reflects the discourse of the official historiography of Turkish Republic. The antagonistic representation of the non-Muslim groups and ethnic diversities in Ottoman society in the historical Yeşilçam films that represent the Independence War would be interpreted through the impact of nationalism in Turkish politics. The prominence of the nationalistic discourses to structure the filmic historiography of the Early Republican Period in Yeşilçam Cinema exhibits the impact of the official state ideology on the culture and society in Turkey until the 90's.

II. THE FILMS OF WAR AND REPUBLIC

The prelude of cinema in Istanbul begins with the private screenings in Ottoman Palace for II. Abdülhamit soon followed by public screenings in Galata beer halls around 1896 [1]. The early practices of filmmaking are made through the productions of MOSD (Cinema Department of Military) founded in 1915. The purpose of the institution was to maintain the filmic documentation of the military operations and significant maneuvers of the army and organize screenings to disseminate them [1]. Although the exact number of the films produced by MOSD is uncertain, the footages from the World War I battlefields are frequently utilized in films about the Independence War that are produced in the following decades [2].

Turkish Republic is founded under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923. Mustafa Kemal emerged as a public figure through his military accomplishments during WWI fighting in Ottoman fronts. The initiation of the Foundation Process begins with the Independence War (1919-1922) that triggers the tumble of the Ottoman Empire and defines the initial borders of the country. The early Republican Period encompasses the Independence War, Foundation of the Turkish Republic and the implementation of the Republican Reforms. The decease of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk marks the end of the Early Republican Period.

Turkish Nation as an essential component of the project of

the Republic of Turkey molds through the virtues of modernization, nationalization and westernization. The 600 years of dynamic conquest politics of Ottoman Empire brought about the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure to the society through intersecting and leaguings together with various communities. The foundation of the Turkish Republic over the monarchic ruling practice of Ottoman Empire required the constitution of a national identity that is unified thus appropriated for the governance in a democratic style.

The construction of the Turkish nation in a unified, modern and westernized form was held through the cultural regulations that are denominated as Kemalist Reforms. The modernist reforms compromised a huge area in almost every social habitat. The implementation of the reforms was directed towards the construction of a nation, which is totally separated from Ottoman virtues and modern in the sense of Western civilizations.

During the foundation process of the Republic in 1920's, the state held regulations aimed to transform the cultural field as an essential part of the modernization project designed to align with the Western civilizations. The exclusion of the Ottoman and Islamic characteristics from the culture was the significant target of the Republican elite's project of building a national identity [3]. The transformative applications covered a wide cultural field involving music in great extends as well as plastic and applied arts. The state institutions are founded to educate and support the artistic practices in Western style. However, the series of modernist implementations practiced in arts and culture during the Early Republican Period ignored the field of cinema despite its high capacity to be utilized as a political instrument [3]. Through the lack of state support and administration, the cinema in Turkish Republic developed in interdependency to the audience and private entrepreneurship and hence in Arslan's emphasis reflected the culture of the masses [3].

The mode of film production in Turkey that accommodated the commercial characteristics is named as "Yeşilçam" (Green Pine) – from the name of the street where production companies reside. Yeşilçam Cinema in Turkey blossomed with the 1940's and had its golden years for number of productions and box office numbers during 1950s and 60s. It has gradually lost its glory during the 70s and diminished through the 80s [1], [3]. There is certainly a complex relation of conditions at play to culminate in the decrease of film production through period that marks the arguable vanish of Yeşilçam tradition. The turmoil in the Turkish politics to reflect the social and economic practice before and in the aftermath of the 80's coup is significant to designate the period. During the time, the widespread expansion of television along with the emergence of videocassette technology relocated the cinematic entertainment in the space of household practice. Consequently, the number of film theatres exhibited a substantial decrease through the 80s [3].

The revival of film production in Turkey in 1990's emerged as a ground that reflected the diversity and conflict in society. The ethnic, religious and cultural identities that have been

excluded from the Turkish national identity previously emerged in the narratives of the films as a significant characteristic of Turkish Cinema in 90s. The representation of cultural diversity in films is inherently related with the globalization of Turkey along with the free market economy. The globalization tendency that transforms the cognition of political, economic, social and cultural practices in direct association to national values is significant to interpret the 90s in Turkey. In terms of film production and audience, the period is designated as the "The New Cinema of Turkey". In the scope of this study on the filmic historiography of the Early Republican Period the films produced during the Yeşilçam Period will be at focus. The films produced after 90s to narrate the Early Republican Period call for a different theoretical approach to evaluate the impact of nationalism during the period of globalization in Turkey.

Despite the disregard of the reformist project on the advance of film production during the early years of foundation, the Republican state arguably attributed quite an attention to the filmic representation of the Independence War and the Republican history both via the narrative forms of fiction and documentary.

The documentary *Ankara, Türkiye'nin Kalbi* (Ankara the Hearth of Turkey) (1933) is designed to narrate the successful progress of the Republican reforms in the 10th year anniversary of Turkish Republic. For the production of the film the state officials invite Soviet filmmakers Sergei Yutkevich and Lev Arnstam [4]. The documentary follows the Soviet committee's visit in cities of İstanbul and Ankara in a parallel manner with the arrival of masses from all over Anatolia to join the celebrations. The film portrays the transformation of Ankara from a barren rural area to a glorious city center with grandiose modern architecture. The representation of the development of Ankara from a wasteland to a capital is utilized to signify the glorious progress of the country under the Republican rule. The poetic form of the documentary emerges through the circulation of images to flow along with the music. The soundtrack of the documentary that accommodates the works of both Soviet and Turkish composers, contributes the epic style of the narrative. The limited voice-over on the images exposes the agitprop aesthetics of the Soviet cinema during the period. The climax of the film culminates with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's 10th year speech [4].

The archival footage of the Independence War shot by MOSD involving the battlefields exposes the importance attributed to the filmic documentation of the struggle for historiographical purposes. After the War, MOSD produces documentaries with these footages to depict the battlefield. The Republican state values and supports the documentaries like Fuat Uzkınay's "*İzmir'in Zaferi*" (The Victory of İzmir) and Cezmi Ar's "*İşgal ordularının İstanbul'u Terki*" (Occupation Armies' Defection from İstanbul). Turkish film historian Agah Özgüç expresses in his article about the Independence War Films that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk signifies these documentaries as valuable historical assets for the maintenance of young generations' engagement with the Republican ideals [5]. Özgüç denotes Atatürk's fierce reaction against the inadequate representations that fail to accomplish the realistic

depiction of the battlefield. In the article he signifies Atatürk's attention on the visualization of the war. Atatürk expresses his frustration in the letter to criticize the utilization of his still images to substitute the live ones that are missing from the footage in the documentary "*İstiklal*" (Liberty) (1937). In the letter, he signifies that he acknowledges participating in the reenactments of the Independence War as the commander of the battlefield as a national duty he is responsible of to serve the country [5].

Özgüç states that Atatürk also requested for the fictional depictions of the Independence War and supported the production of historical films alongside the documentaries. The first fiction film to narrate the story of the Independence War "*Ateşten Gömlek*" (Shirt of Flame) by Muhsin Ertuğrul in 1923 produced on Atatürk's order. *Ateşten Gömlek* is an adaptation from a novel with the same name by Halide Edip Adıvar published in 1922 [5]. Mersin notes that the historical films about the Independence War and the foundation of the Republic produced until the 1970's are mostly adaptations from the novels to narrate the period [2]. "*Ankara Postası*" (The post for Ankara) is the second historical fiction film by Muhsin Ertuğrul released in 1928 following *Ateşten Gömlek*. Adapted from Reşat Nuri Güntekin's theatre play "*Bir Gece Faciası*" (A Night's Disaster) that he originally adapts from François De Curel's play, *Ankara Postası* narrates the national resistance against the imperialist forces. The third film produced during the Early Republican Period is "*Bir Millet Uyandırıyor*" (A Nation is Awakening) directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul, the single director of the period in 1932. In Özgüç's account the first three Independence War films evokes great excitement in the audience and in Ertuğrul's claim the Turkish society positively responds to these films to an extent far beyond their interest for foreign films [5].

The economic straits due to the World War II period culminates with the break in the production of Independence War films for more than a decade. Şakir Sırmalı's "*Unutulan Sır*" (The Forgotten Secret) (1946) is followed by Ferdi Tayfur's "*İstiklal Madalyası*" (The Medal of Liberty) (1948). *İstiklal Madalyası* is significant for the incorporation accomplished with the army during the production and hence is remarkable for its portraiture of the combat scenes [5]. In 1949 two Independence War films are produced. "*Fato-Ya İstiklal Ya Ölüm*" (Fato- Liberty or Death) and "*Vurun Kahpeye*" (Strike the Whore) (1949). In Özgüç's interpretation, "*Vurun Kahpeye*" was Yeşilçam's acclaimed director Ömer Lütfi Akad's first film and it stands out in its cinematographic and narrative qualities [5]. Narrating the story of an idealist Republican woman's struggle with the Greeks and the conservative anti-Kemalist groups in the village where she teaches, the film is adapted from Halide Edip Adıvar's novel with the same title. Orhan Aksoy produces the first remake of the film in 1964. Halit Refiğ produces the second remake of the film in 1973 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Republic.

Twenty-five films that took place during the Independence War and the foundation process are shot between the years 1951 to 1960. The most significant ones among them for Özgüç were Lütfi Akad's "*İngiliz Kemal*" (British Kemal) (1952), Osman

Seden's "*Düşman Yolları Kesti*" (The Enemy Blocked the Way) (1959) and Atif Yılmaz's "Bu Vatanın Çocukları" (The Children of this Country) [5]. The battle between the public resistance against the occupational forces in Anatolia and the traitors from inside to collaborate with the enemy is the common subject to repeat in the majority of the films including the three mentioned above [5]. The remake of *İngiliz Kemal* with its strong emphasis on the codes of nationalism is produced in 1968 this time directed by Ertem Eğilmez. Another course of war films in Yeşilçam to reproduce the nationalistic discourses of Independence War films emerged during the 1950's with the involvement of Turkey to Korean War through United Nations [5].

In 1964 Atif Yılmaz and Atilla İlhan adapts Mükerrrem Kamil Su's novel "*Ateşten Damla*" (The Drop of Flame) to the screenplay with the same title. The film that stands out with Memduh Ün's performance as the director exhibits the agonies of the Independence War in a realistic yet intense way [5]. The first color film "*Çanakkale Arslanları*" (Çanakkale Lions) (1964) by directors Turgut Demirağ and Nusret Eraslan represents the Independence War. The film has the highest budget in all of the Independence War films that are produced to that date. With the extensive support of the army, actual soldiers performed in film as extras along with the military vehicles that presented a vivid visuality. The initial decrease in the number of the Independence War film productions emerges in consequence of the prohibition on the military to support the films in 1968 [5]. The films gradually decreased through the mid 70's along with the broad decrease in the number of Yeşilçam productions.

In terms of audience reaction and its reflection on the box office numbers, the Independence War Films would not evoke much attention in Özgüç's interpretation. The only exceptions of the mediocre representations of the War in films are the first three works of Muhsin Ertuğrul and Lütfi Akad's "*Vurun Kahpeye*". Özgüç explains the success of the three early productions in 1920's and 30's with the recent memory of the War during the Early Republic that charges the public with nationalist sensations. *Vurun Kahpeye*'s success on the other hand grounds on director Lütfi Akad's performance to narrate the story with great intensity [5].

III. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERFORMANCE OF FILM MEDIUM

In the historiographical performance, the historiographer finds and constructs a series of reasons that s/he attaches to the initiation of the event s/he is documenting. The storytelling, which is the art of expression, is required in historiography in order to transmit the information in a meaningful way [6]. The narration is necessary in thinking, writing and talking. The structuralist perspective in semiology focuses on the production of meaning in language [7]. As the context of syntagm points out, the expression of a meaning depends on the selection and placement of the words [7]. The process of selecting, ordering and accentuating the words in an order to transfer the meaning would refer to narration.

In *What is History* E. H. Carr asserts that historians constantly endeavor to arrange the past experiences of human by attaching the cause-and-effect relationship to them [8]. In

this perspective the history is acknowledged as a constitution composed through the organization of the past incidents in a causal order. The historical document needs to be narrative in order to be comprehensible. The construction of the narration involves the establishment of cause-and-effect relationship between the statements. Hence the comprehension of an historical document requires a bond of cause and effect that ties the events. The expression of the resulting event requires the identification of the prior event within a causal bond. Carr highlights the rejection of irrelevant data about past in the act of composing a logical and rational document [8].

The decision on the historical fact to build upon relies on its propriety to maintain the persistence of causality. "The causes determine the historian's interpretation of the historical process, and his interpretation determines the selection and marshaling of the causes" [8].

The evidential characteristic of historiography brings out the notion of reliability as a significant feature of the practice [6]. The historiography composed through the placement of historical facts in an order according to the historian's intention. As a part of the process "the historian fills in the empty gaps of historical facts with the facts of the past in order to maintain a cause-and-effect relationship" [6]. Therefore, the involvement of narration in historiography while arranging the facts, grounds on the aim of creating a comprehensible whole [6]. As Ernst Breisach points out in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, that even though narration is an essential component of historiographical practice, it still deports the practice from a presumptive form that could express the past as it is [9].

In *Metahistory* (1975), Hayden White collates literature and historiography by testing the practice of historiography through the narrative form [10]. His analysis on the style of the historian and the form of text aims to prove that the historiography as a practice of installation. According to White, the difference between the novelist and the historian lies in their practice of approaching to the events, the historian finds the events, while the novelist invents them [6].

Rosenstone defines the historical film as just another medium to represent past, and hence he distinguishes it as historiography on screen [11]. In order to express the similarity of the constitutions of historiography and historiophoty, he highlights the methodology of historiography by means of narration and selectivity [11]. He argues that the historical film may not be history in the traditional understanding but is indisputably a tool for expressing historical knowledge. The historical film exhibits a strong expression of the past event since the historiographical performance of the film medium enables the representation of the past in an audio-visual way [11]. Challenging the commonly held idea that the written representation of history, in other words historiography, is the one factual and solid way of shedding light on the past, Rosenstone follows the path that Hayden White opened through the post-structuralist critique of historical practice [11].

Tomasulo in "*I'll see it when I believe it*" considers the audiovisual shift in the representation of the historical event as a characteristic condition of the postmodern period [12]. Drawing also through the constructive nature of historiography,

he signifies that Hayden White's conceptualization of historiophoty charges the filmic representation of history as a convenient tool to construct a polysemic interpretation of past. Raack's appraisal of the film medium in "*Historiography as Cinematography*" as a prosperous tool to perform historiographical practice goes beyond an approval. He designates the historical representation practiced by the film medium as the ultimate historiographical performance. He asserts that only the film would be able to recover and express the vitality of past [13].

Opposing the traditional monopoly of historical representation by the written practices of historiography, Rosenstone argues that a respectable portion of society's historical consciousness develops through historical films' representations of past events [14]. He points out the availability of film as a tool to express the meaning of past, he proposes historiophoty as a more accessible tool. By such portraiture he does not suggest overriding the written representation of history nevertheless the filmic representation of history deserves more attention and respect as a significant tool to perform historiography [14].

Rosenstone's approach is valuable for acknowledging the performance of historical films in the field of historiography. However, Rosenstone neglects the distinctive notion of the sensual experience that emerges through the diegetic practices of filmic historiography. As the contemporary postmodern accounts that Rosenstone grounds on frequently put forward, the practice of historiography grounds on the selection and establishment of historical facts in narration. In this context the possible discussions on solid historical accuracy and thus credibility would lack validity. Such perspective presents an inclusive tendency for various practices to perform. Through this point of view, the film medium stays on an equal level with the written forms of historiography [6].

Accordingly, the equality of historical accuracy of the different practices of historiography, whether diegetic or non-diegetic, are accepted based on their constructed nature. However, the historiographical performance of the diegetic historical film deserves a distinct theoretical characterization through the generation of the sensual experience. The sensual experience of the past event that is presented by the filmic representation of history establishes in the historical consciousness of the audience. Through this function the historiographical performance of the diegetic film becomes a powerful element in the broad context of history.

Fictional films build their narratives through a diegetic space. The diegesis in Bunia's descriptive approach is the sphere where all the events occur, it is the genuine world design generated for that narration [15]. The diegesis possesses its own rational consistency within itself in means of building a sphere of actuality that the events occur according to the causality within the rules of diegetic gravity. The rational consistency of the events in the narration is bond to the diegetic gravity hence the plot is legitimized in its own space of actuality independent from the restrictions of reality. When a historical event is represented through a diegetic structure, that event transports to an area that is free from the laws of historical accuracy. In spite

of the fictitious diegesis that projects the historical event, the plot establishes on the historical conscious via the comprehension of the historical event through the sense of experience.

The historical event that is narrated through a diegetic form frequently reaches to a closural end in the final act. The narration responds to hooks it attached in earlier phases, the mysteries are solved, the protagonist reaches to his/her destination and eventually the catharsis rises through this closural feeling of completion. The diegetic representative narration of an historical event positions the comprehension to the field of sensation. Therefore, the representative diegetic practices of historiography that the bestseller historical novels or mainstream feature films perform establishes the historical narrations into the field of experience.

In "Imaginary Signifier" (1974) Metz focuses on the mental experience of the diegesis explaining the formation of the suture and the state of the transcendent [6]. He endeavors to describe the unconscious part of the spectator that works toward constituting meaning. The concept of suture was developed in the work of Jean-Pierre Oudart 'Cinema and Suture' published with the name 'La Suture' in the Cahiers du Cinéma in 1969. The notion of suture explains the attachment of the spectator into the diegesis in the moment the base of plausibility locates on diegetic ground [16].

The identification with the camera and with the film in broad terms enables the acceptance of the diegesis as an alternative dimension of reality [17]. The perceptual performance of the spectator is physical and therefore actual, but the object of perception stays on the level of the imaginary. Through the acceptance of filmic diegesis as a constructed design of reality for the filmic world, the action would not disturb the spectator, even if it were extreme in nature. In this phase, the spectators identify with themselves in the act of perceiving. This identification enables the establishment of filmic continuity (the progress of the storyline) inside the spectator's own tracking. Through the identification with the film and the presentation of filmic events, the hooks of cause and effect simulate the reasoning of the spectator. The camera angles become the vision and the soundtrack becomes the hearing of the spectator. Handling natural reflexes like the turning of the head to the source of a sound or the squinting of the eyes to see more details through the control of the filmic presentation generates the state of transcendence [17]. In Metz's words, "the spectator *identifies with himself*, with himself as a pure act of perception (as wakefulness, alertness): as the condition of possibility of the perceived and hence as a kind of transcendental subject, which comes before every there is" [17].

Thompson and Bordwell in "*Film Art: An Introduction*" (2008) explain the conception of involvement in diegetic film through the formal elements of the medium. They emphasize the diegetic films' ability to maintain sensual involvement with the narrative. With their neo-formalist approach they analyse the narrative patterns of the diegetic film that present a structured experience to the spectator [18].

According to their perspective, the audience gains the filmic experience in consequence of the effort of making sense of the

film. In this process they signify the formal elements of the film medium to transmit the sensual experience to the audience. Through their approach they assert that the form is the element that shapes the filmic experience [18].

In "*Genre Film: A Classical Experience*" Vivian Sobchack highlights the function of the balance in diegesis for sustaining the smooth audience comprehension [19]. Hence, although the design of the diegesis is free from the restriction of audience's own outer reality, it still needs to be consistent in its own gravitational rules to be plausible.

Alongside the Neoformalist perspective of Bordwell and Thompson, the concept of the filmic experience relates to the wider context of phenomenological approach to film studies. Peritore in *Descriptive Phenomenology and Film* (1977) inquires the utilization of Husserl's phenomenological philosophy as a self-reflexive approach to film studies [20]. In "*A Phenomenological Aesthetic of Cinematic Worlds*" (2006: pp. 2-5) Yates departs from Heidegger's hermeneutical perspective in "*On the Origin of the Work of Art*" (1935) and explores the possibility of the film medium to conduct the experience of the filmic event to the audience [21].

In "*Feeling Cinema: Emotional Dynamics in Film Studies*" (2013) Tarja Laine locates the filmic experience to the field of emotion. She puts forward that the emotions emerge through the comprehension of the film coincides with the emotions constitute through real life experiences [22]. In "*Cinema as Second Skin*" (2006) she exposes filmic experience's effects on the body such as the goose bumps or simply laughing [23]. Laine's emphasis on the bodily experience of the film relates to the phenomenological perspective of Merleau Ponty that addresses the integrity of body and mind in the experience of the world.

When a historical event is represented through a diegetic structure, that event transports to an area that is free from the laws of historical accuracy. In spite of the fictive representation of the historical event, the plot establishes on the historical conscious via the comprehension of the historical event through the sense of experience. The sense of experience that diegetic practices locate their process of comprehension differentiates the effect of diegetic practices of historiography from the rest. Diegetic historical films operate on the field of experience through the identification they form between the spectator and the narration. The diegetic historical films reproduce the experience of the past and thus the audience experiences the sensuality of the past in the present. The historiographical performance of film medium gains significance through its ability to conduct the experience of past to the audience [6].

In her phenomenological approach, Vivian Sobchack asserts that the historical consciousness of a spectator would respectably be influenced by the representation of the past event practiced in the film [24]. The significant consequence of this influence would be the disappearance of the temporal space between the past and present. The historical representation performed through the diegetic practices transmit the sensual experience of the past period and hence annihilate the temporal space between the present and past. This occasion creates a blur in the cognition of history by dragging the meaning to the field

of simultaneity [24].

Another layer of significance for the filmic practice of historiography emerges on the conductive nature of the film medium to the dominant tendencies of society. The commercial cinema in particular reflects the contemporary cultural tendencies through their supply-demand conscious discipline of production. The contemporary culture as a field of constant struggle involving discursive constitutions of various ideologies emerges in the narratives of commercial films. By the same token, the discourses embodied in filmic narratives form the individuals and groups in society through their influence on contemporary culture.

Douglass Kellner in *Media Culture* (1995) presents a detailed analysis on the interaction of ideology in society and artifacts of media culture [25]. As he points out, the formation of the products of media culture cannot be reduced to a simple process of reproduction of the discourses of the existing ideology in cultural forms of commodity. Nor such cultural products that are tailored to fulfill the audience demands would be consumed in a singular way. Since societies are not homogenic constitutions with identical characteristics, the thoughts, fears and demands of individuals in society would exhibit fierce differences. Hence the societies would react to cultural products in various forms of acceptance and rejection. A popular text in terms a blockbuster film or hit pop song might simultaneously be praised and irritated at by different groups in society. The popularity of a product in society hence points out to its intense circulation in media rather than the society's admiration for it. For Kellner the discipline of cultural studies seeks to conceive the altering forces of dominance and resistance in society through the interpretation of the products of culture [25]. The theoretical perspectives of cultural studies would enable the comprehension of the social dynamics at play through interpreting the cultural products that vividly circulate in society.

Despite the complexity of the non-linear and dynamic relationship between the dominant ideologies in society and the discourses of cultural products, the production processes of the commercial culture persist to establish successful paths to reach massive audience groups. Kellner explains the commercial form of culture that is produced for profit in the wider context of capitalism [25]. The executives of culture industries for Kellner, seeks to achieve sale success in massive scales thus target to attract a mass audience. The solution for this purpose might seem like the production of cultural products that would not offend the mass audience while attracting many at first glance. However the consumer success in culture industries is a much more complicated process that takes a deeper comprehension on the dynamics of society. For Kellner the cultural artifacts that exhibit a wide reach and recognition in societies and hence consumed by massive audience are the ones to keep up with the pulse of the society by resonating social experience. Such products practice social criticism in their narratives and bear the possibility of embodying discourses of social movements while articulating current ideas into attractive forms. Thus even though the cultural products that are produced to be consumed in a massive scale exhibit the media giants'

commercial interests, they also reflect the competing ideologies in society and articulate conflicting positions. The commercial products of culture acquire a potential to advance forces of resistance and progress [25].

The space of culture as both the source and outcome of all intellectual and creative activity forms the ways of engagement with the discourses of social, economic and political conditions in society. The culture as a contested terrain harbours dominant and resistive tendencies, ideological inclinations of the past and present, carving out the future. Popular culture in its dynamic nature could be perceived as the culture of contemporary, the pulse of the society. It is consist of the prominent ideas and ideological tendencies that are in struggle in society. It forms the contemporary impulses of engaging with the cultural environment and influences the cultural practices in a given time and space.

Products of popular culture are the ones to come forward in a wide circulation and reach a large recognition in society. The popularity of a cultural product depends on its accordance with the dynamics of the culture, in other words its ability to catch the pulse of society.

The mainstream films that relates to the wider scope of products of popular culture gains distinction with their effort to catch the pulse of the society through to aim of reaching a large group of audience. The contemporary culture as a field of constant struggle involving discursive constitutions of various ideologies emerges in the narratives of mainstream films.

Once the mainstream film narrates a historical event, the representation of the past adopts the characteristics of the contemporary culture in its historiographical practice. Hence the filmic representation of history in mainstream films reflects the contemporary perspectives in its expression.

TURKISH NATIONALISM AND THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD IN YEŞİLÇAM CINEMA

The narrative of the historical films to represent the Independence War and the Foundation of the Turkish Republic is characterized through the nationalist discourse in broad sense. The dramatic structure of the films are typically built on the courageous Turks' fight against the treacherous enemy. The enemy in the Independence War narratives would be both from inside and out. The inside enemy is the betrayers to collaborate with the occupational forces and the outside enemies are the occupational forces of imperialist states itself. The victorious Turks fight a rightful war for their country and vanquish the enemy. Hence the films conceptualize the national identity that binds the land to the Turkish descent as a merit earned by the sacrifice of flesh and blood.

The frequency of the production of war films in Yeşilçam rises in accord with periods of political change [2]. The first peak in the production numbers of Independence War films takes place in 1951-52's in Turkey. This period is marked by Democratic Party's administration, Turkey's involvement in Korean War and the discussions on the Cyprus' affiliation to Greece. The sudden increase between the years 1959 to 1960 would ground on the political clashes between the students' resistance to the authoritarianism to develop in Democratic

Party's administration. This period culminates with the military coup in 1960. After the second half of the 70's, the historical films to represent the fantastic heroes and battles takes place during the 14th, 15th Century Ottoman period like the serials of Kara Murat and Battal Gazi films emerge. The 70's in Turkey also vibrate with political turmoil to rise towards the 80's coup d'état besides the military operation of Cyprus. The historical adventure films of the period to integrate in the vain of popular nationalism outnumber the Independence War films during the 70's in great extend. [2].

The representation of the heroic battles, the narrative of the courageousness that roots in the Turkish descent, the legitimization of the fight that is reduced to the struggle between good and bad is the recurring narrative in the tradition of historical films in Yeşilçam cinema. From this perspective the historical films to represent the Independence War and the Foundation of the Turkish Republic positions within the conventions of Yeşilçam Historical films in general.

The discursive constitutions to express nationalistic features are rooted in the representation of historical Yeşilçam films regardless of the period of past that is narrated [26]. The portraiture of the enemy revolves around a constant depiction of evil whether it's a Viking, a Chinese or a perfidious Byzantine. The motive of the enemy in this genre conceptualization emerges from their shared hostility against the Turks. The hatred of the enemy against the Turks may or may not be explained in the narrative however, they are unexceptionally depicted as pitch-dark, furious barbarians [26].

The historical films of Yeşilçam were formed broadly as a reflection of the Turkish Republic's nationalistic demands and ambitions [26]. The historical representations of these films are rather disconnected from the factuality of the possible interpretations of the historical data. Nevertheless, the historiographical performance of the films persists to operate through the experience of the diegesis and hence offer a good amount of patriotic pleasure. In Arslan's designation, the gratification served by the heroic narratives of victorious Ottoman-Turkish identity to bring the West World to its knees in Yeşilçam historical films far extends the Republican ideals of being equal to them [3]. The Western world is characterized through Christianity besides their hatred for the Turks and is solidified on the Byzantine Empire. The overwhelming defeat of the Byzantium by the sword of mighty Turks is legitimized on their perfidiousness.

The expressions of honor, patriotism, dignity and heroism create the pattern for the Ottoman-Turk identity against their fight with the tyrant West. The similar patterns operate in the narratives of the Independence War films. This time the cruel enemy transforms from the perfidious Byzantium to the Imperialist Western states to occupy Anatolia.

The dramatic arc of Yeşilçam's Independence War films is generally structured through the events of the occupation of İstanbul by the imperialist states and the constitution of armed forces of resistance in Anatolia to kick the enemy out of the country. On the cinematic representation of the Independence War, Şener points out to the repetitive characteristic of the films' narratives [27]. In his interpretation, the films frequently

portray the struggle of the Anatolian resistance, to be concluded with the expelling of the enemy to the sea in İzmir. While assembling of a shallow love story to the narrative maintains the fluidity of the flow, the cast is typically formalized through eligible solutions.

The stories of Yeşilçam's Independence War Films are revolved around the journey of the Kemalists from the occupied İstanbul to Anatolia. The national Independence struggle is led by the autonomous structure of armed forces founded by Ottoman ex-military with the support of anti-imperialist gangs of Anatolia and the Muslim community of villagers [27]. The non-Muslim population both in İstanbul and in Anatolia is frequently depicted as the supporters of the Imperialist countries. The protagonists of Yeşilçam are placed to play the Anatolians while the antagonists utilized in the roles for the imperialist characters or their collaborators from inside. To solve the congestions in the plot, the monologues to trigger the nationalistic impulses are attached frequently as well as the occasional portraiture of the national flag [27].

IV. CONCLUSION

The depiction of the Independence War in the historical films of Yeşilçam reflects the Turks' victorious fight against the whole world. The significant theme of the "Invincible Turks" recurs in the films in accordance with the nationalistic discourse of the Republican state. The films frequently accommodate the expressions that emphasize the union of the nation as one hearth to defend their land against the thread for the imperialist exploitation. The whole nation struggles in the war regardless of gender, age or occupation. In this depiction, the context of the nation is described through the Turkish Muslim qualifications. The ethnic minorities with an emphasis on the non-Muslim groups in society are excluded from the Turkish identity.

The nationalist practices of the Early Republican Period are devoted to maintain a homogeneous unity in ethnic and cultural terms in the borders of Turkish Republic. The implementations to designate the qualifications and the limitations of the identity of Turkish Citizen culminate with the disregard and oppression of the ethnic varieties inherent to the land. The foundational politics of nationalism that designate the Turkish citizen through the Muslim Turkish characteristics and exclude the religious and ethnic minorities in society sustained until the emergence of critical perspectives in Turkey during the 1990s.

The films to represent the Independence War in Yeşilçam Cinema reflect the perspective of the Turkish agents, generals or soldiers to fight on the side of Mustafa Kemal. The whole phases of the Independence War and the foundation of the Republic are glorified yet already justified through the rightful fight of triumphant Turkish nation for its freedom. The films typically avoid the perspectives to criticize the organization of the resistance against the imperialist states.

The representation of the Early Republican Period in Yeşilçam Cinema would be interpreted in the context of the impact of contemporary social dynamics to shape the historiographical practice of products of popular culture. The malevolent representation of ethnic and religious minorities in

the films about the Independence War and foundation of the Republic could be acknowledged as an intrinsic extension of the courses of nationalism in Turkey.

The dominance of nationalist discourses on the historical films to narrate the Independence War and the Foundation Process broadly reflects the discourse of the official historiography of Turkish Republic. The antagonistic representation of the non-Muslim groups and ethnic diversities in Ottoman society in the historical Yeşilçam films that represent the Independence War could be acknowledged through the impact of nationalism in Turkish politics. The prominence of the nationalistic discourses to structure the filmic historiography of the Early Republican Period in Yeşilçam Cinema exhibits the impact of the official state ideology on the culture and society in Turkey until the 90's.

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