THE MELODRAMATICS OF TURKISH MODERNITY: *VURUN KAHPEYE* [*STRIKE THE SLUT*] AND ITS CINEMATIC AFTERLIFE

by

BARAN GERMEN

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Comparative Literature
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2018

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Baran Germen

Title: The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity: *Vurun Kahpeye* [*Strike the Slut*] and Its Cinematic Afterlife

This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Comparative Literature by:

Sangita Gopal	Chairperson
Michael Allan	Core Member
Kenneth Calhoon	Core Member
Selim S. Kuru	Core Member
Michael Hames-Garcia	Institutional Representative

and

Janet Woodruff-Borden	Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded September 2018

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Baran Germen

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Comparative Literature

September 2018

Title: The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity: *Vurun Kahpeye* [*Strike the Slut*] and Its Cinematic Afterlife

Proposing melodrama as an aesthetics of victimhood, my dissertation examines the intermedial itineraries of notable feminist Halide Edib's *Vurun Kahpeye* [*Strike the Slut*]. Originally serialized in 1923 and published as a novella in 1926 in Ottoman Turkish, *Vurun Kahpeye* was translated into modern day Turkish in 1946. The melodramatic story was then adapted for screen three times in 1949, 1964, and 1973, respectively, by Ömer Lütfi Akad, Orhan Aksoy and Halit Refiğ. With the circulation of these films on TV, the title *Vurun Kahpeye* has since the 90s morphed into an idiom designating the unjust treatment of the innocent.

The persistent repetition of *Vurun Kahpeye* across media, I suggest, signifies melodrama's aesthetic durability due to its affective excess: its efficacy in making a disaffected public experience its own victimhood. Thus, my dissertation provides an archeology of melodrama as a political technology through a reading of each of *Vurun Kahpeye's* media iteration as embedded in its socio-historical context. In this account, the affective medium of cinema emerges as the main site for the formation of a secular mass public by linking secularism to structures of feeling rooted in victimization, suffering, and injury.

And yet, the affective excess of melodrama, I demonstrate, renders *Vurun Kahpeye*'s normative project unstable and uncontainable with each iteration. At different moments in time, *Vurun Kahpeye* is a queer text exposing the heteropatriarchal nature of secular nationalism; lays the infrastructural, spectatorial, and aesthetic foundation of the classical cinema of Turkey; and serves as the project of a social realist, counter-populist, and anti-Western theory of cinema. Therefore, this dissertation traces the conflicting projections, aspirations, and feelings central to Turkish republican modernity that congeal and clash in, through, and around *Vurun Kahpeye*.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Baran Germen

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey
Baskent University, Ankara, Turkey

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Comparative Literature, 2018, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, Comparative Literature, 2010, Istanbul Bilgi University
Bachelor of Arts, American Culture and Literature, Baskent University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Melodrama
Queer Theory

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Visiting Assistant Professor, Film and Media Studies Program, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, 2018 to present

Instructor of Record, Comparative Literature, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2017-2018

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, Comparative Literature, 2011-2018

Bruce M. Abrams LGBTQ Essay Award, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, University of Oregon, 2017

Jane Grant Dissertation Research Fellowship, Center for the Study of Women in Society, University of Oregon, 2016-2017

The Institute of Turkish Studies Summer Language Study Grant, 2016-2017

PUBLICATIONS:

Germen, Baran. “Abjectly Melodramatic: The Monstrous Body and the Queer Politics of *Are We OK?*” *Queer Studies in Media & Popular Culture* 2, no. 3 (2017): 339-351.

Germen, Baran. “Of Parks and Hamams: Queer Heterotopias in the Age of Neoliberal Modernity and the Gay Citizen.” *Assuming Gender* 5, no. 1 (2015): 111-137.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is a product of a collective effort insofar as a diasporic subject's mental, emotional, and physical –let alone intellectual– well-being depends on a number of people. In the seven years that I spent in Eugene, Oregon, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by people whom I am happy to call friends, for friendship, as the most generous rubric for those loving relationships and communities, is the foundation of a migrant life. The scholarly backbone of this life was my chair Sangita Gopal. My academic career, including this dissertation, would not have been possible without her tireless support, mentorship, and inspiration. I am indebted to the time, care, and faith that she put in me and my work throughout these years, and I am grateful for her presence in my life. I feel privileged also to have been near the brilliance of Michael Allan who was an important part of my academic journey at Oregon. I thank him not only for his exemplary scholarship, our rich conversations, and his challenging questions that always set the bar higher, but also for his companionship. Like Michael, Ken Calhoon was a constant source of support and encouragement from day one. His words of guidance to a confounded first-year student that I was to this day ring in my ears: "No matter what you do, work from within." Special thanks are due to Selim Kuru for believing in my project and joining the committee from University of Washington in the later stages of the dissertation after a fortuitous and fortunate encounter in Cunda. I also thank Michael Hames-Garcia for accepting to be a member of the committee and his eye-opening questions and comments in the defense. Many other scholars outside my committee at Oregon contributed to my personal and professional development. I wish to express appreciation to Paul Peppis and Colin Koopman for their influential courses and thank Jenifer Presto not only for assisting my

research and professional career by being an avid reader, but also for the many enjoyable conversations that I continue to cherish today.

To go back to where I began, I want to thank my friends Palita Chunsaengchan for sharing her world and gifting my world with it; Sunayani Bhattacharya for always leading the way without never letting go of the hand; Danielle Seid for the queer family Orlando, you, and I have formed; Fulden İbrahimhakkıoğlu for her ever-insightful perspective, inspirational genius, and unaffected affection; Sergio Rigoletto for having made Eugene – and wherever we travel to– a better place; Michelle Kyoko Crowson for emitting calmness with her voice and words; Nate Liederbach for not holding back who he is; Erin Gallo for all the good times on the 9th Place; Iida Aino for the radiance she exudes; Otto Kyyrönen for listening and, even more so, hearing; Andrea Gilroy for all the soccer talk; Yvonne Toepfer for her company along the way; Mona Tougas for their touching tenderness; and Faten Arfoui Demirer for all the food and the baklavas. Also, thanks to Jenny Odintz, Emily McGinn, Elizabeth Howard, Martha Ndakalako Bannikov, Alican Akyüz, Ahmad Nadalizadeh, Gülce Tarhan, Celil Çelebi, Laura Mangano, and Suzanne and Bill Dassenko for helping me make a home out of Eugene. Special thanks to Gözde Kılıç for her long-distance assistance in acquiring some of the sources lacking in my research for Chapter III.

Finally, I want to thank Özüm Erdil for always being there for me, and my parents, especially my mother Canan Akıncı for her never-ending love that blesses me from afar.

In loving memory of Müji

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: MELODRAMA AS AN AESTHETICS OF VICTIMHOOD

A world compartmentalized, Manichaean and petrified, a world of statues…

(Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*)

I base this on their conduct, not on what they say, and this means that they have become, in themselves, moral monsters.

(James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro*)

Upon returning from his eleven day long North African trip to a country shaken now by nationwide unrest on June 7, 2013, the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan began to address a crowd of supporters in a series of rallies organized in response to the Gezi Park protests beginning from the airport. In his typically vehement oratory, "They attacked *my* veiled girls, *my* veiled sister," said Erdoğan, his wife Emine Erdoğan approvingly nodding next to him, soliciting jeers from an enraged audience in condemnation of the assailants.[1] Erdoğan was referring to an incident that the pro-government media outlets would soon widely circulate as part of a campaign of

[1] An example of one of these speeches, which took place at the Esenboğa airport when Erdoğan arrived in Ankara on June 9th. "Başbakan Erdoğan Havaalanında Halka Seslendi," *Hürriyet*, June 10, 2013 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-erdogan-havalimaninda-halka-seslendi-23470929. Unless otherwise noted, all the translations from Ottoman-Turkish and Turkish sources used in this dissertation are mine.

disinformation, which was based on a testimony of a veiled woman and allegedly documented in an unpublished video footage.[2] According to this narrative, publicized as "the Kabataş attack," approximately a hundred shirtless male protestors wearing bandanas physically harassed a woman with a six-month-old baby in Istanbul. Since then, Erdoğan continued to mobilize the Kabataş incident in various contexts with his oft-repeated "They attacked my veiled sisters" proclamation turning into a slogan. What the deployment of this narrative achieves in the context of the Gezi Park protests is evident: as a competing account of victimization obscuring and even obliterating the state violence that initiated and increased the protests, "the Kabataş attack" serves as the living proof corroborating that the protests are violent agents of a purely ideological revolt by recasting the roles of the victim and aggressor. The figurations of these characters, namely a pious mother marked by her veil and the hysterical mob marked by their lack of clothing pointedly executes this translation. But Erdoğan does more than activate a moral

[2] Erdoğan kicked off this campaign in his party's group gathering with the suggestion that the protestors dragged the daughter in law of one of his acquaintances on the street on the same day he returned to Turkey. The press picked up on the incident, and on June 13th, the newspaper *Star* released an interview with the alleged victim, Z. D., the daughter in law of the JDP mayor of İstanbul's Bakırköy district. In this interview, Z. D. asserts that she was surrounded and beaten by 70-100 shirtless men wearing black bandanas and leather gloves cursing her, her veil, and Erdoğan and yelling that they were making a revolution as the real owners of the nation. Z. D. also implies that she was also urinated on, claiming to have awoken to a stench or urine aster he received a concussion from the attack. "'Yerlerde Sürüklediler,'" *Star*, June 13, 2013 http://www.star.com.tr/guncel/basbakan-erdoganin-yerlerde-surukllediler-dedigi-anne-stara-konustu-haber-762093/. Z. D.'s narrative was endorsed by many members of the press, including the interviewer Elif Çakır, journalist Balçiçek Pamir who affirmed to have seen the body marks from the attack, and columnist İsmet Berkan who claimed to have seen a security camera footage documenting the attack. The alleged attack took a life of its own dominating the national mediascape with the press promoting Z. D.'s narrative in support of Erdoğan. For a timeline of the Kabataş incident, see "Kabataş'ta Aslında Ne Oldu," *Hürriyet*, October, 25, 2015 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/kabatasta-aslinda-ne-oldu-40005830. Another significant component of this campaign, also repeatedly alluded to by Erdoğan this speech onwards, is a report alleging that the protestors entered into the Dolmabahçe Mosque with shoes on their feet and beer bottles in their hands. Later refuted by the mosque's imam and muezzin, the report is a reimagination of the recorded scenes of protestors taking shelter from the police violence and turning the mosque into a makeshift dispensary. Both the imam and the muezzin were later deposed elsewhere.

crisis around the violated female figure by evoking a sensational account of violence. He further implicates himself as the subject of this violence by declaring his kinship with the victim, promoting himself as the injured guardian of the violated woman in the role of a brother. Consequently, the victimized female body embodies Erdoğan's own injury, as he creates for himself a space in a shared victimhood with his constituency, his kin by injury, as a long-disenfranchised politician of the militantly-secularized political arena. "The Kabataş attack" then exemplifies how the discourse of victimhood participates in what Wendy Brown describes as the moralization of politics as a result not of the appeals of the socially subordinated but of the state from the perspective of the injured with the power to injure, as the uncompromising suppression of the protests would subsequently prove.[3]

For Brown, moralizing politics "fixes the identities of the injured and the injuring as social positions, and codifies as well the meanings of their actions against all possibilities of indeterminacy, ambiguity, and struggle for resignification or repositioning."[4] Brown's description echoes the statues that embody the fixity of the social positions of the oppressor and the oppressed in the colonial world that Fanon characterizes as Manichean.[5] As the word implies, a shared world-making project that is essentially melodramatic permeates these three dissimilar contexts. In effect, through an orchestration of a *mise-en-scène*, a concoction of a narrative, an allocation of roles, and

[3] Wendy Brown, "Introduction: Freedom and the Plastic Cage," *States of Injury,* 26-7.

[4] Ibid., 27.

[5] Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," *Wretched of the Earth*, 15.

an appeal to emotions, what is Erdoğan's invocation but a recreation of a melodramatic world divided between the good and the evil? To be more precise, I am suggesting that Erdoğan relies on the efficacy of melodramatic aesthetics in producing a series of affects that translates the victim into an agent whose innocence and consequent righteousness can no longer be questioned. Eight months after the "Kabataş attack," the released video footage from security cameras at the site showed neither bare-chested men in the vicinity, nor a sign of an attack; the alleged victim crosses the street with a stroller without being physically targeted by anyone.[6] Despite this evidence, Erdoğan has not abstained from invoking the incident, a commitment that could only speak for the efficacy of the melodramatic projection of the world even in the face of documented actualities. What we also observe here is therefore the melodramatization of politics –an aesthetic practice itself in the most straightforwardly read Rancièrian terms of aesthetic as arrangement, distribution, and organization of the sensible, a word, as will be discussed, that has a great import for melodrama.[7] Not incidentally, the sensational narrative of gendered victimhood that "the Kabataş attack" stages harks stunningly back to *Vurun Kahpeye* [*Strike the Slut*], originally serialized by notable feminist Halide Edib between 1923 and 1924.[8] Set in a small rural town during the War of Turkish Independence, the story recounts the lynching of Aliye, a recently-appointed teacher working for the nationalist

[6] Both the police reports on and the video recordings of the incident disproved the interview with some of the journalists coming out to apologize for having been misled. "Released Footage Shows No Physical Attack," Hürriyet Daily News, Feb 14, 2014 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/released-footage-shows-no-physical-attack-on-headscarf-wearing-woman-during-gezi-protests-62479.

[7] See Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics,* 2004.

[8] *Vurun Kahpeye* was originally serialized Ottoman-Turkish in the newspaper *Akşam* between December 16, 1923 and January 29, 1924.

struggle. Incensed and mobilized by the town's leading clergyman who slanders her as a whore, the locals publicly lynch Aliye to death. Indeed, the so-called Kabataş attack seems to cite and rework *Vurun Kahpeye*: Eighty-seven years later, Erdoğan adopts the same narrative structure and a similar plot line, only now inverting the political ideologies of the hero and villain by refashioning the female figure as a pious subject.

The parallelism between these two scenes vividly captures the literary lineages of political rhetoric in Turkey today. Despite the extensive political background that frames this dissertation, *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity* is not about a melodramatic modulation within a political grammar, a variation of what Elizabeth Anker terms as "melodramatic political discourse" that she observes in the post-9/11 political climate in America.[9] Anker's methodical analysis of the rhetoric of "The War on Terror" era construes melodrama as an agitating political discourse in service of its fantasmatic telos of "sovereign freedom."[10] It is through a melodramatic mode that the unquestioned legitimacy injury generates becomes justification for agential and often violent political subjectivity for the sake of a better future. Anker's study provides a brilliant model of scholarship to articulate the melodramatization of politics in Turkey –which, as will be shown, is premised upon a vengeful will that cites history as its telos– a project that is needed but this dissertation does not promise to engage in. *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity* instead historicizes the literary and cinematic legacy of melodrama –through an examination of the extended social life of *Vurun Kahpeye*– demonstrating how the

[9] Elisabeth Anker, "Introduction: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom," *Orgies of Feeling*, 19.

[10] Ibid.

idioms and images of melodrama foundationally delimits the horizon of our political imaginary. Taking the cue from Linda William's proclamation that "[w]hat counts in melodrama is the feeling of righteousness, achieved through the sufferings of the innocent,"[11] I define melodrama as an aesthetics of victimhood that bridges innocence and righteousness. Melodrama's availability for our political unconscious lies in its efficacy in making a disaffected public experience its own victimhood, thus mediating, translating, and at times even registering politics as feeling through the affect of victimization. To put it simply, melodrama activates political affects that are then reconstituted as political affiliations by producing the terms of politics at the level of feeling. Thus, rather than adaptable or deployable for political discourse delineating an outside, melodrama is always already political precisely because of its affective excess, which guarantees its aesthetic durability especially in a social context whose political rationality, as I will show below, is structured as much by feelings and attachments as ideas or pragmatics. In the case of Turkey then, melodrama does not only lend itself to political discourse, but further structures a particular political rationality.

The persistence and repetition of *Vurun Kahpeye* is a form of self-melodramatization that is symptomatic of a historical condition, which I would venture as a broader psychic formation that not only configures state politics, but also impacts national subjectivities at once. I contend that the modern Turkish national identity is rooted in a feeling of injury, in a sense of victimhood, and in the figuration of a victim. In other words, the experience of Turkish modernity is overdetermined by a modern

[11] Linda Williams, "Melodrama Revised," *Refiguring American Genres*, 62.

sensibility of victimization that legitimizes both collective and individual existence through a reactionary sovereignty, that is, to borrow from Brown, "in reaction to perceived injuries."[12] In his center-periphery cleavage theory, sociologist Şerif Mardin intimates the significance of the experience of injury within a milieu that translates social difference into cultural division between the secular-urban hegemonic forces and the religious-rural populations in modern Turkey.[13] I propose to accentuate the affective underpinning of the intimation of his analysis not simply in terms of its scale, but also its scope, designating an encompassing sense of victimization originating in the demise of the Ottoman Empire that the Republic inherits. Similar to Walter Benjamin's "angel of history" launched in reverse into the future while facing a perpetually growing debris of the bygone times before its eyes,[14] the Turkish identity negotiates the loss of a long glorious imperial past in its young Republic.[15] Betrayed and victimized by history, by the West, and by the non-Turk, the Turk continues to tend the open wound of the past within a melancholic modality defined as *hüzün* in a literary tradition that extends from Ahmed

[12] Brown, "Introduction," 7.

[13] See Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedulus* 102, no. 1, (Winter 1973): 169-190.

[14] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations,* 257-8.

[15] One must invoke Fatma Müge Göçek who locates the essence of modern Turkish identity in a "collective trauma" rooted in the Treaty of Sèvres, which partitioned the defeated Ottoman Empire amongst the Allied Powers. What she calls the "Sèvres syndrome" signifies "individuals, groups and institutions in Turkey who interpret all public interactions –domestic and foreign– through a framework of fear and anxiety over the possible annihilation, abandonment, and betrayal of the Turkish state by the West." Fatma Müge Göçek, The Transformation of Turkey, 110. Sèvres might be the pinnacle of this trauma, but the trauma can be traced back to the separatist nationalist movements that shook the empire since and even before the Balkan Wars. The other within, the non-Muslim and the non-Turk had long served as the source of anxiety. Regardless of the origin of this trauma, it is noteworthy that Göçek's account intimates a preemptive and paranoid mode of self-victimization that marks the Turkish national psyche.

Hamdi Tanpınar to Orhan Pamuk.[16]

The most prominent recent manifestation of this psychic condition is nowhere more visible than in the Turkish political landscape with the domination of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) since 2002. If, like M. Hakan Yavuz, we read the modern history of Turkey as "the story of the tensions between the state's attempt to modernize and the peripheral forces seeking to redefine the state,"[17] the JDP can be considered as the most successful counterhegemonic political formation in Turkey. To follow Yavuz, the JDP "has looked towards reconfiguring alliances and redistributing political power; it has sought ways to create new institutions and new values, more importantly it has attempted to overthrow the ingrained Kemalist mode or pattern of progressive and elitist thinking."[18] While this broad conceptualization of the ideological mission of the JDP still stands to reason, the perplexing political transformation that the party has undergone in sixteen years complicates this picture. Indeed, the JDP of today is not the same JDP of the early millennium that Yavuz effectively analyzes.[19] It is hard to believe that the JDP was once a beacon of hope and freedom for a pluralistic society, having defined itself as a conservative democrat party whose political success lied in the marriage of a liberal

[16] In the novel form, Tanpınar is one of the first writers to consciously aestheticize the anxiety that emerges out of the cultural revolution of the Republic that pits modernity against tradition in affective terms. See, for instance, Tanpınar, *A Mind at Peace*, 2011. A legacy derived from Tanpınar, *hüzün* is also a prominent element of Pamuk's writings and the lens through which he filters the imbricated stories of his life and İstanbul in his memoir. Pamuk, *İstanbul: Memoirs and the City*, 2017.

[17] M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 33.

[18] Ibid., 13.

[19] For a more recent critical analysis of the JDP-ruled Turkey in English, see Simon A. Waldman and Emre Caliskan, *The "New Turkey" and Its Discontents*, 2017.

Islam with neoliberal market economies towards the ultimate goal of European Union membership. Today, however, the JDP, fueled by an anti-Western and neo-Ottomanist nationalist aspirations, has turned into a mere vehicle for implementing the transition from a parliamentary system to an executive presidency, an autocratic one-manship with diminished checks and balances in an increasingly majoritarian state. Considering the JDP's radical metamorphosis within the span of a mere decade, how can we make sense of its sustaining of the majority of the votes election after election? In other words, how is that the JDP convinces its voters to secure victory in the electorate despite its paradoxical teleology?

The striking case of the JDP points to a distinct political rationality unique to Turkey and elsewhere in which politics "has become the conflict and competition over different lifestyles and value systems."[20] In this context, politics, I would further, is not *understood* as representation, but is rather *felt* as attachment, a phenomenon that could explain the cult of the individual as forming the basis of belonging to a political enterprise. Here, political performance and discourse take precedence over policies or ideologies as primary means of identification. If politics is structured around affective attachments, how the JDP has made its way into, as it were, the hearts of the masses cannot be viewed as an analysis disembodied from real politics, but instead as an element constitutive of that thing we call real politics. It is in this spirit that I consider victimhood as a central invariable analytic making intelligible the JDP's long-standing electoral success. In the JDP's triumphant story, the identity of the victimized emerges as the

[20] Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 12.

nexus merging not only the diverse social bodies that make up of its electoral base, but also this heterogenous constituency with the party as embodied in the persona of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Since its conception, the JDP has promoted itself as the platform for the oppressed and the marginalized, bringing together the victimized Erdoğan of an unjust political system and the victimized masses of a corrupt political and unjust social order. In a country hit by successive devastating financial crises at the hands of a venal coalition government since the turn of the millennium, both the economically and the socially disenfranchised –the squatters, the Kurds, the pious, and the middle-class– found in the victimization of Erdoğan their mirror image. Indeed, Erdoğan had to reinvent himself, giving up Islamism, but he was still the *mağdur* [victim] and *mazlum* [wronged] of the secular establishment. In March 1999, Erdoğan had received a ten-month prison sentence due to his recital of a poem, a modified version of the acclaimed pan-Turkist Ziya Gökalp's "Asker Duası" ["Soldier's Prayer"].[21] His rendering of the poem, especially the verses "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets/The minarets our bayonets, the faithful our soldiers," was adjudged to be an incitement to violence and religious or racial hatred under the article 312/2 of the Turkish penal code.[22] Erdoğan's conviction led to the forfeiture of his position as the mayor of Istanbul, his imprisonment for four months, and his political ban from the following general elections. In fact, Erdoğan could not immediately become the prime minister due to this ban after the JDP won its first

[21] The poem Erdoğan recited is an adapted version of Gökalp's poem published in 1913 during the Balkan War, framed by an added quatrain –the lines that put Erdoğan into trouble– and freed from a cinquain praising the army. Murat Bardakçı, "Şiiri Böyle Montajlamışlar," *Hürriyet*, September 22, 2002 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/siiri-boyle-montajlamislar-99109.

[22] Ibid.

election by a landslide in 2002. In short, the injustice Erdoğan experienced found a social resonance that accorded the JDP a social currency, consolidating in its support, on the one hand, the disappointed masses and the European Union, liberals, and the left, on the other.

To go back to the questions raised earlier, the JDP and Erdoğan years of Turkey have witnessed a proliferation of a discourse around victimhood that keeps afresh the memory and the spectacle of their victimization in service of the legitimization of their being, rule, and actions. As an emotive mode of persuasion corresponding to Aristotelian pathos,[23] the discursive activity around the notion of victimhood repeatedly cites the injustices of the past in terms of paid prices to legitimize the present. What I call the discourse of victimhood is therefore by far the chief and most consistent amongst the JDP's rhetorical and performative strategies for not only sustaining its social legitimacy but asserting its political legitimacy as well. As an unwavering instrumental constant for political capital, it has served a vital role in the JDP's increasing populism, rationalizing the ruling party's contradictory trajectory of what it once promised and what it has eventually become. Key to this discourse is a historicization of the political victimization of the right to which the JDP subscribes itself and within which the past gets perpetually reproduced. The cadres of the JDP themselves have experienced coups and the shutting down of their parties emerging from the Islamist *Millî Görüş* [National Vision] under the secularist militancy of the establishment.[24] And yet, the JDP conceives itself as an heir to

[23] See Aristotle, *On Rhetoric,* 2007.

[24] *Millî Görüş* refers to the first explicitly Islamist political movement led by Necmettin Erbakan on the national level in 1969. As the biggest and oldest Islamist political tradition of modern Turkey, it has

a larger political tradition inflicted with coups, bans, and assassinations that dates to the *Demokrat Parti* [Democratic Party] (DP) the political legacy of which the JDP also alleges to carry.[25] Concomitantly, the JDP also continues to lay claim to positions of victimhood in the present as Erdogan's now hackneyed and oft-mocked *aldatıldık* and *kandırıldık* statements attest to. By confessing that "they were cheated" and "deceived," Erdoğan has a recourse to a victimization that eliminates his responsibility and restores his innocence in the wake of failed collaborations with dire political consequences. Such has been the case in Iraq with Masoud Barzani, in Syria with Barack Obama, and at home with his long-lived and firm partner in power, Fethullah Gülen, the leader of the Gülenist

---

spawned a succession of parties beginning with the *Millî Nizam Partisi* [National Order Party] (1970-1). While some of these parties even came to power within coalition governments, most of them were disbanded and banned either by law on the grounds of constitutional violation or by the junta regimes following military coups. As one of the contemporary representatives of this genealogy alongside *Saadet Partisi* [Felicity Party], the JDP came into being as a result of the split between within the cadres of *Fazilet Partisi* [Virtue Party] after their banning in 2001. The same year, the younger generation of politicians Abdullah Gül, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Bülent Arınç parted ways with Erbakan and his hard anti-western and Islamist ideology to found the conservative democratic JDP, while Erbakan founded the Felicitiy Party at the end of his political ban. For a brief account of this historical overview, see Fulya Atacan, "Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad: AKP-SP," *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 187-199.

[25] The Democratic Party was the winning party of the historic 1950 elections, the first multi-party general elections of the Republic ending a twenty-seven-year-old single-party regime of the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* [Republican People's Party] (CHP), the founding party of the Republic established by the founding father Mustafa Kemal in 1923. As opposed to the top-down politics of Westernization of the hard secularist and statist CHP, the DP developed an Islamic populism by expanding its political base into the rural populace with an anti-establishment rhetoric and a liberal economic agenda. The party was overthrown from power by a military fraction in the army in a coup in 1960 on account of the increasing authoritarianism of its leader Adnan Menderes that was threatening the founding principles of the Republic. The coup resulted in a junta regime under which not only the party was suppressed but also Menderes and two other party were hanged members by a military court in 1961. The JDP inscribes itself into the genealogy of the moderate right –with its defining conservative populist nationalism and liberal economic policies– that extends from the DP, to its successor *Adalet Partisi* [Justice Party] (1961-1981), itself subject to two coups, and to the neoliberal *Anavatan Partisi* [Motherland Party]. See Chapter III for a longer discussion of the DP.

movement who is the alleged mastermind of the July 15 coup attempt in 2016.[26]

In an era marked by "the inflation of victimhood," to borrow Tanil Bora's phraseology,[27] victimhood has emerged as a salient component of popular vocabulary mostly in the form of a social critique under the rubric of *mağdur edebiyatı* [the rhetoric of the victim].[28] In response to the vulgarization of the discourse of victimhood of the JDP, the disparaging expression *mağdur edebiyatı* cynically calls into question the credibility not of the claimed status of victimhood, but rather of its deployment for entitlement. *Mağdur edebiyatı*, in other words, challenges the bridge between innocence and righteousness that the discourse of victimhood builds by fingering at the rhetoricity, the affectedness of victimhood that one crafts for oneself. The viral user-made videos juxtaposing Erdogan's "we have been deceived" announcements with the footage of his and his aides' singing the praises of Gülen despite the oppositional protests of their complicity frame the JDP as engaging in *mağdur edebiyatı*. Meanwhile, a more popular and yet more complex instantiation of *mağdur edebiyatı* took place in the T.V. comedy

[26] A Muslim preacher and an imam in self-exile in the United States since 1999, Gülen is the founder and leader of the transnational Gülen Movement, also known as *Hizmet* –"service" in Turkish– a combination of a religious community, a social service organization, and a business network model consisting of Gülen's disciples and followers. Viewed as the utmost danger to the secular state, Gülen and his movement were accused of having a secret Islamist political agenda of which they were in pursuit by infiltrating state institutions. The JDP and Gülen partnership resulted in the movement's gaining not only financial but also political power. As the international voice of the project of moderate Islam during the JDP's rise to power, Gülen and his movement was the proponent of the JDP. In exchange, the JDP favored Gülenist businesses for state projects and promoted its charities, while redesigning the state and planting Gülenists into key positions especially in the bureaucratic, legal, and military domains.

[27] Tanıl Bora, "Mağdur," *Birikim*, November 21, 2017. http://www.birikimdergisi.com/haftalik/8618/magdur#.W4yexC3MwUE.

[28] The literal translation of the phrase amounts to "the literature of the victim." Literature, however, can partake somewhat of a negative connotation, as expressed in the idiom *edebiyat yapma*, which can be roughly translated as "cut the nonsense" or "cut it short." In such contexts, literature comes to convey any contrived, prolonged, and unnatural discourse that I rendered in terms of rhetoric.

series *Yahşi Cazibe* with the character Simge whose refrain "*mağdurum da mağdurum*" became a catchphrase that to this day echoes in popular discourse.[29] *Yahşi Cazibe* tells the story of an insolvent man, Kemal, stuck in between two women: Cazibe, an Azeri immigrant whom he marries in exchange of a payment, and his girlfriend Simge, who is his boss' daughter. The comedy revolves around the struggle to fake the arranged marriage for Kemal's detective neighbor and to keep it secret from Simge, as Cazibe masquerades as Kemal's wife and maid at once. Unlike Cazibe, Simge is an undomesticated Westernized Turkish woman born to money who is clumsy and yet haughty and obnoxious, all stereotypically marked by her blond hair. With her broken Turkish, she owns a dog named Paris and uses the kettle to cook. A caricature of a victim, Simge provides a satiric parody of *mağdur edebiyatı* as she again and again announces her victimization with her motto in the most mundane, random, and improbable situations seeking Kemal's attention. Indeed, the recurrent proclamation subtly references to his scheme in which he unexpectedly falls for and develops an affair with Cazibe and yet continues to date Simge for material concerns. Against this backdrop, Simge's hyperbolic declaration of victimhood in the face of trivial matters does not simply spotlight her stupid or spoiled nature, but also provides a rich commentary on victimhood. Simge allows us to see that we are always already victimized by forces unbeknownst to us and that owning victimhood is subjective, relative, and performative, inherently running the risk of upstaging the other's suffering. Affected, victimhood, to return to Bora, points to "an economy/market of victimhood augmenting the invisibility and inaudibility of real

[29] *Yahşi Cazibe*, *ATV*, 2010-12.

victimizations, horrific victimizations as a product of atrocious cruelty."[30]

To be clear, the question is not what counts as injury such that it defines the real victim, but rather whose injury counts in the definition of the real victim. Reframed as such, the discourse of victimhood –the identity-injury forgery– must be situated within a larger matrix of power relations. Obviously, the question becomes thornier when the injured, the victim are those who are in power, those who have the means and mechanisms not only to designate the terms of the injury that qualify the injured as the victim, but also to address the injury itself from the position of the injured. This is the point at which the victim begins to assume heroic qualities, acting in the name of an injury to be redressed. The sovereignty that the injured seeks, however, is predicated upon the defeat of an entity –a person, a group, an organization, a country, or even a coalition of these entities– responsible for the injury. Now a subject of Nietzschean *ressentiment*, the injured yields to two paradoxes, to follow Brown's discussion, that inhere in the reactionary nature of the freedom this subject envisages. Firstly, the freedom based on the vanquishing of an enemy is "always constrained by and potentially even require[s] the very structure of oppression that freedom emerges to oppose."[31] Stuck within a revanchist framework, the injured performs "mirror reversals of suffering without transforming the organization of the activity through which the suffering is produced and without addressing the subject constitution that domination effects."[32]

---

[30] Bora, "Mağdur," *Birikim*.

[31] Brown, "Introduction," 7.

[32] Ibid.

Secondly, as previously mentioned, the horizon of this freedom is curbed by the past that haunts the present as "a threat that works as domination in the form of an absorbing ghostly battle" even after this freedom is institutionalized.[33] The specter of unfreedom, the phantom of the enemy, the threat of history dominate political life "as a form of political anxiety," not only justifying the transfigured order of oppression and suffering, but also preempting "appreciation of the new dangers to freedom posed by institutions designed to hold the past in check."[34]

A snake eating its own tail, Turkish modernity, recursive and regressive, inheres in such a vicious cycle in which political practice is structured against an enemy and a past kept alive that block a vision of a better future. Brown's account makes intelligible the way in which yesterday's victims turn into today's perpetrators, the moral monsters of Baldwin,[35] not unlike in a Fassbinderian world, establishing a regime of victimhood of the sort we currently observe in Turkey. In the mouths of a political party that claims to be the "guardian of the rejected, the voice of the silenced,"[36] discourse of victimhood does not simply signify proliferation of a rhetoric around injury, but it also serves as the basis for what Fethi Açıkel identifies as the "psychopathology of the sacred *wrongedness*," diagnosable in the tradition of the right including the JDP.[37] How else to

[33] Ibid., 8.

[34] Ibid.

[35] *I Am Not Your Negro*, dir. by Raoul Peck, 2016.

[36] "Kimsesizlerin kimi, sessizlerin sesi olmak" is a slogan frequently reiterated by the JDP members, including Erdoğan, on many platforms since its foundation to formulize its mission.

[37] Fethi Açıkel, "'Kutsal Mazlumluğun' Psikopatalojisi," *Toplum ve Bilim* 70 (Fall 1996): 199-214.

make sense of the post-coup attempt environment of current Turkey run by purges, arrests, imprisonments and administered by decrees under the state of emergency rule? The victim-hero that the JDP is perpetuates the structure of oppression that once abused itself for revenge through the institutions that legitimize and secure its own tyranny on the pretext of a fight against the adversary now coded as FETÖ.[38] Indeed, the JDP even advocates for a strong presidency model with expanded power across branches of government because of the relentless threat of an amalgamation of enemies of Turkey inside and outside: FETÖ, the West, Asad, and the Kurds. The real, the potential, and the almost victim, the JDP renders its suffering absolute and its reparation imperative through a figuration of an enemy to be vanquished. Now reproduced not only discursively but also practically, injury, suffering, and victimization operate as a technology of power with the emergence of the enemy, which accounts for the radical shift in the mission of the JDP.

The paradigmatic moment of the JDP's radical shift towards "the politics of ressentiment" was the Gezi Park protests of 2013.[39] Just to recap the unfolding of the unrest,[40] the only and small green space situated in Istanbul's renowned Taksim Square, Gezi Park was a target of a redevelopment plan to build luxury residences and a shopping mall in the shape of a resurrected late-Ottoman military barrack. The protests began as a

[38] FETÖ stands for the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization, a term used by the government designating the Gülen Movement as a terrorist organization culpable for the attempted coup of 2016. FETÖ has also become the moniker replacing Fethullah Gülen's name and thus functions as an act to reformat social memory by creating a discursive rupture that blots out the previous intimacy between Gülen and the JDP.

[39] Brown, "Introduction," 27.

[40] I borrow the following timeline from my article on the protests. See Baran Germen, "Of Parks and Hamams," *Assuming Gender* 5:1 (2015), 111-137.

small-scale local environmentalist resistance with sleep-ins at the park on May 27. At dawn on May 30, Turkish riot police made a foray against the Park to oust the civilians camping in the park in protest of the government's enforcement of the park's demolition. The police force, along with a team of construction workers, furtively trapped civilians by setting fire to the tents in which they were sleeping. The subsequent public reaction to the vicious police crackdown on the peaceful participants was unexpected and unprecedented. Many flooded into the park in support of the environmentalists, only to face ever-increasing police violence. As the size of the protests grew, so did police brutality, which included abusive attacks on civilians with truncheons, tear gas, pepper spray, and water cannons. By the last day of May, the park's boundaries could no longer confine the demonstrators. The protests gradually spread nationwide and shook the country for about a month with aftershocks that still reverberate today. The protests had not taken an anti-government twist until the then prime minister Erdoğan backed the municipality against the protesters in the belief that this was an attempt to overthrow his government –a possible defensive reflex in the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring that inspirited the revolutionary aspirations of the people in the region. In a backlash against the regional democratic ethos with which the Gezi Park protests could connect, Erdoğan framed the strife as a conflict between a democratically elected government and *çapulcular*, marauders, as graphed onto each side of the main fissure of Turkish society: the modern seculars and the conservative masses. For Erdoğan, the last had become the first, and the protesters consisted of the bitter secularists who cannot stomach the rule of a conservative government. The ballot box was the site of democracy that rendered the

street illegitimate, and the uprising was an effort to realize what they could not in the elections. It was thus Erdoğan, the JDP, and its constituents that were actually targeted by the protestors illegitimately and illicitly. Justified through an alternative account of victimization, state violence came to act as a shield for democracy.

The Gezi Park protests marks a turning point in the rhetoric of the JDP. Victimhood no longer accounted for the past but became a disciplinary instrument within the practices of power. The primary example of the new inflection in the JDP's discourse of victimhood indicative of the drastic reorientation of its politics is the so-called Kabataş attack that mimics the melodrama of *Vurun Kahpeye*. The deployment of narratives of victimhood may have been instrumental in the rise of Islamic conservatism and its politics of *ressentiment* in Turkey in the new millennium, as the "Kabataş attack" exemplifies. But *Vurun Kahpeye* shows us that melodrama has in fact been undergirding the secular imaginary of the nation all along since the birth of the Republic not least thanks to its cinematic afterlife. A grand narrative of national genesis rendered mythic as the foundational text of the Republic through its successive cinematic interpretations, *Vurun Kahpeye* brings the nation to life through a story of gendered martyrdom by which statehood is implicated in victimhood. If a narrative of victimhood is necessary for a state to emerge and exist, the female protagonist's suffering at the hands of religious orthodoxy serves to justify the formation of the secular state.

The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity investigates melodrama as a political technology of affect by focusing on the many media mutations of *Vurun Kahpeye*, which originates in Ottoman-Turkish in the form of a serialization between 1923 and 1924. It is

published as a novella in the same script first in 1926 and later again in 1943 as transcribed into modern day Turkish. The story is then serially adapted and remade in subsequent decades by the popular film industry in 1949, 1964, and 1973. Today, it survives idiomatically as a shorthand for unjust victimization describing the lynch mentality in the vernacular and popular media. Considering *Vurun Kahpeye*'s fifty-year life span across languages and media, I find the conditions that keep this melodrama relatable –in both discursive and emotive senses of the word– worth thinking. *Vurun Kahpeye*'s transmediality first and foremost depends on its remediatability precisely ensured by its affective excess that renders its normative project unstable and uncontainable. Always in excess of the limits it prescribes itself, melodrama opens itself for reinterpretation as demonstrated by many iterations of *Vurun Kahpeye*. In the western tradition, melodrama is understood as a restorative project thanks to the historical roots of the form examined in the authoritative study of Peter Brooks.[41] In this account, melodrama's emergence as a form is in response to social anxieties about a moral crisis in the wake of the French Revolution. Melodrama, in other words, arrives *post hoc* to manage the upheaval for modernity, offering a surrogate secular moral order upon the loss of a previous one embodied by the monarchy and the church. *Vurun Kahpeye*'s itineraries demonstrate, however, a different temporality in which melodrama partakes: each incarnation to arrive is antecedent to a conflicting project via the interchangeable plot lines, as crystallized by the kinship between *Vurun Kahpeye* and "the Kabataş attack."

[41] See Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 1995.

Thus, offering a melodramatic template viable for the secularist and Islamic imaginaries alike, *Vurun Kahpeye* embodies the shared idiom and imagery of the traditionally opposed ideological camps of Turkey around victimhood, most saliently evinced in the manipulation of gender in the self-dramatization of the state. *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity* illuminates the seminal role the early cinematic iterations of *Vurun Kahpeye* and the cinematic medium itself play in the making of the modern, secular subjectivity and public through a configuration of gender in its melodrama. The first two adaptations of *Vurun Kahpeye* promote an idealized female subjectivity –the desexualized and dedicated woman of Turkish modernization– as opposed to the uncanniness of the veiled woman. Most of all, however, evoking sympathy and outrage through a melodramatic identification of victims and perpetrators, the mutilated female body becomes a key agent through which a secular public with a sensorium very much conditioned for the threats of Islamism is formed –providing the aesthetic backbone to the secularist social anxieties and fears about the Islamists that were mapped onto gender, as analyzed by Yael Navaro-Yashin, following the 1994 local elections resulting in Erdoğan's mayoralty in İstanbul under the Islamist Refah Partisi [Welfare Party] of Erbakan.[42] The persistence and recurrence of *Vurun Kahpeye*'s scene of lynching within cultural memory, which takes place on account of the female protagonist's transgression of traditional Islamic wardrobe, feeds the stereotypical social fantasies about the Islamists coming after "our women." Thus, through a close analysis, I demonstrate that the cinematic afterlife of *Vurun Kahpeye* results in the sedimentation of

[42] Yael Navaro-Yashin, "Prophecies of Culture," *Faces of the State,* 19-43.

secular victimhood in the national imaginary and of a secularist paranoia about the pious Muslim subject, strikingly without any state support.

As intimated, *The Melodramatics of Modernity* privileges the site of cinema as one particularly "affective media," to borrow from Weihong Bao, for melodrama "as a manufactured environment enfolding the individual subject, a virtual space (itself highly mediated) mediating between the prepersonal and the social."[43] Cinema's centrality to melodrama in Turkey is due to specific historical conditions postponing the emergence of a mass readership that in turn advances cinema as one of the primary loci of a mass culture for heightening "affect as a shared social space in commercial and political mass publics."[44] And yet, the journey of *Vurun Kahpeye* points to melodrama's transmediality, demanding cinema to be situated within a broad range of aesthetic regimes, media technologies, and cultural discourses that participate in the production of an affect of victimhood. Thus, as Bao points out, "the affective medium is larger than a singular media technology as we conventionally understand it,"[45] and *The Melodramatics of Victimhood* takes seriously the historical, aesthetic, institutional, and technological discourses and practices that inform cinema.

Unlike the other cinemas of the global South, especially those in the Middle East, Turkish cinema has lacked state funding until very recently. Neither an anti-colonialist instrument nor a technology for nationalist modernization, cinema in Turkey, neglected

[43] Weihong Bao, "Introduction," *Fiery Cinema*, 16.

[44] Ibid., 8.

[45] Ibid.

by the state, develops as a makeshift industry in the hands of a number of impresarios. Through the case of *Vurun Kahpeye*, *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity* chronicles the institutionalization of a secular and to that extent a statist cinema that becomes the main site for the formation of mass publics. This is nowhere more visible than in the injury the first *Vurun Kahpeye* film directed by Ömer Lütfi Akad occasions within the Islamist circles, as analyzed in Chapter III.[46] The aesthetic history of a cultural production that this dissertation provides allows us to see how cinema cultivates collective sentiments –namely the secularist paranoia and the resentment of the pious. Melodramatic aesthetics then shapes political sensibilities on both the secularist and the Islamist camps of Turkish modernity, engendering affects around victimhood, e.g., fear, injustice, injury, vengeance, etc. And yet, the lack of state interest in cinema ensures the formation of an industry that can accommodate alternative circuits interrupting the secularizing drives of cinema. Such is the case when director Halit Refiğ revisits *Vurun Kahpeye* to execute his theories on a national cinema that would inspire an Islamic cinema to emerge.[47] As Chapter IV discusses, Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* is an attempt to reconcile Islam and the secular state against the West as the common enemy whose popular success does not live up to its stylistic mastery.

All in all, *Vurun Kahpeye* represents the first cluster of historical films in which the nation imagines itself mostly in the vein of melodrama. In these War of Independence-themed films, the Turkish identity originates with the birth of the

[46] *Vurun Kahpeye*, dir. by Ömer Lütfi Akad, 1949.

[47] *Vurun Kahpeye*, dir. by Halit Refiğ, 1973.

Republic. From mid-60s onwards, popular film industry develops another strand of historical fiction that rethink the Turkish identity through a reimagination of historical figures in the pre-Republican past. Adapting the comics of mass popularity, the film series like *Malkoçoglu*, *Tarkan, Battal Gazi*, and *Kara Murat* Turkify the Ottoman and pre-Ottoman past in the genre of action film, and in the case of *Tarkan*¸ sometimes with fantastic elements. This is the genealogy that we provides the background to the contemporary historical dramas that get entangled in the neo-Ottomanist fantasies of the state, captivating the imagination of a populace disenchanted with modernity across the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and the Indian Subcontinent. The global circulation and popularity of these recent shows across television networks and online have as much to do with the growing media industry in Turkey as the governmental sponsorship of some of these productions. Thus, the media archeology of *Vurun Kahpeye* that this dissertation performs also puts in perspective the way not only the nation but also the state conceives itself through cinema.

The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity deploys an archeological method to unearth the historical contingencies of the cultural mythology of the female martyr of the secular state. As Roland Barthes essentially argues, myths dehistoricize, that is, conceal the history of, meanings that are always historically produced.[48] The mythification of *Vurun Kahpeye*'s martyrdom narrative congeals in its title's metamorphosis into an idiom designating the unjust treatment of the innocent. The righteousness that the idiom grants to its subject rests upon the figuration of a secular gendered subject punished for her

[48] Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," *Mythologies*, 109-156.

fantasized excessiveness. Thus, every time it gets cited, the idiom verbalizes a tension between the purportedly progressivist and backward social forces of the nation, namely the secular moderns and the religious masses, thereby keeping timeless the myth of secular martyrdom within national consciousness in the quotidian. By reading each of its media iterations as embedded in its socio-historical context, the following chapters follow its affective potency as its melodrama crystalizes in a structure of feeling of secularist paranoia

The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity historicizes the intermedial itineraries of *Vurun Kahpeye* that reveal *Vurun Kahpeye*'s mythification as a foundational text for the Republic in the national imaginary is predicated upon the eroding of the gender politics of Edib's novella. Chapter II, entitled "*Vurun Kahpeye* and the Melodrama of Halide Edib's Queer Feminism," recovers and revises Halide Edib's feminism through a reading that is counterintuitive to *Vurun Kahpeye*'s reception in the popular imaginary as a secularist manifesto. I argue that as a melodrama *Vurun Kahpeye* affords an effective vehicle for Halide Edib's feminism that defies the demands of both secular modernism and Islamic conservatism. Grounded in a neglected dream sequence that stages a lesbian kiss, my reading defines Edib's feminism as queer in its revelation of the opposing Islamist and Kemalist projections of the nation state as heteropatriarchal at the moment of its foundation. The chapter provides this reading against the backdrop of the history of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement that originates within the emerging print media infrastructure and network in the 19th century. Situating Edib's feminism in this history, Chapter II discusses melodrama as the perfect form to capture Edib's feminist praxis that

lies in the inconsistencies of its discursive and performative articulations. While the narrative of victimhood *Vurun Kahpeye* introduces becomes a metaphor for the marginalization of the Ottoman-Turkish feminism within Kemalist modernization, its structural melodramatic excess embodies a feminist vision transcending the fractures of the nation.

Chapter III, entitled "*Vurun Kahpeye* (1949): Cinema and the Infrastructures of Secularism," demonstrates how cinema, during its institutionalization as industry proper, mediates the project of secularism strikingly without state ownership or sponsorship by providing a history of the 1949 cinematic adaptation of Vurun Kahpeye. Moving away from the understanding of secularization as a mode of governmentality, this chapter provides a model of secularization grounded in media and affect as rendered available by a cinematic infrastructure put together by the co-producers of the film. A novel form of a distribution system allows for the film's mass popularity, introducing Edib's story to a public to which it was otherwise unavailable before. Thus nationally celebrated in unprecedented terms, the film occasions many milestones within the history of Turkish cinema, paving the way for the emergence of *Yeşilçam*.[49] This chapter, however, turns to the injury that the film's representation of the turbaned subject, hadji, as the treacherous villain causes in the pious subjects of the nations within the Islamist circles. Juxtaposing the affective reactions that the film engenders in its audience through a media survey, this chapter then argues for 1949 as marking the moment of cinema's emergence as a modern

[49] Literally translated as The Green Pine, *Yeşilçam*, named after the street on which the first production companies and studios were based, is the metonym that refers to the cinema of Turkey. More specifically, it refers to the classical era of this cinema between 1950s and 1970s.

medium whose representative force has high stakes for the public it experiences it. While, for the first time in the history of Turkish modernity, moving images came to matter and became worth fighting for, the history around *Vurun Kahpeye* plays out the narrative of national genesis in which the religiously marked body is deemed improper, unworthy, and obsolete with respect to the nation state.

Chapter IV, "From a Populist-Popular to a National-Popular Aesthetics: The Remakes of *Vurun Kahpeye* in *Yeşilçam* and Through National Cinema," approaches Halit Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* (1973) as an experiment of his theory of National Cinema, an anti-Western cinema that would essentially embody and promote the Turkish identity within a social realist register. The chapter begins with the 1964 adaptation of *Vurun Kahpeye* by Orhan Aksoy as representative of the prevalent filmmaking practices and aesthetics of Turkish cinema Refiğ criticizes in his writings.[50] Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* epitomizes the industrial characteristics of *Yeşilçam*, a star-driven populist cinema whose aesthetics is overdetermined by the market demands mediated by distributors. After a reading of Aksoy's remake as a pompous melodrama responding to the rising tension in Cyprus, the chapter proceeds with the examination of Refiğ's theory. His ideologically infused national cinema pursues a national-popular visual grammar within a populist-popular cinematic culture challenged by the elite-popular propensities under the influence of the western art cinema. I situate his discussion of cinema amidst the cultural debates around the film industry and its relationship with the state. I then provide a reading of Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* in light of his theory, arguing that Refiğ reconciles the

[50] Orhan Aksoy, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 1964.

antagonistic elements of the film through the merging of Muslim and Turkish identities. Furthermore, Refiğ's social realist interpretation relocates melodrama, very much like Edib only without her feminist critique, in the conflict between the personal and the social as conveyed by the theme of the love rendered impossible under the material circumstances of the War of Independence. All in all, this chapter demonstrates the traveling of the melodramatic affective excess that brings about an unlikely outcome in the wake of its iteration. Aksoy's remake generates Refiğ's stylistic reconciliatory project in *Vurun Kahpeye*. Despite the latter's subsequent circulation in the demotic medium of TV, *Vurun Kahpeye* nonetheless emerges as an idiom within popular discourse entrenching the political antagonism Refiğ's project wants to erase.

Overall, through the examination of *Vurun Kahpeye*'s itineraries and their social life, *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity* offers a media archaeology of melodrama as an aesthetics of victimhood –one that accounts for its durability and its efficacy in the Middle East as a political machinery of affective excess. The entanglements of aesthetic forms, the social impact of cultural systems and networks, and political formations that I record in this dissertation allows us to rethink the affective medium of cinema as the main site for the formation of mass publics. At this site, *Vurun Kahpeye* becomes the centerpiece in, through, and around which contesting projections of the nation dialectically interact with each other generating structures of feeling rooted in victimization, suffering, and injury –namely, paranoia and resentment– that characterize these publics. Thus, *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity* illustrates that the study of melodrama's role in culture is key to understanding the political efficacy of the affect of

victimhood. In bridging aesthetics and politics, my dissertation performs interdisciplinary work that recognizes cultural objects and their transmission across time and circulation in different media as vital to understanding the mechanisms of modernity in Turkey and, potentially, in other Middle Eastern contexts. Consequently, I argue that the waning of secular nationalist movements, the global rise of religion, and the turn to populist authoritarianism in places like Turkey –so long considered to be a moderately Muslim model nation– cannot be fully grasped without studying these aesthetic transformations and deployments that hold sway of public emotions and feelings vis-à-vis the nation.

CHAPTER II

VURUN KAHPEYE AND THE MELODRAMA OF HALIDE EDIB'S QUEER FEMINISM

There is a pivotal moment at the heart of Halide Edib's story *Vurun Kahpeye* [*Strike the Slut*],[1] an instance of a modernist rupture –of the sort we note, say, in Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* or E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*– which first arrests the linear progression of the narrative, and then throws its story into chaos. This moment appears in a dream sequence, an erotic replay of the scene of separation between the protagonist Aliye and her fiancé Tosun Pasha: As Tosun leaves Aliye at the door of her house to rejoin the National Struggle,[2] "his big head," to Aliye's excitement, "begins to lean on her tiny face."[3] And yet, when Aliye comes to her senses with a cold touch on her lips, she realizes that the kiss belongs not to Tosun but instead to that nameless outcast

[1] *Vurun Kahpeye* was originally serialized in Ottoman-Turkish in the newspaper *Akşam* between December 16, 1923 and January 29, 1924. It was published as a novella in the same script first in 1926 and later again in 1943 as transcribed into modern day Turkish. It is worth noting that, in this history of translations, the text did not undergo any major changes either in style or in content. My references to the text are from its modern Turkish transcription of the 1926 publication. Halide Edib, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 2015. *Vurun Kahpeye* has not been translated into English. My decision to translate the title as *Strike the Slut* out of various available possibilities is based on two reasons, each accounting for each of my word choice. While *Vurun* can also be rendered as *Hit*, my selection of *Strike* is simply due to its alliterative quality. Less subjective of a choice, *Slut*, however, derives from Edib's own rendering of the word *Kahpe* in a scene that appears in her memoirs in both Turkish and English both penned by herself. Compare Halide Edib, *The Turkish Ordeal*, 207 and Halide Edib Adıvar, *Türk'ün Ateşle İmtihanı*, 163. This is not to disregard the puzzling and significant differences between these two texts, especially the diminishing of Edib's criticism of Mustafa Kemal. Closely examining both ideological and stylistic divergences between the two texts, historian Y. Hakan Erdem argues that the translation of *The Turkish Ordeal* into *Türk'ün Ateşle İmtihanı* was possibly censured without Edib's control. For Erdem, although Edib is the attributed translator, she played a minimal role during the translation after her dictation of the text due to her illness leading to her death. Y. Hakan Erdem, *Tarih-Lenk*. 2008.

[2] *Millî Mücadele*, also referred to as the National Campaign, designated the Turkish War of Independence (19 May 1919 – 24 July 1923) fought against the proxies of the Allies after the Ottoman Empire's defeat in World War I.

[3] Halide Edib, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 88.

widow she has encountered in the mosque early on that evening. As though in ecstatic trance, while panting and her big eyes strangely twisting, the woman whose "cold and old lips" now kiss Aliye begins to repeatedly call her "slut."[4] Scandalized, Aliye wakes up in fear and shock only to be further traumatized by the growing uproar signaling the Greek campaign in town. As such, the text haphazardly interweaves Aliye's sexual crisis with national crisis.

The shattering effect of this moment ripples beyond the frame of the story when we consider the fact that this scene stages same sex desire, as phantasmagoric and ominous as it may be, in a work written about and at the birth of the Republic –being published only six months after the end of the Turkish War of Independence. By this, I emphasize not so much the contemporaneity of the representation of homosexual desire with the newborn nation state as the incongruity of the materialization of non-normative desire in a story of national salvation, an out-of-placeness imputed by dismissive critics who remain blind to this exceptional instance. In a heterosexual romance set against the backdrop of national conflict and nationalist warfare, the flickering of this lesbian kiss flashes as jarring, inappropriate, and irrelevant, in short, a queer event *par excellence*, unworthy of mention as a textual aberration even for its literary function as a foreshadowing technique within the grand narrative of the story.

And yet, despite the critical silence around this moment, I am tempted to consider the supposedly marginal dream about female homosexuality as a gateway to a bed of rich hermeneutic possibilities, a *punctum*, as it were, that would complicate the schematically

[4] Ibid, 89.

dichotomous make-up of *Vurun Kahpeye*, a text far too quickly understood as a straightforward exploration of the everlasting conflict between the religious and secular bodies of the Turkish nation as early as 1923.[5] As Barthes' imagistic coinage implies, this moment, however, sticks out transcending the presumed oppositional structure of the text, pointing to a politics beyond the celebratory reception of the text as the manifesto of the triumphant secular body of the Turkish nation state. Rather, in my reading, this instance intimates an underlying feminist critique that points to the heteropatriarchal nature of not only the Islamist imaginary but also the nation-building project of secularist modernism at the moment of its realization. Taking the unrealized homosexual dream to the fore of my analysis, in this chapter, I will expound Edib's unacknowledged critical feminist vision in *Vurun Kahpeye* by pursuing the question of what makes this moment an (im)possibility, one that can only be conveyed through the structure of excess unique to the melodramatic mode.

This chapter views the homosexual kiss rendered in the form of a nightmare as the symbolic manifestation of the suppression of the homosocial bond Aliye strives to establish with the widow through a feminist interpretation of Islam. Insofar as this Muslim homosocial alliance is a projection of an "affective community,"[6] it embodies all the contradictions that feminism poses for the nationalist project as the site of excess. Just

[5] *Punctum*, along with *studium* with which it coexists, defines the constitutive affective element of the photographic image. While the latter is the average affect an image produces through a conscious general human activity or participation, *punctum* "is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me… [It] is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*. 26-7.

[6] Here, I invoke the title of Leela Gandhi's study of transnational anticolonial networks of friendship during the turn of the century. See Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 2006.

as the way the text renders this kiss and thus this community excessive and unthinkable, so too the Kemalist nationalist project renders the pre-Republican stages of Ottoman-Turkish women's movement parenthetical.[7] Kemalism configures and reproduces for itself a narrative of guardianship and genesis through which the legacy of the past is selectively distilled from the perspective of the originator-protector.[8] As another patriarchal political formation, "Kemalism," to quote Tanıl Bora, "wanted to become the founder, regulator, inventor of the liberation of women too."[9] I contend that *Vurun Kahpeye* anticipates the process by which the nation state overrides the contradictory desires that historically congeal around women in its own version of women's movement and idealized femininity. Thus, I read Aliye's narrative of victimhood as an allegory of the abjection of the history of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement, agency, and explorations, struggles and negotiations around the complex question of how to be Muslim and modern at once.

As time proves, Halide Edib, herself a fervent Ottoman-Turkish feminist, was forced to exile by Mustafa Kemal due to her dissentient vocal critique of the new Republic in 1926. And yet, my reading of *Vurun Kahpeye* is not extensively anchored to her biography. Instead, taking the cue from Hülya Adak's recent study on her political

---

[7] Generally speaking, Kemalism, which derives from the founder of the Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), is the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey. The six foundational principles of Kemalism, represented by the six arrows adapted to the flag of the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* [Republican People's Party] (CHP), are republicanism, populism, laicism, reformism, nationalism, and statism. These principles are the motor of Turkish modernization that attempts to severe the ties of the Turkish state from its Ottoman predecessor to become a part of the Western civilization.

[8] Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 153.

[9] Ibid.

biography,[10] I want to take seriously Edib's versatility as a protean writer publishing works in many forms, genres, and mediums by approaching *Vurun Kahpeye* primarily as a melodrama. The portrait Adak draws is not only that of a complex intellectual whose thought fluctuates as per the changing social and political conditions in which she lives. It is also that of a dramatist who pens the prototypical examples of absurd theater long before the term was coined.[11] Inspired by this reorientation in Edib scholarship, my generic critique of *Vurun Kahpeye* complicates the standard reception of Edib's literature in general and her undermined national struggle novels and their ideals of femininity by turning to the aesthetics of melodrama they deploy. This reading frees the text from a kind of "mimetic anxiety"[12] prevalent around Edib's literary work whose primary paradigm for evaluation is the extent to which the text mirrors or departs from the author's political self. This vein of literary criticism brought about a typological analysis categorizing Edib's heroines as gendered national bodies. By focusing on the structural possibilities and limitations melodrama offers for Edib, I am drawn to explore *Vurun Kahpeye*'s complexities beyond the scope of a typological critique. I find this method more productive for the work of a figure like Edib, given the discrepancy between her discursive and performative self-making projects. As her life affirms, Edib's feminist agency exceeds the limits prescribed by her feminist discourse. Thus, I want to think of the literary field, more specifically, the world of fiction, especially melodrama, as the playground for this tension underlying Edib's feminism.

---

[10] Hülya Adak*, Halide Edib ve Siyasal Şiddet*, *2016.*

[11] Ibid., 151-162.

[12] Sangita Gopal, "Bourgeois Extreme: Genre and Global Flows," 2018.

With this plan in mind, I will divide this chapter into three sections. In the first section, I will provide the historical trajectory within which the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement came to fruition. Here, my emphasis will be twofold: First, I will deliver the stages of this movement as framed by larger socio-political transformations within which the women question emerges. Then, I will link this movement to the emergence of a media infrastructure and print culture out of which it grew. I will relay the process in which women took so enthusiastically to print because it allowed them access to a public sphere prior to and in preparation for their actual physical movement into it. In the next section, I will present Halide Edib as the product of this history as demonstrated by her feminist negotiations of Islam and secular modernity. Then, drawing attention to the distinction between fictional and nonfictional forms of writing through which Ottoman-Turkish feminist movement came into being, I will describe a model of intimacy between literary forms, gender performance, and political activism conducive for a melodramatic reading of *Vurun Kahpeye*. In the final section, I will provide a reading of *Vurun Kahpeye* as a text that exemplifies melodrama as a political technology effectively mediating Edib's feminist vision that resists political Islam and Kemalist secularism.

The Ottoman-Turkish Women's Movement

We could analyze the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement along an axis of modernization that extends from the *Tanzimat* [Reorganization] reforms (1839-1876), through Abdülhamid II's rule between the two *Meşrutiyet* [Constitutionalist] Eras (1876

and 1908) and the II. *Meşrutiyet* [Constitutionalist] Era (1908-1918), to the Turkish national movement and the Republican Era (1918-1935)[13]. In the first three stages of this axis, modernization operates as an apparatus for different political projects whose common goal is to halt the Empire from its decline through a series of legal, institutional, and social reforms. After World War I, however, modernization itself takes the shape of a *dispositif* distributed through the institutions and structures that would establish and organize the Turkish state. This is the trajectory in which an Islamic multinational empire dissolves into a secular nation state, a process that has a huge bearing on the handling of the woman question. As Deniz Kandiyoti suggests, this trajectory entailed "a progressive distancing from Islam as the only form of legitimate discourse on women's emancipation, in favour of a cultural nationalism appropriating such emancipation as an indigenous pattern."[14] Thus, the woman question cannot be divorced from the historical conditions within which Turkish nationalism developed, and I will explore below the central role that media come to assume in this process.

The Ottoman-Turkish women's movement took place within the context of a modernization project geared to address a political urgency, namely the waning of the Ottoman Empire fueled both by economic capitulations given to Western powers and the

[13] This historical trajectory is clearly in conversation with Yaprak Zihnioğlu's periodization of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement in her meticulous study on Nezihe Muhittin and Ottoman-Turkish feminism. Zihnioğlu defines the period between 1869 and 1935 as the first wave of feminism within the Ottoman-Turkish feminist movement, and she divides it into three periods: "Early Ottoman Women Movement (1868-1908)," "The Ottoman Feminism of the II Constitutionalist Era (1908-1922)," and "First Wave of Republican Feminism (1923-1935)". While I subscribe to Zihnioğlu's delineation and the periodization of the first wave feminism, I also recognize the need to highlight the political contexts that shape Edib's feminism. Hence, my predilection to situate women's movement within the changing political frameworks of the era. Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 21.

[14] Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," *Women, Islam, and the State*, 23.

separationist movements within the ethnically heterogenous territories of the Empire. As modernist reformers sought ways to reverse imperial decline, gender too emerged as a site in need of reformation.[15] Both men and women demanded the social advancement of gender on the basis of the amelioration of the condition of the state. The emphasis on *kadınlık mefkuresi* [womanhood ideal] expressing self and public recognition of women's worth in the writings by women in the late Tanzimat period, for instance, partakes in the same vocabulary of progress and enlightenment defining for national ideal. And yet, the discourse around womanhood is far from unified, for the woman question emerges as a stage on which debates around tradition and modernity get played out. As modernization meant westernization, the anxieties about the scope and extent of westernization weighed heavily on the woman question for both men and the women throughout the history of Ottoman-Turkish modernization both in the Empire and in the Republic.

Feminist scholarship on the Middle East, however, has long cautioned against taking such reified binary categories as East/West and traditional/modern for granted.[16] Rather, as is the case in various contexts, gender here too provides the discursive site in which these categories get perpetually defined, contested, and negotiated. As Kandiyoti reminds, the West with its distinct politico-philosophical traditions was never a monolithic entity for Ottomans.[17] More significantly, the West was subject to processes

[15] Kandiyoti notes that discourses on and efforts of reforming or remaking women were in fact about "the wholesale refashioning of gender and gender relations." Deniz Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions," *Remaking Women*, 280.

[16] See, for instance, Lila Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women*, 1998.

[17] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions," 274.

of selectivity "in response to local dilemmas that became the subject of political contestations" amongst factions with diverse visions of an ideal society.[18] By the same token, Ottoman and Turkish reformers looked for native roots for their ideals while making references to "a 'tradition' that better approximates their modernist vision than do the current arrangements in their societies."[19] A case in point, as Kandiyoti also points out, is the primary theorist of Turkish nationalism Ziya Gökalp for whom the pre-Islamic Turkish past already encompassed the democratic ideals of Turkish nationalism, including feminism, that were degenerated by Arab and Persian influences.[20] Thus, the women question and the shifting gender relations are conditioned by the constructionist and deconstructionist discourses and attitudes of the modernist reformers vis-à-vis the West and an assumed, an imagined, and even an idealized past that afford contested and conflicting definitions of the modern.

The ambivalence around women and gender cathected by modernization rife with struggles, negotiations, and contestations necessitates reassessing the understanding of Ottoman-Turkish modernization in terms of imitation or adaption. Drawing attention to the inadequacy of the theories of Turkish modernization in these terms, Şerif Mardin invites us to consider modernization as a mode of looking at "ourselves" through the gaze of the other.[21] Mardin's bifurcation of the self through a disembodied gaze finds an even

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 271.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Şerif Mardin, "Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce,* 44.

more complex articulation in Meltem Ahıskalı's notion of Occidentalism that centers on this fantasized Western gaze. According to Ahıskalı, Occidentalism describes "the set of practices and arrangements justified in and against the imagined idea of 'the West' in the non-West."[22] It "refers to a field of social imagination through which those in power consume and reproduce the projection of 'the West' to negotiate and consolidate their hegemony in line with their pragmatic interests."[23] Reimagined, reinterpreted and moderated, the West mediates the project of modernization while serving as a disciplinary tool. An identification with this phantasmagoric West suggests a displacement of the threatening influence of the West. As Ahıskalı discusses, the ruling elites invested in Republican modernization "by assuming a guardian role that modernizes but at the same time protects the 'less civilized' and 'infantile' population from the 'dangers of too much Westernization'."[24]

We observe a similar process within the Ottoman modernization with respect to the situation of women in society. For the reformers of the period, the danger of too much Westernization loomed most dangerously around women who were viewed as the custodians of traditional morality. The ethos of modernization undeniably granted a public voice and a space for social activity for women of the Empire, but such gestures were always attended to with a great anxiety and never occurred at the same pace as institutional reforms. A perfect example of this is the continued maintenance of the

[22] Meltem Ahıska, "Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no 2-3 (2003): 366.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

Sharia-based civil code of the Empire, which stayed in effect for three years after the foundation of the Republic, after which it was replaced by the adaption of the Swiss civil code. To sum up then, the modernization project up unto the formation of the Republic and even beyond that remained hesitant and uncertain with regard to the condition of women and gender. The woman's movement was thus shaped by this foundational anxiety surrounding gendered modernization, and in what follows, I will briefly delineate the vicissitudes of the women's movement in each of the above-mentioned periods. I will later trace the meanderings of Edib's feminist thought in light of this history that frames the various stages of her feminism. Edib's feminism carry the legacy of this history, especially with regards to her negotiations of such categories as traditional/modern, Eastern/Western, and Islam/secularism. Because Edib's ever-changing political affiliations largely determine her approach to feminism, describing the melodramatic turns and twists that Edib's politics takes is essential to understand the development of her feminism.

The Tanzimat Era (1838-1876)

As the name suggests, the Tanzimat Era encompasses a series of reforms that aim to reorganize imperial governance at the hands of a new generation of Westernized bureaucrats, beginning with a set of pragmatic applications in the early 1800s and gradually turning into a constitutionalist and thus anti-monarchic movement towards the end of the century. This period produces Ottomanism as an ideology in response to the constant declining of the Empire and a concomitant attempt to retain its existing

territories. Committed to the idea of the Empire, the reformists of the era invented "Ottoman" as a political identity.[25] In this regard, the Edict of Gülhane (1838)[26] promises equity amongst the Ottomans, i.e., all the subjects of the Empire irrespective of their religion. The Reform Edict of 1859, is the first official document to use the term "citizen"[27] and it goes on to fulfill the promises of the Gülhane Edict by implementing laws that ensure this equity. Such bureaucratic and administrative changes point to a radical rupture in the long-established system of the Ottoman state apparatus, as concepts integral to modern political thought gradually enter into the social lexicon of the Empire.

We can read this rupture within two headings: democratization and secularization. Firstly, the ideology of Ottomanism overrules the ruler and subject divide and the compartmentalization of the population into *millets* –semi-autonomous non-Muslim religious communities of the Empire– by ensuring equality before law for all of its citizens.[28] As Mardin suggests, in this era, "a type of democracy emerges prior to the Republic."[29] Indeed, such notions as justice, equality, and citizenry point to the emergence of a democratic polity in the Empire's legal lexicon, intellectual world, and social life. Furthermore, the democratization of the social field occurs within a secular

[25] Mehmet Ö. Alkan, "Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi Üzerine Bir Deneme," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce,* 385.

[26] Selçuk Akşin Somel refers to this edict as the Magna Carta of the Ottoman modernity. Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlıcılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 93.

[27] Ibid., 96.

[28] Ibid., 97.

[29] Mardin, "Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi," 42.

framework: Ottoman identity gets defined not through a loyalty to religion but legal criteria outside of religion. As Somel argues, Ottomanism removes of inter-*millet* differences, bringing about a unison around a central point of loyalty and the development of a social identity outside religion.[30]

The Tanzimat was spearheaded by a reactionary group of elite administrators, otherwise known as the Young Ottomans [*Yeni Osmanlılar*], in response to the exposure and the effects of the extreme Westernization of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution such as liberalism, the Young Ottomans themselves believed in the urgency of institutional changes, as evinced in their relentless push for a constitution, in order to prevent the separationist movements within the Empire and to restore the Empire to its glory. And yet, they were as much concerned and adamant about keeping intact and upholding the Islamic state. Thus, their reformism was both circumscribed and empowered by an Islamic discourse reshaped by them. Mardin's authoritative monograph on Young Ottomans paints the picture of a diverse collective torn across the divisions of the East/the West and the past/the future that they try to negotiate by a commitment to the notion of progress derived from the "material advances of Europe" on the one hand and to the nostalgia for "the harmoniousness of an imaginary, ideal, Islamic state."[31] Elsewhere, Mardin reflects on the understanding of the Tanzimat as the period of the "new:" the emergence of new institutions and discourses never meant

[30] Somel, "Osmanlıcılık Düşüncesi," 102.

[31] Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 402.

a rejection of the past or of tradition. [32] On the contrary, this was a paradoxical period "that combined within itself the elements of modernity and tradition."[33] As the Young Ottomans leaders turned to the West and Islam, they reflected on, discussed, and drew the lines of the changes they were ready to promote, to follow Jale Parla, "within a worldview hegemonized by the Ottoman norms and culture," [34] all the while redefining and transforming what the West and Islam meant.

Perhaps one of the most critical developments of this era is the establishment of a new media network in which the Tanzimat thinkers functioned as buffers facilitating this process of appropriation. It is in this era that we can speak of the growth of print capitalism proper for the first time in the Empire. The Tanzimat thinkers exchanged, discussed, but also disseminated their ideas across an emerging media infrastructure that presupposes a community to and about which they spoke. Terms like *hey'et-i ictimaiye* and *hey'et-i mecmua*, terms equivalent to the French *société*, began to emerge in the writings of this era, signifying the first instantiation of an imagined collective identity.[35] The most significant channel in the making of this prototypical understanding of a civil society was Ibrahim Şinasi's newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* (*Illustration of Ideas*) that began to be published in 1862. Using a simplified Turkish, and circulating among a readership of 2000-3000, the paper became the primary vehicle for the Young Ottomans in the

[32] This is in reference to the *yeni* of *Yeni Osmanlılar*, the Turkish wording of the Young Ottomans. Mardin, "Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi," 43.

[33] Ibid., 51.

[34] Jale Parla, "Tanzimat Edebiyatında Siyasi Fikirler," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 223.

[35] Ibid., 44.

dissemination and communication of Tanzimat ideas.[36]

In addition to the press, the thinkers of the Tanzimat Era resorted to literature to express their views, and to that extent the literary field became a political platform –a development that was especially significant, as we shall see, for the women's movement. As Parla notes, it is not merely that the main focus of Tanzimat literature is politics, but that this literature is almost political to a degree that we might call non-literature.[37] In Cemil Koçak's words, "the press, along with any literary or non-literary style that could address the public, provided a field and an opportunity for the thinkers of this era to declare their political ideas."[38] The intimacy and overlap between what we might conventionally view as the press or news media and the literary domain is a notable aspect of the media world of nineteenth century Turkey and as such is fully entangled with the reformist project.

This was the social framework in which the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement had its roots. The woman question appears as a site where the reformist and the conservative tendencies of Tanzimat collided. As Kandiyoti makes clear, "the first outspoken would-be reformers of women's condition were not the *Tanzimat* Westernists, but the Young Ottomans, whose position could best be defined as a modernist Islamism."[39] The Young Ottomans justified their demands for the betterment of women

[36] Mardin, "Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi," 45.

[37] Parla, "Tanzimat Edebiyatında Siyasi Fikirler," 223.

[38] Cemil Koçak, "Yeni Osmanlılar ve Birinci Meşrutiyet," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 78-9.

[39] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 43.

for the sake of society with an eye to tenets of Islam. The condition of women was debated mainly within this religious framework as women began to appear as objects of social discourse in the media world of the era.

For these male thinkers of the period, the woman question emerged primarily in the context of the institution of marriage, an institution that was in need of modernization. In the literature of the period, topics like the styles of marriage, attitude towards women, the institution of concubinary are selected as social issues to be criticized.[40] Concomitant with this progressive discourse around social relations between genders is a heightened anxiety about the role of women in the family. Serpil Sancar notes, for instance, the parallelism between a strong home and a strong nation already in the writings of Namık Kemal (1840-1888), one of the most inspirational Young Ottomans for Turkish nationalism.[41] This comparison designates women as the central nexus connecting the family unit and the Empire. Consequently, the period bears witness to a cultivation of an epistemology around motherhood to which both men and women subscribe for the betterment of the family and thus the nation. In the following periods, women would demand, and justify their demands for, social progress, the right to education, as mothers.

Nicole Van Os understands this early phase of Ottoman Muslim women's movement mainly in terms of a "familial feminism."[42] This feminism conforms to the

[40] One routinely cited paradigmatic example is İbrahim Şinasi's *Şair Evlenmesi*, the first modern Turkish play written in Turkish in 1859, which criticized in its comedic form the practice of arranged marriage. İbrahim Şinasi, *The Wedding of a Poet*, 1981.

[41] Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 86.

[42] Nicole A. N. M. Van Os, "Osmanlı Müslümanlarında Feminizm," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 339.

roles of women within the existing gender regime without challenging the public private divide that governs the lives of these women. While this may be true to a large extent, educational reforms for women paved the way for women's participation in professional life. Despite the modesty of legislative reforms, Kandiyoti highlights the variety of schools opened for the education of women "beyond the barest rudiments of religious instruction at the primary level."[43] Another noteworthy phenomenon is the participation of women in the making of the civil society in the world of letters. By sharing their opinions in newspaper, journals, and magazines, women were able to start breaking down the public private division at least via print. One of the pioneering women writers and putatively the first Ottoman woman novelist, Fatma Aliye, for instance, gives the definition of a "good Muslim-good mother-good wife" in her work, [44] a project that she continues to practice in the following period with the culmination of her manifesto-like treatise *Nisvân-ı İslâm* [*Women of Islam*].[45] Aliye, in her novels, "tries to describe the respectable position of woman," and accordingly, "created characters that defended monogamy and the right to rebel against male infidelity,"[46] always from Islamic perspective. The publication of the first journal for women, *Terakki-i Muhadderat*

---

[43] Some educational reforms Kandiyoti mentions are the training of midwives in the Medical School from 1842 and the opening of a secondary schools for girls in 1858, a girls' vocational school in 1869, and a women's teacher-training college in 1870. Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 28.

[44] Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 90.

[45] Written in the form of a dialogue between the writer and her fictional European visitors, *Nisvân-ı İslâm* provides a model for modern Ottoman femininity. *Nisvân-ı İslâm* was first serialized in 1891 and printed as a book in the following year. Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvân-ı İslâm*, 2012.

[46] Parla, "Tanzimat Edebiyatında Siyasi Fikirler," 224.

[*Progress of the Virtuous Women*] in 1869, testifies to the recognition of women as members of civil society. Similar to Fatma Aliye's project, the writings in the journal defend the congruence of women's rights and Islam.[47]

Overall, before the increasing nationalist, Westernization, and secularist movements and currents of following eras, the Tanzimat period set Islam as the earliest paradigm in reference to which critiques of women's condition could be articulated. Far from doing away with Islam in favor of modern ways, both men and women of this period intimately and seriously engaged with Islam. While such negotiations indeed tested the limits of and at times pushed back against the religious norms of the time, these conservative reformists nonetheless strived to legitimize their vision for progress as compatible and harmonious with religious dictates. It was this part of the history of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement that would get abandoned in the Republican narratives of feminism. As I anticipated earlier, the modernist Islamist feminism of this era would take a very different form in Edib, as it haunts, across time, the present in the form of the nightmare of a lesbian kiss the present. It is the melodramatic form that functions as the technology of excess for expressing a supposed political contradiction – Islamist feminism– in *Vurun Kahpeye.*

The Abdülhamid II Rule (1876-1908)

The Young Ottomans would realize their goal of political reform by bringing Abdülhamid II to power on the condition of the adoption of a constitution and declaration

[47] Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti,* 90.

of constitutional monarchism. The first constitution of the Ottoman Empire, *Kanun-i Esasi* [The Fundamental Law] was promulgated on December 23, 1876, and the first Ottoman parliament, *Meclis-i Umumi* [General Assembly] convened on March 19, 1877 after the first general elections of the Empire in that year. What would come to be known as the First Constitutional Era, however, would not last long. Abdülhamid closed the parliament and suspended the constitution on account of the social unrest engendered by the Russo-Turkish War (1877-8). The devastating loss in the war resulted in the loss of the majority of the European lands of the Empire as well as further capitulations given to Western powers. Abdülhamid addressed this moment of crisis with an authoritarian rule. The experience of constitutional monarchism would be short-lived, ending with the absolute power of Abdülhamid who reclaimed his sole position of loyalty as the Sultan of the Empire and the Caliph of Islam.[48]

Modern historiography following the Abdülhamid Era has since given the name *istibdad* [despotism, tyranny] to the period. While Abdülhamid imposed absolute prohibition on political expression and organization supported by a surveillance infrastructure, as routinely noted by many scholars, he nonetheless carried on the project of modernization of the Tanzimat. Orhan Koloğlu proposes that Abdülhamid was a man of Tanzimat and indeed an Ottomanist, one who professed a traditionalist version of modernization, as, in Koloğlu's words, "a proponent of restoration through reform."[49] What distinguishes him from the Young Ottomans is his refusal of constitutionalist

[48] For a well-founded contextualization and evaluation of the Abdülhamid II reign, see Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 2011.

[49] Orhan Koloğlu, "II. Abdülhamit'in Siyasal Düşüncesi," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 276.

liberalism in favor of the Islamic law. Abdülhamid resorted to Islam in order to keep the empire together through the restoration of his power as the Sultan. It is in this period that Islamism, in addition to the Ottomanism of the Tanzimat, emerges as an ideology, one that was expected to provide the long needed political and social unity to the Empire.

As a pragmatist and modernist autocrat, Abdülhamid valued science and education in his belief in progression. A significant transformation that the Tanzimat enabled was the removal of the institution of education from the monopoly of a religious authority.[50] The Tanzimat reformers saw education as a vehicle to cultivate a consciousness of Ottoman citizenship. Girls of the Empire were given the chance to attend schools, learn reading, arts, and skills as citizens of the Empire. Similarly, Abdülhamid too understood the significance of education, using it "as an institution that would allow absolute monarchy to reproduce itself."[51] No wonder then it was under his rule that the greatest numbers of schools were opened in the history of the Empire. As the official ideology and history of the Empire were systematized and institutionalized through education, religious courses and service were rendered obligatory in schools. Abdülhamid promoted himself as the Caliph of Islam meriting unconditional loyalty, and to this end, the independent institutions of Islam, were replaced by an official Islam reproduced at the university under the complete control of the state and the Sultan.[52] The severing of Islam from the hands of such autonomous institutions as the *ulema* points to

[50] Mehmet Ö. Alkan, "Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi," 379.

[51] Ibid., 385.

[52] Ibid., 390.

the shifting notion of Islam within the singularity of the Ottoman modernity with effects reaching into contemporary Turkey.[53] As Deringil's analysis demonstrates, the Islamic conservatism of Sultan Abdülhamid II was grounded in a state-centered and subsumed Islam that significantly lost its autonomy.[54] Likewise, Mardin also notes that de-linking the discourse of Islamic theology gradually gave way to a populist Islamic voice that saw the seeds of political Islam.[55]

Despite increased level of policing of women's activities and wardrobe, [56] the growth of women's print culture continues.[57] If Tanzimat provided the forum for the women question around which mostly the reformist men and small number of elite women of the era converged, we discern the democratization of this field as more non-elite women began to actively participate in the conversation of the topic through the press and literature that reached to a wider readership across the empire.[58] Claiming a voice in the general public through writing, women of the era tried to prove their self-worth and worth for society at large. As might be expected, women's publications

[53] The body of Muslim scholars represented by the highest order of the Shaykh al-Islam traditionally responsible for the interpretation of the religious doctrines and law. Şerif Mardin conceptualizes this singularity in terms of "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism" in his eponymous article. Şerif Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism," *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 145-165.

[54] See note 48 above. Indeed, state's authorial mediatory position over religion prefigures the shape secularism would take later in the Republic. For an analysis of secularism in Turkey, see Chapter III.

[55] Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism," 156.

[56] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 28.

[57] For an account of the activity of the press and in particular women's periodicals, see Elizabeth Brown Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In," *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, 177-204.

[58] Ibid., 180-182.

inevitably reflect the effects of the spirit of the autocratic Islamicization distinguishing the Hamidian epoch. In line with the ethos of the era, Islam yields a recourse for arguments for women's (self-)worth. Zihnioğlu, for instance, takes note of the figuration of the woman of Islam within Fatma Aliye's writing, a virtuous femininity that embodies "an enlightened/progressive Islamic tradition/culture."[59] In the women writings of the era, women were donned with such qualities as "virtue, chastity, and high morality" with an Islamic hue.[60] In this regard, we could argue that the project of Tanzimat, the reconciliation of modernity/West and tradition/Islam, continues to animate the self-conceptualization of women with a reinforced Islamist substratum.

An important print archive that sheds light on women's activity in press from the era is *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* [*Journal Special to Ladies*], published between 1895 and 1908 for 614 issues as the longest running women's journal to this day in the Ottoman-Turkish national history. The journal had the support of women from various backgrounds and covered topics ranging from "women's issues, family, society, business life, educations, health, fashion," informing its readers on women's rights and movements across the world and in the West.[61] In its first issue, the goal of the journal is stated as twofold: "to serve in every way to expand the knowledge and raise the consciousness of our women" as well as "to showcase Ottoman women's natural

[59] Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 48.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid, 38.

abilities."[62] Recognizing women as "mothers of humanity," it draws an explicit parallel between women's situation and that of the nation because their schooling and education ensures the state of happiness of society in the future."[63] Thus, maternity continues to be the principle rationale for the calls and demands for the education of women within a conservative framework. As Efi Kanner puts it, "[*Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*] attempted to frame the social debate on gender relationships within certain limits that would be acceptable to the imperial authority."[64] Under a despotic regime, the journal embraced the ideology of the theocratic Ottoman monarchy, its writers expressing their loyalty to Abdülhamid and support for his reforms towards women's education,[65] as demonstrated in the editorial of the first issue of the journal.

A commonly held view is that the journal participates in the making of good Muslim Ottoman wives and mothers. Kanner, for instance, designates the journal's feminism as "moderate" rooted in the "[d]efense of Islamic imperial values" that arguably characterizes the feminist discourse of this period.[66] Significantly, this discourse develops within an anti-Western rhetoric that idealizes the moral superiority of Islamic civilization. From the appearance of the news of Western women's progress on the journal's pages, one could sense the process of selection being in effect in women's relationship to the West in forging, in Frierson's words, "a patriotic identity for women in

[62] "Tahdis-i Nimet—Tayin-i Meslek," *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, September 1, 1895, 2–3.

[63] Ibid., 2.

[64] Efi Kanner, "Transcultural Encounters," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (2016), 76.

[65] Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 50.

[66] Kanner, "Transcultural Encounters," 77.

their domestication and mastery of the foreign."[67] In this respect, for Muslim Ottoman woman, the western woman emerges as the referential other, one of the most salient expressions of which can be seen in Fatma Aliye's *Nisvân-ı İslâm*.[68] As Frierson goes on to suggest, "[t]he women's press shows how the aims of encouraging motherly, wifely, and religious virtues expanded into the far more ideologically charged enterprise of redefining Ottoman womanhood for a consciously modernizing age."[69]

Noteworthy here then is how quickly and thoroughly the women's movement adapted to the shifting political conditions when expressing their progressive demands, as it got absorbed by and spoken through an expanding print culture. As a result, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* was able to expose the significance of gendered modes of everyday life and women's social potential, cultivating in women the belief and aspiration that they could be successful in various aspects of social life.[70] More significantly, as women began to actively take advantage of the media infrastructure to debate and delineate the terms of their activism, they began to establish a women's print tradition by which "feminism's ideological and intellectual foundations were laid."[71] The materialization of a conceptual vocabulary indicative of a common and shared life amongst reformist women attests to the fact that the Hamidian Era represents a watershed moment in the

[67] Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In," 182.

[68] See note 45 above.

[69] Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In," 182.

[70] Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 31.

[71] Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 46.

Ottoman women's movement.[72] As we have seen above, media's political and pedagogic capabilities were at the forefront of Ottoman reformism, and the drive to modernization cannot be imagined apart from this kind of communicative modernity embraced by various factions of reformers including women.

The II. Meşrutiyet Era (1908-1918)

The turbulent Second Constitutionalist Era originated with the Young Turk Revolution, a military uprising that spread from the periphery, the Balkan provinces, into the center of the Empire. The Ottomanist Young Turks, organized secretly under a committee called *Ittihat ve Terakki* [Committee of Union and Progress] (CUP) against the despotism of the Sultan, forced Abdülhamid II to restore the constitution, declaring *hürriyet* [freedom] on 23 July 1908. In less than five months into CUP's victory in the general elections, the coup of the Young Turks produced its countercoup in support of the Sultan by conservative reactionaries on 13 April 1909. The countercoup was suppressed eleven days later by *Harekat Ordusu* [the Army of Movement] from Thessaloniki in an event known as 31 March incident, as a result of which Sultan Abdülhamid was deposed and his brother Mehmet V was put on the throne. While the ensuing constitutional changes ensured the independence of the parliament from the Sultan's reach, CPU did not hold complete power due to internal conflicts within the party and to the strong opposition of the rival party *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* [Freedom and Accord Party] (FAP). In the coup of 1913, CUP would overthrow the Grand Vizier of FAP government

[72] Examples include "'kadınlık alemimiz,' [our world of womanhood" 'nisvan-ı İslam,' [Women of Islam] 'tarih-i nisvanımız'[history of our women]*"* Ibid.

in what is known as the Raid on the Sublime Port, which allowed CUP to hold absolute power until the end of World War in 1918 when the party disbanded itself.[73]

The chronology of these events provides the framework for the conditions within which Turkish nationalism increasingly soared in the empire especially after the loss in the Balkan Wars and formed the basis of Republican nationalism. The celebration of the enactment of the constitution as freedom against the tyranny of Abdülhamid, the fear and demonization of the insurgence of sharia supporters as backwards, and the anti-dhimmi (anti-non-Muslim) ethos following the Balkan Wars anticipate the revolutionary, secular, and ethnocentric tendencies of the military-dominant Republican nationalism of the next period. It is essential to note, however, that in this era, Turkish nationalism conjoins Ottomanism and Islamism as the last ideological resort to save a flagging empire to no avail. Kerem Ünüvar therefore argues that CUP's ideology oscillates between Ottomanism –especially in the spirit of *hürriyet* during the early days of the constitution– and Islamism to consolidate and mobilize the Muslim peoples of the Empire, and yet also implements nationalist policies from the beginning of its absolute regime in 1913 and onwards.[74] The growing nationalism from this point on accelerated by World War I horrendously leads up to the Armenian Genocide of 1915 organized and executed by the CUP. As argued by Masami Arai, by the end of the war, the available strands of Turkish nationalism of the era –the one that dreams of an Ottoman nation and the other that

[73] For an extensive analysis of this period and especially the Young Turk movement and CUP, refer to M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 1995.

[74] Kerem Ünüvar, "İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 130.

dreams of a pan-Turkish nation independent of Russia– fail.[75] However, the nationalism of the era paves the way for the Republican nationalism by activating the long-lost national consciousness of the Ottoman Turks and Turkish pride.

The exchange of power between the Sultan and the CUP meant the shifting ideological reconfiguration of the state through the ongoing process of modernization. Key to this transfer of power was redefinition of sovereign power which was no longer held by the Sultan; rather, the dedication and loyalty of the subjects –now citizens–[76] was to be directed towards *vatan* [patria], nation, and state.[77] The social and legal reforms of this era aim to accord sacredness to these and such notions as "constitution, parliament, legislation, court, [and] citizen" that were in disuse in the Hamidian era,[78] but now began to be widely disseminated, constituting the novel values of the public domain. Foremost among these reforms is the freedom of the press enabling what Üstel designates as "the civilization of politics,"[79] forging a new public sphere for a participatory political culture. The CUP gives utmost attention to education in the making of this sphere through indoctrination as education becomes not only the state's but also the party's ideological apparatus. Both in the press and in schools, for instance, Abdülhamid's regime was

[75] Masami Arai, "Jön Türk Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliği," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce,* 194.

[76] As Füsun Üstel notes the political modernization of the period "necessitates a new political-public sphere and its actor 'citizen.'" Füsun Üstel, "II. Meşrutiyet ve Vatandaşın 'İcadı'," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce,* 167. As the title of her article suggests, modern notion of citizenship that the Republic inherits was invented in this period.

[77] Alkan, "Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi," 394-5.

[78] Ibid., 394.

[79] Füsun Üstel, "II. Meşrutiyet ve Vatandaşın 'İcadı'," 167.

registered as despotism against which the people stood up in the Young Turk Revolution.[80] Similarly, the counter-revolution that was quelled with the 31 March Incident was framed as both backward and anti-people.[81] In the meantime, the move towards secularization in the previous era –secularization as understood to be the state's control of religion– continues.[82]

This period bore witness to the first serious attempts of integration of women into public life within the secular-nationalist framework. In its earlier days, the CUP met the demands of women for public visibility mostly through educational reforms. For instance, elementary education became mandatory for girls once the primary and middle schools were integrated, and teacher schools even in higher education for women were opened. [83] Women therefore women emerge into the workforce as teachers in concentrated numbers. Despite these fundamental reforms in education, however, the civil code remained within the weakened sway of sharia law. While women's right to divorce was expanded, polygamy, though largely disdained as an institution and rarely exercised in practice, still remained legal for men,[84] indicating the heightened level of anxiety about traditionally defined gender hierarchies.

The spirit of freedom in the early days of the restoration of the constitution

[80] Ibid, 171-2.

[81] Alkan, "Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi,", 395.

[82] The primary instantiation of the secularization of the Ottoman state apparatus under the CUP rule is the rendering of the institution and position of the Shaykh al-Islam, the head figure of the law of sharia, ceremonial.

[83] Ünüvar, "İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme," 135.

[84] Ibid.

encouraged women to vocalize their demands –both existing and new– more robustly. In a sense, it is arguable that women began to form a counterpublic in the medium of print for the first time from the heyday of the 1908 revolution onward,[85] developing a language and an imaginary that challenge more explicitly the hegemonic patriarchal norms by deploying the very terms patriarchy establishes its hegemony. A case in point is the frequent citation of *kadın inkılabı* [women's revolution] used to express the radical aspirations of women in a variety of women's periodicals. The conservatism of the previous era as epitomized by *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* yields to a more liberal discourse that, as Kanner suggests, "argued for women's education and employment on equal terms with men, improvement of their legal status in the family and even the abolition of the veil" with a renewed attitude to the foreign other, including the suffragettes.[86] Despite the fusion between Turkish nationalism and feminist movement, the rhetoric of *kadın inkılabı* afforded Turkish Muslim women to view themselves as related to non-Muslim women both in and outside the imperial boundaries.[87] Clearly, the liberal atmosphere of the Constitutional Era presented the context for women to imagine and create a different world through which they recalibrated their relationship with both men and women. In the more than two hundred issues of the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası*

[85] Charles Hirschkind defines a counterpublic as follows: "a domain of discourse and practice that stands in a disjunctive relationship to the public sphere of the nation and its media instruments. Charles Hirschkind, "*The Ethical Soundscape*," 117. Also important to note here is the contextual constraints imposed on counterpublics, as pointed out by Michael Warner: "Counterpublics are, by definition, formed by their conflict with the norms and contexts of their cultural environment, and this context of domination inevitably entails distortion. Mass publics and counterpublics, in other words, are both damaged forms of publicness. . ." Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 63.

[86] Kanner, "Transcultural Encounters," 79.

[87] Ibid., 80.

[*World of Women*] (1913-21), we catch many glimpses of this desire to create a new world for women.[88] Openly embracing the term *feminizm* [feminism], the journal emerged as the most powerful representative of women pushing forward a feminist agenda, using the very concepts –liberty, equality and progress– through which the CUP had legitimized itself. However, they applied these terms to mount a sustained challenge to patriarchal norms within existing social, legal, and political contexts. Writing in women's journals as well as daily newspapers, women appeared as active agents shaping the public discourse while persistently demanding rights that would allow their social integration into public life.

Public debates around "the woman question" and women's subsequent participation in defining what gendered modernization would look like had been largely confined to print culture. However, one of the most distinctive phenomena of this period in the context of the Ottoman women's movement was the establishment of social organizations formed by women ranging from philanthropic to feminist ones that gave women the means to restructure gender roles and relations within Ottoman society. *Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* ["Ottoman Society for the Defense of Women's Rights"], the official organ of which was *World of Women,* was the most influential amongst them for women's movement of this period. Founded in 1913, the society's goal was to "realize the integration of women into social life [and] the participation of women into work force."[89] The society fought against traditions and

[88] Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 38.

[89] Ibid., 57-8.

restrictions that created inequality between men and women and kept women uneducated, calling for the reorganization of gender relations within family and society.[90] Demanding a social transformation, it also insisted on the right to divorce for women, the banning of polygamy for men, and discouraging arranged marriages.[91] This emphasis on the transformation of the familial and social lives of women rather than a quest for political rights is a crucial difference between Ottoman feminist movement and its counterpart in the West, which at this time was insistently demanding voting rights. Ottoman feminism embraced a conscious progressivism rather than the radicalism that characterized the Suffragettes, for instance.

Through these journals and organizations, Ottoman women assumed and promoted new identities –as writers, thinkers, feminists, editors, printers, social workers, teachers, etc.– beyond the roles of mother and wife, a development furthered by the socio-historical conditions of the period. Kandiyoti draws attention to the joint effect of "the rise of Turkism as a dominant ideology" and "the requirements of a war economy . . . on the social and economic policies of the CUP," which allowed women to emerge into workforce in even more diverse positions. The CUP already incorporated women's employment into its agenda for establishing a Muslim middle class, but it was the effect of the wars that intensified such mobilization activities. The Balkan Wars and the World War I provided a milieu conducive for women to take a more active role in public life and break down the separation of spheres of private and public life. With the advent of

[90] Ibid., 58.

[91] Ibid.

the Balkan Wars, for example, women began to work alongside men in the Turkish nationalist organizations and to get trained to serve as nurses, traversing the homosocial division of Ottoman life.[92] The loss of male labor during the Great War led to the need for the labor of women. During this period, "[t]he growth of female employment did not remain confined to white-collar jobs in post offices, banks, municipal services and hospitals but involved attempts at wider mobilisation throughout the Anatolian provinces," as women were called upon the workforce as workers.[93] A corollary development worth mentioning is that women's emergence into profession made them the targets of "first pro-natalist policies of the empire."[94]

To a large extent, the women's movement folds into and aligns with the thriving Turkish nationalist movement of the epoch. This reorientation points to once again the versatility of the Ottoman-Turkish movement, proving its artfulness in, to invoke Kandiyoti's acclaimed term, bargaining with patriarchy as per its ever-changing political composition. At this juncture, we must take into account the manifestation of the distinctions between the first and the second generation participants of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement. In addition to their socio-economic dissimilarities recorded by Kanner, we must realize the methodological variations that characterize the respective projects of each generation. Clearly, liberal discourses and social activism engendered first by the revolution and then the patriotism and the war economy of the constitutional

[92] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 30.

[93] Ibid., 31.

[94] Ibid.

era stand in stark contrast to the calculating Islamic conservatism of the previous period, a difference indicative of the rich terrain of feminist engagement.[95] More broadly, the ideological reorganization of this period in its melodramatic ups and downs begins to define the two polarities –of secular and conservative strands of politics– as opposed and deadlocked. The implications of this for *Vurun Kahpeye* are evident and provide the background against which Edib's punctum gains a critical force.

The Republican Era

With the defeat in World War I in 1918, the Allies –British, French, and Italian forces– occupied Istanbul, an incident that triggered the Turkish nationalist movement in Anatolia led by Mustafa Kemal. This movement was a turning point in a century long struggle to restore a disintegrating empire. The movement rallied around *misak-ı milli* [national pact], the declaration of national self-determination, passed by the deputies from the last term of the Ottoman parliament in 1920 that was unrecognized by Allied forces that shut down the parliament. Mustafa Kemal announced the opening of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, a call that channeled the supporters of the nationalist movement including deputies to flee Istanbul. The partitioning of the Empire with the Treaty of Sevres signed between the Allied forces and the then Sultan Mehmed VI and rejected by the nationalists defined the anti-imperial –in both senses of the word as against the Ottoman Empire and against the Western imperial forces– nature of the Kemalist movement that led to the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) with the

[95] This difference prefigures the divergent political priorities of the secular and Islamic feminisms of the republic

Allies and their proxies, chiefly Greece. Upon the beginning of peace talks, the new Grand National Assembly as the sole representative of the Turkish nation declared the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922 before the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne that ended the Turkish War of Independence.

With the proclamation of the Turkish Republic on October 23, 1923, the efforts of modernization that were once a means for imperial reformation became a wholescale campaign in the building of the nation state. As Ünüvar suggests, "Kemalizm ideologized modernization" with a series of radical reforms that aimed to modernize the society through the authoritarianism of a single-party state.[96] Under the totalitarian rule of *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* [Republican People's Party] party-state, the Kemalist regime passed a succession of laws whose goal was to establish a mode of western secular life. Some landmarks worth mentioning are the abolition of the Caliphate and of the Sharia law in 1924, the laws banning religious insignia between 1923 and 1934, including the famous Hat Law of 1925; the ban on the institution of religious covenants and dervish lodges in 1925; the introduction of the new penal law modeled after the Italian penal code and of the new civil code modeled after the Swiss civil code; adoption of the international time and calendar system in 1925, the Latin alphabet replacing the Perso-Arabic script in 1928, and the international unit system in 1933; and the passing of the Surname Law in 1934.[97]

---

[96] Ünüvar, "İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme," 140. Two short-lived attempts to transition to a multi-party democracy would be halted by the regime.

[97] The Kemalist modernization project is under the scrutiny of many studies on modern Turkey. Two important ones worth noting are Feroz Ahmad, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. 2, 2008 and Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 2004.

The War of Independence intensified women's patriotic activities, as exemplified by the establishment of the *Anadolu Kadınları Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Vatan Cemiyeti* [Anatolian Women's Association for Patriotic Defense] that led the mobilization of women from diverse walks of life.[98] Halide Edib herself become the female face of the national struggle not only at home but also abroad by running its propagandist campaign for the Western world. With the republic's foundation, the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement was completely subsumed under the republic's project of secular modernization. In Kandiyoti's words: "the woman question became one of the pawns in the Kemalist struggle to liquidate the theocratic remnants of the Ottoman state," leading to a discourse on and the project of "the new woman" in line with the Kemalist citizenship protocols.[99] While Edib was an active voice in these discussions, she did not subscribe to this project, which was instead taken on by Mustafa Kemal's adopted daughter Afet İnan. In *The Emancipation of Turkish Women*, İnan advocated republican feminism as an emancipatory return to the egalitarian pre-Islamic Turkish social identity.[100] The official Kemalist discourse on women has been a narrative of emancipation from their captivity under the repressive Ottoman rule under Arab and Persian influence, while dismissing the Kemalist regime's belatedness in granting full

[98] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 37.

[99] Ibid., 38.

[100] Afet İnan, *The Emancipation of the Turkish Woman*, 1962. İnan's place in the new republic has been examined in comparison to Edib in many studies. Ayşe Durakbaşa, for instance, identifies Edib as the "rebellious daughter of the republic," as opposed to İnan's domestication in service of the Kemalist patriarchal order. Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edib: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, 148. Further, Sancar views İnan as providing a role model for republican femininty in the form of a "child woman." Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 173.

enfranchisement to women until eleven years after the founding of the republic. Thus, within what Kandiyoti names as "the paternalistic benevolence of the Kemalist era,"[101] the new woman represented a break from a particular past with which the secular republic wanted to sever its ties.

The forging of the new woman suggests that feminism was now under the monopoly of the state. This state-owned feminism has two broad implications. The first of these pertains to a kind of historical erasure. While recent studies on the history of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement have revealed a longer history of feminist activism that dates back to –and even before– the Tanzimat,[102] in a rhetoric of genesis, the earlier phases that I have outlined above were entirely effaced by Kemalist historiography declaring the republic's ownership of women's struggles. Women's active participation in self-determination and definition via the expanding mediasphere of print and associational life is entirely obscured by the Kemalist elites who position themselves as saviors of Ottoman-Turkish women.[103] The ingenious ways in which Ottoman women

[101] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 41.

[102] A significant contribution to this scholarship is Didem Havlioglu's recent work on the poetry of Mihrî Hatun. Havlioglu uncovers a feminist praxis in Mihrî Hatun's emergence into the male-dominated 15th century Ottoman intellectual society. Havlioglu's study is an intervention that redates the roots of Ottoman feminism far before the Tanzimat. Didem Havlioglu, *Mihrî Hatun Performance, Gender-Bending, and Subversion*, 2017.

[103] Afet İnan is one of the leading figures in this historical erasure, becoming, in Sancar's words, "the mouthpiece for state feminism." Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 174. In *Atatürk ve Türk Kadın Haklarının Kazanılması* [Ataturk and Gaining Turkish Women's Rights], İnan weaves a narrative of genesis for women's political rights that begins with Mustafa Kemal, arguing that women in fact did not fight for political rights. Afet İnan, *Atatürk ve Türk Kadın Haklarının Kazanılması*, 1964. İnan took part in another official historiography project that came to be known as *Türk tarih tezi* [the Turkish thesis of history], which gave way to the Sun Language Theory. These state-sponsored pseudo-scientific endeavors put forward a universal mythos of genesis for the Turkish nation, holding that the Turkish race and language constitute the cradle of civilization.

negotiated the tensions amongst Westernization, nationalism, and Islam under shifting patriarchal regimes lose their significance in the uniformist feminism of the Republic. Inevitably, the traditionalist and conservative strand of feminism branching from the first generation of feminists would become significantly peripheral to this project.

Further, the state-owned feminism, as Kandiyoti implicates, hindered "women's autonomous political initiatives."[104] A case in point is *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* [Women's People Party] –later *Kadınlar Birliği* [Women's Union]– a suffragist group defending the political involvement of women in the making of the nation, as meticulously documented by Yaprak Zihnioğlu.[105] With a telling title, *Kadınsız İnkılap* [*Revolution without Women*] maps the patriarchal exclusions of Republican ideology through the example of Nezihe Muhiddin, the founder of *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*. The first ever political party to be proposed for the new republic, *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* transforms into, *Kadınlar Birliği*, a civil society organization fighting for the full political rights of women following the refusal of its application between 1923 and 1924. Like other independent social organizations, *Kadınlar Birliği* would be asked to close on account of the redundancy of civil society under the single party rule, while women would have to wait until 1934 to be granted political equality with men. Identifying a conflict between the early Republican feminists and the Kemalists, Zihnioğlu tracks this history by which the feminist movement got repressed, Muhiddin personally disreputed, *Kadınlar Birliği* suppressed, and women jettisoned from the political arena. As the Republic "realized the

[104] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 41.

[105] Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 2016.

women's rights revolution without women,"[106] Muhiddin was eventually rendered as a subaltern, a fate to be shared by many leading Ottoman-Turkish women including Fatma Aliye, and even Halide Edib, who would be lucky enough to speak out in exile.

Below, I will position Edib as an Ottoman-Turkish feminist and closely look at her feminist literature representative of the above-explained historical trajectory. As we shall see, however, Edib's feminism does more than assiduously bargain with patriarchal hegemonic structures. As her biography demonstrates, she does not shy away from transgressing the boundaries dictated by these dominant formations. Hence, her eventual excommunication from the Republic due to her loyalty to an Ottoman-Islamic heritage critical of Kemalist secularism and a fierce commitment to full enfranchisement, contradictory, untimely, and impossible attachments within the purview of the republic. I propose to read Edib's fictional writing as a site to explore not only her negotiations or contestations but also her transgressions of normative patriarchal boundaries. Thus, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s lesbian kiss that opens to a feminist Islamic utopia becomes the very expression of these transgressive attachments. A symbol of Edib's pivotal position striving to mediate Ottoman and Turkish feminisms, the kiss points to the problems posed by the authoritarian project of women's revolution without women, namely the gifting of rights that not only fails to collaborate women, but also abjects them when necessary.

Halide Edib As an Ottoman-Turkish Feminist

In the genealogy of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement, Halide Edib

[106] Ibid., 22.

arrives as an heiress to the legacy of Fatma Aliye, marrying the women's movement with the nationalist movement that took precedence over Ottomanist imperialism. As a second-generation member of this struggle, Edib carries on the project of negotiating the Ottoman/Islamic tradition with modern/Western sensibilities within the ongoing nationalist project of modernization, even as the figure of the woman of Islam gradually morphs into that of the Turkish woman in public discourse. With a life span that extends from the Abdülhamid Era to the Turkish Republic, Edib embodies the unfolding of Ottoman-Turkish feminism in both her writing and life, each uncannily mirroring the other, as she travels across the shifting patriarchal hegemonic formations. Again, we notice how critically the construction of a feminist subject relies on an expanded media infrastructure that at once publicizes the woman question and helps women assemble a gendered counterpublic to challenge this revolution without women. Edib's translations, essays in women's and nationalist journals, opinion pieces, articles, and interviews chronicle the (trans)formation of the Ottoman Turkish women's personal, social, and political subjectivity. In her publications on women, Edib's appeals to motherhood in the Hamidian Era provides the basis for her to calls for women's education. After the 1908 revolution, Edib advocates for women's participation in national life, gradually inviting women to conjoin men in the work towards national progress. Finally, Edib becomes vocal in her demands for women's full political rights after the founding of the republic.

Hamidian Maternity and Demands for Education

Edib first appeared in print with her translation of John Abbot's *The Mother at*

Home at the age of thirteen in 1897.[107] This translation, *Mader*,[108] earned her the Order of Charity presented by Sultan Abdülhamid II, a token of her feminism's relevance to Hamidian ideology. The preface, which includes a dedication to the Sultan, sheds light on Edib's interest in motherhood, an interest that defines the focus of her feminist engagement in this Era. The first paragraph of the preface delineates a social theory of motherhood that explains Edib's investment in the question: "Children are the hope of the future! The ones who give the first lesson, the first discipline to them are the mothers. That is why motherhood is a big, a very big duty. If a child grows deprived of discipline, society will receive not benefit but harm. But, who would be responsible in this case? Of course mothers!"[109] Through their duty to raise children, mothers serve as the crux connecting the individual with society. This dimension of motherhood as social reproduction confers to what might otherwise be regarded as a personal and familial matter a social functionality. For it is through motherhood that women gain their worth as human beings, commanding public respect. Abbot's text is a guidebook for mothers and reflects Edib's conceptualization of child rearing as a science –as captured by the title of her newspaper article "Fenn-i Etfal" [Science of Children] that she would write in 1909.[110] This meant that mothering was not an innate quality of womanhood but required knowledge and a set of skills and practices to be learned and professed. With this

[107] John S.C. Abbot, *The Mother at Home*, 1833.

[108] Halide Salih, *Mader*, 1897. Edib penned her writings as Halide Salih until 1910.

[109] Halide Salih, "İfade-i Mahsusa," *Mader*, 1.

[110] Halide Salih, "Fenn-i Etfal," *Mehasin*, no. 7 (March, 1909): 478-487.

translation, Edib imports and adapts a piece of literature around the epistemological field of child-rearing for Ottoman women.

The understanding of motherhood in terms of a science serves as the ground on which demands for women's education could be carried forward in the liberal atmosphere of the 1908 revolution. It is in this period that Edib emerges as a hyperactive intellectual and social reformer both in the letters and on the ground, first in the context of education and later nationalization. In an article emblematic of Edib's arguments on women's education in this period entitled "Beşiği Sallayan El Dünyaya Hükmeder" [The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rules the World"], "Schools to us! Schools! Schools!" declares Edib.[111] Edib argues that men should stop treating women as figurines imported for voyeuristic pleasure or as maids to ensure their comfort, for there is more important work for women to perform: it is only women who can provide the disciplining of conscience and morality needed by society, but in order to do so, they need education themselves.[112] Furthermore, women need education in the same matters as men so that their minds get used to "judgment, imagination, truth, and beauty," and thus affect "the decisions they will give in their lives, their impact on their husbands at home, and the discipline they will give to their children."[113] She sums up her point with an emphatic proclamation: "Men will fix this nation, but it is women who will fix men."[114] Edib, therefore, makes a case for

[111] Halide Salih, "Beşiği Sallayan El," *Tanin*, August 6, 1908, 3.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

women's education with reference to their renewed domestic duties with national significance. By this point in her writing, nation, a unitary idea of the empire, began to prominently figure, as Edib defends equal education for both genders because there are no distinctions under the umbrella term of Ottoman identity.

In an essay written for the women's journal *Mehasin* [*Beauties*], Edib argues that mothering should be the centerpiece of all calls for women's rights. While "history, health, social sciences, science, and even mathematics are as useful [to women] as the sciences of family management and childrearing," women should not neglect their "authentic duties."[115] She is wary that as "women shout 'our rights' today, they need to remember that this is not for themselves but for them to be able to provide the discipline necessary for their children."[116] Women need to learn the same topics as men and need to be able to translate them into the language of children "because they need to raise children who are free from false thoughts, with honest judgment."[117] She lectures women that "[a] woman is first an Ottoman, a patriot, the nation most unique, most profound point of worship in her. The nation's rights are a thousand times more important and more honorable than women's rights,"[118] speaking for and to the nationalist Ottomanism of the period. Edib's calls for greater access and opportunity for women were oriented not towards autonomy or sovereignty but rather so women could be better equipped to

[115] Halide Salih, "*Mehasin*'i Okuyan Kardeşlerime," *Mehasin,* no. 6 (February, 1909), 420

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

serve their highest function –materially and morally instructing the nation's future citizens. As a result of the increasing nationalization of the women question, Edib was recruited by the cadres of the CUP to lead, first, the development of the educational structure for women in Istanbul and, then, the reorganization of the schools for minorities in the Levant.[119] Though motivated by the need to make better mothers, the project of women's education paradoxically enabled women to assume a social identity beyond motherhood, an identity Edib embodied in her many roles including reporter for, inspector of, and teacher in various educational institutions.

Marriage of Turkish Nationalism and Women's Movement

In the meantime, Edib became a prolific and productive woman of letters, writing poems, short stories, novellas, while participating in the political debates around the growing nationalism of the era. Edib got under the influence of Turkish nationalism between 1910 and 1912 due to the uprisings in the Balkans, gradually leaving behind an

[119] Edib was an inspector to review the *Darülmuallimat* [Women Teacher's School] where she also served as a pedagogy instructor in 1911. She was recruited by Cemal Pasha to restructure schools for Arab students to preempt the French influence in Damascus and Beirut where Edib spent some of 1916. Later in that same year, she became a superintendent to Ayn Tura, an orphanage mainly for Armenian children. İnci Enginün, *Halide Edib Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı*, 41-49. For a detailed analysis of Edib's role in this school and Edib's shifting relation to the Armenian question, see Adak, *Halide Edib ve Siyasal Şiddet*, 23-79. Adak demonstrates that despite Edib's protests against Cemal Pasha about the CUP's educational policies of enforced proselytism, she took part in the project with the implied belief that their conversion served as a means of survival for these children, a decision criticized by Armenian scholars. Ibid., 41-47. The Armenian question was the primary issue due to which Edib had a fall out with the cadres of the CUP, beginning with Edib's letter of apology for the Adana massacre to Armenian citizens of the empire in 1909. Edib would become dissident and resistant to the policies of the CUP, especially after the Armenian genocide of 1915. Various accounts, including her *Memoirs*, report a talk in which Edib would criticize the CUP in front of 700 listeners at the Turkish Hearth in 1916, marking a turning point in her relationship with the CUP. Adak notes that Edib would turn to education from writing in these years of political violence and war, intimating a correlation between her dissidence and departure from İstanbul for Levant. Ibid., 35-40. Adak tracks the nationalist transformation in Edib's thought with respect to the Armenian question as Edib would later assume a position closer to the republican accounts of the genocide.

Ottomanist nationalism. By 1912, she was already publishing in *Türk Yurdu* [Turkish Home], the official organ of the *Türk Ocakları* [Turkish Hearth],[120] having gained prominence amongst the Turkish nationalists. In 1913, on the other hand, she founded, "the first women's organization … with a feminist orientation," *Teali-i Nisvan* [The Elevation of Women].[121] Targeting the social uplift of women, the society caused "an impact immeasurable by the number of its members."[122] We can consider the founding of this society as the first instance of Edib's efforts to merge women's progress with that of the nation's beyond the previously prescribed roles of wife, mother, and teacher. Edib's advocacy of women's public visibility in rejection of the assaults by the Sultan's supporters in the early days of the revolution evolves into a push for women's integration into the workforce within the nationalist project.[123] In "Türk Kadınları Hakkında" [On Turkish Women] dated 1919, Edib champions "the new Turkish Muslim woman's position next to the man within her national life," taking pride in those women who work honestly to feed their children, who walk for days with a kid and soldier's food on their shoulders, who toil silently and determinedly on the field, at home, and in trade to sustain

[120] A continuation of previous nationalist organizations, *Türk Ocakları* has been in existence since its foundation in 1912. *Türk Yurdu* has been in print on and off since its first issue in 1911. A significant motor of Turkish national struggle, both the organization and the journal are the living archives of Turkish nationalism. By 1912, Edib became an active contributor to the journal, gradually giving talks before male audiences in the organization where she would serve also as an administrator by 1918. Ibid., 42.

[121] Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 58.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Written in between the revolution of 1901 and the 31 March Incident, in "Kadınlar İçin," Edib, assumes an aggressive voice, a rare case in her oeuvre, in defense of women's public presence amidst attacks against them that are overlooked by the police. She even argues for the need for women's self-defense with weapons if the situation persists. Halide Salih, "Kadınlar İçin," *Tanin*. February 9, 1908, 2.

the Turk's life.[124] She labels those who are critical of the working women as enemies of Turks and Muslims aligning with the European orientalist vision, given how Turkish women unprecedentedly reconciled Islam and modernization.[125]

Edib would become a central figure, and by far the most important female one, for the national struggle towards independence, joining, in 1920, the resistance movement rallied by Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia. The new conditions instigated by the empire's loss of World War I –its partitioning by the Allies, especially the Greek occupation of İzmir in 1919, as well as the submission and complacency of Sultan Mehmed VI– definitively drove Edib towards an anti-imperialist militant nationalism defending the right of an independent Turkish nation to exist.[126] This new phase in her politics was marked by a series of public speeches she gave in Istanbul under occupation. Her oft-cited historic speech at the Sultanahmet Square before an audience of approximately 200.000 attendees speaks for the active role Edib played in mobilizing masses now on a larger scale through these public demonstrations.[127] Sentenced to death by Sultan Mehmed VI, Edib moved to

---

[124] Halide Edib, "Türk Kadınları Hakkında," 226.

[125] Ibid.

[126] By this point, Edib departed from the pan-Turkish inclinations of Turkish nationalism, redefining its "field of activity" with a call to "look to home" in serious trouble, foreshadowing Mustafa Kemal's Anatolian Turkish nationalism. Halide Edib, "Evimize Bakalım: Türkçülüğün Faaliyet Sahası," *Vakit*. For an analysis of this piece in the context of the debates within the nationalist circles, see Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*, 233-248.

[127] Halide Edib featured as a speaker in these rallies organized in Fatih, Üsküdar, Kadıköy, and Sultanahmet by the Turkish Hearth in response to the occupation of Izmir in front of a gender mixed crowd. Edib's legendary Sultanahmet speech was addressed on a podium on which the twelfth of Wilson's Fourteen Points asking for the sovereignty of the Turkish population in the Ottoman land was inscribed. Enginün, *Halide Edib*, 42. In this speech, Edib's Islamic anti-colonial rhetoric points to the ideological foundations of the national struggle. Linking the Ottoman past to the future of the new Turkey under the rubric of Islam, she reminds her audience that Muslims are their primary friends in this fight. And yet, she also refers to the conscientious individuals of the civilized nations as the second group of friends. Her

Ankara and took an active role in the front, mainly serving, amongst other duties, as the chronicler and the propagandist of the Turkish struggle for the Western media. Her contributions in the army would eventually be recognized by her decoration as a sergeant. With such milestones challenging the traditionally defined gender segregation of the Ottoman society –to an extent to infiltrate the all-male institution of the army– Edib, from 1919 onwards, set precedents for women in redefining their social status amidst national mobilization efforts. It would be on the premise that the Turkish women had already completed their social integration throughout the national struggle that Edib and other feminists would push their agenda for full political rights with the foundation of the new republic to no avail.

Edib's and the Ottoman-Turkish Movement's Predicament: State Feminism

Before we delve further into Edib's predicament in the Republican Era, it is worth mentioning how Edib herself historicizes the Ottoman-Turkish women's rights movement in order to assess her rationalization of women's political demands. Edib retrospectively reflects on this movement in her conferences and articles in English in the 1930s, casting its history in what we may call an evolutionary narrative, "slow up to 1908 and accelerated within the last twenty two years," thereby providing a "steadier and more serious" account of all the recent radical reforms of the Republic.[128] She argues that

---

renowned statement "Governments are our foes, peoples our friends, and the rightful rebel in our hearts is our strength," which draws a distinction between political institutions and ordinary citizens could be interpreted as a feminist intervention in conventional nationalism's totalizing masculine aggressiveness. "Felaket Karşısında Vahdet: Hak İsteriz, Yaşamak İsteriz." *Zaman*.

[128] Halide Edib, "Woman's Part in Turkey's Progress," *The Open Court* 46, no. 912 (1932), 226.

women's involvement in social and educational domains had a long history, while politics was a new arena. For her, the most significant characteristic of the women movement in Turkey is that it has been an organic part and parcel of the movement for national salvation, "an integral part of Turkish reform," which provides a universal model for the East.[129] This marks a stark methodological difference between the more democratic means of "the gradual emancipation of Turkish women and their evolution as useful and beneficial social units" and Western feminism that is "a revolt of one sex against the other's domination."[130] According to Edib, Western feminism did not take root in Turkey owing to two main reasons: first, unlike their Western sisters, "Turkish woman has never been under economic tutelage" as per the property rights given by the Islamic law.[131] This meant that "her entire struggle for freedom and equality [was] on social lines."[132] Second, the constant urgent and critical conditions within which the nation found itself rendered "women's service in progress as a necessity," a consensus shared across political differences.[133]

Edib's uneasiness with feminism as understood to be a Western mode of an aggressive sex war accounts for her segregation of the emancipation of Ottoman-Turkish women from a global feminist movement. Her writing career at home demonstrates this

---

[129] Halide Edib, "Turkish Women," *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, 219-220.

[130] Ibid., 219.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

uneasiness with a globalized feminism symptomatic within the Ottoman Turkish women's writing of the era. Edib's definition of feminism seems to be rooted in her unfavorable impression of the suffragettes during her visit to England in 1909. The militant methods they employed against men in their struggle were understandably too alienating for "a Turkish woman who had as yet no public experience."[134] Edib saw these methods as incongruent to the shape and form the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement took. On the contrary, the particularity of this movement required a co-dependence of sexes under the same national goal, whereas feminism would "sow discord between the feminine realm and the male realm."[135] In a gesture that emblematizes her promotion of dialogue between sexes in recognition of their interdependence in the nationalist struggle, Edib advises women not see men as an impediment to what women want to achieve; instead, women should stand to benefit from their good will.[136] As Ayşe Durakbaşa explains, for Edib, feminism that privileged one sex was too specific and too insignificant in the context of a broader movement.[137] Edib's feminism was secondary to her commitment to a vision of a free and strong nation. This future could only be built with the participation of everyone irrespective of gender, and thus the nationalist movement could not yet afford feminism.

At least, this was the case until the independence of the new Turkish nation. Edib henceforth became a firm believer that women's contributions to the national struggle

---

[134] Halide Edib, *Memoirs*, 293.

[135] Halide Edib, "Büyük Kadınlar," *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı*, no. 6 (September, 1917), 81.

[136] Halide Salih, "*Mehasin*'i Okuyan Kardeşlerime," 420.

[137] Durakbaşa, *Halide Edib: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, 198.

merited their recognition as equal citizens under the new regime. Although the adoption of the new civil code in 1926 brought new improvements to women's familial and social status, women's political rights would prove to be the field in which the new rulers were to remain by far the most hesitant and cautious. In a period of rapid and drastic social and political transformation and reforms, the founding fathers clearly did not want to reorganize the gendered field of politics. This full-paced modernization project engineered by the patriarchal state was indeed in disregard of the organic social evolution epitomized by women's movement and favored by Edib. The paradox posed by the radicalness of these reforms with respect to the Ottoman-Islamic heritage and their conservativism vis-à-vis the new woman drove Edib away from Mustafa Kemal towards political alternatives. Edib was gradually linked with the first opposition party of modern Turkey, *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* [Progressivist Republican Party] (PRP), founded by a group of reactionaries to Mustafa Kemal's increasing absolutist rule, including Edib's husband Adnan Adıvar in November 1924. She would deny the news of her affiliation with either political party in protest of their refusal to recognize the right to vote for women in their programs, citing lack of democracy due to lack of equal citizenship.[138] Assuming a distinctly oppositional stance against the men dominating the world of politics, Edib engages in the sex war version of feminism she once repudiated while using her public persona to promote women's rights.

Shortly, Edib would side with the PRP on account of the increasing dictatorial propensities of Mustafa Kemal's ideology. The regime's reaction to the first large scale

[138] "Halide Edib Kadınlara Rey Hakkı," *Vatan*, 23 April, 1924, 2.

social revolt against the secular republic, the Sheik Said Rebellion, a Kurdish-based pro-Caliphate uprising, would be harsh, culminating in the implementation of the first martial law, *Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu* [Law on the Maintenance of Order], and the resuscitation of the court-martials *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* [Independence Tribunals] to secure power and punish perpetrators. Edib would become a vocal critique of this process, describing the martial law as dictatorship,[139] a term with which she would identify the Kemalist regime in her exile. In June 1925, after the suppression of the revolt, the PRP would be banned on grounds of triggering religious sedition. Right before many members of the party would be court-martialed and imprisoned along with the hanging of six deputies under the pretext of an alleged assassination attempt targeting Mustafa Kemal in June 1926, Edib and Adivar left the country to live in self-exile until Mustafa Kemal's death in 1938. From then on, Mustafa Kemal would initiate Edib's denigration campaign, slandering her as *mandacı* [American mandate proponent], an ongoing stigma damaging her heroic service in the Turkish War of Independence.[140] *Ad hominem* attacks would ensue, especially after the publication of her memoirs *Turkish Ordeal* in which she criticizes Mustafa Kemal, alleging her unrequited desire for Mustafa Kemal and even her

[139] Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 169.

[140] Mustafa Kemal's allegation is based on an anachronistic evidence, citing Edib's 1919 letter preceding the inception of national warfare. Sent upon his invitation for methods with which to carry out the national struggle, Edib's letter proposed to consider the mandate option towards independence in light of Wilson's Fourteen Points while declaring herself to be in his service. Enginün*, Halide Edib Adıvar'ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı*, 54. Clearly, Edib jettisoned this idea with her participation in the fight for independence once the Turkish national movement found its course of action. However, this letter provided the basis for the campaign slandering her as *mandacı*, an allegation supported by her membership to the Wilsonian Principle Society founded during the war.

promiscuity with soldiers on the front. [141]

If Edib was able to recuperate at least some of her reputation, it was because she would use her intellectual credentials to reinscribe herself into the part of the history from which she was being effaced through lectures, conferences, interviews, and most importantly her memoirs during her years in exile. For Edib in exile, writing in English to the world, becomes a mode of resistance to the patriarchal state that denied her and the women the respect they deserved. Throughout these years, she was vocally critical of the radicalness of the Kemalist reforms, especially in its effacement of the Ottoman legacy, all the while refraining from granting complete political rights to women until the 1930s. Edib's writing from this period demonstrates her issues with the new regime as a Muslim Ottoman-Turkish woman through three focal points: the deferral of women's voting rights, laicite that ensures state control of religion, and the cultural amnesia the Kemalist reforms engender.[142]

Edib's fall out with Mustafa Kemal has larger implications for her feminist agency rooted in a in Edib's feminism. Thus far, with attention to women's presence in print media, I have conceptualized the development of the Ottoman-Turkish women's movement and Edib's feminism in the context of ever-changing patriarchal bargains, "set rules and scripts regulating gender relations, to which both genders accommodate and

[141] Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 170-1.

[142] Halide Edib, "Dictatorship and Reforms in Turkey," *The Yale Review* 14, no.1 (1929): 27-44. See also Halide Edib, *Turkish Ordeal*, 1928; and Halide Edib, "Woman's Part in Turkey's Progress," *The Open Court*, 242-60. In these writings and her interviews in English, Edib harshly criticizes the Kemalist regime, classifying it as a dictatorship under Mustafa Kemal and comparing his rule to that of Abdülhamid.

acquiesce, yet which may nonetheless be contested, redefined, and renegotiated."[143] Edib's biography, however, is rife with instances of resistances to, defiance of, challenges against the parameters determined by such patriarchal bargains limiting the horizon of her futuristic vision in a way that outdo the premise of her writings. In her everyday life, we see a woman who pushes against and, if needed, circumvents the patriarchal circumstances that delimit her feminist subjectivity.

The gap between her discourse on womanhood and her gender performance is most visible in Edib's public image, an image that also varies before Western and local audiences.[144] It is plausible to suggest that despite her vehement advocacy of motherood on which most of her feminist demands were predicated, Edib's public profile overall was far from that of a quintessential maternal figure featured in her writing. Having sent her two sons abroad at a young age, she in fact led most of her life remote from them. Instead of projecting an idealized mother image, she strikes us as a pioneering woman taking unprecedented initiatives within almost impossible situations. Just to name a few, Edib, in her childhood, secretly attended American College for Girls and graduated from the missionary school in 1901 as the first Muslim woman to do so. Very unusually for her time, she divorced her first husband because of his marriage to a second wife. Given the lack of educational infrastructure for women, she sought assistance from British

[143] Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Women, Islam, and the State*, 286.

[144] This split in Edib's profile between two mediaspheres proves Edib's awareness and use of media's potentialities in reaching masses with the recognition of varying public sensibilities. Reviewing Edib's long-lived presence in the Western press, one can see how Edib was conscious in fashioning a particular feminine image, an effort that was most effective during the years of national struggle. Edib was not shy in channeling the image of a female warrior, embodying in her persona the progressivist claims of Turkish nationalism to render the fight for independence more sympathetic for Western audiences. Edib's self-making project merits a thorough scholarly attention.

pedagogue Isabelle Fry in a letter she sent to the journal *Nation* in 1908, an act that sow the seeds of a lifelong transnational friendship.[145] Add to this Edib's active involvement in the field of politics contesting, as we have seen, gender segregation and hierarchies in male dominated social circles and public sphere as an administer, orator, and soldier. Indeed, Edib's dissident nature cannot be divorced from her transgressive gender performance. Blacklisted by the Sultan, parting ways with the CUP,[146] and deposed by Mustafa Kemal, Edib experienced adversity with every form of Turkish authority; her feminist praxis is embedded within her transgressive acts in each of these epochs and her reactions to these clashes as much as within her writings.

I emphasize the disagreement between Edib's discursive and performative self-making projects as a productive site to approach her complex feminism. The split we observe in Edib's persona itself already complicates the notion of feminist subjectivity by rendering it bifurcated and even inherently contradictory. Edib acts almost like a double agent, but this double agency refers more broadly to the inherited woman question itself, a question that is shot through not only with one challenge: how to remain a Muslim and become modern and how to contest and cooperate with patriarchy. However, very soon women's explorations and negotiations would get co-opted by the nationalist project that would coerce them to take part in a revolution of women where their own (double) agency is mandated. Thus, the homosexual kiss is the *punctum* of these structuring

[145] Halide Salih, "The Future of Turkish Women," *Nation* 4, no. 4, October 24, 1908, 149. Fry would later invite Edib to England where she spends her precautious retreat from Istanbul during the counter-revolution of 1909 after receiving death threats from the supporters of the old regime. Fry would also come to Istanbul to inspect and report on schools that Edib would translate and share with the CUP.

[146] See note 119 above.

binaries rife with contradiction and yet straightened out by the Kemalist regime and a literary critical apparatus developed in relation to it.

In this, I propose the field of fiction as the ideal site to read Edib's incongruous feminist subjectivity for reading practices that would complicate the simplified understanding of her feminism. At this juncture, it is worth remembering Talal Asad's critique of Benedict Anderson for focusing merely "on the significance of newspaper reading for imagining the nation as a community" in developing his notion of print capitalism.[147] When Asad draws attention to "the simultaneous growth of serialized novels published in periodicals and the enormous expansion in the market for imaginative 'literature' –both prose and poetry– that mediated people's understanding of 'real' and 'imagined,'"[148] he assigns literature a sense of imaginative autonomy from informative and communicative modes of journalistic writing. I find it necessary to extend the generic distinction that Asad draws within a national mediasphere also to the subgenres of imaginative literature when approaching so protean writer as Edib who explores multifarious modes and genres of literature in her oeuvre. Thus, as I turn to *Vurun Kahpeye*, I primarily read it as a melodrama, one that presciently allegorizes the reversal of fortune that allows us to relate to women now as partly victims –embodied by Edib's downfall from a sergeant whose name would be written on ballots by voters to a traitor whose statue at Sultanahmet gets dynamited.[149]

---

[147] Talal Asad, "Introduction: Thinking about Secularism," *Formations of the Secular*, 14n15.

[148] Ibid.

[149] In 1919 elections, first woman to appear in ballot boxes, Edib received a total of twenty-three votes from three cities in Anatolia thanks to a gap in legislature regulating candidacy conditions despite the absence of

The Melodrama of *Vurun Kahpeye*

As mentioned, the spectrum of Halide Edib's fictional works spans a wide range of genres and styles. For the purposes of this chapter, I will briefly lay out a categorization of her fiction in prose, based on literary historian Berna Moran's classification of her bibliography and its feminist reception. Edib's earlier novellas published between 1909 and 1913 represent a body of work that can be grouped as "psychological love" stories.[150] Revolving around psychologically complex characters mostly approached by the male narrators with a masculine focal point, these novels have abundantly been subject to feminist criticism especially around the characterization of her female heroines. This emphasis on Edib's figuration of female protagonists has been central to the reception of her work from her second phase that has a national outlook, including *Yeni Turan* [The New Turan] (1912), *Vurun Kahpeye* and *Ateşten Gömlek* (1923),[151] the last two of which are subsumed within the movement of National Literature and the genre of National Struggle novels. Traditionally, these texts are considered to

---

suffrage for women. Enginün, *Halide Edib Adıvar'ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı*, 56. The incident is telling of Edib's popularity during the formation of national struggle. Edib's effigy commemorating her name at the meaningful Sultanahmaet Square, the host of her historic speech, was destroyed and dragged along the street in 1970. Ibid., 77-8. To this day, within official and popular public discourse in Turkey, Edib's name is tainted with treason due to her alleged Americanism.

[150] These novellas are: *Raik'in Annesi* [*Raik's Mother*] (1909), *Seviyye Talip* (1910), *Handan* (1912), and *Son Eseri* [*Her Last Work*] (1913). Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, 118.

[151] Serialized in 1922 and printed as a book in 1923 in Turkish, *Ateşten Gömlek* was also published in English in two translations: *The Shirt of Flame*, translated by Edib herself, was published in the United States in 1923. Halide Edib, *The Shirt of Flame*, 1923. Translated by Maulvie Mohammed Yakub Khan, it was also published in India as *The Daughter of Smyrna* in 1932. Halide Edib, *The Daughter of Smyrna*, 1932.

exemplify Edib's portrayal of a sublime femininity that perfectly balances modernity and tradition; instead of foregrounding individual matters, the heroines of these novellas prove their virtue in their dedication to the national cause. For Moran, "this woman-image" (of the new Turkish woman) is Edib's particular contribution presented to its Turkish readers: Westernized and yet dedicated to national values, educated and independent and yet virtuous.[152] The phase that begins with the publication of *Sinekli Bakkal* (1936)[153] marks a turn in Edib's fiction. More philosophical than ideological, her fictional prose following this period has a more modernist outlook and composition.[154]

Belonging to Edib's second phase, *Vurun Kahpeye* has not been as critically acclaimed in secondary literature as its counterpart *Ateşten Gömlek*, which became even more popular at home thanks to its 1923 cinematic adaptation and abroad thanks to its translations into various languages including its two English versions. [155] The first novel based on the Turkish War of Independence, the latter has occupied a canonical place within Turkish literature as a well-written sophisticated text. [156] Overshadowed by the

---

[152] Moran, *Türk Romanına*, 119.

[153] *Sinekli Bakkal* was originally published in English as *The Clown and His Daughter* and later translated to Turkish by Edib herself. Halide Edib, *The Clown and His Daughter*, 1935.

[154] Moran, *Türk Romanına*, 120.

[155] Produced by Kemal Film and directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul, *Ateşten Gömlek* was one of the earliest, if not the first, War of Independence themed film of Turkish cinema. Enginün mentions finding in the archives a 1etter from 1924 by Goldywin Pictures declaring its interest in adapting the text, but no Hollywood production of *Ateşten* Gömlek exists. Enginün, *Halide Edib Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı*, 70-1n77. For information on its English translations, see note 151 above.

[156] In the most extensive monograph written in Turkish on Edib's work, İnci Enginün describes *Ateşten Gömlek* as "the most vivid and beautiful book of the National Struggle" in 1978. Enginün, *Halide Edib Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı*, 69. Thirty years later, Azade Seyhan repeats the same view, defining the novel as "arguably the best novel of the Turkish War of Independence." Azade Seyhan, *Tales of Crossed Destinies*, 18.

interest in *Ateşten Gömlek*, *Vurun Kahpeye* appears mostly in feminist criticism only in passing with reference to "the ideal woman" that protagonist Aliye represents in a line of characters within Edib's fiction. Deniz Kandiyoti, who traces the representation of women in the Turkish novel, remarks on these patriotic novellas as embodying "[t]he self-sacrificing comrade-woman [who] is also an asexual sister-in-arms."[157] For her, "the love of [these] heroines transcends individual, sexual love and represents a meeting of minds in the nationalist ideals."[158] The same idea is reiterated by Nazan Aksoy who considers these characters as "patriotic activist women" fighting for the greater social cause sacrificing their sexuality.[159] Finally, Hülya Adak expands on the deficiency of asexuality argument by suggesting that these women cannot express their sexuality because they prioritize the nationalist cause.[160]

Except for this typological criticism, *Vurun Kahpeye* to a large extent is shrouded in silence. Despite the critical silence around it, however, the novella has not been silent at all, leaving its mark within Turkish cultural modernity with three cinematic adaptations, its affective potency eventually culminating in the idiomatic coinage of its title that signifies unjust victimization. This disconnect between the public disinterest in the novella and its extended social life within popular imaginary, I would argue, is precisely due to *Vurun Kahpeye*'s melodramatic potency that purportedly renders the

---

[157] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women as Metaphor," *The State, Urban Crisis and Social Movements*, 149.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Nazan Aksoy, "Halide Edip Adıvar'ın Seviyye Talip'inde Kadın Kimliği," *Türk Edebiyatına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, 49.

[160] Hülya Adak, "Otobiyografik Benliğin Çok-Karakterliliği," *Kadınlar Dile Düşünce*, 167n9.

meaning of the text straightforward, explicit, and taken for granted. And yet, melodrama's structural excess is a receptacle containing tensions and contradictions that at the same time complicate the literalness of its meaning. In the case of *Vurun Kahpeye*, this literalness is expressed in the typological criticism of Aliye as representing of ideals of femininity. In what follows, however, I will present a reading of *Vurun Kahpeye* as a melodrama whose aesthetics undermines not only its own literacy but also its own normativity by turning to the surfacing of homosexual desire in a dream sequence that opens this chapter. It is with the reference to this queer moment that I want to explore the scope of Edib's feminist vision beyond the representational.

Let us begin with the summary of the story. Indeed, *Vurun Kahpeye* reads pretty much like a melodrama, as the female body transpires as a stage on which the competing politics of secularism and Islamism violently clash. The story describes protagonist Aliye's new life in a small western Anatolian town as a young idealist teacher at the peak of the national struggle against the Greeks. Her arrival in town immediately animates the existing tensions between the secular nationalists and the Islamist antinationalists. On the one hand, we have Aliye, her recently adopted parents, and her fiancé Tosun, a militia leader in the National Forces. Against this familial grouping, the text places the leading figures from the gentry and clergy whose waning power is further threatened by Aliye's democratizing force in the school and in town. The power struggle between the emerging new order and the dying regime materializes in the persona of Aliye and Hadji Fettah Effendi who provokes the public against Aliye on account of her immodest public appearance as a Muslim woman, for she does not cover her face. Hadji Fettah eventually

conspires against the nationalists by secretly inviting the Greeks into town in the absence of Aliye's fiancé Tosun. The Greek invasion of the town necessitates that Aliye assume the role of a secret agent to help Tosun save the town. Once the town is cleared of the Greeks, Hadji Fettah takes advantage of the chaos ensuing and provokes the locals to engage in a moral cleansing. This leads to the lynching of Aliye whom he slanders as a whore. The story ends with a reference to the Independence Tribunals at the end of which Hadji Fettah is hanged.

In the afterword complementing the most recent edition of the novella, novelist Selim İleri refers to Edib's "schematic" approach to *Vurun Kahpeye*, as opposed to her "analytical" approach to *Ateşten Gömlek*,[161] which helps us understand the construction of the text as melodrama in its deliverance of female victimization. For him, this scheme determines the division between the progressivist and the reactionary as graphed onto the opposition between the enlightened teacher and the fundamentalist clergy against the décor of the War of Independence.[162] Just like a true melodrama, *Vurun Kahpeye* registers its Manichean world in oversignification. From the naming to the physiognomies and physical attributes of its characters, the text somatically literalizes the intrinsic qualities of the characters to deliberately render legible the world divided between the good and the evil. Aliye (sublime), Tosun (young bull), Gülsüm (the name of prophet Mohammed's mother), Ömer (namesake of a caliph) are marked against Hadji Fettah Effendi and Tall Hüseyin Effendi whose bodily disfiguration undermines their

[161] Selim İleri, "*Vurun Kahpeye*: Birkaç İzlenim," *Vurun Kahpeye*, 210.

[162] Ibid.

virtuous names highlighting their hypocrisy. The terms İleri uses to describe the formal structure of the novella –schema and décor– further point to the melodramatic make-up of the story episodically staged by a narrator in a theatrical fashion.

The silence about *Vurun Kahpeye* may have something to do with this literalness that renders the text's meaning superficially self-evident. This melodramatic literality is accentuated with the assumed socio-historical documentary value of the text, if we consider the context out of which the text materializes. As mentioned previously, *Vurun Kahpeye* first appeared as a serialization in the newspaper *Akşam* between December 1923 and January 1924. Its readers would see the story framed within the news on the freshly founded republic. In fact, during this period, the pages of *Akşam* are dominated with the updates on the recent trials of the first Independence Tribunals of the republican era, the very courts referred at the end of the novella. Originally founded to prosecute antinationalist activities during the War of Independence, these courts were reactivated to prosecute the caliphate supporters in the second month of the republic. If these courts served as the crux anchoring the text to its moment, its author who had already published *Ateşten Gömlek* based on her experiences within the national struggle gave another reason for *Vurun Kahpeye*'s literacy.

We must recall that Edib's novel belongs to a longer tradition of media-use outlined above where the distinctions between news, polemics, and literature are constantly blurred during a period of rapid political and social transformation. This assumed proximity between fact and fiction folds well into an easy ideological interpretation of the text as depicting the harsh realities of the War of Independence

fought not only with the foreign enemy but also with the enemy within. In the anti-caliphate ethos in which it appears, *Vurun Kahpeye* reads as a secularist manifesto legitimizing the regime with an account of female victimization. To invoke Peter Brooks' account of melodrama, *Vurun Kahpeye* appears at the right moment, in the immediate aftermath of the foundation of the Republic, soothing the anxieties around a post-revolutionary secular world.[163] There could be chaos, but the moral order would be restored, the message of the text could be easily read.

Yet, as we have seen above, such "easy" readability is a hallmark of the novel as a direct form of politics seeking to both reflect the stakes of ideological conflict and provide the frames through which this conflict is to be read so that the reader can be recruited to the right side. We need to locate Edib's work as a melodrama in this highly rhetorical mediaspace. Melodrama as a political technology grants a legibility in the form of victims versus villains, but its structural excess can undercut this legibility and return us to inherent contradictions that the legibility supposedly seeks to manage. In this respect, the nightmare of the lesbian kiss upsets the secularist heteropatriarchal femininity that *Vurun Kahpeye* ostensibly promotes. It is undeniable that Edib identifies the ongoing sociopolitical conflict between the secularists and the conservatives undergirding the experience of Ottoman-Turkish modernity as foundational for the republic. While anxieties about modernization and gender –namely, the feminine body, its visibility in public, or more precisely, the degree of its public visibility– acts as the catalyst in this conflict, Edib's gender politics exceeds this political antinomy. Edib's overarching

[163] Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 1995. See especially Brook's introduction.

critique of patriarchy is apparent at the beginning of the novel as we find out that Aliye's predecessor has left the town having been slandered as a slut by no other than the Superintendent himself for not sexually submitting to him. In fact, Ömer Effendi volunteers to host Aliye in order to save her from his predation, but Tall Hüseyin replicates the same gesture by collaborating with Hadji Fettah following Aliye's rejection of him. Thus, Edib's critique extends also to the old and degenerated secular institutions of the Empire –bureaucracy and the gentry– as represented by these figures.

More significantly, Aliye's predicament, that is, her melodramatic victimization, has also a lot to do with Tosun and the nationalism he represents: Aliye is in love with a man who loves his nation more than his fiancé. As a matter of fact, Aliye confesses that she loves Tosun more than she loves her nation.[164] And yet, when Tosun is cornered in his secret visit to Aliye, he regrets jeopardizing a more sacred mission for a caprice of his heart, for "this selfish love" for which he imperils his nation, his army and thousands of Turks.[165] Upon realizing Tosun's frustration, Aliye is emotionally manipulated and guilt-driven to the idea of sacrifice not for the nation but for the man she loves, offering to manipulate the Greek commander's feelings for her, risking her chastity, and even her life. Aliye's resentment is palpable in the narration of this scene, as well as her recognition of the true nature of her deed: "This hopeless girl was doing the very same horrible sacrifice she defied six month ago for his love of nation that rivals her in his

[164] Edib, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 177.

[165] Ibid., 173.

heart."[166] Tosun welcomes this decision by saying that he does not know any soldier more heroic than Aliye, introducing another discursive category attached to Aliye especially after her death: hero. Aliye's heroism would lead to her lynching in the name of Islam as Hadji Fettah distortedly publicizes her amorous sacrifice as immoral treason. Stuck in between two labels, slut and hero, Aliye, *Vurun Kahpeye* demonstrates, cannot develop her subjectivity and agency based on personal desire, something that is further emphasized by the mere number of epithets that name Aliye. Between slut and hero, Aliye is also called Emine by her adopted parents with reference to Prophet Mohammad's mother and their deceased daughter and nicknamed "the devil's daughter" by the Greek commander Damyanos. *Vurun Kahpeye* thus exposes the discursive hold of patriarchy that repeatedly cites the female body as a "slut" or a "hero" irrespective of its political predilection.

It is via this patriarchal critique that I wish to revisit the nightmare of the lesbian kiss. The scene of the homosexual fantasy builds on Aliye's encounter with that unnamed widow earlier in the mosque. Along with the all the residents of the town, Aliye goes to mosque to attend the Mevlid ceremony performed by a *Dede* from İstanbul traveling through the town.[167] Starting from the inspirational performance of the

[166] Ibid., 178.

[167] Mevlid refers to the recital of "Mevlid-i Şerif," a poem written in Turkish by Süleyman Çelebi during the fifteenth century narrating the birth of the Prophet. Traditionally, Mevlid is a ritual observed to commemorate the deceased during funerals and death anniversaries in Anatolia. In *Vurun Kahpeye*, Mevlid is arranged by a father for the martyrs of the War of Independence on behalf of his two sons. *Dede*, on the other hand, is a religious rank in both Mevlevi and Bektashi orders. The Mevlid episode provides an alternative account of Islam with folkish and Sufi inflections to the Sunni orthodoxy represented by Hadji Fettah, as explained by Aliye: "The Dede's profound face, beautiful voice shook her with the ecstasy of a saint. However, only a couple days ago, another man, a religious man of virtuous duty, had her experience

beginning section entitled *Veladet* [birth] praising Prophet Mohammed's mother Aminah, Aliye is transported with tears, "understanding for the first time like a woman the sacredness of womanhood, the suffering and happiness of birth which is the most profound omen of life and nature."[168] As she continues to experience "the greatest secret of the soul, of the body of the woman and the mother" in her bones[169] in a transfixed unison mediated by the recital, she catches a glimpse of the widow who has been outcast by the other women of the town. The widow, Gülsüm reports, has been stigmatized as a whore due to her pretty face after her husband's death, called to dance in festivities in town. Aliye witnesses that even at the mosque, she is not served the candy that has been passing around. In the spirit of the moment that fills her with an "infinite compassion and tolerance," Aliye, who finds this exclusion at odds with that very spirit, walks up to the woman and hands her the candy herself to the bewilderment of the rest of the women.[170] This display of public act of affection honoring the woman shamed by the rest of the believers in the room is reciprocated when the widow kisses Aliye's hand in gratitude and out of respect outside her house.

Thus, the lesbian kiss takes place between two marginalized women, which is underscored by the Mevlid episode where Aliye acts out of compassion to the widow in front of other women who are not like them. As such, Edib redefines heroism by linking

---

hell and torment. How is it that Hadji Fettah Effendi pulls such nightmarish torment and torture out of a religion filled with such compassion and goodness." Ibid., 85-6.

[168] Ibid. 86-7.

[169] Ibid, 87.

[170] Ibid, 88.

it with compassion as an Islamic virtue. "Our Prophet begged for his sinful community on the night he was born, are you greater than our Prophet," demands Aliye, suggesting that judgement belongs to none and redemption is for all.[171] Aliye's heroism is about extending compassion to a socially rejected woman even discriminated under the roof of a mosque. In this respect, Edib's feminism can be said to wage for a particular group of women, those who are single or widowed and victimized merely for that reason. In a novella set in Turkish War of Independence, Edib brings to focus of the nation the otherwise socially abject, pointing to an affective alliance of social outcasts categorized under the rubric of the whore lie Aliye, her predecessor, and the widow.

The affective bonding between the two women captures a feminist utopic vision, an ephemeral vision pivoted around the figure of Amina, that transcends the patriarchal limitations imposed on these women. Strikingly, the text presents this vision almost as a substitute to Tosun's love marked with absence and impossibility. Similar to the timing of the lesbian kiss that displaces Tosun's expected kiss in Aliye's dream, the widow materializes as soon as the prospect of maternity with Tosun emerges as an impossibility: "With a strange and mental and perhaps solely spiritual lucidity, she thought of the impossibility of the actualization of this exquisite feeling."[172] Without further reflection and right after this sentence, the focal point shifts to the widow Aliye notices kneeled against the wall behind the lines of women preceding Aliye's act of compassion. Considering the sequentiality in the narration, the text advances Aliye's gesture enabling

[171] Ibid., 89.

[172] Ibid. 87.

the social recognition of the widow as almost expanding the notion of birth, as compassion rivals procreation.

The same pattern is repeated at the end of the novella as Edib dedicates Aliye's last vision to the same woman right before she dies during her lynching. Edib, through Aliye's stupor, stages this violent scene as a scene of sacrifice set in the Feast of Sacrifice as Aliye is described as a lamb. While some members of the crowd attempt to halt the killing, some support it by yelling "Chop her, chop her; for the nation, for the penance of the town chop her."[173] With this, Aliye's thoughts are driven to Tosun, for "the nation was Tosun," and Aliye reckons with death, as "good might be born like a child out of torment, sacrifice, and death."[174] It is at this juncture that the vision of the widow appears, telling Aliye "do not fear" against the backdrop of a quatrain from Mevlid performed by the Dede[175]. With this, "Tosun and the thousand delicate and beautiful things Tosun represents flickered in her soul and took off"[176] Once again, the widow thwarts narration at the most unexpected moment when Aliye envisions death as birth enabled by the widow.

But what does this pattern mean? Clearly, Edib envisions Aliye's melodrama in terms of an impossible love overdetermined by social conditions that render Tosun emotionally unavailable for Aliye. Just to reiterate, Aliye loves a man who loves his

[173] Ibid., 199.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

nation more than Aliye. And yet, alongside this impossibility, another impossibility strikes us: a feminist alliance that lies not only beyond available political realms and outside the conditions of possibility of the novella's world. The dream that immediately follows the Mevlid episode only emphasizes this impossibility through the lesbian kiss. What renders the homosexual kiss an impossibility is not different from what makes this friendship unviable within the strictures of patriarchy. In *Vurun Kahpeye*, Edib unveils the workings of heteropatriarchy in curbing female agency and solidarity, a project to which not only Islamist but also secularist ideologies are indebted as heteropatriarchal projects. We have seen this with how alliance towards national independence has been forged on women's labor but with the goal of excluding them. The patriarchal quarantine of the site of politics was a collaborative project between the political fractions of the nation.

In conclusion, it is the melodramatic mode that allows Edib to point to a feminist vision beyond the patriarchal order in which she is entangled, a vision of excess that is close to her gendered performance that cannot find its place discursively outside of the fictional space of literature within the media network. It is melodrama as a gendered genre of excess that accommodates Edib's vision. Melodramatic excess can be found not solely in the body of its subjects or the visceral reactions of spectators,[177] but first and foremost in the very structure of melodrama that always creates its own abject through its

[177] Peter Brooks designates melodrama also as the mode of excess with reference to the non-verbal signification of meaning through the body. See Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 1995. Linda Williams, on the other hand, defines melodrama as a body genre with attention to melodrama's effect on the audience's body elliciting physical reactions. See Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1991): 2-13.

dialectics. Jonathan Goldberg calls this the "queer contradiction" inherent in melodrama, a situation that cannot be translated into and resolved within the Manichean world of melodrama.[178] The unnamed widow and the fantasy of the lesbian kiss denote that very field, marking the queerness that Edib's feminism embodies in its resistance to the (hetero)patriarchal imaginaries of the nation state. Thus, on the one hand, *Vurun Kahpeye* anticipates the melodrama that awaits Edib two years before her disposal from the national stage by Mustafa Kemal. And yet, it also hints at Edib's feminist praxis that outdoes the "law of the father" in its imaginings through writing. On the other hand, Edib lends a queer melodrama to the nation that continues to live in many forms and formats within the experience of Turkish modernity always in excess of its normative framework.

[178] Jonathan Goldberg, "Preface," *Melodrama: An Aesthetics of Impossibility*, x.

CHAPTER III

VURUN KAHPEYE (1949): INFRASTRUCTURES OF SECULARISM

In his seminal *Formations of the Secular*, Talal Asad arrives at his definition of secularism via a discussion of the work of media:

> The modern nation as an imagined community is always mediated through constructed images. When Taylor says that a modern democracy must acquire a healthy dose of nationalist sentiment he refers to the national media –including national education– that is charged with cultivating it. For the media are not simply the means through which individuals simultaneously imagine their national community; they *mediate* that imagination, construct the sensibilities that underpin it. When Taylor says that the modern state has to make citizenship the primary principle of identity, he refers to the way it must transcend the different identities built on class, gender, and religion, replacing conflicting perspectives by unifying experience. In an important sense, this transcendent mediation is secularism.[1]

For Asad, then, secularism is analogous to media in that they both mediate social differences towards homogenous omnipotent signifiers in distinct realms: the former towards the imagined nation and the latter towards the making of the citizen. I wish to follow Asad's conjectures about the implicated relationship between secularism and media by volunteering an instantiation of the collusion of these tangential trajectories in the context of a nation state whose founding principle is arguably secularism. Turning to 1949, I will demonstrate how cinema, at the moment of its evolution as an industry proper in Turkey, emerges as a medium through which not simply a secular national community is imagined, but also ideal forms of citizenship gets articulated. Moreover, in this account, cinema participates in the disciplinary project of secularism that shapes the sensibilities, behavior, and disposition of national imagination, knowledge, and

[1] Talal Asad, "Introduction: Thinking about Secularism," *Formations of the Secular*.

subjectivity strikingly without state ownership and sponsorship.

This chapter is centered on Lütfi Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* to show how cinema, through the grammar of melodrama, enables a certain kind of mobilization that is essential to secular nationalism.[2] The possibility of such mobilization, I argue, entails, first and foremost, a laying out of a prototypical distribution mechanism that ensures the film's widespread dissemination throughout the country. Thus, narrating the distribution history behind the exhibition of the film, I will demonstrate how the cinematic infrastructure built around *Vurun Kahpeye* mediates the project of secularism through engendering affects on a national scale. In this, I will uncover a debate around the release of the film that reveals an emotionally divided audience by focusing, on the one hand, on the exuberant celebration of the film in the mainstream, and, on the other, on the sense of injury it causes within the Islamist circles. The dismissal of the calls for the censorship of the film, in essence, plays out *Vurun Kahpeye*'s narrative of national genesis that designates the kinds of bodies improper, unworthy, and obsolete with respect to the secular nation.

Telling the story of *Vurun Kahpeye* with attention to this infrastructural history brings to light the moment in which cinema emerges at the epicenter of social conflict in the nation. For the first time ever, the moving image matters with stakes that are worth fighting for such that cinema appears as a fault line across which the difference between the secular and religious is consolidated such that they translate into identity categories of

[2] *Vurun Kahpeye*, directed by Ömer Lütfi Akad. (1949).

secularists and Islamists.[3] That the pious subjects of the nation refuse to be mediated as per the image in this instance proves, as it were, that secularism is doing its job of turning religious belief into identity: the Islamist. This is the very moment of the production of a mass public and another that draws attention to the mediatory nature of the political through the instance of media. In this respect, cinema appears as a medium through which not the projection of a nation produces its own population. Thus, it can be argued that *Vurun Kahpeye* occasions the materialization of the imagined community of the nation. Scholars, like Umut Tümay Arslan, have long noted cinema's, especially melodrama's, centrality to the nation as it configures a collective memory and identity by providing the images and sounds that we deem "us" and that produce the feeling of "us" at once.[4] Much as cinema is undeniably the primary factory for the production of a national imaginary and belonging, it also, as the story of *Vurun Kahpeye* instantiates, functions as a technology to assemble a national body politic by shaping sensibilities, mobilizing subjects, and consolidating affiliations. By attending to the infrastructural development, industrial transformation, and institutional formation of cinema to which *Vurun Kahpeye* gives rise, I examine the conditions of membership to this body politic in order to historicize the process by which certain bodies count as "us" and others fail to do so.

[3] Indeed, cinema had previously incited religious sensibilities. For instance, a group of dervishes from the Bektashi order had raided the set of Muhsin Ertuğrul's *Boğaziçi Esrarı* / *Nur Baba* during its production in 1921 based on a hearsay that a film against the Order was being shot. Rakım Çalapala, "Stüdyoya Baskın," *Yıldız*, August 1, 1944. However, the reaction in this example is not mediated by the cinematic image itself. As will be demonstrated below, I am referring to a particular critical relationship with the image.

[4] Umut Tümay Arslan, *Bu Kâbuslar Neden Cemil?* 14. Ibid, 76.

My discussion runs through three different scenes that structure this chapter. The first section of the chapter, entitled "Lynching," provides a reading of *Vurun Kahpeye* as a sensational melodrama that conceives of a paranoid male audience through the figuration of female precarity. The next section, "Shooting," focuses on the distribution system that enables the film's encounter with this audience, resulting in *Vurun Kahpeye*'s momentous mass popularity and canonicity. "Injury," the final section of this chapter, unearths the undermined adverse reactions to the film in the Islamist press that stem from the depiction of the treacherous turbaned figure. Before I proceed, I wish to frame my discussion of the film with a few words of clarification on secularism in Turkey, its effect on cultural politics of the state, and its unrecognized kinship with cinema.

Roughly understood as the separation of church and state, secularism defines the redefinition and replacement of religion in modern society. Secularism takes a unique shape within the foundational ideology of the Turkish nation state, Kemalism, which aims to establish Turkey as a modern country belonging to the western world. To do so, Kemalism, derived from the name of the founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, attempts to severe all the ties with the former Ottoman Empire that the new Turkish Republic replaces.[5] This, of course, includes a revised relation to Islam, the official religion of the Ottoman Empire, by adopting and implementing a strict and hard form of secularism, a version of French secularism, *laïcité*. Accordingly, Kemalist state policies have since the foundation of the Republic targeted the removal of Islam from public to private sphere by means of social, legislature, and legal reforms regulating the way

[5] A brief history of this process can be found in the previous chapter.

religion is practiced in the modern nation state. In the words of Charles Taylor, secularism operates as an "authoritarian programme designed to diminish the hold of religion on masses" in Turkey.[6] Taylor's description aptly points to a tension between a secularist ruling elite and the Muslim populace, a tension that has been played out in favor of the secularists owing to the Turkish army's hold over politics until very recently in the longer history of the nation. As the history of coups in Turkey illustrate, secularism is militantly enforced by the army that is the absolute guardian of the Kemalist ideology.[7]

It must be noted that there is a fundamental paradox in the enactment of Turkish secularism. The problematic inherent in Turkish secularism is that it emerges as the conflation of two historical modes of secularism that Taylor follows in his important study. On the one hand, the state claims to occupy the site of "political morality" neutral to religious differences.[8] Indeed, an axis that extends from the Edict of Gülhane (1839) and Ottoman Reform Edict (1856) of the Tanzimat to the abolishment of the Caliphate (1924), to the removal of Islam as the official religion of the Turkish Republic from the constitution in 1928, and finally to the introduction of secularism to the constitution in 1938, the Ottoman-Turkish history attests to de-Islamization efforts en route to the separation of church and the state. And yet, on the other hand, the state to this day continues to sanction Islam as the official religion of the country through the Presidency

[6] Charles Taylor, "Modes of Secularism," *Secularism and Its Critics*, 37.

[7] This history of coups indeed precedes the nation-state, dating to the Young Turk revolution of July 1908 when the army raised arms to Abdülhamid and restored constitutional monarchy, entering the scene as a secular political force. Even as allegedly organized by the religious leader Fethullah Gülen, the recent coup attempt on July 2016 was put in motion in the name of secularism.

[8] Ibid., 33-35.

of Religious Affairs that produces a version of Islam in line with the agenda of the various social reforms that privatize Islamic religious practice.[9] Thus promoting an institutionalized legitimate Sunni identity defining Turkishness, the state invalidates its claims to neutrality vis-à-vis religious difference. Therefore, to go back to Taylor's historiography of secularism, we note the deployment of "the independent ethic" (political morality) approach as a means to achieve secularism as "the common ground" model insofar as it is only based on a strictly regulated moderate form of Islam. In short, in Turkey, secularism signifies redefinition and repositioning of Islam as endorsed by the state.

The secularist interventionism of the state is also evident in the cultural domain, a domain considered not only reflective of a national mold but also instrumental in the disciplining of national subjects. The Kemalist regime was extremely keen on redesigning the cultural milieu of the new Republic as much to create a secular national culture as to shape public sensibilities.[10] Thus, Kemalist cultural politics involved a

[9] *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, Presidency of Religious Affairs, was founded in March 1924. Historically speaking, the Presidency replaces the Shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman State in the new Republic. The Presidency was founded to carry on the mission of the previous institution in administrating "the affairs related to faith and worship of the religion of Islam." "Establishment and a Brief History," Presidency of Religious Affairs, https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/en-US/Institutional/Detail//1/establishment-and-a-brief-history.

[10] A letter sent to Walter Benjamin by Erich Auerbach from İstanbul, his exilic home, documents the situation through the eyes of an outsider:

> Yet [Ataturk] has had to accomplish everything he has done in a struggle against the European democracies on the one hand, and on the other against the old Muslim, pan-Islamist sultan economy, and the result is a fanatical, antitraditional nationalism: a renunciation of all existing Islamic cultural tradition, a fastening onto a fantasy 'ur-Turkey,' technical modernization in the European sense in order to strike the hated and envied Europe with its own weapons. Hence the predisposition for European exiles as teachers, from whom one can learn without being afraid that they will spread foreign propaganda. The result: Nationalism in the superlative with the simultaneous destruction of the historic national character. This configuration, which in other

systematic disposal of traditional aesthetic forms and a cultural heritage belonging to a linguistic, ethical, and spiritual standards of a bygone era, in addition to the cultivation and institutionalization of modern aesthetic and cultural practices.[11] This was the Kemalist cultural nationalism that had been formulated by sociologist Ziya Gökalp from the second half of 1910s onwards. Gökalp proposed a synthesis between *hars* and *medeniyet*, culture and civilization, a binary signifying a national tradition and morality purged from Arabic and Persian influences (content) and a West reduced to its science, technology, and means and methods (style).[12] The domain of music was the ultimate playing ground of Gökalp's theories as the regime took a keen interest in its regulation. For instance, *alaturka*, Ottoman classical music, was first withdrawn from the curriculum of the state conservatory in 1926 and later banned from radio broadcasting for eight months in 1935.[13] In the meantime, the state began to sponsor the education of what would later become the nation's first Western classical music composers in Europe

---

> countries such as Germany, Italy, and indeed also in Russia (?) is not yet a certainty for everyone, steps forth here in complete nakedness. The language reform —at once fantastical ur-Turkish ("free" from Arabic and Persian influences) and modern-technical— has made it certain that no one under 25 can any longer understand any sort of religious, literary, or philosophical text more than ten years old and that, under the pressure of the Latin script, which was compulsorily introduced a few years ago, the specific properties of the language are rapidly decaying. Auerbach to Walter Benjamin, in "Scholarship in Times of Extremes," *PMLA* 122, No. 3 (2007), 751.

[11] For a detailed analysis of the Kemalist cultural policies, see Orhan Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, 370-418.

[12] Ibid., 374-380. Like many scholars who note the significance of Gökalp, Koçak suggests that "Ziya Gökalp formed the program of Turkish cultural revolution." Ibid., 376. Koçak demonstrates Gökalp's long-lasting influence in cultural policies after providing the terms to debate the historical tensions around culture. While Gökalp is commonly cited in literature on Turkish cultural history, a selection of his essays is available in English. See Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, 1959.

[13] Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," 393.

through bursaries.[14] In this case, state censorship and sponsorship worked hand in hand to mold the national characteristics and social dispositions with regards to musical taste.

As Martin Stokes emphasizes, "the state invested heavily in the production of a new national music" especially by means of national radio and television throughout the experience of republican modernity.[15] Considering the intensified efforts to shape the acoustics of the nation, cinema's unnoticed relationship to secular nationalism is not unwarranted: cinema had no place in the creation of a national culture. It is plausible to argue that because the Kemalist regime failed to take note of the potentiality of images, its cultural politics did not directly target cinema. In fact, for a long time, the state had no real interest in cinema, as registered by the title of a disproving essay published by Tuncan Okan as late as 1973: "The Only Art Form Deprived of State's Interest: Cinema."[16] The Turkish film industry was subject to a rudimentary regulation of cinema through what Savaş Arslan defines as "a continually changing and politically volatile system of control and censorship."[17] And yet, as Arslan notes,"cinema in Turkey, despite governmental control and censorship has not been made into an instrument of the government."[18] Thus, as the cries for state support for cinema demonstrate, we cannot

---

[14] Ibid., 406.

[15] Martin Stokes, *The Republic of Love*, 17.

[16] Tuncan Okan, "Devletin İlgisinden Yoksun Kalan Tek Sanat Dalı: Sinema," *Milliyet Sanat Dergisi*, October 1973. 6-7.

[17] Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*, 9. It was not until 1939 that censorship was centralized with a board of controllers comprised of public officials. Despite changes introduced to the regulation at various times, the board was technically in effect until 1986. Ibid. 51-2.

[18] Ibid., 6.

really speak of the deployment or promotion of cinema for visualizing secular nation state.

In fact, as Arslan mentions, the lack of state sponsorship of cinema lent a leeway for cinema to develop "outside the purview of the conventions of cultural westernization that limited other arts."[19] While private sector enabled a certain kind of autonomy for the industry whereby audience taste prevailingly shaped cinematic aesthetics, the practice of auto-censorship provides significant clues about the ideological leanings of those who were primarily involved in cinematic production. Arslan suggests that "[o]fficial censorship policies were strengthened by a self-censorship born of the ideas of tutelage and loyalty to Kemalist principles, especially during the early years or foreign film post-synchronization (dubbing)."[20] That cinema in Turkey was initially produced by those committed to republican ideology and norms has a historical explanation that we can find in Okan's article. The genealogy of cinema in Turkey that Okan and others provide for this neglected art bespeaks cinema's secular lineages. Cinematic production originates with the army, the secularist backbone of the nation since 1908 and the guarantor of the secular republic to this day. In 1914, Fuat Uzkınay, dubiously identified as the first Turkish director, was commissioned to establish "The Central Army Cinema Department" by the decree of the Minister of War and Commander in Chief of the period,

[19] Ibid., 53. Still, to what extent the censors influenced this autonomy is still debatable. Arslan takes note of a double standard in the practices of the controllers: "while foreign films were loosely controlled, strict oversight of domestic films began with the film script, and the board's verdict on them was permanent." The board's focus on the script more than the image and a lack of oversight during screenings arguably provided some freedom for filmmakers. It is also possible to assume that filmmakers in time developed a visual grammar to bypass the board. Still, there were cases when this was impossible; as Arslan remarks, it was mostly the social realist and leftist films that were most strictly censored. Ibid. 53.

[20] Ibid., 52.

Enver Pasha. The sole control of cinematic production remained with the army until 1922 when the founders of Kemal Film, the first private film production company, obtained the only available equipment in the country discarded in an abandoned room. From a materialist point of view then, the means of cinematic production, transferred from the hands of the military to the private sector during the passage from an empire to the nation state, bears a secular legacy, one that that films preceding it inherit but *Vurun Kahpeye* illustrates most emphatically.

Indeed, *Vurun Kahpeye* was not the first film to showcase this legacy; its direct heir was the stage director and actor Muhsin Ertuğrul who began his cinematic career with Kemal Film in 1922.[21] Ertuğrul shot several War of Independence-themed films, originating with the adaptation of Halide Edib's *Ateşten Gömlek* [*Shirt of Flame*] the very year the Republic was founded. With the appearance of the first female cast of Turkish cinema, Neyire Neyyir Ertuğrul and Bedia Muvahhit, the film was one of the more successful productions of Ertuğrul whose monopoly of the industry led the description of the years between 1922 and 1949 as the era of the dramatists. Still, the underdevelopment of the cinematic infrastructure resulted in the dissemination of these films mostly within urban circles. In 1923, for instance, there were only thirty theaters in Turkey,[22] which reached up to 129 in 1932.[23] A year before Akad's debut, *Vurun Kahpeye*, there were

[21] Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey*, 53.

[22] Nezih Coş, "Türkiye'de Sinemaların Dağılışı," *Akademik Sinema*, August 1969.

[23] Hilmi A. Malik, *Türkiye'de Sinema ve Tesirleri*, 12-15.

228 theaters across the country.[24] Akad's success was that he was able to make use of this infrastructural expansion with a cinematic language that resonated with the masses. With *Vurun Kahpeye*, Akad broke the hegemony of Ertuğrul and his entourage who used cinema for the advancement of their primary occupation, theater, by catering to the expectations of an audience trained by domesticated Egyptian melodramas since 1938.[25]

Lynching: *Vurun Kahpeye* as a Sensational Melodrama

Adapted to screen for the first time from Halide Edib's eponymous novella, *Vurun Kahpeye* visualizes a narrative of victimization faithful to the plot line of the story. Set in a small Anatolian town during the Turkish Independence War fought against the Greeks, the film recounts the story of a recently-appointed teacher from Istanbul, Aliye, who becomes an active proponent of the nationalist cause in her new town. Aliye's promotion of the secular nationalists threatens the waning power of the leading clergyman of the town, Hadji Fettah. To put an end to her growing appeal and influence, Hadji Fettah incites the locals against Aliye by slandering her as an immoral *kafir*, a non-believer, due to her unveiled face and active public visibility. On account of Aliye's recent engagement with the local militia leader Tosun, Hadji Fettah resorts to a plot to remove Aliye and the nationalists by secretly inviting the Greek army into town in the absence of the nationalist

[24] Ahmet Gürata, "Tears of Love: Egyptian Cinema in Turkey (1938-1950)," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 30 (Spring 2004), 57.

[25] In Turkish film historiography, the film is treasured for terminating the era of the dramatists by introducing an innovative director with a cinematic vision outside the theater circles that until then monopolized Turkish filmmaking. As film theorist and director Halit Refiğ notes "[a]fter Akad's situation, the idea that one does not need to be a dramatist to make a film became more acceptable." Halit Refiğ, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavır: Halit Refiğ Kitabı*, interview by Şengün Kılıç Hristidis, 69.

militia. The Greek invasion of the town requires Aliye to interact with the Greek commander to help the Turkish forces save the town. Soon as the town is cleared from the Greeks, Hadji Fettah takes advantage of the chaos to put in motion his ploy to kill Aliye. Accusing her of alluring the Greek commander into town and later sleeping with him, Hadji Fettah incenses the public and rallies a mob to lead the lynching of Aliye in the name of moral cleansing with the chanted imperative that marks the title of the film.

Despite this shared plot line, screenwriter and director Lütfi Akad provides an ideological rendering of this shared plot line through a re-figuration of Aliye. As discussed in the previous chapter, Halide Edib's *Vurun Kahpeye* lends itself to a feminist reading that exposes the opposing ideologies of Islamism and secularism as both heteropatriarchal. Edib's story, more than anything else, is Aliye's melodrama as a woman in the face not only of the oppressive backward forces that act in the name of Islam but also of the demands of the emerging secular nation-state. Akad abandons Edib's feminist critique that subtly undermines the secular politics of her text and the ethos of its time. This discrepancy lies at the moment when Aliye takes the risk of reciprocating the Greek commander's interest in order to cease the surveillance of her house and thus facilitate Tosun's escape from entrapment. In the novella, this moment marks Aliye's devastating realization that their love is impossible because Tosun is first and foremost dedicated to the nationalist cause. Tosun blames "this selfish love" for his secret visit to Aliye that risks "the life of my country, my army, and thousands of Turks."[26] The novella vocalizes Aliye's consternations in the aftermath of this accusation.

[26] Halide Edib, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 173.

Consequently, Aliye, driven at once by guilt and sorrow, decides to sacrifice her purity and life for the man "I love more than my country."[27] This personal-over-political message of the novella disappears thanks to the lack of this dialogue, as Aliye without hesitation willingly volunteers herself for the trick in Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye*. In the film, Aliye explains her decision as follows: The nation is a higher entity than us. To sacrifice oneself for it is something honorable." Indeed, the stark division in the interpretation of this scene emblematizes the repression of the feminist inconsistencies of the literary text, turning Aliye from an unwilling conscript of secular nationalism to its complete agent and martyr.

Akad essentially translates *Vurun Kahpeye* into a sensational melodrama wherein gender exclusively designates the paradigmatic fault line amplifying the irreconcilability between secularist and Islamist worldviews. In this section, I will provide a reading of the film as a melodrama of the secular nation state with an emphasis on gender. I argue that on the one hand, the film fantasizes a desensitized and desexualized femininity embellished with virtues such as patriotism, bravery, and independence, exposing the patriarchal demands of the nation. On the other hand, it also assigns a precarity to this femininity that entails a patriarchal guardianship whose incarnation I trace in the reactions to the film in the following section. I will ultimately demonstrate that Akad's linking of gender and secular nationalism is based on sensationalizing the melodramatic features of *Vurun Kahpeye*. As will be shown, Akad's use of the soundtrack plays a pivotal role in imagining the nation through gender in a way that audiences bodily

[27] Ibid., 177.

respond to.

First, it is important to comprehend the Manichean opposition that structures this melodrama. The division is graphed onto the secular nationalists and their enemies, each group collected around its representative central figure. On the one hand, we have Aliye, and her recently adopted parents in town, a sidekick student named Durmuş, and her fiancé Tosun. Against this grouping, the film positions Hadji Fettah who allies with the leading gentry Uzun Hüseyin as well as the Greeks. Aliye appears as an object of desire for all the characters, even for those in the opposite camp except Hadji Fettah. It is the female body –its visibility in public, or more precisely, its degree of public visibility– that catapults an ideological conflict. Aliye's transgression of the traditional local Islamic wardrobe, namely her unveiled face without a black niqab, taken as a political challenge accounts for Hadji Fettah's enmity: It is because of the nationalists that women like Aliye can go unveiled in public in defiance of the Islamic law and tradition, a development that symbolizes his waning power in his community. Through this antagonism, the narrative animates the power struggle between the emerging secular order and the dying regime of Islam.

Interestingly, the struggle between these ideological positions are staged for the public in search of their body, as exemplified in a scene of encounter at the town's square foreshadowing the scene of lynching. The scene begins with Hadji Fettah giving a speech to a crowd, provoking his audience against "the foes of religion," the nationalists "who would violate the sacred word as soon as they have the power." "They will not only cause the demise of the Sultan," says Hadji Fettah, "but also lead the enemy to dishonor and

loot us by enraging them," suggesting that it is the nationalist resistance that renders the Greeks more hostile towards people. The talk is interrupted with Aliye's arrival to the square with her students. Hadji Fettah immediately directs his anger at Aliye: "You see strangers with their unconcealed faces and eyes wander around singing songs to breed bad blood amongst men. These are accursed; do not entrust your children to them. Unless you want to see the enemy within us one day, dismember these women!" Hadji Fettah's call to violence is cut short due to Tosun who turns up on horseback with his men back to town. The moment that could become Aliye's death miraculously turns into a love at first sight as Aliye and Tosun chance upon each other.

The scene plays out the clash between the representatives of secular nationalism and antinationalist Islamism through two distinct rhetorical modes: the march as a vehicle of indoctrination and the *vaaz*, an Islamic form of sermon, as a means of incitement. Having provided them with flags and organized them into a procession, Aliye shepherds her students through the town. An accompanying anthem sung by the students increases the volume of the public display of nationalism of the march, which collides with Hadji's *vaaz*. If Aliye is authoritatively, or better yet militaristically, dictates her rule to a body of students, Hadji Fettah engages the public in a more affective way through a deployment of politics of fear in an attempt to convince his audience that the nationalists pose a threat to Islam, the Sultan, and their women and possessions. In this way, Hadji Fettah assumes the role of the custodian of Islam, just as Aliye functions as the agent of secular nationalism. At the moment of its appearance, Aliye's body serves both as evidence for moral corruption and as harbinger of a revolutionary transformation that would result in

the end of a social order of which Hadji Fettah is in command. No sooner he sees the march than is he aware of Aliye's control over the future generations; poisoning the Muslim children, she embodies the threat to Islam. And thus, Aliye becomes the source of the fear that Hadji Fettah incites through a projection of a future –a doomed degenerate Muslim society. Therefore, Hadji Fettah orders Aliye's destruction in the name of Islam.

The film's staging of this ideological conflict before an audience implicates the viewer. As per its melodramatic structure, the film guides the audience through a laying out of a moral polarity between Aliye and Hadji Fettah. What defines Aliye is her dedication to the nation, as delivered by her mantra initially heard as a voice-over at the beginning of the film and later repeated in the diegesis a few times: "Your land is my land, your home my home; I will be a mother, a light for this place, for the children of this land, and I will fear nothing; I swear by Allah!" It is due to this dedication that Aliye goes to Anatolia to teach, not only democratizing the classroom by bringing justice to a corrupt order privileging the children of the gentry, but also modernizing the methods of education with satisfying results for the parents. As we have already seen, Aliye's dedication to the nation is selfless, risking her chastity for the liberation of the nation when needed, a virtue that she protects like a vow having turned down the Uzun Hüseyin's and the Greek commander's interest in her. Whereas Aliye can gladly consign the ring that is the only token from her deceased mother to pay for the fabric she would use to embroider a flag in support of the nationalists, Hadji Fettah provokes the public against the nationalists in protest of the militia forces collecting money in support of their campaign against the enemy. For his own selfish interest, Hadji Fettah goes far as

collaborating with the Greeks while slandering Aliye as a slut through scenes of rumor that are available to the viewer but not to Aliye. This knowledge difference –what we could consider as melodramatic irony– is a significant mechanism to clarify the moral opposites that these characters represent.[28] The above-mentioned scene serves a critical purpose in graphing this moral polarization onto the Manichean positions of the good and the bad, once Aliye, upon the pleas of town wives, dissuades Tosun from punishing Hadji Fettah for inciting the public against her. That Aliye saves the life of her lyncher does not simply add a melodramatic twist to the storyline, but further accentuates her innocence, of Hadji Fettah's deeds against her behind the scene, as well as his accusation about her promiscuity.

At its climax, the scene of lynching most powerfully conveys the affective hold of the melodrama that *Vurun Kahpeye* is by translating moral positionalities into moral identities. It is thanks to the rendering of the antagonism in terms of a victim and a perpetrator that the film can appeal to the feelings of the audience. The visualization of the unjust treatment of the innocent –presumably the first depiction of public lynching in the history of Turkish cinema– evokes sympathy and outrage at once. The scene is once again staged this time in a way to orchestrate a dialectic of precisely these feelings. Dragged with a rope tied around her hands by Hadji Fettah who is leading a mob, Aliye is taken onto a higher platform. From there Hadji Fettah speaks to the crowd, inflaming them against Aliye who refuses his allegations and exposes Hadji Fettah's ploy, begging

[28] I refer here to what Christine Gledhill describes as "the rhetorical structure of melodrama in which narrative and mise-en-scene offer the audience the privileged insight necessary to the functioning of pathos." Christine Gledhill, "Christine Gledhill on 'Stella Dallas,'" *Cinema Journal* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1986), 48.

the crowd to stop and instead punish Hadji Fettah and Uzun Hüseyin. Once again, the film positions a group of addressees that implicate the audience. The pathetic affect operates through another gap between our privileged knowledge and the townspeople's ignorance of Aliye's innocence. In this way, the characters indirectly appeal to the viewer, intensifying the emotional reach of sympathy and outrage as Aliye, rather theatrically like an actress from her stage, addresses and implores the crowd to stop and instead punish the actual betrayers. Once Hadji Fettah invites the crowd to "strike the slut" and hits Aliye's face with a stone, the camera pulls back to reveal the crowd swarming to attack her with the echoes of Hadji Fettah's words. As the aerial shot, subsequent to the reverse angle shot of Aliye taken down by Hadji Fettah, illustrates, Aliye disappears amidst a hysteric host of men violently lynching her. After a fade to black, we see Aliye's mutilated body covered in blood lying on the ground. Akad's prolongation and dramatization of the scene is noteworthy.

Clearly, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s affective range is not constrained to the feelings of sympathy and outrage. In Peter Brooks' established account on the form, melodrama's main function is the restoral of moral clarity in a world absent from religious and monarchic authorities.[29] Indeed, the entire politics of melodrama is hinged upon this transition from moral chaos to moral clarity. Dating the dramatic roots of the form back to the French Revolution, Brooks talks about the ideological work melodrama performs for the emerging regime in a post-sacred world; melodrama assuages anxieties about the

[29] Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 1995. See especially Brook's introduction.

new secular order that it raises.[30] Following this logic, *Vurun Kahpeye* removes the lingering sense of injustice that defines the moral crisis, the victimization of the innocent, with the hanging of Hadji and his accomplice when the Turkish army takes the town back and dispels the Greeks from Anatolia. From a Brooksian point of view, Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* then can be said to do the ideological work for the newly independent secular nation state by overcoming the moral chaos engendered by political indeterminacy –due to the lack of authority within the framework of war and occupation. Simply put, political order – the secular regime– restores moral order by reinstating justice.

Key to this formula of restoration is the dialectics of victimhood whereby victimization first grants righteousness which then activates and justifies –usually violent– political action.[31] With this dialectics in mind, the visual rendering of each corpse is noteworthy for us to expand on the ideological working of *Vurun Kahpeye*. Aliye's disfigured body is found by her adopted mother and Durmuş who cover it with the flag she embroidered with the fabric she purchased after selling her mother's sole memento. The sorrowful note of a violin in the background complements the mourning figures. Compare this to the disguised scene of hanging of Hadji Fettah and Uzun Hüseyin who are brought near a tree by three soldiers. As they stop and their faces express shock, the camera cuts to a pair of nooses dangling from a branch. After three additional shots that capture the terror on their faces, the film hard cuts to the final shot of the sequence that depicts the two suspending bodies from knees below. The prolonged

[30] Ibid.

[31] See Chapter I for a longer discussion of this process.

melodramatization of Aliye's butchery from her capture to her corpse wrapped in a flag targets to animate the feelings previously discussed. Conversely, the short and unseen scene of capital punishment and the image of the corpses are structured to block emotional association. In this way, *Vurun Kahpeye* operates as a pedagogy of secularism designating the kind of bodies to be sorry while abjecting the others from the nation.

Moreover, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s training of sensibilities within the secularist ideology manifest itself as prominently also outside the diegesis. As noted earlier, Akad makes a sensational melodrama out of Edib's *Vurun Kahpeye*, weaving together visual, literary, and audial extra-diegetic elements to create a multimedia experience for the entire human sensorium. The most conspicuous example is the interlude used to bridge the sequence of lynching and that of the capital punishment, allowing for the transition from moral crisis to moral clarity. Akad inserts a montage of documentary footage of the Turkish cavalier presumably taken from the archives of the War of Independence –various cuts of marching that bookends a few soldiers landing a flag on a hilltop. With the soundtrack of the anthem that sings "Ye patria, cease your tears, for we have arrived," the footage heralds the arrival of the Turkish army to correct the wrong, to punish the crime. Akad's decision here can be read as an attempt to bring his feature closer to a vérité, linking both the narrative of victimization and its resolution to historical truth for his audience.

In fact, the same gesture is noticeable with the dedication that frames the film. The opening credits, which appear on the pages of *Vurun Kahpeye* defined as "the National Novel," end with a freeze frame of a meadow involving an inscription that reads: "This film is dedicated to the souls of the Turkish women who fell martyr during

the War of Independence." Such instances of extradiegetic components help the film invoke and channel the past to heighten its emotional impact on the audience. A closer look would also suggest that they simultaneously engage in a project of reimagining the past for its audience. As the dedication literalizes, Akad conceptualizes and promotes Aliye's victimhood in terms of martyrdom. And yet, if Aliye is a martyr, she is martyred not by the Greeks against whom the Turks are giving their fight, but by her fellow countrymen. Counterintuitively and strikingly, *Vurun Kahpeye* presents a narrative of national genesis that points both to the enemy within, the religious zealot, as the major threat to the nation.

I am suggesting that *Vurun Kahpeye* harnesses cinema's possibilities to merge secularism and nationalism through a deployment of gender. As mentioned, it does so with an interplay of diegetic and extradiegetic elements that produce an assemblage of secular nationalism. Its most pronounced instantiation is the epilogue where the film's pedagogical ambitions come close to didacticism. The epilogue begins with Durmuş sitting where Aliye was slain, as the crippled Tosun returns to the town unaware of her tragic demise. Once Durmuş breaks the news, Tosun asks first of Aliye's last words and then of what the mob was saying when they were slaughtering her. The juxtaposition of Aliye's mantra and the call "Strike the slut!" in the mouth of Durmuş once again emphasizes the distinction of the right from the wrong. In the background we hear a somber harmonic note, soon to become an intro to a musically modernized hymn of a Yunus Emre poem, "Ne Zaman Anarsam Seni" [Whenever I Remember You] that

accompanies Durmuş taking Tosun to Aliye's burying ground.[32] Here, Tosun gives a eulogy that provides a commentary on her legacy:

> Aliye, I will devote my life to loving like you, to being self-sacrificing like you, doing the things you did. In the same way you were the emblem of love, compassion, and goodness; in the same way you were brave against the destruction of this abode by the deceitful, I will not be afraid, just like you. I will keep your dear memory, along with that of all the Turkish women who fell martyr for this nation, in my heart until I die. The lips that would repeat the degree of the torment you suffered, of the self-sacrifice you exercised are now forever silent. But you vowed to me, a vow bigger than everyone's.

As though to negate Tosun's prophecy, Aliye, in the form of a voice over, repeats her mantra: "Your land is my land, your home my home; I will be a mother, a light for this place, for the children of this land, and I will fear nothing." With this, a women's choir starts singing the national anthem, whose first phrase "Do not fear," as though in support of Aliye, refers back to her words. Through an intricate use of the soundtrack, the epilogue connects multiple discursive registers bracketed between an invocation of folkish Islam and the citation of the national anthem. In between, Tosun addresses Aliye not exactly as his fiancé but as a national martyr, devoid of any personal terms of endearment. The tone of his address is not romantic, but heroic, as it demonstrates not love but respect, glorifying her exemplary qualities of bravery and unselfishness. Aliye's

---

[32] Yunus Emre (1238-1320) was a significant Turkish Sufi mystic poet who has been influential in the Anatolian culture of a folkish Islam. Scholar of Turkish literature Talat S. Halman explains Yunus Emre's secularizing impact in terms of Turkish humanism with a universal reach:

> The tradition of Turkish humanism is best represented by Yunus Emre. His poetry embodies the quintessence of Turkish Anatolian–Islamic humanism. He was the most significant literary figure of Turkish Anatolia to assimilate the teachings of Islam and to forge a synthesis of Islam's primary values and mystic folk poetry. Yunus Emre, the first great Turkish humanist, stood squarely against Muslim dogmatists in expressing the primary importance of human existence. Talat S. Halman, *A Millennium of Turkish Literature*, 16.

Thus, in addition to the rendering of the hymn, Akad's choice of Yunus Emre is in and of itself noteworthy and telling.

words that segue into the national anthem with the word "fear" convey, like a torch passed on next generations, that Aliye's legacy will outlive her body.

In this, the film strives to construct an ideal image of a desexualized secular femininity that is selflessly and blindly devoted to the nation. And yet, Aliye's grave and the disembodied voices that haunt the screen highlight the challenges awaiting this womanhood. As implied earlier, *Vurun Kahpeye* imagines the nation through a kinship formation, and positions the enemy outside of this make-shift family that the emerging nation is. Indeed, the underlying family under attack motif is integral to the film's melodramatic modes of appeal, and, obviously, the most precarious member of this family is the woman under the threat of the fanatics. Therefore, *Vurun Kahpeye* defines its idealized female subjectivity with a sense of precarity that flashes now and then when Aliye is paralyzed with terror during her encounters with her enemies. In the confrontation scene, for instance, before Aliye reaches to the square with her students, Uzun Hüseyin's intimidating gaze stops her dead and his menacing words leave her with a terrified look. Durmuş steps forward and says, "Don't be afraid, Hoca Hanım, I would slay whoever lays a hand on you," words that encourage her to restart the march. In the following scene, Hadji Fettah's orders to attack her are interrupted with Tosun and his men's timely arrival. These scenes not only associate the female body with precarity but also link female agency to male protection. It is not a coincidence that the same look of shock and horror we have observed in Aliye's body are replicated in Uzun Hüseyin and Hadji Fettah in front of the nooses, a mirroring produced once again as a result of the paternalistic intervention of the army. Therefore, especially considering the finale where

it is the father and the son, Tosun and Durmuş, who survive the imagined family, my point is that the film not only determines the terms of secular femininity but also calls forth a male subject in defense of this femininity.

Shooting: *Vurun Kahpeye* As a Sensation

Hailed as the best War of Independence-themed film produced by then, *Vurun Kahpeye* resonates with audiences like no other Turkish film before as evidenced by the palpable exuberance in the press. "The Only Successful National Film," reads the title of a review, one, the author argues, "that deserves the title National Film amongst those done under the same rubric."[33] As the newspapers and journals passionately sang the praises of the film, *Vurun Kahpeye* became a true national phenomenon. Recording that "There was a scene of holiday in Taksim," another critic mentions the difficulty he had getting tickets for the film due to a crowd one could only wish for other Turkish films.[34] Indeed, any piece on the film from the period takes stock of crowds of people flocking at the theaters in numbers unwitnessed before for a domestic production. The first reviewer, on the other hand, confesses that "I was watching a local film without getting bored and with great attention for the first time,"[35] signifying the aesthetic superiority of foreign films that dominated the market by then. Essential to this interest is the film's emotional impact on its audience as the viewers were moved to tears by the memory of the war

[33] Selçuk K. Emre, "Muvaffak Olmuş Tek Milli Film: Vurun Kahpeye," *Halk Dergisi*, March 1949.

[34] Turhan Ediz, "Bir Filmin Tenkidi: Vurun Kahpeye," *Son Saat*, March 21, 1949.

[35] Emre, "Muvaffak Olmuş Tek Milli Film: *Vurun Kahpeye*."

days, of sacrifices made and prices paid. In addition to this sense of nostalgia, the film was lauded for channeling those days for the new generations, enlivening a spirit compared to the one that moved the nation to victory in its fight for independence. As a news report on the film attests to, *Vurun Kahpeye* turned out to be a living proof that "the spirit of Kuva-yi Milliye [National Forces] is not dead in our people."[36] All in all, the film stirs up the nationalist feelings of the public that seems to develop a new relationship with a local film in unprecedented terms in a market hegemonized by imports, especially those from Egypt between 1938 and 1948.[37]

The emotional reactions to the film register, in the words of the above-mentioned quote, "the enthusiastic display of the spectacular national feeling and excitement that the film has engendered in its viewers."[38] One such instance to which the title of this section refers effusively exemplifies the affective efficacy of the film vis-à-vis its audience. In an interview, the renowned producer Hürrem Erman relates a memorable anecdote regarding a screening of *Vurun Kahpeye* in the northern Anatolian town of Bafra in the spring of 1949:

> Our film is going to be exhibited in a summer garden. The garden is extremely crowded. The summer garden cinemas then would host more than a thousand people. In the evening, we ran the film and tested the copy. In the meantime, the audience was slowly coming. Before it was too late, they jammed the space. The film began. Already in the beginning there were

[36] "Bir Filim Münasebetiyle," *ANT*, April 6, 1949.

[37] On the dominance and domestication of Egyptian cinema in Turkey, see Gürata, "Tears of Love: Egyptian Cinema in Turkey (1938-1950)." In this ten-year period of what Gürata defines as "Egyptomania," there were 130 Egyptian films screened in Turkey as opposed to 60 films that were locally produced with 20 of them being shot in 1947-48. Ibid., 56.

[38] "Bir Filim Münasebetiyle."

> applauses. I am also watching the film with the audience at the side, sometimes observing them. I take note of where they react and such. During one of the most dynamic scenes of the film when Hadji Fettah and Uzun Hüseyin invite the Greek army into the town in order to realize their own ploy, a voice broke from the very back of the garden: "Enough with you Hadji Fettah!" followed by unmentionably vulgar curses. Before I figured out what was going on, there were gunshots. When I jumped on my feet to see what was happening, a bulky man with an ugly face was firing at the screen from one of the back rows. Suddenly, a commotion broke out in the garden. We stopped the screening of the film. Otherwise, things were going to get worse. Next day, I had an argument with the exhibitor. The viewer was an important man from the gentry. He had completely perforated the screen. Leaving most of the profit to the exhibitor, I kind of ran away from Bafra.[39]

We may easily dismiss this anecdote as harking back to an outdated model of spectatorship. One is inevitably reminded of the founding myth of cinema, that of the purportedly fleeing audience in panic at the sight of the train moving towards them during the first screening of the Lumiere Brothers' "The Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat." And yet, fifty-four years later, this stunning memory rather reveals cinema's affective lure. Far from mistaking and submitting to the image as real through fear, the viewer in Erman's anecdote defies the image as a consequence of rage. That is, he acts in protest of the extent of the villainy Hadji Fettah demonstrates as he surreptitiously and treacherously colludes with the enemy. At the moment when the clergyman's villainy gets articulated through treason, the viewer, shocked, is moved in both senses of the words: first, emotionally through anger and secondly, physically to interact with the film. The curses and the gunshots he fires at the screen in the face of this unfathomably horrendous act cut the film short of the point before Aliye's lynching. Considering that

[39] Rıza Kıraç, "Türk Sinemasının Bir Dönüm Noktası: *Vurun Kahpeye*," *Hürrem Erman: İzlenmemiş Bir Yeşilçam Filmi*, 50.

Hadji Fettah as well as his accomplice are hanged at the end of the film, we can argue that the infuriated viewer preemptively restores order and dispense justice for the secular nation state to come. In other words, the film interpellates the viewer to act in the name of the secular state, positions him as its guardian, but above all, renders him as its subject.

My point is not that the film in some miraculous way ideologically proselytizes the viewer. Rather, what I am suggesting is that this anecdote marks the film's imagined encounter with its desired audience. I would emphasize the significance of the cinematic medium in this anecdote that embodies the successes of cinema as a relay of secularism as translating social positions into identity formations. Cinema thus concretizes social fractures by providing shape, form, and body to their constituents in the social imaginary. I argue that this kind of mobilization essential to the secular nationalist project could only happen through the work of the cinematic medium. Cinema plays a central role in the affective animation of secularism in the public sensorium in a way that, say, literature cannot, especially in a context like Turkey where literacy had belonged to a limited group. As mentioned earlier, *Vurun Kahpeye* was adapted from a novella by notable feminist Halide Edib originally serialized in Ottoman Turkish between 1923 and 1924 and later printed as a book in 1926, a decade when literacy rates were estimated to be around 10 per cent with stark differences between urban and rural and male and female populations.[40] Even when the book was translated into modern day Turkish in 1943, fifteen years after the so-called language revolution jettisoning the Perso-Arabic script

[40] Benjamin C. Fortna, "Introduction: Reading Empire, Reading Republic," in *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic*, 20.

and adopting the Latin one instead, official literacy figures were below 28.45.[41] Given these literacy rates in which we need to situate *Vurun Kahpeye*'s print history preceding its incarnation as a film, it is possible to surmise that *Vurun Kahpeye* does not generate any comparable reaction –in both shape and size– due to its relatively limited reach in print. Indeed, to make this claim we must pay heed to alternative reading practices that take place in communal and informal spaces such as coffeehouses. And yet, such gendered and urban circuits of literature cannot compete with a more democratic media literacy that images require. As I will show below, *Vurun Kahpeye* actualizes the democratic potentiality of the cinematic medium through an infrastructural innovation by making cinema accessible across the nation, thereby closing the gap between geographical social differences.[42] It is therefore cinema's demotic nature that popularizes *Vurun Kahpeye*'s story as interpreted by Akad to a large audience that had hitherto been unavailable, mediating the nation in a capacity that its print cannot.

Released six years after the transcription of Edib's text into modern day Turkish, Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* signals the populist propensities of Turkish cinema that *Yeşilçam*

[41] According to the official figures by the Turkish Statistical Institute, literacy rates escalated from 18.70 per cent in 1935 to 28.45 per cent in 1945 when the literacy rate for the male population was 44.25 per cent as opposed to 13.51 for the female population. In 1950, a year after the release of *Vurun Kahpeye,* 31.8 per cent of the total population was literate. It remains unknown but highly possible to me that literacy is defined with the knowledge of modernized Turkish, not Ottoman Turkish. Therefore, these figures very likely only signify the population who would have access to Edib's *Vurun Kahpeye* in modern day Turkish after its transcription. Turkish Statistical Institute, "1.17. Adult Population Literacy Rate by Sex," *Statistical Indicators 1923-2011*, 19.

[42] It is of great importance to note that the population in Turkey was concentrated in towns and villages rather than provinces or district centers until the middle of 1980s. Between 1945 and 1950, more than 75 per cent of the population was living outside urban centers. Turkish Statistical Institute, "Share in Total Population of Province and District Centers and Towns and Villages Population," *Statistical Indicators 1923-2011*, 8.

institutionalizes in the 50s. For the first time for a domestic film, Akad's debut instantiates cinema as an aesthetics of popular by developing a cinematic language for the masses analyzed in the previous section. As film theorist and director Halit Refiğ observes, "Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* was a very big success. But this success was largely stemming from its subject. Lütfi Akad's success there was to narrate that subject in a shape that the audience of the day could easily follow."[43] In creating an accessible cinematic language to masses, Akad recognizes the emergence of a new audience trained by the Egyptian melodramatic singer films with an indeginized soundscape that had for the last ten years dominated the market and by its rivaling secondary American adventure films. While Akad's grammar caters to this audience attuned to sensationalism, by combining the melodrama and action of these respective cinemas, *Vurun Kahpeye* anticipates the two genres around which *Yeşilçam* would be built.

This aesthetic appraisal notwithstanding, the mass publicity of *Vurun Kahpeye* first and foremost entails an infrastructural renovation that renders the film's widespread circulation possible. An account of the mass publicity of the film must begin with the pioneering distribution system laid out by the producers of the film, one that evinced and actualized cinema's popular and thus capitalist potentialities. I argue that *Vurun Kahpeye*'s significance lies in its seminal role in the institutionalization of cinema by assembling a rudimentary distribution mechanism known as the "percentage system," a precursor to the fully formed distribution infrastructure model known as Regional

[43] Halit Refiğ, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavır*, 68.

Management [*Bölge İşletmeciliği*] that was at the heart of *Yeşilçam* until the 1990s.[44] Thus, just as *Vurun Kahpeye*'s aesthetic influence in *Yeşilçam* is undeniable, the industrial innovation it brings about sets it apart as the building block of the cinematic infrastructure and market through which *Yeşilçam* emerges.

Before the details and consequences of this crucial transformation, it is important to take note of the single most significant change in the superstructure that provided the conditions for a local cinematic market to emerge. In 1948, the year before *Vurun Kahpeye*'s release, the changes in the municipality legislature reduced entertainment taxes on domestic productions from 75 per cent to 20 per cent upon the demands of the Local Film Producers' Association,[45] a decision commonly viewed as the first instance of state's reinforcement of cinema. Understandably, this was a big blow to a cinema culture formed around imported films comprised largely of Egyptian productions, which filled the gap left by the shortage of imported American films in the 1940s due to the blocked major routes of film traffic as a result of the war.[46] The 41 per cent tax deducted from each ticket sold for imported films, as opposed to the 20 percent for domestic productions, made domestic productions more desirable than imported films, resulting in a drastic decline of film imports and increase in the demand for Turkish films.[47] Through

[44] Regional Management Model was a system in which regional distribution companies had the upper hand in the industry as the link between producers and exhibitors, shaping film production as per the demands of the audiences. For more on the Regional Management Model, see Chapter IV.

[45] Gürata, "Tears of Love," 75.

[46] Ibid., 58-9.

[47] Ibid., 75.

the removal of the prevailing Egyptian films and the exhibitors' demand for Turkish films, the entertainment tax regulation promoted local film production as a lucrative investment and thus led to a dramatic increase in the number of local film production so as to enable the birth of the Turkish commercial film industry *Yeşilçam*. *Vurun Kahpeye* not only thematized this turn to the nation with its War of Independence setting, but also capitalized on the fledgling market for Turkish film with the percentage system.

In these novel circumstances, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s producer, Hürrem Erman, was the primary figure to explore, expose, and reap the economic potentialities of cinema as a product from which to be profited. Identifying an opportunity in the shifting trends of the market, the founder of Erman Film undertook an act of entrepreneurship with his second production *Vurun Kahpeye*. Prior to *Vurun Kahpeye*, the undistinguishable processes of production, distribution, and exhibition were integrated within companies that primarily focused on importing international films.[48] These companies imported, dubbed, produced, exported, and distributed films all at once, and in some cases even managed theaters. Within this structure, copies of films were for the most part sought and bought by the theaters themselves. The integration of these vectors meant a limited and delayed circulation of films that largely remained in the metropolises where these companies were stationed. Thus, the primary orientation of distribution was centrifugal as films trickled down across Anatolia from these cities, privileging and thus promoting the tastes of the urban audiences whose predilections informed the kinds of films to be imported and produced. Inspired by the surge of interest in and demand for local productions, Erman,

[48] For a reliable source on the history of the industrial developments of Turkish cinema of the period and beyond, see Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*, 2011.

with *Vurun Kahpeye*, put to test "percentage system," the first step to separate the stages of film industry in a format unique to the Turkish cinema. Instead of selling copies of the film, which minimized the profit margin, Erman began to rent his films on a percentage basis per the number of purchased tickets, an irrefutable initiative that clearly took advantage of the market's need for local productions due to the recent tax regulation.[49] To reliably facilitate this system, staff under the title of "the percentage officer" was commissioned not only to find theaters or makeshift exhibition sites –such as the "summer garden" of the anecdote– to rent the films to, but also to keep track of the number of tickets sold. And because more purchased tickets meant more money for the producer, with *Vurun Kahpeye* onwards, these officers traversed all across the country both to promote their films and in search of sites of exhibition for them.[50] *Vurun Kahpeye* then was the first film to travel to every corner of Anatolia, reaching to an audience greater than any other film before.

It is thanks to its mass publicity enabled by the innovation of the percentage system that *Vurun Kahpeye* hits many milestones and marks important landmarks within

[49] Hürrem Erman,"Yapımcı Hürrem Erman'la Konuşma," 23. In fact, in this interview, Erman suggests that it was with his first film *Damga* in 1946 that he experimented with the percentage system in Anatolia first time and expanded its use with *Vurun Kahpeye*. Ibid., 24. However, Akad, the then accountant of Erman Film who also served in the production of *Damga* as a substitute director, designates *Vurun Kahpeye* as the first instance of the percentage system. Ömer Lütfi Akad, *Işıkla Karanlık Arasında*, 91. Regarding this question, Erman's biographer too points out a discrepancy between Erman's recollection and Erman Film's employers accounts Rıza Kıraç, "Türk Sinemasının Bir Dönüm Noktası: *Vurun Kahpeye*,"51.

[50] In his memoirs, Akad relates that as a percentage officer he checked tickets at the gate of Azak theater in İstanbul. Furthermore, just like Erman, he traveled outside İstanbul to locations like Adana, Eskişehir, Bilecik, and Geyve with films at hand finding sites of exhibition and collecting the percantage in cash. Ibid. While such producers and directors served in the role of a percantage officer, showing the rudimentary phase of the institutionalization of cinema without a clear line of division of labor, this novel profession also provided an entryway into the industry for some, most notably the leftist Kurdish actor and director Yılmaz Güney whose film career began as a percantage officer in Adana.

the history of Turkish cinema. First and foremost, as a first true local box office hit *Vurun Kahpeye* epitomizes cinema's capital-making prospects clear. In an interview in 1973, twenty-four years after its release, Erman claims that *Vurun Kahpeye*'s box office record remains unmatched.[51] Secondly, its mass popularity sparks a novel interest in Turkish films within print media. A film literature consisting of reviews and critiques began to materialize for the first time around *Vurun Kahpeye* in both the local and national press the examples of which we have seen above. Thirdly, the film occasions the shining of the female lead Sezer Sezin, who appears in the role of Aliye, as the first truly cinematic star with an emerging fan base.[52] Fourthly, the first Turkish film to be selected and screened internationally, *Vurun Kahpeye* features at the International Edinburgh Film festival.[53] Finally, the film's epoch-making success guarantees its status as the first remake of Turkish cinema in 1964,[54] with another one to follow in 1973. Thus canonized within the history of Turkish cinema, the 1949 version of *Vurun Kahpeye* lays the imagistic foundation of the secular martyrdom gradually mythfied within national consciousness with, as I will discuss in the next section, some turbulent social backlash that was

[51] Erman, "Yapımcı Hürrem Erman'la Konuşma," 24. The film was screened at Taksim theater for five weeks, and from the second week onwards Erman four-walls the theater, and act he describes as "unprecedented." The entire cost of the film, Erman also notes, was 36,000 TL, and he makes 33,000 TL with the film's screening only in primary theaters in Ankara. Ibid.

[52] Indeed, Sezer Sezin was not the first female lead of Turkish cinema. By this point, Cahide Sonku had proved her credentials as a star especially in her trademark role of the *femme fatale*. However, Sonku built on her stage career in cinema, unlike Sezin who began and continued her career as a film actress. Just as Akad breaks the hegemony of the dramatists in filmmaking, Sezin provides the first true model of acting before the camera as noted by many reviewers from the era and historians of Turkish cinema. Akad himself names Sezin as "the first actual star of Turkish cinema." Akad, *Işıkla Karanlık Arasında*, 91.

[53] "Beynelmilel bir festivale giren ilk Türk filmi: Vurun Kahpeye," *Yıldız*, August 15, 1949.

[54] "Vurun Kahpeye Türkiye'de İkinci Defa Çekilen İlk Film Oldu!.." *Sinema Expres*, August, 1964.

suppressed.

Injury: Secular Sensations versus Religious Sensibilities

Vurun Kahpeye's mass trafficking across the nation has wider implications and consequences. In his prominent account of the nation as an imagined community, Benedict Anderson argues that social transformations like print capitalism give rise to new ways of imagining society.[55] Modern social imaginary, for Anderson, inheres in a sense of simultaneity that conceives of society as a unit consisting of disparate simultaneous events, in essentially a notion of horizontal-secular temporality without any higher reference point.[56] My point is that it is *Vurun Kahpeye* illustrates the significant potentiality of cinema in mediating the nation in a context where the written word does not have so much primacy.[57] It is with *Vurun Kahepeye* that cinema for the first time takes an active part in the making of a horizontal understanding of society. In other words, the infrastructural innovation that the film occasions homogenizes time and space of the nation by leveling the field of distribution for films. This immediacy of access connects people into a single collective unit enabling channels of participation in and belonging to the nation. As cinema imagines the nation through *Vurun Kahpeye*, the nation also begins to imagine itself through cinema.

---

[55] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 2006.

[56] Ibid., 37.

[57] I have in mind the low literacy rates that limit the efficacy of print capitalism. Perhaps, it is precisely because of this reason that the Kemalist cultural policies were most intent on shaping the soundscape of the nation.

And yet, we know that the imagined community of the nation is phantasmagoric, reveling in its own fantasy of a unitary vision. A survey of responses to the film within the marginal press allows us to see how *Vurun Kahpeye* also reveals the fantasy that the nation is as always imagined but never fully actualized. As I have already demonstrated, the moment of ecstasy that the viewer firing at the screen embodies captures the championing of the film that proved to be a sensation all across the country. Behind this façade of national celebration, in the shadow of the Turkish flags that don the streets of Istanbul, and amidst the tears, jeers, and claps of an emotional crowd, however, there lingers a note of resentment within the Islamist circles outside of the mainstream media. In one of the most established and leading Islamist journals of the period, *Sebilürreşad*,[58] a series of reader contributions expressing a sense of injury appears, an injury that stems from the representation of the turbaned pilgrim, Hadji Fettah, as the religious fanatic who betrays the nationalist cause.

Initiating a chain of letters of complaint in the April of 1949, a reader in the name of Cevat Rifat Atilhan, speaks of his sadness at the sight of the audience who "watched this film in rapture, in excitement, in tremor, and with claps."[59] Against the backdrop of a festive Taksim square filled with an exhilarated crowd, Atilhan leaves the theater with a

[58] The significance of the journal goes beyond the period. Dating back to the Abdülhamid era, the journal was founded in 1908 as the primary periodical of the Islamist movement. Shut down under the Law on the Maintenance of Order in 1925, the journal remained inactive until 1948 when it began its publication in modern day Turkish. The journal went out of print in 1966 but was revived in 2016. "Sebilürreşad Kaldığı Yerden Devam Ediyor," *Hürriyet*, August 12, 2016. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/seb-lurresad-kaldigi-yerden-devam-ediyor-40191062. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan supported the journal with an article he penned on the Turkish-Chinese business partnership. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Türkiye-Çin Stratejik İş Birliği," *Sebilürreşad*, Jan 2017.

[59] Cevat Rifat Atilhan, "Vurun Kahpeye!," *Sebilürreşad*, April 1949.

sigh "that is unleashed from his lungs and that aches his insides."[60] Atilhan contends that the film is set against Muslim Turks, for it insults and humiliates the pious subjects of the nation with the figure of the turbaned man who does all the evil that no Muslim could ever imagine doing –uniting with the enemy against the nationalist cause, going to the feet of the commander of the foe, inciting the public against the nationalist struggle, and perpetrating all the vile and fraud against a decent lady teacher.[61] Providing historical examples of heroism shown by turbaned subjects like hodjas, *müftüs*, and *müderrises* during the War of Independence, Atilhan, himself a veteran of the same war, denouncing the film for distorting historical facts.[62] Citing, wrongly, the case of *Oliver Twist* (1948) allegedly banned from display on the grounds of anti-Semitism upon a haham's request, Atilhan calls for the censorship of the film that has the impact of a horrible propaganda.[63]

Atilhan's rhetoric is repeated in three other letters that appear in the subsequent issues of the journal. At times more aggressively, readers continue to convey the offence they take at the film, to condemn its historical distortion, and to insist on their call for censoring of the film.[64] These reactions that we observe in the pages of *Sebilürreşad* are comparable to the visceral response that we have noted in Erman's anecdote. If the film's narrative of victimization triggers a vigilant secular subjectivity, the secular image regime

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid. *Müftüs* are appointed officials in charge of Islamic affairs in districts and provinces while *müderrises* are scholars of Islam.

[63] Ibid. 250.

[64] An important element to note about the rhetoric of some of these reviews is their anti-semitism and anti-communism that provide an insight into the Islamist imaginary of the era.

of cinema that *Vurun Kahpeye* establishes is injurious and offensive to the pious subjects of the nation. Available also to the pious populace, *Vurun Kahpeye* convinces Muslim audiences of the power of motion picture. Far from demonstrating an Islamic sensibility towards the representative claims of the image generally understood in terms of blasphemy,[65] Muslim viewers experience a resentment that has a basis in a faith in the potency of images. Noted instead is a critical awareness of the real effects of cinema, an awareness that registers, in Asad's words opening this chapter, "media are not simply the means through which individuals simultaneously imagine their national community; they *mediate* that imagination, construct the sensibilities that underpin it."[66] Cinema does not simply represent the world but recreate that world, the world of the nation in which religiously marked bodies are stigmatized. In this respect, it would not be an overstatement to suggest that Muslim audiences anticipate the violent encounter between the image and the viewer firing at the screen, the hyperbolic embodiment of *Vurun Kahpeye*'s desired viewer.

Thus, for the first time in the history of Turkish modernity, moving images come to matter and become worth fighting for. *Vurun Kahpeye* then occasions cinema as a modern medium whose representative force has high stakes for the public that experiences it. The pious viewers contest the film's claims on historical truth, defy the film's attempts to cast an ideological conflict over gender, and question the verisimilitude of the turbaned subject, reinscribing themselves into the imagined world from which they

[65] For a sharp analysis of blasphemy, see Saba Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?," 836-862.

[66] Asad, "Introduction: Thinking about Secularism."

are abjected. Most of all, they address the avatars of the state –namely, the general attorney, the government, the ministry of education, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs– to intervene by means of censorship. In this, they practice the promise of the state in its mediatory role apropos disparate religious sensibilities. In the anniversary of the film's release, *Sebilürreşad* reprints an editorial from a local newspaper whose author was heard by the Directorate of Religious Affairs.[67] As a result, the film, as Akad remarks, underwent the inspection of the Film Control Commission second time after its release.[68] Reapproved for exhibition, this time the governor of a central Anatolian province banned the exhibition of the film in his vicinity, a decision revoked by the Ministry of the Interior.[69] Consequently, the calls for censorship of the film remained unanswered in the las year of the ultra-secularist İnönü regime. In fact, on the contrary, finding these reactions silly, Hürrem Erman's brother, co-producer Hasan Erman argues that the film translates the feeling of the entire Turkish nation, and thus, invites the very institutions addressed for censorship demand to retaliate these anti-Kemalist publications.[70]

Uninterrupted by the state, the cinematic medium and its infrastructures therefore become a successful relay of secularism. *Vurun Kahpeye* actualizes cinema's potentiality in mobilizing masses, defining ideological positions, and consolidating political affiliations. What the controversy around the film makes clear is that the formation of

[67] Numan Sabit Osmançelebioğlu, "'Vurun Kahpeye' Filmi Bizçe [sic] Niçin Kötüdür?," March 1950.

[68] Akad, *Işıkla Karanlık Arasında*, 89.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Alim Şerif Onaran, *Lütfi Ömer Akad'ın Sineması*, 28n8.

cinema as an industry proper begins through a process of exclusion where by cinema privileges certain bodies while dismissing the feelings of the others. *Vurun Kahpeye* then marks the moment at which cinema steps in as a conduit of secular nationalism at the expense of the nation's religious subjects. Furthermore, this same story will repeat itself in 1964 when director Orhan Aksoy revisits *Vurun Kahpeye in* the first remake of Turkish film history only to push to limits both the melodrama and the sensationalism of its predecessor.

So, what happens when one is insulted by images so much so that one's body hurts? What does one do when one's wounds are rubbed against the salt, let alone healed? Where does one go when the state fails to fulfill its promise? The answer is simple: one hijacks the images that injure oneself. This solution becomes clear in 1973 when, for the fiftieth anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, film critic and director Halit Refiğ turns to *Vurun Kahpeye* to put to test his theory of National Cinema, an anti-western cinema that aims at redefining the Turkish identity. In this remake, Refiğ not only reimagines Ömer Effendi as a foil to Hadji Fettah as the embodiment of true Islamic piety, but also places a Quran as a central motif to his story as emphatically revealed in a close-up in Aliye's palm after her massacre. This close-up congeals the potency of images for an Islamic cinema whose theoretical discussions Refiğ's theory would inspire in 1973. The story of *Vurun Kahpeye* then not only tells us the marriage of secularism and cinema without significant state manipulation, but it also becomes a harbinger of an Islamic cinematic counterculture that would emerge in the following decades.

CHAPTER IV

FROM A POPULIST-POPULAR TO A NATIONAL-POPULAR AESTHETICS: THE REMAKES OF *VURUN KAHPEYE* IN *YEŞİLÇAM* AND THROUGH NATIONAL CINEMA

This chapter puts Halit Refiğ's 1973 production of *Vurun Kahpeye* into dialogue with Orhan Aksoy's in 1964.[1] As the theorist of National Cinema that would embody and promote an anti-western Turkish cultural identity, Refiğ puts his theory to practice with his decision to direct the film's second remake. In this chapter, I read Refiğ's interpretation of *Vurun Kahpeye* as a social realist melodrama in conjunction with Aksoy's adaptation from the previous decade and Refiğ's own writings on cinema. In the first part of the chapter, I contextualize and analyze Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye*, suggesting that the film is representative of the industrial characteristics of *Yeşilçam*, a star-driven populist and commercial cinema with a primarily melodramatic mode of address shaped as per the market demands. I explore this cinema further in the second part of the chapter where I summarize and examine Halit Refiğ's conceptualization of National Cinema. While Refiğ's theory takes its force from the industrial organization of Turkish cinema that he identifies as "the people's cinema,"[2] his search of an ideologically coded national-popular cinema reads as revisionist of the populist aesthetics of the *Yeşilçam* cinema devoid of politics. In the last part of the chapter, I examine Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* in light of his theory and argue that *Vurun Kahpeye* allows Refiğ to reimagine the nation

[1] *Vurun Kahpeye*, dir. by Halit Refiğ, 1973 and *Vurun Kahpeye*, dir. by Orhan Aksoy, 1964.

[2] Halit Refiğ, "Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*," 9. For my references to Refiğ's theory of national cinema, I rely on Melis Behlil and Esin Paça Cengiz's translation of selections from Halit Refiğ's *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası* [*The Fight for National Cinema*], the collection of his writings on the theory from 1971, published in *Cinema Journal*. Halit Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 2013.

through a Muslim Turkish identity always under the risk of the hostility of the West. Very much like Halide Edib's *Vurun Kahpeye*, Refiğ's social realist melodrama investigates the tension between individual desire and social constraint in times of war, a tension I locate in the dialectics of social realist and melodramatic registers of the film. Overall, this chapter continues to trace the unexpected aftereffects of each iteration of the film. In the same way Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* leads to Refiğ's reactionary remake, the circulation of Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* in the demotic medium of TV results in the transferal of the title in the vernacular as an idiom animating the political antagonism counterintuitive to Refiğ's project.

*Yeşilçam*ization of Orhan Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* (1964)

Much has changed in Turkey between 1949 and 1964, the period between Lütfi Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* and Orhan Aksoy's remake. Aksoy's rendering of *Vurun Kahpeye* cannot be understood without taking into account the tremendous political transformation that took place in this period. I am mostly referring here to the first coup d'état in the history of Republic of Turkey, the 1960 coup d'état, which terminated the ten-year rule of the Democratic Party (DP), both marking the failure of the first attempt at multiparty democracy and definitively designating the army as the guardian if not the owner of the state. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the DP had come to power with a sweeping victory in the general elections in 1950, a year after the release of the first *Vurun Kahpeye*, ending the single party rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP) for twenty-seven years since the birth of the Republic in 1923. As the founding party of the

Republic established by Mustafa Kemal, the RPP became the ultimate apparatus to realize the Kemalist ideology in the making of a modern secular nation-state. This inevitably entailed, especially at a time when single party state formation signified fascism in the political climate of the World War II, the transition to a multiparty system leading to the formation of the DP, the prototype of the right in the political spectrum. As opposed to the military-based elites of the RPP who continued the legacy of Kemal, the DP embraced an Islamic populism, discursively exploiting the gap between the RPP and the people, as exemplified by its slogan "Enough! The millet [nation] has the word" used in the 1950 election. The DP's message resonated with the masses, evinced by its landslide win by gaining the 55% of the votes against the RPP's %39.6, followed by two victories in the ensuing elections of 1954 and 1957. A lot can be said about the ideological and political differences between the RPP and its rival, but, for my purposes, suffice it to say that the DP's Islamic populism entwined with economic liberalism was the main point of division between the two parties that was marked by the rise of a new Anatolian bourgeoisie.

On May 27, 1960, a faction in the army consisting of thirty-eight subordinate military officers acting outside the chain of command under the name National Unity Committee (NUC) led a bloodless coup overthrowing the DP government in the name of democracy. The coup took place at the height of the DP's growing despondency amidst, on the one hand, increasing socio-political unrest and economic recession, noted in the censorship of the press and the attacks against the RPP, and, on the other, Ankara's

growing affinity with Moscow.[3] Thus, the declaration of the coup cites preventing "fratricidal strife" and justifies the intervention "due to the depression that our democracy has fallen and the recent deplorable events," while pledging allegiance to the UN, NATO, and the Baghdad Pact.[4] In this regard, the members of the NUC can be said to have reinvented the army as a force of counterbalance in the regulation of political power, institutionalizing the army as the ultimate ward of the Kemalist Turkish state. Following the coup, the NUC ruled the country as a junta regime with edicts for about eighteen months until the 1961 elections. In the interim, the junta regime detained and tried the members and associates of the DP, chief amongst which were President Celal Bayar and the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, in what is known as the Yassıada Trials for unconstitutional rule and treason.[5] In addition to the alleged suicide of two prisoners, six others died during their imprisonment. But what left its indelible imprint in the social memory of Turkey was the execution of, along with two ex-ministers, the charismatic ex-prime minister of the DP years Adnan Menderes. The junta stepped down from power with the 1961 election that resulted in the coalition between RPP and the Justice Party (JP), the successor to the suppressed the DP.

The socio-political events of this period provide the backdrop against which we

[3] For a thoroughly researched and objectively analyzed study of the DP era and the coup, see Mogens Pelt, *Military Intervention and a Crises of Democracy in Turkey: The Menderes Era and Its Demise*, 2014.

[4] "TSK'nın 27 Mayıs 1960 Bildirisi," *T24*, September 17, 2008, http://t24.com.tr/haber/tsknin-27-mayis-1960-bildirisi,7371. The announcer of the coup, Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, would later become a politician as the founder and leader of *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* [Nationalist Movement Party] in the far right between 1969 and 1997. Today, the party is in coalition with the JDP.

[5] Recently renamed as the Democracy and Freedom Island, Yassıada is an island off the coast of İstanbul where the trials and the hangings of the DP members were executed.

need to situate Orhan Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* in 1964. It could be argued that they lend an almost allegorical quality to the film, something that Akad's version did not possess. As discussed in the previous chapter, Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* can be claimed to perform the ideological work for the ultra-secularist İnönü regime on the eve of the impending electoral shift; it participates in the shaping of a structure of feeling of paranoia for the secular sensorium in the paranoid subject's futural orientation. Aksoy's remake, however, inevitably evokes the socio-political upheaval of the previous decade. Hadji Fettah's selfish politicization of religion, the malleability of the masses, the influential and destructive power of slander, the military intervention to eliminate chaos and injustice and restore order, and the hanging of the perpetrators of Aliye's lynching, all find a social body and meaning in a not too distant past. In addition to its associability, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s chief ideological project can be seen as recasting the nation through a competing narrative of secular victimization at a time when the political right has its own actual victims. Soon after the political right pays a huge price with the execution of Prime Minister Menderes and his ministers, Aliye's lynching serves in a sense to redeem the secular guilt and to redefine the terms with which the nation sees itself.

Vurun Kahpeye's relevance in its contemporary political climate should also be assessed beyond the borders of the nation, given the film's highlighting of the Greek threat. The 60s bore witness to a dramatic volatility in Cyprus soon after it gained its independence from the British Empire at the beginning of the decade under the protection of Britain as well as Greece and Turkey. The intercommunal violence that erupted between the Greek majority and the Turkish minority in the island in 1963 gave rise to

anti-Greek nationalism in mainland Turkey. In response to the ongoing violence, Turkey, as the guarantor mother-state, even threatened to invade Cyprus in 1964, but American intervention deferred the invasion of the island for another ten years. The anti-Greek sentiment of the 60s must be read in conjunction with the Istanbul Pogrom of 1955 targeting the private and public properties belonging to the Greek minority by a furious mob of Turkish nationalists.[6] The pogrom was set off because of the false news disseminated about the bombing of Mustafa Kemal's house in Thessaloniki serving as the Turkish consulate by the Greeks. The propaganda campaign triggering the attack is commonly attributed to the Menderes government not only in response to the burgeoning of Greek nationalism in Cyprus but also as a way of scapegoating a minority amidst increasing social and economic instability. The pogrom, which had to be suppressed by the army with the declaration of a martial law, culminated in the displacement of a significant number of Greek ethnics and the confiscation of their properties. Both inside and outside then the Greek came to represent the ultimate enemy by the mid-60s. As a result, the words Aliye says to Greek commander Damyanos –this time openly named after the character he is based on in the novel– "You [Greeks] are a nation used to treacherously stabbing in the back," acutely resonate with the audience, as do the images of Greek violence during the invasion of the town.

Released in the aftermath of a coup that put to death a Prime Minister and at the height of anti-Greek nationalism, Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* reforms the nation in response to the contemporary anxieties of the nation. Thus, Aliye's martyrdom is configured in a

[6] For a recent work that situates the pogrom in the longer history of systemic violence in the making of the nation state, see Dilek Güven, *6-7 Eylül Olayları*, 2017.

way to consolidate the nation against the clearly designated outsiders representative of their respective social bodies: Hadji Fettah and Damyanos. Another significant moment for the sedimentation of the martyrdom myth for the nation, *Vurun Kahpeye* nonetheless proceeds with the project of secularizing this martyrdom as vigorously as its predecessor. At the time of Cyprus crisis, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s storyline ultimately turns to the real threat within, given the dispensability of the Greek danger enabled by no less than Aliye herself. In fact, even Damyanos' characterization in a way undermines the Greek threat as opposed to the villainy of Hadji Fettah who acts as the mastermind orchestrating Damyanos' weakness for Aliye for his own scheme, just as he manipulates Uzun Hüseyin with the promise that Aliye will become his once the nationalists are defeated. When Damyanos proposes to Aliye, however, he also offers to leave the Greek army and retreat with her to a rich life afar. Of course, Aliye deals with Damyanos, just as the Turkish army expels the Greek forces. And yet, Hadji Fettah remains pestilent as the cancer within, the fatal tumor that needs to be removed by force.

Aksoy remakes *Vurun Kahpeye* as a suspense-driven and action-filled melodrama building up to the Turkish independence by virtue of Aliye's heroism. What the relative salience of the Greek representation allows is Aliye's increased female agency, literalized through her transformation from a teacher to an agent. In this *Vurun Kahpeye*, Aliye, brought to life by rising star Hülya Koçyiğit's impressive performance, is as active as, if not more than, Fuat,[7] as she secretly captures the hidden map depicting the Greek arsenal in the vicinity for the nationalists to cut off the Greeks' supplies before their assault to

[7] Aksoy renames Tosun as Fuat while Refiğ would opt for Tahsin instead of either.

take back the town. Similar to the first film, when Fuat gets trapped during his secret visit to Aliye –at which point she hands the map she could not deliver earlier due to surveillance– it is once again Aliye who steps forward to leave for Damyanos in order to lift the watch in exchange for her acceptance of his proposal by declaring herself a soldier: "One day you told me that the most beautiful and the biggest love is the love of the nation, and now I am a girl, a soldier in love with the nation!," a proclamation introduced by Aksoy. Against Fuat's protest, Aliye reminds him that the nation takes priority over them, referring to her mantra of her dedication to the land and of her lack of fear while promising that she will keep the enemy busy without any damage to herself. Aliye's conversion from a secret agent to an active soldier is realized not only when the Turkish army marches into the town, but also when she kills Damyanos after he assaults to rape her once he figures out her ploy with the arrival of the Turkish army. Therefore, at the moment of a supposed resolution, Hadji Fettah's villainy displaces the Greek animosity as the ultimate source of evil.

What I have been describing is the dialectics of action and pathos that makes up the melodrama of Aksoy's remake,[8] one that inheres in the unjust killing of a war heroine, in the very moment when the soldier Aliye turns into a martyr in the hands of a zealot and his followers. The division between the affective registers of action and pathos is graphed onto their respective temporal codification. The commotion that heralds the arrival of the Turkish army takes place "in the nick of time:"[9] What was supposed to be

[8] Linda Williams, "Melodrama Revised," 69.

[9] Ibid.

the night of consummation for Damyanos and Aliye turns out to be the night of liberation for the nation. Fuat, on the other, is welcomed to town with a "You are too late, son," marking the irreversible damage always framed within a belatedness.[10] What takes place in between, the lynching, is a blow to a relieved audience, channeling the cathartic release into a pathetic discharge by which Aliye emerges as a victim-hero.

This dualism between action and melodrama is also palpable in the soundtrack of the film. Most noticeably, Aksoy opts to use not one but two narrators, Aliye and Fuat, whose voice-overs stylistically diverge from each other. The film begins with Aliye's narration of her new life, her experiences in the town, conveyed in a prose communicated rather mellowly. With perplexing decision, half way into the film Aksoy drops her voice-over completely and instead begins to use Fuat's pompous and thunderous speech to deliver his intervals using documentary footage from the War of Independence. Neither of these two intervals involving scenes of Mustafa Kemal serve so much as a bridge for the story, except for linking the local story to the national struggle. Providing information on the historical details of the Turkish advancement in the war, Fuat's glorifying rhetoric that breaks the narrative, the superfluity of this montage reveals the film's propagandist tendencies.

A similar dualism exists also in the background theme that employs romantic and heroic registers, the dialectics of which drive the melodrama. A case in point is the previously mentioned scene of Fuat's visit to Aliye in which the romantic encounter of the longing couple transitions into a heroic moment of separation with the realization of

[10] In other words, in the "too late" of Linda Williams. Ibid.

Fuat's entrapment. The theme tracks this transition that allows for Aliye's transformation from a fiancé to a soldier, punctuating the range of feelings that the series of events engender. The melodic opening celebrating the reunion of the couple is abruptly taken over by the high-pitched strings that convey tension as soon as Aliye's breaks the unison with the news of the entrapment. Upon Fuat's verbalized desperation and Aliye's moment of reflection, she determinedly says "Do not worry, Fuat. You will leave this place soon." The rhythmic tension of the strings, interspersed with repeated emphatic motifs building up suspense, gradually gives way to a crescendo with the addition of bells and horns. The emergent valiant tune progresses into an anthem-like march, as Aliye assumes the identity of the soldier, marked by Fuat's kiss in her forehead.

Aksoy's cinematography reflects this dynamism on the level of images, a dynamism that Akad's static camera lacks. With location shooting and its use of light in the outdoors scenes at night, platforms, and rain effects, Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye* was celebrated for its cinematic execution of mise-en-scene. Aksoy's remake, however, stands out for its camerawork that complements and augments the dynamism of its melodramatic use of sound and acting, typical of the well-established conventions of the 60s *Yeşilçam* melodrama. I would argue that Aksoy's signature in this film is his deployment of zoom. Generally speaking, a pattern can be recognized here: Aksoy begins a scene with a serene medium-long or a long shot only to quickly zoom into a close up of the faces of his subjects in the plan. Juxtaposed with the initial shot, the effect of the zoom, accompanied by an upbeat tempo, is somewhat jarring, heightening the pertinent emotion of the scene. Aksoy continues to register the scene in medium close-up or close-

up, capturing the hyperbolic mimics and gestures of his subjects, until he pulls back to leave the scene.

Considering the dialectics and dynamism produced through juxtaposition in register, sound, and shot, I would argue that Aksoy's rendering of *Vurun Kahpeye* is the most melodramatic version in the series. As discussed earlier Akad's melodramatization of *Vurun Kahpeye* as a secular collage serves as a pedagogy of structure of feeling of paranoia with its paternalistic configuration of its viewers. Key to this collage is an attempt to circumscribe a correct Islam for the nation. Aksoy's remake does not seem to be preoccupied with this endeavor at all. Islam has already been colonized under the national identity, as emblematized by the ultimate condition on which Aliye feigns to accept Damyanos' proposal, namely, that she will remain as a Turk and as a Muslim when the two are married. Curiously enough, *Vurun Kahpeye* recognizes that remaining as a Turk does not necessarily mean to remain as a Muslim. In other words, this statement is an acknowledgment that the two identity markers are not coterminous, although the film attempts to approximate them. In an earlier scene of separation of the couple, for instance, Aliye walks in front of the camera, brings herself to a medium-close up, and, gazing into the border between the lens and the frame perpendicular to the audience, utters this wish: "My Allah, may you protect Fuat, the Turkish army, and their commander in chief Mustafa Kemal." Fuat's narration responds to this call over the documentary montage to which the film cuts by saying "Yes, Allah's protective angels" were indeed on the side of the Turkish army. Without any engagement to fashion an un-Arabized folkish Islam like Akad, Aksoy is at ease with a superficially understood Islam

lendable to the national project, as epitomized by the jarring note of "Allah's protective angels." Despite Islam's adoptability, Aliye's condition to Damyanos reveals that to remain a Turk is prior to remain a Muslim.

Overall, the symbols and motifs of Islam recede in Aksoy's interpretation of *Vurun Kahpeye*, the paradigmatic example of which is the scene of Mevlid that the director glosses over with a soundtrack that combines Aliye's narration and a recitation of the poem over the images of people flocking towards the mosque. And yet, it is this mosque that gains symbolic significance as the backdrop for the evil on screen. Even in this scene of Mevlid, Aliye notices and interrupts a group of women harassing a young infamous widow –a significant character from the novella Aksoy introduces to the series albeit in passing– in the courtyard of the mosque. By the same token, the mosque appears in the background when Hadji Fettah incites the public against Aliye through slanders or devises his scheme deceiving Uzun Hüseyin in the act of ablution. More importantly, unlike Akad's decision to take Aliye's lynching outside the town, Aksoy's Hadji Fettah stages the killing in front of the mosque in the square of the town.

All of this takes us back to the initial point I made about comprehending *Vurun Kahpeye* in the context of the ethos of its period. As a film thematizing the Turkish War of Independence fought against the Greeks, this *Vurun Kahpeye* addresses the anti-Greek nationalism of the 60s and assuages anxieties about the increasing tension in Cyprus. By reminding the Turkish audience of a foundational saga of victory over the age-old enemy, the film, in a way, assures them of an imminent triumph in the event of a future conflict. That the mosque becomes the landmark for discrimination, corruption, and violence, on

the other hand, evokes the memory of Menderes years in which religion has been politicized for gain according to the official national historiography that accounts for Menderes' populism. I do not wish to push to limits my reading of *Vurun Kahpeye* as an allegory, but it would be interesting to entertain Hadji Fettah's villainy as representing the past that could have become a reality without the coup and Menderes' execution. While it may be an insupportable stretch to argue for the film's justification of the coup and the execution, it is certainly plausible to suggest that the fresh memory of both incidents haunt the viewing experience of the audience for whom the film may or may not act as reconciliatory, therapeutic, or reparative.

In this respect, the final scene of the film is telling for the ideological compass of the film. Aksoy radically reimagines Akad's privatized service for Aliye in the bucolic setting of a cemetery by rendering it social in the square in front of the mosque where Aliye was lynched. Wrapped in a Turkish flag, Aliye's coffin is perched on a platform framed in a square by a group of soldiers and students standing to attention. At each end of the coffin stands Durmuş and Aliye's adopted mother as Fuat, with his arm suspended from his head in cast, delivers a monologue in which he declares Aliye as a martyr of whom the entire nation is proud and who became a leader to Turkish women and mothers. At the end of his farewell, he slowly raises his hand and salutes her coffin, as the camera pulls back, and an anthem picks up for the final cut. In addition to the literalization of Aliye's martyrdom with an official military funeral service, the scene represents the symbolic takeover of the public space now exposing the mosque in the background through the final long shot. And yet, there is no public to speak for, except

for the children representative of the new generation and soldiers who act as their guardian. Aliye's martyrdom therefore clearly stands for a particular social body, the prevailing secular-national body politic of the era.

Yeşilçam Contested: Halit Refiğ's National Cinema

To say that the reviews of Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* were disparaging is not an overstatement. Such names as Selmi Andak, Giovanni Scognamillo, and Tuncan Okan agree that the remake compares unfavorably with Akad's original adaptation filmed and produced under primitive circumstances in the absence of an industry.[11] More significantly, for these reviewers, Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye* signifies the current aesthetic degeneration of Turkish cinema of the 60s in an industry dictated exclusively by growing market demands. By this decade, *Yeşilçam* became a giant factory with 171 film productions on average; only in 1964 when *Vurun Kahpeye* was released, there were 181 locally produced films screened in Turkey.[12] In a market in dire need of source materials, *Vurun Kahpeye* inaugurates a new trend as the first remake in the history of this cinema. Thus, Aksoy's remake crystallizes the very fact that *Yeşilçam* turned into a fully commercialized industry that now began to recycle its own products off the assembly line at the expense of aesthetic originality, innovation, and quality.

These concerns of these reviews are symptomatic of a larger conceited attitude

[11] Selmi Andak, "60 Sinemada Birden Gösterilen Vurun Kahpeye Bekleneni Veremedi," *Cumhuriyet*, October 28, 1964; Giovanni Scognamillo, "Vurun Kahpeye – 1949 Yılında Çevrileni Mum Işığıyla Arattıran Bir Yerli Film," *Akşam*, October 31, 1964; Tuncan Okan, "Nerede Lütfi Akad?" *Cumhuriyet*, October 31, 1964.

[12] "Türk Sinemasında Kaç Film Çekildi?" Sinematik Yeşilçam, August 2, 2016, http://sinematikyesilcam.com/2016/08/turk-sinemasinda-kac-film-cekildi/.

towards Turkish cinema observed in the intellectual and critical film circles, especially of the left, in the 1960s. The formation of this clique and its relation to Turkish cinema coincides with the emergence of the New Cinemas around the globe. It could be assumed that as viewers the members of this circle were trained by the examples of contemporary world cinema and that the populist nature of the Turkish film industry did not appeal to their acquired sensibilities. They became more vocal about their dissatisfaction with Turkish cinema prior to the meeting of the first Film Council in the fall of 1964 occasioned by the surprising prizing of Metin Erksan's *Susuz Yaz* [*Dry Summer*] with the Golden Bear in the 14th Berlin International Film Festival the previous summer.[13] The Film Council brought to table minister representatives, intellectuals, and professionals from the industry to address the state, which showed a tangible interest in cinema for the first time at the level of ministry, about the ways in which state could play a role for cinema. The intellectuals came to the table to propose the establishment of a national film center, modeled after the Centre National Cinématographie (CNC), but the professionals offered to begin the sessions first with the description of the industry to determine its needs. Rejected by the intellectuals, the filmmakers left the table even before the talks began.

The uncompleted momentous Film Council cemented the existing tensions between the intellectuals and professionals from the industry. In the wake of the failed Council, the intellectuals, funded by the private sector, established the Turkish

[13] Melis Behlil and Esin Paça Cengiz's introduction to their selection of Refiğ's writings provides the context in which the Film Council took place. Refiğ, "Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*," 6. Refi *Susuz Yaz* was Hülya Koçyiğit's debut at the age of 16. *Susuz Yaz*, directed by Metin Erksan, 1963.

Cinémathèque, Türk Sinematek Derneği, in 1965.[14] The following year, Sinematek began the publication of the journal *Yeni Sinema* [*New Cinema*]. Both venues served as new channels for these intellectuals to pursue their interest in world cinemas, sometimes dismissing and other times vilifying Turkish cinema and its creators. Meanwhile, filmmakers concentrated their efforts to help institutionlize the Turkish Film Archive center, *Türk Film Arşivi*, by donating their films to the founder Sami Şekeroğlu.[15] A representative of the professionals at the center of this very contestation, critic and director Halit Refiğ responds to the failed Film Council in a collection of essays written between 1965 and 1971 called *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası* [*The Fight for National Cinema*].[16] In these pieces, Refiğ renders what could be conventionally viewed as the struggle between high art proponents and low art practitioners in terms of an ideological opposition of the West and the East. Amidst the conflict between the elite-popular and populist-popular, Refiğ is able to advance a theory for the national-popular.

Refiğ's treatise can be summarized with two central issues or lines of argument that motivate his essays, which I will detail out in the following. First, in response to the intellectuals and film critics formed around the Sinematek, he drafts a defense of Turkish cinema, defining it in its own terms, finishing the job left undone in the Council. In this defense, he analyzes the material conditions that bring forth a true form of people's

[14] Savaş Arslan notes that "As a founder and longtime director of the *Cinémathèque Française*, Henri Langlois was born in Izmir and supported the foundation of the Turkish Sinematek Association, which exhibited various examples of world cinema between 1965 and 1980." Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey*, 279n3.

[15] Sami Şekeroğlu, "Türk Film Arşivi Müdürü Sami Şekeroğlu ile Konuşma," Yedinci Sanat 8 (October 1973).

[16] Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 1971.

cinema. According to this materialist analysis, the infrastructure through which the Turkish film industry evolves defies the available models around the world, especially the Western ones. Thus, those who approach to seriously think about cinema in Turkey, let alone to reform it, must first and foremost take into account the singularity of Turkish film industry. On the contrary, however, while the state is in complete disinterest, the intellectuals continue to not only assess Turkish cinema through the values of the West, but also impose these values on to the industry. For Refiğ, then, these intellectuals perpetuate the project of Kemalist westernization, although cinema offers a mode of resistance to the West and especially to the top-down models of Westernization.

Secondly, Refiğ develops a theory of cinema, National Cinema, which actualizes the non-western propensities of Turkish cinema. Refiğ's National cinema is based on a historicist account of fundamentally unbridgeable two worlds, the West and the East, as rooted in the development of disparate social structures: a capitalist society ridden with class warfare and a classless society with a state-owned capital: the former paving the way for the rise and the privileging of the individual and the latter sanctifying the state and thus the social signify distinct world views, visions, sensibilities, and ways of being. Therefore, the highly-prized notions such as humanism and individualism, notions that emerge from the history of the West, have no correspondence and worth in a statist society like Turkish people. For Refiğ, cinema, exempt from the interventionist cultural policies of the state, then first provides the unique opportunity as a means, or rather, a method to explore this people. Secondly, cinema also functions as a political or ideological tool to address the needs of this people and the nation by depicting their

reality. And finally, Refiğ's cinema is a site for an aesthetic theory that draws inspiration from traditional Turkish art forms.

To fully comprehend Refiğ's discussion of Turkish cinema, let us begin by his materialist account of the development of Turkish film industry that yields to one of the earliest efforts of a comprehensive and systematic historicization of Turkish cinema. Refiğ emphatically states that "Turkish cinema is not a 'cinema of imperialism,' as it was not established by foreign capital; not a 'bourgeois cinema,' as it was not established by national capital; and not a 'state cinema,' as it was not established by the state. Turkish cinema is a 'people's cinema,' since it was born directly out of the cinema-going needs of the people, and because it does not rely on capital but on labor."[17] Here, Refiğ points to the industrial development of Turkish cinema whereby cinematic production is both determined by the demands of the audiences and is funded by the very same audiences paying for the product. This needs explanation: "People's cinema" essentially inheres in the leverage the distribution infrastructure gained in the history of Turkish cinema since the late 40s when films led by Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye*, as discussed earlier, exposed the economic potentialities of cinema through the entrepreneurship of its producers exploring new methods for circulating their film. The following decade bore witness to the birth of *Yeşilçam* on the shoulders of an ever-growing regional distributors while the production companies four-walled sites of exhibition in İstanbul. Operating in six regions and based in six cities –İstanbul, Samsun, Adana, İzmir, Ankara, and Zonguldak– these regional distributors eliminated competition and economically monopolized over film distribution

[17] Refiğ, "Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*," 9.

in their respective region.[18] As the demand for films and the pace of film production rose to unmanageable levels by production companies by the end of the decade –due to the increasing expenses vis-à-vis cast, personnel, and taxes– these regional companies moreover stepped in as financers of film production by issuing long-term bonds. Accordingly, these bonds would fund film production, which would be paid back at the time of its exhibition, creating, in Refiğ's words, a "hermetic economic structure".[19] With the lack of state support and private capital, "these bonds are being issued based on expectations of the money to be paid by the audiences," and thus, "the true owners of the bonds were audiences of the Turkish films."[20]

This was not the only sense in which Turkish cinema was a people's cinema. The growing significance of regional distributors entailed these companies to acquire unconventional roles and characteristics beyond their primary purpose. Gradually in the 50s, these companies began to register and relay audience reaction and channel "the spectatorial demands thanks to information gathered from theater owners."[21] Besides serving as a feedback platform, once the bonds system became a standard practice, distribution companies began to take active participation in the mode of production. Because the box office numbers were now vital also for regional distributors with a much greater stake in a film's financial success, these companies wanted to ensure that

[18] Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey*, 106.

[19] Refiğ, "Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*," 10.

[20] Ibid., 9.

[21] Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey*, 107.

audience expectations were met. As a result, they started to also serve as conveyors of audience preferences and demands, with the distributors visiting Istanbul during the spring to make deals with producers, and thus influencing all aspects of film production including "the number of films, genres, and stars for the upcoming season."[22] Therefore, thanks to the economic structure of Turkish cinema, audience input, via the conduit of the regional distribution companies, would inform, shape, and determine the artistic production. As Refiğ notes, "Stories people loved, stars people admired, popular songs of the period became the points of departure for all films. During this period, films resembling one another started to proliferate, and a star system emerged in Turkey for the first time."[23] Thus, Turkish cinema was also a people's cinema in the sense that its audience had a hold on the aesthetics of this cinema through indirect participation in its production. This cinematic practice can be referred to as "people's cinema," to sum it up in Refiğ's words, "because these films aren't financially dependent on private capital or state institutions, and their artistic characteristics are conveyed in an 'anonymous' manner."[24]

By conceptualizing Turkish cinema as a people's cinema, Refiğ approximates it to traditional Turkish folk arts. Cinema is clearly distinguishable from other arts forms like theater, music, and painting that are socially cultivated by westernization programs of the state. Without any support or aid by the state "Turkish cinema relies entirely on its own

[22] Ibid.

[23] Refiğ, "Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*," 11.

[24] Ibid.

people" and "takes whatever comes from the people and returns it to the people" very much like folk arts with which it shares a self-sufficient hermetic economic structure.[25] This allows for Turkish cinema to "share similar sentiments and attitudes with traditional Turkish arts (such as Anatolian folk paintings, Turkish folk stories, public storytellers, traditional comedies, and shadow plays)."[26] As a result of its intimacy with these art forms, cinema materializes as an ethnographic practice, opening "a window onto the thoughts, tastes, and enthusiasm of the people."[27] Thus, Turkish cinema, just like folk arts, offers itself as an incredibly rich resource for national arts through which "one can understand what moves Turkish people and in what way, understand how they express their reactions, opinions, and enthusiasms regarding specific issues."[28] Refiğ's concept of national cinema is then predicated on the populist propensities of Turkish cinema rooted in its industrial development.

Like *Yeşilçam* gave way to and was superseded by a people's cinema, national cinema would emerge out of people's cinema, however, only with a conscious attitude. Although Refiğ's concept of national cinema has its basis in the folkloric and populist characteristics of the Turkish cinema industry, his relationship to people's cinema is more complex than it initially appears to be. In essence, national cinema must be reformist in relation to people's cinema given its gradual deterioration owing to the increasing

[25] Ibid., 10.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 9.

[28] Ibid., 10.

Western influences that came to define its populism. For Refiğ, the problem with people's cinema is that it has reproduced "stereotypical narratives due to screen personas of the stars and its openness to foreign influences to the extent that its national characteristics are substantially (even if not completely) dissolved."[29] Instead of the historical merits of Turkish society, people's cinema relies on Western populist patterns. Consequently, we need to understand national cinema as an attempt to find the national populist vein of cinema that is essentially non-Western.

Much as it is revisionist in relation to people's cinema, the concept of national cinema emerges also out of the reaction "against the admiration of Western cinema," as professed by Turkish intellectuals and film critics. Refiğ considers that this group is shaped by the administrative class –the Kemalist elite– alienated from the realities of the people whom it despises. Thus, for Refiğ, there is a social division that defines the contemporary Turkish society: "the wider classes of people who take refuge. . . in the nomadic Turkish traditions, Islamic law, the mosque, and the religious community" and "the newly trained administrative class [who] has become a colonial trooper for Western thought and art in its own land."[30] The metaphor Refiğ uses is very telling; he views Kemalist westernization as a colonial project in which people who think about and write on cinema participate. These intellectuals and critics look down on Turkish cinema through the prism of ideas, values, and paradigms alien to Turkish history, society, and culture and borrowed from the West chief amongst which is humanism. They deride

[29] Ibid., 11.

[30] Ibid., 8.

Turkish cinema for lack of humanism, but humanism is the end product of a very particular economic and social history germane to the West. Thus, this group deprecates Turkish cinema with terms that have no valence and relevance within the socio-historical development of Turkey.

At the core of the aesthetics of Refiğ's Turkish national cinema is this civilizational discourse about the incompatible and even opposing evolutionary trajectories of two worldviews: Western individualism and Eastern statism. Refiğ argues that at the root of humanism is the class war between the bourgeoisie and the feudalists, both of which were governed by the logic of private ownership. Thus, he compellingly claims that "Humanist art, harping on about 'the human, the human!,' is the bourgeois cry of victory at the conclusion of this class war."[31] The history of class warfare on private land property, however, does not have its equivalence within Turkish history. By contrast, the Turkish seizure of Anatolia resulted in a land reform "based on old Turkish nomad traditions and the conquest law of Islam, replacing private land ownership with a system of state ownership."[32] The Turkish society is therefore historically class-free without an aristocracy and landless people. Hence, Refiğ conjectures that "Just as the essential foundations of individualist Western thought lie in Greek philosophy and Christian theology, the main sources for statist Turkish thought are nomadic Turkmen traditions and Islamic canon law."[33] National cinema must become an aesthetic

[31] Ibid., 7.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 14.

exploration and expression of this statist thought.

While Refiğ is not prescriptive on the level of style, he lays out the fundamental aesthetic principles of this cinema with his discussion of the development of realism in Western and Turkish arts, as demonstrated, for instance, by the comparative examples of Western theater and Turkish performance arts. "Turkish arts," says Refiğ, "do not reflect worldly realities as they are, but instead contain an interpretation of these within a divine order represented by the state. Unlike the Western arts, which reflect nature the way it is, Turkish arts (like other Eastern arts) thus rely on strict formulas of style and expression."[34] However, he warns against slavishly copying from the past, like lifting from Western modes of representation, "without any consideration of the cultural needs or the condition of our society today."[35] People's cinema already embodies the statist thought and attitudes of the people: "The formulaic story lines, formulaic hero archetypes, and formulaic behaviors in Turkish cinema are attempts to convey the virtues and beauties of a divine order that has disappeared, perhaps never to be seen again."[36] But it is incumbent upon the scholarly and creative minds help people counter "the present-day worldly realities. . ., while containing an interpretation of these realities."[37] Thus, in addition to its anti-individualist, collectivist, and allegorical predispositions, it can be inferred that Refiğ's national cinema is in essence a social realist art.

---

[34] Ibid., 15.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 16.

[37] Ibid.

Finally, considering the historical moment that Refiğ pens and collects his writings, national cinema is conceptualized not simply as a theory of cinema, but also as an urgent political need. In a world torn and partitioned between two superpowers at the height of Cold War, Turkey is gradually integrating with the West. Refiğ interprets this as Turkey's economic and political dependence on the West, the final stage of Turkey's Westernization efforts over two centuries. For him then Turkey's sovereignty is in question.[38] Therefore a turn to national arts is "a means of resistance and rebellion for the protection of national sovereignty in the face of the imperialist expansion of superstates," as intimated by the principle of "universality," which is invented in the West and colonialist by nature. Likewise, "contemporary," "new," "free," all belong to the vocabulary of the superstates.[39] In this context, national arts becomes a means of survival, for "the only option for turkey to avoid being pulverized between the blocs is to use the shield of nationality against all movements of universalism."[40] The power of national cinema lies in its ability to unite the peoples' sentiment and enthusiasm, in as well as beyond its borders.[41] Further, National Cinema, if realized, has the potential to lead to a Middle Eastern cinema thanks to the dominant and unifying role of the Turkish element.[42]

---

[38] Ibid., 13.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 13-4.

[41] Ibid., 16.

[42] Ibid., 12.

From a critical standpoint, Refiğ's views on the contemporary state of Turkish cinema are visionary. From within the industry, he is one of the first people to systemically historicize the development of Turkish cinema with attention to its infrastructure. What's more, he situates this history within its social context whose analysis anticipates sociologist Şerif Mardin's influential reading of Turkish society as formed by a center-periphery cleavage inherited from the decentralized system of Ottoman administration.[43] The processes of modernization and nationalization transformed what once stood for an organized division between sedentary and nomadic populations, between the Sultan and his officials in Istanbul and the segmented nature of Anatolian provinces. Key to this process was the pushing into the periphery of the religious institution, which served as "the hinge between center and periphery."[44] Mardin's analysis is insightful because it reads this transformation as cultural beyond solely as political. Thus, for him, Kemalist regime's hold onto the center against the periphery results in "cultural alienation of the masses from the rulers, of the periphery from the center" such that the periphery emerges as the locus of "a counter-official culture."[45] Mardin contends that Kemalists' failed project of national integration is not realized until the political cooption of the Turkish countryside by the DP that stood for the culture of the periphery by changing "the master-servant relation between patron and

[43] Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations," 1973.

[44] Ibid., 174.

[45] Ibid., 187.

client".[46] DP then paradoxically "produced a national unity in the sense of provincial unification around common themes."[47] I allude to Mardin's analysis because it seems to me that Halit Refiğ tells us the same story as refracted through the arts, especially cinema about a decade before Mardin. It is no coincidence that the emergence of *Yeşilçam*, the cradle of people's cinema, concurs roughly with DP's rise to power. As *Yeşilçam* films meet with the audience in Anatolia, the infrastructural changes Refiğ discusses, namely the expansion of and mutation within the distribution mechanism, renders possible a centripetal cultural formation. People's cinema, then, democratizes the cultural field of the nation by bringing the center and the periphery on a level plane.

With that being said, there are apparent shortcomings to Refiğ's concept of national cinema grounded in the social theories of Turkish exceptionalism of his ideologue author Kemal Tahir. It would not be an overstatement to suggest that Refiğ's statist nationalism is not only essentialist but also reductive with such statements that convey a romanticized mythic past as "Turkey had a unique social harmony and order"[48] or "[D]espite certain differences in sentiment, a difference of worldviews has not occurred between state and folk arts."[49] To say the least, his idealized homogenous Ottoman world seems phantasmagoric. And yet, perhaps, it is his vision of the world as divided into two independent entities that is most unconvincing. It seems as though Refiğ

[46] Ibid., 185.

[47] Ibid., 187.

[48] Refiğ, "Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*," 7.

[49] Ibid., 15.

does not fathom any cross-cultural contact, traffic, and exchange possible until the twentieth century. As worlds closed onto themselves, Refiğ's East and West are sterile and rigid constructs exempt from interaction with each other outside an antagonistic framework.

In addition to such ideological drawbacks, Refiğ's theorization of National Cinema raises questions about its practicality, as captured by his revelation that "the people's cinema exists in practice whereas national cinema is largely theoretical."[50] Refiğ acknowledges that "there is no support for a national cinema either from people or from the state."[51] Given that there is not a class that could risk material loss, he suggests, it is incumbent upon the state to support this cinema. "And," he adds, "this is only possible if the state, or rather, the rulers of the state, possess a certain consciousness of the state."[52] These remarks reveal a dilemma in the way of the actualization of national cinema. After all, it was the withdrawal of the state that allowed for a particular cinema to emerge, a cinema that Refiğ can name as people's cinema, which is at the basis of a national cinema to emerge. Receiving state funding for a national cinema risks a national cinema to turn into a state cinema. Refiğ's proposition to inculcate into state a consciousness of the state will not eliminate the risk when we consider the ideological contestations around the meaning of the state. In a democratic system where rulers periodically change, often through their definition of the state in this contestation, the notion of the state is also likely to change accordingly such that this notion might set the tone for a national cinema

[50] Ibid., 12.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 16.

that the state agrees to fund. Refiğ does not address the question of how a support system can be established to ensure the autonomous place of national cinema between people and the state.

Perhaps most significantly, there is a fundamental conundrum inherent to the concept of national cinema based this time on the tension between the people and the artist. Refiğ's dissatisfaction with the productions of the people's cinema suggests the susceptibility of the people to the outside influences. As a result, Refiğ charges the artist with the mission of channeling the masses back to their material reality through cinema. In this case, some questions that need answers arise: How are the artists supposed to position themselves before and present their work for the masses without mimicking the Kemalist administrator? And, what would it mean if this cinema did not resonate with the people and if people turned to films outside this cinema? These and similar questions cast doubt on the viability of the national cinema's promised populism by inquiring into the nature of the relationships between this cinema and audiences.

Halit Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* (1973) through National Cinema

Despite these challenges, especially an unaccommodating market and a lack of financial backing, examples of national cinema materialize by the sheer ingeniousness of directors like Refiğ himself and Erksan who are able to turn such industrial disadvantages into their favor. In 1973, for instance, Hürrem Film approaches Refiğ with their desire to once again remake *Vurun Kahpeye* this time in color in the absence of a film that honors

the fiftieth anniversary of the Republic.[53] Even though Refiğ had reluctantly made a handful remakes due to industrial pressures and the fear of falling out of the market by this point in his career, the offer presents an invaluable opportunity for the theoretician of national cinema to exercise his theory. Perhaps no other story than the one that defines the nation at the moment of its foundation as mediated through cinema would have given the director the chance to reimagine the nation as per his vision. Refiğ accepts the offer on the condition that the company would not intervene in his artistic choices, and producer Hürrem Erman agrees with the condition that the Mevlid scene remains intact because it is an audience pleaser, a demand that fits well into Refiğ's project anyway.[54]

Refiğ's main critique of the previous films is based on the projection of the enemy: The backward forces have been highlighted while the foreign enemy remained obscure.[55] In recalibrating the antagonistic elements of the story, Refiğ declares his reference point as the poem of the "İstiklal Marşı" [Independence March],[56] the national anthem of the Republic, penned by Mehmet Akif. Akif's poem represents the spirit of the national struggle through which Refiğ embarks on to refract *Vurun Kahpeye*, as captured by its fourth stanza:

> The horizons of the West may be bound with walls of steel,
> But my borders are like the faith-filled bosom of a believer.
> Let them howl, fear not! How can this faith ever be extinguished

[53] Halit Refiğ, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavır*, 209.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

By that single-fanged monster you call 'civilization'?[57]

Akif imagines a nation united against the Western enemy in and through faith that overpowers even the advanced weaponry of the West. Islam thus grants freedom "[F]or independence is the right of my God-worshipping nation."[58] Refiğ thus renders Islam as the shared value of the nation, and he does so not through an elimination of "the bigot type" but through a refiguration of Tahsin,[59] Ömer Effendi, and Aliye. Crucial to this process is a motif whose idea Refiğ confesses to adopt from Aksoy. In lieu of a medallion that Fuat hands to Aliye as a souvenir, Tahsin, Fuat's counterpart, gives Aliye a mini Quran, saying "Do not forget about; do not diverge from Allah's path." Aliye responds that she "will keep it as the token of my dedication to you and Allah," a promise she keeps until her lynching. Revealed through a close up inside Aliye's palm when Tahsin finds her corpse, the striking reappearance of the Quran affirms Aliye's loyalty to Islam, to Tahsin, and through him, to the nation.

The motif of the Quran sums up Refiğ's undertaking of *Vurun Kahpeye* as a project to reconcile nationalism and Islam against the common enemy in line with the ideological worldview of his theory of national cinema. Refiğ realizes this project through a social realist methodology as per his vision for a national cinema, situating its story within the material historical conditions of its setting and providing its

[57] The poem was originally published in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and *Sebilürreşad* on February 17, 1921. The poem, along with the history of its publication and adoption and composition as the national anthem can be found at the Ministry of Education's webpage dedicated to the poem. "İstiklal Marşı," *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*, http://www.meb.gov.tr/belirligunler/istiklal_marsi/index_istiklal.html

[58] Ibid.

[59] See note 7 above.

interpretation. This unavoidably brings about a de-melodramatization of the story, palpably perceivable in the shrinkage of soundtrack in terms of both quantity and purpose. The use of extradiegetic sound is minimal, most notable by the removal of narrator and anthems, in comparison to the previous incarnations. In cases where extradiegetic music is deployed, the limited and repeated repertoire sets up the mood of the scene, instead of serving as punctuation cuing the audience. The paramount example of this is the use of same guitar arpeggio in scenes involving Aliye and the Greek commander this time named Çorbacı where Refiğ's primary goal is to thematize romance far from soliciting sympathy.

Indeed, in Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* emotional identification is secondary to an intellectual connection the film seeks to establish with the audience. It seems as though the director presents an analysis and an argument predominantly through a dialectical use of montage in which a shot makes sense in reference to the preceding shot that it undoes. A montage of negation, the shot succession, to be more precise, proceeds with the logic of thesis followed by its antithesis that negates the previous shot or the sequence of shots in communicating the argument that the nation must stand united in the face of outside advisory. This intellectual approach, particularly visible in montage, establishes the predominant social realist mode of the film, the goal of which is to elucidate national crisis as the real drama of the film. As a result of this anti-melodramatic attitude, the conditions that render the addressing of issues in social or national terms become oppressive for the doomed romance of Aliye and Tahsin. Abjected into both *mise-en-scène* and acting, the melodramatic excess cannot be accommodated in this historical

drama. Thus, the stylistic abjection of melodrama performatively mirrors the oppressive social conditions that render impossible the love. In what follows then, I will provide an analysis of Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* as a social realist melodrama that subtly stages the tension between the social and the individual through the interplay of the social realist and melodramatic modes.

Within the world of *Vurun Kahpeye*, reimagining the nation united entails reconsidering the place of Islam within the national struggle, instead of pushing it to the periphery, to once again invoke Mardin's discussion. Refiğ brings Islam to the center as a progressive force especially through Aliye's adopted father Ömer Effendi while marginalizing Hadji Fettah's regressive position in terms of pseudo-religiosity. Thus, the organization of shots or elements of a shot attests to this tension through a clash whereby the latter invalidates the former. The first two sequences of the film play out this dialectics. The first image of the film is a low angle shot of a mosque. The camera pans from its minaret down to street as Aliye enters into the frame. In the subsequent shots, we follow Aliye on her way to the Office of the Superintendent accompanied with her mantra echoed in the background. She walks past her soon-to-be archenemy and his accomplice, as Hadji Fettah holds the "half-naked" woman responsible for all the evil that falls upon them. Framing Aliye between the mosque and Hadji Fettah's religious morality, the film seems to be perpetuating the stereotypical representation of Islam. And yet, in the next sequence we are introduced with a pious family welcoming Aliye not only to their home but also into their family, proving the Superintendent's description of them as "extremely honorable Muslims." The kinship structure is formed in two juxtaposed

scenes: in the former, Aliye is told the story of their late daughter as she is given her room, while, in the next scene, Aliye tells of her orphanhood in the living room under a window frame that has a view of the minaret of the mosque in distance. The conversation ends with "Allah took one daughter and sent another," religiously officializing Aliye's adoption. The looming presence of the mosque in each sequence helps for its transvaluation, which will be completed, as I will demonstrate, in the Mevlid scene, if we especially recall how it signifies in Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye*.

Important to note here is Refiğ's portrayal of Ömer Efendi as a foil to Hadji Fettah. Depicted older than his predecessors in the previous versions, he is also religiously marked with his taqiyah. Challenging Hadji Fettah's orthodoxy, he provides an immanent critique with Islamic terms, representing the antithesis that dismantles the thesis in the montage composition. A case in point is when, early on, the film pits against Aliye and Hadji Fettah and their representative ideologies in two sequences. In the first series of shots, Aliye leads a dictation exercise in the classroom in which she reads out a passage praising the nation and the national struggle. The following sequence challenges this mode of indoctrination by picturing Hadji Fettah engaging in anti-nationalist public incitement in a coffeehouse. This time, Refiğ provides the antithesis within the shot by providing a counter religious discourse from Omer Efendi's mouth. Quoting the Müftü of Denizli, Ömer Efendi refers to his proclamation that when the land of the Muslims is conquered, Muslims attack the enemy. Hadji Fettah responds to this with reference to Sultan's fatwah that the nationalists must be stopped, but Ömer Efendi reminds him that the Sultan is in the hands of the British and thus cannot speak his mind. Refuted, Hadji

Fettah changes the topic, asking the older man why they began to host this stranger of a girl, to which he responds that they have in fact adopted Aliye, designating her a social legitimacy in public. By including the voice of another source of Islamic authority, Refiğ here exposes the fallacy of Hadji Fettah's logic through an immanent critique in an attempt to merge the nationalist project with Islam against the common enemy. Another significant example takes place before the attempted lynch cut short when Hadji Fettah incites the public in the square. The nationalists fighting the Greeks, Hadji Fettah contends, are enemies of religion ready to reject the rule of the sacred word, to remove the veil from women, and to defy the Sunna and the Fard. Thus, their blood is that of a Kafir and can be shed. He advises the people that they should follow whoever protects the mosque, the religion. However, Omer Efendi refutes once again by reminding him that the first rule of Islam is jihad against the actual infidels, which is what the nationalist are doing.

Consequently, Omer Efendi emerges as the synthesis of a Muslim and a nationalist. In this, he serves a vital role, perhaps more than Aliye, for Refiğ's project of realignment of Islam, nation, and the people against an antagonistic outside force. This is clearly pronounced when Tahsin tells Omer Efendi that it is not solely the Greeks that they are fighting, but the Greeks are backed up by the West, a point repeated several times with reference to the British and evinced by the "Made in England" sign branding the boxes of weaponry in the Greek arsenal. Thus, as much as the film contests the monolithic notion of Islam, it strives to represent a totality of the West that is set against the Turk. "Since the Crusades," rejoins Omer Efendi seated under a rug picturing Kaaba

on the wall, "this has been the fate of the Turk, son. The place of the Turk in history is to be the sword of Islam." The linking of the Turkish and Muslim identities is thus predicated upon this totalization of a Christian West. To this effect, Refiğ has the Greek foray into the town during the scene of Mevlid commemorating the martyrs of the nation. In a decision that reverses Aksoy's, Refiğ takes the camera inside the mosque –an actual mosque unlike Akad's chamber– registering Aliye's immersion in the service through a series of eyeline matches depicting Islamic signs and symbols. The religious affect of the scene is interrupted by the explosions signaling the Greek assault. In the most violent portrayal of the attack, the Greek army fires at the crowd running out of the mosque responding the strike with sticks and stones, even killing women and children. Understandably, these images visually echo the Greek massacres in Cyprus circulating within the popular discourse almost a year prior to the invasion of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Released shortly after the military action, the film dialogues with the crisis that led to the invasion. Similar to Aksoy's *Vurun Kahpeye*, the film might strike us as an allegory for the recent Cyprus crisis. And yet, considering the film's attempts to lay out a universal civilization enmity since the Crusades, the film rather seems to situate the Greek attack within a historical continuum, as emblemized by the banner in the Greek headquarters that reads "MEGALI IDEA" [Great Idea] connecting the Greek conquest of Anatolia and the Greek aspirations in Cyprus. Channeled in an irredentist utopic project, these events are mere instantiations of a timeless civilizational conflict between the Christian Occident and the Muslim Orient.

Cast in these terms, this opposition redefines Turkish nationalism as a fight for

Islam and Turkish nationalists as guardians of Islam. Dismantling the stereotypical binary between secular nationalism and Islamist antinationalism, this redefinition marginalizes Hadji Fettah and Uzun Hüseyin whose motives now stand distinctly selfish and capricious, not necessarily emerging out of the social context in which they are enmeshed. Their outsidedness to Islamic morality is conveyed with the film's meticulous attention to historical details made legible also through the use of montage. Such historical precision that almost acts as an organic exposé informing the audience about the conditions of the guerilla warfare the Turks are giving against the Greeks. While Hadji Fettah believes that "these beardless men" do not stand a chance against an advanced army, Tahsin informs Omer Efendi that their goal is to buy time before the Great Offensive whilst Mustafa Kemal is forming a new army in Ankara in which they will join. Because as a gang they materially rely on the townsmen, they invite the notables, along with Hadji Fettah, for a meeting. Tahsin debriefs them about the annual expenses of his sixty men which he asks to be funded by the invitees on the basis of a volunteered amount. Omer Efendi asks him to name the amount himself. He does so to meet with the protests of Hadji Fettah who names this incident as a Bolshevik theft. Later, when Aliye visits Tahsin to save Hadji Fettah from his imprisonment, she finds out that he was jailed because he tried to incite the crowd against the nationalists and herself, not because he has rejected to give money. He explains further that "Only enthusiasm or men won't be enough to win a war. Guns and armory are also necessary. And these can only be bought by money." Despite Tahsin's advice against pitting Muslims against each other before his departure, Hadji Fettah conspires with Uzun Hüseyin whose motivation

lies in his injured masculinity after Aliye socially castrates him by admonishing his son in class and by rejecting his proposal. Promising to commit Aliye to Uzun Hüseyin, Hadji Fettah aims not only to escape from having to give money and to get rid of Tahsin, but also to seize Omer Efendi's properties. Aliye's adopted mother Gülsüm's statement about Hadji Fettah and his followers is therefore validated: "These foul men are neither afraid of Allah nor ashamed of the prophet."

Under such dire conditions, the relationship between Aliye and Tahsin can only develop through their shared commitment to the nation; romantic love seems unthinkable and impossible. The expression of their interest is thus communicated through a mutual admiration of their service for the nation. Asked whether she would wait for him until after the war, Aliye can only reply with a formal "I would be honored to wait for you." For their engagement, Refiğ takes the couple to a decrepit building that conveys the out of time and place-ness of this relationship, considering Walter Benjamin's suggestion that time and space collapse into each other in the formation of a ruin.[60] The ruinous house embodies the current state of the nation explained by Tahsin as "The homeland/nation has been destroyed, destructed. A new state is being formed." Without a home(land) for their romance, literalized by the house in disuse, the setting captures the true melodrama of the love that they cannot live. The consummation of their love is thus predicated upon national salvation. As seen in their second meeting in the building when Tahsin secretly visits the town under occupation, the house serves as the backdrop against the future home for which they are fighting. The interlocking fates of the individual and the social,

[60] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 177-8.

the personal and the national is verbalized in a better future "for both us and the people."

It is indeed the stifling national crisis that characterizes the Fassbinderian acting noticeable throughout Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye*. One of the most anti-melodramatic impulses of the film lies in the rigidity with which the actors navigate the screen, highlighting the constraining social conditions of the war-ridden days. The melodrama of the impossible love, however, exposes surfacing of the repressed emotions. Consider, for instance, the farewell scene in their second meeting at the decrepit house next to Tahsin's kiss in the forehead. Here, the couple is this time driven to intimately embrace each other with Tahsin placing a hesitant and shy kiss into Aliye's cheek, triggering Aliye to respond with multiple kisses back on his cheek. Her hand on the nape of his neck, Aliye begins rubbing their cheeks against each other when finally, they part ways with goodbye. The prolonged intimacy delivered in a shot reverse shot reveals a worried Tahsin and a nervous Aliye. The subdued eroticism and the repression of feelings are further accentuated by the rising of a violin harmony. It seems as though what is repressed here comes to surface, albeit intimated, in an ellipsis during Tahsin's secret visit this time to Aliye's house. This sequence contains the film's only dissolve transitioning out of Tahsin kissing a joyous Aliye and back in to Tahsin waking up with his head in Aliye's lap. In between two dissolves, Refiğ takes the camera to the Greek headquarters where Çorbacı orders to encircle Aliye's house upon receiving the report of Tahsin's sighting. The transitioning between these two scenes is indeed suggestive for the risking of the social for the personal, signifying a moment of rupture or excess breaking free from social and personal repression. That the revelation of Tahsin's entrapment takes

place after this scene framed between two dissolves increases the forbidden fruit theme of the moment for which Tahsin risks the national mission for personal pleasure.

The removal of melodrama from innocent Aliye's unjust victimization to the doomed love between two young people is evident also in the lynching scene. Aliye's lynching is perhaps the most violent in the series in its depiction, and yet its melodramatization is missing mostly because of the curt rendering of its grief. Despite the clear self-designation of Aliye as a soldier and her act as a sacrifice, she is not socially inscribed as a martyr for the nation. After Tahsin discovers the Quran in Aliye's hand, the two perpetrators are sent to hanging, which for the first time in the series gets to be fully represented. Following a hard cut, we see Tahsin walking towards the camera in the schoolyard where Aliye is buried. While, looking at the ground, he quietly wipes his tears, Aliye's mantra is heard against the children singing an anthem. The camera zooms out to reveal her burial ground covered in Turkish flag, and with a tilt, it reveals another Turkish flag hanging at a pole. Thus, without a glorifying ceremony and with a man living his pain alone, Aliye's lynching is translated almost as a deserved and damning penalty to pay for the breaching of an invisible national contract. Repressed into a longing gaze at a bridal gown, resisting shivering bodies in resistance to desire, an ellipsis that dissolves the act of consummation, and two wiped drops of tears, *Vurun Kahpeye*'s melodrama lies in the clash between individual and the social. Traceable in its dynamic tension between the social realist and melodramatic modes, Refiğ's interpretation of *Vurun Kahpeye* gets closest to the central concern animating Edib's novella, bar her feminist vision.

Although Refiğ's highly stylized social realist melodrama was a box-office failure and unnoticed in the press, it was welcomed and celebrated by the right and the Islamist circles.[61] Emblematic of this celebration, the Islamic-nationalist journal *Hareket* dedicates the cover of its November issue in 1973 to it with the title "The Sum of 50 Years and *Vurun Kahpeye* again," beckoning to Selim Yağmur's piece inside.[62] Yağmur sings the praises of the film for deconstructing a false binary that the "anti-Islamic" previous versions perpetuated and reads the Quran motif as Refiğ's message that "those who want to realize a revolution in Turkey grip the Quran before anything else."[63] In this respect, twenty-four years after Akad's *Vurun Kahpeye*, Refiğ seems to repair the injury that the original film had engendered in this audience. *Vurun Kahpeye* also became an addendum to the dialogue Refiğ's national cinema inspired between the filmmakers and the Islamists in search of their own cinema. Earlier in 1973, Refiğ was invited for the National [*Milli*] Cinema Convention organized by National [*Milli*] Turkish Student Association. Refiğ's reflections on cinema since the middle of the 60s had been influential in thinking about an Islamist cinema in the late 60s. As part of the process of defining and distinguishing their cinema, the members of this circle extended the

[61] This contrast in the reception of the film can be captured by two reviews that appear in ideologically opposed journals. On the one hand, *Yeni Sanat*, a journal that defines itself as belonging to the "National Front," publishes a blurb that promotes the film "as the most sensitive" amongst the three versions and thus worth watching in its first issue. "Sinema," *Yeni Sanat*, December 1973. On the other hand, the leftist *Yedinci Sanat* ranks the film with one star ("insignificant") out of four stars in its Evaluation section where the disclaimer for Turkish films reads "Evaluated within the possibilities of our cinema." Complaining that Aliye has turned into a revolutionary of Islam in Refiğ's hands, the note continues as follows: "A well shot, well told, nonetheless, a redundant story. Refiğ, being very far to the problems of 1973, looks at the history from the 'right' front." "Değerlendirme," *Yedinci Sanat*, October 1973.

[62] Selim Yağmur, "Yeniden 'Vurun Kahpeye'…" *Fikir ve Sanatta Hareket*, November 1973.

[63] Ibid.

invitation to Refiğ to analyze his theory and filmic production. Refiğ appreciates this dialogue, but the convention serves an occasion to identify in more pronounced terms his separation from them,[64] as emblematized by each side's embracing of either of the synonyms of "national." Whereas Refiğ's *ulusal* is a Republican retrieval of an ancient Turkic word, *milli* is the Arabic word originally denoting religion or religious community that in the 19th century evolves into the national body. Thus, while the former refers back to a pre-Islamic Turkic past, the latter strikes a religious chord that stems from its Arabic origins. Refiğ summarizes the distinction between the two sides in terms of ideological priorities: For him, the primary issue is the danger, threat, pressure from the outside, and to stay strong against them inside, but those who represent the National Vision [*Milli Görüş*] give precedence to an Islamic morality.[65]

It may even be possible to argue that Refiğ's project in *Vurun Kahpeye* results in perhaps a more unlikely and an equally unintended outcome in the following decades. In the middle of the 70s, due to industrial shrinkage and his dissatisfaction with the industrial dynamics, Refiğ orients himself to TV, specifically, to the only existing channel, the state station, Turkish Radio Television (TRT).[66] As a result of his tenure at the state television, Refiğ was able to broadcast some of his films on TV. Refiğ maintains that as a result his connection to TRT, his *Vurun Kahpeye* was the one to be broadcast the

[64] Halit Refiğ, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavır*, 210.

[65] Ibid., 211.

[66] In fact, in 1975, Refiğ directed the first Turkish miniseries to be aired in Turkish television, *Aşk-ı Memnu* (*Forbidden Love*).

most on TV.[67] Considering the new televisual publicity of *Vurun Kahpeye* since 1975, we can draw a connection between Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* and the idiomatic appearance of *vurun kahpeye* in the following decades.

A significant media event must be noted for the emergence of the title as an idiom. In March 1990, popular news magazine *Nokta* came out with a controversial headline with reference to what came to be known as the activation of the scandalous "reduced rape law:" "Justice Gave Permission, Strike the 'Slut.'"[68] A sex worker was kidnapped and raped by four women in Antalya in 1986; however, by the beginning of 1990, the penalty of the rapists was decided to be reduced by two-thirds of the duration due to the profession of the woman as per the notorious article 438 of the Turkish Penal Code. The appeal for the invalidation of the law by the Antalya Attorney of the Criminal Court for the Major Cases was rejected by the Supreme Court on the basis that an unchaste woman cannot be put in the same pot with a chaste woman.[69] *Nokta*'s headline, then, compares the Supreme Court decision to the blows Aliye receives in *Vurun Kahpeye*, pulling the focus back to the gendered nature of the lynching that Edib in her novel emphasized but the male directors deemphasized. Through this feminist rerouting, the idiom *vurun kahpeye demek* [to call strike the slut] has come to signify attacks or efforts to prevent an otherwise useful or pioneering idea, person, or cause, perpetuating

[67] Halit Refiğ, *Halit Refiğ: Düşlerden Düşüncelere Söyleşiler*, 285.

[68] "Adalet İzin Verdi, Vurun 'Kahpe'ye," *Nokta*, March 4, 1990.

[69] The decision caused public outrage led by nationwide protests by the feminists, which resulted in the cancellation of the law by a joint proposal in the parliament, a decision that marks the first legal victory of the feminist movement in Turkey. "İlk Yasal Kazanım," *Bianet*, http://bianet.org/kadin/siyaset/66-ilk-yasal-kazanim.

the tension between the progressive and regressive social forces as mostly graphed onto the political division between the secularists and Islamists within reference to gender. Thus, counterintuitively, Refiğ's *Vurun Kahpeye* can be said not only to rekindle the long-forgotten feminist desires of Edib's text, but also to help cement the social divisions it tries to eradicate through the new medium of television.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: THE PAST AS EPILOGUE

This dissertation investigated the experience of Turkish modernity through a culturally reproduced aesthetics of victimhood germane to the idea of a nation delineated by a secular social body. Rooted in the Western dramatic tradition, the imported form of melodrama is adapted to imagine the Turkish national identity through the victimization of a secular population in the face of Islamic orthodoxy. I have demonstrated the melodramatization of victimhood in the secularist imaginary by examining the extended social life of *Vurun Kahpeye* across media between 1923 and 1973. In this history, mass media, especially cinema, plays a significant role in the forging of nation and victimhood, evident in the sedimentation of a secularist paranoia about the Islamic subject construed as a potentially zealous, bigoted fanatic. *Vurun Kahpeye*'s impact therefore reaches far beyond the first fifty years of the Turkish Republic, as its title cements this paranoia in the vernacular in the form of an idiomatic phrase. Indeed, the event that the idiom *vurun kahpeye* conjures up – the violent treatment of the innocent individual at the hands of a mob – animates the tension between the supposedly progressivist and backward social forces of the nation, namely the secular moderns and religious masses. As a meme, the fantasized mutilated female body of *Vurun Kahpeye* foments secularist fears about the imminence of the Islamist threat that have structured social and political sensibilities, attitudes, and praxis in modern Turkey.

As Charles Hirschkind reminds, "the affects and sensibilities honed through popular media practice are as infrastructural to politics and public reason as are markets,

associations, formal institutions and information networks."[1] Thus, the repetition of *Vurun Kahpeye* allows us to approach melodrama as a political technology of victimhood within a social economy of affect. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, however, a preemptive secularist paranoia is only one side of the distributive and disciplinary effect of melodrama. My work in this chapter illustrates that Aliye's body blots out the injury that the representation of the turbaned male incites during the formation of cinema as mass media. This chapter anticipates the emergence of a proliferated and magnified affect of resentment whose study will serve as an appendix to *The Melodramatics of Turkish Modernity*. If melodrama is the medium to channel secular affects around victimhood, *arabesk* emerges as a populist expression and cultivation of the suffering of the oppressed, those figures who are concealed by the national victim. As the counterculture of the domestic rural migrants experiencing hardships in the urban landscape, *arabesk* appears as a transmedial outlet for the victimization of the –conservative, rural, working class– masses under the –secular, urban, bourgeois– elite since the 70s through an outburst of music and filmic production. *Arabesk*, as musicologist Martin Stokes explains, primarily refers to a hybrid popular music style mixing "'Arab,' Turkish popular classical, Turkish folk, and Western pop and rock."[2] As discussed by Stokes, this hybridity is audible in the composition of these songs which remain unsynthesized to produce the affect of anguish through their interruptive elements.[3] Most of all, referring

[1] Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape*, 9.

[2] Stokes, *The Republic of Love*, 19.

[3] Ibid., 80.

presumably back to its origins in architecture as arabesque, the musical form *arabesk* is notoriously characterized by overwrought vocal and tonal prolongations in mostly high notes as well as emotive punctuations and exclamations that make up of its excessive ornamentations. Such stylizations determine the wide affective range of the contested messages of *arabesk*, which as Meral Özbek points out, "is a field both of resistance and submission."[4] The affective repertoire of *arabesk* spans between the fatalistic submissiveness of the ascetic self of *dert* and *çile* and the defiance of the protesting subject of *itiraz* and *isyan*.[5] Through the growing channels of mass media and new social networks such as cassettes, films –musical films, especially singer films, in the genre of *arabesk*– VHS, tabloids, and the people's concerts, *arabesk*'s messages were embraced by a broad scope of socially disenfranchised groups disenchanted with modernity that range from Kurds to queers.

In contemporary Turkish cultural hierarchy, as an alternative or a counter aesthetics of victimhood, *arabesk* occupies a lowly position. What Stokes observes about the *arabesk* debate of the 80s is in fact still a prevalent attitude today despite *arabesk*'s mainstream status:

> The intelligentsia initially saw *arabesk* in unambiguously negative terms and monopolized representations of it. For them, it revealed an inner Orient in a supposedly Western country, and a cultural tangle of insufficiently suppressed 'Arab' influences and traditional elements that flourished amongst poorly integrated rural migrants in the squatter towns. It showed the painful limits of

[4] Meral Özbek, *Popüler Kültür ve Orhan Gencebay Arabeski*, 27.

[5] Given all of these words have a metaphysical ring to them, their incorporation into the popular provides another instantiation of *arabesk*'s popularization of Islamic rhetoric that I mention below. While the previous set of words can roughly be rendered as "affliction" and "ordeal," the latter would can be translated as "objection" and "rebellion."

the Turkish state's efforts to become 'modern.'[6]

The elitist and Kemalist perception of *arabesk* today, the most vocal proponent of which is the celebrated pianist-composer virtuoso Fazıl Say, rests upon an old "critical cliché," to borrow from Stokes, that "*arabesk* was fatalistic and masochistic, encouraging a passivity that had no place in a modernizing republic." Furthermore, to follow Stokes, "[t]he accusation of fatalism was linked with *arabesk*'s complicity in religious reaction (*irtica*) and the Islamization of the Turkish public sphere."[7] Indeed, *arabesk*'s connection to religion is not far-fetched as intimated by Stokes. In the wake of the 1980 Turkish coup d'état when religious mass media productions were withdrawn underground, "*Arabesk* hinted at these suppressed archives of popular religious emotion, though it never spelled them out explicitly."[8] I would further stress this connection and argue that *arabesk* popularizes an Islamic discourse on suffering and victimization found within the cultural reservoir of the conservative right. The cultural lineage of *arabesk* goes back to the poetry of Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873-1936) and Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983) who serve as the ideologues of political Islam in Turkey. The Muslim subject that these poets draw on in their work is one who is downtrodden but self-righteous in anticipation of the day of reconciliation –against the imperial West in Mehmet Akif's poetry and against the secular Republic in Necip Fazıl's– corresponding to the *çilekeş* [ascetic] and *isyankar* [rebellious] registers of *arabesk*'s message outlined above. Considering the

[6] Stokes, *Republic*, 74.

[7] Ibid., 100.

[8] Ibid., 22.

large diverse social body of *arabesk*, this ultimately means that through *arabesk* political Islam found a counterpublic with which its increasingly populist message would resonate. As *arabesk* translates Islamic suffering into a sweeping populist discourse, it cultivates a competing structure of national feeling of resentment suitable for non-Kemalist political affiliations led today by the JDP. As Stokes notes,

> Prime Minister Turgut Özal's political party, the *Anavatan Partisi* (ANAP, or Motherland Party), co-opted arabesk in the mid-1980s in moves consonant with Özal's promotion of a laissez-faire economy and the dismantling of the state's patrimonial role. . . The promotion of Islam as a public virtue that accompanied this process antagonized the secular left, for whom *arabesk*'s visibility was yet more worrying evidence of this new 'hegemony of the periphery.'[9]

Thus, I would argue that *arabesk* laid the foundation for a discursive platform for the coalition of those we could deem as the victims of modernity.

Just as melodrama, as an affective aesthetic form, *arabesk* too, registers politics as feeling. Distributing and depositing a competing structure of a national feeling of resentment, it challenges the kinship between melodrama and the project of secular national modernity. Thus, this dissertation gestures towards an impending genealogy of an alternative account of victimhood that would complement its project by mapping the divergent itineraries of melodrama and *arabesk*, their encounter with each other, and their entanglements with politics. While such a project is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I will briefly sketch out an example that epitomizes the efficacy of *arabesk* as a transhistorical affective hinge. The injurious resentment that the Islamists and the rural populace share signals the unforeseen political alliances embodied nowhere better than in

[9] Ibid., 93.

the trans diva Bülent Ersoy's intimacy with the conservative right, especially the Motherland Party in the nineties and the JDP in the new millennium. *Şöhretin Sonu* [*The End of Fame*] (1981)[10], a singer film that stages Ersoy's fall from an educated, effeminate, and bourgeois singer-actor type of melodramas into a miserable and undesirable *arabesk* singer against the backdrop of her sex reassignment surgery as an unrecognized legal subject, is symbolic.[11] The film marks the rise of a new political body of the dispossessed that later finds its political expression in Islamist conservatism, anticipating the unlikely alliances that we would soon see within Turkish modernity.

Ersoy has forged a link between transsexuality and conservatism by channeling the affects of the dispossessed in the forging of her Muslim Turkish identity on account of the banning of her public performances throughout the 80s by the secularist Turkish Armed Forces after the military coup in 1980. Today, Ersoy is a vocal proponent of President Erdoğan and his JDP, participating in the recent global phenomenon of the counterintuitive marriage between transsexuality and conservative politics, epitomized till recently by Caitlyn Jenner in America. The conditions of possibility of this marriage are encapsulated in two contrasting scenes from the summer of 2017. Hours after the riot police raided İstanbul Trans Pride and brutally targeted the trans community, Ersoy was shaking hands with Erdoğan as his invited guest at a Ramadan dinner reception at a luxurious mansion in the same city. This juxtaposition, I believe, reveals, on the one hand, the trans body as the bearer of a new political sensibility that frame the conditions

[10] Orhan Aksoy, *Şöhretin Sonu*, 1981.

[11] For a historical reading of the film through the prism of Ersoy's battle with the law, see Ertür, Başak, and Alisa Lebow. "Coup De Genre: The Trials and Tribulations of Bülent Ersoy." *Theory & Event* 17, no. 1 (2014).

of trans-visibility in an era marked by the turn to the right. Ersoy's *hyper*visibility in media –with TV performances in such shows as *Popstar Alaturka*, *Bülent Ersoy Show*, and *Dünya Güzellerim*– during the sixteen-year-old reign of the JDP attests to how Ersoy professes the injured, suffering subject of Necip Fazıl always in retaliation against the injustices of the past at the hands of the secular elite.

The inflections of victimhood in the modern Turkish nation state have larger implications for a sense of historical injury. Aliye's mutilated corpse, Fettah Efendi's hanged body, Erdoğan's imprisonment, and Ersoy's abjection– the articulation of the Turk as the victim in its various forms and shapes presupposes the dismissal of the body and the pain of the ultimate other: the non-Muslim and non-Turk. On January 19, 2007, Armenian-Turkish editor-in-chief, columnist, and journalist Hrant Dink was assassinated on the street outside his newspaper *Agos*' office in Istanbul. In his last column nine day before his murder, "I am like a dove," Dink had recorded, in the face of the death threats he had been receiving ever since his third prosecution under the notorious Article 301 of the Turkish penal code for denigrating Turkishness.[12] "Do you know Ministers what a price it is to imprison someone to the skittishness of a dove?,"[13] Dink had asked his prosecutors, comparing his mental state to that of a fidgety dove, always in distress, always in alarm. Still, Dink had refused to leave Turkey, nor had he requested protection, because he had faith in his country, in the people of his country. His final words on paper attested to this conviction that would prove fatal: "Yes, I can feel myself as restless as a

[12] Hrant Dink, "A Dove's Skittishness in My Soul," *Bianet*, January 22, 2007 http://bianet.org/bianet/english/90552-a-doves-skittishness-in-my-soul.

[13] Ibid.

dove but I know that in this country people do not touch and disturb the doves. The doves continue their lives in the middle of the cities. Yes indeed a bit frightened but at the same time free."[14] Hrant Dink's seventeen-year-old puppet murderer betrayed Dink's trust, brutally reminding us of those children of the neighborhood who, with their slingshots, strike doves to death.

Hrant Dink's assassination has a distinctive ethnocentric quality within the annals of state-sponsored nationalist anti-intellectual violence in Turkey. In this respect, the devastating incident must be situated in a longer history of ethnic cleansing. Dating to the cataclysmic Armenian Genocide of 1915, Dink's murder adds to a chain of abominable crimes enacted for the Turkification of the Anatolian and Thracian land via the elimination of minorities and confiscation of their properties: the population exchange of 1923, the Dersim Massacre of 1938, the Wealth Tax of 1942, and the Istanbul Pogrom of 1955. Arguably, some version of this bloody past taints the chronicles of more or less every nation-state; however, what marks the Turkish case is the absolute denial of those crimes whose execution has been the condition of possibility for the emergence and existence of a Turkish nation state since the turn of the century. Without an acknowledgement of the suffering of the other, not to mention the recognition of responsibility or guilt, it is, as though in an exacting exercise of dissimulation in service of this denial, the Turk cites himself as the ultimate victim of the history *ad nauseum*.

Take, for example, the great catastrophe of the Armenian Genocide, the systematic extermination of over one million Armenians through a series of massacres

[14] Ibid.

and enforced deportation on death marches under the Ottoman rule in 1915. While the term genocide was in fact coined after this ethnic cleansing, the Turkish state succeeding the Ottoman government of the CUP has vehemently rejected to categorize the events of 1915 as genocide through what Fatma Müge Göçek names as "the republican defensive narrative."[15] Kept alive and perpetuated by the Turkish state not only through scholarship and publications, but also through the nationalist machinery of state apparatuses like a centralized education and a conscription system, this master narrative codes the atrocities as *tehcir*, "relocation," as a necessary means for national security and unity, as opposed to and divorced from a massacre or a genocide, concealing the pan-Turkist aspirations of the CUP. Alternately or concomitantly, this narrative justifies the actions of the CUP as a vengeful response to the massacres of the Balkan Turks and Muslims, as a preemptive measure against the influence of Armenian nationalists or Russians on the Armenian population during the World War I, and as a natural consequence of mutual killings between the communities in the same war.[16] In this counter knowledge production, then, The Turk appears as the ultimate, the likely, and the essential victim. Thus, in Göçek's words, "the Armenian victims themselves, tragically and ironically, have emerged in the Republican narrative, alongside the guilty Western powers, as the main perpetrators of the crimes" committed against them.[17] This history of violence –not only of the aggressions of the past, but also of the ongoing hijacking of the suffering of the other–

[15] Fatma Müge Göçek, "Reading Genocide," *A Question of Genocide,* 101.

[16] Hülya Adak, *Halide Edib ve Siyasal Şiddet*, 28-9.

[17] Göçek, "Reading Genocide," 118.

looms large in the backdrop of this dissertation.

But in a geography of denied and contested victimizations, we have to ask, is there a right way to bear one's suffering, own one's victimization? This seems to be the question that the anti-melodramatic hero of François Ozon's 2005 production *Time to Leave*, Romain, provides an answer to.[18] Diagnosed with a terminal cancer, Romain refuses treatment and determines to die alone, abruptly shunning himself away from the people around him without any explanation. Resentful towards the world, he refuses sympathy, perhaps in fear of inspiring pity or pain, but his withdrawal confounds and hurts his friends and family, especially his boyfriend, Sasha, whom Romain curtly jettisons from his apartment and life. It is Romain's kindred spirit, his grandmother Laura, who has sequestered herself after her husband's death, abandoning her child, Romain's father, that points Romain to an alternative path: "there is no shame in kindling tender feelings," she remarks, because "[i]t could be an opportunity to talk to each other." Talk Romain does, as he henceforth subtly begins to make peace with his life companions before his farewell. In his steady march to death, Romain, now mindful of the others around him, delicately and maturely navigates his suffering, which, repressed or reveled, always runs the risk of causing or silencing other sufferings in reclaiming victimhood.

The embodiment of the new path that Romain embraces is his revised decision to help a heterosexual couple have a baby by accepting to impregnate the wife. A young gay fashion photographer not too fond of babies –as his relationship with his sister's children

[18] *Time to Leave*, dir. by François Ozon, 2005.

evinces– Romain fathers a baby for the couple in an act of *disidentification*, which appears as a means for Romain to overcome the oppressive potentiality of one's own suffering. Disidentification is also a crucial political exercise by which the individual is divorced from the regulatory norms of difference for mobilizing politics towards "the rearticulation of democratic contestation."[19] The unforeseen and unprecedent reactions to Hrant Dink's assassination in his funeral service is a testament to the indispensability of disidentification as an ethical political praxis in the face of the victimization of the other. Over hundred thousand mourner-protestors gathered in the streets of Istanbul carrying and chanting the slogan "We are all Hrant, we are all Armenians." Providing a historical account of a melodramatization of victimhood in the secularist imaginary that frames the experience of Turkey's modernity, my hope is that this dissertation echoes the disidentificatory calls from January 23, 2007.

[19] Judith Butler, introduction to *Bodies that Matter,* 4.

REFERENCES CITED

Abbot, John S.C..*The Mother at Home*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873.

Abu-Lughod, Lila, ed. *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Açıkel, Fethi. "'Kutsal Mazlumluğun' Psikopatalojisi." *Toplum ve Bilim* 70 (Fall 1996): 199-214.

Adak, Hülya. *Halide Edib ve Siyasal Şiddet: Ermeni Kırımı, Diktatörlük ve Şiddetsizlik. İstanbul*: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016.

———. "Otobiyografik Benliğin Çok-Karakterliliği: Halide Edib'in İlk Romanlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet." In *Kadınlar Dile Düşünce: Edebiyat ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet*, edited by Sibel Irzık and Jale Parla, 161-178. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017.

"Adalet İzin Verdi, Vurun 'Kahpe'ye," *Nokta*, 4 March, 1990.

Adıvar, Halide Edib. *Türkün Ateşle İmtihanı*. İstanbul: Çan Yayını, 1962.

Ahıska, Meltem. "Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no 2-3 (2003): 351–379. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-102-2-3-351

Ahmad, Feroz. *From Empire to Republic: Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. 2 Vols. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversity Press, 2008.

Akad, Lütfi. *Işıkla Karanlık Arasında*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2004.

Aksoy, Nazan. "Halide Edip Adıvar'ın *Seviyye Talip*'inde Kadın Kimliği." In *Türk Edebiyatına Eleştirel Bir Bakış: Berna Moran'a Armağan*, edited by Nazan Aksoy and Bülent Aksoy, 41-52. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017.

Alkan, Mehmet Ö. "Resmi İdeolojinin Doğuşu ve Evrimi Üzerine Bir Deneme." In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 377-407. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Andak, Selmi. "60 Sinemada Birden Gösterilen Vurun Kahpeye Bekleneni Veremedi," *Cumhuriyet*, October 28, 1964.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. New York: Verso, 2006.

Anker, Elisabeth. "Introduction: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom." Introduction to *Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Arai, Masami. "Jön Türk Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliği" In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 180-95. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Translated by George A. Kennedy. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University, 2007.

Arslan, Savaş. *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*. New York: Oxford University Press: 2011.

Arslan, Umut Tümay. *Bu Kabuslar Neden Cemil? Yeşilçam'da Erkeklik ve Mazlumluk*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2005.

Asad, Talal. "Introduction: Thinking about Secularism." Introduction to *Formations of the Secular*: *Christianity, Islam, and Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Atacan, Fulya. "Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad: AKP-SP." *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 187-99.

Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Vurun Kahpeye!" *Sebilürreşad*, April 1949.

Auerbach, Erich. "Scholarship in Times of Extremes: Letters of Erich Auerbach (1933-46), on the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Death." Edited and translated by Martin Elsky, Martin Vialon and Robert Stein. In *PMLA* 122, No. 3 (2007), 742-762.

Bao, Weihong. "Introduction" to *Fiery Cinema*: *The Emergence of an Affective Medium in China, 1915-1945*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015.

Bardakçı, Murat. "Şiiri Böyle Montajlamışlar," *Hürriyet*. September 22, 2002 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/siiri-boyle-montajlamislar-99109.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*: *Reflections on Photography*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

———. “Myth Today.” In *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: The Noonday Press, 109-156.

“Başbakan Erdoğan Havaalanında Halka Seslendi.” *Hürriyet*, June 10, 2013 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-erdogan-havalimaninda-halka-seslendi-23470929.

“Başbakan Erdoğan’ın ‘Yerlerde Sürüklediler’ Dediği Anne Star’a Konuştuç” *Star*, June 13, 2013 http://www.star.com.tr/guncel/basbakan-erdoganin-yerlerde-surukledilerdedigi-anne-stara-konustu-haber-762093/.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Translated by John Osborne. London: Verso, 1998.
———. “Theses on the Philosophy of History.” In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

“Beynelmilel bir festivale giren ilk Türk filmi: Vurun Kahpeye.” *Yıldız*. August 15, 1949.

“Bir Filim Münasebetiyle.” *ANT*, April 6, 1949.

Bora, Tanıl. *Cereyanlar: Türkiye’de Siyasi İdeolojiler*. İstanbul: İletişimYayınları, 2016.

———. “Mağdur.” *Birikim*. November 21, 2017. http://www.birikimdergisi.com/haftalik/8618/magdur#.W4yexC3MwUE.

Brooks, Peter. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess: With a New Preface*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Brown Frierson, Elizabeth. “Mirrors In, Mirrors Out: Domestication and rejection of the foreign in late-Ottoman Women's Magazines (1875-1908)." In *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, edited by D. Fairchild Ruggles, 177-204. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Brown, Wendy. “Introduction: Freedom and the Plastic Cage.” Introduction to *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Butler, Judith. Introduction to *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex.”* New York: Routledge: 1-23.

Coş, Nezih. “Türkiye’de Sinemaların Dağılışı.” *Akademik Sinema*, August 1969.

Çakır, Serpil. *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994.

Çalapala, Rakım. “Stüdyoya Baskın.” *Yıldız*. August 1, 1944.

Deringil, Selim. *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909)*. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2011.

“Değerlendirme.” *Yedinci Sanat*. October 1973.

Durakbaşa, Ayşe. *Halide Edib: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000.

Dink, Hrant. “A Dove’s Skittishness in My Soul.” *Bianet*. January 22, 2007 http://bianet.org/bianet/english/90552-a-doves-skittishness-in-my-soul.

Ediz, Turhan. “Bir Filmin Tenkidi: Vurun Kahpeye.” *Son Saat*, March 21, 1949.

Emre, Selçuk K. “Muvaffak Olmuş Tek Milli Film: Vurun Kahpeye.” *Halk Dergisi*, March 1949.

Enginün, İnci. *Halide Edib Adıvar’ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı Meselesi*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2007.

Erdem, Y. Hakan. *Tarih-Lenk: Kusursuz Yazarlar, Kağıttan Metinler*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008.

Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip. “Türkiye-Çin Stratejik İş Birliği.” *Sebilürreşad*, January 2017.

Erman, Hürrem.“Yapımcı Hürrem Erman’la Konuşma.” By Atilla Dorsay, Nezih Coş, and Engin Ayça. *Yedinci Sanat*, July 1973, 22-37.

Ertür, Başak, and Alisa Lebow. "Coup De Genre: The Trials and Tribulations of Bülent Ersoy." *Theory & Event* 17, no. 1 (2014) https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed September 2, 2018).

Fanon, Franz. “On Violence.” In *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Fatma Aliye. *Nisvân-ı İslâm*. İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2012.

“Felaket Karşısında Vahdet: Hak İsteriz, Yaşamak İsteriz.” *Zaman*, May 24, 1919.

Fortna, Benjamin C. “Introduction: Reading Empire, Reading Republic.” Introduction to *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Gandhi, Leela. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Germen, Baran. "Of Parks and Hamams: Queer Heterotopias in the Age of Neoliberal Modernity and the Gay Citizen." *Assuming Gender* 5:1 (2015), 111-137.

Gledhill, Christine. "Christine Gledhill on 'Stella Dallas' and Feminist Film Theory." *Cinema Journal* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1986): 44-48.

Goldberg, Jonathan. "Preface" to *Melodrama: An Aesthetics of Impossibility*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2016.

Gopal, Sangita. "Bourgeois Extreme: Genre and Global Flows." Paper presented at What Matters to Me series, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, May 11, 2018.

Göçek, Fatma Müge. "Reading Genocide: Turkish Historiography on the Armenian Deportations and Massacres of 1915." In *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*. 101-127. Edited by Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

———. *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

Gökalp, Ziya. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*. Edited and translated by Niyazi Berkes. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.

Gürata, Ahmet. "Tears of Love: Egyptian Cinema in Turkey (1938-1950)." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 30 (Spring 2004): 55-82.

Güven, Dilek, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Azınlık Politikaları ve Stratejileri Bağlamında 6-7 Eylül Olayları*. Translated by Bahar Şahin Fırat. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017.

Halide Edib. "Büyük Kadınlar." *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı*, no. 6 (September, 1917).

———. *The Clown and His Daughter*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1935.

———. *The Daughter of Smyrna.* Translated by Maulvie Mohammad Yakub Khan. Lahore: Dar-ul Kutab Islamia, 1932.

———. "Dictatorship and Reforms in Turkey." *The Yale Review* 14, no.1 (1929): 27-44.

———. "Evimize Bakalım: Türkçülüğün Faaliyet Sahası." *Vakit*, June 30, 1918.

———. *Memoirs*. New York: The Century Co., 1926.

———. *The Shirt of Flame*. New York: Duffield and Co., 1923.

———. *The Turkish Ordeal: Being the Further Memoirs of Halidé Edib*. New York: The Century Co., 1928.

———. "Turkish Women." Chap. 7 in *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*. Delhi: Maktaba Jamia Millia Islamia, 1935.

———. "Türk Kadınları Hakkında." *Büyük Mecmua*, no 15 (November, 1919): 226.

———. *Vurun Kahpeye*. İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2015.

———. "Woman's Part in Turkey's Progress." *The Open Court* 46, no. 912 (1932): 242-60.

"Halide Edib Kadınlara Rey Hakkı Vermediğinden Hiçbir Fırkaya Taraftar Değil." *Vatan*. 23 April, 1924.

Halide Salih. "Beşiği Sallayan El Dünyaya Hükmeder." *Tanin*, August 6, 1908.

———. "İfade-i Mahsusa." In *Mader*, 3-7. İstanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1897.

———. "Fenn-i Etfal." *Mehasin*, no. 7 (March, 1909): 478-487.

———. "Kadınlar İçin." *Tanin*. February 9, 1908.

———. *Mader*. İstanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1897.

———. "*Mehasin*'i Okuyan Kardeşlerime." *Mehasin,* no. 6 (February, 1909): 418-421.

———. "The Future of Turkish Women." *Nation* 4, no. 4, October 24, 1908.

Halman, Talat S. *A Millenium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History*. Edited by Jayne L. Warner. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011.

Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Havlioglu, Didem. *Mihrî Hatun Performance, Gender-Bending, and Subversion in Ottoman Intellectual History*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017.

Hirschkind, Charles. *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*. New York: Colombia University Press, 2006.

I Am Not Your Negro. Directed by Raoul Peck. 2016. New York: Kino Lorber, 2017.

İbrahim Şinasi, *The Wedding of a Poet*. Translated by Edward Allworth. Whitestone, NY: Griffon House Publications, 1981.

İleri, Selim. "*Vurun Kahpeye*: Birkaç İzlenim." Afterword to *Vurun Kahpeye*, by Halide Edib. İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2015.

"İlk Yasal Kazanım." *Bianet*. April 9, 2003. http://bianet.org/kadin/siyaset/66-ilk-yasal-kazanim.

İnan, Afet. *Atatürk ve Türk Kadın Haklarının Kazanılması*: *Tarih Boyunca Türk Kadınının Hak ve Görevleri*, İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1964.

———. *The Emancipation of the Turkish Woman*. Paris: UNESCO, 1962.

"İstiklal Marşı." *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*. Last modified 2003. http://www.meb.gov.tr/belirligunler/istiklal_marsi/index_istiklal.html

"Kabataş'ta Aslında Ne Oldu," *Hürriyet*, October, 25, 2015 http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/kabatasta-aslinda-ne-oldu-40005830.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." In Gender and Society 2, no. 3 (1988): 274-90.

———. "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism, and Women in Turkey." In *Women, Islam, and the State*, edited by Deniz Kandiyoti, 22-47. London: Macmillan Press, 1991.

———. "Some Awkward Questions on Women and Modernity in Turkey." In *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod, 270-287. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

———. "Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel from the Tanzimat to the Republic." In *The State, Urban Crisis and Social Movements in the Middle East and North Africa*. Edited by Kenneth Brown et. al. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989.

Kanner, Efi. "Transcultural Encounters: Discourses on Women's Rights and Feminist Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, Greece, and Turkey from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Interwar Period." *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 66-92. doi:10.1353/jowh.2016.0025

Kıraç, Rıza. “Türk Sinemasının Bir Dönüm Noktası: *Vurun Kahpeye*.” Chap. 7 in *Hürrem Erman: İzlenmemiş Bir Yeşilçam Filmi*. İstanbul: h20 Kitap, 2017.

Koçak, Cemil. "Osmanlı Türk Siyasi Geleneğinde Modern Bir Toplum Yaratma Projesi Olarak Anayasanın Keşfi: Yeni Osmanlılar ve Birinci Meşrutiyet." In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 72-82. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Koçak, Orhan. “1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları.” In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 2. *Kemalizm*, edited by Ahmet İnsel, 370-418. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Koloğlu, Orhan. “II. Abdülhamit'in Siyasal Düşüncesi.” In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 273-276. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Köroğlu, Erol. *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004.

Mahmood, Saba. “Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?” In “The Fate of Disciplines.” Edited by James Chandler and Arnold I. Davidson. Special Issue. *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2009): 836-862.

Malik, Hilmi A. *Türkiye'de Sinema ve Tesirleri*, Ankara: Kitap Yazanlar Kooperatifi, 1933.

Mardin, Şerif. “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?” *Daedulus* 102, no. 1, (Winter 1973): 169-190.

———. *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*: *A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*. N.p.: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

———. “Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes.” *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 145-165. doi: 10.1080/14683840500119478

———. “Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi.” In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 42-50. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Moran, Berna. *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*. Vol. 1. *Ahmet Mithat'tan A. H. Tanpınar'a*. İstanbul: İletişim, 1983.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. “Prophecies of Culture: Rumor, Humor, and Secularist Projections about ‘Islamic Public Life.’” In *Faces of the State*: *Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Okan, Tuncan. “Devletin İlgisinden Yoksun Kalan Tek Sanat Dalı: Sinema.” *Milliyet Sanat Dergisi*, October 1973.

———. “Nerede Lütfi Akad?” *Cumhuriyet*, October 31, 1964.

Onaran, Alim Şerif. *Lütfi Ömer Akad’ın Sineması*. Ankara: Altın Portakal Kültür ve Sanat Vakfı Yayınları, 2001.

Osmançelebioğlu, Numan Sabit. “‘Vurun Kahpeye’ Filmi Bizçe [sic] Niçin Kötüdür?” *Sebilürreşad*, March 1950.

Özbek, Meral. Popüler Kültür ve Orhan Gencebay Arabeski. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991.

Pamuk, Orhan. *İstanbul: Memoirs and the City*. Translated by Maureen Freely. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017.

Parla, Jale. “Tanzimat Edebiyatında Siyasi Fikirler,”In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 223-33. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Presidency of Religious Affairs. “Establishment and a Brief History.” Last modified May 28, 2013. https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/en-US/Institutional/Detail//1/establishment-and-a-brief-history.

Pelt, Mogens. *Military Intervention and a Crises of Democracy in Turkey: The Menderes Era and Its Demise*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2014.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. Translated by Gabriel Rockhill. London: Continuum, 2004.

Refiğ, Halit. *Halit Refiğ: Düşlerden Düşüncelere Söyleşiler*. By İbrahim Kalın. İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2001.

———. Selections from *The Fight for National Cinema*, by Halit Refiğ.” Edited and translated by Melis Behlil and Esin Paça Cengiz. In *Cinema Journal* 55, no. 3 (2016): 1-16.

———. *Sinemada Ulusal Tavır: Halit Refiğ Kitabı*. Interview by Şengün Kılıç Hristidis. İstanbul (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları), 2007.

———. *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2013.

"Released Footage Shows No Physical Attack." Hürriyet Daily News. Feb 14, 2014 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/released-footage-shows-no-physical-attack-on-headscarf-wearing-woman-during-gezi-protests-62479.

Sancar, Serpil. *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2012.

Scognamillo, Giovanni. "Vurun Kahpeye – 1949 Yılında Çevrileni Mum Işığıyla Arattıran Bir Yerli Film," *Akşam*, October 31, 1964.

"Sebilürreşad Kaldığı Yerden Devam Ediyor." *Hürriyet*, August 12, 2016. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/seb-lurresad-kaldigi-yerden-devam-ediyor-40191062

Seyhan, Azade. *Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008.

"Sinema." *Yeni Sanat*. December 1973.

Somel, Selçuk Akşin. "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlıcılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913). In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 88-107. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Stokes, Martin. *The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Susuz Yaz. Directed by Metin Erksan. 1963. DVD In *Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Project*. Vol 1. New York: Criterion Collection, 2013.

Şekeroğlu, Sami. "Türk Film Arşivi Müdürü Sami Şekeroğlu ile Konuşma." By Atilla Dorsay and Engin Ayça. *Yedinci Sanat* 8 (October 1973).

"Tahdis-i Nimet—Tayin-i Meslek." *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*. 2–3. September 1, 1895.

Tanpınar, Ahmet Hamdi. *A Mind at Peace*. Translated by Erdag Goknar. New York: archipelago books, 2011.

Taylor, Charles. “Modes of Secularism.” In *Secularism and Its Critics*. Edited by Rajeev Bhargava. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Time to Leave. Directed by François Ozon. 2005. Culver City, CA: Strand Releasing Home Video, 2006. DVD

“TSK’nın 27 Mayıs 1960 Bildirisi.” *T24*. September 17, 2008. http://t24.com.tr/haber/tsknin-27-mayis-1960-bildirisi,7371.

Turkish Statistical Institute. *Statistical Indicators 1923-2011*. Ankara: Turkish Statistical Institute Printing Division, 2012.

“Türk Sinemasında Kaç Film Çekildi?” Sinematik Yeşilçam. August 2, 2016. http://sinematikyesilcam.com/2016/08/turk-sinemasinda-kac-film-cekildi/.

Ünüvar, Kerem. “İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme, İhyadan İnşaya.” In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 129-42. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Üstel, Füsun. “II. Meşrutiyet ve Vatandaşın ‘İcadı.’” In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 166-79. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Van Os, Nicole A. N. M. “Osmanlı Müslümanlarında Feminizm,” In *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*. Edited by Murat Gültekingil and Tanıl Bora. Vol 1. *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, edited by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 335-47. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

Vurun Kahpeye. Directed by Ömer Lütfi Akad. Erman Film. 1949. İstanbul: Gala Film, 2010. DVD.

Vurun Kahpeye. Directed by Halit Refi Halit Refiğ. Erman Film. 1973. İstanbul: Gala Film, 2010. DVD.

Vurun Kahpeye. Directed by Orhan Aksoy. Erman Film. 1964. İstanbul: Gala Film, 2010. DVD.

“Vurun Kahpeye Türkiye’de İkinci Defa Çekilen İlk Film Oldu!..” *Sinema Expres*. August, 1964.

Waldman, Simon A. and Emre Caliskan. *The “New Turkey” and Its Discontents*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York, Zone Books, 2002.

Williams, Linda. "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1991): 2-13. DOI: 10.2307/1212758.

———. "Melodrama Revised." In *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory*, edited by Nick Browne, 42-88. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1998.

Yağmur, Selim. "Yeniden 'Vurun Kahpeye'…" *Fikir ve Sanatta Hareket*. November 1973.

Yahşi Cazibe. *ATV*. Written by Gani Müjde. Directed by Bora Onur. 93 Episodes. 2010-2012.

Yavuz, M. Hakan. *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Zihnioğlu, Yaprak. *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadınlar Birliği*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003.

Zürcher, Erik J. *Turkey: A Modern History*. Rev. ed. London: I.B.Tauris, 2005.