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Benevolent conquerors, besieged homelands, threatened state: the reproduction of political myths in cold war Turkey

Kibris, G.

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Benevolent Conquerors, Besieged Homelands, Threatened State: The Reproduction of Political Myths
in Cold War Turkey

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Güldeniz Kıbrıs
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Promotor: Prof. dr. Erik-Jan Zürcher

Co-promotor: Dr. Petra de Bruijn

Promotiecommissie:

Prof. dr. C.J.M. Zijlmans

Prof. dr. A. Ashgar Seyed-Gohrab (Universiteit Utrecht)

Prof. dr. Kerem Halil-Latif Öktem (Università da Ca' Foscari Venezia)

Dr. A. Alp Yenen

Güldeniz Kıbrıs

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Acknowledgements

There has been a long period of time between the moment I decided to do a PhD and finish it. It was a complicated process with many ups and downs. Today, when I was completing the acknowledgements section, I have learned that Cüneyt Arkın, one of the most acclaimed actors in Turkish cinema, has passed away at the age of 84. He was a prolific actor acted in most of the action/adventure films in my dissertation. I believe, his dedication to what he was doing contributed a lot to the popularity of these films in Turkey. Therefore, first of all, I would like to express my appreciation to him for his idealism.

I owe my sincere thanks and gratitude to certain exceptional people in my life. I am grateful to Prof. dr. Erik-Jan Zürcher and Dr. Petra de Bruijn for their patience and support throughout the years. I learned a lot from my professors at Sabancı University Graduate program in History. My special thanks go to Prof. dr. Halil Berktaş for all the inspiration he has given to me. What I have also learned from Prof. dr. Cemil Koçak about working discipline has shaped me in irreversible ways. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Prof. dr. Stefanos Yerasimos, Prof. dr. Leo Lucassen, Prof. dr. Henk te Velde, Prof. dr. Dilek Barlas, Prof. dr. Fuat Keyman, Prof. dr. Ziya Öniş, Dr. Derin Terzioğlu, Dr. Yonca Köksal and Dr. Eric Storm who contributed my intellectual growth through the provision of new points of views. The passion and excellence of their teaching and research have enriched my work and encouraged me on how to develop as a committed researcher and academic. I also would like to thank Prof. dr. Amanda Jane Audrey Yeşilbursa for editing the final text.

During this very long and stressful process of graduate studies, my sister, Ezgi Şiir Kıbrıs, patiently supported me. She was always willing to spend hours dealing with my academic anxieties. She has always been my source of joy.

I reserve my deepest gratitude for Sertaç Şahin Atabay. We have grown up together on my path to become academics. He has always been an enthusiastic supporter of my dissertation topic. As my partner and friend, he believed in me more than I did. No words can explain how much I feel lucky to have him in my life.

While I was concluding with the appendix on a hot and humid night in July 2021 in Rochester, New York, my daughter Olivia Gülce Atabay was born. Today, as she approaches her first birthday, I have understood how surprising life is. This dissertation is dedicated to her. I wish she becomes the heroine of her own life.

İstanbul, June 28, 2022

PROPOSITIONS

I-Political myths explain the present by referring to the past and serve as guides for the future and as justifications for the tragedies of history. In this regard, action/adventure films with historical settings constitute a significant realm of everyday life through which nationalist political myths are reproduced.

II-According to seventy-one action/adventure films analyzed in the dissertation, during the period of the 1950s-1980, the cinematic depiction of the Ottoman/Turkish past evolved into a much more militant and aggressive one.

III-The ideal warrior depicted in action/adventure film corpus between the 1950s and 1980, also represents the idealized Turkish citizen.

IV-The transformation in the depictions of the idealized citizen happened against a backdrop of the shift in electoral balance in favor of the conservative peripheral elite, which manifested itself as the common man's representative against the 'privileged' founding elite.

V-The transformation in the representations of the ideal warrior, nationalistic space and enemies reflects the continuous and dynamic nature of Turkish nation-building.

VI-The formation of nations is not a one-off undertaking. It involves continuous re-interpretations, rediscoveries, and reconstructions of political myths as a response to new necessities.

VII- The process of imagining nationhood includes the discourses of official/formal nationalism on the one hand and popular/informal nationalism on the other. These two are always in dialogue and what comes out of this reveals different visions and manifestations of national identity by challenging non-dynamic monolithic discourses.

VIII-Much of the available literature about the Cold War focuses on Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War and adopts a political history perspective. The addition of the cultural aspect is necessary to create a more complete picture of the varieties of Turkish nationalism.

IX-Communication studies in Turkey are largely lacking a critical and interdisciplinary perspective. For instance, despite a profound academic interest in the representation of the past in Turkish cinema, many of the studies on films of the period the dissertation deals with are primarily general surveys.

X- The 'Strong man' style of leadership is flourishing in the world. This is a reflection of rising populism and growing mistrust of democratic systems driven by the sense of insecurity brought about by globalized capitalism.

XI-There are plenty of economic and security explanations for the Russia-Ukraine War of early 2022. These, however, are incomplete without taking cultural and historical underpinnings into account. A thorough understanding requires going back to points underlined by Vladimir Putin's July 2021 article "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians." It reproduces political myths related to Russian superiority through his vision of reviving the Tsarist Empire. This contemporary example shows why and how political myths are significant in understanding global politics.

XII-Breastfeeding is perceived as maternal duty and so taken as the hallmark of quality mothering. In this regard, breastfeeding promotion campaigns by health authorities reinforce gender inequalities and also lead to negative emotions such as guilt for those mothers who do not (exclusively) breastfeed.

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INTRODUCTION: Constructing and Deconstructing the Nation

Significance:

On July 24, 2020, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan led the first Friday Prayer in Hagia Sophia, previously a church later a museum converted into a mosque. There were 350,000 people in the congregation, all wearing white facemasks as a precaution against COVID-19. After Erdoğan recited a verse from the Quran, the head of *Diyanet* (Directorate of Religious Affairs), Ali Erbaş, delivered the Friday sermon holding an Ottoman sword as a symbol of conquest and told the kneeling congregation:

“...O the Almighty Allah, today we are having the joy of the reopening of our Hagia Sophia for worship which we have waited for 86 years... O Allah, may You let our dear nation, which has served humanity in the way of our supreme religion Islam, has become a hope to the hopeless people, a shelter for the oppressed people, and a protector for the lonely people for centuries, live forever and may You let its excellence and strength last forever...O Allah, may You save and make our nation, homeland, army, land, and the world of Islam safe from all kinds of internal and external enemies which are going to damage our peace and brotherhood. O Allah, may You have mercy on all our martyrs from the Battle of Badr to the Battle of Manzikert, from the Battle of Gallipoli to the War of Independence, from the July 15th to today who sacrificed their lives to prevent azans being silenced, our flag from being taken down, our homeland from being divided, and our purity from being violated.”¹

Hagia Sophia, outfitted in turquoise carpets precisely placed pointing to Mecca, is originally a Byzantine church built in the 6th century. Throughout the centuries, as İstanbul changed its rulers, this former Greek Orthodox Christian church had also served as a Roman Catholic church, and then an Ottoman Mosque in 1453. After the declaration of the Republic in 1923, it was reopened as a museum in 1934 and became a symbol of the blending of eastern and western civilizations. However, for Erdoğan, the 1934 decision was an “unjust” and a “betrayal of history.” Therefore, he regarded its reopening for prayer as “the second conquest of Istanbul.”²

The discourse of both Erdoğan and Erbaş constructs a historical narrative by reproducing nationalist political myths. It justifies the Turkish nation's superiority, its

¹ “86 Yıllık hasret sona erdi,” <https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Content/PrintDetail/29717>

“Ya Rabb, bugün 86 yıldır büyük bir hasretle beklediğimiz Ayasofyamız'ın ibadete açılmasının sevincini yaşıyoruz... Ya Rabb! Asırlardır yüce dinimiz İslam'ın yolunda insanlığa hizmet etmiş, çaresizlerin umudu, mazlumların sığınağı, kimsesizlerin hamisi olan aziz milletimizi ilelebet payidar eyle, izzet ve kudretini daim eyle Allah'ım Ya Rabb, huzur ve kardeşliğimizi bozacak her türlü dahili ve harici düşmanlardan milletimizi, memleketimizi, ordumuzu, yurdumuzu, ailemizi, İslamı halas ve emin eyle Allah'ım. Ezan dinmesin, bayrak inmesin, vatan bölünmesin, namusumuz çiğnenmesin diye en aziz varlıklarını bu yüce değerler uğruna feda eden Bedir'den Malazgirt'e, Çanakkale'den İstiklal Harbi'ne, 15 Temmuz'dan bugüne bütün şehitlerimize rahmet eyle Allah'ım.”

² “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın Aya Sofya Açıklaması: Aya Sofya'da kılınacak ilk namazın tarihi belli oldu,” *Haber Global*, 10 July 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0Hm2scQQ8g&ab_channel=HaberGlobal

significance in the Islamic world, and its mission to help those in need. Erbaş also mentions how external and internal others threaten both the nation and the homeland. He connects the time of Prophet Mohammed, Anatolian Seljuks, the First World War, and the War of Independence with the attempted coup of July 15, 2016. This narrative reframes official visions of the national past to include July 15. In this context, the reopening of Hagia Sophia is the second conquest of İstanbul confirmed by ultra-nationalist and Islamist circles in Turkey, who had demanded the possibility of praying there for years.³ Erdoğan is assumed to be the second conqueror, or the Savior, of the Turkish nation. Here, through the reproduction of political myths, the boundaries between past, present, and future are broken down. Consequently, how the past is linked to and represented in the present is taken under control. Hence, political myths legitimize the AKP's policies.

Controlling the past and representing it in such a way as to justify and deal with the present is a significant part of the political programs of nation-states. In part one of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera reveals the link between political power and the reconstruction of the past: "They shout that they want to shape a better future, but it's not true. The future is only an indifferent void no one cares about, but the past is filled with life, and its countenance is irritating, repellent, wounding, to the point that we want to destroy it or repaint it. We want to be the masters of the future only for the power to change the past. We fight for access to the labs where we can retouch photos and rewrite biographies and history."⁴ Therefore, the past's recreation or reconstruction has the prize of gaining and maintaining political power in the present and the future. As George Orwell says: "Who controls the past...controls the future: who controls the present controls the past."⁵ This is what political myths do. They create a narrative which is integral to nation-building. In fact, the nation is a narration⁶ hence as Anthony Smith says, "what gives nationalism its power are myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritage and how a popular living past has been and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias."⁷ All these myths meet practical political needs such as enhancing legitimacy and mobilizing public support to government policies.⁸

³ Tanil Bora, "İstanbul of the Conqueror The 'Alternative Global City' Dreams of Political Islam," in *İstanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, ed. Çağlar Keyder (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 48.

⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 34.

⁵ George Orwell, *1984* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1983), 33.

⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 1-7.

⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9.

⁸ Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994): 30-32.

Thus, this dissertation focuses on the reproduction of political myths through nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings produced during the 1950s-1980, which is the golden age of Turkish cinema in terms of production and consumption. The nationalist political myths within this dissertation's scope are the myths about the past, the present, and the nation's future, in addition to the myths about the methods the nation should adopt to fulfill its duties. I examine how these myths reconstruct the past through selected films depicting particular political and historical contexts. My central question is: How do films produce nationalistic ideology through political myths within the frameworks of different political-historical contexts? Here I must state that the films and the changing discourses of nationalism all exist in the same ideological universe making both of them significant for a thorough analysis of the period. In this regard, I analyze what nationalist political myths tell about the past, present, and future of the Turkish nation concerning the 1950s-1980 conjuncture, that could be defined through a rhetorical shift in political balances in favor of the 'common man' versus a military/bureaucratic elite against a backdrop of the Cold War that facilitated the growth of more conservative and anti-communist political discourses in the country.

At this point, I should also state that I do not aim for a class-based analysis. What I mean by the 'common man' is a rhetorical tool utilized by those that defined themselves differently from the foundational military/bureaucratic elite. As can be followed in the dissertation, during the period I am evaluating, some of the industrial, commercial, and landowning bourgeoisie positioned themselves as the representatives of the 'common man' vis a vis the foundational military/bureaucratic elite. Here, the 'common man' is an essentialist discursive construct utilized for political propaganda. This means it does not directly correspond to a group of people narrowly bounded by class. The current dissertation, therefore, does not look for a one-to-one correspondence between the films and the political-historical contexts. Instead, it focuses on nationalist discourses as revealed by political myths reproduced through films regarding political-historical contexts and the ideological universe of the period

Thus, to trace significant political-historical changes that might have influenced the changing discourses of nationalism, I divided the 1950s-1980 into four subperiods. The first is the 1950s, the period of transition to the multiparty system that brought the rhetorical rise of the landowning, industrial and commercial bourgeoisie at the foundational military/bureaucratic elite's expense. The second subperiod of the 1960s-1965 starts with the 1960 coup, which was an attempt by the older elite to grasp power. I have put the 1965-1971 period as the third subperiod. It starts with the 1965 nationwide elections that resulted in the Justice Party's victory (*Adalet Partisi*, AP), which arose as the representative of the former

Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) supporters, including industrial, commercial, and landowning bourgeoisie as opposed to the military-bureaucratic elite. The party adopted a discourse through which it presented itself as the representative of the non-elite ‘common man’ standing against the privileged elite of the Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). This was also a period of social movements and increasing political violence. This subperiod ends with the 1971 military memorandum, which severely suppressed leftist social movements in particular. Finally, the fourth subperiod starting with 1971 and covering up until the 1980 military coup rhetorically strengthened the non-elite ‘common man’s’ position, which was incorporated into the dominant political discourse of the period.

In this regard, I consider cinema to be a realm of everyday life of the 1950s-1980 through which the discursive emphasis on the ‘common man’ and the rhetorical shift in political power balances in relation to changing discourses of Turkish nationalism can be followed. It is where the unofficial/informal and official/formal constructions of Turkish national identity encounter, intermingle and negotiate. Therefore, the dissertation also reveals the pluralistic and dynamic nature of Turkish nation-building, which continuously evolves by responding to the context. The product that emerges at the end is the cross-fertilization of different imaginings of Turkish identity. Therefore, overall, the study manifests the dominant ideological codes of Turkish political culture over time and how these might have influenced the evolution of the idealized Turkish nation and Turkish citizen through nationalist political myths.

Research Questions:

The departure point of this dissertation is the relationship between political and historical contexts and their cultural products. I argue that there is a link between changing depictions of Turkish nationalism in nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings and the political-historical context between the 1950s and 1980. The Turkish nation’s cinematic representation, as revealed through the adoption of political myths, evolved through time into a much more aggressive and militarist one as political power balances shifted at the rhetorical level by challenging to the dominance of the foundational military/bureaucratic elite. This shift happened together with the polarizing of the society shaped around the Cold War ideological atmosphere and changing foreign policy orientation of Turkey. Therefore, my sub-questions regarding the context is: How does the nationalist depiction of the past change through time with the increasing political polarizations in the country?

To clearly explain the relationship between films and the context concerning the questions above, I use political myths about the nation’s spatial, ancestral, temporal roots,

present situation, future, and mission. At this point, the most critical question the dissertation deals with is whether the reproduction of these myths has changed over time. To compare and contrast political myths in the films produced in the 1950s, 1960-1965, 1965-1971, and 1970s, I adopt the following questions: Who is the ideal representative of the Turkish nation in the films? How are the national leader and warrior depicted? How are enemies, friends, women, children, the national space, and religion represented as a part of different depictions of the past in the films? How is the national mission defined? The answers to these questions lead to the dissertation's central argument that the depictions of the ideal Turk gradually shifted into a much more aggressive one through time corresponding to the increasing aggressive nationalism, polarizations, and political violence from the 1950s to 1980.

State of The Art:

This dissertation analyzes the changing depictions of the Turkish nation through the 1950s-1980 from the perspective of action/adventure films with historical settings. With its use of movies to understand how political power or the dominant ideologies in the society utilize nationalist myths to legitimize political authority, the dissertation mainly stands at the intersection of the history of political thought, nationalism studies, and cultural history. Therefore, it attempts to contribute to different areas of study through an interdisciplinary approach which allows the reader not only to discover the unofficial/informal/popular varieties of Turkish nationalism but also to take a step towards understanding the *zeitgeist* and how this has been perceived/interpreted by the Turkish citizens as revealed through cultural artifacts.

In my quest, I have examined two central bodies of literature that remain relatively apart. The first is political studies, political history in particular. The sources I utilize are related to the Cold War from Turkey's perspective and have contextualized the films in my sample. The second bulk of the sources belong to film studies and mainly concentrate on Turkish cinema. They enabled me to understand the economic and social dynamics of cinema while at the same time situating nationalist action/adventure films in an enormous pool with a vast number of films. I bring these two groups of sources by asking political questions to cultural products to contribute to the history of political thought literature. To put it very briefly, in my view, cinema, as a representation, talks about both the society and the world we are in.⁹ However, the difficult part is that no film is an objective or accurate representation of reality, but reflects or indicates anxieties and desires of both the producers and the society. Films, therefore, are

⁹ Howard Saul Becker, *Telling About Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

convenient sources to comprehend different imaginations of Turkish nationalism. In this vein, nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings represent the past by reconstructing and imagining it after going through a process that includes selection, organization, interpretation, invention, and narration.¹⁰ This process is never independent of historical, political, and social contexts. Thus, my goal is to examine films in relation to the 1950s-1980 political and historical contexts while positioning them in the broader context of Turkey's changing currents of nationalism.

Much of the available literature from the first main body on the 1950s and 1980 focuses on Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War. Among those sources, many significant ones explain how Turkey, as a US ally, acted primarily in terms of its geopolitical position and role in the Middle East.¹¹ These sources all adopt a political history approach. Besides, there is a extensive body of literature about the political ideologies that dominated Turkey during the period. The rise of political Islam, the development of far-right and leftist movements are the major topics discussed by many recent studies.¹² These studies enabled me to contextualize the films in my sample. However, despite the richness of all, the cultural dimensions of Turkey's experience in the period are mostly missing. This dissertation attempts to explain the impact of all these political and ideological transformations on culture, an area in which the unofficial/popular/informal versions of Turkish nationalism have found their expressions. The addition of the cultural aspect is necessary to create a thorough picture of the varieties of Turkish nationalism.

¹⁰ Frank Ankersmit, "Historiography and Postmodernism," *History and Theory*, 28 (3), (1989): 137-153; Hayden White, *Topics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); "Historiography and Historiophoty," *American Historical Review*, 93 (5), (1988): 1193-1199; Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Robert Eaglestone, *Postmodernism and Holocaust Denial* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2001); Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹¹ See for example, Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1994); Mustafa Sıtkı Bilgin, *Britain and Turkey in the Middle East: Politics and Influence in the Early Cold War Era* (London: IB Tauris, 2007); Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Cold War Context: Formation of the Turkish-American Alliance," in *Turkish-American Relations, 1800-1852: Between the Stars, Stripes and the Crescent*, (London: Routledge, 2015), 118-137; Süleyman Seydi, "Making a Cold War in the Near East: Turkey and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1947," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 17, no. 1 (2006): 113-141.

¹² See for example, Cangül Örnek, *Türkiye'nin Soğuk Savaş Düşünce Hayatı: Antikomünizm ve Amerikan Etkisi*, (İstanbul: Can Sanat Yayınları, 2015); İlker Aytürk, "Nationalism and Islam in Cold War Turkey, 1944-69," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50:5 (2014): 693-719; Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' in Modern Turkish Political Thought," *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXIX, No: 3-4 (July-Oct. 1999): 350-376, Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (New York: IB Tauris, 2011); Emin Alper, *Student Movement in Turkey from a Global Perspective, 1960-1971*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Boğaziçi University, The Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, (2009).

There is a limited number of sources about the cultural aspects of the Cold War in Turkey. A significant one is *American-Turkish Encounters: A Contested Legacy, 1838-1989*, edited by Criss, Esenbel, Greenwood, and Mazzari. The book partly focuses on Turkish-American relations' cultural dimensions from the late Ottoman period to the end of the Cold War. The book's first three parts include articles about American religious missionaries in Ottoman lands, American educational advisers' influence in the Ottoman Empire and the modern Turkish Republic, and American military presence in Turkey. Among the other articles in the final part, titled Cultural and Intellectual Interaction, Gözen's article about how jazz music was used as a propaganda tool by the US is particularly significant for my dissertation. The author mentions some details of the jazz tours organized and sponsored by the US State Department in the 1950s. According to Gözen, the geographical scope of these tours were the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, all those places where the US competed with the SU.¹³ This article is a good step in understanding the cultural exchanges created and discovering what might be extracted from cultural products and their creators' stories in terms of high politics.¹⁴

In the same vein, a significant study that adopts a cultural perspective to the Cold War period is *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, edited by Örnek and Üngör. In the book, the authors deal with topics such as sports, literature, education to reveal the effect of the Cold War on those areas. Among the articles, two of them significantly helped me evaluate my research materials, which are films. The first belongs to Günay-Erkol and discusses the influence of the Cold War on Turkish literature. The author explains how literature became an area where different political identities were constructed and contested by analyzing significant literary figures from different ideological positions. What Günay-Erkol calls "a panoramic look" reveals the interaction between politics and culture and different ideologies in terms of identity construction.¹⁵ This means that the Cold War ideological universe was not formed by isolated ideological compartments but an interconnected and interacting node of a nexus. Taking this as a departure point, I avoid simply calling the historical action/adventure films 'rightist,' although they are both nationalistic and conservative most of the time and so, clearly very close to the rightist ideological camp. Instead, I try to catch the spirit of the nexus, a banal

¹³ Pınar Gözen, "The Cold War, Jazz and Turkey" in *American Turkish Encounters A Contested Legacy 1833 1989*, eds. Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Tony Greenwood and Louis Mazzari (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 331-343.

¹⁴ Similar studies about different geographical contexts: Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Çimen Günay-Erkol, "Issues of Ideology and Identity in Turkish Literature during the Cold War," in *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, eds. Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 109-129.

and everyday perspective that is based upon ideological connections as reflected on cultural products. Therefore, my sample of films appear as banal, mundane, and most importantly, ‘popular’ sources, thus appealing to the ‘common man,’ who could be described as ‘ordinary’ as I explain in the coming chapters.

The second article from the same book is by Örnek about the promotion of American books in Turkey and how the US aimed to increase its ideological influence with a book translation program.¹⁶ At this point, Pakin’s article about the foundation of American Language/Culture and Literature departments in Turkish universities starting with the 1950s is worth mentioning. With an emphasis on the connection between politics and culture, Pakin considers these departments as elements of the US’s “soft power.”¹⁷ Elaborating on Pakin, Örnek also argues that the spread of American culture through newly translated books nurtured the ideological and cultural basis of the rising populism thanks to those translated literature’s emphasis on rural transformations and pre-industrial values.¹⁸ This is very much related to the US’ being the largest exporter of agricultural raw materials. Here, although the author does not mention how Americanization might have changed societal values, she inspired me to think about the other side of the coin; not what the literary works might have presented, but what kind of wishes and desires the ordinary men adopted once they had encountered the American cultural influence. I should also state that although the reception of movies was beyond the scope of Örnek’s dissertation, thinking or brainstorming about what people might have felt when watching films has been an extremely beneficial method for me to realize the interconnectedness between different ideological camps as revealed throughout my dissertation. Besides, right at this point, my attention was directed towards discovering the possible cultural impacts of Hollywood films released during the same period. However, except for Erdoğan and Kaya’s article,¹⁹ there is a lack of critical studies about the subject, and the only available ones are unpublished theses, which present limited and primarily descriptive information.²⁰ Therefore, I utilized sources about Hollywood’s ideology and reception in

¹⁶ Cangül Örnek, “‘The Populist Effect’: Promotion and Reception of American Literature in Turkey in the 1950s,” in *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, eds. Örnek and Üngör (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 130-157.

¹⁷ Esra Pakin, “American Studies in Turkey during the ‘Cultural’ Cold War,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (Sept. 2008): 507-524.

¹⁸ Örnek, “‘The Populist Effect’: Promotion and Reception of American Literature in Turkey in the 1950s,” 130-157.

¹⁹ Nezi̇ Erdoğan and Dilek Kaya, “Institutional Intervention in the Distribution and Exhibition of Hollywood Films in Turkey,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 22:1, (2002): 47-59.

²⁰ Müzeyyen Karabağ, *American Cinema and Popular Representations of Women in Early Republican Turkey*, Unpublished MA thesis, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Ankara, (2013); Gevher Ebru Çelikoğlu, *A Case Study of Hollywood to Yeşilçam Cross-Cultural Film Remakes*, Unpublished MA Thesis, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent

different geographical contexts to enhance my perspective about the film symbols and images as representations of underlying ideologies and, most significantly, constructions of national identities during the Cold War.²¹

Furthermore, *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri* is the other edited book that completes my focus on the culture of the period I am investigating. Edited by Kerestecioğlu and Öztan, the book puts forth the role of anti-communism in constructing the image of the enemy in cartoons, textbooks, children's literature, and some right-wing journals.²² Its use of extensive material has enriched my understanding of a different variety of sources produced during the Cold War. Özdemir's article in this volume is worth mentioning because of its topic: Islamic cinema in the 1990s and early 2000s in Turkey.²³ The time focus of the article, reveals what has is all but missing in the existing literature analyzing the Cold War period: a critical analysis of the Turkish cinema of the 1950s-1970s. In fact, despite many areas of culture written about, none of the works mentioned above discuss how the Cold War might have influenced what has been represented in the Turkish cinema of the 1950s-1980. Therefore, it would be reasonable to state that even though the Cold War occupied an important place in the everyday life of the 1950s-1970s, because the period coincided with the golden age of Turkish cinema, cinema, and its connections with the political and ideological transformations of the period largely remain underexplored in political studies.

Regarding the second main body of literature, critical studies on Turkish cinema, despite the extensive research on Turkish cinema during the 1950s-1970s, that with a critical historical-political perspective taking cinema as a carrier of political and nationalist meanings is very limited. The lack of critical studies is not the only problem, there is also only a handful of critical sources written in English. Although none of these studies writes explicitly about historical action-adventure films, Dönmez-Colin, Suner, Arslan, Erdoğan, Göktürk, Kaya-

University, Ankara, (2018). A worth mentioning work is *Remake, Remix, Rip-Off: About Copy Culture and Turkish Pop-Cinema*, dir. Cem Kaya, (2014). This is a documentary film about how Turkish filmmakers of the golden age of Turkish cinema copied and remade best-seller movies from all over the world including the ones from Hollywood. The director meets with filmmakers, actors to reveal the dynamics of copying and remaking in Turkish Cinema particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

²¹ See for example, Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Manchester: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Denise J. Youngblood and Tony Shaw, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010); Stephen J. Whitfield, "Chapter 6: Reeling: The Politics of Film" in *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 127-152.

²² İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (eds.), *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012).

²³ Seda Özdemir, "Modern Müminin Kodları, Simgeleri: Türkiye'de İslami Sinema" in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, eds. Kerestecioğlu and Öztan, 377-406.

Mutlu, and Bayrakdar are prominent scholars who apply critical frameworks to the study of the history of Turkish cinema.²⁴ However, the general lack of sources makes it difficult to conduct comparative studies. Thus, the current dissertation could constitute a step towards future work.

There are several resources from the field of cinema studies that have directly influenced my dissertation. One such resource is *1960 Darbesi ve Türk Sinemasında Toplumsal Gerçekçilik*, a book by Daldal based on her doctoral dissertation. Daldal follows Lukacs and Bourdieu's footsteps and argues that the realism wave in Turkish cinema has some social and political determinants. She states that specific socio-political changes in society prepared the ground for the emergence of social realist films after the 1960s coup in Turkey. For her, these changes were very much related to class balances and the formation of an urban middle-class coalition involving the military intelligentsia and the manufacturing bourgeoisie, which assumed a 'progressive role' against different segments of the society in the aftermath of the coup.²⁵ Daldal's critical perspective establishes an elaborate connection between the films and the context makes her work one of the most significant ones in my analysis of the 1960s' political and social atmosphere. The same period is also analyzed by Başgüney in his study, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye'de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma*. This book examines activities such as journals and film screenings of the Sinematek Association established in 1965 by westernist cinema followers, mainly the intellegentsia and the youth, who were the members of the urban alliance that Daldal mentions. Indeed, the author historicizes the association's evolution by referring to the impact of the political changes on the artistic agenda.²⁶ Therefore, the book complements Daldal's argument and has enhanced my understanding of the period. The entire picture, however, is completed by Kaya and Azak's article, which critically analyzes a film titled *Birleşen Yollar* (*Crossroads*, dir. Yücel Çakmaklı, 1970), which the authors take

²⁴ Here, it should be also stated that sources in English language are quite limited, too. The available ones, which are also critical not about my films in general: Gönül Dönmez-Colin, *Turkish Cinema: Identity, Distance and Belonging* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008); Asuman Suner, *New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, Identity and Memory* (New York: IB Tauris, 2010); Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Nezih Erdoğan and Deniz Göktürk, "Turkish Cinema" in *Companion Encyclopedia of Middle Eastern and North African Film*, ed. Oliver Leaman, (London: Routledge, 2001), 533-573, and a collected volume by Deniz Bayrakdar, *Cinema and Politics: Turkish Cinema and The New Europe* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Oxford University Press, 2009). These do not specifically mention the film sample I chose but present a framework for a critical analysis of Turkish cinema. Another very significant study is Dilek Kaya Mutlu, "Between Tradition and Modernity: Yeşilçam Melodrama, Its Stars and Their Audiences," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 46, Issue 3, (2010): 417-431. It analyzes the reception of Turkish cinema in the 1960s and 1970s by its audiences through audience letters written to stars.

²⁵ Aslı Daldal, *1960 Darbesi ve Türk Sinemasında Toplumsal Gerçekçilik* (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi ve Yayıncılık, 2005).

²⁶ Hakkı Başgüney, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye'de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma* (İstanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık, 2011).

as the pioneer of Islamic National cinema.²⁷ The emergence of this cinema movement happens in the 1970s and fits well into the gradually increasing Islamist emphasis in the subject matters of my sample of films. This article also completes that of Özdemir and situates political Islam in a historical context that makes it work better for that dissertation's purposes.²⁸

The other critical study which has widened my perspective is Arslan's *Bu Kabuslar Neden Cemil?*, a monograph that adds cinematic representations of Turkish masculinities in the 1970s into the picture. By analyzing several melodramas with central male protagonists, the author displays how the representations of masculinities in popular cinema have become an arena for comprehending collective anxieties and desires, and therefore Turkish society's collective psychology.²⁹ In her analysis, Arslan adopts Açıkkel's metaphor of *kutsal mazlumluk* (sacred oppression), a significant building block of the ideology of the Turkish right. This metaphor praises suffering when encountered with the modernization of the country and constructs a discourse that is conservative and nationalist.³⁰ In this respect, Arslan argues that there is a masculinity crisis in the protagonists of the films in her sample, and this is a reflection of the trauma created by the political and historical context of the 1970s, which was shaped by increasing social inequalities, encounters of the rural with the urban, political oppression caused by the 1971 military memorandum, and economic crisis. The films, therefore, are the products of the societal anger nurtured by the ideology of sacred oppression and longing for a powerful father figure, represented by the protagonists, to save the entire society.³¹ Here, although Arslan does not mention historical action/adventure films, her general framework fits well into my dissertation and actually confirms the narratives of historical action/adventure films where the

²⁷ Dilek Kaya and Umut Azak, "Crossroads (1970) and the Origin of Islamic Cinema in Turkey," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 35, No. 2, (2015): 257-276.

²⁸ There is, in fact, a considerable number of studies about the representation of Islam in Turkish cinema. See for example, Gönül Dönmez-Colin, *Women, Islam and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004) for a comparative perspective on the representations of women in the cinemas of Turkey, the Middle East, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and some Muslim East Asian countries; Petra de Bruijn, "Islam Goes to Hollywood: An Explanatory Study on Islam in Turkish Cinema," *CINEJ Cinema Journal*, Vol. 2.1, (2012): 2-41; Özlem Avcı and Berna Uçarol-Kılıç, "Islamic ways of life reflected on the silver screen" in *Cinema and Politics: Turkish Cinema and the New Europe*, ed. Deniz Bayraktar (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 240-257; Bilal Yorulmaz and William L. Blizsek, "Islam in Turkish Cinema," *Journal of Religion and Film*, Vol. 18, Issue: 2, (Oct. 2014), Article 8.

²⁹ Umut Tümay Arslan, *Bu Kabuslar Neden Cemil?* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2005).

³⁰ Fethi Açıkkel, "Kutsal Mazlumlukun Psikopatolojisi," *Toplum ve Bilim*, No. 70, (1996): 153-198.

³¹ A parallel study about the reflection of that masculinity crisis in literature is Çimen Günay-Erkol, *Broken Masculinities: Solitude, Alienation, and Frustration in Turkish Literature after 1970* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2016). Günay-Erkol focuses on the representations of masculinity in the novels written in the 1970s, which was a period of political oppression.

Turkish nation is always saved by a nationalist hero that takes revenge from evil others at it is revealed in the following chapters.³²

At this point, my search for meanings in the films was also supported by a study about a very popular Turkish TV series, which can be taken as a convenient example of the analysis of popular cultural products concerning their specific contexts. Çetin's article, *The Paramilitary Hero on Turkish Television: A Case Study on Valley of the Wolves* about *Valley of the Wolves*, a TV series telling the story of a paramilitary hero fighting against the mafia, foreign intelligence agencies, and Kurdish militant networks. Çetin argues that the series' massive popularity in the early 2000s was very much related to the social and political context of that time. By taking this as her departure point, she first makes an analysis of reception through interviews with consumers. She also offers a textual analysis which reveals the nationalist and militarist meanings that have emerged through the construction of Turkish masculinity.³³ The study shows that militarism does not always work through the army or military institutions, but also through popular cultural representations. In this vein, Çetin's book urged me to think about the reception of nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings at a time of increasing political turmoil.

Moreover, there is a profound academic interest in the representation of the past in Turkish cinema. One point to note here is that it might be intriguing to think about that rising interest in relation to Turkey's current political and social context, but this is beyond the scope of the current dissertation.³⁴ Nevertheless, many of the studies on films of the period I am scrutinizing are primarily general surveys. This is the first and foremost weakness of the

³² In another study *Mazi Kabrinin Hortlakları: Türklük, Melankoli ve Sinema* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009), Arslan raises her argument once again by attempting to understand the reproduction of emotions such as national tears, laughter, and hysteria in Turkish melodramas. By referring to the narratives of several films, she tries to grasp the collective mentality of the society hence the construction of the Turkish national identity. This book has a much wider perspective compared to *Bu Kabuslar Neden Cemil?* and does not specifically talk about masculinities.

³³ Berfin Emre Çetin, *The Paramilitary Hero on Turkish Television: A Case Study on Valley of the Wolves* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015). The series is also analyzed by Volkan Yücel, *Kahramanın Yolculuğu: Mitin Erkeklik ve Suç Draması* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014). Adopting a structuralist approach and following Vladimir Propp's literary methodology, Yücel analyzes the representation of masculinities through criminal heroes in several popular TV series including *Valley of the Wolves*. Although the author does not mention the context that these series were consumed, this study, too, inspired me to think about the reception of aggressive and nationalist popular culture products.

³⁴ The neo-Ottoman nostalgia which glorifies the Ottoman past vis a vis the Kemalist legacy is revealed through various popular TV shows in addition Erdoğan's speeches. This relates to the AKP policies of restoration and reconstruction of a Turkish-Islamic identity as opposed to a Westernized one. A complementary reading of the following articles is significant for understanding the rising interest in the Ottoman past during the AKP era and the reflection of this on popular cultural products. These articles are: Josh Carney, "ResurReaction: Competing Visions of Turkey's (proto) Ottoman past in Magnificent Century and Resurrection Ertuğrul," *Middle East Critique*, 28/2, (2019): 101-120; Umut Uzer, "Glorification of the Past as a Political Tool: Ottoman History in Contemporary Turkish Politics," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, Vol. 9, No. 4, (2018): 339-357.

literature about action/adventure films with historical settings. One of these studies is Makal's *Sinemada Tarihin Görüntüsü*. It is essentially a rough, descriptive survey presenting the history of the films about history devoid of any substantial analysis of the films.³⁵ Duruel-Erkılıç's *Türk Sinemasında Tarih ve Bellek* covers an extensive period from the 1950s up until the 2000s, but it does not aim to make a systematic analysis of films about history. One of the chapters is devoted to the subparts of the films of the 1950s-1970s. In these subparts, Duruel-Erkılıç provides summaries of some notable films taken as representatives of this period. Since her goal is again to draw a general framework, she does not mention a historical-political context.³⁶ A similar study is Yüksel and Sancak's article about some of the films that are also a part of my corpus, such as : "Kara Murat, Yandım Ali vd..." The authors aim to mention nationalist messages in those films, but they fail to do this analytically, so their study is primarily a generalization devoid of comparison and context.³⁷ Gürata's study encompasses the films in my corpus in general. However, he has an entirely different approach than mine, and analyzes the narrative structure of those films by following Propp.³⁸ İspivery generally mentions the representation of others in films about the past.³⁹ Finally, Akbaş's *Türk Sinemasında Ortaçağ Tarihi Algısı (1943-2014)* adopts a descriptive approach. That is, instead of providing analysis, it consists of a synopsis of the films accompanied by limited details of the context. Consequently, it could be considered as a review due to its non-comprehensive and non-critical style.⁴⁰

On the other hand, there is a short, yet significant piece written by Arslan as a part of his book *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*. In his analysis of different genres and how their codes are represented in Turkish cinema, Arslan mentions historical action/adventure films, referring to one of the most prominent films, *Kara Murat Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1972). Although it does not provide historical or political context due to its subject matter, Arslan presents a refined analysis that very briefly includes how the Turkish national identity is constructed in the film in relation to the representation of the enemies and allies.⁴¹ This short piece might be considered as a basic introduction in line with

³⁵ Oğuz Makal, *Sinemada Tarihin Görüntüsü* (İstanbul: Kalkedon, 2014).

³⁶ Senem Duruel-Erkılıç, *Türk Sinemasında Tarih ve Bellek* (Ankara: De Kİ Basım Yayın, 2012).

³⁷ Filiz Uygun Yüksel and Ayşe Sancak, "Kara Murat, Yandım Ali vd..." in *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler-9*, ed. Deniz Bayrakdar (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2011), 89-98.

³⁸ Ahmet Gürata, "'Öteki'yle Üçüncü Türden Yakın İlişkiler: Tarihsel Kostüme Filmler ve İkizlik Miti" in *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler-6*, ed. Deniz Bayrakdar (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2007), 43-56.

³⁹ Gökçe İspi, "Tarihi Türk Filmlerinde 'İyi ve Kötü Adam Olmak'" in *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler-6*, ed. Deniz Bayrakdar (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2007), 57-64.

⁴⁰ Emel Akbaş, *Türk Sinemasında Ortaçağ Tarihi Algısı (1943-2014)*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2018).

⁴¹ Savaş Arslan, "Chapter 5: High Yeşilçam II: Genres and Films," 175-180.

the purposes of the current dissertation. Saydam also establishes the relationship between the films about history until and their historical-political contexts the 2000s. Although this is a significant article because it enables the readers to see the films as connected within the same framework, it still lacks focus on a specific period.⁴² Yedidal's analysis of four action/adventure films is also critical due to its references to the literature on nationalism studies and emphasis on the films as representations of national memory. Nevertheless, it still context, so the author's opinions cannot be sufficiently grounded.⁴³ Maktav's article, "Vatan, Millet, Sinema" from his collection of articles *Türkiye Sinemasında Tarih ve Siyaset*, also presents a general picture. His study is interesting because he connects nationalist action/adventure films with films representing the Turkish army and its soldiers. He claims that Turkish cinema made historical action/adventure films due to its archaic and immature industry. In his opinion, because Turkish filmmakers could not shoot films with a crowded cast, they opted for films that were sometimes almost copies of one another and included few characters such as nationalistic heroes fighting alone. For Maktav, later, the single heroes were all replaced by the depictions of the Turkish army because of the increasing role of the military in Turkish politics with the 1980 military coup.⁴⁴ I find this argument a rather simplistic one which eliminates too obviously the influence of the context on the emergence and popularity of nationalist action/adventure films with few heroes. He also ignores the fact that the fading away of those movies is part of societal and political turmoil, which resulted in decreasing cinema audiences due to political violence in the streets. One could add the spread of television to the living rooms of ordinary citizens into the picture. There is also an undeniable continuity between films representing the army and films representing lone heroes, as this dissertation reveals. Maktav also ignores those continuities. Thus, overall, the number of critical studies that approach cinema as a carrier of nationalist meanings and values is limited. There is no comprehensive political-historical analysis of the nationalist action/adventure films in the available literature.

Finally, one complementary body of literature that has inspired my analysis deals with comic books in Turkey. In fact, the most popular action/adventure heroes of cinema, such as Karaoğlan and Tarkan, were originally comic book heroes born into Turkey's vivid publishing culture during the post-Second World War era. Therefore, the studies on the comic books of

⁴² Barış Saydam, "Geçmişten Günümüze Türk Sineması Tarihi ve Avantür Filmlerinde Kahraman Miti" in *Biraz Mağrur Biraz Mağdur: Türk Sinemasında Kahramanlar*, ed. Tuba Deniz, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2017), 35-54.

⁴³ Hande Yedidal, "Çizgi Romandan Beyaz Perdeye 'Yenilmez Türk' İmajının Yıllar İçerisindeki Dönüşümü" in *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler-9*, ed. Deniz Bayraktar (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2011), 99-109.

⁴⁴ Hilmi Maktav, "Vatan, Millet, Sinema," *Türkiye Sinemasında Tarih ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2013), 3-31.

the period have contributed to my understanding of the intellectual atmosphere. Among these, Cantek's *Türkiye'de Çizgi Roman* presents a historical survey of comics from the late 19th century until the 2000s. This is not an academic work, and hence does not provide a systematic analysis with a theoretical background and references. However, it is unique in presenting a general overview by putting comics into a global context and historicizing them. There is no other study where one can find a comprehensive chronology of the comics of Turkey. Cantek also briefly mentions nationalist comics that are set in the past. He refers to their common themes, the depiction of the hero, women, and others.⁴⁵ His analysis is inspiring yet unsystematic but undeniably significantly contributes to the understanding of the rich world of comic book heroes.

Furthermore, Cantek's noteworthy study, *Erotik ve Milliyetçi Bir İkon: Karaoğlan*, offers an extensive analysis of the available Karaoğlan comic books published between 1963-2002. Adopting a historical approach, the author exploits primary sources to present the details of both Karaoğlan and other characters of different Karaoğlan adventures.⁴⁶ Despite the richness in primary sources, the lack of a theoretical framework and a general systematic structure overburdens the reader with details. Nonetheless, the book is still a precursor to later works with its approach to comics as historical sources. In this regard, Gürata's article titled "*Çizgi Romandan Sinemaya*," also analyzes the narrative structure of popular comic books in the 1960s, including those featuring nationalist action/adventure heroes. Although it does not mention the context that gave birth to these comic books, it is still beneficial to comprehend the broader global framework that reveals interconnections between comic books in Turkey and the world.⁴⁷ Other studies that could be considered within the same pool are Özkaracalar and Cantek,⁴⁸ Çoruk⁴⁹, and Tellan.⁵⁰ All of these studies start out from the theories of popular culture and history of particular comic books, thus none of them provides a political-historical context. Only in the final part of her article does Karadoğan mention the importance of political and historical context in understanding what meanings the audience derives from both the comics

⁴⁵ Levent Cantek, *Türkiye'de Çizgi Roman* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 169-186.

⁴⁶ Levent Cantek, *Erotik ve Milliyetçi Bir İkon: Karaoğlan* (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık, 2003).

⁴⁷ Ahmet Gürata, "Çizgi Romandan Sinemaya" in *Çizgili Hayat Kılavuzu: Kahramanlar, Dergiler ve Türler*, ed. Levent Cantek (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 53-65.

⁴⁸ Kaya Özkaracalar and Levent Cantek, "Fantastik ve Sado-Erotik Bir Tarihsel Çizgi Roman: Tarkan" in *Çizgili Hayat Kılavuzu: Kahramanlar, Dergiler ve Türler*, ed. Levent Cantek (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 84-89.

⁴⁹ Hüsnü Çoruk, "Çizgi romanımızda kahramanlık türü" in *Çizgili Hayat Kılavuzu: Kahramanlar, Dergiler ve Türler*, ed. Levent Cantek (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 73-95.

⁵⁰ Bülent Tellan, "Kara Murat: Çizgi romandan beyazperdeye bir akıncının sergüzeştleri" in *Ayşegül Keskin Çolak'a Armağan Tarih ve Edebiyat Yazıları*, eds. Hasan Çolak, Zeynep Kocabıyıkçoğlu Çeçen, N. Işık Demirakın (Ankara: Kebikeç, 2016), 243-258.

and the films.⁵¹ Therefore, although it deals with a different medium, this particular group of studies presents abundant opportunities to understand the intellectual atmosphere of the 1950s-1980.

Given the lack of studies analyzing the interaction between political-historical context and cultural products in addition to the distance to culture in political studies literature, this dissertation aims to reveal a comprehensive political picture of the 1950s-1970s by relying on cultural products, namely nationalist action/adventure films, within a historical setting. This approach also captures different varieties of Turkish nationalism through popular representations of the past and how these are embedded in the common man's everyday ideological mindset. The current dissertation ultimately attempts to contribute to the literature on the history of political thought through an exploration of the dynamic nature of Turkish nation-building.

Methodology:

In my research on the reproduction of nationalist political myths through historical action/adventure films, I adopted a qualitative research method and conducted close reading combined with film analysis. This methodology includes the attempt to gain an understanding the deeper meaning of the material under scrutiny.⁵² Here, as Brummett and Mikos maintain,⁵³ films are not simple audiovisual products but are meaningful texts. Giddens states that a thorough understanding of a text becomes possible when “the conditions of (meanings’) knowledgeability” are explored.⁵⁴ This means the context in which the films are produced, circulated, and consumed needs to be investigated to gain ⁵⁵a sense of the text’s more profound meaning. In this vein, with all their images, characters, costumes, and narratives⁵⁶ -that is *mise-en-scène* and editing,⁵⁷ films present symbols determined by a context⁵⁸ to the consumers, who

⁵¹ Rukiye Karadoğan, “Tarihi Çizgi Romanların Yeşilçam Serüveni: Kostüme Avantür Filmler” in *Çizgili Hayat Kılavuzu: Kahramanlar, Dergiler ve Türler*, ed. Levent Cantek (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 66-72.

⁵² Barry Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading* (US: Sage Publications, 2010), 9.

⁵³ Lothar Mikos, “Analysis of Film” in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, ed. Uwe Flick (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 411.

⁵⁴ Anthony Giddens, “Action Subjectivity and the Constitution of Meaning,” *Social Research*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Autumn 1986): 545.

⁵⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, “Principles for a Sociology of Cultural Works,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays in Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 176-191.

⁵⁶ Mikos, “Analysis of Film,” 409.

⁵⁷ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, “The Shot: Mise-en-Scene” in *Film Art: An Introduction* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 112-161.

⁵⁸ Mikos, “Analysis of Film,” 410-411.

receive all those symbols and construct reality⁵⁹ in a context. The context here could be historical,⁶⁰ economic, technical, cultural, and social.⁶¹ Therefore, neither the content of the films nor their makers and viewers are independent of what is going on socially and politically in the day's events.⁶²

This dissertation takes the relationship between political-historical context and the text as a departure point in its close reading and analysis of films. From this perspective, a text that is a nationalist action/adventure film about a Turkish hero defeating Byzantines must have had intense meaning for both producers and consumers during the 1974 intervention of Turkey on Cyprus. Therefore, the Cold War context of the 1950s-1970s is genuinely significant for conducting a close reading and analysis of the nationalist political myths represented in the sample I have chosen. At this point, I should also state that this dissertation does not aim to present how the audience reacted to the films, but instead what those films represent and what kind of meanings they generate in relation to the context. Following the footsteps of Casetti, I am aware that how consumers interpret texts and how they utilize texts in their everyday lives is also significant for comprehending the true meanings of the text.⁶³ However, dwelling on the reception of the films is beyond the scope of the current dissertation and could be the subject of another study. Therefore, I focus on the historical contexts of production and consumption to reveal how films reproduce nationalist political myths by contributing to different nationalist discourses.

My methodology is very much related to the New Historicism approach, which looks at literary works from a broader historical perspective. Based on Stephen Greenblatt's study of English Renaissance Literature that analyzes how the members of the middle class formulated their identities in the 16th century⁶⁴, and influenced by Michael Foucault's ideas on the relationship between holding power and determining what is knowledge, truth at any given time,⁶⁵ New Historicism puts forth that the understanding of a work of literature is determined

⁵⁹ Mikos, "Analysis of Film," 413; James Monaco, *How to Read A Film: Movies, Media, Multimedia* (NY, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 262.

⁶⁰ According to David Greenham, "Chapter 8: The Adversarial Context," in *Close Reading: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2018), the adversarial context which is about which and how historical and political contexts shape the text is one of six other contexts of close reading. The others are semantic, syntactic, thematic, iterative, and generic contexts.

⁶¹ Mikos, "Analysis of Film," 420.

⁶² Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading*, 10.

⁶³ Francesco Casetti and Federico di Chio, *Analisi del Film* (Milano: Bompiani, 2001), 156 cited in Mikos, "Analysis of Film," 412.

⁶⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction," *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1-9.

⁶⁵ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon, 1980); *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); *Catherine*

by its creator's and readers' environment and conditions. This cultural studies approach seeks to reconnect a cultural product with the time period it was produced and relate it with the historical forces of the time. In this regard, it may assume that each film I am dealing with is the product of the historic moment that created it. As Greenblatt says, a complete cultural analysis that pushes the text's boundaries is the one that reveals the links between the text and the cultural, social, and historical aura in which the text has been produced and consumed. In Greenblatt's words, this approach to literature presents another, wider vision of history.⁶⁶

Thus, I search for the relationship between cultural products and their contexts through nationalist action/adventure films produced between the 1950s-1980. The sample of films I have chosen includes seventy-one action/adventure films taking their subject matters from the past. Consequently, I had to omit many other action/adventure films which reproduce political myths. Thus, my sample does not include films that were produced between the 1950s and 1980 depicting contemporary political issues such as the Korean War and the Cyprus issue. The only exception is those films that devote significant time to the Ottoman/Turkish past simultaneously with current issues. Besides, because there are no box office records or any piece of credible information about ticket sales for each film, I adopted my own criteria while creating my sample. To develop a list of action/adventure films, first, I checked the synopses from *Ansiklopedik Türk Filmleri Sözlüğü* (Encyclopedic Turkish Film Lexicon)⁶⁷ prepared by Agah Özgüç, a journalist and cinema historian who contributed much to the development of cinema studies in Turkey. Second, I went over *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (History of Turkish Cinema),⁶⁸ authored by Giovanni Scognamillo, a prominent film critic. As the next step, I looked at whether the films in my list are available at İstanbul Atatürk Library, National Library, Boğaziçi University Library, The Foundation for Sciences and Arts (*Bilim ve Sanat Vakfı-BİSAV*), Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Prof. Sami Şekeroğlu Turkish Film & TV Institute and finally the Internet. After finding out the available ones, I briefly watched them to learn their subject matter. I chose the ones that focus on war/conquest, so include a fight between Turks and 'others.' Therefore, my corpus has narratives of combat, war, and conflict. The films' plots are based upon imaginary or actual historical events in the footsteps of Davis,

Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000); Louis A. Montrose, "Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes, and the Pastoral of Power," *English Literary Renaissance*, Vol. 10, Number 2, (Spring 1980): 153-182; "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture" in *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. K. M. Newton (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1997): 240-247.

⁶⁶ "Culture" in *The Greenblatt Reader*, ed. Michael Payne (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 11-17.

⁶⁷ Agah Özgüç, *Ansiklopedik Türk Filmleri Sözlüğü 1914-2014* (İstanbul: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2014).

⁶⁸ Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk Sinema Tarihi* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2014).

who defines the historical film as the one that makes those events central to its story.⁶⁹ Therefore, my analysis does not include those that take wars and history as a backdrop. That is, while choosing my sample, I have eliminated those films in which the past serves as a nostalgic setting or backdrop, as Burgoyne does in his analysis of American historical films.⁷⁰ For example, *Vurun Kahpeye* (*Shoot the Whore*, dir. Halit Refiğ, 1973), a historical drama set during the War of Independence, is not included because war is only in the background. After creating a list of films, I have grouped them according to the time period they depict. Then, I watched them for the second time and took very detailed notes. Based on these, I created excel tables in which the films were compared according to heroes' life stories, where and when the stories take place and the names of enemies. These tables enabled me to have easier access to some basic information about the films. When I needed, I watched the films or specific scenes for the third or sometimes fourth time. While watching the films, I have tried to understand two things: First, how they represent the past and secondly, how they can be related to the period of 1950s-1980.

The analytical tools I use are nationalist political myths about the nation's spatial, ancestral, temporal roots, present situation, future, and mission. I aim to understand the production of those myths through specific categories of representations. These include main characters, protagonist heroes, their missions, religion, the national space, good others, bad others, women, and children. If relevant, I examine the use of language and costumes. Finally, for each film, I explore how these representations could be compared and contrasted across time between the 1950s and 1980. While doing this, I developed subheadings for a relatively more straightforward reading of the dissertation. These subtitles, however, are not sharply distinguished categories. Instead, they are parts of a narrative that relies on where the most evident and significant political myths in any film come to the fore. Besides, in my analysis, I used official English translations of film titles whenever they are available. After writing the original versions, I have put my own translations in parentheses for those without English titles.

Furthermore, for the current dissertation, which solely centers on the films as a medium and the contexts in which they had been produced and consumed, I omit differences in filmmakers, hence individual directors' or producers' choices. Therefore, I have categorised films according to two criteria. The first is production date, and the second is the historical period they illustrate. In terms of the first, I have categorized films by considering political changes and the impact of those on the depictions of the nation. There are four main

⁶⁹ Natalie Davis, *Slaves on Screen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 5.

⁷⁰ Robert Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 3-4.

subheadings here: the 1950s, 1960-1965, 1965-1971, and the 1970s. As the second step, I refer to the historical period the films are talking about. The main subheadings here are pre-Islamic heroes, pre-Ottoman Islamic heroes, and Ottoman heroes. While comparing the four periods in terms of political and ideological transformations, I look at the reproduction of nationalist political myths through cinematic depictions of different periods of history. Thus, the dissertation illustrates the shifts in Turkish nationalist imaginings as reflected in political myths that are reproduced in action/adventure films with historical settings.

Limitations:

First, the films' availability, which is a criterion in creating my sample, could be a limitation of the study. The films in my sample are those that were publicly accessible between 2016 and 2019. There might be films that have been added to the Internet or libraries after this time. However, this is a lower possibility given the legal cases related to copyright issues of Yeşilçam films.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the dissertation already includes a vast number of sources.

Second, in my analysis of the reproduction of political myths, I considered only the films' production dates. Some films, however, were exhibited in more than one season over the years or over different seasons in different regions of the country. Moreover, during the 1950s-1980 period, since cinema timetables were only available as programs of some cinemas in İstanbul and were published on an irregular basis, it is impossible to develop a definite picture of what was shown in which cinema on a specific day. Therefore, the release dates and when the films were shown are not definite.⁷²

Moreover, the dissertation solely focuses on the ample material provided by the Turkish cinema. Therefore, European, Latin American, and American counterparts and how Turkish

⁷¹ There are problems with with legal procedures regarding copyright of Yeşilçam films and film music. This reflected on several court cases: "420 senaryosu filme çekilen Önal: Hiç telif verilmedi" *Gazete Duvar*, 5 January 2020, <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/kultur-sanat/2020/01/05/420-senaryosu-filme-cekilen-onal-hic-telif-verilmedi#:~:text=Eser%20sahiplerinin%20telif%20haklar%C4%B1%20i%C3%A7in,hi%C3%A7bir%20C5%9Fey%20vermeyenleri%20affetmeyece%C4%9Fim%22%20dedi.> (Retrieved on 15 April 2021); "Kemal Sunal'ın Ailesi 'Telif Hakkı' Davasını Anayasa Mahkemesine Taşlıyor," 19 September 2018, <https://www.haberler.com/kemal-sunal-in-ailesi-telif-hakki-davasini-anayasa-11248059-haberi/> (retrieved on 15 April 2021).

⁷² At this point, it might be relevant to state that the quite common uncertainty about the release dates was never related with censorship. Many of the action/adventure films with historical setting were not censored except a few scenes including nudity before they were released. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about censored and uncensored versions of the same film exhibited in different times. For more information about censorship in Turkish cinema in the Cold War period: Güldeniz Kıbrıs, "Censoring the Nation: Censorship of Turkish Cinema in the Shadow of the Cold War," paper presented at *Screening Censorship Conference: New Histories, Perspectives, and Theories on Film and Screen Censorship*, Ghent/Brussels, 16-17 October, 2020.

examples relate to them are not explored. This is the case because I aim to reveal the ideological codes of Turkish political culture alone. Therefore, other countries' cinemas are beyond the scope of the current study, but nevertheless merit future work. For example, in my opinion, a study about how these films traveled through the Mediterranean basin and if there were remakes could be an exciting contribution to the comparative histories of cinema in revealing the social and political commonalities between different countries of the region.

Finally, the dissertation only focuses on how the films reproduced nationalist political myths and how these representations might have been related with the political-historical contexts. Therefore, how the films were received by the audience is beyond the limits of that dissertation. However, relying on my extensive archival research besides oral history interviews, I can comfortably say that it might be a topic of future research that is built upon my dissertation.

Organization:

This dissertation mainly aims at comprehending different imaginations of Turkish nationhood in the 1950s-1980. It argues that the increasing rhetorical emphasis on the 'common man,' vis a vis the founding military/bureaucratic elite influenced the depictions of the Turkish nation as revealed in the reproduction of political myths in action/adventure films with historical settings. In this regard, apart from a main introduction and conclusion, this dissertation has been divided into five chapters, each of which has a chapter introduction and concluding remarks section. Besides, each chapter includes some subheadings as political myths. The chapters have not been constructed along with the same headings because I have abundant material and each material has its own distinguishable or prominent category. I want to emphasize these prominent categories. There is also an appendix of filmography that has synopses of seventy-one films analyzed throughout the dissertation. The filmography has been organized alphabetically based on the original titles of the films.

The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical background concerning nationalist political myths. After explaining the significance of political myths, the chapter categorizes them to reveal what each myth narrates about the nation. Here, the first category is constituted by myths about the nation's past, which reveal the nation's spatial and ancestral roots as well as its temporal origins and the golden age. The second concentrates on myths about the nation's present, in particular the myth of decline. The third is about the nation's future, and this category includes the myths of ethnic election and the nation's mission. It also explains the ways in which the nation should realize its mission. Therefore, the myths of the warrior nation, national

warrior, leader, and others are presented. The chapter ends with a discussion of how political myths work as elements of popular culture and cinema's role in disseminating political myths. Throughout the chapter, various examples are provided to manifest the significance of political myths in Turkish political culture and nation-building.

The second chapter analyzes political myths in the films of the 1950s in relation to the beginning of a change in political elites. The chapter also discusses various foreign policy developments which strengthened nationalist, anti-intellectual, and anti-bureaucrat elements of political discourse. These developments include the Korean War, Turkey's NATO membership, and increasing American influence in the country. The chapter also includes the growing body of non-academic sources on the Ottoman past during the period in question, which ultimately influenced the depictions of Turkish nationhood through political myths in action/adventure films with historical settings. The films place either the Ottoman past or the War of Independence at the center. Thus, this chapter attempts to explain how films responded to the context of the 1950s'.

The third chapter covers the period between the military intervention of May 27, 1960 and the national elections of 1965. This was when the founding military/bureaucratic elite attempted to take the revenge of the 1950s by rebalancing political power against a backdrop of Turkey's isolation in the international arena due to its Cyprus policy. This situation strengthened the popular reaction against the military/bureaucratic elite, while at the same time prepared for a flourishing nationalism in the post-1965 period. This chapter analyzes how these might have reflected on depictions of the Turkish nationhood as revealed in myths that were reproduced by historical action/adventure films. The chapter is divided into two main parts: the context and the films. Again, the films are chosen from those about wars in the Ottoman Empire and the War of Independence. This chapter acts as a transition to the fourth and fifth chapters, which are about the post-1965 period.

The fourth and fifth chapters are connected in terms of the period they investigate. They are about the increasing aggressive nationalism following the 1965 nationwide elections until the late 1970s, ending with the military coup of September 12, 1980. The latest film I analyze is *Kara Murat Devlet Savaşıyor* (*Kara Murat: The Giants are Fighting*, dir. Natuk Baytan), which was produced in 1978. This date also marks the a reduction in cinema attendance due to the widespread street violence stemming from political chaos and the spread of television, which gave an end to the vast consumption of cinema in everyday life. Given this, the fourth chapter mainly deals with the context in which the rhetorical power of the 'common man' was strengthened in political culture vis a vis the military/bureaucratic elite. This came hand in hand

with the militarist and aggressive atmosphere created by the late 1960s' criminalization of social movements, the suppression of the left with the military memorandum of 1971, and the Cyprus Operation of 1974. The phenomenal consumption and production of cinema also coincided with that period, and the films, of course, cannot be thought of independently from the political and historical circumstances in which they were born into or the dominant ideology of their time. In that respect, these films throw light on the late 1960s and the 1970s. Therefore, I have created two general categories of films that I deal with in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The first category includes films depicting the defense of Anatolia in the 19th century and those that took place during the War of Independence. Since this group constitutes only a minority, I have put them in Chapter Four to be able to contextualize them better. However, the second category is analyzed in Chapter Five. It includes films manifesting Turkish heroism during various conquests from the 5th to the 17th century by the Hunnic Empire, Göktürks, Anatolian Seljuks, and the Ottoman Empire. In terms of the characters and narratives, these films are generally very similar to each other because most of them are episodes of series completing each other. However, their heroes are much more aggressive in comparison to those of the previous chapter. Lastly, I should add that the fifth chapter is longer than the other chapters, so there is an imbalance between the chapters in terms of the number of pages they occupy. This is because the number of films produced during the last period I am dealing with, 1965-1980, is significantly greater than those produced in other periods.

To make my analysis easily comprehensible, I have put intra-conclusions raising the main arguments due to the variety and extent of the films under scrutiny. The dissertation also includes a filmography as part of an appendix at the end. This section is divided into subsections according to chapters. Each subsection contains the synopses of films analyzed in the related chapter. In this regard, the first subsection is on Chapter Two, which has eleven films; the third section is on Chapter Three and presents five films, the third is on Chapter Four and has twelve films, and the last subsections is for Chapter Five, which gives the synopses of forty-three films. The films in each section have been listed alphabetically based on the original language.

CHAPTER I: Theoretical Framework: Making and Breaking Political Myths

1.1. Introduction:

Political myths are great stories that narrate the past events creatively⁷³ and through which “collectivities – in this context especially nations – establish and determine the foundations of their being, their systems of morality and values.”⁷⁴ Although myths seem to be rather irrational and secondary in the modern world, people still look at stories about the past may have entered it.”⁷⁵ In this context, with its visual narrative power, cinema is a fruitful way of storytelling for reproducing political myths verbally and visually in everyday lives. Therefore, the Turkish historical action/adventure films of the 1950s-1980 are prolific sources from which to generate nationalist political myths and hence ideological discourses that ultimately reveal the processes of negotiation and intermingling in Turkish national identity.

Thus, this chapter aims to establish a theoretical basis that reveals the relationship between political myths, nationalism, and cinema to understand where to locate these nationalist action/adventure films following the dominant ideological trends in Turkish political culture. I have divided the chapter into four sections. The first section defines political myths and explains why they are significant. The second section is about the link between political myths and nationalism. The third section attempts to make a categorization of nationalist political myths in four sub-sections. In the first, myths about the nation’s past, which are about the nation’s spatial and ancestral roots besides temporal origins and the golden age, are mentioned. The second concentrates on myths about the nation’s present, the myth of decline, in particular. The third sub-section is about the nation’s future, and includes the myths of ethnic election and the nation’s mission. Finally, the fourth sub-section deals with myths explaining the ways in which the nation should realize its mission. It includes myths of the warrior nation, leader, and others. The chapter then discusses how political myths work as elements of popular culture and cinema’s role in disseminating political myths. The chapter ends with concluding remarks to summarize the main arguments presented in the chapter. In each section, contemporary examples are provided to illustrate the significance of political myths.

⁷³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Haggay Ram and Galia Saber-Friedman, “The Political Significance of Myth: The Case of Iran and Kenya in a Comparative Perspective,” *Cultural Dynamics*, Vol 8, No. 1, (1996), 53; Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1982), 31.

⁷⁴ George Schöpfung, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 80.

⁷⁵ Clifford Geertz, “Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power,” *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 143.

1.2. Political Myths: Definition and Significance:

In the popular vernacular, the word ‘myth’ generally indicates falseness and is often used pejoratively⁷⁶ as to the opposite of scientifically established truths.⁷⁷ In modern societies, the general belief is that human beings draw their everyday guidance from modern sciences and make their political choices on a rational-secular basis.⁷⁸ Thus, myths are repressed “into the obscure depth of the psyche.”⁷⁹ However, even with scientific rationality, these stories about the past, particularly the ones about state and nationhood as analyzed in this study, still dominate everyday life. Both politicians and ordinary people still look at them to derive meaning about various political, social, and economic transformations.

Political myths could be considered components of political culture, that is “the set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings people hold about politics in a society” as the most fundamental definition says.⁸⁰ They inform us about the general trends in overall political change in the society, how such changes influence the society and how society relate to changes. So, since myths are basically reactions to certain changes and crisis in the society, an analysis of their reproduction can provide us information about changes and the relationship of the society to these changes.

⁷⁶ Joanne Esch, “Legitimizing War on Terror,” *Political Psychology*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (June 2010): 357-391.

⁷⁷ See: Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of The Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 34-48.

⁷⁸ The cognitive aspects of individuals involved in foreign policy making is problematized by Political Psychology Literature. Interestingly, earlier contributions were from the late Cold War period: Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Richard W. Cottam, *Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and A Case Study*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1977); Margaret G. Hermann (ed.), *Political Psychology*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1986). Some scholars working on the effect of discourses on international relations are Richard K. Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, “Introduction: Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (Sept. 1990): 259-268; James Der Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); Luisa Godinho, “Discourse and International Relations: A Theoretical and Methodological Approach,” *JANUS.NET e-journal of International Relations*, Vol. 7, No.2, (Nov. 2016-Apr. 2017); Rom Harré and Grant Gillett, *The Discursive Mind* (California, London, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1994); Jennifer Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5, Issue: 2, (1999): 225-254; Michael J. Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding: The Politics of Discursive Practices* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Michael J. Shapiro (ed.), *Language and Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1984); Simon Koschut, Todd H. Hall, Reinhard Wolf, Ty Solomon, Emma Hutchinson and Roland Bleiker, “Discourse and Emotions in International Relations,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 19, Issue: 3, (Sept. 2017): 481-508; Jutta Weldes and Diana Saco, “Making State Action Possible: The United States and the Discursive Construction of ‘The Cuban Problem,’ 1960-1994,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No 2, (1996): 361-395.

⁷⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter Between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 27; Also see: Joseph L. Henderson, “Ancient Myths and Modern Man,” in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (New York: Anchor Press, 1988): 104-157.

⁸⁰ Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 25) cited in İltur Turan, “The Evolution of Political Culture in Turkey,” *Modern Turkey: Continuity and Change*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1984), 84-112.

One medium that reproduces these myths is cinema, and the widely consumed historical action/adventure Turkish films that convey nationalist messages chiming with the political context are concrete examples of this. A contemporary example is *Fetih 1453* (*Conquest 1453*, 2012, dir. Faruk Aksoy), an epic retelling of the conquering of İstanbul by Mehmet II. According to box office records, the film had approximately 7 million viewers⁸¹ and has been the fourth most-watched movie of all time in Turkey.⁸² Fitting well into the Neo-Ottoman policies of the governing party, AKP, the film portrays Byzantium as completely decadent and corrupt and the Ottomans as tolerant, good-willed bringers of civilization under the leadership of young, charismatic, heroic, intelligent, and divinely assigned Mehmet II. The narrative, here, mainly justifies the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority as the representative of the Muslim world fighting against the Christian world. This perspective has very much dominated Turkey's political discourse. For instance, in his speech during the fourth commemoration of the failed coup attempt of July 15, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan connected the failed coup with the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, the conquest of İstanbul in 1453, and the War of Independence in 1919-1922, arguing that Turkey had constantly been threatened by external and internal enemies, July 15 being "the latest ring of the chain of struggles of our existence."⁸³ Although the scope of the current dissertation is limited to the medium of cinema, at this point it would be pertinent to mention two immensely popular examples from television, namely, *Diriliş Ertuğrul* (*Resurrection Ertuğrul*, 2014-2019, producer: Mehmet Bozdağ) and *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (*Magnificent Century*, 2011-2014, producer: Timur Savcı). The former narrates the life and wars of Ertuğrul, the father of Osman, who founded the Ottoman Empire in the 13th century. Although little is truly known about the life of Ertuğrul Ghazi, the series was broadcasted for five seasons on TRT (Turkish State Radio and Television). It even broke the rating records and was exported to 71 countries, including the US, UK, various countries in Europe, the post-Soviet space, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. The latter series is set in the 16th century, when the Ottoman Empire was at its apex under the leadership of Suleiman the Magnificent. Besides wars and palace intrigues, it mainly depicts the amorous relationship between Hürrem and the Sultan. It lasted for four seasons and was exported to 45 countries, reaching more than 200 million viewers. Both series' popularity was not a coincidence given their contribution to Neo-Ottomanist political ideology by representing the struggle of

⁸¹ <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/fetih-1453--2010437/box-office>

⁸² "Seyirci Rekorları," <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/>

⁸³ "Erdoğan likens thwarting of July 2016 coup attempt to Conquest of İstanbul," July 15, 2020, <https://www.duvarenglish.com/politics/2020/07/15/erdogan-likens-thwarting-of-july-2016-coup-attempt-to-conquest-of-istanbul/>

Turks/Ottomans against Christians under the leadership of divinely appointed charismatic leaders. It should also be noted that despite its success, the latter received much criticism due to its depiction of various events, palace life, the harem, and Suleiman himself. In 2012, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the leader of AKP and the Prime Minister at the time, even made calls for the series to be canceled due to problems with its historical accuracy. After these criticisms, RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) received more than 23,000 complaints about *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* in one month compared to approximately 2,700 during the prior ten-month period.⁸⁴ The interest in the series, even in the form of criticisms, reveals that both series fitted well into a particular political context created by the rise of AKP's discursive emphasis on Neo-Ottomanism and the myths of internal and external threats that were disturbing Turkey's national unity. *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* had screened during a period of economic crisis and the Gezi Resistance, and *Diriliş Ertuğrul* to the backdrop of the July 2016 coup attempt, the transition to the Presidential system and the rise of a cultural war between secular and non-secular sections of the society. Within this context, according to Carney, the series worked to legitimize Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership against internal and external enemies.⁸⁵ As a result, a foundation myth for the AKP rule had been created, and this myth also justified the Turkish nation's antiquity and greatness as a Muslim state with intelligence and military power.

Based on these examples, myths about the Turkish state and nationhood are very much used in contemporary political life. Therefore, what matters in analyzing political myths through cinematic production surpasses a debate about the historical accuracy of what is presented in films or TV series. Therefore, the theoretical understanding of myths needs to go beyond their claims to truth.⁸⁶ At this point, Flood's perception of myth is enlightening. According to him, myth is "an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present or predicted political events and which is accepted and valid in its essentials by a social group."⁸⁷ Jones, drawing from Barthes, also points out that myths are

⁸⁴ "Şikayet 1 ayda 10 kat arttı," <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/sik-yet-1-ayda-10-kat-artti-22264360>

⁸⁵ Josh Carney, "Resur(e)cting a spectacular hero: Diriliş Ertuğrul, Necropolitics and Popular Culture in Turkey," *Review of Middle East Studies*, 52 (1), (2018): 93-114. For another commentary: William Armstrong, "What a TV Series Tells about Erdogan's Turkey," May 14, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/14/opinion/erdogan-tv-show-turkey.html>

⁸⁶ Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Erica Benner, "Nationalism Within Reason," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 43, No. 1, (Jan. 1997): 29; David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 34-35; Arash Abizadeh, "Historical Truth, National Myths and Liberal Democracy: On the Coherence of Liberal Nationalism," *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (2004): 294-295; Chiara Bottici and Benoît Challand, "Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilizations as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9(3), (2006): 321.

⁸⁷ Christopher G. Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 44.

important for what they do, not what they say.⁸⁸ “All one has to do is to put the political myths into action and to show their constructive and destructive power.”⁸⁹ Therefore, myths’ significance and impact are much more valuable,⁹⁰ and their inaccuracy does not diminish their effect.⁹¹

Consequently, a working definition of political myth must refer to the content and purposes. As Tudor says, a political myth is “...a story told for a purpose and not simply to amuse.”⁹² In fact, with these myths, a group is turned into a political community⁹³ that is related to a particular past, forms solidarity with those who share that identity,⁹⁴ and justifies why those who govern have the right to do so and why the community should obey them.⁹⁵ Furthermore, myths are user-friendly, meaning that they create readily available, clear, and logical⁹⁶ formulas or frameworks to help people understand the world.⁹⁷ They are kind of “life models”⁹⁸ or “a series of *exempla virtutis*.”⁹⁹ Barthes says, “...myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a worldwide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves.”¹⁰⁰ To put it more clearly, myths are “flattening complexities and contradictions of human history.”¹⁰¹

⁸⁸ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (Trans.) Annette Lavers, (New York: Noonday Press, 1972), 126-127.

⁸⁹ Ernst Cassirer, “Judaism and the Modern Political Myths,” *Contemporary Jewish Record*, 7 (2), (1944): 115-126.

⁹⁰ Esch, “Legitimizing War on Terror,” 361.

⁹¹ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 183-184.

⁹² Henry Tudor, *Political Myth* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1972), 16.

⁹³ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 152-153.

⁹⁴ George Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” in *Myths and Nationhood*, eds. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 20.

⁹⁵ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 22–23; Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 179.

⁹⁶ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe*, 84.

⁹⁷ As Tudor explains, “In telling a myth, the myth-maker not only intends his audience to understand the message he has in mind; he intends to make them behave in a certain way,” 48; Esch, “Legitimizing War on Terror,” 360; W. Lance Bennett, “Myth, Ritual and Political Control,” *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 30, no. 4, (Fall 1980): 167; Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 253; Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 24; Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization: 1800-1890* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 16; Bottici and Challand, “Rethinking Political Myth,” 319-321; Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 15.

⁹⁸ Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 16.

⁹⁹ Anthony Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” in *Myths and Nationhood*, eds. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 37.

¹⁰⁰ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 143.

¹⁰¹ Duncan S. A. Bell, “Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity,” *British Journal of Sociology*, 54(1), (2003): 75.

Besides, they standardize¹⁰² and naturalize¹⁰³ similarities and differences between people and create ideological baggage¹⁰⁴ based on binary oppositions such as good and evil, friends and enemies.¹⁰⁵ As Gramscian cognitive monopolies with symbolic power,¹⁰⁶ they even block the receptivity of irreconcilable information¹⁰⁷ and thereby shape perception, cognition, and emotions. Then, according to Bouchard, as these myths diffuse and become a part of the rituals of social life, they turn into sacred taboos.¹⁰⁸ This is the point in which they become self-fulfilling prophecies¹⁰⁹ as naturalized, ‘banal and given’ elements of everyday life¹¹⁰ with the transformation of discourses into realities.¹¹¹ As a result, how people (must) perceive their surroundings, what they (must) feel about them, how they (must) decide to act within this world is all framed by myths¹¹² that seem entirely natural, according to Barthes.¹¹³ Then myths attain the power to create conflicts and prejudices against other groups and facilitate stereotyping and scapegoating by influencing the group’s ideas.¹¹⁴ Then, the nation, state, leader, territory associated with that community, and the community itself are all sacralized. So, as Sorel maintains, the anxieties of both the ruler and ruled could be solved, emotions could be controlled, radical changes could be promoted, certain memories could be maintained, political choices could be manipulated, and finally, national identities could be constructed and maintained.¹¹⁵

¹⁰² Norbert Elias, “The Symbol Theory” cited in *Myths and Nationhood*, eds. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 20.

¹⁰³ George Schöpflin, “The Construction of Identity,” *Osterreichischer Wissenschaftstag* (2001): 1-2.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Wilson, “Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine,” in *Myths and Nationhood*, 183.

¹⁰⁵ Claude Levi-Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol 68, No: 270, (Oct.-Dec. 1955): 428-444.

¹⁰⁶ Mary Fulbrook, “Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR” in *Myths and Nationhood*, 73.

¹⁰⁷ Murray Edelman, *Politics and Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence* (New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press, 1971), 44.

¹⁰⁸ Gérard Bouchard, “National Myths: An Overview,” *National Myths: Constructed Pasts, Contested Presents*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 276-282.

¹⁰⁹ Bottici and Challand, “Rethinking Political Myth,” 329.

¹¹⁰ Schöpflin, “The Construction of Identity,” 1-2.

¹¹¹ Esch, “Legitimizing War on Terror,” 363.

¹¹² Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 19.

¹¹³ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 143.

¹¹⁴ Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 26; Murray Edelman, “Language, Myths and Rhetoric,” *Society*, (Jan.-Febr. 1998): 133.

¹¹⁵ Georges Sorel, “Introduction: Letter to Daniel Halevy,” *Reflections on Violence*, ed. Jeremy Jennings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3-39.

1.3. *Political Myths & Nationalism:*

Smith argues that nationalism itself can be regarded as a political myth,¹¹⁶ whose birth is connected with the transformation from traditionalism to industrialism¹¹⁷ and political and material interests generated by modernization.¹¹⁸ Breuilly¹¹⁹ and Mann,¹²⁰ too, refer to the growing devaluation of religion and its replacement in response to the making of the modern state. Similarly, Anderson links the emergence of the nation-state (the result of nationalism) with the spontaneous intersection of various historical and cultural forces, the disintegration of the religious community, and the dynastic realm in particular. According to him, the decline of these systems since the 17th century provided the historical and geographical space in which nations could emerge.¹²¹ Greenfeld goes back to the 16th century to explain the original modern idea of the English nation. According to her, it occurred in relation to the Protestant Reformation, which stimulated the translation and reading of the Bible into English.¹²² As Jensen suggests, this religious transformation reinforced the consciousness of belonging to the English nation.¹²³ Greenfeld also says, "...though Protestantism cannot be said to have given birth to the English nation, it did play the crucial role of a midwife without whom the child might not have been born."¹²⁴ Anderson agrees that in the context of Enlightenment-era rational secularism, nationalism provided a secular alternative to the previously sacral role of explaining and answering for the weight of human suffering.¹²⁵ So, nationalism has replaced religion as a 'secular glue' that bonded society together.¹²⁶ In this context, Smith argues, myths are connected with the emergence of the modern world as things people look on for salvation.

¹¹⁶ Anthony D. Smith, "The myth of the 'modern nation' and the myths of nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 11:1, (1988): 1.

¹¹⁷ See Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1966); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 65; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹¹⁸ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), 9-19.

¹¹⁹ John Breuilly, "Chapter I: Prelude to Nationalism: religious and national oppositions in early modern Europe" in *Nationalism and the State*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 44-64; "Approaches to Nationalism" in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London and New York: Verso, 1999), 146-174.

¹²⁰ Michael Mann, "A theory of the modern state" and "Conclusions to Chapters 4-6: The emergence of classes and nations" in *The Sources of Social Power Vol. II: The Rise of classes and nation-states, 1760-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 44-91, 214-253.

¹²¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 12-22.

¹²² Liah Greenfeld, "England as God's Peculiar People, and the Token of His Love" in *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992), 60-66.

¹²³ Lotte Jensen, "Introduction" in *The Roots of Nationalism: National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe 1600-1815*, ed. Lotte Jensen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 18.

¹²⁴ Greenfeld, "England as God's Peculiar People, and the Token of His Love," 63.

¹²⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 12-19.

¹²⁶ Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960).

Therefore, with the rise of modern bureaucratic society, “only by resorting to a real or an alleged common past and origins, both groups and individuals could make sense of these challenges and psychologically confront the modern state.”¹²⁷ Hobsbawm and Ranger mention the role of ruling elites in creating and diffusing nationalism through education manuals, public ceremonies, public monuments, and buildings to develop a loyalty to the nation-state as an alternative to royalty and religion.¹²⁸ Thereby, they could overcome an identity crisis,¹²⁹ influence the masses, and counter the threat caused by rising social movements in the late 19th early 20th century.¹³⁰ In this framework, Gellner, from an evolutionist perspective oriented towards progress based on a continuing improvement introduced by the Industrial Revolution and the idea of limitless growth, concentrates on differences between the agrarian/rural and the industrialized. He says, unlike agricultural societies, the industrial era is characterized by anonymity, an increasingly complex division of labor, and standardized literacy, which requires the imposition of national identities. In modern society, the state monopolizes public education to create loyalties through an all-embracing identity. Through state education, communication beyond local boundaries is facilitated, and the state tries to cope with challenges. Gellner argues that this situation gave birth to a central culture.¹³¹ Here, it could be said that this culture is constructed by political myths to bind different subjects to each other, then diffused from and by the state.

Drawing on the references mentioned above connecting nationalism and modernization, it could be argued that political myths rise at certain junctures: “periods of profound cultural clash, and accelerated economic and social changes, a definite political or military threat from the outside to the viability of the community.”¹³² In his *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, Smith identifies three typical conditions for the emergence of ethnic myths. First, myths emerge during “prolonged periods of warfare,” no matter whether the community engages actively in war or not. The second condition is related to “incipient secularization or its threat,” which has the potential of leading a clash of traditional and ‘rationalistic’ cultures. The last condition, stated by Smith, is when “incipient commercialization breaking down the community’s

¹²⁷ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 62.

¹²⁸ Eric J. Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 263-283.

¹²⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 96-97.

¹³⁰ Anderson, “Official Nationalism and Imperialism” in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 83-111; Eric J. Hobsbawm, “The Government Perspective” in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 80-100.

¹³¹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 19-38.

¹³² Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 83.

isolation” occurs.¹³³ In that context, myths serve as antidotes to a sense of estrangement, alienation, and insecurity¹³⁴ by reducing complexities into a relative and comprehensible simplicity.¹³⁵ So, they are reproduced when social complexity increases and a greater need for societies emerges to tell stories that make sense of what seems confusing and unconnected. Myths, in a way, provide ontological security,¹³⁶ which “(r)efers to the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action.”¹³⁷ At this point, Gellner, in his “Reply to Critics,” refers to the individual’s search for a resolution of the stress and ‘perpetual humiliation’ which the incongruences of modern life engender.¹³⁸ So, narratives, political myths in this context help provide a framework, albeit a malleable one, by inserting events, characters, and images into a sequence.¹³⁹ So, social actors can comprehend the situation, make choices in the face of uncertainty depending on ‘the familiar and the understandable’¹⁴⁰ values that define Self and Other.”¹⁴¹

Therefore, myths explain the present by referring to the past and serve as guides for the future and as justifications for the tragedies of history.¹⁴² This is how they produce and reproduce meaning and significance¹⁴³ about why the political community came together, why it excluded others, and how political authority should govern.¹⁴⁴ Besides, returning to the past can also respond to the community’s practical need for rebirth after experiencing decline and decay.¹⁴⁵ For example, if a territory was lost in that period and if it is contested, the reference

¹³³ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 84.

¹³⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 83-84; Benedict Anderson also emphasizes the particular significance of social alienation and estrangement for generating nationalism: Benedict Anderson, *Long-Distance Nationalism: World Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics* (Amsterdam: CASA, 1992).

¹³⁵ Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction*, 33-44; William W. Cobb, *The American Foundation Myth in Vietnam: Reigning Paradigms and Raining Bombs* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), 2-3.

¹³⁶ Felix Berenskoetter, “Parameters of a national biography,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20(1), (2014): 262-288.

¹³⁷ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, Polity Press: 1996), 92.

¹³⁸ Ernest Gellner, ‘Reply to Critics’ in *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, eds. John A. Hall and Ian Jarvie (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 626.

¹³⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 62.

¹⁴⁰ Vincent Della Sala, “Not So Different After All?: The EU and Myths of Exceptionalism,” <http://aei.pitt.edu/79654/>; Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 114-115.

¹⁴¹ Fulbrook, “Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR,” 73; Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 22.

¹⁴² Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 23.

¹⁴³ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 24; Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction*, 42-44; Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 19; Ernst Cassirer, “The Function of Myth in Man’s Social Life” in *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), 37-49.

¹⁴⁵ Tudor, *Political Myth*, 61-62.

to the past may be used to provide “prior title” ownership for the community.¹⁴⁶ Bartov mentions the rise of German myths about Jews following the First World War when Germany’s national unity was threatened, political myths about the ‘great and glorious’ past of the Aryan race worked to restore domestic consensus and harmony.¹⁴⁷ Tismaneau refers to the fall of communism in the Balkans and argues that the post-communist landscape was favorable for collective passions, fears, illusions, and disappointments. Within that context, political myths came into being as “responses to the sentiments of discontinuity, fragmentation, and the overall confusion of the post-communist stage.”¹⁴⁸ Besides, Greenfeld and Chirot, in their study of the early nation-building stage in Russia, Germany, and certain Arab countries, state that when elites feel insecure and dissatisfied with their domestic power status and feel humiliated, they resort to nationalistic propaganda and polemics over sensitive historical issues.¹⁴⁹ As Smith observes, political communities keep on “looking into the pasts of their peoples for sanction for their new policies and innovations; archaizing is the concomitant of rapid change.”¹⁵⁰ That is to say, the conditions of uncertainty, distress, continuous instability, and insecurity create a favorable environment for the emergence of political myths to control the pace and scope of political, social, and cultural change¹⁵¹ happening in the present. Thanks to myths, Smith argues that individuals conceive their nation as “stemming from” older communities of historical culture. This feeling provides a guarantee and security for the national community’s maintenance through generations by leading to “an overriding commitment and bound for the community,” a vision of the future.¹⁵² As a result, communities transcend the limits of time and space, ‘relive’ mythical time, and the nation is formed. Therefore, the political, economic, and social context in the 1950s-70s, which nurtures myths or is nurtured by myths, should not be ignored in the study of the reproduction of Turkish political myths in Turkish cinema.

Political myths also serve to legitimize the potential of violence and brutality in relation to enemy population. For Greenfeld and Chirot, there is an association between certain types of

¹⁴⁶ Anthony Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival” in *Myths and Nationhood*, 38.

¹⁴⁷ Omer Bartov, “Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998): 771–816. A similar source: Ruth Linn and Ilan Gur-Ze’v, “Holocaust as Metaphor: Arab and Israeli Use of the Same Symbol,” *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 11, no. 3 (1996): 195-206.

¹⁴⁸ Vladimir Tismaneau, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 5.

¹⁴⁹ Liah Greenfeld and Daniel Chirot, “Nationalism and Aggression,” *Theory and Society*, 23, no.1, (Febr. 1994): 79-130.

¹⁵⁰ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 174.

¹⁵¹ Ram and Saber-Friedman, “The Political Significance of Myth: The Case of Iran and Kenya in a Comparative Perspective,” 54.

¹⁵² Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 57, 120.

nationalism such as ethnic nationalism, and aggressive, brutal behavior.¹⁵³ Analyzing psychology of ethnonationalism and how some important cases of collectivistic and ethnic nationalism turn into harsh, aggressive and murderous, Dusan Kecmanovic argues that all nationalisms justify violence and so at some point aggressive nationalism might turn into aggression which is more extreme and actively hostile.¹⁵⁴ Here, what matters is the role of myths in this process. The discourses that glorify war against others through political myths may trigger war and ethnic conflicts or at least may contribute to the hostile atmosphere against the others. The last point here is what I actually mean by ‘nationalist aggressiveness’ or ‘aggressive nationalism’ throughout the dissertation. In the Turkish political-historical context, I indicate the spread of nationalist discourses that exalt war and hate internal and external others, the Greeks in particular in the period of 1950s-1980. Just to note, these discourses the dissertation deals with are not necessarily expansionist. A comparison with Japanese or Italian aggression in the Second World War, therefore, does not make sense.

Moreover, the formation of nations is not a one-off undertaking, “It is one that involves ceaseless re-interpretations, rediscoveries, and reconstructions,” of myths, symbols, and rituals in response to “new needs, interests, and perceptions.”¹⁵⁵ In a noteworthy lecture delivered in 1882, Renan says that people’s day-to-day commitment, essentially a ‘daily plebiscite’ of men, creates “a moral conscience which is called a nation.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, ‘objective’ and ‘tangible’ criteria such as race, language, religion, physical or material interests are not sufficient to realize this daily plebiscite. In fact, what is needed is a ‘soul,’ a spiritual principle based upon “large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those others that one is prepared to make in the future.”¹⁵⁷ ‘A national idea,’ says Renan, is based upon “a heroic past, great men, glory.” To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, having cried on the same day, laughed on the same day, and to wish to do so again, that is the essential condition for being a nation that affectively motivates the present will to bind together, to act together in a unified fashion. In fact, ‘myths’ or ‘tales’ create the will to become a nation in Renan’s world. Here Guibernau also says “collective memories” of glorious and heroic times, namely those of independence, oppression, “liberation” struggles, or international leadership as reflected on

¹⁵³ Greenfeld and Chirot, “Nationalism and Aggression,” 85-88

¹⁵⁴ Dusan Kecmanovic, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism* (New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 1996), 132-149.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 17.

¹⁵⁶ Ernest Renan, “What is A Nation?” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 8-22, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Renan “What is A Nation?” 19.

political myths, strengthen a sense of shared identity among the members of the nation, even if the latter is stateless.¹⁵⁸

Smith also implies that the existence, sustenance, and continuous production of a nation could be provided only with myths, memories, values, and symbols, which he summarizes as a ‘myth-symbol complex.’ This complex works as a social glue linking different people to each other and the ruler and the ruled. Smith argues that the reproduction and perpetuation of modern nations are substantiated by the continuity of former elements of premodern cultural, political and ethnic groups, which he calls *ethnie*, which is “a named human population with shared ancestry myths, histories and culture, having an association with the specific territory and a sense of solidarity.”¹⁵⁹ Thanks to myths, pre-modern *ethnies* transform into nations.¹⁶⁰ This point by Smith also challenges to primordialist understanding of the nations which posits old and premodern nations surviving in the modern era. In fact, myths and national symbols have such a power to form nations by creating historical depth for modern nations in premodern times as Smith would argue.

According to Anderson, a nation can be considered an “imagined community,” united by a “deep, horizontal comradeship” whereby national co-fellows are believed to constitute a bounded, ‘natural’ entity although “they will never know “most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them.”¹⁶¹ Here, he does not refer to myths directly, but his concept of imagination could be used to understand the functions of myth. In his view, the nation as an imagined community needs to tell stories to provide a setting for the present and the future.¹⁶² These are myths within which “people share an idea of origin, continuity, historical memories, collective remembrance, common heritage, and tradition, as well as a common destiny.”¹⁶³ So, myths become forms, tools, and/or models of imagination in the emergence and continuity of nations.

A more in-depth exploration of the functions and purposes of myths requires an analysis of the producers of myths. Here two terms coined by Anderson are beneficial: official nationalism and popular/vernacular nationalism. The elite imposes the former as a response to

¹⁵⁸ Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 11.

¹⁵⁹ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), 191; *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 32

¹⁶⁰ Smith, “The myth of the ‘modern nation’ and the myths of nations,” 11; *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 15; *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 11.

¹⁶¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 7.

¹⁶² Bo Strath, “Introduction” in *Myth, Memory and History in the Construction of Community: Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*, ed. Bo Strath (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2000), 19-48.

¹⁶³ Daniela Obradovic, “Policy Legitimacy in the European Union,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34(2), (1996): 196.

the threatened dynastic and aristocratic groups to protect their privileged situation rising from their inherited superiority against the latter, that is, the nationalism of the masses-.¹⁶⁴ Besides, from Gellner's perspective, official nationalism could be defined as the high culture of the elites, which is "a school-mediated, academy supervised idiom," "codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication."¹⁶⁵ He states, in the nation-building process, political elites, through high culture, provides "specialized training," "make citizens," and "provide a common cultural identity."¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Hobsbawm attributes active roles to elites and argues that traditions such as symbols, rituals, heroic stories, and founding myths are invented and spread by political elites.¹⁶⁷

The focus of Anderson, Gellner, and Hobsbawm on the role of elites in the production of myths does not merely and automatically suggest that subjects passively accept the myths of high/official/formal culture without any resistance and myths are instrumentally created by the elite without any basis, *ex nihilo*. At one point, Gellner almost seems to have acknowledged that high culture does not occur in a cultural vacuum; although nationalism, in his view, emerges from a break with the past, "it claims to defend folk culture while in fact, it is forging a high culture; it claims to protect an old folk society while in fact helping to build up an anonymous mass society"..."Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored . . . The cultural shards and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions."¹⁶⁸ Thus, Gellner underlines cultural continuities with the past in the formation of myths. Nevertheless, Gellner does not dwell much on these linkages between official and unofficial cultures. The same thing could be said for Hobsbawm too. Although he mentions that in specific periods the state links "formal and informal, official and unofficial, political and social invention of tradition,"¹⁶⁹ he does not explain the role of these different spheres in the formation of myths. In fact, myths arise right in this complex and contested realm of dynamics from above and below. So, they emerge and function as a result of conflict and negotiation at the same time. Here, Fulbrook also mentions the necessity of some degree of congruence between official myths and popular collective memories.¹⁷⁰ Bell, too,

¹⁶⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 150.

¹⁶⁵ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 57.

¹⁶⁶ Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 158 cited in Natividad Gutierrez, *Nationalist Myths and Ethnic Identities: Indigenous Intellectuals and the Mexican State* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 13.

¹⁶⁷ Hobsbawm, "Introduction" in *The Invention of Tradition*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 56.

¹⁶⁹ Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914," 264.

¹⁷⁰ Fulbrook, "Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR," 74.

states that these official and popular must be emotively connected.¹⁷¹ This could happen only if myths derive from within,¹⁷² the ‘psychic repository’¹⁷³ and collective memory.¹⁷⁴ An excellent example of that could be Simon Schama’s well-known account of Dutch golden-age culture. In this work, the author suggests that many different mythologies were woven into the fabric of Dutch identity and everyday life, not imposed on an unaware and dependent population.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, these tales about the past should strike a chord in everyone’s hearts, not merely the elites.¹⁷⁶ As Yinan He argues, they must be rising on certain embedded perceptions and emotions present in family memories and folk culture.¹⁷⁷ Myths must also respond to certain contexts, be consistent and coherent with other stories and discourses that transmit similar or complementing messages. So they must be able to give meaning to the present with an orientation towards the world of experience.¹⁷⁸ In other words, there must be a connection between people’s personal experiences in the present, whether real or imagined, and these myths, memories, or symbols in the national repertoire.¹⁷⁹ This is how myths can create a world that seems familiar, rational, and natural.¹⁸⁰ It shows that they become credible only if they are connected to past events and widely observable phenomena.¹⁸¹

Thus, according to Cruz, political actors must operate within “imaginable possibilities when constructing tools for imagination.”¹⁸² The possibilities here also include a “usable” past and future, as Hobsbawm calls. According to Smith, national or nationalist historiographies must resonate in a plausible past...to take root.”¹⁸³ That convincing, credible, or believable past

¹⁷¹ Duncan S.A. Bell, “Mythscape: Memory, Mythology and National Identity,” 67.

¹⁷² Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 56.

¹⁷³ Bruce Mazlish, “Leader and Led,” in *Political Leadership: A Source Book*, ed. Barbara Kellerman (Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 278.

¹⁷⁴ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 26; Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 11.

¹⁷⁵ Laura Cruz, “The Epic Story of The Little Republic That Could: The Role of Patriotic myths in the Dutch Golden Age” in *Myth in History, History in Myth*, eds. Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhoff (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 160.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 57.

¹⁷⁷ Yinan He, “Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950-2006,” *History & Memory*, Vol. 19, No.2, (Fall/Winter 2007), 48.

¹⁷⁸ Bruce Kapferer, *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance, and Political Culture in Sri Lanka and Australia*, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 48.

¹⁷⁹ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 185; Anamaria Dutceac-Segesten, *Myth, Identity and Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Roman and Serbian History Textbooks* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011), 74.

¹⁸⁰ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 26.

¹⁸¹ David Archard, “Myths, Lies and Historical Truth: A Defense of Nationalism,” *Political Studies*, XLIII, (1995), 477-479.

¹⁸² Consuelo Cruz, “Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures,” *World Politics*, 52, no. 3 (April 2000): 275-312.

¹⁸³ Bryan D. Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social Theory*, (Philadelphia, PA: 1990) cited in Wilson, “Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine” (1997), 182; Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” *Myths and Nationhood*, 36.

is primarily determined by the present needs.¹⁸⁴ Besides, tales about the past do not directly transmit; they are used selectively.¹⁸⁵ Some parts of the past are omitted to be useable both for the elite and the masses.¹⁸⁶ As Renan says, myths can even make certain parts of memory salient and confer new understandings on them. Specifically, myths can exclude some events from public discourse and block, acknowledging that those events took place.¹⁸⁷ This ‘forgetting,’ says Renan, “I would go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation...”. For example, “every French citizen should have forgotten (the massacre of) Saint Bartholomew, (and) the massacres of the Midi in the thirteenth century.”¹⁸⁸ Thus, myths depend on a selective repertoire depending on the circumstances and the purposes of the teller.¹⁸⁹ At this point, Calhoun, in his analysis of Anderson’s works, mentions how English schoolchildren need to forget that William the Conqueror, the founding father, did not speak English and, nevertheless, is known as the ancestor of the English nation.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, mythmaking and nation-building include remembrance and forgetting at the same time. In sum, stories about the past are produced and reproduced, told, and retold. Through them, national identity is presented as ancient, primordial, homogeneous, or unified, and legitimate. People of today are linked linearly with those of the distant past and with the future.

1.4. A Categorization of Nationalist Political Myths:

1.4.1. The Intellectual Basis for Categories of Political Myths in Turkish Nationalism:

As reproducers of myths, nationalist action/adventure films of the 1950s-1970s contributed to the general trends in the discursive world of Turkish nationalism of the period. In doing so, they helped to weaponize everyday life with more straightforward and plausible nationalist arguments. Of course, the myths they presented were not novel and were the products of various intellectual debates and formulations about what Turkish national identity was, what it should include and not include. In this regard, one of the significant defining formulations that played a role was the Turkish History Thesis, which was the official paradigm developed by the early Republican elite during the single-party era dominated by the CHP. The thesis was canonized and publicized by the Turkish History Foundation through history and

¹⁸⁴ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 37.

¹⁸⁵ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 20.

¹⁸⁶ John Corbin, “Truth and Myth in History: An Example from the Spanish Civil War,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol 5, no 4, (1995): 609-625.

¹⁸⁷ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe*, 80-83, 85-88.

¹⁸⁸ Renan, “What is A Nation?” 11.

¹⁸⁹ Corbin, “Truth and Myth in History: An Example from the Spanish Civil War,” 609.

¹⁹⁰ Craig Calhoun, “The Importance of Imagined Communities and Benedict Anderson,” *DEBATS-Annual Review* 1, (2016): 14.

language congresses, a reference book titled *Türk Tarihi'nin Anahatları* (*The Main Tenets of Turkish History*), and various other textbooks. The thesis takes the Turkish nation's origins back to Central Asia and considers this land as the original land of the Turkish nation. According to the theory, Turks migrated from their original land due to severe changes in climatic conditions and arrived in Anatolia, which had been an uninhabited vacant land making the Turks its original and autochthonous inhabitants. Then, as a superior nation whose purity remained intact, Turks started to build civilizations centered on Anatolia. At this point, the thesis is also connected with the Sun Language Theory, which proposed that all languages are derived from a proto-Turkic first language named sun language as it could be understood from phonemic resemblances. According to the theory, the origin of that language was again Central Asia, the original land of the Turks, and it was formed when the Turks' utterings made while saluting the all-powerfulness of the sun took the form of a language.¹⁹¹

This official discourse based on Central Asia was given birth in a context of various reforms in favor of westernization, including the establishment of a secular and republican government, European legal codes, the emancipation of women, the transition to the Latin script from the Arabic one, all of which meant a complete break with the Ottoman/Islamic past. Hence, the foundation of the Republic meant a complete break with Ottoman/Islamic history and the creating of a new nation conforming to western values to reach the 'level of contemporary civilizations.' In line with the political atmosphere, the official historical discourse, hence the Turkish History Thesis, served to negate the Ottoman and Islamic pasts from the Turkish national identity in the minds of the early Republican elite. In the 1940s, it also served as the ideological basis of Pan-Turkist claims advocated by Pan-Turkist circles led by Rıza Nur, Reha Oğuz Türkkan, Nihal Atsız, and Nejdet Sançar. As a result of this cross-fertilization, the Pan-Turkists, with their voluminous intellectual production including fictional stories, provided a romantic framework for the thesis and filled the imaginary gaps by supplying images and narratives related to the Central Asian past, the superiority of the Turkish nation, and its relationship with other Turkic communities.¹⁹² What these circles created as images and

¹⁹¹ Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), 49-50. For example, Şemseddin Günaltay, in 1938, expressed one of the aims of the Sun-Language theory in his book, *Dil ve Tarih Tezlerimiz Üzerine Gerekli Bazı İzahlar* (Some Necessary Explanations on Our Language and History Thesis) by saying "Turkish language was rescued from the yoke of Islam through this Sun-Language Theory." Şemseddin Günaltay, Hasan Reşit Tankut, *Dil ve Tarih Tezlerimiz Üzerine Gerekli Bazı İzahlar* (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1938), 27.

¹⁹² Mithat Atabay, *II. Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Türkiye'de Milliyetçilik Akımları* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005), 252-334; Güldeniz Kıbrıs, *Creating Turkishness: An Examination of Turkish Nationalism through Gök-Börü*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Sabancı University Social Sciences Institute, 2005; "Political myths as tools for nationalist propaganda," *Journal of Abant Cultural Studies*, 4 (7), (2019): 1-15; Nizam Önen, *İki Turan: Macaristan ve Türkiye'de Turancılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 246-323; Günay Göksu Özdoğan,

symbols together with narratives constituted a significant visual and narrative basis enriching the Turkish History Thesis.

Nevertheless, the Turkish History Thesis was mostly uncontested in Turkish historiography until the 1970s. However, with the formulation and the subsequent rise of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis in the 1970s and 1980s, the intellectual basis for reproducing political myths was extended to include Islamic elements. Mainly formulated by conservative intellectuals such as İbrahim Kafesoğlu, Osman Turan, Ahmet Kabaklı, Muharrem Ergin, and Seyit Ahmet Arvasi, the synthesis has become the basis of political Islam that has dominated Turkish politics for several decades. In this regard, due to their increasing use of Islamic elements through time, the nationalist action/adventure films of the 1950s-1970s present convenient opportunities to observe that gradual paradigmatic shift from Turkish History Thesis to Turkish-Islamic Synthesis as it is revealed throughout the current dissertation.

The basics of the Turkish Islamic Synthesis was put forth in 1972 by İbrahim Kafesoğlu, the first chairman of *Aydınlar Ocağı* (The Intellectuals' Hearth), a small organization formed by a group of conservative journalists, academics, and some other intellectuals. The synthesis brought a reconciliation of Turkish national identity with Islamic elements. According to Kafesoğlu, the Turks did not find it difficult to convert to Islam because Islamic principles fitted well into Turkish culture. He also argues that the conversion of Turks provided protection for Islam that was about to lose its power and influence.¹⁹³ Here, Turks are given the role of savior and vanguard of the Islamic world, as Ahmet Kabaklı, from another group of intellectuals, argues.¹⁹⁴ This is, in fact, a sign of Turkish national superiority in the eyes of the Intellectuals' Hearth. A natural outcome of this was the glorification of the Ottoman past. In this context, Osman Turan made an especially significant impact. His works relying on Medieval sources emphasize that Turks are superior because God had chosen them. Therefore, the more they extend their borders, the more prosperous and just the world will become.¹⁹⁵ This is, in fact, the idea of *nizam-ı alem* (world order), which is the core legitimizing political notion that justifies Ottoman political rule, the supremacy of the conqueror, and the state against the

'Turan'dan 'Bozkurt'a: Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük (1931-1946) (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002); Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 130-136.

¹⁹³ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri* (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1966), 5-6, 269-270.

¹⁹⁴ Yüksel Taşkın, *Anti-Komünizmden Küreselleşme Karşıtlığına Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 223, 243.

¹⁹⁵ Osman Turan, "The Ideal of World Domination among the Medieval Turks," *Studia Islamica*, No: 4 (1955): 77-90; *Türk Cihan Hakimiyeti Mefkuresi Tarihi: Türk Dünya Nizamının Milli, İslami ve İnsani Esasları* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2014-originally published in 1969).

threat of chaos and corruption.¹⁹⁶ From this perspective, what is maintained by Turan could be named *Pax Turcica* (The Turkish Peace) that pushes the mental borders of Turkish domination by giving the Turks the significant role of becoming world conqueror. This idea seems irredentist at first, but given the international political context of the 1950s-1980 shaped by Turkey's gradual isolation and the Cyprus issue, it might be taken as a reference to the cultural and spiritual connections with the 'Outside Turks' who are living beyond the borders of the Turkish nation-state and need the Turkish nation to save them from the hands of the oppressors.

Moreover, despite its expansionist inclinations, the synthesis, in its entirety, was not a deviation from the Turkish History Thesis. What it did was to add Islam into the picture as an indispensable and natural ingredient of the Turkish national identity. This does not mean that the intellectuals had given up the Westernist ideal. Kafesoğlu still maintained that Western-originated values such as secularism and gender equality had already been a part of Turkish culture.¹⁹⁷ However, even those served to boost the Turkish national superiority, according to the author. At one point, he compares the Turkish culture with German, French, and English and unsurprisingly reaches the conclusion that the Turkish one is superior.¹⁹⁸ This means that although the Turkish History Thesis was trying to prove that Turks are in the same league with the Western civilization, the Turkish Islamic Synthesis worked to prove Turkish superiority over others.

The ideological transformation from the Turkish History Thesis into the Turkish Islamic Synthesis with the inclusion of a more prominent role for religion is related to the country's changing political structure. This first happened with the revival of Islamic influence in Turkey's political culture with the transition to multiparty politics. As explained in the following chapter, a powerful propaganda method of the DP, a significant rival of the CHP, was to appeal to the masses' Islamic sensibilities as opposed to the complete break with the Ottoman/Islamic past. In fact, the Cold War's international political conjuncture had also favored redefining Turkish national identity's links with Islam. As expressed throughout the current dissertation, Ottoman and Islamic values were perceived as ideological bulwarks against communism and the spread of the leftist ideology in Turkey.¹⁹⁹ In this vein, the declared aim of the Intellectuals' Hearth was to counter the so-called communist threat by reasserting Turkish

¹⁹⁶ Gottfried Hagen, "Legitimacy and World Order" in *Legitimizing the Order: Ottoman Rhetoric and State Power*, eds. Hakan Karateke, and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 55-83.

¹⁹⁷ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri* (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1966), 1-8.

¹⁹⁸ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türkler ve Medeniyet* (İstanbul: İstanbul Yayınları, 1957), 18, 20, 92.

¹⁹⁹ Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*, 154-163; 179-180.

and Islamic values.²⁰⁰ This practical political result of this approach was the formation of several right-wing political parties, all considering Islam as a significant element of the Turkish national identity. Later, although the Intellectuals' Heart did not initially associate itself with a political party, some of its members led by Muharrem Ergin supported the lobbying activities of the National Front coalition governments of 1975-1978 by the AP, Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) and the Republican Trust Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi*, CGP).²⁰¹ In the aftermath of the military coup of September 12, the ideas of the Turkish Islamic Synthesis gained much more prevalence and legitimacy and worked to restructure the political arena for propagating unity and integrity of the society, something desired by the military regime.²⁰²

The conservative turn in Turkish politics also reveals the ideological journey of Turkish nationalism. Thus, while analyzing myths and their significance, this study also refers to discursive changes and continuities of the Turkish nationalist discourse. Consequently, I have created categories of nationalist political myths that dominated Turkey's political culture as reflected in nationalist action/adventure films in the light of the official historical thesis and the Turkish Islamic Synthesis, in addition to the works of Girardet, Schöpflin, Smith, and Slotkin who are scholars working on the relationship between political myths and national identity building. For a conceivable analysis, I came up with four main categories: myths about the nation's past, the current condition of the nation, the future of the nation, and the methods that the nation should adopt to fulfill its duties. The sub-categories of the first are myths about the spatial and ancestral roots of the nation, along with the golden age myth. The second dwells on the myth of decline. The third refers to the myths of ethnic election and the national mission. The final category, which is the central one I have used to analyze films, has subdivisions of the myths of warrior-nation, the others, and national leader. Although divided into different categories, these myths are never mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they complete each other and nurture the discursive world of the general trends of Turkish nationalism of the 1950s-1980.

²⁰⁰ See: Aydınlar Ocağı, *Aydınlar Ocağı'nın Görüşü: Türkiye'nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* (İstanbul: Aydınlar Ocağı Yayınları, 1973).

²⁰¹ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergah: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü Hareket* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 153.

²⁰² More about connections between military and the Intellectuals' Hearth: Bora and Can, 1991: 147-156. Also See: Bozkurt Güvenç, Gencay Şaylan, İlhan Tekeli and Şerafettin Turan, "2. Bölüm: Aydınlar Ocağının 12 Eylül Armağanı" in *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1991), 37-68.

1.4.2. *Myths about the nation's past:*

1.4.2.1. *Spatial and Ancestral Roots of the 'Nation:'*

Contingent with historical and political conditions, the idealization of space is connected to myths about the nation's past. It leads to arguments about why people should relate themselves to space. In fact, as people feel alienated due to displacement, migrations, war, and modernization, and the encounters with 'others' increase, the emotional attachment to a certain land piece gains strength. Through this attachment, people counter their 'homelessness,' establish emotional and physical security as they live through a symbolic journey to a historical landscape and rediscover their heritage.²⁰³ As mentioned in the third chapter, this point is significant in understanding the reproduction of the myths of space in the historical action/adventure films of the 1950s-1980, a period that witnessed increasing internal migration from rural to urban centers. Therefore, these myths are closely connected to the context in which they are formulated.

No nation exists in a vacuum; it is always attached to a land piece as its 'home.'²⁰⁴ This 'home' could have been lost in the past as in the traumatic impact of the loss of the Balkan lands at the beginning of the 20th century. This 'lost' piece of land did not only hold the hometowns of many prominent late Ottoman/early Republican intellectuals but it was also the most advanced and economically significant section of the empire. This loss created an immense literary stock which included eulogies for the lost 'home.'²⁰⁵ Besides, the 'home' could be a promised land of future,²⁰⁶ such as the 'promised land' of Israel, which is the backbone of Zionist nationalism. The 'home' could also be where the nation was born or reached its great and glorious days, or could gain the potential to do that. For the Turkish History Thesis, the Turkish nation had been born in Central Asia, and that part of the world must be reconquered according to Pan-Turkists. On the other hand, for many nationalists, Anatolia is

²⁰³ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 149; Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths," 34.

²⁰⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 149.

²⁰⁵ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir is one of the late Ottoman/early Republican intellectuals longing for his 'lost home' in *Suyu Arayan Adam* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2015), p. 43. Yahya Kemal is another significant intellectual who has poems permeated with a nostalgia of the loss of the Balkans besides Ottoman glory at the same time: Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Kendi Gök Kubbeimiz* (İstanbul: YKY Yayınları, 2003). For an exploration of nationalist nostalgic constructions of both the Balkans and Anatolia in the late Ottoman period: "Imagining the Homeland: A Late Ottoman Construction of National Identity" in *The New Nationalism in the First World War*, eds. Lawrence Rosenthal and Vesna Rodic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 141-160. Besides, Erik-Jan Zürcher questions whether the predominance of the Balkans in the geographical background of Young Turks had an influence on their worldviews: "The Young Turks-Children of the borderlands?" *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9/1-2 (2003): 275-286; "Macedonians in Anatolia. The Importance of the Macedonian Roots of the Unionists for their Policies in Anatolia after 1914," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 6, (2014): 960-975.

²⁰⁶ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 69.

the ‘home’ where the Turks regained their greatness. Here, drawing on Maier, it could be argued that the land is considered as the source of resources, livelihood, output, energy, and of course, emotions.²⁰⁷ Since the land is believed to be sacred, “Hills and rivers and woods cease to be merely familiar; they become ideological “as sites of shrines, battles, and birthplaces” of the nation, as Fishman puts it.²⁰⁸

At this point, Smith’s term *ethnoscape* could be a convenient tool to describe the mystical affinity of the people for their homeland. According to him, this *ethnoscape* is exalted with secularization and the transfer of awe and reverence from the deity and the church to the location of the shrine and its ancestrally connected worshippers.²⁰⁹ Then, the land piece is consecrated since it is believed to encompass the terrain on which heroic ancestors led the community in the collective realization of its providential destiny and contains the soil they now rest. Smith states, “so, the places where holy men and heroes walked and taught, fought and judged, prayed and died, are felt to be holy themselves; their tombs and monuments become places of veneration and pilgrimage, testifying to the glorious and sacred past of the ethnic community.”²¹⁰ This understanding could be seen in many Yahya Kemal poems, a late Ottoman/early Republican intellectual and diplomat born in Skopje in 1884. For him, the loss of the Balkans also meant the loss of his hometown. Besides, it was the end of an empire, and that, too, very much traumatized Yahya Kemal. Therefore, he frequently remembers the good old days from the 16th century when the Balkan lands had been conquered. For example, in *Mohaç Türküsü (The Song for Mohacs)*, he praises the heroism of Ottoman soldiers in the conquest of Mohacs.²¹¹ Similarly, *Akıncılar (Raiders)* depicts the passage of a thousand heroic raiders from the Danube to defeat a large army.²¹² These references exalt the Balkans as the home of ancestors.

The land’s indivisibility and unity are also significant for nationalists. In fact, the indivisibility of space also means the indivisibility of the nation, which is believed to be

²⁰⁷ Charles S. Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2016), 1-8.

²⁰⁸ Joshua A. Fishman, *Nationality, Nationalism and Nation-Nationism* (Washington, D.C.: ERIC Clearinghouse, 1968), 41 cited in David Lowenthal, “European and English Landscapes as National Symbols” in *Geography and National Identity*, ed. David J. M. Hooson (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 17.

²⁰⁹ Smith, “The ‘sacred’ dimension of nationalism,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29(3), (2000), 807.

²¹⁰ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 153.

²¹¹ “Bizdik o hücumun bütün aşkıyla kanatlı;/ Bizdik o sabah ilk atılan safta yüz atlı/ Uçtuk Mohaç ufkunda görünmek hevesiyle/ Canlandı o meşhur ova at kişnemesiyle! /Fethin daha bir ülkeyi parlattığı gündüz/ Biz uğruna can verdiğimiz yerde görüldü”

²¹² “Bin atlı akınlarda çocuklar gibi şendik/ Bin atlı o gün dev gibi bir orduyu yendik/ Haykırdı, ak tolgalı beylerbeyi “İlerle!” / Bir yaz günü geçtik Tuna'dan kafilelerle”

comparable to a patriarchal family composed of organically linked members,²¹³ including the father, mother, and children. In this picture, ‘we,’ as the members of the same united whole, are believed to be homogeneous and without any political, linguistic, administrative, political, or religious differences.²¹⁴ As a monolithic body, ‘we’ own that homeland, which is also the ‘fatherland;’ the land of fathers where their bones were buried, and also the ‘motherland’ which feeds and consoles ‘us;’ its children.²¹⁵ This argument also establishes a link between fellow members of the nation across generations²¹⁶ while excluding ‘others’ who do not share that common ancestry.²¹⁷ Hence, the message is: “despite the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of social change,” there is a continuity between different generations, which make ‘us’ the descendants of the heroes and sages of the past who are connected through homeland. Then, this land is believed to be the home of heroes and an arena or stage for their enactment of epic actions and achievements.²¹⁸ Therefore, the re-rooting of the community in this land of the fathers and mothers, heroes, and sages may even revive at some point, and the conditions for a new collective to bloom may be recreated²¹⁹ as the members of the nation return to their core ethnic values.²²⁰ Thus, political negotiation over this land is impossible,²²¹ and it is solely that particular nation with legitimate and historic rights on this land.²²² In this context, according to the official paradigm, Anatolia had been an empty space before the arrival of the Turks who migrated from Central Asia. Making the Turks autochthonous inhabitants, this argument obviously erases rival claims on the lands of Anatolia.

The arguments also show that people may relate themselves to their homelands even in modern nation-state settings by adopting a premodern understanding. Here, the contemporary interpretation defines the nation by the sovereign power of the state,²²³ and so, the homeland is an administrative division in accordance with the limits of state sovereignty.²²⁴ This modern and limited space is manifested through maps of the homeland, which are displayed in

²¹³ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 34.

²¹⁴ Raoul Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1986), 146.

²¹⁵ Ladis D. Kristof, “The Image and the Vision of the Fatherland: The Case of Poland in Comparative Perspective” in *Geography and National Identity*, 221-222.

²¹⁶ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 35.

²¹⁷ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 49.

²¹⁸ Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, 1-8.

²¹⁹ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 49-50.

²²⁰ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 52.

²²¹ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 28-29.

²²² Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, 1-8.

²²³ Anne-Laure Anilhat Szary, “Boundaries and Borders” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, eds. John A. Agnew, Virginie Mamadouh, Anna Secor, Joanne Sharp (Oxford: Wiley and Blackwell, 2017), 16.

²²⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 19.

textbooks and public places such as schools, courthouses, police stations, or town halls to impose and strengthen the sense of togetherness within clearly defined borders.²²⁵ As Anderson mentions, the map is “instantly recognizable, everywhere visible, the logo-map penetrated deep into the popular imagination, forming a powerful emblem.”²²⁶ However, based on political and historical contexts, modern maps could even complete premodern imaginings. An interesting example is the “Turkic World Map” that was incorporated into school textbooks by the Turkish Ministry of Education with a decree in 1993. This map minimizes the size of Europe and shows areas in Central Asia populated by Turks. Therefore, instead of clearly demarcated areas, the map has blurred boundaries displaying Turkey and Central Asia as a whole, and therefore not separate for less careful eyes.²²⁷ This kind of representation fitted well into Turkey’s attempt to become the leader of the Turkic world in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Besides, it shows that premodern imaginations could still be alive. At this point, Anderson explains the premodern understanding as follows: “in the older imagining where states were defined by centers, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another. Hence, paradoxically enough, the ease with which premodern empires and kingdoms were able to sustain their rule over immensely heterogeneous, and often not even contiguous, populations for long periods.”²²⁸ As Sack also indicates, in premodern civilizations, the use of territory was by no means precise by modern standards, and “boundaries were never delimited as accurately as they are now.”²²⁹ This understanding could still be employed despite the territorial trap that official maps or textbooks fall into while defining the nation-state’s sovereignty over a limited space.²³⁰ So, although they are attached to a nation-state, some mythmakers could think that these borders may always be shifted outward in the future. In fact, this kind of mentality defines inside and outside again and again,²³¹ and it could add energy to the nation with the idea that the borders might be unclear. Poulantsaz puts, “For to mark out

²²⁵ Cristina Del Biaggio, “Territory beyond the Anglophone Tradition” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, eds. John A. Agnew, Virginie Mamadouh, Anna Secor, Joanne Sharp (Oxford: Wiley and Blackwell, 2017), 38-39; David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow’s Ancestors* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 55; Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths, 29.

²²⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 175.

²²⁷ Bülent Batuman, “The Shape of the Nation: Visual production of nationalism through maps in Turkey,” *Political Geography* (29) (2010): 225.

²²⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 19.

²²⁹ Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 75-76.

²³⁰ John Agnew, “The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory,” *Review of International Political Economy*, 1(1), (1994): 53-80.

²³¹ Anastasia Stouraiti and Alexander Kazamiaz, “The Imaginary Topographies of the Megali Idea: National Territory as Utopia,” in *Spatial Conceptions of the Nation: Modernizing Geographies in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Nikiforos Diamandouros, Thalia Dragonas and Çağlar Keyder (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 14-15.

frontiers involves the possibility of redrawing them: there is no way of advancing in this spatial matrix except...through demarcation of an interior that is always capable of being extended *ad infinitum*.”²³² In fact, here, ‘frontier’ could be a much more useful concept than ‘border.’ As Slotkin puts in his canonical book about how the myth of frontier works in defining American identity, “the frontier is a world theoretically unlimited.”²³³ It is a complex space that is somewhat fluid in which the political authority is not concentrated but diffused. According to Giddens, this idea correlates with the traditional state.²³⁴

Thus, as Kant states in his *What is Enlightenment?*, regime changes may happen; however, the transformation of mentalities is not an automatic process; it does happen slowly.²³⁵ That is to say, the empire might have gone away as a political entity, but the idea of an empire with fluid borders could still live as a mentality and a culture. Therefore, despite the modern understanding of clearly defined borders, people or powerholders may imagine the nation’s boundaries in a much more fluid fashion. This may end up with the conflation of nationalist ideology and visions of empire, which could produce highly ambiguous, fluid, abstract, and indefinite mental maps coexisting with specific, impermeable, and static understanding. Here, the word ‘empire’ indicates a technical and administrative land and a mentality that could be nurtured by imperialist memories that the idea of the nation-state cannot easily and automatically replace. Therefore, national homelands do not exist *a priori*; they are historically and socially produced, as Stouraiti and Kazamias put.²³⁶ Besides, it may continuously create enemies from both outside and inside.²³⁷ Therefore, from that perspective, ‘our’ duty as the autochthonous and legitimate owners of this single and indivisible land is to protect it from disruptions and tearing.²³⁸

1.4.2.2. Temporal Roots of the Nation: the ‘Golden’ Age:

As they constructed themselves a national space, mythmakers also idealize a period during which the nation’s creative genius and distinctive culture are believed to have flowered and revealed. This golden age stands for a great and glorious past, including moments of glory,

²³² Nicos Poulantsaz, *State, Power, Socialism* (London, New York: Verso, 2000), 105.

²³³ Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*, 45.

²³⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, Volume Two of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 50.

²³⁵ Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (1784), <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>

²³⁶ Anastasia Stouraiti and Alexander Kazamias, “The Imaginary Topographies of the Megali Idea: National Territory as Utopia,” (2010), 15-16.

²³⁷ Colin Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 153-154

²³⁸ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 146; Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 29.

purity, and authenticity for the nation.²³⁹ So, it is the period of high cultural achievement, when the nation realized its full potential, represented its best traditions, and made a permanent contribution to human civilization. As Mock states, by quoting Weber, this was when the community asserted its “irreplaceable cultural values,” which made it unique.²⁴⁰ This reference to the golden age legitimizes the nation’s existence by taking it back to time immemorial²⁴¹ and putting forward that this particular nation is God-given and has existed objectively independent of any historical, social, or economic transformations.²⁴² This emphasizes the nation’s antiquity and elevates its status in comparison to other ‘so-called nations.’ From this perspective, since this nation is always there, it is also claimed to constitute the origin of world civilization. At this point, the Turkish History Thesis of the early Republican elite is again a fitting example. According to presentations in the first and second history congresses, organized in line with the Turkish History Thesis, Turks achieved their superiority and established the first civilization in 7000-8000 BC in Central Asia, and once they migrated, they brought civilization to the other parts of the world. This myth, here, takes 7000-8000 BC as the golden age of Turks and attributes Turk’s national antiquity besides national superiority.²⁴³

The emphasis on Central Asia and a distinct period from the 20th century fits well into the early Republican elites’ efforts to erase the Ottoman and Islamic pasts. This example manifests the fact that the golden ages that have been chosen by certain groups serve political interests, and so, powerholders emphasize a rediscovery of the past to obtain political recognition. At this point, the greater and the more glorious that past appears, the easier it becomes to unify and mobilize people around a common culture and political goals.²⁴⁴ In fact, historical messages could be selected, reassessed, and so shaped to serve political and social

²³⁹ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 40.

²⁴⁰ Steven J. Mock, *Symbols of Defeat in the Construction of National Identity* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press: 2012), 26.

²⁴¹ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 48.

²⁴² Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 7-9; Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 48.

²⁴³ Some of these presentations are: Ayşe Afetinan, “Tarihten Suret ve Tarihin Fecrinde” in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi: Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları, Münakaşalar* (İstanbul: TC Maarif Vekaleti, 1933), 18-41; Reşit Galip, “Türk İrk ve Medeniyetine Umumi Bir Bakış,” in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi: Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları, Münakasalar*, 99-161; Hasan Cemil Çambel, “Ege Medeniyetinin Menşesine Umumi Bir Bakış” in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi: Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları, Münakaşalar*, 199- 214; Sadri Maksudi Arsal, “Beşeriyet Tarihinde Devlet ve Hukuk Mefhumu ve Müesseselerinin İnkışafında Türk İrkının Rolü” in *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi: Kongrenin Çalışmaları, Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943), 1062-1093; Eugene Pittard, “Neolitik Devirde Küçük Asya ve Avrupa Arasında Antropolojik Münasebetler” in *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi: Kongrenin Çalışmaları, Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, 65-84. The Thesis was published by the government’s Committee for the Study of Turkish History in 1930: Ayşe Afetinan, Mehmet Tevfik, Samih Rifat, Yusuf Akçura, Reşit Galip, Hasan Cemil, Sadri Maksudi, Semsettin Vasıf and Yusuf Ziya Beyler, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları: Kemalist Yönetimin Resmi Tarih Tezi* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1996).

²⁴⁴ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 39.

needs.²⁴⁵ Besides, there might even be competition among different golden ages and so different visions of the past between different ideological groups.²⁴⁶ For instance, although the official paradigm mentions 7000-8000 BC, for Yahya Kemal, the 15th and 16th centuries, namely the period of ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire, had been the golden age of Turks as it could be understood from his poems mentioned above. A relatively recent example is provided by İbrahim Karagül, the editor-in-chief of the pro-government *Yeni Şafak* (*New Dawn*) newspaper. Following the November 2015 snap parliamentary elections, which resulted in AKP gaining 49.4 per cent of votes (23 million), meaning botha majority and the breaking the record for winning the most votes in any Turkish election,²⁴⁷ Karagül wrote two subsequent articles in which he states that this election symbolizes the beginning of the “Third Golden Age” in Turkish history. The first one, he claims, starts with the defeat of the Crusaders and the establishment of the Seljuks. This, however, was brought to an end by the Mongolian invasions. The Second Golden Age started once the Ottoman Empire was established and ended with the First World War. The proclamation of the Republic, he says, was a transitory stage, and now, with AKP’s victory, the Third Golden Age had started.²⁴⁸ Here, what Karagül says fits nicely into the AKP discourse, and as this example shows, myths are never reproduced independently of the political context.

1.4.3. Myths about the nation’s present: Decline in ‘an empire of darkness’:

Nationalist mythmakers refer to the present as a moment of sadness and decadence compared to the great and glorious days of the past.²⁴⁹ For them, this is a period of decline, which the nation had entered having forgotten its essence and old virtues. As a result the country degenerated, old systems were dissolved,²⁵⁰ and individualism overcame communal solidarity, discipline, and self-sacrifice. Basically, as Rousseau would say, when private will became more important than general will, the nation entered a state of stagnation.²⁵¹ However, this period will only end if the nation protects the purity of its original and unmixed essence concealed under

²⁴⁵ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 57.

²⁴⁶ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 52.

²⁴⁷ For details of the elections and a commentary: Sabri Sayarı, “Back to a predominant party system: The November 2015 Snap Election in Turkey,” *South European Society and Politics*, 21:2 (2016), 263-280.

²⁴⁸ “1 Kasım Üçüncü Altın Çağ’ın Başlangıcıdır,” <https://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/ibrahimkaragul/1-kasim-ucuncu-altin-caguin-balangicidir-2022899>; 9 November 2015; “Büyük oyuncu Geri Dönüyor,” <https://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/ibrahimkaragul/buyuk-oyuncu-geri-donuyor-2022946>; 11 November 2015.

²⁴⁹ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 94.

²⁵⁰ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) cited in Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 67.

²⁵¹ For Rousseau’s concepts of private will and general will, see: Jean Jacques Rousseau, “Book Two” and “Book Four” in *The Social Contract* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63-90, 134-168.

the debris of the ages and is awakened. According to Smith, this is how the nation will revive its great and glorious past, thereby revealing its truly noble nature.²⁵²

This myth about the nation's decline in the present includes an evolutionary perspective that legitimizes change and powerlessness.²⁵³ It creates a mythical order in chaos and leads to the belief that a 'nation' develops from small, original, and pure beginnings in some distant past, flowers in the golden age, and then declines until it experiences a second birth and revives the golden age in the hands of the nationalists. The current situation before awakening is considered the God-given fate of the nation, and, highlighting the moment of fall, invites a sense of continuity with the current age of regeneration.

In this context, the Turkish History Thesis puts forward that the Ottoman Empire gradually entered a period of stagnation in the aftermath of the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent as Turkishness lost its power as the result of the influx of foreign elements and the increasing power of the reactionary ulema. This argument fits perfectly into the de-Ottomanizing/de-Islamizing purposes of the early Republican elite. In fact, in their inescapable ordeal with the Ottoman heritage, the early Republican elite chose the ascendancy period, particularly the reign of Mehmet II, to insert into their nationalist arguments. Thereby, they could celebrate the military power of Turks through the conquest of İstanbul and show that the remedy for the decline of Turkishness was the proclamation of the Republic and westernizing reforms.

1.4.4. Myths about the Nation's Future: Myths of ethnic election & the nation's mission:

The golden age myth works together with the myth of ethnic election in legitimizing the cultural and moral superiority of the nation.²⁵⁴ From the mythmakers' perspective, the heroic nation living on a sacred land has a distinctive culture inherited from its fathers.²⁵⁵ Defining the nation's inner dignity and heroic qualities, this culture enables the nation to revive the golden age. This nation is believed to have been chosen by God²⁵⁶ to perform a special mission in a golden age.²⁵⁷ Within the framework of the Turkish History Thesis, it is stated that since the Turkish nation is superior, it constituted the first civilization and then spread to the other parts

²⁵² Smith, "The 'Golden Age' and National Revival," 49-51.

²⁵³ Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths," 29-33.

²⁵⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 267; Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths," 31.

²⁵⁴ Bruce Cauthen, "The Myth of Divine Election and Afrikaner Ethnogenesis" in *Myths and Nationhood*, 107.

²⁵⁵ Smith, *National Identity*, 50.

²⁵⁶ Smith, "Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15:3, (1992), 441.

²⁵⁷ Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths," 31; Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 69.

of the world as it migrated from Central Asia. In this context, the Turkish nation established all great civilizations, including Chinese, Mesopotamian, Persian, Egyptian, and Anatolian civilizations.²⁵⁸ The mission of the Turkish nation, therefore, is believed to be spreading civilization throughout the world. In this regard, the myth of national mission is reproduced by portraying the Turks as bringers of civilization, and consequently, the architects of a kind of *Pax Turcica*, described as the state of peace and stability in places ruled by Turks.²⁵⁹ From this perspective, Turks conquer because of their mission to bring peace and civilization to the world, which makes them ‘benevolent conquerors.’

Moreover, the golden age and ethnic election myths erect a barrier between the divinely appointed community and others whom God did not favor.²⁶⁰ This idea of ‘being chosen’ is much deeper than ethnocentrism because of an “ideological kinship between religious myths of ethnic election and nationalist ideals of mission and destiny.”²⁶¹ This makes the myth so durable, intense,²⁶² and demanding in creating some moral obligations for the nation. This means the chosen nation must manifest its God-given genius²⁶³ by fulfilling its God-given duties.²⁶⁴ And, since the nation is an organic whole, all members of it are expected to fully participate and complete the tasks required for the nation’s survival.²⁶⁵ Those who ‘do not participate’ are believed to be ‘internal others,’ ‘the enemies within,’ ‘enemies of the state,’ or the ‘disloyal’ ones who are not faithful to fathers of the nation. In contrast, those who fulfil their duties are considered to be proper and loyal citizens of the nation. It is assumed that once the loyal nationals participate in fulfilling duties, the nation will regenerate and return to its great and glorious days.²⁶⁶

According to Smith, the myth of ethnic election helps the survival of *ethnies* and their mobilization in four ways. The first is the imperial-dynastic argument, which pairs the idea of chosenness with the monarch and the royal family. Here, the dynasty or the monarch is

²⁵⁸ “Beşeriyetin en yüksek ve ilk medeni kavmi, vatanı Altaylar ve Orta Asya olan Türklerdir. Çin medeniyetinin esasını kuran Türklerdir. Mezopotamya’da İran’da milattan en aşağı 7000 sene evvel beşeriyetin ilk medeniyetini kuran ve beşeriyete ilk tarih devrini açan; Sümer, Akat ve Alam isimleri verilmekte olan Türklerdir. Mısır’da deltanın otokton sakinleri ve Mısır medeniyetinin kurucusu olan Türklerdir.” Uluğ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973), 68-69.

²⁵⁹ For *Pax Ottomana*, see: Rhoads Murphey, “Bigots or Indormed Observers? A Periodization of Pre-Colonial English and European Writing on the Middle East,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 110 (2), (1990): 291-303.

²⁶⁰ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 49.

²⁶¹ Smith, “Ethnic Election and National Destiny: Some Religious Origins of Nationalist Ideals,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 5(3), (1999): 335.

²⁶² Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 67.

²⁶³ Smith, *National Identity*, 64.

²⁶⁴ Smith, “Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive,” 441.

²⁶⁵ Smith, “Ethnic Election and National Destiny: Some Religious Origins of Nationalist Ideals,” 334-339.

²⁶⁶ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” 50-51.

considered divinely chosen, so does the community with the transmission of that feature.²⁶⁷ As a result, royalty provides the nationals with the necessary national symbols and culture.²⁶⁸ The second pattern of Smith is the communal-demotic pattern in which the people is considered as the source chosenness with its mission and culture in its own homeland.²⁶⁹ It is argued that the members of the *ethnie* are the rightful owners of that land, and theirs is the autochthonous culture.²⁷⁰ This argument idealizes popular revolt and active defense of heritage instead of passive endurance.²⁷¹ The third pattern of Smith is the emigrant-colonist pattern that attaches the myth of election to an immigrant people, which is destined to establish a new moral order in the middle of the wilderness, or at least in an unfamiliar territory to which the deity has sent them. The community here is a settler community and has a mission. Therefore, it carries its values, memories, and traditions to form a new society in a new land. The fourth and final pattern is diaspora-restoration, which includes a nostalgia for an abandoned or lost homeland from which the community originated in the distant past. The community here is again chosen, and its first mission is to return to its ancestral land,²⁷² physically and spiritually.²⁷³ In emigrant and diaspora patterns, people ‘wander.’ For the first, people wander and try to migrate to the promised land destined to be theirs. For the second, people wander with nostalgia and burn with a desire to recover the original homeland, which ‘belongs’ to the divinely appointed community. All in all, there is an elected community consisting of ‘righteous warriors under their redeemer princes’ or ‘protective leaders’ and ‘faithful caliphs’²⁷⁴ who will battle for fulfilling the nation’s mission. Thanks to them, the nation realizes its dreams of returning to land, conquering a new land, or protecting the existing homeland and the dynasty.

Therefore, the myth of ethnic election can provide solidarity within the community and mobilize them, as Cauthen maintains. When the cause of a people is conceived to be God’s will, the community is infused with a powerful sense of purpose beyond the more mundane considerations of socio-political organization.²⁷⁵ Bassin also states that the conviction of possessing the only true faith and a higher morality and civilization can inspire some groups,

²⁶⁷ Smith, “Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive,” 446-447.

²⁶⁸ Smith, “Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive,” 446.

²⁶⁹ Smith, “Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive,” 447.

²⁷⁰ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 136.

²⁷¹ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 138.

²⁷² Smith, “Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive,” 448.

²⁷³ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 137.

²⁷⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 138.

²⁷⁵ Bruce Cauthen, “Covenant and Continuity: Ethno-symbolism and the Myth of Divine Election,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 10 (1/2), (2004): 20.

invite them to expansion as missionary movements or imperialist drives.²⁷⁶ In fact, nationalists attach the myth of ethnic election to other ideas in that particular community's ideological climate. Specifically, they make today's conflicts much more understandable as they refer to what had been accumulated in people's minds. For example, the idea of 'chosenness' could be connected with the 19th-century imperialist ideology. Kipling's 'the white man's burden' concept, which emphasizes the chosen community's mission to carry out civilization to supposedly inferior and backward people, could be one of the inspiring sources of nationalist mythmakers even today. Smith adds that historically, such myths have provided an irresistible stimulus for territorial enlargement, mass insurrection, collective translocation, and struggles for the communal recovery of the lost homeland.²⁷⁷ Therefore, the myth here legitimates assimilation²⁷⁸ and conquest of those 'who live in darkness'²⁷⁹ in a genuinely Darwinist manner.

Furthermore, what the ages put in collective memory is a valuable inspiration for mythmakers. For example, when President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that the EU was a fundamentally Crusader Alliance in April 2017, it became easier for the Turks to comprehend and tell the story of Turkey's EU adventure.²⁸⁰ In fact, these medieval concepts of crusaders, infidels, *ghazis*, conquistadors, or *mujahids*, which have already been instilled in the memories of ages, could make today's conflicts much more understandable by today's minds since they present readily available formulas to the community. These formulas, essentially myths, complete the puzzle in people's minds and help them to define and explain what is happening easily. Thus, for the Turkish/Muslim context, the idea of 'chosenness' also resonates with the Islamic concept of *jiḥād*—the righteous, just war against infidels, and the premodern *ghaza*—holy war or raid. In this picture, *Mujahids* and *ghazis* fight in the name of Islam, and as the members of that chosen community, they defend the Caliph or the Sultan and conquer new lands.²⁸¹ Within this framework, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's *Ghazi* title bestowed him in 1921 means God's righteous warrior and destroyer of infidels. This legitimizes him once again and makes him not a secular warrior but a religious one. This fits perfectly into the next category of myths, which are concerned with what should be done for the nation to realize its mission.

²⁷⁶ Mark Bassin, "Russian Geographers and the 'National Mission' in the Far East" in *Geography and National Identity*, 113.

²⁷⁷ Smith, "Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive," 448.

²⁷⁸ Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths," 32.

²⁷⁹ Smith, "Chosen peoples: Why ethnic groups survive," 446.

²⁸⁰ "EU not accepting Turkey because bloc is a 'crusader alliance' listening to Pope-Erdogan," <https://www.rt.com/news/383160-eu-erdogan-crusader-alliance/>

²⁸¹ Ali Anooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam: A Comparative Study of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 143-144.

1.4.5. Myths explaining how to realize the mission:

1.4.5.1. The Warrior Nation and Its Heroes:

In fulfilling its civilizing mission as ‘benevolent conquerors,’ the nation is expected to perform military deeds because it is assumed to be a warrior nation divinely elected to manifest collective heroism. In this regard, the Turkish nation is a warrior-nation, and “all Turks are born as soldiers” with the ability to fight.²⁸² Therefore, it is not only soldiers in the military, but all members of the nation are also supposed to fulfill their duties for the nation’s, and by extension, the family’s survival. Therefore, within this context, the nation’s heroes are its role models²⁸³ with their bravery and patriotism.²⁸⁴ As Smith states, heroes mirror the best of the community’s traditions, its authentic voice in the moment of its first flowering. They represent courage, wisdom, self-sacrifice, and zeal, which are believed to be lacking in the present generation.²⁸⁵ Thus, all the heroes mentioned in that dissertation are basically the reproductions of this myth, so they are all heroes of the Turkish warrior nation.

In nationalist minds, the heroic deeds are all “reserved for the masculine,” as Silva notes.²⁸⁶ As embodiments of the nation, men are expected to protect and save the homeland, women, and children.²⁸⁷ On this matter, Enloe puts forward an interesting argument. Specifically, she says, “nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope.”²⁸⁸ It is ‘manly-men’ who are active agents in the formation and maintenance of the nation. So, in fact, masculinity is intimately linked to militarism, “yet the two sets of ideas are not inseparable.”²⁸⁹

Men, however, do not automatically become heroes, and first, they need to pass the tests of masculinity.²⁹⁰ In this context, war is a significant opportunity for men to accomplish and

²⁸² Suavi Aydın, “Toplumun Militarizasyonu: Zorunlu Askerlik Sisteminin ve Ulusal Orduların Yurttaş Yaratma Sürecindeki Rolü, in *Çarklardaki Kum*, eds. Özgür H. Çınar and Coşkun Üsterci, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 25-48; Ayşe Gül Altınay and Tanıl Bora, “Ordu, Militarizm ve Milliyetçilik” in *Modern Türkiyede Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 140-154.

²⁸³ John Hutchinson, “Myth against myth: the nation as ethnic overlay,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 10 (1/2), (2004), 112.

²⁸⁴ Joane Nagel, “Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21:2, (1998), 242-269.

²⁸⁵ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 66.

²⁸⁶ Neluka Silva, “Introduction” in Part I in *Feminists Under Fire: Exchanges across War Zones*, eds. Wenona Giles, Malathi de Alwis, Edith Klein, Neluka Silva (coeditors) with Maja Korac, Djurdja Knezevic, Zarana Papicc (advisory editors), (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 37.

²⁸⁷ Sylvia Walby, “Woman and Nation” in *Mapping the Nation* (1999), 235-254.

²⁸⁸ Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2000), 45.

²⁸⁹ Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives*, 235.

²⁹⁰ Karen Hagemann, “German heroes: the cult of the death for the fatherland in nineteenth-century Germany” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, eds. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 128; Nagel, “Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations,” 244

manifest their manhood. Von Bernhardt says the beauty of war strips man from his primordial instincts so that it enables men to discover their true nature as warriors.²⁹¹ This true noble nature is nurtured by heroism, death, and sacrifice for a higher purpose in life.²⁹² Individuality vanishes as men take part in this collective heroism²⁹³ and become real men. Besides, since men are considered the embodiment of the nation and its ideals and hopes,²⁹⁴ their bodily power is also essential. The fit, well-sculpted and healthy body means “manly courage,” “manly spirit,”²⁹⁵ character, and discipline.²⁹⁶ This is also interpreted as a sign of the nation’s beauty, power, and moral worth. In this context, the Turkish heroes in historical action/adventure films are all very athletic and have excellent fighting skills. Despite that, they are never muscular men with extraordinary bodily features; instead, they are all ordinary men. This could be because of technical difficulties such as the lack of special effects or the audiences’ demands for certain actors. Regardless of the reason, these Turkish men were able to motivate the common man along with nationalist goals who attached themselves to the heroes they saw in films.

Furthermore, in the Turkish nationalist imagination, the references to different types of warriorship could be reinforcing the warrior-nation myth. These could be *eşkiya* (bandit), *kabadayı* (bravado), and *ghazi*. According to Hobsbawm, banditry must be taken in relation to the history of political power and control because “banditry as a mass phenomenon, that is to say, independent action by groups of men of violence and arms, occurred only where power was unstable, absent or had broken down.”²⁹⁷ For Braudel, banditry is a Mediterranean phenomenon,²⁹⁸ whereas Hobsbawm extends his analysis to several territories, including the Balkans and the Far East. This shows that banditry is not specific to the Turkish context but exists in peasant societies when the control of political power is absent in mountain areas or the remote countryside, particularly in periods of poverty and economic crisis. Nevertheless, banditry occupies a significant place in Turkish cultural history as a nostalgic ideal type of masculinity. In this context, bandits are considered brave and fair heroes who are strong enough to challenge the governing authority’s power and even put their lives in danger, if necessary, to

²⁹¹ Friedrich von Bernhardt, “Chapter I: The Right to Make War,” *Germany and the Next War*, (trans.) Allen H. Powles, (New York: C.A. Eron, 1914), 16-37.

²⁹² George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51-52.

²⁹³ Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myths and a Taxonomy of Myths,” 32.

²⁹⁴ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 53.

²⁹⁵ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 40-41.

²⁹⁶ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 162.

²⁹⁷ Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 8.

²⁹⁸ See: Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. I (trans. Sian Reynolds), (New York, Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972).

rescue and protect the poor.²⁹⁹ In fact, Ottoman bandits emerged in the 17th century as a response to high taxes, extended military duty, and poverty. Interestingly, although bandits have challenged the state authority, their control over communities has been recognized by the state at some point, and they were also employed by political authorities when needed as armed and paramilitary forces during the Late Ottoman period and the National Struggle.³⁰⁰ Therefore, bandits also emerge as a form of idealized masculinity in Turkish political culture.

The bravado, however, can be considered as the urban form of warriorship. Kandiyoti describes it in the following terms: “The figure of the Ottoman patrician had his popular counterpart in the *kabadayı* (literally tough uncle, meaning a neighborhood tough).”³⁰¹ *Kabadayı* is like premodern chivalry in an urban setting protecting his district’s honor and women as the guarantor of traditions, unlike *mon-chers*, a term that some mythmakers use to describe westernized intellectual and political elites. Those *mon-chers* are believed to have lost their national essence and therefore are not perceived as idealized heroes, but instead, effete snobs living far from the nation. Therefore, *kabadayı* is the ideal manly hero with local and national qualities, whereas *mon-chers* are western and feminine.

Besides, Mosse states, the ideal hero has the spirit of adventure, which led to the exploration of new lands, the creation and maintenance of empires, and enlistment in the armed forces.³⁰² He is active, unlike *mon-chers*, and always fights for fulfilling the nation’s mission. Therefore, according to mythmakers, the hero must be free from social norms and bureaucratic procedures.³⁰³ They must be alone to serve better and cannot make friends other than their male comrades. In this context, male comradeship, which emerges irrespective of social classes, is significant as providing the foundation of both the nation and the state independently of heterogeneities.³⁰⁴ Other than male comrades, heroes do not need to have a home and wife. The homeland is man’s home, and the motherland is his accompany nurturing and consoling him in his service to the nation and the state. Therefore, the ideal hero does not live at the center, which may lead to passivity, laziness, and cowards. Rather, he must always be at the frontiers doing what the leader directly commanded him to do. Thus, the *ghazi*, *akıncı* (raider), or frontiersmen

²⁹⁹ Sabri Yetkin, *Ege’de Eşküyalar* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003).

³⁰⁰ Karen Barkey, “The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century” and “State-Bandit Relations: A Blueprint for State Centralization,” *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 48-54, 189-228.

³⁰¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, “Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity”. In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan, and Reşat Kasaba (Washington D.C.: University of Washington Press, 1997), 121-122.

³⁰² Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 113.

³⁰³ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 110-111.

³⁰⁴ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 161.

perfectly fit into that picture of idealized Turkish masculinity. These raiders are connected to the central state but continue their lives far from the center and free from local authorities. They act independently, but this does not make them rebellious since they receive commands directly from the leader. They live in a frontier zone, and that zone is the world between savages and civilized world, or believers and infidels. The frontier here is not a clearly defined line, it is a zone that is expected to be 'enlarged' by ideal heroes. And there are the others either in or out of frontiers.

1.4.5.2. The Leader/The State:

Since men have first-class citizenship in the world of nationalist mythmakers, the idealized national leader is unquestionably a man. Therefore, the myth about the idealized leader is shaped around the glorification of the relationship between nation, state, and manhood. Smith and Schweitzer state the leader's duties as follows: to protect his nation, provide welfare, offer solutions for problems, guarantee the nation's survival by preserving the state, lead the nation in fulfilling its mission and revive the golden age.³⁰⁵ In Girardet's analysis of myths, the leader is the Savior and is believed to be the architect of the restoration, an enabler of metamorphosis in a time of perceived decadence and crisis of legitimacy.³⁰⁶ So, he is the leader, ruler, patron, Sultan, or King, and all power is attributed to him.

Drawing on what a nation needs at a particular time, Girardet puts forward four types of leaders³⁰⁷ and consequently provides some powerful theoretical tools for analyzing the images of leaders in Turkish political culture, as reflected in historical action/adventure films. The first archetype is Alexander, who is the heroic, Bonapartist conqueror creating his glory through great deeds. He is assumed to be a warrior hero, the conqueror, a young man of action who builds legitimacy with immediate action and is idealized with a sword in his hand. He conquers new places and fights for the unity of the government and the governed at the same time. This type is similar to the courageous warlord worshipped by his daring followers due to his conquests.³⁰⁸ In this context, the wartime Atatürk, with his military victories and commandship, is the most prominent example of the Alexander type. Moreover, although he did not participate in a real war, Turkey's current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could be inserted into that category if one looks through his followers' lenses. His aggressive conduct in

³⁰⁵ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 194; Arthur Schweitzer, "Theory and Political Charisma," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.16, Issue: 2, (March 1974): 150-181.

³⁰⁶ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 68.

³⁰⁷ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 63-95.

³⁰⁸ Schweitzer, "Theory and Political Charisma," 152.

politics and his behavior in several cases, such as the One Minute Incident in which he clashed with the Israeli president over Gaza in Davos in 2009,³⁰⁹ fostered an image of a ‘tough guy’ with courage, strength, and self-confidence. This masculine image is reinforced with Erdoğan’s background of centered on being from *Kasımpaşa*, a lower-class conservative district of İstanbul giving him an image of *kabadayı* (tough guy) so basically ‘the boy of our district,’ ‘street boy,’ and ‘the protector of our district’ as opposed to Western-oriented as *mon-chers*. This image is, of course, polished by his past as a football player and his graduation from *imam hatip lisesi* (religious vocational high school) and *Ticari İlimler Akademisi* (The Academy of Commercial Sciences).³¹⁰ All these, together with his aggressiveness, have made him the Alexander of the Turkish political Islam of the late 20th century. The idealized national warriors represented in nationalist action/adventure films analyzed in the final chapter could be taken as the extensions of the Alexander type of leader. These warriors are loyal companies of idealized conquerors with their courage, bravery, youth, heroism, and responsiveness.

The second archetype for Girardet is Cincinnatus, the wise and old man who is believed to bring “the gravitas and wisdom” of his old and respectable age. At this point, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, another Islamist and the joint candidate of the CHP and MHP in the 2014 presidential elections against Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is a suitable example. Having no political background, İhsanoğlu was a university professor and former Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). During the time of his candidacy, he was 71-year-old. He was promoted as the ‘wise man’ and “silent power” rising instead of rage and anger in election propaganda,³¹¹ resembling the Cincinnatus type in Girardet’s categorization.

The third archetype is Solon, the legislator, who founds new institutional order, who is the lawmaker, and the final one is Moses, the prophetic leader, who is believed to be good, brave, just, and visionary. He has a kind of sacred force, and as a preacher, he uses it and keeps his people together to make them reach salvation.³¹² As manifested in the following chapters, in Turkish nationalist action/adventure films, the leadership myth is mostly reproduced as the Bonapartist type in addition to some cases of the Cincinnatus type. Therefore, most of the protagonists are active conquerors, and several others are wise and older men. This is not surprising given the fact that action/adventure films are all about wars and conquests. In fact,

³⁰⁹ Recep Erdogan storms out of Davos after clash with Israeli president over Gaza, (30 January 2009).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-gaza-davos>

³¹⁰ For his biography: <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/receptayyiperdogan/biography/>

³¹¹ Selim Türsen, “Sakin güç, öfkeye karşı,” *Hürriyet*, 23 July 2014
[https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/selim-tursen/sakin-guc-ofkeye-karsi-26863630?nomobile=true,](https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/selim-tursen/sakin-guc-ofkeye-karsi-26863630?nomobile=true)

³¹² Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 63-95.

which type of leader comes to the fore represents a particular state of mind,³¹³ which cannot be taken independently of the political context, as mentioned in the following chapters.

Moreover, Weber's characterization of charismatic authority also provides powerful theoretical tools. Weber indicates that charisma is based on people's collective perception that a given individual is extraordinary and worthy of leading.³¹⁴ Therefore, for nationalist mythmakers, the one who 'saves' the nation is the charismatic hero who is believed to be divinely gifted and possesses certain extraordinary capacities. He is "set apart from ordinary men and...treated as endowed with...exceptional powers and qualities...(which) are not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary."³¹⁵ Atatürk, as the 'Father of Turks,' is one of the leaders of that kind, thanks to his compelling vision that transformed Turkey. Currently, many studies are attributing the quality of charismatic leadership to Erdoğan. His powerful personality and ability to effectively address his constituents' emotions are shown as main indications of his charisma.³¹⁶ Consequently, irrespective of whether he is the foundational leader or acquired political power with elections, this leader model is taken differently from those considered 'ordinary' because their legitimacy derives from traditional or rational-legal sources of authority. Therefore, the leader is not a traditional one who inherits power from a dynasty or an 'appointed' officeholder. In fact, charisma "knows no formal and regulated appointment or dismissal, no career, advancement, or salary, no supervisory or appeals body, no local or purely technical jurisdiction, and no permanent institutions in the manner of bureaucratic agencies."³¹⁷ In this vein, the idealized charismatic leader is one with exceptional qualities that make him omnipotent and free of any dynastic or bureaucratic structure.

Thus, the myth of the leader in Turkish political culture rests on understanding the leader as an active agent and Father of the nation. In this framework, the nation is assumed to be a patriarchal family in which the land is the motherland, that is the life-giver, and the people are

³¹³ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 63-95.

³¹⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978), 1111-1112.

³¹⁵ Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (trans.) A.R. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (Edinburgh: Hodge, 1947), 329.

³¹⁶ Some of these studies are: Ayşe Amine Tuğ Kızıltoprak, 'Türk Siyasetinde Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Karizmatik Liderliği,' *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Yıl: 5, Sayı: 30, (Kasım 2018): 613-638; Raquel dos Santos and Isabel Estrada Carvalhais, 'Understanding Erdoğan's Leadership in the New Turkey,' *Janus.Net: E-Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (May-October 2018): 88-102.

³¹⁷ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978), 1112.

children directly connected to their Father.³¹⁸ The duty of the nation is to be loyal to the Father in return for his protection. So, it is the nation's responsibility to do whatever the Father asks. More significantly, as a warrior nation, the members should be ready to fight for the leader when needed. Therefore, what is expected from idealized nationals is to be loyal warriors or guardians of the leader/nation. In fact, as Girardet notes, to recognize and submit oneself to the Father's authority enables the individual to rediscover himself.³¹⁹ As the individual loses himself in the leader, he renounces his personal interests and fuses in collective identity."³²⁰ This is some noble stage where nationals give up their individual will at the expense of the nation's interests. Besides, this is the only way through which the nationals can realize their manhood. Here, serving the nation means serving the family, and since the Father is the paternal authority, his interests are the family's, and hence the nation's, interests. Therefore, the Father is the nation's only representative and, in fact, the nation's incarnation.

Moreover, the Father-leader-nation is also the embodiment of the state because it is the state which, like a Father, protects people and provides them sources.³²¹ In this context, nation and state go hand in hand and are incarnated in the national leader's body. Consequently, for the mythmaker, the state is not an institution but a sacred and metaphysical entity as well as the symbol of being potent and powerful.³²² Since the nation is a family,³²³ the state is a physical and spiritual provider for the family and has the power of rewarding and punishing.³²⁴ Cassirer argues that this fusion of nation, state, and leader is the heritage of the period before the enlightenment.³²⁵ In the same vein, Heper refers to the legacy of the patrimonial monarchy in the form of the image of the Father State (*Devlet Baba*).³²⁶ This understanding, which is inherent in Ottoman-Turkish political culture,³²⁷ idealizes the leader/Sultan as the one who is

³¹⁸ Carol Delaney, "Father State, Motherland, and the Birth of Modern Turkey" in *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, eds. Sylvia Yaganisako and Carol Delaney (New York, London: Routledge, 1995), 177-179.

³¹⁹ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 95.

³²⁰ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 76.

³²¹ Şükrü Arğın, "Türk Aydınımın Devlet Aşkı ve Aşkın Devlet Anlayışı" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, ed. Ömer Laçiner (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 84-86.

³²² Ömer Laçiner, "Türk Toplumunun Devleti," *Birikim*, Sayı: 93-94, (Ocak/Şubat 1997): 18-25.

³²³ Fethi Açıkel, "Devletin Manevi Şahsiyeti ve Ulusun Pedagojisi," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Vol. 4: Milliyetçilik*, 133.

³²⁴ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: Eothen Press, 1985), 102-103; Delaney, "Father State, Motherland, and the Birth of Modern Turkey."

³²⁵ Tanıl Bora, "Milli Tarih ve Devlet Mitosu," *Medeniyet Kaybı: Milliyetçilik ve Faşizm Üzerine Yazılar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 43.

³²⁶ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 103.

³²⁷ Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, "Officers: Westernization and Democracy" in *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities*, eds. Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü, and Heinz Kramer (London and New York: IB Tauris, 1993), 24.

perceived to have the grace or the divine mandate to rule. This point, here, could be understood concerning the idea of *kut*. Tezcan states, in the Ottoman Empire, acquiring the throne or basically the political power required a victory to be gained at a fatal competition. It was this ordeal that determined the one who had the grace *-kut-* among Ottoman princes. İnalçık traces this divine mandate to Central Asia, where Turkish rulers would attribute their position to divine grace and their personal *kut*, which could be translated as “auspiciousness, fortune, luck, and felicity.”³²⁸ Tezcan also mentions that the Arabic word *dawla*, which is related to change and rotation, was later transformed to have the meaning of “state.” Thus, in that context, the *devlet* of a certain Ottoman prince was both his fortune and his turn in political power. If he did not have *devlet* in the sense of fortune, he would not have his turn in power either. Consequently, , princes tested each other’s fortunes or *devlet* in fratricidal struggles. The one who succeeded was believed to have God-given qualities and so took control of the state.³²⁹ This means that the idealized leader in Ottoman-Turkish political culture is the one who has this *devlet*, and if he acquires political authority, that means it is God’s will that is being fulfilled.

In this regard, one can mention a continuity in political culture through the 1950s and 1970s in the framing of the relationship between state and society around three notions based upon an omnipotent state and citizens with duties. *Ülkücüye Notlar (Notes for the Idealist)*, a reference book for the extreme rightists of the 1970s, describes the state as a merciful one that looks after its citizens.³³⁰ For one group of the leftists of the late 1960s, primarily Mehmet Ali Aybar, the chair of the Turkish Labor Party (TİP), however, the state is a tyrannical/authoritarian/despotic (*ceberrut devlet*) one that suppresses its citizens with all the coercive means it owns through those holding political power.³³¹ Another group led by Sencer Divitçioğlu and Kemal Tahir, who can broadly be described as Marxists, find the previous understanding relatively shallow and argue that that state is a gracious one (*kerim devlet*) that protects and feeds its people. Their main goal is to explain the underdevelopment of the Turkish Republic concerning its Ottoman past. They argue that the lack of private land ownership created a society that is impossible to define by adopting Western concepts such as class

³²⁸ Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlılar’da Saltanat Veraseti Usulü ve Türk Hakimiyet Telakkisiyle İlgisi,” *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 14(1), (1959): 69-94.

³²⁹ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 60.

³³⁰ Necdet Sevinç, *Ülkücüye Notlar* (İstanbul: Dede Korkut Yayınları, 1977), cited in Tanıl Bora, “Türkiye’de Faşist İdeoloji ‘Hürriyet Değil Faşizm Gibi Bir İdare İstiyoruz’” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, 358.

³³¹ Zerrin Kurtuluş, “Devlet Akli ve Toplumsal Muhayyile Arasında Din ve Siyaset” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, 629; Mehmet Ali Aybar, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi Tarihi, Vol. 1*, (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1988), 65, cited in Sevgi Adak and Ömer Turan, “Mehmet Ali Aybar” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, 151.

struggle. Instead, the state, as the owner of everything, “enlightens” and “advances” (*ihya edici devlet*) in addition to promoting justice.³³²

Thus, depending on the three notions of the state which have dominated the Turkish political culture, it could be said that having the state power or holding the means of the state is significant for different ideological lines. The peculiarity here is that although these understandings seem to convey the idea that the state is central and powerful, the underlying message that they give centers on the powerlessness or arbitrariness of the state at the same time. That is to say, the state is significant, but it must be owned by the true powerholders. Otherwise, it will be ruined under attacks by both external and internal enemies. Consequently, the state needs to be protected from falling into the wrong hands, which threaten its indivisibility and security. Here one point to note is that in the process of formation of Turkish nationalism and modernization, one of the most dominant political issues for the late Ottoman elite was ‘saving the state’ as a response to the crisis of legitimacy, and mainly because of the rising nationalist movements within the Empire. Therefore, ‘saving the state’ hence the nation, the leader, and the family has always been the central tenet of Turkish political culture. Consequently, the protagonists of nationalist action/adventure films, who could be taken as the idealized versions of loyal warriors, all have this cumbersome burden of saving and protecting the state, nation, family, and, of course, the leader from those “enemies of the state”³³³ who could be both inside and outside of the homeland.

1.4.5.3. The ‘Others:’

Discovering the moment of fall requires an understanding of who could be blamed because of the present decline, which brings the myths related to ‘others’ to the scene. Girardet’s myth of conspiracy is significant here. According to this, the nation is encircled by evil forces or enemies which tried and still try to destroy the nation’s value, unity, and mission. This is the point where mythmakers depict an epic confrontation between the forces of good as ‘us’ and the forces of evil as ‘them.’ In this confrontation, the evil opposes the light of the common people with its wish to establish what Girardet calls, ‘an empire of darkness.’ This ‘other’ could be an enemy within, who have made some secret pact with the enemy. They could also be disguising themselves as Trojan horses, or foreign agents or spies who might be infiltrating ‘our’ homeland.³³⁴ Moreover, it is not always that easy to identify evil forces because they could be

³³² Sencer Divitçioğlu, *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1967).

³³³ Tanıl Bora, “İnşa Döneminde Türk Kimliği,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, No. 71, (Winter 1996): 168-194.

³³⁴ Girardet, *Mythes et mythologies politiques*, 151.

hiding themselves in their cause of exerting political influence to manipulate the world order, and to corrupt and pervert traditions and moral values. Here, with this emphasis on external and internal enemies, responsibility for the present decline is placed not inside, but outside the nation.³³⁵ Thus, the nation is motivated, united, and mobilized for the common goal of eliminating threats against fulfilling its mission.

Furthermore, the others also serve to describe the qualities of the hero as being his opposites. Physical ugliness and formlessness are significant characteristics of the ‘others.’ Since the person is the nation’s embodiment, his ugliness means the ugliness of his nationhood. Besides, according to mythmakers, disordered outward appearance signals an impure mind which lacks control over the passions.³³⁶ Such others could not have honor, which is regarded as an integral part of manhood. In that context, the ‘dishonorable others’ are thought to have different bodily structures projecting their ugliness than standard manly looks.³³⁷ In this context, the ‘others’ in Turkish action/adventure films comfortably fit into that picture. As will be discussed in the following chapters, they mostly have the appearance of ugly barbarians. If they are physically powerful, they are also uncontrollable and so dangerous.³³⁸ There are also cases in which the ruler of the other is portrayed as effeminate,³³⁹ which humiliates the other.

Although the nation is imagined as indivisible, women are not considered proper citizens in nationalist myths. They cannot be naturally noble, as Bourdieu puts in his *Masculine Domination*.³⁴⁰ Therefore, women are not capable of conquering new places or commanding armies, unlike men. In the nation, which is imagined as a family,³⁴¹ the male is the head, and women exist only in relation to men as their mothers, sisters, daughters, or wives, rather than real agents.³⁴² As weak and passive objects, the only thing women can and must do is to discharge their natural duty of giving birth.³⁴³ “This perceived difference between men and

³³⁵ Simon Murphy, “Northern Ireland: The Unionists” in *Contemporary Minority Nationalism*, ed. Michael Watson, (London: Routledge, 2013), 59-60.

³³⁶ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 59.

³³⁷ Mosse *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 63.

³³⁸ Mosse *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* 65.

³³⁹ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* 66.

³⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 56-63.

³⁴¹ Anne McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven: Women and Nationalism in South Africa,” *Transition*, no. 51, (1991): 104-123; “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review*, No: 44, (Summer 1993), 63-65; Julie Skurski, “The Ambiguities of Authenticity in Latin America: Dona Barbara and the Construction of National Identity,” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Loci of Enunciation and Imaginary Constructions: The Case of (Latin) America, I (Winter, 1994): 605-642.

³⁴² McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” 63-65; Claudia Koonz, “Introduction: Love and Order in the Third Reich,” *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2013), 3-17.

³⁴³ Floya Anthias, “Introduction” in *Woman-Nation-State*, eds. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 7-8.

women helps to boost the ideal of masculinity. Man uses women to become conscious of his masculinity.³⁴⁴ Besides, in general, a woman is believed to deviate the hero from his way; therefore, the warrior man must be away from women to fulfill his duties.³⁴⁵ This could be why many Turkish heroes in historical action/adventure films do not prefer to establish a family, as discussed in the following chapters.

When women exist on the battlefield, they are mostly the victims of sexual aggression or exploitation. According to Mosse, they are raped by the other's men or sometimes sacrifice themselves as "battlefield nurses."³⁴⁶ Here, 'our' women's shame is considered the family's, and hence the nation's, shame.³⁴⁷ Therefore, the image of rape here does not only show how evil the other is, but it also indicates how man must perceive war and conquest. In other words, since these 'others' rape or penetrate 'our' women, and so 'our' motherland, the same methods could be legitimate. Besides, women of the others are mostly depicted as seductive, "sexually promiscuous and available" *femme fatales*.³⁴⁸ This makes them potential, legitimate candidates for rape.³⁴⁹ Interestingly, despite that representation, no single Turkish hero rapes the others' women in nationalist action/adventure films, although many Turkish women are raped and tortured by the enemies. This representation could be related to the filmmakers' attempt to show Turks as a civilized nation as opposed to the barbarian others.

1.5. Political Myths as Tools of Everyday Life, Popular Nationalism, and Popular Culture:

Given that a nation is an imagined community, as Anderson claims, we must clarify that imagining is a dynamic process with the discourses and practices of the political elites as official/formal nationalism on the one hand and the memories and discourses of the masses as popular/informal nationalism on the other. These two spheres are always in dialogue; they constantly confront and shape each other.³⁵⁰ At this point, Özkırmılı states that there is a

³⁴⁴ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 74.

³⁴⁵ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 109.

³⁴⁶ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 127-128.

³⁴⁷ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 109.

³⁴⁸ Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, 74.

³⁴⁹ See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2013); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014); Enloe, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993); Sandra Pollack Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the US Military in Asia* (New York: New Press, 1992).

³⁵⁰ Wolfgang Kaschuba, "Popular Culture and Workers' Culture as Symbolic Orders: Comments on the Debate about the History of Culture and Everyday Life" in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 174.

competition between the popular and the official sphere, and this does not necessarily indicate a mutual exclusiveness. Instead, there is an organic link through which they transform each other. Therefore, what comes out of this transformation reveals different visions and manifestations of national identity by challenging non-dynamic monolithic discourses. As a result, the dividing line between high/formal/official/state-mediated and low/informal/unofficial/rebellious becomes blurred. And here emerges the realm of everyday life through which continuous negotiations, consents, and contestations about which tales/myths to adopt could be observed.³⁵¹ In this regard, the nationalist action/adventure films that take place in historical settings constitute a significant realm of everyday life through which the continuous and dynamic nature of Turkish nationalism is observed. Therefore, a thorough analysis of Turkish nationalism would require not only an exploration of elite manipulations or resistance by the masses but also an entire discussion of this realm of intersection, which is cinema, for the purposes of this dissertation.

In his noteworthy book titled *Banal Nationalism*, Billig calls myths, symbols, and other practices in the realm of everyday life ‘forgotten reminders’ of national identity. Criticizing the comprehension of national identity always together with “triumphalist displays” and times of crises like war or irrational and extremist ideas, Billig claims that “the concept of nationalism has been restricted to passionate and exotic exemplars,”³⁵² without noticing its banal and quotidian reproduction. However, national identity is renewed continuously at the level of everyday life in subtle and unremarkable ways through its ‘forgotten reminders.’³⁵³ As a metaphor to explain this point, Billig refers to the ‘unwaved flag’ hanging unnoticed on the public building instead of the consciously waved one.³⁵⁴ Crucially, this routine hanging of flags is ‘unconscious’ and ‘mindless,’ and according to Billig, it is the presence of such unwaved flags that silently but continuously reminds us of who we are, so that at times of crisis, it will give way to consciously waved flags. In the same vein, Bottici acknowledges, “we do not need grand parades or blood rituals to witness the work on political myths: they are simply part of our banal political life.”³⁵⁵ In that political life, myths render “extraordinary into banal”³⁵⁶ and make things of the past seem natural, although they remain invisible. They produce “inherent

³⁵¹ Umut Özkırımlı, “Türkiye’de Gayriresmi ve Popüler Milliyetçilik” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 4: *Milliyetçilik*, 706-717.

³⁵² Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), 8.

³⁵³ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6.

³⁵⁴ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 8.

³⁵⁵ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 259.

³⁵⁶ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 247.

and usually unarticulated feelings of belonging through day-to-day interactions,”³⁵⁷ where their power rests. Therefore, political myths are like the unnoticed flag of Billig, which is always there, in the media, on TV, newspapers; but become popular in times of crisis. Politicians, sportswriters, academics always talk about ‘we’ or ‘us’ and some ‘others,’ as Billig exemplifies, it is always ‘our’ country, ‘our economy’ or ‘the’ government.³⁵⁸ Bottici suggests looking at speeches, icons, arts, both visual and otherwise, rituals and almost all other social practices,³⁵⁹ mass communication tools³⁶⁰ instead of ‘the dust in our libraries.’³⁶¹ Here, one needs to extend Anderson’s argument about the invention of the printing press and the later rise of print media, which provided a technological means for the widespread dissemination of the idea of the nation thanks to commercial book publishing on a mass scale. Edensor finds Anderson’s emphasis on literacy and printed media reductive; since Anderson does not refer to many ways in which the nation is imagined, for instance, music hall and theater, popular music, festivities, architecture, fashion, spaces of the congregation, and in some other habits and performances, or other parallel cultural forms such as television, film, radio, and information technology. Edensor also refers to Barker, who mentions television as a potent tool of ‘imagining “us” as “one.”’ Citing a list of sporting events, political and royal ceremonies, and soap operas, he argues that “they all address me in my living room as part of a nation and situate me in the rhythms of a national calendar.”³⁶² Therefore, one needs to address the rich complexity of cultural production following Deutsch, who argued that their ‘communicative efficiency’ strongly bounds nations.³⁶³ Therefore, as Edensor puts, particularly in contemporary times, any identification of national cultures would have to include a range of other myth producers – pop stars, advertisers, tabloid hacks, marketers, fashion-designers, film and television producers, and sporting heroes – besides a host of popular cultural practices including dancing, sports-spectatorship, common pastimes, holidaying and touring.³⁶⁴ Thus, myths are not always transmitted formally through state instruments such as schools, museums, grand parades, and a thorough analysis requires looking at unofficial and informal realms such as popular novels, movies, pop songs, TV series.

³⁵⁷ Katherine Verdery, “Whither ‘Nation’ and ‘Nationalism?’” *Daedalus*, Vol. 122, No.3, (Summer 1993): 41.

³⁵⁸ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 36.

³⁵⁹ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 181.

³⁶⁰ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 258.

³⁶¹ Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, 181.

³⁶² Chris Barker, *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities* (Buckingham, Philadelphia, Penn: Open University Press, 1999), 5-6 cited in Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002), 9.

³⁶³ Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*.

³⁶⁴ Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*.

Thus, how national identities -political myths in that context- are (re)produced by popular cultural products is significant to understand official national identity's resonance with the masses and multiplicity of nationalist discourses. They are significant also because their consumers –in this case film viewers- were all immersed in these discourses in their everyday lives; so, in a way, films constituted their everyday common sense. At this point, a striking example about the impact of popular cultural products comes from Lila Abu-Lughod, who has revealed that women in the peripheries of Egypt learn about Muslim women's rights through representations of gender violence in popular TV series.³⁶⁵ In this regard, the films in this dissertation were widely consumed, they might be the sources of what most viewers 'know' about the Ottoman history or the War of Independence besides history textbooks, newspapers and other popular sources such as novels. Therefore, the relationship between popular culture and politics matters because these representations have potential political effects. For example, they might have contributed to the formation of a stereotypical perspective toward non-Muslims in the 1950s-1980 Turkey. Here, I should note that the relationship between politics and popular culture is much more complex than what is examined within the limits of this dissertation. The reason is that popular culture does not only represent things but also constitute them. As Foucault argues, popular cultural texts discursively construct the objects about which they speak.³⁶⁶ An analysis of reception could help to our understanding of the effect of these texts on people.

Furthermore, in Anderson and Gellner, informal/unofficial/popular/low/vernacular culture' is reduced to the premodern, pre-national world, ceremonial traditions, basically 'folk.' They do not consider contemporary popular culture. Unlike what Özkırımlı, Edensor, and Billig would argue, for some scholars, popular culture is trivial and shallow, just an expression of the elite's manipulations of the masses,³⁶⁷ therefore, cannot be really connected with questions of national identity. However, popular cultural products exist in a much more complicated arena, and the antithesis between high or "serious" and popular culture is methodological rather than a difference in the object, as Fredrick Jameson says.³⁶⁸ Although it is not directly related to

³⁶⁵ Lila Abu-Lughod, "Women on women: television feminism and village lives" in Suad Joseph and Susan Slymowics (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 103-114.

³⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, A. M. Sheridan Smith (trans.) (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 49

³⁶⁷ For a summary of those arguments see: Meral Özbek, *Popüler Kültür ve Orhan Gencebay Arabeski* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 62-67; Orhan Tekelioğlu, "Önsöz: Popüler Kültürün Türkiye'deki Yüzleri," *Pop Yazılar: Varoştan Merkeze Yürüyen 'Halk Zevki'* (İstanbul: Telos Yayıncılık, 2006), 19-34; 20, 29.

³⁶⁸ Fredrick Jameson, "Ideology, Narrative Analysis and Popular Culture," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (Winter 1977): 545.

nationalism, it would be pertinent at this point to mention Özbek's analysis of popular culture. She says that what is more decisive in describing one's perspective on popular culture is understanding the popular. Her book takes arabesque music as a case for understanding a particular socio-economic class in its historicity.³⁶⁹ Being far from descriptive, she explains the critiques of modernism by keeping in mind the creation of a distinction between high and low cultures and focuses on why these cultural products become popular. In doing so, she uses mainly the framework proposed by Stuart Hall, according to which different perspectives of popular culture are discussed, and popular culture is presented as an area of struggle and resistance for different groups. In this context, for both Hall and Özbek, popular culture is a sphere in which national identity is negotiated through the encounter between hegemonic elements of identity and resisting popular traditions. This, however, does not necessarily mean a distinction between hegemonic groups and the rest. In fact, who wants to be hegemonic must struggle to make itself accepted. In this process, there is both resistance and acceptance, revealing the complexity. As Hall argues, the realm of popular culture has the potential to take the form of a struggle against a power-bloc as well as being the stronghold of the powerful. Thus "it is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises and where it is secured."³⁷⁰ In this study, I prefer to call this complexity 'cross-fertilization'. Instead of a simple one-sided relationship, what exists is a two-sided one through which both popular and hegemonic nurture, change, and transform each other.

Besides, in nation-building, popular culture is presented as another aspect of social engineering without negotiation or resistance. As Ahıska rightly says, it only means a forced association of the nation with its builders.³⁷¹ Using Ahıska's perspective, it could be argued that it is crucial to explore subjects situated in the middle of national projects by the nationalist elites. Without considering these subjects' reflections, one can only look at these projects as if they are monolithic discourses. However, we must remember that once nationalist policies permeate/penetrate everyday life with their claim to be manuals for co-nationals, they simultaneously gain some meaning through the daily and conflictual encounters.³⁷² In these

³⁶⁹ Özbek, *Popüler Kültür ve Orhan Gencebay Arabeski*, 75-93. Other significant studies about popular culture as a producer/consumer of nationalism in different geographies include: Jon E. Fox, "Consuming the nation: Holidays, sports and the production of collective belonging," *Ethnic and racial Studies*, Vol. 29, Issue 2, (2006): 217-236; Robert Foster, *Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption and the Media in Papua New Guinea* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2002); John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009).

³⁷⁰ Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular,'" in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 239.

³⁷¹ Meltem Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı: Garbiyatçılık ve Politik Öznellik* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2005), 18.

³⁷² Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı: Garbiyatçılık ve Politik Öznellik*, 27.

encounters, different nationalisms, different myths, different ways of building identities compete. Right at this level, the image of the presence of a monolithic discourse in the name of Turkish nationalism falls into pieces.

There is a whole industry of history and commemoration that gives memories in a national frame and (re)presents them, as Calhoun says in his piece about Anderson.³⁷³ In this framework, an analysis of popular cultural products concerning their political, economic, social contexts moves the focus away from elite projects of political pedagogy, which overtly mobilized nationalist passion for the state's goals. This line of analysis reveals how political myths are (re)fabricated, and nation is experienced in the routine of everyday life.³⁷⁴ And it also shows how national identity has become commodified, and even routine consumption of certain movies defines and states never-questioned tales about the glory of a nation's past at the level of people's discursive experience. With the reproduction of myths through cinema, national identities are (re)created and help co-nationals to visualize their pasts.

In this regard, the Turkish cinema of the 1950s-1980 generated political myths and ideological discourses that construct Turkish national identity. The specific political and social contexts in which the films were made played a vital role in reproducing and appropriating these political myths. As Maktav argues, films reflect a collective memory that was filtered with nationalist ideologies depending on various social and political transformations.³⁷⁵ Given the consumption-based development of Turkish cinema in the absence of state support and much private capital, as mentioned in the forthcoming chapters, films can be considered significant realms to understand the wishes and desires of the people as a response to the contexts. However, one should not fall into the trap of interpreting Turkish cinema simply shaped by people's demands, so unofficial/informal varieties of Turkish nationalism. In fact, people's demands are never independent of the dominant ideological codes formed by powerholders of the time. Therefore, the cross-fertilization between two sides helps one to understand the areas in which conflicts and negotiations of different varieties of Turkish national identity across time.

At this point, it should be stated that Turkish cinema, especially that of the 1950s-1980, is a significant source for understanding how nationalist imaginings evolved through time because of the place it occupied in everyday life. As stated by Özgüç, more than 200 films on

³⁷³ Calhoun, "The Importance of Imagined Communities and Benedict Anderson," 14.

³⁷⁴ Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities*, Vol: 8(4), (2008): 536-563.

³⁷⁵ Hilmi Maktav, "Vatan, Millet, Sinema," *Türkiye Sinemasında Tarih ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2013), 3-31.

average per year were made in this period.³⁷⁶ There was not only supply but also tremendous consumer demand, and so the total number of films produced between 1965-the 1970s reached more than 4,000 films.³⁷⁷ Despite their low quality, dubbing problems, lack of special effects, and too many continuity mistakes in addition to narrative similarities, some of these films were shown for weeks in the many cinema halls all over Turkey.. According to the State Statistical Institute data, there were 2,424 cinema houses and 1.164.769 seats throughout the country by 1970. İstanbul had 274 cinema halls in 1977.³⁷⁸ The numbers were higher, most probably because of unregistered open-air cinema halls that were active in the summer seasons. This also reflected in ticket sales. Official figures point out that the average annual ticket sales for domestic films were seven to eight tickets per person per year during this period.³⁷⁹ The average number of films viewed by an individual was 11.8 in 1950 and 22.3 in 1970. In 1950, the number of tickets sold was approximately 12 million, and it became 25 million in 1959. In 1977, İstanbul had more than 50 million ticket sales.³⁸⁰ Given that Turkey's population was about 41 million in 1977, this increase in consumers was proportionally more significant than the increase in the overall population. All these enable cinema to present convenient opportunities to explore how the imaginations of Turkish nationhood evolved in the 1950s-1970s. Therefore, it is possible to analyze how political myths are reproduced through time in relation to the changing political and historical context besides the gradual paradigmatic shift from Turkish History Thesis to Turkish Islamic Synthesis through the presentation of the past in nationalist action/adventure films of the period.

1.6. Concluding Remarks:

Political myths can be classified in relation to their central arguments. In this context, a categorization includes myths about the nation's past, present, and future, in addition to myths about nationals and their enemies. In fact, myths about the past and present are bridged to reconstruct a viable future in line with the changing political context. In this regard, films are artifacts that cannot be understood by narrative and visual analysis alone. They are complex cultural products whose form and content result from several social, political, and economic processes. Consequently, they should be considered in relation to the particular contexts within

³⁷⁶ Agah Özgüç, *Türk Filmleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: SESAM, 1993), Vol. 1 and Vol. 2.

³⁷⁷ Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 103-108).

³⁷⁸ Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Kültür ve Eğlence Yerleri İstatistikleri, 1970*, Yayın No. 665 (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, 1973).

³⁷⁹ Özön, *Karagöz'den Sinemaya, Türk Sineması ve Sorunları I: Tarih, Sanat, Estetik, Endüstri, Ekonomi*, 50.

³⁸⁰ Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Kültür ve Eğlence Yerleri İstatistikleri, 1970*, 7.

which they were produced and consumed.³⁸¹ Therefore, explaining how nationalist action/adventure films depict political myths and construct Turkishness requires the analysis of social and political changes. Hence, the following chapters concentrate on the role of specific contexts. The dissertation analyses the intensive period of transformation between the 1950s and 1980 through action/adventure films with historical settings. Here, as my analytical tools, I adopt political myths and discover their reproduction in the films to grasp the dynamic nature of Turkish nationalism of the 1950s-1980 as revealed in the rise of the nationalist and conservative elements through time. As part of everyday life, these films display the interactions and negotiations between official/state/formal imagining of the national identity and the unofficial/popular/informal one. Therefore, nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings are the most suitable materials because they constitute the most overt and banal cinematic depictions of the varieties of Turkish nationhood, especially in a period that evolves into militarism and nationalist aggressiveness.

³⁸¹ James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper, "Introduction" in *The New Film History: Sources, Methods and Approaches*, eds. James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1-10.

CHAPTER II: Changing Balances of Political Power in the 1950s

2.1. Introduction:

The central tenet of the early Republican cultural ideals was the Turkish History Thesis, which eliminated the links with the Ottoman and Islamic pasts to raise the new nation-state to the league of ‘contemporary civilizations.’³⁸² This unique formula of westernization relied on a synthesis of a modernized version of pre-modern folk culture and Western civilization. The elites, then, embarked on a project of redesigning the multi-cultural heritage of Anatolia as homogeneous and idealized folk culture and importing models from the West mainly by ignoring the cultural capital.³⁸³ The reaction to the project under the influence of various political and social transformations between the 1950s-1980 was the gradual rise of nationalist and Islamic elements in politics, as well as the formulation of the Turkish Islamic Synthesis. This happened in the context of the rhetorical shift in the balance of political power in favor of the ‘common man’ vis a vis the westernizing military/bureaucratic elite. In addition to the transition to multiparty politics and the rise of the representatives of the industrial, commercial and landowning bourgeoisie, as a result, the rural to urban migration which made the rural population much more physically visible in cities, and the US and Turkey rapprochement in the Cold War political atmosphere which provided not only the surge of Americanization against the founding military/bureaucratic elite but also the necessary nationalist backdrop of the formulation of nationalist discourses during the period contributed to the changes in the balance power. All these, of course, reflected on widely consumed action/adventure films that reproduced nationalist political myths by manifesting the transformation of the ideal Turkish national from a purely Turkish and Western one into a Turkish and Muslim one.

Thus, this chapter focuses on the 1950s, which constitutes the start of the rhetorical shift in power balances and the beginning of the golden age of Turkish cinema in terms of increasing domestic production and consumption. The main question I am dealing with in this chapter is: How did the rhetorical shift against a backdrop of the Cold War influence the depictions of nationalist political myths in action/adventure films of the 1950s? Thus, for a full-fledged explanation of the context and its nationalist discourses, I also look at Turkey’s foreign policy

³⁸² Etienne Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine: Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 29-78.

³⁸³ Gönül Paçacı, “Dar-ül-elhan ve Türk Musikisi’nin Gelişimi I,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 121, Vol. 21 (January 1994): 48-55; “Dar-ül-elhan ve Türk Musikisi’nin Gelişimi II,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 122, Vol. 21 (February 1994): 17-23; Koray Değirmenci, “On the Pursuit of a Nation: The Construction of Folk and Folk Music in the Founding Decades of the Turkish Republic,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (June 2006): 47-65.

stance. Finally, I argue that foreign policy dynamics reflected on the political myths hence the depictions of nationalism reproduced through films.

The chapter has been divided into two main sections. In the first, I explain political and social transformations that influenced nationalist discourses of the 1950s. This section has four sub-sections, which explain the ideological rise of the ‘common man.’ The first analyzes the political changes and elections, the second talks about migration, and the third deals with Turkey’s foreign policy choices. The fourth sub-section enriches the period’s ideological backdrop by referring to the rising popular interest in history and increasing intellectual production related to that. The second main section examines how the contexts mentioned in the first part might have influenced the depictions of nationalism in action/adventure films of the period. This section is again divided into three: the first presents the historical development of cinema in relation to the transformation mentioned above, the second analyzes the films that take the Ottoman past as its center, and the third discusses the films displaying the War of Independence. All in all, this chapter aims to pave the way in revealing the transformation in Turkish nationalist discourses through time as reflected on the reproduction of political myths in action/adventure films with historical settings.

2.2. The Context:

2.2.1. The Encounter of the ‘Despotic Elites’ with ‘Common Man’ through political transformations:

The transition to the multiparty regime in 1950 brought a rhetorical shift in the power distribution, mostly in favor of the landowning commercial and industrial elites represented by the DP challenging the military/bureaucratic elite of the CHP. In this new equilibrium, the DP made the propaganda of the power and potential of the ‘common man’ as the representative of the true ‘national will’ vis a vis ‘despotic elites.’ These changes complied with the expansion of Turkish cinema thanks to the rising domestic production and consumption. In fact, the whole atmosphere constituted a step toward transforming ordinary people’s imaginings of a political leader from the Europe-oriented military/bureaucratic elite into self-made, traditional, anti-intellectual, anti-elitist, and anti-bureaucratic man of the periphery. Unsurprisingly, this imagining formed the most significant characteristics of heroes in nationalist action/adventure movies that served to reproduce political myths.

The DP's establishment goes back to the split in the CHP due to a disagreement over a law draft about the land reform, which proposed redistributing land to peasants in 1945.³⁸⁴ Some landowners, including Adnan Menderes, a landowner and deputy from the province of Aydın, opposed the draft by arguing that this law harmed national sovereignty and the maintenance of democratic institutions. Later, a group of four CHP deputies formed by Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan, Adnan Menderes, and Fuat Köprülü submitted the *Dörtlülük Takrir* (Memorandum of the Four) in which they asked for the party's reform.³⁸⁵ In a very short time, Bayar and Menderes were dismissed from the CHP. For these two former members of the CHP, the Memorandum and what happened afterward put the CHP and its leader İsmet İnönü (1884-1973) in a conflicting position against 'democracy' and the 'nation's will.' In fact, this conflict shaped the DP's populist propaganda centered on the argument that the CHP acted against the nation like "enlightened despots," therefore, the only representative of the national will was the DP.³⁸⁶ From then on, any political parties in the DP line would make the propaganda that they were the real representatives of the Turkish nation as opposed to the despotic elites of the other side. This cleavage of elites and the 'real and legitimate citizens' would become one of the dominant themes of Turkey's political culture in justifying political power and how citizens identified with the leaders.

Indeed, the propaganda of the DP had some popular basis. As stated by both Zürcher and Eroğul, the state-centered modernization policies and radical reforms, including the suppression of expressing religious beliefs during the single-party era, had already created popular discontent.³⁸⁷ The government had also increased its role in the country's economy with the National Protection Law, which gave it full authority to control stocks and fix prices. Furthermore, to extract resources for the treasury, it imposed the wealth tax and soil products tax.³⁸⁸ The primary victims of the wealth tax were the wealthy, particularly non-Muslims, who

³⁸⁴ For a comprehensive presentation of the debates of the law draft see: Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de İki Partili Siyasi Sistemin Kuruluş Yılları (1945-1950): İkinci Parti*, Vol. 1, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 182-228, 253-296.

³⁸⁵ Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti Tarihi ve İdeolojisi* (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2013), 12-14.

³⁸⁶ Speech by Adnan Menderes, 9 September 1949 cited in Tanıl Bora, "Adnan Menderes" in *Türkiye'nin 1950li Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015): 334. For speeches of Menderes see: Samet Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1967), Mükerrer Sarol, *Bilinmeyen Menderes*, Vol. 1-2 (İstanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1983), Talat Asal, *Güneş Batmadı-Müvekkilim Adnan Menderes ve Yassıada* (İstanbul: Selis Yayınevi, 2003).

³⁸⁷ Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*, 76-81, Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 209-210.

³⁸⁸ İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin (eds.), *Savaşın İçinden Geleceğine Yönelen İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, Vol. 3, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013), 291-293; Güngör Özcan, "Demokrat Parti Döneminde Maliye Politikası," *CBÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (2014): 262.

were charged higher rates than Muslims.³⁸⁹ Apart from that, the soil products tax alienated landowners. Small landowners were the most suffered ones since they had to give 12 per cent of the grain they produced to the state.³⁹⁰ Those who failed to pay either of these taxes had to struggle with the oppression by state officers and gendarmerie, namely the militaristic and bureaucratic means of the state.³⁹¹ These developments were reviving people's bitter memories about *aşar*, the tithe taken from all agricultural produce by the Ottoman state.³⁹² Keyder and Birtek argue that, due to these policies, the CHP lost touch with large segments of the society, and the compromise between peasants and state was harmed³⁹³ as some portions of the population felt marginalized by the central authority. Besides, industrialists and commercial classes had memories of the etatist policies of the CHP and the bitter impacts of heavy taxation in their minds. In this context, the DP emerged as a new chain of equivalences, gathering different interests in one pot under the name of democracy and national will.³⁹⁴

The DP also attracted crowds by its so-called 'mission' of fighting for democracy on behalf of the 'common man' against 'despotic elites.' This was manifested in their election slogan of 'at last, the nation has the word,' meaning that the DP provided the first opportunity for the people to speak after they had been silenced under the leadership of the CHP. Until taking despotic measures to silence the opposing voices, the DP had the support of intelligentsia, press, and capital owners who visualized a democratic Turkey. Its populist discourse instilled hope in everybody, especially 'ordinary people,' by conveying that even the uneducated, lower class and rural citizens could have a word in politics like the 'modernized' or 'westernized' and 'privileged' military/bureaucratic elite.³⁹⁵ The economic well-being of the country also helped this optimistic ideological climate. The period of 1948-1954 was a time of rapid economic expansion, and the early fifties witnessed good harvests in addition to the Marshall aid that brought tractors and trucks to the countryside, which was a real revolution.³⁹⁶ Thanks to the austerity policy of the CHP during the war years, export revenues and purchasing

³⁸⁹ Ayhan Aktar, "'Tax me to the End of my life!' Anatomy of an anti-minority tax legislation (1942-3)" in *State Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945*, eds. Benjamin C. Fortna, Stefanos Katsikas, Dimitris Kamouzis and Paraskevas Konortas (London: Routledge, 2013), 188-220.

³⁹⁰ Şevket Pamuk, *Türkiye'nin 200 Yıllık İktisadi Tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015), 207.

³⁹¹ Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Siyasetinin Yapısal Analizi-II 1920-1960* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2010), 170.

³⁹² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 208-209.

³⁹³ Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Birtek, "'Türkiye'de Devlet Tarım İlişkileri 1923-1950'" in *Toplumsal Tarih Çalışmaları*, ed. Çağlar Keyder (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 1983), 195.

³⁹⁴ Tanel Demirel, *Türkiye'nin Uzun On Yılı-Demokrat Parti İktidarı ve 27 Mayıs Darbesi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 52.

³⁹⁵ Tanıl Bora, *Medeniyet Kaybı: Milliyetçilik ve Faşizm Üzerine Yazılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 91.

³⁹⁶ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 226-228.

power of large commercial farmers had increased. With increasing imports in the first half of the 1950s, new products such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, record players, and automobiles were brought to Turkish markets, leading to the emergence of new consumption patterns in large urban centers in particular.³⁹⁷ These developments brought “an explosive rise in the average villager’s expectations of material improvement,” especially of those who recently migrated to cities even if income inequalities kept most segments of society from enjoying these imported goods.³⁹⁸

The embodiment of hope for the ‘common man’ and, in fact, anybody against the military/bureaucratic elite was Adnan Menderes (1899-1961), the chairman of the DP and a Prime Minister of the multiparty period. What made him appealing to the masses was, first, his background. Unlike many military/bureaucratic elites who were military school graduates, Menderes had studied at İzmir American College and then Ankara Law Faculty. His educational background had exposed him to western culture, American culture in particular, and liberal values. He chose law as his professional career, and his family owned one of the most productive farms in Aydın, Western Anatolia.³⁹⁹ His feudal and traditional connections that coexisting with his western style of education probably made him gain money independently from bureaucratic structures, unlike the founding elite, who dominated the single-party regime.

İnönü, on the other hand, was a military man, a hero of the War of Independence, the leader for life of the CHP until 1946, and the National Chief deeply respected as Atatürk’s closest friend. Even Menderes accepted İnönü’s charisma as he stated in one of his propaganda speeches: İnönü was a “great hero, a legendary rival” and “this country owes him a lot,” but himself was “a farmer whom the people came to know only recently.”⁴⁰⁰ This populist discourse and his background made Menderes the symbol of a discourse in favor of democratization by strengthening ‘common man.’⁴⁰¹ He was “a heroic figure” with an ordinary farmer background, “who defended the political and economic rights and interests of the ‘common man.’”⁴⁰² Besides, Aydemir states, people saw him as a visionary, a builder, and a developer who was not

³⁹⁷ Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 116-117.

³⁹⁸ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 230; Tunçay calls this period as “the hopeful years of democracy,” emphasizing the wave of optimism the new political system instilled on people, Mete Tunçay, “Siyasal Tarih, 1950-1960” in *Türkiye Tarihi*, Vol. 4, ed. Sina Akşin (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1990), 178.

³⁹⁹ Bora, “Adnan Menderes” in *Türkiye’nin 1950li Yılları*, 331-351.

⁴⁰⁰ Metin Heper, “İsmet İnönü: A Rationalist Democrat” in *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*, (eds.) Metin Heper and Sabri Sayari, (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2002), 25-44, p. 26, footnote 8

⁴⁰¹ Sabri Sayari, “Adnan Menderes: Between Democratic and Authoritarian Populism” in *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*, 70.

⁴⁰² Bora, “Adnan Menderes,” 331.

scared of big numbers.⁴⁰³ In this context, in his voters' eyes, Menderes symbolized change, whereas İnönü was the symbol of elitism, bulky and corrupted bureaucratic structure, and *status quo*. This mindset can also be followed in the DP-controlled newspapers of the time. These were frequently full of news about İnönü's health, hearing problem, and medical test results confirming the outdated-old and sick bureaucracy. So, İnönü was presented as a *sakit* leader, an old and fallen one, who was no longer influential.⁴⁰⁴ This news, obviously, contributed to polishing Menderes' young and energetic image.

Furthermore, with trips and mass demonstrations around the country, Menderes and other DP members came closer to the nation, unlike the traditional elite, who was perceived as far from the periphery. According to Eroğul, the novelty of the DP method was clear: "a people who had had no say in its own destiny for centuries was suddenly thrust into the political arenas and began to scream its demands at the face of those in power."⁴⁰⁵ Menderes, then, promised to create a millionaire in every district, save the country from the gloomy prudence of the CHP and build 'Little America' with liberal policies based on entrepreneurship.⁴⁰⁶ These promises were not only optimistic but also motivating because they imposed the idea that 'ordinary men' could reach the top from nothing. That is, they did not need to be a member of the military/bureaucratic elite to be politically and economically powerful. Besides, according to Menderes' propaganda, the military/bureaucratic elite of the CHP was *devletlu* – the state elite-which controlled the country's economic life against the common man's interests.⁴⁰⁷ These resembled the Ottoman state's *kapıkulu*, *gedik* owners, and local notables in their obedience. Since the CHP had granted them some privileges, they fulfilled what the government wanted them to do without any problem. Therefore, in the eyes of the DP supporters, the idealized citizen was not a state officer but an entrepreneur who used his rationality to get richer and politically powerful.

⁴⁰³ "inşacı ve imarcıdır" according to Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Menderes'in dramı?* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), 217.

⁴⁰⁴ Süleyman İnan, "'Sakit İnönü' Muhalefette İsmet İnönü" in *Türkiye'nin 1950li Yılları*, 249-266.

⁴⁰⁵ Eroğul, "The Establishment of Multiparty Rule: 1945-71" in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, eds. Irvin Cemil Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press), 105.

⁴⁰⁶ 15 May 1952, Balıkesir Speech in Bora, "Adnan Menderes," 341.

⁴⁰⁷ 1 October 1947 speech: "Vaktiyle Osmanlı Devleti denildiği zaman saray ve onun etrafında toplanmış kapıkulu, gedik sahipleri ve vilayetlerdeki eşrafin anlaşılması gibi, Halk Partisi sisteminde de seneler geçtikçe iktidarın etrafında koskoca bir zümrenin adeta devletleştiğine şahit olduk. Böye bir devlet anlayışının ilk neticesimemuriyet kadrolarını alabildiğine genişletmek ve bu suretle mümkün olduğunca geniş ve okumuş vatandaş kütlesini iktidarın emri ve un maişetiye bağlı hale getirmek oldu. Buna muvazi olarak da iktidadi hayatın memurlştırılması gayretleri sarf olunurdu. Bu suretle daha çok sayıda vatandaşarı işleriyle güçleriyle iktidara bağlamak imkanı elde edilmiş olacaktı." 13 February 1950 speech: Münevver ve okumuş zümreyi mümkün olduğu kadar Devle kapısına bağlamak, şuurlu hesaplı olmasa bile insiyaki olarak belirmiş bir temayüldür...Devletçilikte ölçünün kaybedilmiş ve aşırı hudutlara gidilmiş olmasında da bu teayül ve insiyakin tesirlerini aramak yerinde olur," cited in Bora, "Adnan Menderes," 341.

Pro-Islamic policies also captured the rural voters' hearts. The re-appropriation of the Arabic version of the azan, the increase in the number of mosques, the opening of religious schools, and the allowance of the sale of religious literature made the DP much more popular. When the economy started to deteriorate by the late 1950s, the DP increased Islamic symbols' use in its propaganda. It sought alliances with several religious communities, such as the Nurcu movement, to not lose its votes.⁴⁰⁸ Besides, from time to time, it utilized nationalist political myths to give the sense that the Greeks had threatened Turkey, and therefore, the DP should stay in power to protect the Turkish nation. A significant reflection of that on the streets was the 6-7 September 1955 incidents when after some nationalist speeches of Menderes, a street demonstration turned into vulgar plunder against non-Muslims of Istanbul.⁴⁰⁹ According to Zürcher, the incidents were not only attacks on non-Muslims but also a general attack on visible wealth by the inhabitants of the *gecekondus* and rural areas.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, the incidents could also be interpreted as the attack of 'unprivileged' lower classes on the 'privileged' classes. Although politically incorrect, it would still be enlightening to a certain degree to say that the incident could also reflect a conflict between potential DP supporters – 'the common man' - and the so-called 'elites.' This approach confirms the nationalist, anti-intellectual, anti-elitist, anti-bureaucratic, and populist discourse of Menderes.

Meanwhile, the 1950s also witnessed rural to urban migration leading to a ten per cent increase in the population of cities⁴¹¹, with İstanbul's population tripling between 1950 and 1970.⁴¹² This brought increasing encounters of the urbanites with those from the periphery,

⁴⁰⁸ Here it should be kept in mind that the DP's instrumentalist use of Islam does not mean that the DP gave up the Kemalist modernization project. It took measures to curtail the power of Islamist circles in *Büyük Doğu* and *Sebiülreşat*, which had intensified their propaganda against Kemalism. When Ahmet Emin Yalman, a journalist who had been criticizing the DP's increasing emphasis on Islam with the idea that it encouraged anti-secular groups in the country, was attacked and wounded in Malatya in 1952, the government arrested and imprisoned the Islamist groups organized the crime. Furthermore, in 1953, a law was enacted prohibiting the use of Islam as a tool for seeking personal and political interest which strictly prohibited propaganda attacking the secular character of the state. For a comprehensive analysis see: Umut Azak, *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion and the Nation State* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 89-96.

⁴⁰⁹ Dilek Güven, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Azınlık Politikaları ve Stratejileri Bağlamında 6-7 Eylül Olayları* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2005).

⁴¹⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 233.

⁴¹¹ Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *İstatistik Göstergeler-Statistical Indicators 1923-2009*, Publication No. 3493 (Ankara: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Matbaası, 2010), 8-10, 27-28.

⁴¹² Michael N. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1985), 28-29. Here, it should also be emphasized that at the same time the rural population did not decline because thanks to the improved health and hygiene, child mortality went down very fast. For the factors leading to rural to urban migration, see: Ecehan Balta, "1945 Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu: Reform Mu Karşı Reform Mu?," *Praksis*, No. 5 (Winter 2002), 283; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 226-227; Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 115. For more discussions and comments on the Land Distribution Law, see: İnan, "Toprak Reformunun En Çok Tartışılan Maddesi: 17. Madde," *Journal of Historical Studies* 3 (2005): 45-57; Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Bir Tepeden Reform Denemesi: 'Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanununun' Hikayesi," *Birikim*, No. 107 (March, 1998):

reinforcing the DP's propaganda of putting the 'common man' at the center.⁴¹³ Nevertheless, in the 1950s, with its propaganda, the DP told the rural population that their traditional ways were not inferior. This message must have enhanced the self-confidence of the peripheral populations who felt far from the state and marginalized. In fact, Behice Boran, in her 1945 study about thirteen villages, indicated that villagers felt inferior as they came closer to cities.⁴¹⁴ Given this, in the eyes of that segment of the population, Menderes must have been a symbol of hope, enhancing their self-confidence. Furthermore, his youth, dynamism, culturally traditional, entrepreneurial, self-made, non-elite 'common man' image against the *devletlu* -the state elite- must have played a role in people's imaginings of the ideal political leader by reproducing the national heroic leader myth. Therefore, the depiction of heroes in nationalist action/adventure movies was influenced by that understanding of rhetorical glorification of the 'common man.' At this point, in addition to some later leaders in the DP line, Menderes might be a critical inspiring source for the heroes portrayed in the nationalist action/adventure movies of the following decades.

2.2.2. Americanized 'Common Man' against Westernized elites:

The other significant change that the supportive environment in shifting power balances from military/bureaucratic elites to 'common man' was the rising American political and cultural influence. In the 1950s, the ideological divide between the communist and non-communist blocs was consolidated, and Turkey aligned itself with the US by reorienting its foreign policy.⁴¹⁵ As a significant outcome of the Turkey-US alliance, the Turkish government

31-47; Çağlar Keyder and Şevket Pamuk, "1945 Çiftçi Topraklandırma Kanunu Üzerine Tezler," *Yapıt*, 8 (December/January 1984/1985): 52-63; Özer Serper, "1950-1960 Devresinde Türkiye'de Şehirleşme Hareketleri," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 24, no. 1-2 (October-March 1964): 162-163; Bahattin Akşit, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye Köylerindeki Dönüşümler" in *75 Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere*, ed. Oya Baydar (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), 173-186

⁴¹³ Moreover, for the military/bureaucratic elite, the newcomers were basically misfits to the Republic's westernization ideals due to their rural and religious sides. This is explained by the following sources: Levent Cantek, *Cumhuriyetin Büluğ Çağı: Gündelik Yaşama Dair Tartışmalar (1945-1950)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 247-251. Their crude behavior was to be ridiculed in novels, newspaper articles and so forth since the 1930s through the 1950s. Cantek and Öncü maintain that the stereotypical representation of such rural-originated rich landlord types were given the name of *hacığa* to imply their religious and feudal features. This name indicates that the urbanized and 'modern' elite found *hacığas* as misfits to the westernizing targets of the cultural modernization policies. Ayşe Öncü, "Istanbulites and Others: The Cultural Cosmology of 'Middleness' in the Era of Neo-Liberalism" in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, ed. Çağlar Keyder (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 95-120.

⁴¹⁴ Behice Boran, *Toplumsal Yapı Araştırmaları: İki Köy Çeşidinin Mukayeseli Tetkiki* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1945).

⁴¹⁵ For more about the shifting power balances, see: John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 198-243; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 25-36.

sent a brigade of soldiers to join the UN forces in the Korean War. The government's motivation in sending soldiers was to prove that Turkey was part of the anti-communist, free world and an indispensable international actor that could protect the entire Middle East from the Red Army.⁴¹⁶ This could also be interpreted as an attempt to eliminate Turkey's inferiority complex against old, antique, and graceful Europe by justifying its role in global politics. In this respect, Turkey's NATO membership in 1952 was perceived as a great success showing that the Western nations had entirely accepted Turkey on equal terms.⁴¹⁷ At this point, the evoking of political myths in politics caused the militarization of everyday life not only through the army but also through popular cultural products. Of course, the increasing domestic and national film production, thanks to the reduction in municipal entertainment taxes in 1948, got its share. In the wartime period, many films with quite militarist titles were shot such as *Hürriyet Şarkısı* (*Song of Liberty*, 1951), *Kore Gazileri* (*Veterans of the Korean War*, 1951), *Kore'de Türk Kahramanları* (*Turkish Heroes in Korea*, 1951), *Kore'de Türk Süngüsü* (*Turkish Bayonet in Korea*, 1951), *Kore'den Geliyorum* (*I am coming from Korea*, 1951), *Vatan için* (*For the Fatherland*, 1951), *Mehmetçik Kore'de* (*Mehmetçik in Korea*, 1952), *Yurda Dönüş* (*Back to the Fatherland*, 1952), *Dokunulmaz Bu Aslana* (*Cannot touch this Lion*, 1952), and *Zafer Güneşi* (*Sun of Victory*, 1953). Although beyond the limits of that dissertation, these films are significant in comprehending the increasing militarism during the period.

In this context, for the DP line, the US was a good example of a nation that had achieved technological modernity and material progress while embracing its traditional and religious values. As Bora states, it was the new role model in which cultural conservatism and the liberal economy went hand in hand.⁴¹⁸ This model emphasized the idea that there was no need to adopt European culture to modernize. Therefore, it was, basically, a challenge to the Europeanized military/bureaucratic elite who had been holding the monopoly of the modernization project until the rise of the DP. In this context, Europeanization was associated with top-down elitist reforms, and the spread of American culture was connected with the traditions and values of ordinary men. In parallel to that idea, *Bütün Dünya* praises Vehbi Koç, who worked hard like Americans and opened his shop by praying every morning, showing that he had not forgotten

⁴¹⁶ See: *Milliyet*, 15.11.1950 and 06.03.1951.

⁴¹⁷ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 237-238. This was in line with Turkey's efforts of modernization as raised by Ambassador İsmail Soysal in 1977: "Turkey's participation...in NATO in 1952 are concrete steps in the...direction (of establishing Turkey in the Western civilization and democratic order) from İsmail Soysal, "The influence of the concept of western civilization on Turkish foreign policy," *Foreign Policy* 6. 4/4 (1977), 3-6 cited in Eylem Yılmaz and Pınar Bilgin, "Constructing Turkey's 'Western' Identity during the Cold War," *International Journal*, (Winter 2005-2006): 57.

⁴¹⁸ Bora, "Türkiye'de Siyasal İdeolojilerde ABD/Amerika İmgesi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 3: Modernleşme ve Batıcılık*, eds. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 154.

his essence.⁴¹⁹ The same magazine also mentions the success stories of American businessmen like Rockefeller, George Kent, or Elmas Jim and shares their secrets with articles such as “Ten Conditions for Becoming Rich.”⁴²⁰ It is said that none of these successful businessmen came from wealthy families, but whatever the circumstances were, they became wealthy as a consequence of their own hard work.⁴²¹ Here, the message is that people could become rich, gain respect and higher status even if they were not members of a privileged elite. So, people could be successful no matter what their backgrounds were. In the minds of populist DP supporters, this privileged group was associated with the military/bureaucratic/Europeanized elite who did not take ordinary people’s interests into account.

In this light, it could be argued that in the 1950s, the ideal citizen was not someone from the military or bureaucracy but a hardworking entrepreneur or self-made businessman. This businessman was also expected to be respectful towards religious and national values. Namely, he should display both Turkish spirituality (*maneviyat*) and Western rationality. This idealized national, in fact, nurtures the self-esteem of the ‘ordinary man’ and his way of doing things. This understanding definitely fits into the shift in political power’s focus from ‘elites’ associated with advanced secular Europe to the ‘common man.’ Indeed, this emphasis was not a coincidence at a time when Menderes, as a trader, became the hero of the masses as opposed to İnönü, a man of the military.

2.2.3. Constructing ‘history for people:’

The 1950s also witnessed a rising interest in history in the Western world. This, interestingly, fits well into the period when the military/bureaucratic elites of Turkey started to lose their political power. This interest could first be understood in relation to what happened in the Western world during those years. Hobsbawm says that once the gloomy atmosphere of the Second World War was over, many countries, particularly the developing ones, realized that the times were better than the dark days of the past.⁴²² Then, as Lowenthal argues, they started to revisit the past to rebuild their identities while responding to war-related anxieties like dislocation, chaos, absence, loss, and death.⁴²³ During this period in Turkey, a new national

⁴¹⁹ Sabahattin Sönmez, “Küçük Koç her sabah dükkanının asma kilidini besmeyle açıyor,” *Bütün Dünya*, Vol. 9, No. 51, (April 1952), 359.

⁴²⁰ “Zengin Olmanın On Şartı,” *Bütün Dünya*, Vol. 1. No.2 (March 1948), 199.

⁴²¹ Dale Carnegie, “Hayır için 750.000 dolar dağıtan adam,” *Bütün Dünya*, Vol. 5, No.24 (January 1950), 24; George Kent, “Lüks otelleri yaratan adam,” *Bütün Dünya*, Vol. 13, N.o 73 (February 1954), 165; “2000 kat elbisesi olan adam: Elmas Jim,” *Bütün Dünya*, Vol. 5, No. 25 (February 1950), 146.

⁴²² Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995), 258.

⁴²³ David Lowenthal, “Nostalgia: dreams and nightmares,” *The Past is A Foreign Country-Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 31-64.

culture based on academic and non-academic sources about history became popular. This is, of course, related to several social and political transformations mentioned earlier. One may add the death of the ‘Father of the Turks’- Atatürk in 1938, which had the potential to bring about an identity crisis once people failed to find another leader or hero to feel attached to. Also, given the solidification of communism as an international threat, citizens might have sought refuge in a ‘usable’ past to identify themselves. All these, of course, facilitated the birth of alternative historiographies, including the Turkish Islamic Synthesis, in the following decades.

In the 1950s, a corpus of daily newspapers, magazines, children’s periodicals, encyclopedias, novels, cartoons, and serialized stories (*tefrika*) about history emerged.⁴²⁴ As a result of this dynamism, history became a marketable commodity. This was reflected in cinema by increasing the number of films with historical settings that constituted a new and fruitful arena for the reproduction of political myths. All these also meant the emergence of new channels of narrating and publicizing history. Moreover, what came out of the new channels was richer than the productions of official channels. To put it simply, during the 1950s-80, in addition to those made about the War of Independence, many movies were made about the imperial legacy, with which the official historiography could sympathize. Unlike the official narrative, instead of depicting failures, defeats, and how the Ottoman Sultans harmed racial purity with the devshirme system and intermarriages, these movies glorified certain periods of Ottoman history, military victories, Ottoman İstanbul and other Muslim Turkic states, such as the Seljuks.

In fact, the 1950s’ ideological atmosphere was favorable to the popularization of alternative historiographies with Ottoman and Islamic emphasis differing from the official historiography.⁴²⁵ Akurgal, one of the authors of *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası (Illustrated History Magazine)* in the 1950s, states that intellectuals of the period had the goal of writing/manifesting history ‘as it was’ to represent ‘realities.’ Accordingly, the creators of new sources argued that what they were creating was ‘history for people’ as opposed to that of official channels, which failed to make history understandable by wider audiences.⁴²⁶ This

⁴²⁴ For a detailed analysis, see: Ahmet Özcan, *Türkiye’de Popüler Tarihçilik 1908-1960* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2011).

⁴²⁵ One reflection of that interest could be the audience letters available in journals and periodicals. In *Tarih Hazinesi (The Treasure of History)*, for example, readers asked questions about historical issues to ‘experts.’ Another reflection of the interest also mentioned by *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası (Illustrated History Magazine)* was sales numbers. According to the magazine, its first issue sold 10,000, second 20,000, third and fourth 40.000. Although neither the audience letters nor sales numbers were trustworthy, one should keep in mind that raw paper prices in the 50s were quite expensive. Compensating these costs necessities considerable demand. For detailed information, see: Özcan, *Türkiye’de Popüler Tarihçilik 1908-1960*.

⁴²⁶ Ekrem Akurgal, *Bir Arkeoloğun Anıları* (Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, 2002), 246 cited in Özcan, *Türkiye’de Popüler Tarihçilik 1908-1960*, 189.

claim indicates a kind of misfit or a disagreement between the narratives of official and unofficial channels. In this context, the creators could be striving to make theirs much more believable and exciting to reach out to more people with their products. This could explain why they mostly used both adventurous and didactic tones simultaneously, presented some dangerous situations, escapes, and bravery while supporting them with footnotes and references in printed materials or the insertion of documentary footages or a voiceover in the films.

Consequently, starting with the 1950s, alternative national imaginings based on the imperial past, which had been concealed in the early Republican era, began to glow in the dark. Karpat explains the reasons for the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire by referring to several stages of the Turkish Revolution. He states that, by the 1940s, the radical phase had ended, the regime had formed its own support groups, and confidence in the modernization project had emerged.⁴²⁷ Since the regime had been solidified, alternative ideas were no longer perceived as potentially dangerous to the regime. Nejdet Sançar, a prolific nationalist writer from the 1950s, makes a complementary argument that the hostility towards the Ottomans was a natural outcome of early Republican politics, but now after twenty-five years, the Ottoman Empire was no longer a threat. However, Sançar raises a very significant point that sheds light on the populist policies of the DP about religion as well: “sinking the Ottoman period, which was the most brilliant period of the Turkish past, would only help communists.”⁴²⁸ For the anti-communist nationalist line in the 1950s, the Ottoman legacy was a safe haven to protect Turkey from communism. Furthermore, the celebrations of the fifth centenary of İstanbul’s conquest in 1953 also increased awareness about the Ottoman Empire. With lectures, seminars, exhibitions, a soccer match dedicated to the conquest, horse races, and restoration of Rumeli Fortress,⁴²⁹ these celebrations conveyed the idea of respect and curiosity of the imperial past.

Although the general interest in the imperial legacy became the most vital source of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis dominating the 1970s and 80s, a broader perspective reveals that, in the 1950s, the alternative and unofficial narratives still served to the Kemalist modernization project. In fact, the alternative explanations did not erase the Kemalist thesis, but complemented it. This happened with the retrospective Turkification of the Ottomans and several other Muslim

⁴²⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Kültürel. Ekonomik Temeller* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 331-332.

⁴²⁸ Nejdet Sançar, “Osmanlı ve Padişah Düşmanlığı,” *Orkun*, 53, (October 5, 1951), 6-7.

⁴²⁹ Müjgan Cınbur, “İstanbul’un 500üncü Fetih Yıldönümü Dolayısıyla Tertiplenen Sergilere, Yapılan Kültür, San’at ve Neşriyat Hareketlerine Dair,” *Vakıflar Dergisi*, Vol.4, No. 265, (1958): 265-281; Kazım Yetiş, “İstanbul’un Fethi Kutlamaları Yeni Bir Dönemi Başlatıyor” in *Türk Edebiyatında İstanbul’un Fethi ve Fatih*, ed. Kazım Yetiş (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005), 3-76. Newspapers gave detailed information about these. See, for example, “Fetih yılı programı,” *Milliyet*, 21 May 1953; Ferdi Oner, “Fethin 500üncü yıldönümü tören ve şenlikleri başladı,” *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1953.

states and reinterpretation of them as legitimate and honorable precedents of the modern Turkish nation-state. Osman Turan, Zeki Velidi Togan, and İbrahim Kafesoğlu were among the most important academics who solidified Islam's place in Turkish culture and history. Thus, historiography gradually shifted to contemporary Turks and the Ottomans as saviors of Islamic civilization from the Mongols and the Crusades, even in Medieval times. This was, more clearly, a 'domestication' or 'rehabilitation' of the past through the lenses of the Kemalist modernization project. Therefore, as Lowenthal maintains, "...one thing that history does...is to fumigate experience, making it safe and sterile...Experience undergoes eternal gentrification; the past, all the parts of it that are dirty and exciting and dangerous and uncomfortable and real, turn gradually into the east village."⁴³⁰ This means the past, which had been mainly ignored in the early years of the Republic, went through a process of 'gentrification' to justify the 1950s.

In the 1950s, the conquest of İstanbul was not merely a victory of the Ottoman and Islamic elements, but one of secularism, Western enlightenment values, and the Turkish nation. Hasan Ali Yücel, the former minister of education and a columnist in *Cumhuriyet*, declared that in conquering İstanbul, Mehmet II culturally and geographically "turned his face towards the West."⁴³¹ He, in fact, "gave an end to the Middle Ages" and its "fundamentalism," leading to "sectarian conflict." Then he "opened a new era" in history, even started the Renaissance, awakened the West, erased religious bigotry, and revived the free thought of Ancient Greece. He even made İstanbul the center of science by establishing the first university, and his arts and sciences.⁴³² From this perspective, Mehmet II was the most secular sultan of all.⁴³³ He was also a revolutionary, an innovator, or a visionary, as it could be understood from how he dragged his fleet over İstanbul to circumvent Byzantine. This shows that he was not satisfied with traditional methods.⁴³⁴

Indeed, Mehmet II had all the features of the ideal political ruler. Here, Atatürk is used as 'the reference,' and a bond between the 'two great men' is formed. Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, the mayor of İstanbul, said in his speech during the celebrations: "His (Mehmet II's) ideas will live forever with the Turkish nation on the strong base built by Atatürk." These words continued with: "Look at Korea. Look at the Atlantic Pact...We, as the Conqueror's children, show that

⁴³⁰ "Notes and comment," *New Yorker*, (24 September 1984): 39 cited in Lowenthal, *The Past is A Foreign Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xxv.

⁴³¹ Hasan Ali Yücel, "Fethin Önemi," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 May 1953.

⁴³² Sami Nafiz Tansu, "Sanatkar Fatih," *Cumhuriyet*, 31 May 1953.

⁴³³ "İstanbul bugün Fetih yılını kutluyor," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 May 1953.

⁴³⁴ Ataç, "Yeni," *Ulus*, 31 May 1953.

we are worthy of him through serving the cause of world peace with our soldiers' blood in Korea today. Now we bow down with honor before all our holy martyrs who, beginning with the Conqueror, died for their country and who now give their lives for world peace under the United Nations in Korea today."⁴³⁵ Here, Gökay started with Atatürk and then legitimized not only the Ottoman past but also the Korean War. He connected all these by reproducing the political myth that Turks are benevolent fighters; they fight not with greedy motivations but for world peace. Others contributed to this argument, saying: "Today's soldiers are descended from him, and these heroic children were an indication that heroism was truly what this nation inherited from its ancestors."⁴³⁶ Therefore, there is no difference "between Ulubatlı Hasan, who first raised our flag over the walls of Istanbul, and the commander who went to fight in Korea wrapped in the Turkish flag?"⁴³⁷ It is precisely this idea that gave birth to the fighter image in nationalist action/adventure movies. These heroes are all depicted as loyal to powerful rulers, similar to Ulubatlı Hasan's depiction here. This idea, of course, reinforces the 'common man' discourse because Ulubatlı-like characters are all common man performing their heroic skills in fighting for the ruler. It also draws boundaries between loyal and disloyal citizens, featuring the loyal ones and disregarding the others. This is a guide for citizens to learn 'what is loyal' and 'what is not' and therefore 'who is to blame.'

Thus, the emergence of alternative historiographies and their popularization via a new supply of popular sources could be interpreted as a challenge to the 1930s' monopolistic imagining of the Turkish nation, hence the military/bureaucratic elite's power. Furthermore, this new supply with elements from Turkish-Islamic Synthesis inspired the reproduction of political myths in action/adventure films with historical settings in the 1950s-1970s, as revealed in the following parts.

2.3. Cinema and the Reproduction of Political Myths:

2.3.1. The Republican ideals, realities, and cinema:

According to *Ulus*, in May 1945, three young men in Ankara committed a series of robberies. When they were caught, they told the police that they needed to find money because they had decided to go to Texas, buy land, and become cowboys like Hollywood stars.⁴³⁸ These

⁴³⁵ "Fatih ve Topkapı'daki törende yüzbinlerce İstanbullu bulundu," *Vatan*, 30 May 1953; see: Gavin D. Brockett, "Chapter 6: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Mehmed the Conqueror: Negotiating A National Historical Narrative," *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 173-202.

⁴³⁶ Ferdi Öner, "Fethin 500 üncü yıldönümü tören ve şenlikleri başladı," *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1953.

⁴³⁷ Mumtas Faik Fenik, "Seferihisar'da Genç Ulubatlı Hasanlar," *Zafer*, 30 May 1953.

⁴³⁸ "Ankara Kovboyları," *Ulus*, 8 May 1945, 3.

three young men probably had watched Hollywood films and wanted the same life depicted in those films. As this example shows, some ‘common men’ were familiar with America due to Hollywood movies. Turkey’s participation in the Korean War as a US ally intensified this familiarity by adding the ideological aspect, and the result of this was the reproduction of political myths through the lenses of anti-communism. This reinforced cultural and religious conservatism and contributed to the rhetorical power shift from ‘elites’ to ‘common man.’

In fact, before the 1950s, domestic production was limited in Turkish cinema. Due to economic insufficiency, neither the state nor the private capital holders were to produce systematically. Eighty per cent of the film companies were short-lived, low-budgeted, shot only one feature film on average per year. As a result, the supply of films was predominantly provided by American and Egyptian films. However, there was a difference between consumer demands for each. Öztuna states, “American films were only popular in big cities, whereas Egyptian films were shown for weeks even in small towns.”⁴³⁹ The US Department of Commerce also referred to the popularity as cited by Gürata: “In the İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara regions, United States films are definitely preferred, while European films and particularly British films meet with favor...In the rest of the country, United States films, although well-received, do not meet as much favor as Egyptian films.”⁴⁴⁰ It seems that the audience of the time preferred Egyptian films over Hollywood films when given a choice. Tekelioğlu notes that, in the 1940s, approximately 150 Egyptian films were shown in Turkey. For Cantek, the number is probably around 100 or higher. This vast consumption of Egyptian films was obviously a challenge to the early Republican military/bureaucratic elite’s westernization ideals. Unsurprisingly, many of the elites did not like Egyptian films, perceiving them as backward and so not in line with the modernization project.⁴⁴¹ Özön finds them technically inadequate⁴⁴² and says they usually looked like filmed revues with belly dances. He also did not like melodramatic elements such as raped young girls, tears, sick love, suicide, murder, death.⁴⁴³ These elements were all considered so emotional and irrational, unlike the Western cultural model, based on rationality, science, and industry.

⁴³⁹ Yılmaz Öztuna, “Türk Musikisi’nin Yayılışı ve Tesirleri” in *Türk Musikisi Ansiklopedisi* vol. II /2 (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi), 341, cited in Ahmet Gürata, “Tears of Love: Egyptian Cinema in Turkey 1938-1950,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 30 (Spring 2004): 56.

⁴⁴⁰ World Trade in Commodities-Motion Pictures and Equipment, vol. VI, part 4, no. 21, (1948), cited in Gürata, “Tears of Love: Egyptian Cinema in Turkey 1938-1950,” 74.

⁴⁴¹ Cantek, *Cumhuriyetin Büluğ Çağı: Gündelik Yaşama Dair Tartışmalar (1945-1950)*, 159-164.

⁴⁴² Nijat Özön, *Türk Sineması Kronolojisi 1895-1966* (Ankara Bilgi Yayımevi, 1968), 21.

⁴⁴³ Özön, “Mısır Sinemasının Türk Sinemasına Etkisi,” *Türk Dili*, No. 129, (1962): 760, cited in Gürata, “Tears of Love: Egyptian Cinema in Turkey 1938-1950,” 67-68.

The popularity of these films indicates a mismatch between the elites' expectations and the demands of the periphery. This also alarmed the CHP, so the General Secretariat warned the Ministry of Internal Affairs about this 'threat to the Turkish language in the areas bordering Syria', which included a significant Arab-Turkish population in 1942. After this complaint, in 1943, the Ministry wrote to the censorship committee in Istanbul suggesting a ban on Egyptian films in Kurdish or Arab populated areas in eastern Turkey. This limited the display of these films in those regions, and the ban lasted until 1957. Besides, since the government was very keen on the issue, in movies shown in the other areas of Turkey, the dialogues and the lyrics of Arabic songs were also Turkified.⁴⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it was this consumer profile into which the Turkish cinema developed. After the 70 per cent reduction of the municipal tax on domestic films in 1948,⁴⁴⁵ the cost of filmmaking decreased, so domestic production increased significantly. In the meantime, ticket prices decreased, rural areas were gradually electrified, and transportation facilities improved, providing easier access to cinema halls.⁴⁴⁶ All these, in the end, led to the awakening of the Turkish cinema industry. Here, the critical point is that, unlike with the other branches of art, the state had no financial support for cinema, and the Turkish economy was still on the edge of expansion. Therefore, Turkish cinema primarily relied on consumer demand. This made it a realm where the mismatch between Republican ideals and consumer demands could be followed, since cinema was mainly shaped by what sold most.

Thus, the 1950s brought the beginning of a period with phenomenal production and cinema consumption, which became accessible not only in urban areas but also in the periphery thanks to prolific production. Besides, going to the cinema was a cheaper way of entertainment than going to music halls during this period. As a result, people could go to the cinema in crowded groups with their families and friends inexpensively. The whole activity, in fact, was more than just watching a movie, but a social event in which people saw and met each other. Therefore, cinema was a significant element of everyday life.

⁴⁴⁴ Özkan Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1968), 97-98.

⁴⁴⁵ Özön, *Karagözden Sinemaya: Türk Sineması ve Sorunları: Tarih, Sanat, Estetik, Endüstri, Ekonomi*, Vol. 1 (Ankara: Kitle Yayınları, 1995), 335.

⁴⁴⁶ It must be noted that as late as 1953 the total number of villages that had been linked up to the electric grid was 10 which was equal to 0.025 per cent of Turkey's 40,000 villages. While total production of electricity had grown tenfold between 1923 and 1943, it was still a phenomenon of city life. Of the total energy capacity of 107,000 kilowatts available in 1945, 83,000 kilowatts went to İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir. And even so, the trolleybuses in Ankara had to stop when the lights went on. Hakkı Devrim, Nezihe Araz, Nurullah Gezgin (eds.), *Türkiye Ansiklopedisi 1923-1973*, Vol. 2 (İstanbul: Kaynak Kitaplar, 1974), 583. Ten years later the number was 216 (Vol. 3, 962) cited in Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 208.

In this regard, the masses were the critical driving force making Turkish cinema a sector of its own kind. It was, basically, a product of the consumption-based economy⁴⁴⁷ and rested on the fundamental supply and demand relationship. In this system, to distribute films in İstanbul, producers contacted the owners of first-run cinema halls that major film importing companies partly controlled. For the other cinema halls, producers collaborated with distributors who gathered information from cinemas in six regions: İstanbul, Adana, Ankara, Samsun, İzmir, Zonguldak. Due to this communication, they learned about audiences' demands and determined which films they would make for the following season. Once the producers decided, they were given bonds by cinema hall owners or regional operators for producing films.⁴⁴⁸ The producers gave some portion of these bonds to the actors and film crew for guaranteeing their labor. On the other hand, the distributors made sure that the most demanded films would be produced. Then rented films or four-walled cinema houses for a couple of weeks or months. In the end, 35 to 45 per cent of the net profit from ticket revenues was collected by the owners of cinema houses; the rest went to the producers.⁴⁴⁹ In this system, consumer demand was the single most crucial thing for the sector's survival. Therefore, most directors worked in line with the commercial mentality, produced within the supply and demand relationship, and even adjusted content according to audience reactions. This situation restricted new cinematic experiments while leading to the enormous production of similar films, one after the other based on commercial formulas mainly shaped around popular Hollywood and Egyptian films of previous years. This made cinema a lucrative business as well, and as a result, the 12 production companies in the 1950s increased to more than 370 in the 1960s and early 1970s to respond to the increasing demand.⁴⁵⁰ This brought new people into the cinema business, including some 'nouveau riche,' from agriculturally rich areas like Kayseri and Adana, who wanted to make quick money. These people did not have sufficient cultural capital, but they could find themselves a place in the cinema sector. *Perde ve Sahne*, in 1954, stated that "Recently production has become a fashion in our country. Everybody from teachers dismissed from school to smiths and carpenters, who have had a little money in their hands have attempted to make film and ruined Turkish filmmaking...Of course, these people who are not trained and do not know what it means to be a producer would be unable to appreciate the

⁴⁴⁷ Tanju Akerson, "Türk Sinemasında Eleştiri," *Yeni Sinema*, No. 3, (Oct.-Nov. 1966): 35.

⁴⁴⁸ Ertan Tunç, *Türk Sinemasının Ekonomik Yapısı (1896-2005)* (İstanbul: Doruk Yayınları, 2012), 92-93.

⁴⁴⁹ For details about regional distributors and four-walling, see: Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*, 105-109.

⁴⁵⁰ Giovanni Scognamillo, "Türk Sinemasının Ekonomik Tarihine Giriş," *Yeni İnsan Yeni Sinema*, No. 9, (Spring 2001): 94-105. <http://yenifilm.net/2000/12/turk-sinemasinin-ekonomik-tarihine-giris/>

value of artists, directors, and cameramen under their service.”⁴⁵¹ This commercial nature of Turkish cinema, based mainly upon the ability to earn money by appealing to the masses, made it a convenient tool to understand the viewers’ wishes and desires. This situation fits nicely into the political atmosphere that has winds blowing in favor of the ‘common man,’ who can be considered as the representative of the periphery finding themselves a place in the center.

Despite tremendous consumer demand, the cultural elite was somewhat distant from Turkish cinema. The elite preferences were mainly shaped around American or European productions, and they generally found Yeşilçam films unrealistic, exaggerated, and fake, and therefore undesirable and unacceptable. They thought these films did not represent the Turkish nation, and their viewers were ‘passive,’ ‘irresponsible,’ and ‘mindless’ masses.⁴⁵² Nijat Özön, a critique in the period, in *Akis*, called Yeşilçam a “swamp that should be dried,” because it was spreading bad taste to the society.⁴⁵³ This, again, reveals the distinctive characteristic of Turkish cinema: On the one hand, crowds were flocking into cinema halls, sometimes even breaking the doors to be able to see certain films. On the other, there was a group of intellectuals who severely criticized these people and the films. This is an indication of the cleavage between the consumers of Turkish cinema and the elite. This context, of course, influenced the reproduction of political myths in action/adventure films with historical settings.

2.3.2. Imagining the Ottoman Past in the 1950s’ Cinematic Baggage:

In parallel to the rising popular interest in Ottoman history as reflected in the newly published sources, several movies about the Ottoman Empire were shot in the 1950s. Here, one point to note is that shooting movies about Ottoman history does not mean the DP government’s complete internalization of Ottoman history. In fact, the official discourse of the 1950s still did not diverge that much from the Turkish History Thesis of the early Republican era. There was still a distance from the Ottoman past despite increasing academic and non-academic sources.

⁴⁵¹ “İstismarcı Prodüktörler,” *Perde ve Sahne* 1 (1954): 15 cited in Dilek Kaya Mutlu, *Yeşilçam in Letters: A ‘Cinema Event’ in 1960s Turkey from the Perspective of An Audience Discourse*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Bilkent University, (2002), 126.

⁴⁵² *Yeni Sinema* presents many criticisms in this line throughout the 1960s. For example: Özön “Türk sinemasına elestirmeli bir bakış,” *Yeni Sinema*, No.3 (1966): 12; Ali Gevgilili, “Çağdaş sinema karşısında Türk sineması,” *Yeni Sinema*, No.3 (1966): 17. In addition, see the following for negative criticisms about Yeşilçam: Ünsal Oskay, “Sinemanın Yüzüncü Yılında Türk Sinemasında Entelektüellik Tartışması” in *Türk Sineması Üzerine Düşünceler*, ed. Ali Dinçer (Ankara: Doruk Yayıncılık, 1996), 98; Nijat Özön, *Karagözden Sinemaya: Türk Sineması ve Sorunları*, Vol.1, (Ankara: Kitle Yayınları, 1995); Ayşe Şasa, *Yeşilçam Günlüğü* (İstanbul: Gelenek Yayıncılık, 2002), 40-41; Dilek Tunalı, *Batıdan Doğuya, Hollywood’dan Yeşilçam’a Melodram* (Ankara: Arjantin Felsefe Grubu Yayınları, 2006), 219.

⁴⁵³ Özön, “Kurulması Gereken Bataklik,” *Akis*, No.203 (1958): 30–31.

The point here is that the government was still not in complete peace with the Ottoman past. However, instead, it would start to utilize it to exalt the Turkish national identity.

In fact, during the 1950s, movies about the Ottoman Empire constituted a significant group that reproduced nationalist political myths. In total, 23 movies were shot about subject areas such as Ottoman personalities and several Ottoman conquests.⁴⁵⁴ Considering the fifth centenary celebrations that dominated the country's cultural agenda in the early 1950s, although not high, the number is significant. Besides, not all 23 movies are accessible. From those that are, the sample I chose constitutes four movies centered on war and conquest, therefore action and adventure. These are *İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*, dir. Aydın Arakon, 1951), *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa)*, dir. Baha Gelenbevi, 1951), *Vatan ve Namık Kemal (Fatherland and Namık Kemal)*, dir. Cahide Sonku, Talat Artemel, Sami Ayanoğlu, 1951) and *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor (Sultan Selim the Resolute is Crying)*, Sami Ayanoğlu, 1957). The most significant common point of these movies is the producers' selection of particular periods and persons to polish the Turkish national identity. The leading characters are all real people from the past. These include two sultans, Mehmet II and Selim I, and the Ottoman navy's admiral, Hayrettin Barbarossa. Here, the focus is obviously the Ottoman conquests. Another persona is Namık Kemal, a poet who greatly influenced Young Turks and nationalist movements. His story is told in relation to a Russian siege in the 19th century. In this film, Ottoman patriotism and anti-Russian nationalism are fueled, confirming Turkey's Cold War anti-Soviet stance. Nevertheless, although the characters and events are Ottoman, the films contribute to the construction of the heroism of Turks. The dominant narrative in the films is also based upon replacing the word 'Ottoman' with 'Turkish.' This is a way to Turkify the past and reproduce nationalist political myths to bolster the Turkish national identity. In this situation, first, a direct continuity between the Ottomans and the 1950s' Turkish nation-state is established. In the end, movies created a visual repertoire of 'golden' times, people, and places that are worth remembering by Turkish nationals, while marginalizing what must not be remembered.

2.3.2.1. The leader, the nation, the mission:

The most notable cinematic production from the corpus of this chapter was *İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*, which, according to its opening credits, was supported by the

⁴⁵⁴ Some of these films that use the Ottoman wars solely as a backdrop are: *Üçüncü Selimin Gözdesi (Selim III's Favorite)*, dir. Vedat Ar, 1950); *Cem Sultan* (dir. Münir Hayri Egeli, 1951); *Gül naz Sultan* (dir. Muharrem Gürses, 1954), and *Safiye Sultan* (dirs. Enzo Martino and Fikri Rutkay, 1955).

military, several bureaucrats, and academics. This is not surprising if the movie is considered within the framework of the celebrations of the fifth centenary of the Conquest. The movie displays the didactic tone that dominated popular historical materials of the period. The narrative is supported by voiceovers that describe various stages of the siege. In this way, the viewers are directed to acquire ‘the proper’ understanding of the subject matter. This means the audience is not only shown a selected narrative but also taught about how to perceive and interpret it. One of the central characters is Sultan Mehmet II, with his features making him the ideal political leader: physical power, wisdom, toughness, passion, dynamism, heroism, a strategic mind, and state-building capabilities. In some scenes, he is called *devletlü* and *şevketlü* (the Most Excellent and Majestic) by the viziers and other bureaucrats. These words mean that he has legitimate power in the state. As a heroic sultan, he does not hesitate to take an active part in one-to-one fights in accordance with his warrior nature. As for his attitude towards his subjects, he is not only just and prudent, but also tolerant. Just before the Conquest, he says: “We do not chop people’s heads off because they are worshipping God in another way” (44:42)⁴⁵⁵ about how he behaves the non-Muslims. In fact, believing that Mehmet would bring justice, the people of Byzantium even support the siege and open the city gates for the Ottoman army. At this point, the film also portrays a Byzantine priest informed by the Turkish side who then helps the three loyal men of Mehmet II. All these make Mehmet an ideal Turkish hero, capable of acting as a world leader. This message also completes the official nationalist discourse based on the idea that Turks are civilized and respectful members of the European world. Besides, since İstanbul is within the borders of contemporary Turkey, the fact that this movie is about a conquest does not give it an expansionist or an irredentist discourse. Rather, it depicts İstanbul as a place that is predestined to be owned by Turks.

Mehmet II’s grandson, Selim I, known as Selim the Resolute, was the second sultan that filmmakers were interested in. *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor* (*Sultan Selim the Resolute is Crying*) first portrays Selim as a tough prince and a military strategist. This portrayal is based upon a critique of his father, Bayezid II, for not continuing the victorious conquests of his grandfather, Mehmet II. Selim says his grandfather’s sword has not been taken out of its sheath since his death, and this is unacceptable because “God created conquerors not to live steadily in a territory but to conquer new lands” (01:32:29).⁴⁵⁶ Here, the ruler’s continuous dynamism is emphasized as one of the qualities making him the ‘ideal’. In this context, Bayezid is no longer ‘ideal’ and must be replaced by the legitimate one. It must also be noted that the leader’s health

⁴⁵⁵ “Allah’a başka türlü ibadet ediyor diye biz kimseyi kesmeyiz.”

⁴⁵⁶ “Tanrı cihangirleri bir toprakta yaşamak için değil; ülkeler fethetmek için yaratmıştır.”

equals the empire's health since the leader is considered the state's embodiment. In this context, Bayezid's deteriorating health and older age are associated not only with the halted military expansion, but also with the weakening of state authority. The escalating unrest among the Janissaries and bandits in the periphery and corruption of state circles are all considered as the symptoms of the emperor's so the empire's sickening body. All in all, according to the narrative, Bayezid's impotence causes the disruption of the unity of the empire and the survival of the state. Here, using a Machiavellian perspective could help understand the ideal ruler's sole duty: protecting the state's integrity, indivisibility, and continuity. In the film, Selim is depicted as the ideal one who deserves to be sultan. When Bayezid abdicates, Selim is involved in fratricide to eliminate his rivals for the throne. Although we do not see an overt representation of this in the film, Selim cries after killing his brothers, which could be a modern interpretation of the practice of fratricide in the Ottoman Empire. Selim's concern means that neither he nor the Ottomans is violent, but he has to do this for the state's survival. In fact, while leaving his throne, Bayezid tells Selim that human beings are ephemeral, and only the state can last. Therefore, Süleyman, Selim's son, must learn how to govern the state. This would suggest that, although the focus of the movie seems to be Selim, the message was that the state must survive no matter what happens. The sacred nature of the state above everything is what the audience should absorb.

Once he becomes sultan, Selim does not dispose of everything related to the past; instead, he builds on them. For example, he respectfully receives Bayezid's advice on being just and merciful and not leaving God's path. This transgenerational communication fosters the legitimacy of the state and the ruling dynasty throughout history. *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor (Sultan Selim the Resolute is Crying)* also includes Selim's son: Süleyman, who would become the Magnificent. This representative of the younger generation is yet inexperienced and must learn how to unravel his potential. In the scenes depicting the Battle of Çaldıran, Selim says that nobody can teach Süleyman how to fight because he, as a Turk, was born a soldier and already knows to fight (01:34:44).⁴⁵⁷ This is an apparent reproduction of the myth of warrior nation with an essentialist understanding of nationhood, presenting Turks as genetically capable of fighting. Through the end of the film, Süleyman gives a hint of his passionate, heroic potential, saying that there was nothing he would not do until only one flag was waved in the world (01:59:40).⁴⁵⁸ When Selim is overwhelmed by his illness after the battle, he becomes

⁴⁵⁷ "Oğlum, madem Türk'sün, sana savaşmayı hiç kimse öğretemez, sen onu bilip de doğdun. Hocamız damarlarımızdaki kan, örneğimiz atalarımızdır."

⁴⁵⁸ "Dünyada tek bayrak dalgalanması için yapmayacağımız şey yok."

concerned because he could not fight, and then dreams of his children riding their horses at full gallop in Magyar lands. This could be a harbinger of Süleyman's raids to Europe through the Balkans in the following years. These imperialist references are made very vaguely and are not actually placed at the center. The reason for this weak emphasis could be the fact that they do not fit into the official nationalist discourse. Religious references are not given much emphasis either compared to the focus on territorial integrity. In *İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*, Mehmet II states, "Our power is based upon the goal of making this glorious city a mujahid and opening it to religion" (1:09:20).⁴⁵⁹ We also see fewer prayer scenes, minor references to the Quran accompanied by janissary band music about the victorious nature of Turkish armies and God's help to the Turkish army during the siege. These scenes are still less intense than those of future decades, as revealed in the following chapters.

Since İstanbul is located within the borders of the contemporary Turkish nation-state, the producers probably did not see any problem in mentioning the conquest in a much more detailed way. In fact, İstanbul is considered as a land that is destined to be possessed by the Turks. According to Mehmet II in *İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*, Byzantium resembles the head of a boil rising in the middle of the country, and therefore must be conquered to provide indivisibility of the 'country.' Since "we do not want a foreign flag waving in our land (*ülke*), we do not want to bow down before anybody while our army is crossing the Straits (08:18).⁴⁶⁰ "We want to leave a unified piece of land to our children. When we succeed in this, our children, as the masters of these lands, will not encounter a hypocrite enemy in a land of their own" (57:37).⁴⁶¹ These words strongly legitimize war while repelling any potential territorial claim regarding the independence of the Straits during the Cold War period. In addition to providing and protecting territorial integrity, the other cause of the conquest is "to bring a fresh soul and infallible justice to a fusty empire where morality and justice were disrupted" (45:17).⁴⁶² Mehmet II says to the messenger of the emperor Constantine XI in *İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*. Therefore, the Ottomans/Turks are saviors of oppressed people, and Mehmet II is the ideal leader also for the people of Byzantium who have been suppressed by their own administration. This feature distinguishes Ottoman/Turkish army from the others in the world since it is the army of 'benevolent conquerors' with altruistic

⁴⁵⁹ "Kudretimiz bu muazzam beldeyi mücahit ve din için açık bir şehir haline getirmektir."

⁴⁶⁰ "Biz isteriz ki ülkemizde yabancı bayrağı dalgalanmasın. Biz isteriz ki Boğazlar'dan ordu geçirdiğimizde hiç kimseye baş vermeyelim."

⁴⁶¹ "Evlatlara yekpare vatan verelim, istedik ki evlatlarımız bu ülkenin efendileri bizleriz dedikleri zaman bu topraklarda münafık bir düşmanla karşılaşmasınlar."

⁴⁶² "Muradımız...ahlak ve adaletin tebessua uğradığı köhne Bizans'a taze bir ruh, sağlam ve şaşmaz bir adalet getirmektir."

missions instead of greedy imperialist motivations. This is the message provided by Byzantine women and children who welcome the Ottoman/Turkish army and the Sultan with smiling faces and flowers upon their arrival to the city right after the victory. In fact, they are not the only people longing for Ottoman/Turkish rule. In *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa)*, the people living in ‘Fondi’ Castle are crushed severely by the taxes imposed on them by the Italian Count Vespasio. They get together and open the gates of the castle to the Ottoman navy led by the Ottoman admiral Barbarossa. One of them even kills Vespasio with a sword blow to help the conquering army. The grand vizier tells the Naples ambassador that Turkish pirates never plunder but are involved in *ghaza* to rescue those suffering under cruel suzerains. All these events justify the idea that the Ottomans/Turks are not after personal or economic interests.

The war, therefore, is a just war, and the Ottomans/Turks are the ‘benevolent conquerors.’ This is even a significant reason for attraction for the women of others. Vespasio’s wife Julia also wants to get saved by the Turks, saying that “I know that you come to succor the unfortunate and oppressed ones. Your name means fear for the oppressor, hope for the oppressed in the entire Mediterranean. Please, save me, too” (11:50)⁴⁶³. Venetian Donna in *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor (Selim the Resolute is Crying)* gives up her decision to go away and wants to be a part of Selim’s harem after realizing how just and tolerant he is towards his subjects. Neither Yavuz nor Barbarossa respond positively to these women’s attraction because, for the heroes, patriotic duties always have priority over love. When Julia of *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa)* wants to join the harem after he rescued her, Barbarossa says, “You are the most beautiful woman of the Mediterranean, but I cannot take you with me, you can make me feel dizzy and lose control. However, my shoulders should be firm and strong. I want to take the entire Mediterranean as my bride; I want to adorn it with the Turkish flag as its veil” (53:20-53:40).⁴⁶⁴

2.3.2.2. *The warriors:*

It should be noted that *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa)* focuses on Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa’s personality and his raids. In its narrative formulation, Sultan Süleyman, who is at the height of his political power, is depicted only in connection to

⁴⁶³ “Beni kurtarmanızı istiyorum. Siz kimsesizlerin, zulüm görenlerin imdadına koşarsınız bilirim. Bütün Akdeniz’de adınız zalimlere korku, mazlumlara ümittir. Beni de kurtarınız.”

⁴⁶⁴ “Akdeniz’in en güzel kadını sensin. Fakat seni alıp götürmem. Başımı döndürebilirsin. Halbuki omuzlarımda dimdik durmalı. Ben kendime gelin diye Akdeniz’i boydan boya almak isterim, ona duvak diye Türk sancağını takmak isterim.”

Barbarossa giving orders and appointing him as the admiral. Unlike the Sultan depictions in other movies, here, Süleyman is not on a battlefield but in his court in İstanbul getting involved in state affairs. Instead of the young Süleyman of *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor* (*Yavuz Sultan Selim is Crying*) in the battlefield, there is a mature, experienced, dignified, wise and encouraging Süleyman, corresponding to Girardet's Cincinnatus type of leader, at the Capital directing wars and administering his state. He is in the background, and the protagonist is Barbarossa. This style of depiction, with the Sultan behind the curtains and his loyal soldier in the forefront, is employed in nationalist action/adventure films. In this context, Barbarossa represents the ideal, true warrior, who fights for his country and confirms the leader's orders without questioning them. He could also be interpreted as an average or common man, because he does not come from bureaucracy or the highly educated intellectual class. When 'this common man' is at the Court to visit Süleyman, the viziers explain the codes of conduct and the protocol he must follow, such as salutation and bowing. Barbarossa listens to them reluctantly because he finds all these meaningless. In the presence of Süleyman, he bows, but the Sultan does not want him to do this and says: "So, they did not allow you to see me directly" (1:24:57).⁴⁶⁵ A similar scene is in *İstanbul'un Fethi* (*The Conquest of İstanbul*), in which Mehmet II gives orders directly to his three loyal warriors; Hasan, Hızır, and Mustafa, who are assigned to spy on Byzantium. When they ask whom to inform, Mehmet II says: "Me, directly" (11:35).⁴⁶⁶ The message in these scenes is quite significant in determining the narratives of nationalist action/adventure films that depict loyal heroes directly commanded by the Sultan. First, the Sultan is revered by an emphasis on how he is distant from his bureaucratic circles. He is the only authority and so above his bureaucrats. Therefore, there is no one, no authority to check and balance him. He could do whatever he wanted, even see his loyal men without taking the protocol into account. In the eyes of ordinary people, viziers or ministers have no power. It is the Sultan who knows and controls everything. Second, there is a sincere and personal relationship between the Sultan and his warrior. The warrior is directly responsible to the ruler. Therefore, he is expected to be much more loyal and sacrificing. When Mehmet II orders, Hasan passes unscathed through arrows and swords in the heat of the battle and plants the Turkish flag on the walls of Byzantium, and is subsequently killed. This sacrificial duty strengthens the relationship between the loyal man and the ruler.

Furthermore, loyalty is the key to success for the common man. If he follows the commands without questioning, he could gain glory. In this context, seeking personal interest,

⁴⁶⁵ "Demek beni görmene izin vermediler."

⁴⁶⁶ "Bana!"

money, or titles is undesirable; because the ideal proper warrior should be dedicating himself only to the Sultan, fatherland, nation, or empire. For instance, the Janissary Hasan in *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor (Yavuz the Resolute is Crying)* underlines that he never fights for promotion. Barbarossa does not even enjoy all the fun and entertainment organized in his honor at the court. The only thing that occupies his mind is fighting and, therefore, fulfilling his duties. These representations create a role model for a loyal man and draw a boundary with the disloyal ones. Here, the disloyal man is the one who is dizzy with entertainment, titles, money, and some other material rewards; but the loyal one always thinks about his patriotic duties. This is also a reflection of the anti-bureaucratic perspective through which the connection between the ruler and the ruled becomes much more robust, and the ruler's authority is absolutized.

The symbol of 'disloyal' man is Çandarlı Halil Pasha, the grand vizier of Mehmet II in *İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*. Having been bribed by Byzantium, he does not support Mehmet II's plans. The Sultan is not happy with his advice either; sometimes, he even says that Çandarlı continues his duty just because he is the legacy of the previous Sultan, Murat II. At one point during the siege, Çandarlı misdirects the Janissaries, causing them to fall. When Mehmet II realizes this, he says: "Is it greediness for money and property which made you like this? You are mistaken. You have forgotten that we were raised in war, and we know how to fight; we are the sons of Orhan, Yıldırım and Murat. Betrayals do not make us lose the war...Victory belongs to the Turks" (1:18:35)⁴⁶⁷. With these words, Mehmet II alienates Çandarlı, who is executed immediately after the conquest. This could reflect the anti-bureaucratic viewpoint again. Bureaucrats might have been perceived as constantly challenging the leaders' goals. This idea favors the monopolistic authority of the Sultan and severely punishes the disloyal ones. Moreover, continuity with previous Sultans is emphasized, and the war is 'Turkified' simultaneously.

The boundaries between loyalty and disloyalty also foster the myth that Turks are born as soldiers. In *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa)*, Selim, the architect Sinan's foreman, suffers from thalassophobia and has never taken a gun into his hands. Nevertheless, he evolves into a true warrior when fighting against Count Vespasio's men to save his betrothed, Hatice. Eventually, war becomes an indispensable part of his being, and he does not hesitate to leave Hatice to join Barbarossa's forces getting prepared to fight in another siege. In fact, none of these heroes in war/conquest films choose love over war, similar to the heroes of nationalist action/adventure films. This kind of portrayal emphasizes the significance of fighting for the

⁴⁶⁷ "Seni bu hale getiren para ve mal hırsı mı? Ama yanıldı. Unuttun ki biz sefer içinde büyüdük. Harp etmesini biliriz. Unuttun ki Orhanların, Yıldırımın, Muratların oğluyuz."

heroic fulfilment of the Sultan's command. It may also have a narrative advantage in that the hero should have no commitment so he can engage in new adventures.

Other natural-born fighters volunteer to fight in the war. In *Vatan ve Namık Kemal* (*Fatherland and Namık Kemal*), an older man who has lost his arm in another war, women, and youths all want to join the forces against the Russians. Among them, a young woman named Zekiye helps Sergeant Abdullah to bomb the enemies' headquarters. She, as the loyal one, in the end, receives an honor medal for her contribution. Here, the myth of the warrior nation, showing that all Turks are capable of fighting, is again strengthened. The message is that Turks could defeat the enemy even when they are in a disadvantaged situation, regardless of age or gender. Therefore, even a young Turkish woman or a child could overpower the enemy. Furthermore, Turks use their mind and intelligence, even if they are in a disadvantaged position. For example, they could be trapped in prison, or they may have few or no weapons. Despite what may happen, the Turks eliminate the enemy. The three loyal warriors of Mehmet II in *İstanbul'un Fethi* (*The Conquest of İstanbul*) hold off the Byzantine guards easily by deceiving them with some hand puppets. These kinds of examples serve to belittle the enemy and to increase the self-confidence of the Turkish nation conveying the message that 'we could defeat the enemy even if there is an imbalance in power.'

2.3.2.3. Internal and external others:

Internal enemies such as Çandarlı are always depicted as more wicked than external others. In contrast, in *İstanbul'un Fethi* (*The Conquest of İstanbul*), the Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI is portrayed as a heroic man, although he is an 'external other.' During the siege, he dresses like an ordinary Byzantine soldier, without any sign distinguishing him from the rest. He wants to fight equally to "save his nation." Just before the war, he gives an encouraging speech and asks the Venetian and Genoese people to help Byzantium: "Under the auspices of Jesus, this city has become your second homeland. I kindly ask you to fight together with us in a brotherly manner. As for me, I am determined to die for my nation, and if it is predestined, together with my nation. Do not lose your bravery and courage; put your trust in your commanders; victory is ours" (1:11:02-1:11:50).⁴⁶⁸ This speech is not dramatically different from one that any other Turkish leaders could deliver. The use of the word 'nation' interestingly

⁴⁶⁸ "Siz Venedikli, Cenevizli askerler! Bu şehir sizin ikinci vatanınız oldu. Bizimle beraber muhasara etmenizi rica ederim. Bizimle beraber kardeşçe muharebe etmenizi sizden tekrar rica ediyorum. Bana gelince; milletim için ve mukadderse milletimle beraber ölmeye kati suretle karar vermiş durumdayım. Cesaretinizi kaybetmeyin, kumandanlarınıza itimat edin. Zafer bizimdir."

reveals the producers' insistence on defining every community as 'nation.' This could be a deliberate choice for establishing parallelism and equality between Turks and Byzantium. The emperor does not say a single negative word about the Turks; instead, he appreciates their bravery and their high possibility of winning the war in several scenes. This heroic character is not only brave on his own, but he also contributes to the bravery of Turks. Another such external other is Shah İsmail, the leader of the Safavids in *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor* (*Yavuz, the Resolute is Crying*). In the Battle of Çaldıran, he refuses to shoot a Turkish prisoner of war in the back because it is not chivalrous. The bravery of the 'external' enemies or their compliance with the 'laws of war' increases the legitimacy of the war for the Turkish side.

Among the other external enemies, there are also Russians. In *Vatan ve Namık Kemal* (*Fatherland and Namık Kemal*), which is based upon a theater play, *Vatan yahut Silistre* (*Fatherland or Silistra*) from 1872, the audience is not shown the Russian nation but the commanders. The characters inform the audience about the cause of the war that Russians are trying to invade the 'fatherland.' However, we do not see any representative of the Russian nation in person. Although the protagonist continuously talks about the sacred nature of the fatherland, it is not clear where the Russians attack and for which land piece the 'Turkish' army is fighting for. The fact that it was a castle named Silistra is not stated anywhere in the film. This could be because the producers did not want to attach hostility towards the Russians onto a particular land piece to generalize it. Besides, Silistra was probably unfamiliar to the 1950s audience, therefore, it would be hard for the audience to feel attached. Hence, the producers were able to keep the anti-communist stance alive in the Cold War by not naming the land piece the Ottomans are fighting for. Another interesting case is the enemies that invade the Fondi Castle and later attack the island of Lesbos in *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa* (*Hayrettin Barbarossa*). After Hatice is kidnapped in Lesbos by the same enemies, in one scene, a man introduces himself to her saying: "an Italian aristocrat" (38:55)⁴⁶⁹. This is the only reference to the identity of enemies. The audience knows that they are Christians, because Sultan Süleyman declares that this is a *ghaza* against infidels, but there is no mention of their national or ethnic identities other than what this 'aristocrat' says. The other 'external' enemy is King Abdullah of Tlemcen in North Africa. In *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa* (*Hayrettin Barbarossa*), his plans to cooperate with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, is mentioned by several characters. He is fundamentally portrayed as cruel, greedy, and excessively interested in material things and

⁴⁶⁹ "bir İtalyan asilzadesi"

women. His corsairs kidnap Hatice, and although she says, “Save me. I am a Turk, I am Muslim” (1:00:01),⁴⁷⁰ they take her to King Abdullah’s harem.

There is no difference between the depictions of non-Muslim and Muslim enemies. Most significantly, references to nations or communities are not entirely clear. What matters, instead, is single characters instead of the entire community or the nation. For example, in *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa)*, we do not see Italians; but an Italian commander and a count, even without hearing their national or ethnic identities. King Abdullah’s Tlemcen in the same film is relatively unfamiliar to the Turkish audience. *Vatan ve Namık Kemal (Fatherland and Namık Kemal)* refers only to some imaginary Russians without embodying them. There is Shah İsmail in *Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor (Yavuz the Resolute is Crying)*, but no mention of the Safavids. The only visible community is the people of Byzantium in *İstanbul’un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul)*. This kind of depiction could be attempting to distinguish modern nations from past political entities. Except for the Turkish case, the producers do not want the audience to connect today’s modern nations with the old enemies.

2.3.3. Imagining the War of Independence in the 1950s’ Cinematic Baggage:

One group of movies that reveals the increasing interest in history while contributing to the reproduction of political myths is those about the War of Independence. The emotional circumstances of the Korean War were also influential in creating a militarist atmosphere that could easily absorb the messages presented in movies. As a result, between 1948, when the municipal entertainment tax was reduced significantly, and 1960 when the first military intervention took place, around 40 movies about the War of Independence were filmed.⁴⁷¹ This section analyzes seven available films which include: *Allahısmarladık (Goodbye, dir. Sami Ayanoğlu, 1951)*, *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş” (The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş,” dir. Faruk Kenç, 1951)*, *Bulgar Sadık (Sadık the Bulgarian, dir. Osman Seden, 1954)*, *İstiklal Harbi Ruhların Mucizesi (War of Independence, The Miracle of Souls, dir. Hayri Esen, 1954)*, *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes, dir. Agah Ün, 1958)*, *Düşman Yolları Kesti*

⁴⁷⁰ “Ben Türk’üm, Müslüman’ım. Kurtarın beni.”

⁴⁷¹ Some of the unavailable films are: *İstiklal Madalyası (War of Independence Medal, dir. Ferdi Tayfur, 1948)*; *Fato Ya İstiklal Ya Ölüm (Fato Independence or Death, dir. Turgut Demirağ, 1949)*; *Ateşten Gömlek (Shirt of Flame, dir. Vedat Örfi Bengü, 1950)*; *Ege Kahramanları, (Aegean Heroes, dir. Nuri Akıncı, 1951)*; *Hürriyet Uğrunda (For Independence, dir. Muharrem Gürses, 1954)*; *Kahraman Denizciler (Brave Sailors, dir. Refik Kemal Ardurun, 1953)*; *Bu Vatan Bizindir (This Fatherland is Ours, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1958)* and *Bu Vatanın Çocukları (This Fatherland’s Children, dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1959)*.

(*The Enemy Blocked the Road*, dir. Osman Seden, 1959), and *İzmir Ateşler İçinde* (*İzmir is in Fire*, dir. Onur Ergün, 1959).

Among the available films from the 1950s, few had been supported by the Turkish military in terms of financial sources, military equipment, and human resources. For example, the opening scene of *Allahısmarladık* (*Goodbye*) presents thanks to the General Staff, navy, and land forces, along with a ship engineer. These films were rare examples because there was no systematic state or big capital holders' support in Yeşilçam. Nevertheless, this kind of support enabled filmmakers to use authentic ships, munitions, real soldiers, and actual military uniforms. These made war scenes look much more realistic, crowded, and technological, as manifested in impressive long shots. The other way to increase the sense of reality was to use documentary footage about the occupation of İstanbul and Anatolia. These scenes also included prominent real-life figures such as Atatürk, İsmet İnönü, General Fevzi Çakmak,⁴⁷² Halide Edip Adıvar,⁴⁷³ and Mehmet VI, the last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Interestingly, the same documentary scenes were used by all films with a voice-over that explained the subject matter of these scenes. This could be an indication that the filmmakers were not comfortable with the subject matter. They may even have been afraid of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, which is unsurprising given the 1951 Law against Defaming Atatürk. Therefore, filmmakers protected themselves by using the same scenes, which seemed legitimate because they had already been used in another film. With this strategy, they did not divert from official historical understanding and eliminated any potential risks. Besides, they guided the audience about how to interpret certain scenes. This mentoring could be a beneficial strategy in overcoming false interpretations and contributing to a canonical nationalist narrative.

2.3.3.1. The warriors:

In all the films analyzed in this part, the storyline starts with the end of World War I and İstanbul's occupation by the Allies composed of British, French, and Italian forces. There is always a group of nationalists called *Kuva-yi Milliyeci* (National Forces), *Milliyeci* (Nationalists), or *Mustafa Kemalci* (Followers/Supporters of Mustafa Kemal) usually led by a handsome, likable, and masculine lieutenant as the central figure. This figure is a representation of the younger generation of professional soldiers who were nationally conscious. In fact, lieutenants were attractive characters for filmmakers because they were in direct contact with

⁴⁷² Fevzi Çakmak (1876-1950) was the Chief of General Staff in 1918-1919 and later the Minister of War in 1920.

⁴⁷³ Halide Edip (1884-1964) was a nationalist intellectual who wrote one of the first novels about İstanbul under Allied occupation.

their men, in contrast with the captains, the next highest rank who conferred with their lieutenants. Moreover, they could have been modeled after the young Mustafa Kemal. Lieutenant Süha in *İstiklal Harbi Ruhların Mucizesi (War of Independence, The Miracle of Souls)* even plans to copy what Mustafa Kemal did: ripping off all his epaulets and throwing them on the table after his condemnation to death by the Sultan. This is a repetition of what official historiography proclaims about Mustafa Kemal's free and independent personality that did not give importance to rank or titles.

The lieutenants in the films are never alone, but accompanied by sergeants and privates. In their scenes, the audience witnesses a brotherhood between all soldiers. None of the films provide information about where any of these soldiers are from or their ethnic identities. All characters speak Turkish with a proper İstanbul accent, which is the norm throughout Turkey. As for their religious affiliations, the audience assumes that they are Muslims. For a critical viewer, there are small references to soldiers' religion or at least if they are practicing Muslims or not. Two exceptions could be the soldiers' saying 'Allah Allah' in the heat of the battle, and Agent Kemal, who swears on the Quran and promises to serve his nation and his flag with loyalty in *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)*. As for the civilians, we see some imams and some veiled women but never placed at the center of the movies. There is also a reference to some people of Maraş going to the mosque for Friday prayers in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir "Şanlı Maraş"* (*The City that Saved Itself "Glorious Maraş"*). These men say Friday prayer is not permissible until the Turkish flag is raised in Maraş (42:06).⁴⁷⁴ They give priority to the independence of their cities over practicing their religion.

Besides, the films mainly focus on soldiers and desperate people. They do not mention how soldiers collaborated with intellectuals except one scene in *Allahısmarladık (Goodbye)*, in which a jailed nationalist speaks about how the Turkish nation will punish supporters of the Sultans one day. With his bowtie and jacket, he resembles a Western-educated intellectual. However, there are only teachers or doctors who help the military during the war in the films. This could be a deliberate choice for filmmakers who wanted to reach larger audiences. In fact, prototypes of teachers and doctors are generally easier to portray, and it is not unusual for ordinary people to be familiar with them in everyday life. However, the situation was more complicated for the portrayal of intellectuals because their depiction could lead to controversies that commercially minded filmmakers would want to avoid.

⁴⁷⁴ "Başucumuzda düşman bayrağı dalgalanırken bize Cuma namazı caiz değil."

2.3.3.2. *The warrior-nation:*

The Nationalists strive to deliver weapons and other supplies to armed groups to fight the occupation forces in Anatolia. Since the Nationalists are the legitimate owners of the fatherland, their fight is just. Therefore, they are fighting not because they want to kill and destroy other nations, but because their homeland is under attack, and they were almost enslaved. However, for Turks, the essential thing in life is freedom. Therefore, as Lieutenant İzzet says in *Allahısmarladık (Goodbye)*, they prefer to die with their honor to living as enslaved like the people of Africa (1:17:57-1:18:53).⁴⁷⁵ This argument also strengthens the myth that Turks were never barbarians. Besides, the voice-over in *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)* states that, like the other civilized nations in the world, they believe in the ideal of humanity, living in peace and tranquility, and being part of a strong front against any power that could threaten world peace. This might be interpreted as a reference to Turkey's NATO ideal that the Turkish nation was a part of the anti-communist free world – ‘*hür dünya*’ brought together under NATO. In this context, “the past has gone, and Turkey is a friend of its neighbors who believe in the same ideal of humanity and is determined to live as friends forever” (1:42:35-1:43:09). These lines from *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)* are in line with Turkey's Cold War foreign policy.

In realizing their mission, the main supporting power behind the nationalists consists of civilians of different ages and genders, befitting the myth of military-nation. Among these, teenage boys show up quite frequently. These are depicted as potential soldiers or potential ideal men who learn how to fight from the elderly. In *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*, sergeant Sadık teaches Mehmet, lieutenant Osman's teenage brother, how to shoot. In fact, despite his age, Mehmet is a quick learner, and after a brief practice, he hits the target. This is, of course, not surprising because Turkish men are born and raised as soldiers. Then, Osman asks Mehmet to enemy camps and learn about the number of guards for the arsenal. Mehmet's answer was befitting to his soldierly character: “don't worry, my commander” (36:55).⁴⁷⁶ Here, the audience understands that Mehmet is no longer the main character's brother but a soldier obeying the commander's demands. Although he gets caught and beaten by enemy soldiers, Mehmet achieves the assignment. In revenge, in a night raid, he attacks the particular soldier who had beaten him by saying, “you, the bandit of wilderness” (47:44),⁴⁷⁷ but this “little

⁴⁷⁵ “Burada bayrağımızın gölgesinde ecdadımızın icap ettiği zaman yaptığı gibi şerefimizle dalgaların arasına karışmak mı; yoksa Afrikalı bir zenci gibi zindanlarda esir olarak yaşamak mı?”

⁴⁷⁶ “Merak etme kumandanım.”

⁴⁷⁷ “yabanın haydudu”

soldier,” as Osman calls him, gets shot in the back. Additionally, in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş”* (*The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş”*), two boys attack drunken enemy soldiers that harass a veiled woman on the street. Then Ali Ökkeş, the leading character, appears and kills those men. He gives his gun to the boys as a gift. Here the message is that although we are a military nation, we still need adults to defeat the enemy. As the other group of men, we see older ones who had fought in previous wars and anxious to fight in this one, too, such as the imam had fought in the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş”* (*The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş”*). Here through a reference to another war, a connection is established between different generations as co-nationals, and the people are attached to the homeland. However, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish War of Independence is not entirely clear. This was probably because the people did not call themselves the Ottomans. Even in *Bulgar Sadık* (*Sadık the Bulgarian*), which depicts 1910 just before the Balkan Wars, close to the period before the First World War, the word ‘Ottomans’ is not used to name people. Instead, there are always ‘Turks,’ ‘the Turkish nation,’ or ‘heroic Turks’ adopted to define the people living in Anatolia.

Regardless of who these civilians are, the members of the warrior-nation are heroic, nationally conscious, and know how to use guns. Their almost automatic adaptation into wartime conditions reproduces the myth of Turks being a warrior nation since birth. This is not only an essentialist approach to the formation of nationhood but also imagines a nation in a von Herderian way -that is, a biological entity composed of separate cells or organs, all of which work harmoniously in fulfilling their specific functions for the same interest. This perspective suppresses any kind of differences, such as ethnic and class-based ones that could disturb societal harmony and so envisages a homogeneous and solidaristic people devoid of any conflicts. This community in the films fights for the fatherland, which is their sacred home. From this perspective, the enemies are attacking not an ordinary land but the sacred fatherland of the nation. The war, therefore, is a just war. To depict the cause of this just war, the filmmakers construct Anatolia as a beautiful land of forests and rivers where innocent people live happily and peacefully free of conflict. In *Allahısmarladık* (*Goodbye*), the occupation commander’s daughter Betty and the nationalist Lieutenant İzzet the Black Sea coast visit a Black Sea town and participate in a rural wedding ceremony. We see helpful and respectful local people there, musicians playing local songs, and young people playing folk dances. As in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş”* (*The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş”*), these depictions help the audience to imagine Anatolia as a national, untouched, and peaceful

fatherland. They guide the audience in what to imagine and how to do that by manifesting a national repertoire of songs and dances.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the cooperation within this particular community in protecting the fatherland leads to the idea that the war had been won together. Therefore, every member of the Turkish nation can be considered a hero. This idea enhances the self-confidence of the people. In this context, the general portrayal of characters in the films is worth mentioning. At first sight, they seem to be mainly featuring Lieutenants. However, it is hard to argue that the narratives were only about the main characters. There are secondary characters such as sergeants or heroic young women whose stories occupy considerable narrative portions. In fact, there are no radical differences between the time devoted to Lieutenants and secondary characters. Even most of the titles do not refer to individual heroes; instead, they refer to plural anonymous heroes as in *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)* or a city and its heroic inhabitants without like *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş” (The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş”)* or *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)*. When all these are considered within the DP’s populist discourse in the 1950s, we see the connection to the zeitgeist ‘common man’s self-confidence’ and ‘self-assertion.’

2.3.3.3. Women:

There are four groups of women helping the Nationalists. This first includes older women, such as the mother in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş” (The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş”)*. She kills her husband, Salih, with a gun because he was a spy carrying the Nationalists’ secret plans to the Sultan. After shooting her husband, she says: “God damn this traitor! If he did not die, Maraş would be lost” (01:25:55)⁴⁷⁸. In *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*, we see older and traditional-looking women with guns waiting for the Nationalists’ commands. The second group of women was younger mothers with their babies. In one scene of *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*, we see a young woman protecting a field gun from the rain instead of her baby, who was suffering from malaria. When her baby dies, she and other women are upset, but continue their mission of carrying guns to the battlefield. We see the third group of women leading all those young mothers: young Turkish women who are active on the battlefield. One of them is Zeynep in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş” (The City that Saved Itself “Glorious Maraş”)*. When the leading character Ali Ökkeş asks her to go back to her house because she is a woman, Zeynep says: “I will go

⁴⁷⁸ “Gebersin vatan haini. O ölmeseydi Maraş elden gidecekti.”

wherever you go. I am a woman. Ok. But am I not a Turkish woman? ... Look, I can use guns. In war, woman and man unite, there is no difference between them” (01:27:05).⁴⁷⁹ She subsequently falls a martyr and is buried like other martyrs wrapped in the Turkish flag. Similarly, Zehra in *İstiklal Harbi Ruhlar Mucizesi (War of Independence, The Miracle of Souls)* also says to Lieutenant Süha: “We all have the same goal...And...we should work altogether, women and men, the young and, elderly” (22:45-23:03).⁴⁸⁰ Here women perceive themselves as equal to men in realizing this goal. Another salient figure is Ayşe of *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*. Although her father was a well-to-do merchant supporting the Sultan and the occupation forces, Ayşe becomes conscious of her country’s politics after falling in love with Lieutenant Osman. At one point, she even slaps her betrothed, a pro-Sultan Lieutenant. When she breaks up with him, she enters a transformation process as reflected through her clothes. Instead of dresses and high heels, she puts on military uniforms and fights in the hills as the founder of Women’s Troops. At some point, she works as a tailor to sew Turkish flags like many other women who fulfill several duties on the battlefield. Like other members of the Turkish nation, young women are also nationally conscious, or about to gain national consciousness. Ayşe of *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*, for example, states that she learned heroism and the love for the fatherland from Lieutenant Osman (1:08:53).⁴⁸¹ She even calls him “my commander” in one scene (1:15:42-1:16:26)⁴⁸² as a sign of her respect for the military and her adaptation ability into wartime conditions. Here, love comes with national consciousness, and lovers do not reunite until the end of the war. Therefore, personal relations also become political. Interestingly, we do not see teenage girls in films. This could be simply because the storytellers did not know where to place them in the story. They were too young and could not be put in a love relationship; besides, there were already teenage boys as the potential heroes for the future, and there may have been no need for small girls.

The last group of women is the Other women represented through the daughters of occupation commanders. Betty in *Allahausmarladık (Goodbye)* and Suzy in *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)* fall in love with the principal characters-the Lieutenants. These relationships underline the protagonists’ masculinity through their desirability to Western women. One point to note is that although these women are from the enemy side, they are never evil. Instead, they are honorable, thoughtful, and sensitive characters who support the protagonists with their love.

⁴⁷⁹ “Sen nereye, ben oraya. Kadınsam kadınıam. Türk kızı değil miyim bunun ne ehemmiyeti var? Elim silah tutuyor ya se ona bak. Savaş olunca kadın erkek bir tek varlık demektir, ayrı gayrı olmaz.”

⁴⁸⁰ “Biz aynı gaye için çalışıyoruz...kadın, erkek, genç, ihtiyar çalışmalıyız.”

⁴⁸¹ “Senden kahramanlığı, vatan sevgisini öğrendim.”

⁴⁸² “komutanım”

For the main characters, however, the love for the nation is above all other relationships. Kemal, a Turkish agent, in *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)*, for example, says that he would not hold back from killing Suzy if his country wanted him to do so. On the other hand, the protagonists' approach to these women is not based on aggressiveness; they want a relatively steady and regular relationship. Therefore, the women of the Other are not 'conquered,' but the two become 'partners.' Although this partnership is still unequal considering the typical storyline that ends with those women's decisions to leave their own countries to live with the Lieutenants in Turkey, one could state that it is relatively equal compared to the evil women of the Other in historical action/adventure movies of the following decades. Besides, one of the women, Betty, is also depicted as nationally conscious. In the last scene of *Allahısmarladık (Goodbye)*, looking at the allied forces' ships, one of which is carrying her father, departing from the coast of İstanbul, she waves, saying: "Goodbye my honorable flag, my beautiful homeland" (2:00:49).⁴⁸³ These words elevate her in the audience's eyes by making her a suitable accompaniment for the Turkish hero. At this point, it should be noted that with their modern outlook, hobbies such as playing piano, and tenderness, Betty or Suzy are less controversial role models for young Turkish women who may have been bonding with cinematic characters.

2.3.3.4. External others:

There are several groups of Others. The most obvious one is, of course, external others. The audience is shown high-ranking enemy soldiers or occupation commanders making plans and giving commands. They are not represented as an evil that the audience could hate, but respectable soldiers who are fulfilling their duties. The filmmaker appreciates the Turkish nation through them. At some point, the commander in *Allahısmarladık (Goodbye)* appreciates the honor of the Turks by referring to other wars: "I have fought against Turks at close quarters for days and months in Gallipoli. I know it better than anybody: how honorable, brave, and heroic Turks are. I came here as an enemy, but now I'm leaving with friendly feelings" (01:56:17-01:56:52).⁴⁸⁴ With these sentences, the audience is reminded of the Battle of Gallipoli. This reference reinforces what the audience must know about the Turks' heroic struggles, therefore contributing to the narration of the milestones of the official nationalist

⁴⁸³ "Güle güle şerefli bayrağım, güzel vatanım."

⁴⁸⁴ "Ben Çanakkale'de Türklerle karşı karşıya, göğüs göğüse günlerce ve aylarca harbettim. Türklerin ne kadar şerefli, mert ve kahraman bir millet olduğunu herkesten daha iyi bilirim...Memleketinize düşman olarak gelip içi dostça hislerle dolu ayrılan bir asker olarak..."

historiography. Besides, these lines emphasize the Turks' being a noble nation, making it compatible with fighting within the same league of the Western powers. The commanders also have a conscience. Therefore, in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir "Şanlı Maraş"* (*The City that Saved Itself "Glorious Maraş"*), the occupation commander wants to find a solution to the spilling of blood. Here, although they are enemies, the evil sides of these characters are not overly emphasized, probably because the general atmosphere avoided offending the Western European powers who were Turkey's allies in the 1950s.

However, if the enemy was not from Western Europe but Bulgaria, the Other's representation dramatically changes. It could be related to the power balance that the Turkish foreign policy followed during the 1950s. Bulgaria was mainly a part of the communist bloc, therefore, constituted a threat to the Western anti-communist piece of land that Turkey was attached to. An excellent example of the devilish representation of the Bulgarians is in by *Bulgar Sadık (Sadık the Bulgarian)*, which is about Bulgarian comitajis (*komitacı*) terrorizing muhajirs in 1910. In it, the Bulgarian commander orders his soldiers to burn down muhajirs' houses and kill them all. Here we see evil Bulgarians entertaining themselves, consuming ample amounts of food and wine, trying to harass a Turkish muhajir woman by forcing her to dance. However, there is an exception in one scene in which Rüştü Pasha informs three Bulgarians about court decisions, and these Bulgarians become immensely grateful to the Ottoman court because of its justice and mercy. This scene serves to underline Turks' justice as opposed to the Bulgarians, who are ungrateful to the Ottoman state that has been taking care of them for centuries.

More 'Others' are the Armenians, who are also expected to be 'grateful' to the Turkish nation. This is stated by a dialogue between a wealthy Armenian landowner, Agop, a supporter of the Sultan, and his two relatives in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir "Şanlı Maraş"* (*The City that Saved Itself "Glorious Maraş"*): "We have actually been ungrateful towards Turks...Let us think, Agop Efendi. What kind of a misdeed did we see from Turks?" Agop: "That is right." First Armenian: "Agop Efendi, you are the most educated, most intelligent man among us. I guess you are influenced because your wife is a foreigner. As I know, Turks have not bowed down to any other nation, and they never will. We are content with them, so why are we betraying our fellow countrymen by serving those foreigners?" Agop: "You are right. My emotions have got the better of me. However, I, too, have eaten this nation's bread for years. I cannot deny this." Second Armenian: "Yes, we are happy that you have understood your mistake, Agop Efendi. All Armenians except you and us are fighting against the enemy together with the Turks." Witnessing the dialogue, Agop's son finds it meaningless. When the relatives

declare that the son is manipulating his father, the son grabs a gun and shoots them. Then Agop takes the weapon from the hands of his son, saying: “you the dog, you fooled me and asked me to help the enemy, and now you attempted to kill my relatives. A monster like you must not live. The fact that you are living is a shame for our family.” Then Agop kills his son (01:16:18-01:18:15).⁴⁸⁵ This particular scene is quite impressive in showing the legitimacy of the war. This means it is such a sacred struggle that fathers are killing their sons for the future of the fatherland. The scene also contributes to the Turkish nation’s justice and mercifulness by underlining the so-called ‘loyalty’ of the Armenians.

There are not many low-ranking ‘Other’ soldiers, such as privates, as if the war is simply between high-ranking men and the Turkish nation. In fact, when there is a hot conflict between two armies, documentary footage is shown. Therefore, in these scenes, the audience generally sees ships, bombs, smoke, tanks, and some troops with long shots instead of close shots of the faces of ordinary soldiers killed on fronts. One-to-one encounters between Turkish soldiers and other soldiers are not common. These representations increase the epic side but might decrease the possibility of feeling attached to those soldiers who fought on fronts. They are basically non-violent scenes, which might also cause the audience not to hold excessive hate towards the enemy. Besides, there is no single overt reference to the exact nationalities of the occupying forces in İstanbul. In *Allahaismarladık (Goodbye)*, Major Rıfat mentions them indirectly: “Let them come. From Scotland, Senegal, India, Africa, they are pouring from all over the world...the world’s huge armies...” (09:27).⁴⁸⁶ In these lines, the character only gives the names of colonies joining the occupying forces. In other words, who occupied where is not thoroughly evident in the films. The reason could be the impracticality of showing different

⁴⁸⁵ Armenian 1: “Aslını ararsanız bir Türklere karşı çok nankörlük ediyoruz.”

Agop : Doğru”

Armenian 1: “Düşünün bir kere Agop efendi biz şimdiye adar Türklere ne kötülük gördük?”

Agop: “Çok doğru”

Armenian 1: “Agop efendi sen içimizde en okumuş en akıllı adamsın ama galibe karın ecnebi olduğu için tesir altında alıyorsun. Benim bildiğim Türklere hiçbir millete boyun eğmemişlerdir ve eğmezler de. Biz onlardan memnunuz ne diye elin gavuruna hizmet edip de hemşehrilerimize hıyanet edelim.”

Agop: “Hakkınız var. Ben hislerime mağlup oldum. Halbuki ben de senelerce bu milletin ekmeğini yedim. Bunu inkar edemem.”

Armenian 1: “Tabii ya, hatanı anladığına memnun olduk Agop Efendi. Senden ve bizden başka bütün Ermeniler Türklere beraber şehri kurtarmak için düşmana karşı harp ediyor.”

Agop’s son: “Bir avuç Türk koskoca devletle başa çıkabilir mi hiç? Defolun da babamı rahat bırakın.”

Armenians: “Seni vatan haini seni babanı da kendini de kötü yola sevk ediyorsun da farkında bile değilsin ha. Biz Türklere düşmana karşı omuz omuza harp etmeye gidiyoruz.”

Armenian 2: “Eğer karşıma çıkacak olursan beynini ilk kurşuna benden yersin.”

Agop’s son: “O kadar acele etmeyin nasıl olsa düşmana karşı harp edemeyeceksiniz”

Agop: “Alçak köpek! Beni kandırıp düşmana yardım ettirdiğin yetiştirmiyormuş gibi şimdi de akrabalarımı öldürmeye kalktın. Senin gibi bir canavarın yaşaması ailemiz için lekedir.”

⁴⁸⁶ Gelsinler bakalım. İskoçya’dan, Senegal’den Hindistan’dan, Afrika’dan, dünyanın dörtbir yanından akıyorlar ...dünyanın en muazzam orduları.”

soldiers, making the narrative harder to understand. Another reason could be that the filmmakers probably did not want to offend Western European countries in the Cold War atmosphere, in which Turkey needed to find itself an ally against the Soviet threat. Besides, the emphasis only on the greatness of the enemy's armies recognizes the enemies' worth and strengthens the idea of the Turks' bravery and success despite the imbalance.

2.3.3.5. *Internal others:*

In general, the occupying forces are helped by the Sultan's troops and some other groups which do not support the War of Independence. Those helping the enemy are the true evil towards whom the audience must feel hate. More explicitly, they are 'internal enemies' as exemplified by some Lieutenants, high-ranking soldiers, prosperous merchants, bureaucrats, non-Muslims, and a few imams. Since they are against the War of Independence and collaborate with the occupying forces, they are considered traitors or enemies of the fatherland by the heroes and their surrounding groups. For example, in *Düşman Yolları Kesti* (*The Enemy Blocked the Road*), a spy carries messages to occupying forces from Ankara. In *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir "Şanlı Maraş"* (*The City that Saved Itself "Glorious Maraş"*), one imam is anxious to fight with the enemy, although the other supports the Sultan. These examples are significant to reveal the heterogeneity of the Turks. The most striking representation is of ambitious and wicked Lieutenants and some high-ranking soldiers who only think of their individual interests and therefore cooperate with the Sultan to rise in rank. The nationalist Lieutenant İzzet describes *Allahısmarladık's* (*Goodbye*) Major Celal as ready "to sell the fatherland" for an additional star on his epaulet (11:36).⁴⁸⁷ The voiceover in *İstiklal Harbi Ruhların Mucizesi* (*The War of Independence, The Miracle of Souls*) asks why those pashas and *efendis* with shining uniforms glittering medals are waiting for while Turkish soldiers in Anatolia are fighting against soldiers from all over the world. These yes-men of the Sultan belittle the ones who fought in Anatolia (05:31-06:30).⁴⁸⁸ Zeynep's father in *Kendini Kurtaran Şehir "Şanlı Maraş"* (*The City that Saved Itself "Glorious Maraş"*), says that it is not possible for a handful of "vagabonds" (*baldırıçıplak*) to defeat this enormous state. The spy who carries information to İstanbul and the occupying forces named Salih declares that these nationalists

⁴⁸⁷ "Apoletine ilave edilebilecek tek bir yıldız için bir vatan satabilir."

⁴⁸⁸ "Etrafında bir suru dalkavuk vazifesi merasimlere iştirakten başka bir şey olmayan parlak üniformalı paşalar vatan kaygısından uzak ihsan-ı şahaneye mazhar olabilmek için vatani satmaya bile gönülleri razı...Çanakkale'de Mehmetçik yedi iklimin askerleriyle savaşıyor. Şu eli tutan askerlerin burada ne isi var, göğüslerinde pırıl pırıl madalyalar olan efendiler neyi bekliyorlar niçin onlar da cephede değiller. Onlar cepheye gitseler efendilerini kim karşılayacak, kim padişahım çok yasa diyecek."

are just a group of “plunderers” (*çapulcu*) (1:18:20-1:19:47). “Bandits” is another name used for the Nationalists.

In *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*, after the group he leads attacks a rich farmhouse to find money and the necessary guns, the nationalist Lieutenant Osman says: “I have come here to take back all the money you have stolen from the nation for years by cooperating with some corrupted ones. We are not bandits. We are here to give what has been stolen from the nation back to the nation” (25:58-26:47).⁴⁸⁹ Here the emphasis on banditry might be related to the fact that nationalists were composed of irregular armies at first. Therefore, the way they were perceived could be different from how the Sultan’s troops were perceived. The irregular ones could be legitimizing their cause by saying that they were not bandits, and their real aim is not to kill people but to awaken them about the national cause. At one point, Lieutenant Osman gives the receipt for the money he seized from the wealthy owner of the farmhouse. Here they express themselves as the legitimate representatives of the national will instead of those who exploited people.

2.3.3.6. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk:

In their quest for freedom, the guide for Nationalists is Mustafa Kemal. In *İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire)*, he is described as “the world’s greatest savior and commander, the most honorable face of humanity and civilization” (1:41:02). This is a step towards the mythization of Atatürk, happening at a time when the Law against Defaming Atatürk was passed, and Menderes wanted to show himself as the real supporter of Atatürk to curtail İnönü’s charisma. Conforming with this environment, in *Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes)*, when the teenage boy Mehmet is dying, he sees Atatürk in between lights above the mountains like the dawn. These mythized Atatürk as ‘Savior’ and ‘the only political leader,’ monopolizing how he and the ideal leader could be interpreted. In this context, the emphasis is on the ordinary man, and that anybody could become a hero; you do not need superpowers. There is already a man with superpowers, and that is Atatürk. In this case, what you should do as an ordinary man is to follow Atatürk, the mythical leader as a member of the warrior nation that is obedient and heroic.

⁴⁸⁹ “Buraya senelerdir namussuzlarla uyarak milletten çaldığım paraları almak için geldim. Biz eşkıya değiliz Milletten çalınanı millete vermeye geldik.”

2.4. Concluding Remarks:

The 1950s was the beginning of a period in which the dominant political discourse characterized politics based on a struggle between the Western-oriented military/bureaucratic elite and ‘common man.’ According to the ruling DP, the western-oriented elites were isolated from the desires and interests of the ‘common man’, who was believed to be the real representative of the nation. This understanding was born parallel to various political and social transformations, such as the DP propaganda, rural to urban migration, Cold War foreign policy choices, and American influence. It also transformed social values in favor of a self-made, traditionalist, and anti-communist role model of the idealized Turk instead of a military-bureaucratic one imagined in connection with the early Republican elite. In the cultural area, a blend of the American and peripheral values, besides the increasing interest in history, came to the fore in everyday life. This marked negotiations within the official discourse and the formation of alternative imaginings of the Turkish nationhood as it could be followed through action/adventure films with historical settings shot during the period.

In fact, the 1950s also witnessed the beginning of a tremendous increase in production and consumption in Turkish cinema. Rather than simple artifacts, these complex cultural products created a world where the Turkish nation was wholly unchanged and homogeneous, yet militarist. Many action/adventure movies take their subjects from the past in this rich pool of movies. With their focus on the heroism of Turks, these movies reproduced nationalist political myths, as the analysis reveals. According to this sample, Turks are a heroic nation attached to Anatolia and İstanbul. This insertion of the nation into its current national borders could be related to the efforts of establishing good relations with the allies and, at the same time, prove that the Republic is different from the Ottoman Empire, hence always in favor of peace and never supporting imperialism. In this context, the golden age of this sample of movies starts with the War of Independence, as it could be seen even from the greater number of movies about the War of Independence in comparison to those about the Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand, there is also a selective appropriation of the Ottoman past. Specifically, the Ottomans are taken to represent the Turkish nation’s heroism, preparing the ground for today’s Republic. Therefore, the conquest of İstanbul is depicted as a heroic event in which the Turks fulfilled their national mission of bringing peace and civilization everywhere. Of course, filmmakers were cautious in not offending the allies in line with the government’s foreign policy. In this context, the enemies are never represented clearly. The soldiers' faces are blurred, there are no close shots, and hot conflicts between Turkish and enemy soldiers are not shown. Besides, although Russians are mentioned as the enemy, the

audience does not see any Russians. To avoid mentioning the Greeks, Byzantium is referred to at some point. This could be related to the filmmakers' attempts to distinguish enemies of the past from today's nation-states. The only exception is the more precise representations of the Bulgarians in *Bulgar Sadık* (*Sadık the Bulgarian*). Therefore, if the enemy is from the communist bloc, its representation changes, except for the case of Russia, the leader of the bloc. This, again, is the result of an attempt to place Turkey in the group of 'civilized' nations in line with the anti-communist propaganda messages of the Western bloc, which are mainly based on emphasizing the barbaric nature of communists in contrast to civilized westerners.

These action/adventure movies that reproduced political myths succeeded in three instances. First, they created visual baggage consisting of nationalist symbols, images, and narratives that could be used by the filmmakers of the following decade. Then, they militarized the everyday life of the 1950s by disseminating nationalist ideas through non-militaristic means. Third, they constructed an ideal leader and his warrior prototype in a period without Atatürk - 'the Father of Turks.' The perfect leader in the Ottoman context is Mehmet the Conqueror, who is a young, dynamic, healthy, and heroic Sultan with significant military capabilities. He is an Alexander type of leader in Girardet's categorization. Although he is a conqueror, he conquers İstanbul, which is a place that is meant to belong to Turks due to the oppressive regime terrorizing even its own citizens. Therefore, Mehmet is, in fact, a protector of today's Turkish homeland. In this context, the mythization of Atatürk in the films was much more intense. He is represented as the Savior in parallel to the savior myth of Girardet. He is powerful, distinct, unreachable, and unchallengeable. The warriors of the ideal leader, however, are not represented anonymously. Of course, the entire nation, including women and children, is constituted by ideal warriors. However, other than Barbarossa, no film established its entire discourse on a hero representing the ideal warrior. Instead, the ideal warrior is the whole nation without any exception.

Nevertheless, the end product of all these representations is a step toward depicting the ideal warrior as a challenge to the Europe-oriented military/bureaucratic elite. As analyzed in the following chapters, this man is expected to be active, dynamic, and masculine, in addition to being culturally conservative, anti-elitist, anti-bureaucratic, self-made, and most importantly, loyal. This depiction reinforces the power and influence of the 'common man' vis a vis the traditional military/bureaucratic elites.

CHAPTER III: The Quest for A National Leader 1960-1965

3.1. Introduction:

Regarding the rhetorical shift in the balance of power in favor of the ‘common man,’ 1960-1965 might be considered a transition period, which is significant in strengthening the popular reaction against the military/bureaucratic elite. Although the military coup of May 27, 1960 brought the military/bureaucratic elite into power once more, the DP ideological line never lost its supporters, as revealed in the 1965 nationwide elections, which resulted in the victory of the AP, the heir of the DP. In this regard, from 1960 through 1965, two main developments shaped ideological trends; hence the depictions of political myths in cinema: the revenge of the military/bureaucratic elite from the DP, and Turkey’s marginalization by the US in its foreign policy regarding Cyprus. These two developments were born into rural-urban, and older-younger generation encounters inherited from the 1950s. Consequently, the ideological climate created by all these developments influenced how nationalist political myths were reproduced in Turkish cinema.

Thus, this chapter concentrates on the impact of all these changes on the nationalist depictions of the Turkish nation in action/adventure movies produced between 1960 and 1965. As with the previous chapter, I have divided the current chapter into two main sections: the context and the films. The first section has two sub-sections: the first shedding light on the uneasy relationship between the urban alliance formed around the military/bureaucratic elite and the newly rising ‘common man’ discourse; the second dealing with Turkey’s changing foreign policy orientation and the Cyprus issue. The second main section starts with the analysis of political myths in films depicting the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the last sub-section investigates the impact of the May 27 mindset and foreign policy choices in the depictions of national identity in the films about the War of Independence.

3.2. The Context:

3.2.1. “The Revenge of the Establishment” against ‘Common Man’

The major transformation that provided a suitable atmosphere for the reproduction of various political myths, the myth of the warrior nation, mainly, was the military coup of May 27, 1960. The coup increased the military’s role in everyday life and magnified the centuries-long rift between the ‘elites’ and ‘common man’ by punishing the so-called ‘voice of the latter,’ the DP. In the eyes of the DP supporters, the coup aimed to curb their power and influence that had been rising throughout the 1950s. By the same token, Laçiner states that the coup was “the

revenge of the establishment” that enabled the striking back of the old elites, who had been disturbed by the rise of the common man, including rural landowners, the petty-bourgeois, and newly encountered migrants.⁴⁹⁰

The primary justification of the army for the intervention was the undemocratic performance of the DP that had been manifested with its elimination of opposing voices in the military, judiciary, bureaucracy, university, and the press. In fact, accompanied by a day-to-day increase in economic problems, there was discontent in bureaucrats, urban intellectuals, the industrial bourgeoisie, university students, officers, and academics. The peak was the DP’s formation of an investigation committee, claiming that the CHP was getting organized to seize political power illegally by causing an armed struggle.⁴⁹¹ For the CHP and some intellectuals, this was a direct attempt to silence alternative voices. The process ended with the army staging a coup d’état and declaring martial law on May 27, 1960.⁴⁹²

The following period brought extensive changes in the country’s political structure, all of which aimed to stop the development of any DP-type opposition. First, the DP was dissolved, many DP members were put into prison, and a military government was formed.⁴⁹³ Then, three ministers, including Adnan Menderes, the first elected prime minister, were executed for corruption and violating the Constitution. According to the junta, the executions aimed to save democracy and reinstate the Republic’s founding principles. In the same vein, the Preamble of the new Constitution stated that the ‘May 27 Revolution’ aimed to establish the rule of law, human rights, justice, and equality for all citizens, created in line with the ideals of Atatürk.⁴⁹⁴ Here, the word ‘revolution’ is quite significant in revealing the perception of the coup by the junta and its supporters as a radical outbreak from the DP past. Besides, the Constitution redesigned the parliamentary system as a bicameral legislature with a National Assembly and Senate, the latter responsible for checking and balancing the former. According to Dodd, this new structure reveals a certain distrust in how democracy and elections function in the Turkish case. In other words, the elites were suspicious of the choices of the masses, and they wanted

⁴⁹⁰ Sedat Laçiner, “Turkish Foreign policy between 1960-1971: neo-Kemalism vs. neo-Democrats?” *USAK Yearbook of Politics and International Relations*, No: 3 (2010): 172.

⁴⁹¹ Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*, 229. The Investigation Committee also attempted to control the press with some legal provisions besides the power to confiscate publications, close newspapers and printing houses. For more details see: Hıfzı Topuz, *II. Mahmut’tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2015), 208-225.

⁴⁹² Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Siyasetinin Yapısal Analizi-II (1920-1960)* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2012), 214, 333; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 242.

⁴⁹³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 250-251.

⁴⁹⁴ Sadık Balkan, Ahmet E. Uysal and Kemal H. Karpat (trans.), *Constitution of the Turkish Republic*, Ankara 1961. <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/1961constitution-text.pdf>

to block the formation of another oppressive government similar to the DP.⁴⁹⁵ Thus, although the Constitution was democratic in its outlook, it also reflected the Jacobin mentality of the military/bureaucratic elite.

Mümtaz Soysal, a law professor who was appointed to the Founding Assembly that prepared the Constitution, indicated in the following years that the 1961 Constitution was based on a “dialectic”, meaning that while it aimed to support the democratic system based on elections, it also wanted to continue the top-down reforms imposed by the Republican military/bureaucratic elite.⁴⁹⁶ This is not peculiar given the Turkish army’s central historical role in Turkish political culture, as reflected in the myth of the warrior nation. Throughout Republican history, the army functioned as the protector of the regime against ‘reactionary forces.’⁴⁹⁷ The 1960 intervention, in this context, was basically the consequence of some military officers’ concerns about the survival of the regime.

Indeed, the army was not alone, and the urban bourgeoisie, including a large student population and the intelligentsia, welcomed the coup with the “explosions of public joy” in Zürcher’s words, especially in Ankara and İstanbul.⁴⁹⁸ For them, the coup was the end of a ‘corrupted’ and ‘decadent’ regime.⁴⁹⁹ Besides, from the perspective of the *Yön* (Direction)⁵⁰⁰ circle gathered around the nationalist-leftist journal under the same name, the DP symbolized Turkey’s submission to imperialist powers. The coup, therefore, also symbolized the fight against imperialists by ‘progressive elites’ or the vigorous powers (*zinde kuvvetler*), namely the army, youth, urban bourgeoisie as it had been in the Third World countries.⁵⁰¹ This is why the journal mainly defended neo-etatism in favor of planning and development; and national capital instead of the global capitalism and increasing American influence that had dominated the DP era.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁵ Clement H. Dodd, *Politics and Government in Turkey* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 107-127.

⁴⁹⁶ Mümtaz Soysal, “Anayasa Diyalektiği Açısından Özerk Kuruluşların Görevi,” *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 24 (4), (April 1969): 111-124.

⁴⁹⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1977), 194.

⁴⁹⁸ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 244.

⁴⁹⁹ Semih Vaner, “The Army” in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, eds. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 251-252.

⁵⁰⁰ For an analysis of *Yön* views see: Hikmet Özdemir, *Kalkınmada Bir Strateji Arayışı Yön Hareketi* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1986), Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, *27 Mayıs ve Yön Hareketinin Sınıfsal Eleştirisi* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1970); H. Bayram Kaçmazoğlu, *27 Mayıs’tan 12 Mart’a Türkiye’de Siyasal Fikir Hareketleri* (İstanbul: Doğu Kitabevi, 2013); Mehmet Arı, “Türkiye’de Sol Milliyetçilik (I): Yön Hareketi,” *Birikim*, No. 67 (1994): 25-35; Kemal H. Karpat, “Yön ve Devletçilik Üzerine,” *Forum*, (December 15, 1962; January 1, 1963, January 15, 1963); Kurtuluş Kayalı, “Kalkınmada Bir Strateji Arayışı: Yön Hareketi,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol. 9, No. 51 (March 1988): 61–63.

⁵⁰¹ Kaçmazoğlu, *27 Mayıs’tan 12 Mart’a Türkiye’de Siyasal Fikir Hareketleri*, 45.

⁵⁰² Türkkaya Ataöv, “The 27th May Revolution and Its Aftermath,” *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations 1960-1961* (1982), 20.

On the other hand, unlike the urban bourgeoisie and the *Yön* circle, rural countryside, petty-bourgeois, and traditional landowners were silent during the DP members' trials and the subsequent executions of its leading cadre. In fact, as stated by Zürcher and Szyliowicz, there was no evidence of any sharp decrease in Menderes's popularity.⁵⁰³ Even the referendum results for the Constitution, which had 61.7 per cent yes and 38.3 per cent no votes,⁵⁰⁴ revealed that the change was insignificant because this percentage for 'no' was somewhat equal to Menderes' vote in general. This shows that most former DP supporters probably remained loyal to their parties, or at least its ideals.⁵⁰⁵ As a result, as soon as the ban on political parties was lifted in 1961, one of the established parties was the AP, which described itself as the heir of the DP. For this political line, the coup could be a kind of *déjà vu* of the historical oppression of 'common man' by the 'despotic elites.' In this time of junta, the supporters were also afraid of losing the advantages and social mobility they had achieved due to the liberal policies that had enabled the development of rural-originated petty-bourgeois. In fact, in the DP era, the intensified communication through a good network of roads, public transportation, and cars funded mainly by the US were positive developments for the peasants, merchants, and wealthy landowners who could travel quickly to the cities.⁵⁰⁶

Keyder maintains that although migrants to urban centers had been a part of the city economically, they had not integrated culturally. For example, Ankara kept its elitist heritage as the capital of the new and westernized Republic and so discriminated against the migrants in everyday life. The reaction of the migrants to this was to retain their own rural culture in their squatter settlements.⁵⁰⁷ On the other hand, despite cultural disintegration, the increasing economic activity and interconnectedness in the 1950s had already injected everybody's minds with the hope for a future potential social mobility. Many entrepreneurs, small producers of rural origin, or peasants had already come to cities and become more visible. Thanks to the multiparty system, they could find new channels, such as the new political parties, to deliver their demands like the rest of the population.⁵⁰⁸ In fact, the new living conditions of these

⁵⁰³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 244; Joseph S. Szyliowicz, "The Political Dynamics of Rural Turkey," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Autumn, 1962): 430.

⁵⁰⁴ Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz and Christof Hartmann (eds.), *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook, Vol. I Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 254.

⁵⁰⁵ Szyliowicz, "The Political Dynamics of Rural Turkey," 430.

⁵⁰⁶ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 226-228.

⁵⁰⁷ Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey A Study in Capitalist Development*, 136-137. Besides, for an ethnographic study on experiences and self-identification of second generation migrants, females in particular, see: Tahire Erman, "Becoming 'Urban' or Remaining 'Rural': The Views of Turkish Rural-to-Urban Migrants on the 'Integration' Question," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30 (4), (1998): 541-561.

⁵⁰⁸ Sungur Savran, "1960, 1971, 1980: Toplumsal Mücadeleler, Askeri Müdahaleler," *11. Tez*, No: 6, (1987): 138-139.

migrants were critical in their increasing demands. Many of them did not have sufficient means, so they were living in *gecekondu* settlements, which were close to industrial areas and without infrastructure. As a result, those populist politicians who wanted to gather votes used essential needs such as electricity, running water, and housing licenses as propaganda tools. The period also witnessed a tremendous explosion in housing construction and the rise of apartments for middle-class nearby the *gecekondu* areas.⁵⁰⁹ Given that the *gecekondu* inhabitants worked in the centers, some as the doormen of the newly built apartments or the cleaning ladies, everyday encounters between the middle classes and *gecekondu* inhabitants intensified. Besides, the newcomers mostly embraced their old customs and habits due to their marginalization in the city.⁵¹⁰ Therefore, in most instances, there was disintegration and marginalization instead of the peaceful coexistence both groups. In the late 1950s, when the middle class disintegrated due to increasing inflation and economic crisis, they felt that the migrants had taken their places. Kenneth Fidel states, “The teachers and the government employees were also pushed aside by these people from villages. They could no longer afford to live in the good quarters of the town...They could not afford to buy clothing anymore. All these people were stripped of the one thing that kept them proud throughout the years—the self-respect, and their pride in being the most advanced sector of the population was taken away by the cost of living (due to increasing inflation), and the newly rich farmers and merchants.”⁵¹¹ Therefore, those educated urban classes, who had long been the symbols of Turkey’s modernization, also felt both socially and economically marginalized as they had been pushed aside both by populist politicians, rural capital holders who had recently migrated to the city, and the other migrants who had false hopes regarding upward social mobility. In the end, this meant a rhetorical change in the hierarchical order of elites. Consequently, the anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucratic discourse of the DP line supporters became a significant theme in the dominant political discourse.

However, due to DP’s lack of industrial support, the big industrial bourgeoisie had been discontented with the DP regime. In the 1950s, the *laissez-faire* economic policies and overvalued exchange rates had made importing a profitable business, and therefore, no one was willing to invest in the industry. Thus, the industry was weak.⁵¹² There was also a competition for sharing economic and political resources between rural-based petty merchants and city-

⁵⁰⁹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 229.

⁵¹⁰ Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey A Study in Capitalist Development*, 136-137.

⁵¹¹ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 99.

⁵¹² Ayşe Öncü, “Chambers of Industry in Turkey: An Inquiry into State-Industry Relations as a Distributive Domain” in *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Turkey*, eds. Ergun Özbudun and Aydın Ulusan (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980), 465.

based manufacturers over time. So, the latter defended the planned economy, and the Freedom Party (*Hürriyet Partisi*) was established as an industrial alternative to the DP's emphasis on the petty bourgeois. However, the party later joined the CHP.⁵¹³ Besides, the army officers had issues with the DP regime because they believed that they had lost their favorable status. Hale states that the officers "felt robbed of the central role in Turkish political culture they had traditionally enjoyed."⁵¹⁴ Karpat explains this by referring to interviews he held with several army officers right after the coup. Accordingly, military officers felt their status had deteriorated because of rising inflation and the emergence of a new American-style culture based on material wealth, making them less prestigious in the eyes of the 'common man,' who had rising hopes for social mobility.⁵¹⁵

During the period, the representational power of the army also declined.⁵¹⁶ As Özbudun reveals, with the DP in power, the number of parliament members with a military background decreased from 54.7 per cent between 1943-1946 to 22 per cent between 1950-1954.⁵¹⁷ There were many tradesmen and lawyers in the DP-led parliament, in contrast with the public officials in the previous one. Another point that decreased military officers' status was related to the army's transformation due to the aid Turkey received as a part of the Truman Doctrine and its membership in NATO. The weapons, military training, and organization, in general, were all modernized. This led to an increasing prestige of technical branches with particular contact with the West, such as the air force and navy. The land forces and middle-ranked officers perceived all these "as the degradation of its own institutional prestige and a challenge to its image within society," as Vaner states.⁵¹⁸

The most dynamic group that was not happy with the DP regime was the university students. Ironically, the power of that group rested on the DP, which opened new universities in line with its populist policies. For the DP, this had meant saving university education from the hands of the elites. The point that the DP failed to calculate was the composition of students. According to Kazamias and Szyliowicz, most university students were of middle-class urban origin; their parents were at least workers or state officers, and this continued even in the

⁵¹³ Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey A Study in Capitalist Development*, 142.

⁵¹⁴ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 98-99

⁵¹⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Military and Politics in Turkey, 1960-1964: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of a Revolution," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No.6 (Oct. 1970), 1663.

⁵¹⁶ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 88-99.

⁵¹⁷ Ergun Özbudun, *Türkiye'de Sosyal Değişme ve Siyasal Katılma* (Ankara: AÜHF Yayınları, 1975), 41-42. Özbudun's work is based on an earlier research by Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965).

⁵¹⁸ Vaner, "The Army," 237-238.

1960s.⁵¹⁹ This meant that the parents had probably received a Kemalist education, and it is not entirely wrong to assume that the early childhood socialization of those students had been realized chiefly in Kemalist families. This could be one reason why most university students were secular, nationalist, and Kemalist, with very few conservative students among them. They found the DP government to be corrupt and organized many protests due to their powerful student unions, which were significant enough to scare the DP government. The peak of the student protests before the coup were those of 28-29 April 1960, which ended with the death of a student, Turan Emeksiz, due to a police bullet. Immediately after the coup, Emeksiz became a symbol of resistance against the DP's oppression, and his corpse was removed from where it had been buried secretly by the DP to block potential protests. The coup administration reburied him in Atatürk's Mausoleum together with three other students who had died in other demonstrations. A state funeral modeled after that of Atatürk was organized, and the students were given the title of 'Revolution Martyrs.' The names of students were given to roads, schools, and some vehicles. Moreover, some soil samples were brought from different places to put into their graves. These places included the Tomb of Ertuğrul Ghazi, which was the tomb of the father of Osman and the founder of the Ottoman Empire; Aziziye Bastions, which served in the 19th century to defend Ottoman cities from the Russian and Armenian attacks; Çanakkale Martyrs' Memorial, which had been built to commemorate the 253,000 Turkish soldiers who had fought in the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915-1916; Dumlupınar, the district in which the last battle against the Greeks between 1919-1922 had taken place; and finally Cyprus, which had started its struggle with EOKA's advancement of the political union of Cyprus and Greece. All these gestures revered the students to the position of Turkish soldiers that fought to save Turks from oppressors in different periods of history.⁵²⁰

The heroization of students was the new regime's strategy of legitimization by taking its roots back to the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, it reproduced the myth of the warrior nation by leading to the perception of university students as an army of the national mission next to the military's actual army. Therefore, the founding elite, which took power with the coup, turned their faces to the educated youth. For them, the youth of the

⁵¹⁹ Andreas Kazamias, *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 278; Szyliowicz, *A Political Analysis of Student Activism: The Turkish Case* (London: SAGE Publications, 1972), 77. For a comprehensive survey of sources about the class origins of students in Turkey see: Emin Alper, *Student Movement in Turkey from A Global Perspective 1960-1971*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boğaziçi University (2009); Demet Lüküslü, "60lı Yılları Gençlik Kategorisi Üzerinden Okumak: Modernist Söylemin Savunucusu ve Aktörü Olarak Gençlik" in *Modernizmin Yansımaları: 60lı Yıllarda Türkiye*, eds. R. Funda Barbaros and Erik-Jan Zürcher (Ankara: Efil Yayınevi, 2013), 214-218.

⁵²⁰ Turgay Gülpinar, "Anıtkabir'in Unutulan Kabirleri" in *Neye Yarar Hatıralar? Bellek ve Siyaset Çalışmaları*, ed. Pınar Melis Yelsalı Parmaksız (Ankara: Phoenix, 2012), 81-150.

country, who had received a Kemalist education and were therefore intellectual, were ideal to adopt the duty of continuing Atatürk's revolution as inheritors. They were uncorrupted, idealist, brave, and trustworthy, symbolizing a fresh and dynamic re-start for modernization, which had been interrupted during the DP period. An outcome of this belief was to lower the voting age from 21 to 18.⁵²¹

The youth gained self-confidence, too. In fact, students were already a privileged group consisting of 1.5. per cent of the population aged between 18-24.⁵²² Most of them could find jobs very easily upon their graduation.⁵²³ Nevertheless, the mission attributed to them did not remain unanswered. On the first anniversary of the April 1960 protests, The National Turkish Students Union (*Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*, MTTB) issued a declaration: "As the patriotic youth of a nation which gave thousands of martyrs for generations for the ideal of liberty, by considering liberty more sacred than our lives, we will not refrain from giving new martyrs for this purpose if it is needed".⁵²⁴ Another declaration from the third anniversary says: "The 28-29 Aprils are the celebration of the great victory of the Turkish youth against all kinds of exploiters. On behalf of the Turkish youth that we represent, we continue to remind those who are presumptuous, against the parliamentary regime, against the Constitutional system and laws emanating from it, against Atatürk's principles, who want to overshadow May 27, attack the honorable Turkish army and the Turkish youth, disrupt the unity and tranquility of the great Turkish nation, of 28-29 April and warn them once again to pull themselves together."⁵²⁵ As

⁵²¹ Ümit Güveyi, "Türkiye'de Seçme ve Seçilme Hakkı Boyutunda Yaşanan Demokratikleşme Sürecinin Kısa Tarihçesi ve Bu Süreçte Kadim Türk Kültürünün Rolü," *Türkiye Barolar Birliği Dergisi*, No. 137, (July-Aug. 2018): 51.

⁵²² T.C. Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, *1959 İstatistik Yıllığı* (Ankara: Yeni Cezaevi Basımevi, 1961), 146, 157.

⁵²³ Herbert H. Hyman, Arif Payaşlıoğlu, Frederic W. Frey "The Values of Turkish College Youth" *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1958): 289, cited in Alper, *Student Movement in Turkey from A Global Perspective 1960-1971*, 148; Özer Ozankaya *Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Siyasal Yönelimleri* (Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1966), 75, cited in Alper, *Student Movement in Turkey from A Global Perspective 1960-1971*, 151.

⁵²⁴ "Hürriyet ideali uğruna nesiller boyunca binlerce şehit vermiş bir milletin vatansever gençleri olarak, hürriyeti canımızdan aziz bilerek icabederse bu uğurda yeni şehitler vermekten çekinmeyeceğiz. Bizleri yürekten sarsan hazin bir yıldönümü, hürriyet şehitlerinin aziz hatıraları önünde hürmet ve muhabbetle eğilirken onların ölmez ruhlarını bir bayrak gibi selamlarız." 28 April 1961, "MTTB Declaration," cited in Harun Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik* (İstanbul: Literatür, 2015), 20.

⁵²⁵ "28-29 Nisanlar Türk gençliğinin, her türlü istismarcılara karşı kazandığı büyük zaferin bayramıdır. Temsilcileri bulunduğumuz Türk gençleri adına kendini bilmezlere, parlamenter rejim aleyhtarlarına, Anayasa düzeninin ve onun ruhundan doğan kanunların karşısında bulunanlara, Atatürk ilkelerine karşı olanlara, 27 Mayıs'ı gölgelemek isteyenlere, şerefli Türk ordusuna ve Türk gençliğine dil uzatanlara, büyük Türk milletinin bölünmez bütünlüğünü ve huzurunu bozmak isteyenlere, daima 28, 29 Nisanı hatırlatır, kendilerine gelmelerini bir defa daha ihtar ederiz." 29 April 1963, "Türkiye Milli Gençlik Teşkilatı (TGMT), Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu (TMTF), Ankara Üniversitesi Talebe Birliği (AÜTB) Common Declaration" cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 21.

these lines reveal, the students also appropriated and internalized the role of inheritors attributed to them by the ‘establishment.’

Thus, the May 27, 1960 coup alliance formed by the military/bureaucratic elite, industrial bourgeois, and university students perceived the DP as a threat to the fundamentals of the Kemalist regime. In this regard, the threat of the DP was suppressed, entailing the symbolic suppression of non-elite populations, including those who had just migrated to the city with the hopes of upward social mobility. Having lost its confidence in the electoral choices of those sections of the population, the elite adopted a Jacobin discourse to ‘transform’ society so that it would not produce another DP. One of the reflections of the May 27 coalition mentality in cinema was the social realist movies made between 1960-1965. Although these movies are beyond the limits of the current dissertation, which concentrates on action/adventure films, I must emphasize that they also contributed to the formation of nationalist political myths with their depictions of the youth as idealized nationalist heroes struggling against the bigotry of the periphery, or greedy desires of the capitalists. Moreover, these movies contributed to the imagining of the Turkish nation as fighting together for the same goal despite social class differences.⁵²⁶

3.2.2. Foreign Policy Dynamics:

The end of the 1950s also witnessed Turkey’s isolation in the international arena, mainly because of the army’s questioning attitude towards Turkey’s unequal bilateral relationships and the Cyprus policy. In this context, one of the first things that the junta administration and the first coalition government of İnönü did was to declare internationally that Turkey would continue to follow its commitment to the West.⁵²⁷ The army, however, had a doubtful attitude towards the West because the relations between Turkey and the West did not depend on equal principles and, therefore, were likely to creating new capitulations for Turkey. For example, according to the 1954 Agreement with the US, an American soldier was not under Turkish jurisdiction if he was on duty. Turkish Customs did not even control goods

⁵²⁶ Some of the available social realist films are: *Gecelerin Ötesi (Beyond the Nights)*, dir. Metin Erksan, 1960); *Otobüs Yolcuları (Bus Passengers)*, dir. Ertem Göreç, 1961); *Şehirdeki Yabancı (Stranger in the City)*, dir. Halit Refiğ, 1962); *Şafak Bekçileri (Watchmen of Dawn)*, dir. Halit Refiğ, 1963); *Gurbet Kuşları (Birds of Exile)*, dir. Halit Refiğ, 1964); *Bitmeyen Yol (The Never-Ending Road)*, dir. Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1965); *Suçlular Aramızda (Criminals are Among Us)*, dir. Metin Erksan, 1964); and *Karanlıkta Uyananlar (Those Awakening in the Dark)*, dir. Ertem Göreç, 1965).

⁵²⁷ “The Coup Maker; Cemal Gürsel,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1960, <https://www.nytimes.com/1960/05/28/archives/the-coup-maker-cemal-gursel.html>; “Zorlu, ‘En kısa zamanda seçime gidilecek, dedi,” *Milliyet*, 27 May 1960; “Gürsel ‘Diktatör olmayacağım’ dedi,” *Milliyet*, 28 May 1960; İsmail Arar, *Hükümet Programları, 1920-1965 (İstanbul: Burçak Yayınevi, 1968)*, 312-350.

sent to Turkey from the US. There had been some secret agreements as well. As a result, the coup administration was not content with the DP's pro-US policies and favored balanced relations.⁵²⁸

The army's distrust created a convenient intellectual environment to discuss new directions and alternative leanings in Turkish foreign policy. In fact, there were already many criticizing Turkey's close relationship with the West. One group was the Islamists, but at that time, they were weak and did not have much influence on the state when compared to other groups. The two powerful groups were the Kemalists with leftist orientation gathered around the journals, *Yön* and *Aydınlık*.⁵²⁹ According to the authors associated with these groups, Turkey should continue its anti-imperialist fight that had started with Atatürk and the War of Independence.⁵³⁰ In this framework, the authors argued that the West was trying to colonize Turkey as it had done in the Third World countries. Therefore, its relationship with the West would not work for Turkey's benefit; in fact, they would make Turkey much more dependent, unstable, and hence backward.⁵³¹ Besides, these intellectuals thought that the coup was an absolute necessity for saving Turkey from the hands of the imperialists⁵³² because businesspeople and the DP, or any parties in the same ideological tendency, collaborated with these imperialist powers.⁵³³

The cooling of relations between Turkey and the West happened over the Cyprus issue, which had already been a subject of public debate in the 1950s with the EOKA attacking the British and Cypriot Turks, and the subsequent İstanbul Pogrom. In the Zurich and London Conferences of 1959, Cyprus became a Republic under the guarantorship of Britain, Turkey, and Greece, which had symbolic military forces on the island. The junta and the following coalition government of the CHP and AP ratified this agreement and did not vote for the further changes demanded by Makarios III, the Archbishop of the Church of Cyprus, and the First

⁵²⁸ Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 12-14.

⁵²⁹ Mehmet Gönübol, "A Short Appraisal of Foreign Policy of the Turkish Republic," *Milletlerarası Münasebetler Türk Yıllığı*, No. 14, (1974): 8.

⁵³⁰ For example, see: Behzat Ay, "Ekonomide Atatürkçülük," *Yön*, No. 48, (Nov. 14, 1962); Niyazi Berkes, "200 Yıldır Neden Bocalıyoruz: VII-Atatürkçülük Nedir Ne Değildir?" *Yön*, No. 63, (Febr. 27, 1963); Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, "Türk Sosyalizminin İlkeleri," *Yön*, No. 56, (Jan 9, 1963).

⁵³¹ Çetin Altan, *Onlar Uyanırken: Türk Sosyalistlerinin El Kitabı* (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2017); Ataöv, *Amerika, NATO ve Türkiye* (İstanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2006); Mehmet Ali Aybar, *Bağımsızlık, Demokrasi, Sosyalizm* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1968).

⁵³² Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Devrim ve Demokrasi Üzerine* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1997); *Türkiye'nin Düzeni: Dün Bugün Yarın* (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi, 2018).

⁵³³ Mihri Belli, "Ulusal Demokratik Devrim," *Aydınlık*, (May 27, 1966) in *Yazılar: 1965-1970* (Ankara: Sol Yayınları, 1970), 12-24; Avcıoğlu, "Bir Sosyalist Stratejinin Esasları," *Yön*, No. 185, (Oct. 14, 1966).

President of Cyprus.⁵³⁴ However, some bloody incidents started soon after, resulting in intercommunal violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The most remarkable incident was that of Bloody Christmas, which occurred on 20-21 December 1963 and led to the death of more than five hundred Cypriots, most of them being from the Turkish side. Consequently, 25,000 Turkish Cypriots had to flee their homes. At this point, Turkey asked for the intervention of the guarantor states, while at the same time, the Turkish Assembly allowed its government to intervene in Cyprus if needed.⁵³⁵ Although the Western powers' reactions were quite adverse, Turkey did not stop and even started to fly over Cyprus in a threatening manner. Finally, in June 1964, the Turkish government received President Johnson's Letter saying that Turkey was not permitted to use US military equipment in operation in Cyprus. The letter also stated that NATO could not defend Turkey in the event of Soviet aggression provoked by possible Turkish military intervention in Cyprus.⁵³⁶ This letter, unquestionably, was a turning point that resulted in the cooling of Turkey's ties with the US by spreading the idea that the Western powers had betrayed Turkey. It also increased anti-imperialist and anti-US sentiments.

Thus, Turkey's foreign policy dynamics were mainly shaped around the deterioration of Turkey's relationships with the West due to the Cyprus issue. Although Turkey tried to approach the SU, this did not fit well into the anti-communist nationalist discourse popularized in the shadow of the Cold War. These situations also provided a suitable playground for the gradual adoption of nationalist political myths that would reflect on action/adventure films.

3.3. Cinema and the Reproduction of Political Myths:

3.3.1. Questioning the Ottoman State in Cinema:

It must be first noted that Turkey's foreign policy moves hardly have any relationship with the depictions of the Ottoman past between 1960-1965. However, the movies depicting the Ottoman Empire were significant in reproducing political myths. I was able to find only four movies about the Ottoman Empire made between 1960 and 1965. Among those, two take the Ottoman Empire as a political entity while the other four use the empire only as a cultural

⁵³⁴ "Appendix 1: Conference on Cyprus, documents signed and initialled at Lancaster House on 19 February 1959," https://www.embargoed.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1959_London_and_Zurich_-Agreements.pdf; Richard Clogg, "Troubled Alliance: Greece and Turkey" in *Greece in the 1980s*, ed. Richard Clogg (London and Basingtone: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 130-131.

⁵³⁵ For details of Bloody Christmas and the trauma it created in Cypriot Turks, see: Etienne Copeaux and Claire Mauss-Copeaux, *Taksim! Bölünmüş Kıbrıs 1964-2005* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 58-69.

⁵³⁶ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 107.

backdrop.⁵³⁷ These two films are *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat)*, dir. Yavuz Yalınkılıncı, 1962) and *Harem'de Dört Kadın (Four Women in the Harem)*, dir. Halit Refiğ, 1965). At this point, I should state that the second movie, *Harem'de Dört Kadın (Four Women in the Harem)*, is a drama and not an action/adventure film. Despite that, I included it in my analysis since the number of movies from 1960-1965 is limited.

Furthermore, in the shadow of the 1960 intervention, which declared the previous government illegitimate, my sample depicts the collapse of the Ottoman state mechanism caused by corrupted administrators. Therefore, unlike the sample from the 1950s, which concentrates on the sultans' conquests in different lands, the sample of 1960-1965 shows how things went out of control in the capital city of İstanbul during a period of relative stagnation. In the minds of the filmmakers of the period, this period of relative stagnation could be associated with the DP era, and the attempt to depict this in the movies could be again related to how the military/bureaucratic elite might have felt itself once it lost its power to the masses.

3.3.1.1. The Leader and Internal Others:

Compared to the depictions of the Sultans in the films of the 1950s, *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat)* presents a more in-depth examination of the Sultan's personality. This could be related to the point that unlike the periods of conquests that had occupied the minds of filmmakers in the 1950s, Murat IV reigned in the first half of the seventeenth century, a period of chaos and stagnation, during which the political order was disrupted due to corruption, bribery and racketeering of both bureaucrats and subjects of the empire. Under conditions such as the strangling of his older brother Osman the Young by the Janissaries and the dethronement of his uncle Mustafa I, Murat IV is portrayed in a depressed and paranoid state of mind, continuously living in the terror of being murdered since the time he has crowned at the age of eleven. Thus, this character could be considered not only the representation of a Sultan but also the entire decayed Ottoman political structure.

Taking advantage of Murat's young age, his mother, Kösem, and several bureaucrats try to manipulate him for their interests. When Murat gets older, he realizes that everyone, including the royal doctor who smoked opium despite stern measures, are trying to deceive him. Then he makes the following statements, which seem rather anachronical: "I gave my nation

⁵³⁷ An example to those available films using the Ottoman Empire as a cultural backdrop is *Gönülden Gönüle (From Heart to Heart)*, dir. Süha Doğan, 1961). It tells the amorous relationship of a composer. The other film from the same group but not available, is *Sayılı Kabadayılar (A Few Gangsters)*, dir. Hasan Kazankaya, 1965). It is a crime story in which a gangster wants to take the revenge of his brother.

my word of honor⁵³⁸ (41:34). I will punish those who disturb the order and involve unjust acts. I could even punish my mother for the interests of my state and my nation” (53:34-53:45).⁵³⁹ His choice of the word ‘nation,’ a modern concept, to name seventeenth-century Ottoman society, reveals the filmmakers’ possible attempts to explain contemporary times. The ruler, here, has a ‘national’ mission of protecting the state order and the nation. In this context, he is a victim of his hostile environment, which makes his representation neither positive nor negative, maybe even more positive. Here, to push it a little further, given the absence of entirely negative representation, Murat could be representing an ideal ruler who is aware of his duties, ready to sacrifice even his mother for realizing these goals; but cannot get out of the frame because ‘internal’ enemies surround him. This representation reflects the anti-bureaucratic building block of Turkish nationalism that increases the ruler's power. Then, because Kösem and the bureaucratic circle have already lost their credibility, Murat disguises himself as a commoner and goes out to observe the problems of his subjects with his own eyes. Although what he does is instead policing, his words could be revealing another possible feature of the ideal ruler: direct communication with people without any intermediaries.

3.3.1.2. *The Warrior:*

When Murat of *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat)* is in the streets of İstanbul one day, he meets Rüstemoğlu Osman. This man is young, outspoken, brave, and strong and from somewhere in Anatolia. Here the myth of the national homeland is reproduced in relation to Anatolia, confirming the official discourse based upon the Turkish History Thesis. In this regard, although it could be far-fetched, Osman could be considered the ideal Turkish youth who would be the inheritor of the regime. Osman comes to İstanbul after he fights with men of a beg who wants to racketeer his family. His uncle thinks these men attacked them because it is a period of nepotism in which titles are gained by paying money instead of success and courage. This remark could be seen as a critique of the DP period, in which incapable people had status and influence or, in fact, any corrupted regime that is not merit-based. After this altercation, Osman promises his mother not to fight again but to study in a *medrese* in İstanbul. His mother has always wanted him to do this since he was a child, as shown in a particular scene in which Osman and his nephew ‘play war’ with wooden swords on wooden horses as little children. Watching these two, Osman’s mother and uncle have a short conversation in which the uncle expects Osman to become a brave warrior like all Turkish

⁵³⁸ “Milletime namus sözüm var”

⁵³⁹ “Anam olarak başımın üstünde yerin var fakat devletimin, milletimin menfaati için seni de harcarım.”

men, whereas the mother wants him to receive an education and so become a “great man.” For her, education is the only way for him “to save himself from being enslaved by another man.” (5:29-5:48). In this scene, the uncle seems to contribute to the myth of the warrior nation by emphasizing how warlike Turkish men are. However, what is stated by Osman’s mother is intriguing in the sense that for the first time in my sample of films, a female character, is challenging the myth of the warrior nation by emphasizing education over fighting. However, in the end, Osman becomes a warrior, and this might relate to the legitimacy of the fight. That is to say, the fight that Osman was in his hometown may not be as legitimate as the wars that he participated in as a loyal soldier of Murat. From this perspective, a physical fight with some corrupted men is meaningless because the only way to destroy them is to establish a meritocratic society.

While Osman of *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat)* is hanging around in the open market when he comes to İstanbul, he sees a swindler stealing an older man’s money. Osman helps the older man and gives some money to him. There is also a healthy man pretending to be blind. These scenes represent the corruption in İstanbul and the personality of Osman. Here, the audience automatically creates an association with Anatolia, where Osman is from, and positive features. When Osman and Murat meet, they get along very well and quickly become friends. At some point, Osman learns about the real identity of Murat. This, however, does not influence their friendship. As a result, Osman becomes a *musahib* -an official companion of the Sultan with his honesty and sincerity. The new status makes Osman the prey for bureaucrats who are trying to manipulate the Sultan through him. Of course, Osman never does what they ask him to do, and he always remains loyal to Murat. Besides his loyalty to the Sultan, the audience also witnesses his heroism in the Baghdad expedition. Despite his young age, which makes him ineligible to fight in the Ottoman army, he voluntarily leads soldiers “without receiving orders from anyone” (1:01:38). In the final scene, he plants the Ottoman flag on the walls of Baghdad Castle. Unlike the corrupted bureaucrats of the time, he does this for neither money nor titles, but because he wanted to serve the Sultan, the representative of the state order. This makes him a unique hero in the eyes of the Sultan. Based on these actions, it could be argued that the national hero is also expected to be loyal to the ruler besides being young, fearless, and educated, or at least eager to be educated. He should behave independently of bureaucratic circles and be ready to sacrifice his life for the ruler and everything he symbolizes, such as the state order.

3.3.1.3. External Others and Their Internal Collaborators:

Directed by Refiğ, *Harem 'de Dört Kadın (Four Women in the Harem)* is set in late 1899 early 1900, in the absolutist period of Abdülhamit II. In general, this period in the movie could be an allegory of the DP period, which turned out to be a tyranny of the majority with its dictatorial measures limiting freedoms of speech and thought. Once more, the audience sees a chaotic atmosphere similar to that faced by Murat IV in *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat)*. The difference, however, is that in *Harem 'de Dört Kadın (Four Women in the Harem)*, in addition to internal enemies represented by evil bureaucrats, there are external enemies. These are European powers, whether British, German, or Dutch, who strive to get several concessions by manipulating the Sultan through some greedy pashas that could be bribed. The protagonist is Sadık Pasha, whom the British pay for influencing the Sultan in favor of England. As opposed to his name, which means 'loyal' in Turkish, this Pasha is disloyal to the Sultan. He is portrayed as fat, bearded, and speaking in a rural accent. Moreover, he is greedy and self-interested. Since he does not seem to deserve his status as a pasha, he could be representing a corrupted society of nepotism instead of a meritocratic one, as also emphasized in *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat)*. This also reflects the audience's expectations of the presence of a kind of dissonance between the pasha and the westernized modern life that any pasha of the time could have. In this context, in one scene depicting Christmas Eve's celebrations, Sadık Pasha suddenly stops the radio playing Western music and starts to dance the tsifteteli, a traditional dance with oriental rhythms. Moreover, Sadık Pasha's impotence and the fact that he cannot have children are also emphasized in several parts of the film. In fact, it is made clear to the audience that his problem is not simply physical impotence but his inability to control the three women in his harem. He is manipulated by those women who are also making some covert plans against Ruhşan, who has been chosen to be the fourth wife.

3.3.1.4. Imperial Landscapes, 'Our' Women and the Potential Warrior:

In *Harem 'de Dört Kadın (Four Women in the Harem)*, Sadık Pasha's harem and the entire mansion personnel could be considered a micro example of the Ottoman Empire, which had already gone out of control. Every morning, when he salutes his personnel, he refers to where they are from. According to what he says, there is a man from the Black Sea region, an Albanian, a Tatar, and another man from Montenegro in this community. His wives also contribute to the picture. The audience is presented the information that the oldest of his wife is Arab, one of the others is Circassian, and the other is Bosnian. These three women coming

from different lands of the empire belittle Ruḥşan, the fourth wife because she is from Anatolia. She is a distant relative of the Pasha and unsurprisingly described as the most innocent, freshest, and purest of all women. She is in love with Cemal, a student of the Faculty of Medicine. Here Cemal could be a representation of university students who are expected to ‘enlighten’ the country. He is the Pasha’s nephew, and despite his uncle, he is a supporter of the Young Turk movement. In the scene in which the Pasha learns about Cemal’s political inclinations, the Pasha calls the Young Turks vagrants who were trying to overthrow the Sultan, destroy the state, and realize freemasonry ideals. He also states: “We owe what we have to the Sultan. How did you forget the filthy Anatolian town that I have brought you from? If I did not bring you..., you would be dead of dirt”⁵⁴⁰ Cemal then says: “Our comfort alone is not that important. All people of Anatolia should live in the same conditions. This is what we are fighting for”⁵⁴¹ Pasha then says: “Is it your business to worry about the people of Anatolia? They, themselves, do not complain about their situation...What are you doing in İstanbul, if you really love Anatolia? Why do you want to get a foot in Europe?”⁵⁴² (1:01:53-1:02:24). In the film, the myth of the national homeland concentrates on Anatolia, and, with these sentences, the Pasha also belittles Anatolia, although he has decided to take Ruḥşan as his fourth wife. Therefore, the real savior of Anatolia is not the Pasha, who could be the representative of the DP; but instead, Cemal, the revolutionary university student who falls in love with Ruḥşan, the embodiment of Anatolia with her purity and innocence. Then, the audience waits for the ultimate union of Anatolia and the young intellectual. However, his plans to go to Paris with Ruḥşan to join the Young Turks there fail after Cemal eavesdrops on the men of a rival Pasha planning to kill Sadık by collaborating with the other nephew Rüştü who, in return, expects to get the title of Major in addition to the mansion and the harem. Then, Cemal sacrifices his love, fights with the men of the other Pasha, and saves his uncle. This narrative implies the presence of internal enemies in addition to external ones. Cemal, however, is loyal and respectful to the elderly. This depiction could give clues and show role models about what is expected from young university students of the early 1960s. They should work for the welfare of Anatolia, and in doing this, they should be loyal to the elderly.

⁵⁴⁰ Eğer rahat yaşıyorsak, refah içinde yaşıyorsak padişahımızın sayesinde. Geldiğin pis Anadolu kasabasını ne çabuk unuttun?...Seni getirtmeseydim pislikten geberecektiniz.”

⁵⁴¹ “Yalnız bizim rahatımız mühim değil; bütün Anadolu insanı da aynı rahata kavuşmalı. Biz bunun için mücadele ediyoruz.”

⁵⁴² “Size mi düştü Anadolu halkının tasası. Hani hallerinden şikayet ettikleri?...Anadou’yu seviyorsunuz da İstanbul’da işiniz ne? Niçin Avrupa’ya atıyorsunuz kapağı?”

It is hard to tell that there is an obvious critique of the Sultan in both films analyzed in this part. What is criticized is the corrupted circle around the Sultan. In both films, the ones who are loyal to the Sultan are Osman and Cemal, the young, brave, and nationally conscious men. Even Cemal's attitude towards the Sultan is not evident because he neither confirms nor rejects his uncle's words about the Young Turks' goals of overthrowing the Sultan and changing the state order. I do not think that the audience also attaches these goals to Cemal because the words are voiced by Sadık and some women in the harem, who are not entirely believable characters. Besides, the emphasis on Anatolia with Osman and Ruḡsan's backgrounds and Cemal's goals could be associated with the re-embrace of Anatolia by the late Ottoman/early Republican intellectuals of the War of Independence who had to deal with the only remaining piece of land in their hands. The May 27 alliance could be perceiving itself in line with these intellectuals and, therefore, could be sympathetic to embrace Anatolia not only to be able to understand ordinary people's wishes but also to gain votes against the political parties in the DP line. Besides, these neither positive nor negative representations of the Sultans could be evidence that the filmmakers started questioning the Ottoman Empire but that questioning also included an embrace of the past and not leaving it in the hands of some ignorant men who do not deserve their power and status like the DP members.

Thus, this somewhat limited number of films reproduces the myths of the warrior nation and its leader through the figures of Osman and Cemal. In this picture, the homeland is Anatolia and, the youth is expected to be its protector while working for the interests of the nation. In this context, as loyal warriors, they should be ready to fight against both internal and external enemies who want to disrupt the nation's unity.

3.3.2. *The Men in Solidarity in the War of Independence:*

The available nationalist action/adventure films representing the War of Independence depict the stories of men fighting shoulder to shoulder for a great nationalist goal regardless of their differences. These films are *Silah Arkadařları* (*Brothers in Arms*, dir. řinasi Özonuk, 1962), *İsimsiz Kahramanlar* (*Nameless Heroes*, dir. Semih Evin, 1964) and *Çanakkale Arslanları* (*The Lions of Gallipoli*, dir. Turgut Demirağ, 1964). In general, these films present an ideal society devoid of any class conflict and works in solidarity for the great goal of saving the 'homeland.' The reaches of the homeland here do not only include İstanbul, unlike what had been mentioned in the War of Independence films of the 1950s, but also an unknown town of Eskişehir in *Silah Arkadařları* (*Brothers in Arms*), historical sites of Antalya, and the battlefield in Çanakkale in *Çanakkale Arslanları* (*The Lions of Gallipoli*). Thus, the films of

the early 1960s give a much broader image of the homeland with their focus on Anatolia. All these corners of Anatolia are expected to be rescued by some ‘saviors’ fighting in solidarity. This could be why the films had titles with plural nouns as indicating an imagined togetherness between co-nationals. In this context, instead of bringing one individual to the forefront, the films of historical and action/adventure genre of the 1960-1965 period focus on a group of men’s nationalist acts.

3.3.2.1. *The Warriors:*

Against a backdrop of the military’s increasing visibility and influence in everyday life, the films adopt a professional observation of the military. Soldiers are presented with their ranks making the audience aware that there were some lieutenants and privates in addition to many high-ranking commanders. This representation guides viewers in showing them to whom to be respectful. So, the ‘common man’ should know his place regarding the military. Besides, the military hierarchies might resemble the societal ones, that is, the social classes. The films, however, do not divide people into compartments; but instead unite and, at the same time, discipline them.

The general representation of these groups of ‘saviors’ is centered on a military-style brotherhood within the groups. Men are all friends, and as friends, they sing, smoke, dance, and wrestle. All these strengthen their togetherness in the eyes of the audience. In fact, the viewers could even envy the friendly and heroic war atmosphere. The characters’ hometowns, and references to their occupations do not divide the group. In *Çanakkale Arslanları (The Lions of Gallipoli)*, there is a soldier from Adana who is a shopkeeper alongside a farmer from İzmir. This information on what they do for a living and where they are from could be a reminder that petty-bourgeois and farmers, a part of the former DP electorate, had fought for the same national goal together with intellectuals, journalists, or teachers, who had been portrayed as the most active groups in the movies of the 1950s. This shows how unified the Turkish nation is despite its differences.

Furthermore, what unites the characters in films is not only their nationalist goals but also what they remember about the past, as Ernst Renan would agree. In their viewing experience, the audience could quickly build links between different periods. For example, in *Silah Arkadaşları (Brothers in Arms)*, there is an older man called Sergeant Kazım, who plays his war trumpet from time to time, even in completely unrelated scenes. The townspeople explain the reason for his behavior as a mental disorder because he is the only survivor of his battalion in the Battle of Gallipoli. A similar example could be given from *İsimsiz Kahramanlar*

(*Nameless Heroes*), where an older man mentions that he lost his arm in Gallipoli. A woman confirms that two family members died in the same battle (20:41-22:08). Thus, any viewer watching these scenes could connect the Battle of Gallipoli and the War of Independence. Interestingly, Gallipoli was a relatively new reference for filmmakers because there was no reference in the available group of movies from the 1950s. Therefore, they probably could not decide, for a while, ways to adopt this late Ottoman war into the official nationalist discourse. In the early 1960s, foreign policy developments might have helped them, given the powerholding elites' questioning of Turkey's dependence on the West and the resentment caused by the Western powers' attitude in the case of Cyprus. Therefore, Gallipoli might have functioned to boost the decreasing Turkish self-confidence. Besides, in this later appropriation of Gallipoli, *Çanakkale Arslanları (The Lions of Gallipoli)*, as a film commissioned by the Turkish Military Forces, probably acted as a guideline providing the 'necessary' official clues for narration to the filmmakers. In the end, these movies formed a grand narrative that contextualized Cyprus as a repetition of past traumas that had been faced in previous wars.⁵⁴³

3.3.2.2. *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk:*

As in the films of the 1950s, the films of this section include many references to Atatürk. The difference, however, is that this time he is portrayed as a part of the narrative, not as a mysterious savior whose pictures suddenly appear on the screen accompanied by a voice-over describing his heroic acts. For example, in *Çanakkale Arslanları (The Lions of Gallipoli)*, he commands soldiers, talks to them, makes phone calls, and gives orders. Although only his back is shown, the audience immediately grasps the message that Atatürk was a great man of the military, and that his genius shaped the fate of the Battle. This representation does not only strengthen Atatürk's image but also enhances the legitimacy of both the Battle of Gallipoli and the War of Independence by connecting them as the former being the precursor of the latter. In this picture, the soldiers' sole duty is to follow Atatürk's orders without questioning, no matter what their ranks, hometowns, jobs are. This is what was expected from the idealized citizen in the minds of the powerholders in 1960-1965. From their perspective, the Turkish nation should not diverge from Atatürk's path.

⁵⁴³ For a compact review of the commemoration of the Gallipoli Campaign during the AKP era and a brief background, see: Sibel Baykut, "The Re-contextualization of the Battle of Gallipoli through Commemorations," *Intercultural Understanding*, Vol. 6, (2016): 7-15. Another source that focuses on celebrations and some speeches by politicians: Yücel Yanıkdağ, "The Battle of Gallipoli: The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting in Turkey," *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, No.2, (2015): 99-115.

3.3.2.3. *The Military/Army Nation:*

The movies about the War of Independence feature young and ambitious lieutenants such as the Lieutenant Doğan in *Silah Arkadaşları (Brothers in Arms)*, but it is hard to tell that these characters are sufficiently at the forefront. They fight together with soldiers of other ranks and are in close contact with civilians. Although they lead the other people, the movies impose where they should stand vis-a-vis the high-ranking soldiers. That is to say, the lieutenants are expected to be the leaders of the lower-ranking soldiers and civilians, but they know their place with respect to their commanders. This expectation, of course, finds its way into the idealized Turkish youth of 1960-1965. Consequently, these young people must respect the elderly, stay away from violence, and take Atatürk's principles as their guidance in transforming society.

One particular character could be regarded as the target of the May 27 coalition's perspective of transforming the people of Anatolia. He is a young rurally-based private in *Çanakkale Arslanları (The Lions of Gallipoli)*. He is unsophisticated, pure, has a slight accent, sometimes sings folk songs, and hangs around with a donkey to search for water for his legion in the scenes where he is at the forefront. The audience is not provided his real name, but other soldiers call him Keloğlan, meaning 'the bald boy,' although he is not bald. This character is a reference to another character with the same name in folk literature, a folk hero living with his poor mother somewhere in Anatolia. In his stories, he first seems to be easily fooled. In reality, he is cunning and always finds practical solutions to different problems, even the Sultan.⁵⁴⁴ In the eyes of the filmmakers of 1960-1965, he could be representing the rural masses of Anatolia. For example, when he gets caught by the British soldiers while searching for water, he deceives them by saying that his commander sent him to take water to enemy trenches. The British commander believes in him and even appreciates the Turkish side for behaving in such a noble way. Using this as an opportunity, later, Keloğlan learns about where the enemy stores its guns. At the end of the story, the Turkish side uses this piece of information to defeat the enemy. Thus, as a representative of the 'common man,' he saves his own life by turning a disadvantaged situation into an advantaged one and makes a significant contribution to the war. The message here could be that the people of Anatolia should be re-discovered because they are hidden gems. Considering the other characters from Anatolia, such as Osman of *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and Sultan Murat)*, the filmmakers, in general, could be said to be re-

⁵⁴⁴ Hasan Bülent Paksoy, *The Bald Boy and the Most Beautiful Girl in the World* (Texas: Aton, 2003). http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/texts/carrie_books/paksoy-8/The_Bald_Boy_Keloglan_and_the_Most_Beautiful_Girl_in_the_World.pdf

embracing Anatolia for the survival of the nation. To extend the analysis further, this could be an attempt to grasp why the DP had been victorious in the rural hearts of Anatolia.

3.3.2.4. *The Others:*

Who is the enemy, then? The heroes fight against both external and internal enemies. The most potent external enemies are Western states, which are generally described twofold. First, their technological superiority is emphasized to increase the Turkish side's heroism by conveying that it could defeat its enemies despite the lack of technology. Second, in *Çanakkale Arslanları* (*The Lions of Çanakkale*), the British side is depicted as noble, heroic, and quite respectful to war codes. For example, they do not shoot an already wounded enemy man or kill their prisoners of war. There are several scenes in which the British commanders appreciate the Turks' strength and bravery. When his army leaves Çanakkale at the end of the film, the British commander says that the entire of humanity lost 550,000 of its children in this war (2:19:17-2:19:25). By mentioning a strikingly negative side of the war, the filmmakers might have wanted to emphasize the civilized nature of the Turks through the British character. According to the given message, Turks represent humanity besides the British, and Turks are never warlike. This point is understandable only in relation to the image that the new government wanted to convey to the world. On the one hand, it could also be interpreted as a challenge to the myth of the warrior nation. On the other, it supports the idea that Turks fight only when they have a legitimate cause. This message here legitimizes the wars that Turkey had in the past. A controversial depiction of external enemies is available in *İsimsiz Kahramanlar* (*Nameless Heroes*), which starts with two drunk French soldiers harassing several Turkish women in the streets of İstanbul.

In terms of non-Muslim minorities, a double-sided depiction can be observed in *Çanakkale Arslanları* (*The Lions of Çanakkale*). In the film, the audience sees two Greek priests with opposing ideas. The first works for the Greek Megalo Idea and therefore asks Aleko, the little bakery boy, to bomb the Turkish arsenal. The second perceives himself as a member of the Turkish nation, whether or not his name is Aleko, Dmitri, or Yael. He says that he is benefiting from the auspices of the Turkish nation and that he is strictly against religious men's involvement in political issues (1:00:34-1:00:47).⁵⁴⁵ Aleko follows the latter, and at one point, even sacrifices his life to protect the Turkish arsenal against the first priest. This two-dimensional portrayal of non-Muslims could be considered an attempt to emphasize the unity

⁵⁴⁵ "Mademki bu topraklarda yaşıyor ve onun nimetlerinden istifade ediyoruz biz de bu memleketin evladınız. İsmi Aleko da Dimitri de Yael da olsa Türk'sün."

of the Turkish nation in its ideals. Therefore, although the myth of ethnic homogeneity is challenged with these representations, the idea of the Turkish nation's unity in terms of ideals is strengthened.

The other internal enemies are gypsies depicted in *Silah Arkadaşları (Brothers in Arms)*. This is the first time the audience meets this group. The difficult point, however, is that it is unclear whether the filmmakers see the gypsies as a separate ethnic group or otherwise. In the story, they pop up as a handful of dancing vagrants who have just started to live in a town of Eskişehir, which is mostly empty because the able-bodied men had been recruited. It is not explained why the gypsy men are in town instead of war. This specific town has another group of others: the bandits. It is not known why these characters have become bandits, but they cooperate with the gypsies to racketeer the townspeople. Their accomplice in the town is a timber merchant who receives his share from the money collected by the bandits. This whole set of disorder and chaos is expected to be solved by Lieutenant Doğan, who is responsible for punishing internal enemies while some of his friends are fighting in trenches against external enemies. Therefore, Doğan could symbolize the military/bureaucratic elite's return to Anatolia and its desire to deal with internal enemies.

Another internal enemy to the nation is the Sultan. At this point, a very interesting scene in *İsimsiz Kahramanlar (Nameless Heroes)* of a prostitute and French soldier who are engaging in sexual intercourse brings how internal enemies are perceived to the fore. The prostitute makes one of the most radical speeches of the history of Turkish cinema, in my opinion: "That Archduke, or king or the Sultan, whoever they are, it is as if they are different from you or me. They say he (the Sultan) is descended from the sky; he (the Sultan) is a member of the dynasty. Have you ever seen a man in the toilet? There, what the Sultan does is the same as what tramps like me are doing. But they regard the whole universe as a toilet and have defecated on it..." (09:09-09:23).⁵⁴⁶ Here, she tears apart the sky and brings the ruler down to the earth. In doing this, she considers the Sultan, an internal enemy who has betrayed the homeland and the nation. In her words, "he (the Sultan) has sold the homeland to enemies." Similarly, in another scene, the old man who lost his arm in the Battle of Gallipoli says to his daughter: "Do you see that beautiful palace?...This nation made them (the Sultan and his bureaucratic circle) pursue their lives in palaces like this, but they sold these glorious lands which had been watered by the blood

⁵⁴⁶ "Arşidük mu kral mi sultan mı e haltsalar sanki benden senden farkı var. O gökte zembille inmiş hanedanmış o. Sen hiç kenefte adam gördün mu orada padişah da aynı isi yapar benim gibi berduşlar da..."

of martyrs to the enemies.”⁵⁴⁷ Hearing this, his daughter warns him to be quiet against denouncers and the imperial guards that torture the rebellious voices.⁵⁴⁸ The father’s answer is again quite courageous: “Let them denounce me. There is nothing that they can take away from me anymore if I cannot speak freely in my homeland” (20:41-22:08).⁵⁴⁹ These lines justify the War of Independence, which is against both internal and external enemies.

3.4. Concluding Remarks:

The first half of the 1960s was shaped by the May 27 coup, which brought the military/bureaucratic elite’s reinstatement of its power against the newly rising classes such as tradesmen, petty-bourgeois, and peasants. For the military/bureaucratic elite, which had played a determining role in politics since the late 19th century, the new classes were just ignorant masses dragging the county into authoritarianism, chaos, and uncertainty. To save the regime, therefore, an adjustment had to be made by the ‘progressive elite,’ which also included university students that were perceived as the idealist inheritors of the early Republican elite. The result was fierce suppression of the opposing voices, even in the form of execution. This also meant the crystallization of the rift between traditionalist and western-oriented ‘progressive,’ rural and urban, and the non-educated and educated classes.

In this environment which was dominated by the Jacobin mentality of creating an ideal Turkish national out of the ‘common man’ that would not support the values of Menderes, filmmakers were interested in Anatolia. Nevertheless, they omitted to represent ethnic and class differences. Instead, the strategy was to emphasize the birthplaces of characters as the defining elements of their heterogeneity. With this, the military, bureaucratic elite attempted to form a re-attachment with the lower classes of rural origin. Consequently, movies depicting the past from the period either take place somewhere in the periphery or include characters originating from different parts of Anatolia. In the same vein, unlike the high-ranking soldiers of the War of Independence films of the 1950s, low-ranking soldiers and civilians adopt influential roles, as in the case of Kelođlan in *Çanakkale Arslanları (The Lions of Gallipoli)*. The message was that all members of the nation fight in solidarity as the parts of an organic whole by adopting the same nationalist goal regardless of their social classes or birthplaces. They all fight in solidarity as if they are a family, therefore symbolizing the nation itself.

⁵⁴⁷ “Bak görüyor musun su güzel sarayı ah ah Yazıklar olsun o akıtılan kanlara. Bu millet onları böyle saraylarda yaşattı onlar ise şühedanın kanlarıyla sulamış bu aziz toprakları düşmanlara sattılar. Tüh Allah belalarını versin!”

⁵⁴⁸ “Baba sus! Duyarlarsa jurnal ederler.”

⁵⁴⁹ “Etsinler! Benden alacakları bir şey yok artık. Kendi vatanımda konuşamayacak olduktan sonra bu kolumu iye kaybettim ben vücudum kursun yarasıyla dolu bütün bu mücadele işgal altında yaşamak için miydi?”

Furthermore, younger characters are taken as the inheritors of the founding elite. Therefore, while the youth is associated with the coup alliance's values, the Ottoman Empire is represented as corrupted and decadent as the symbol of something outdated. These representations also fit into the post-coup conjuncture in which the Ottoman past is associated with the corrupted DP. In this context, the nation's leadership must be assumed by uncorrupted, young, educated, loyal, and nationalist males, who are aware of social problems such as medical school student Cemal in *Haremde Dört Kadın* (*Four Women in Harem*). At this point, although education is shown as the only way to have respectability and upward mobility against the nepotism of the DP, there are also cases in which these men had to change. For example, Rüstemoğlu Osman in *Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han* (*Young Osman and the Sultan Murat*) reneges on this promise to his mother and joins the Ottoman army to defend the Sultan because corrupted bureaucrats are deceiving the Sultan. Thus, in some cases, the young and educated male finds himself in a position of giving up his titles and fighting together with soldiers. Therefore, in their portrayals as the ideal warriors of the leader, these characters never behave independently of the ruler or the military.

All these representations militarized everyday life of the early 1960s, which had already been under the influence of the deteriorating relationships with the West over the Cyprus issue. As a result, by the end of the 1960-1965 period, filmmakers had become eager to reproduce the myth of national mission by completing the official foreign policy discourse. Here, like the representations of enemies in the 1950s, the enemy is not entirely obvious, probably because the government did not want to offend the Western bloc. The mission of the nation, in this context, is to bring civilization and peace to all corners of the homeland as benevolent conquerors.

Thus, the 1960-1965 period might be interpreted as a period of intervention to the masses' interests and tastes by the military/bureaucratic elite. The films are never independent of the dominant codes of Turkish politics. Therefore, they all reproduced political myths, specifically the myth of warrior nation, by preparing the ground for the post-1965 period in which aggressiveness and militarism would dominate.

CHAPTER IV: The Disengagement between Masses and the Elites: 1965-1980

4.1. Introduction:

The 1965 nationwide elections led to the rise of AP, the heir of the DP vis-à-vis the May 27 coalition of the military/bureaucratic elite. This was a big shock for the urban elite, and therefore its members started attempts to bring a bottom-up perspective into politics and culture. As a result, understanding the wishes and desires of the masses, so the ‘common man’ became a significant motivating force for both politicians and intellectuals. In the realm of cinema, this led to the flowering of intellectual discussions about what and how Turkish cinema must depict. This also coincided with the emergence of a new and younger generation challenging older military/bureaucratic elites. The echo on the streets was felt as social movements, with one of the most dynamic groups being university students, besides the growing business sector and the trade unions. The main questions in many students’ minds were about the origins of social inequalities and why Turkey had not been as developed as the West. To discover the answer, both rightist and leftist intellectuals turned their faces to the Ottoman past. This interest reflected in cinema and led to the production of various action/adventure films based on the stories of late Ottoman folk heroes fighting against corrupted Ottoman bureaucrats.

Meanwhile, through time, the confrontations between the older and younger generations, as well as the rightists and leftists, became sharper and hurtful. The increasing tension was interrupted with the military memorandum of March 12, 1971. The victims of the memorandum mainly were the leftist youth, and their ideology was crushed severely. The result was the domination of Islamist and nationalist elements in everyday political discourse as reflected on the formation of National Front governments by the rightist political parties. In fact, the international political atmosphere was also very convenient for the rise of these elements of political discourse. Turkey had been isolated by its western allies in its foreign policy, and the US had an embargo against Turkey mainly because of Turkey’s proactive policies in the case of Cyprus. One should also add the impact of the oil crisis and the economic downturn into the picture. As a result, the 1970s became the years in which protest waves and political violence swept the country. Now, a polarized, aggressive, and militarist society living through first a disengagement, and later a cut, between different groups was on the stage. Of course, this transition had an impact on the depictions of nationalism through political myths in nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings.

Thus, the current and the following chapter attempt to explain the context and the reproduction of political myths in a selected corpus between 1965 and 1980. I have created two

separate chapters because the ones in this chapter constitute a minority and focus on the defense of Anatolia or protecting the interests of the Anatolian people. However, the overwhelming majority of the movies in the next chapter are mostly about conquest with characters expanding the borders of the state. In addition, those in the next chapter are mostly part of several series, unlike the films analyzed in the current chapter. In this respect, the films of this chapter could also be divided into two groups. The first group depicts local folk heroes in the late Ottoman period. The second group includes movies about the War of Independence. Here my research question is how action/adventure films directly responded to the aggressive context as reflected in the political myths produced by them. By discussing the context that was primarily shaped by the rhetorical shift in the political balance of power, I aim to reveal the evolution in different political myths, such as the myth of the leader, warrior, and others. The context I mention here also facilitates the comprehension of the reproduction of political myths in the movies of the following chapter

4.2. *The Rise of the Masses:*

Although the urban intellectual elite, as part of the May 27 Coalition, wanted to embrace Anatolia represented with soldiers and civilians in the films depicting the War of Independence, the realities were different. In fact, it was not the CHP or its allies as the key groups supporting the coup, but the AP, which gradually attracted the masses. This new political party took advantage of the liberal atmosphere created by the 1961 Constitution that guaranteed freedom of thought, expression, and organization and enabled the easier entrance of new ideas and new actors into Turkey's political life. This led to a multiplication of voices in the political arena, which showed itself in the form of new political parties or the heirs of older ones. The newly established parties included the Labour Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP) with Marxist orientation, the Republican Peasants' Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*, CKMP) with far-right inclinations, and the New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*, YTP), which had recruited several DP members. Yüksel Menderes, Menderes' son and later majority of its members joined the AP. In the first free elections in 1961, the AP gained 34.8 per cent, the CHP got 36.7 per cent, the CKMP's share was 14 per cent, and the YTP received 13.7 per cent of the votes. A crude calculation here reveals that 62.5 per cent voted for the rightist parties meaning that even just after the 1960s coup, the rightists were much more appealing to the masses than the May 27 Coalition's leftist orientation. Consequently, after three coalition governments headed by İnönü in the 1965 general elections, 52.9 per cent voted for the AP, whereas the

CHP's votes dropped to 28.7 per cent.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, it seems that the AP achieved to consolidate the right, unlike the divided left.

One of the significant causes of the AP's success was its perception as the DP heir by both its supporters and opponents. In fact, amnesty for the DP members in prison was one of its political goals, and its flag had a white horse that was directly borrowed from the DP logo. Given these, it would be too naïve not to think that these positively influenced the party's popularity. Moreover, the consecutive coalition governments of 1961-1965 could not respond to the country's growing discontent. For example, peasants were doubtful of losing various improvements in their living conditions that they attained in the DP era, such as the construction and extension of rural highways, water services, and government support of agricultural prices. Besides, poor migrants from villages were trying to cope with unemployment and poverty in the squatter settlements of the big cities. Therefore, the AP was able to unite a considerable portion of these voters under its umbrella. In the end, AP's election victory led to the flourishing of conservative nationalism in the country. This also meant at least a rhetorical rebalance in the political spectrum in favor of the 'common man' and a challenge to the May 27 Coalition's attempt to orient Turkish politics towards the ideals and aspirations of urban intellectual classes. Besides, many intellectuals had started to question the ongoing political developments to understand and represent the feelings and the wishes of the newly rising groups. This also included attempts to make cinema consumable by the new groups.

4.3. Defining National Cinema as an Attempt to Understand the Masses:

“After such bloody struggles, could not we defend anything? This is being damned...Why has God left us like that in the lurch? Why has hope closed its doors to us? What have we done? Could you please tell us what horrible crime we have committed that we cannot be forgiven?”⁵⁵¹ Thus, quotes Halit Refiğ, the leading spokesman of social realist directors of the early 1960s, from Kemal Tahir's novel *Esir Şehrin İnsanları* (*People of the Enslaved City*) at the beginning of his piece about *Ulusal Sinema* (National Cinema). Like many other intellectuals allied with the military/bureaucratic elite, for Refiğ, the 1965 victory of the AP was a severe blow to the social realist filmmakers. This made them question what they had missed or, in Tahir's words, “what horrible crime” they “had committed.” As a result, a group of filmmakers, most of whom had an urban bourgeois background, started to produce movies with an attempt to understand and depict the masses. These movies were about the impact of

⁵⁵⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 149-153.

⁵⁵¹ Halit Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası* (İstanbul: Hareket Yayınları, 1971), 125.

social and economic developments such as feudalism, migration, unemployment, poverty, and religious fundamentalism. In terms of the content and the form, their directors, including Metin Erksan, Ertem Göreç, Halit Refiğ, Atıf Yılmaz, and Duygu Sağıroğlu, adopted a social realist approach that they borrowed from Italian Neo-Realist cinema of the post-World War II period.⁵⁵² These filmmakers believed that they could transform the society from above and create ideal Turkish citizens out of villagers, workers, and beggars; essentially, the masses. There was a Jacobin approach inherited from the modernizing elites of the early Republican period and renewed by the junta of 1960. This approach also marked the emergence of conceptual and theoretical discussions about what and how the Turkish cinema should depict for grasping the hearts and minds of the masses.

First, Refiğ coined the concept of *Halk Sineması* (People's Cinema) and argued that Yeşilçam should be considered as the true example of *Halk Sineması* because it was not financed by foreign capital of imperialist powers or bourgeoisie or the state; but depending on people's demands and their money.⁵⁵³ Here, Refiğ refers to the Yeşilçam bond system, where movies were produced after the regional distributors and movie theater owners ordered films specifically to meet the consumers' demands. This system led to the idea that whatever was produced was shaped by the audience,⁵⁵⁴ hence considering these films as examples of *Halk Sineması*. Therefore, after 1965, Refiğ and his disciples started to believe that Yeşilçam was the representation of common man's feelings, dreams, and wishes. They also stated that Yeşilçam was corrupt now due to the remakes of some foreign movies and the fact that Turkish people hesitated to represent themselves as they were because they were not confident of themselves.⁵⁵⁵

The second aspect of Refiğ's argument was inspired by Sencer Divitçioğlu's and Kemal Tahir's emphasis on the Marxist theory of Asiatic Mode of Production. According to this theoretical foundation, the Ottoman Empire had been an eastern despotic state that did not have private property, personal capital accumulation, and social classes in western terms. According to Tahir, this history made Turkey significantly different from western societies in many aspects. Moreover, instead of content-based borrowing from Hollywood or European cinema,

⁵⁵² Aslı Daldal, *Art, Politics and Society: Social Realism In Italian and Turkish Cinemas* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003), 196. Some of the films were: *Gecelerin Ötesi* (*Beyond the Nights*, Metin Erksan, 1960), *Otobüs Yolcuları* (*Bus Passengers*, Ertem Göreç, 1961), *Şafak Bekçileri* (*Watchmen of Dawn*, Halit Refiğ, 1963), *Gurbet Kuşları* (*Birds of Exile*, Halit Refiğ, 1964), *Suçlular Aramızda* (*Criminals are Among Us*, Metin Erksan, 1964), *Bitmeyen Yol* (*The Never-Ending Road*, Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1965), and *Karanlıkta Uyananlar* (*Those Awakening in the Dark*, Ertem Göreç, 1965).

⁵⁵³ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 91.

⁵⁵⁴ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 87.

⁵⁵⁵ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 87-88.

it is precisely this uniqueness from which the Turkish cinema should take its root to create *Ulusal Sinema*. Therefore, what mattered was whether a film was ‘Turkish’ in its core, meaning, and message.⁵⁵⁶

Refiğ also argues that since *Halk Sineması* is a close-to-real representation of the Turkish people, its artistic origins should be paid attention to when producing national films. He shows traditional folk arts such as pictures of Anatolian people, folk tales, storytelling, theater in the round, and shadow play as the origins. Here, he makes no connection with theater, music, and painting because they are perceived as imitating the West in terms of both form and content.⁵⁵⁷ Given the importance of these other artistic branches in the early Republican era, what Refiğ says could be interpreted as a challenge to the domination of Western ideals in the cultural realm. At this point, Refiğ also attacks Muhsin Ertuğrul and argues that he mainly depended on western sources and so imitated the West. He also emphasizes how superficial the single party’s modernization attempts were. However then, he adds, Yeşilçam cinema had been a positive step in opening cinema to the people, similar to the DP's victory, which subsequently opened politics to the people.⁵⁵⁸ These references show that Refiğ was pragmatically trying to find a space in the new political atmosphere. This should be why he calls the social realist films, including those directed by him in the early 1960s, as marginal and crippled due to their use of western concepts such as capitalism, class, or bourgeoisie.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, Refiğ argues that the duty of the producers of *Ulusal Sinema* is to make movies reflecting the values, cultures, and habits of Turkish people⁵⁶⁰ by basing them on Turkish folk art and the community consciousness of the Turkish people.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, instead of searching for universal or western cinematic values,

⁵⁵⁶ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 96-97. Asiatic type of production (*Asya tipi üretim tarzı*, ATÜT) was a term first used by Karl Marx in his work *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. Marx, by using this term, tried to point out the difference between historical differences of property ownership between European and Eastern societies. In the 1960s, ATÜT discussions played a significant role in the formation of socialist theories. For an analysis of the relationship between the Marxist concept of Asiatic Mode of Production theory and the views on the Ottoman Empire, see: Suraiya Faroqhi, “Introduction,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 18, Issue 3-4, (1991): 3-17; Halil Berktaş and Faroqhi (eds.), *New Approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Suavi Aydın and Kerem Ünüvar, “ATÜT Tartışmaları ve Sol” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: *Sol*, ed. Murat Gültekinçil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 1082-1088; Sencer Divitçioğlu, Sencer, *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu* (İstanbul: Köz Yayınları, 1971); Kurtuluş Kayalı, “ATÜT Tartışmalarının Hafife Alınmasının Nedenleri ve Bu Tartışmaların Atlanan Ruhunu” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: *Sol*, 1089-1094; Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür* (İstanbul: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2006), 142. Sencer Divitçioğlu, *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1967); Bülent Ecevit, “Devlet Ana,” *Kitaplar Arasında I* (Apr. 1968): 4-5; Emin Özdemir, “Osmanlılık Özlemi,” *Varlık*, No. 755 (Aug. 1970), 4; İlber Ortaylı, “Bir Siyasi Hikaye Olarak Devlet Ana,” *Dost* (Jan. 1968): 20–22.

⁵⁵⁷ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 89.

⁵⁵⁸ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 89.

⁵⁵⁹ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 88

⁵⁶⁰ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 91.

⁵⁶¹ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 97.

they should look for what makes Turkish people unique. This point is significant for its encouragement of nationalist political myths in action/adventure films of the period even though these films were not produced by any of the directors associated with Refiğ's line and, in fact, they were not even made for conforming the vision of a particular cinema movement.

Moreover, Refiğ and his friends were in a rivalry with another camp gathered around *Sinematek*, which was established in August 1965 by mostly western-educated intellectuals such as Onat Kutlar, Şakir Eczacıbaşı, Hüseyin Baş, Cevat Çapan, Nijat Özön, and Henri Langlois, the founder of Cinémathèque Française.⁵⁶² Since its members wanted to be politically and economically independent, this group did not accept outside support.⁵⁶³ Inspired by French New Wave Cinema, Italian Neo-Realist Cinema, and Brazil's Cinema Nuovo, the group organized film screenings by auteurs of European cinema such as Jean-Luc Godard, Luchino Visconti, and the films of the Soviet Revolution Cinema and Eastern European Cinema; and American cinema. According to Kutlar, on the very first days, only three films had been shown in a week, but later that number reached up to twenty, proving increasing interest.⁵⁶⁴

Sinematek was also a meeting place for the educated urban elites, including students and intellectuals who shared their ideas and goals on that platform. At this point, by referring to Kutlar's participation in the Chile Solidarity Night organized by the TİP, Başgüney argues that the members were primarily supporting the TİP.⁵⁶⁵ In this regard, *Sinematek* functioned like a leftist debating society idea club as existed in universities where people discussed films and political developments, and students met significant intellectuals of the time. Although Atilla Dorsay mentions how the screenings of Czech, Italian, Hungarian and French films were important social events also for the upper classes,⁵⁶⁶ the majority of the audience was composed of university students and leftist intellectuals. Therefore, the understanding of the *Sinematek* circle could be associated with the urban elite searching for the causes of the AP victory.

For *Sinematek* members, national cinema should synthesize European high culture and the original and popular culture of Anatolia, meaning that the country's social and political particularities should be attached to universal culture. They argued that cinema should be

⁵⁶² Hakkı Başgüney, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye'de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma* (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2009), 66.

⁵⁶³ Zeynep Avcı, "Onat Kutlar ve Şakir Eczacıbaşı Sinematek Dönemini Anlatıyor: İstanbul Film Festivali'ne Ulaşan Yol" in *Onat Kutlar Kitabı*, ed. Turgut Çeviker (İstanbul: Türsak Yayınları, 2006), 173-191.

⁵⁶⁴ Avcı, "Onat Kutlar ve Şakir Eczacıbaşı Sinematek Dönemini Anlatıyor: İstanbul Film Festivali'ne Ulaşan Yol," 178.

⁵⁶⁵ Başgüney, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye'de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma*, 83.

⁵⁶⁶ Atilla Dorsay, "Sinematek sosyeteği bile etkileyen bir modaydı," *Sabah*, (26.02.2006); https://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/pazar/dorsay/2006/02/26/sinematek_sosyeteği_bile_etkileyen_bir_modaydı

produced independently of the current capitalist system based on a primitive supply and demand relationship. Different modes of production, such as festivals and competitions, should be used following an auteur policy.⁵⁶⁷ In this context, one of the main targets of *Sinematek* was Yeşilçam. The group believed that Yeşilçam was “associated with worn-out formulas, plagiarism, escapism, and exploitation.”⁵⁶⁸ Therefore, creating a national cinema in international terms requires being free from capitalist concerns, unlike the cinemas of Hollywood and Yeşilçam.⁵⁶⁹ This is, at the same time, a way to reach universal cinema.⁵⁷⁰

Although both groups criticized the current situation of Yeşilçam, the National Cinema group found *Sinematek*'s approach too elitist and western-centered.⁵⁷¹ They argued that the Turkish people's characteristics and needs could not be reached by taking European art cinema with all of its aesthetics and cinematic values as the model.⁵⁷² This ignores national values and culture while arbitrarily building upon western traditions.⁵⁷³ Here, a debate arises between universalism and authenticity through different definitions of ‘national.’ For Refiğ's line, it was simply what comes out of Anatolia, whereas for *Sinematek*, ‘national’ was united with a certain universality in relation to westernization. Thus, Refiğ's line could be interpreted as much more in the direction of the ideology of the DP/AP. In contrast, *Sinematek* seems to be in the same framework as the ideology of the early Republican elite. Nevertheless, both were born out of the so-called ‘necessity’ to define what ‘national’ was to grasp the tastes and demands of the ‘common man.’ This shows the power shift in favor of the ‘common man.’ Thus, the 1965-1980 period's highly militarist and aggressive nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings were born into this particular intellectual atmosphere.

4.4. The New Generation of Leaders:

Meanwhile, Turkish politics was becoming much more competitive and richer due to the rise of a new generation of leaders. This could be interpreted as a reinforcement of the myth of the national leader in the minds as a self-made, non-elite, fresh, and young man in line with

⁵⁶⁷ Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” *Screen* 39:3, (Autumn 1998): 262.

⁵⁶⁸ Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” 261.

⁵⁶⁹ Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” 262.

⁵⁷⁰ Şengün Kılıç Hristidis, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı ‘Halit Refiğ Kitabı’* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), 145-150.

⁵⁷¹ Başgüneş, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye’de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma*, 63.

⁵⁷² Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” 262.

⁵⁷³ Hristidis, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı ‘Halit Refiğ Kitabı,’* 145-150.

the DP/AP values. One of the most prominent representatives of the new generation was Süleyman Demirel (1924-2015), the AP chairman, who played a significant role in the 1965 victory with his popularity against the ‘privileged’ military/bureaucratic elite of the May 27 Coalition. The first main reason for the applaud in the darkness for him was his young age. When he became the Prime Minister in 1965, he was only 41 years old and, therefore, the youngest Prime Minister in the history of modern Turkey. Given that İnönü, the main opposition party’s leader, was 81, and the ages of the other leaders, the youngest being Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997), the head of the CKMP as 48, Demirel was a fresh breath for Turkish politics. The second very significant reason for his popularity was that he came from a lower-middle-class conservative family from İslamköy of Isparta province in Western Anatolia. Taking benefit of all the educational advantages provided by the Republican regime,⁵⁷⁴ after primary school in İslamköy, Demirel went to the boarding schools in Muğla and Afyon. There, he also started to learn English, fitting well into the increasing US influence in Turkey. When he graduated from İstanbul Technical University (ITU), he was a civil engineer who upwardly socially mobile thanks to his education, and hence a perfect fit for a developing country.⁵⁷⁵ This background made him radically different from previous leaders with mostly elitist family backgrounds, as well as law school or military association. Therefore, Demirel was neither an elitist nor from the military; but a young, successful self-made engineer who could be an ideal role model for the ‘common man.’⁵⁷⁶

Demirel climbed the career ladders rapidly, and he gained Adnan Menderes’ support due to his success. After graduate studies in the US Bureau of Reclamation, he became the Director of the State Hydraulic Works, supervising the construction of dams, power plants, and irrigation facilities. Later, he worked for the State Planning Organization being responsible for implementing national development plans to decrease regional differences.⁵⁷⁷ His final stop was a US firm named Morrison & Knudsen Construction Company. All these, in the end, gave him significant assets as a political leader appealing to the masses and the needs of a developing country. People started to call him ‘Shepherd Sülü’ due to his village background, ‘the King of Dams,’ and ‘Morrison Süleyman’ due to his educational and employment backgrounds. He

⁵⁷⁴ Deniz Cenk Demir, “Altmışlı Yıllarda Merkez Sağ: Demirkırat’tan Adalet Partisi’ne Merkez Sağın Sancılı Serüveni” in *Türkiye’nin 1960’lı Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 506.

⁵⁷⁵ Murat Arslan, “Erken Yıllar (1924-1960),” “Yükseliş (1960-1964),” *Süleyman Demirel* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), 17-43; 45-73.

⁵⁷⁶ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975*, 236.

⁵⁷⁷ Korel Göymen, “Milestones of Regional Policy and Practice in Turkey,” (2008), 2, http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/; He was a technocrat and as Sherwood mentions, even “a modern, pragmatic executive and organizer”; W.B. Sherwood, “The Rise of the Justice Party in Turkey,” *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No.1 (Oct. 1967): 54.

essentially became the symbol of a self-made man with whom peasants, and the newly arrived migrants living in squatter settlements, felt they could identify with. He was, clearly, the embodiment of the aspirations of the ‘common man.’ Unlike other party leaders of the period, such as İnönü and the TLP’s leader Mehmet Ali Aybar, he was more of an insider in the people’s eyes.⁵⁷⁸

In addition to Demirel’s appeal to the ‘common man’ with his own life story, the AP’s strategies of opening new mosques, permitting religious instruction at schools, helping migrants contact official authorities, finding jobs and housing were quite influential. Meanwhile, Demirel made influential aphorisms such as, “All qualified Turkish citizens could own factories.”⁵⁷⁹ These words instilled hope in the masses by conveying that they could gain money and respect if they worked hard. In fact, the economic environment also helped this understanding gain strength because between 1965 and 1969, the country experienced 6.9 per cent growth thanks to a planned economy and import substitution policies.⁵⁸⁰ This was also accompanied by the construction of Keban and Gökçekaya hydroelectric dams, the countryside’s subsequent electrification, and the first national TV channel’s introduction, which started test broadcasting in 1968.⁵⁸¹

On the other hand, increasing class distinctions due to rapid modernization and capitalist industrialization during the period gave birth to another leader from the new generation: Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006). He was one year younger than Demirel and had been the youngest minister of Turkey to date with his service as the Minister of Labor in three consecutive coalition governments led by İnönü between November 1961 and February 1964. Unlike Demirel, Ecevit had an elitist background. His mother was a painter, and his father was a university professor and served as the Kastamonu deputy between 1943 and 1950. The family descended from some local notables of Kastamonu. After studying at American Robert College, Ecevit worked as a translator at the General Directorate of Press and Publication. He was first employed in London by the BBC as a translator, and later in the US as a journalist.⁵⁸² With this background in hand, Ecevit had all the assets of the country’s traditional elitist class.

⁵⁷⁸ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975*, 236.

⁵⁷⁹ “Kabiliyetli her Türk vatandaşı fabrika sahibi olabilir,” *Milliyet*, (8 July 1968), cited in Murat Arslan, *Süleyman Demirel*, 92.

⁵⁸⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 269; Murat Arslan, *Süleyman Demirel*, 93.

⁵⁸¹ Mihalıs Kuyucu, “Historical, Economic and Political Development of Television Broadcasting in Turkey and An Industry Analysis,” *International Journal of Management and Applied Science*, Vol. 1, Issue: 9 (Oct. 2015): 45.

⁵⁸² Mustafa Çolak, “Çocukluk ve Gençlik Donemi” *Bülent Ecevit: Karaoğlan* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 27-80; Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, “Birinci Bölüm: ‘Bambaşka Düşleri Vardı’ *Karaoğlan* (İstanbul: Can Sanat Yayınları, 2015), 19-48.

Thus, both Demirel and Ecevit were members of a new generation of political leaders. This fact underlined one of the ideal leader's features reflected in action/adventure films with young protagonists as the community's saviors. In this regard, since the mythical leader is counted as the embodiment of the nation and the state, older politicians are associated with the decaying power of both the state and the nation. Demirel and Ecevit, however, could be representing hope and dynamism. Moreover, Demirel's rise from a relatively disadvantaged background to a self-made man obviously challenged the dominance of the Western-oriented military/bureaucratic elite. This might have strengthened common man's imaginings of the leader as anti-bureaucratic and anti-intellectual and different from the military/bureaucratic elite.

On the other hand, what made Ecevit politically successful was his bottom-up perspective embracing workers and peasants, and therefore those who were not from the military/bureaucratic elite. Particularly his contribution to the formation of a new labor law which for the first time sanctioned collective bargaining and the right to strike made his party, the CHP, extend its voting base while at the same time orchestrating a change in the ideology of the party as left-of-center that he mentioned in his 1968 book, *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir (This Order Must Change)*.⁵⁸³ The Cold War ideological climate also influenced the competition between the two young leaders as the representatives of the new generation of politicians. For the AP, Ecevit's positioning as left-of-center indicated the CHP's leftist leanings on the road to Moscow,⁵⁸⁴ therefore threatening the country's unity. In fact, the AP took nationalism and anti-communism as its fundamental values and believed in nationalist harmony and collaboration between different segments of the population for economic growth. However, the capitalist transformation of the country thanks to import substitution policies had already brought class conflicts to the fore. The working classes, a portion of civil servants, peasants, and students were mobilized during this period. To cope with all these, the AP tried to limit freedoms by purging schools and universities and even by bringing translators of foreign socialist works into the trial. These had already made urban intellectual classes discontent with the AP.⁵⁸⁵ All of these incidents caused Demirel to lose his popularity, while polishing Ecevit's image as an

⁵⁸³ Bülent Ecevit, *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011); *Ortanın Solu* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009).

⁵⁸⁴ A popular campaign slogan of the AP at this time was "Ortanın solu, Moskova yolu" (left of center is the road to Moscow) as mentioned in F. Michael Wuthrich, *National Elections in Turkey: People, Politics, and the Party System* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 123.

⁵⁸⁵ "Report by Parker T. Hart, 'Attitudes of some young Turkish instructors,' dated December 9, 1966" in *Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s Through the Reports of American Diplomats*, ed. Rifat N. Bali, (İstanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık, 2010), 119-124.

enthusiastic supporter of student movements in addition to the workers' and peasants' protests. Meanwhile, the army also started to see Demirel as incompetent. The AP's winning of the absolute majority in the 1969 general elections was also subjected to questions because of 60 per cent participation. In fact, the country had been carried into political turmoil as society became increasingly polarized and society's demands were diversified.

4.5. Generational Encounters and the Rise of New Role Models:

Complying with the rise of a new and young generation of politicians in Turkey, the second half of the 1960s also witnessed the loud voice of the youth heard in different parts of the world with student mobilization.⁵⁸⁶ Through time, with their demands of change regarding political and economic inequalities,⁵⁸⁷ students also inspired peasants and civil servants, leading to strikes and demonstrations in different parts of Turkey. Although the number of students was not that high compared to the population, the change their movement created was significant in designing the country's political culture. They, in fact, provided new role models for the reproduction of the myth of the national leader.

In this regard, besides increasing societal demands such as higher wages and a decrease in taxes, the social protest wave initiated by students was shaped by a generational encounter between those who had been raised on economically and politically depressive days of the Second World War and the others who were living in relatively free and prosperous societies of the post-war period. Despite the previous generation's conservative attitudes in favor of stability, the younger ones were self-confident optimists believing that they could change society for the better. A reflection of those winds of youth in Turkey could be Demirel's and Ecevit's rise as young politicians who challenged other politicians' established visions and instilled hopes in their electorates. They were like intermediaries between the younger and the older generation. Moreover, the student movement also gave birth to the rising popularity of several charismatic university students, who would be the new heroes of their own circles but interpreted as 'disloyals' by previous leftist generations and political elites in general. This difference in their perceptions defined the boundaries of the young national leader myth in the minds of both the political elite and the 'common man.'

⁵⁸⁶ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, 446-447.

⁵⁸⁷ The number of university students was 65,000 in 1960, 97,000 in 1965 and 159,000 in 1970. İlhan Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi" in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 3, ed. Murat Belge (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), 666.

In his autobiography *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, Harun Karadeniz, a student activist and the chair of the Student Union of ITU in the late 1960s when he was in his twenties, described the main goals of the student movement as the following: “We have adhered to May 27 as if we were the ones who made it. We adhered to it more than those who realized it. We would protect it if those others did not.”⁵⁸⁸ As these lines reveal clearly, the students had adopted the mission given to them by the May 27 Alliance. With their self-confidence influenced by their privileged status besides the army’s support,⁵⁸⁹ they perceived themselves as the owners and protectors of the revolutionary values, hence the society's saviors. This understanding was not different than what social realist films of the early 1960s depicted. However, this view also led to generational conflicts and even disagreements between students and political parties sharing similar opinions.

The most significant reason for disagreement was the release of the imprisoned DP cadre under an amnesty. Most university students were firmly against amnesty legislation; they criticized the CHP’s conciliatory attempts, especially during the CHP, YTP, and CKMP coalition formed after the second general elections in 1962. Nevertheless, this coalition granted amnesty and released the former President, Bayar. The stance of the students was at this point quite evident as they pointed out in the January 1964 declaration of the Turkish National Student Federation (*Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu*, TMTF): “We have not forgotten hateful attacks against the youth that resisted those who wanted to terrorize the country to take the nation back to the darkness of the Medieval times. We want to remind you that those who lost their legitimacy due to their unconstitutional and unlawful conduct and behaviors on May 27 will very close encounter the same end. The mentality of pre-May 27 has been imprisoned forever because it betrayed the principles of Atatürk.”⁵⁹⁰ As these lines show, students perceived themselves as inheritors of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, whereas followers of the DP line were considered traitors. This discourse was nurtured by another source of disagreement between generations: university regulations. In their successive protests, students demanded

⁵⁸⁸ Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 26.

⁵⁸⁹ “Millî menfaat mihverinde gençlik ve ordunun kucak kucağa olduğunu ve olacağını bir kere daha ispat etmiş bulunuyoruz” “MTTB Declaration,” 28 March 1963, *Ulus*, cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 29.

⁵⁹⁰ “Milleti ortaçağ karanlığına sürüklemek isterken, keyfî idareyi bir terör havasıyla yurttan estirmek isteyenlere direnen gençliğe karşı girişilen menfur hadiseleri unutmamak. 27 Mayıs’ta, anayasa ve hukuk dışı tutum ve davranışlarıyla meşruluğunu kaybettiklerinin sabitliği dünyaya ilan edilenlerin, icap ettiği takdirde tekrar aynı akıbeti göreceklerinin yakın olduğunu hatırlatmak isteriz. 27 Mayıs öncesi zihniyet Atatürk ilkelerine ihanet ettiği için ebediyen mahkum edilmiştir.” “TMTF Declaration,” 24 January 1964, *Ulus*, cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 27.

radical changes in the educational system, including examination methods.⁵⁹¹ This situation created a conflict between university professors and students, primarily because of boycotts, which frequently disrupted education. As a result, in the fall of 1964, the student union head's traditional speech in the opening ceremony of İstanbul University was canceled. As a reaction to that, students organized their own alternative opening ceremonies and started to criticize their professors for working in the private sector besides the university. The students argued that professors were making monetary gains, in fact, personal benefit by using science.⁵⁹²

With all these protests paired with public forums and meetings, students were destroying formal methods of making politics. They were trespassing the borders of opposition by challenging hierarchical mechanisms and, at the same time, democratizing decision-making.⁵⁹³ Meanwhile, the political party that students found opportunities for voicing their demands was mostly the TİP, which had 47 per cent support in the 1965 elections in student dormitories in İstanbul and Ankara. This, in fact, was more than passive support based on votes; according to Genç, the METU Student Association had even spent 35,000 Turkish liras for the election campaigns of the TİP.⁵⁹⁴ In the 1965 elections, the party got 3 per cent of votes and 15 seats. According to the party leader, Aybar, this result was a victorious step towards realizing a Marxist Revolution within a democratic legal framework.⁵⁹⁵ In fact, Aybar was in favor of convincing workers and peasants by vigorous powers⁵⁹⁶ and then capturing the means of the state with these groups.⁵⁹⁷ Many students, however, did not share this idea and found Aybar somewhat outdated and slow. This difference in opinion led to another group's emergence, the National Democratic Revolution (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*, MDD), within the TİP. It was a dominantly Maoist group headed by Doğan Avcıoğlu and Mihri Belli, which supported alternative means to come to power, such as anarchism, activism, and street protests. They believed that in the absence of a bourgeois class, which could be the driving force of the revolution, the only chance for revolutionaries to seize the means of the state and realize a

⁵⁹¹ Nadire Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009), 18-19; Gün Zileli, *Yarımla (1954-1972)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 288-291.

⁵⁹² *Milliyet* 14.12.1964 cited in Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye'de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1993), 205.

⁵⁹³ Yiğit Akın, "Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye'de Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 86-113.

⁵⁹⁴ Süleyman Genç, *12 Mart'a Nasıl Gelindi, Bir Devrim Perde Arkası* (Ankara: İleri Yayınevi, 1971), 102.

⁵⁹⁵ Mustafa Şener, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 360.

⁵⁹⁶ Artun Ünsal, *Umuttan Yalnızlığa: Türkiye İşçi Partisi 1961-1971* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2002), 5; Mehmet Ali Aybar, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi Tarihi*, Vol. 1 (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1988), 291, cited in Sevgi Adak and Ömer Turan, "Mehmet Ali Aybar" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler, 136.

⁵⁹⁷ Adak and Turan, "Mehmet Ali Aybar," 151.

national democratic revolution is to adopt new and extraordinary methods. Besides, the MDD saw the army as part of a possible revolutionary coalition that also included the national bourgeoisie. For Aybar, the MDD's stance rested upon some adventurous ideas and, therefore, impossible to be adopted. It should also be noted that Aybar might have been afraid of the party's closure due to extremist action. Consequently, he reemphasized hierarchies by discharging some members and imposing new disciplinary measures. He did not even allow the formation of more autonomous youth branches and the party's young members' participation in the congress of 1964.⁵⁹⁸ This attitude gradually made the youth feel alienated from the TİP. At one point, this situation was followed by an attack on Çetin Altan, a prominent TİP member, by rightist MPs after he commented on possible secret agreements between the ruling AP and the US. Other TİP representatives were, too, continuously backfired in the assembly. In fact, the TİP's voice was turned down significantly with the adoption of the D'hondt formula in the allocation of seats, which gave the TİP to two deputies in the 1969 general elections.⁵⁹⁹ Within this atmosphere, the youth's belief in traditional methods of coming to power decreased. This was the sign of a generational conflict as well, which showed in the form of a rebellious youth standing against the traditional methods of older leftist political elites called as 'old guns' (*eski tüfekler*).⁶⁰⁰

In the meantime, there was an anti-imperialist fervor, which became a powerful argument of student movements. The Cyprus issue and the US president Johnson's letter to Prime Minister İnönü in 1964 had already created a widespread feeling that Turkey had been betrayed by the US.⁶⁰¹ For students aware of the Palestine Independence Movement, Vietnam War, the Cuban Revolution, the civil independence wars in Congo and Algeria, the US was an imperialist power aiming to exploit dependent countries. The presence of the US navy in the Eastern Mediterranean was the other issue of the student movement. Therefore, students organized protests against Turkey's dependency on the US, the visits of the US sixth fleet to Turkish coasts, and for the nationalization of oil and mines.⁶⁰² In this context, the students saw theirs as the Second War of Independence fought for the country's national and independent development. As Deniz Gezmiş, the student leader executed in 1972, wrote in a letter to his father: "You raised me with Kemalist ideas. I grew up listening to the memories of the War of

⁵⁹⁸ Ünsal, *Umuttan Yalnızlığa: Türkiye İşçi Partisi 1961-1971*, 276.

⁵⁹⁹ Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960'tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020), 174.

⁶⁰⁰ Lüküslü, *Türkiye'nin 68'i: Bir Kuşağın Sosyolojik Analizi* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2015), 155.

⁶⁰¹ Veysel Ergüç, "Johnson Mektubu" in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, 257-274; Gencer Özcan, "Altmışlı Yıllarda 'Dış' Politika" in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, 210-237.

⁶⁰² Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 37.

Independence. Since then, I have hated foreigners. We are the fighters of Turkey's second War of Independence."⁶⁰³ With these lines, Gezmiş did emphasize not only the nationalist and anti-imperialist goals of the student movement but also expressed the continuity between his generation and his father's generation. This reveals the students' confirmation and adoption of the mission given to them by the May 27 Alliance and their adoption of Atatürk as their leader. For these students, Atatürk was the anti-imperialist savior of the nation.

In addition to Atatürk, students referred to activists such as Che Guevara, William Pomeroy, Carlos Marighella, Alberto Bayo, and Douglas Bravo besides Lenin, Mao, and Trotsky.⁶⁰⁴ Most of the sources written by these activists supported guerilla movements and very much appealed to the left-wing student leaders who could be interpreted as the new, young, brave, self-confident, and idealistic heroes of contemporary politics, reinforcing the myth of the national leader in students' minds. Therefore, the other inspiring heroes other than Atatürk were Che Guevara, a significant figure of the Cuban Revolution, and Ho Chi Minh, a symbol of Vietnam's struggle for independence and unification during a long conflict with anti-communist South Vietnam and the US.⁶⁰⁵

The rightist youth, on the other hand, felt associated with Turkist and anti-communist Alparslan Türkeş,⁶⁰⁶ who was the spokesman of the May 27 coup but was later exiled by the junta because he and his thirteen friends had not been in favor of leaving the power in the hands of civilians before solving the country's structural problems. In 1965, Türkeş became the chairman of the CKMP, which was later renamed as MHP. In 1967, his Nine Lights Doctrine was accepted as the party's program. These were targets for the party listed as nationalism, idealism, moralism, societalism, scientism, liberalism, ruralism, developmentalism/populism, and industrialization/technology.⁶⁰⁷ Thus, for extreme-rightists, Türkeş was quite significant also with his doctrinal contributions to the nationalist movement. He was found quite charismatic as well, according to Dündar Taşer, a retired major and a close associate of Türkeş, who argued that Türkeş was the *başbuğ* (chief of the Turks) because he "could get up and walk

⁶⁰³ *Cumhuriyet*, 29 January 1971 cited in Feyizoğlu, "Deniz/Bir İsyanının İleri," No.9, *Cumhuriyet*, (14 May 2004), 9.

⁶⁰⁴ Yiğit Akın, "Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye'de Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 96.

⁶⁰⁵ Hamit Bozarslan, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, 370-385; Ertuğrul Kürkçü, "Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketine Silahlı Mücadelenin Girişi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 494-542; Ömer Laçiner, "Kopuş Düşüncesi: 1960'lı Dönem Bir Kop(ama)ma mıdır?" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 525-535.

⁶⁰⁶ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Türkiye Solunun Kadına Bakışı: Değişen Bir Şey Var mı?" in *Kadın Bakış Açısından 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadınlar*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 291-293.

⁶⁰⁷ For Türkeş biography see: Zübeyir Barutçu, "Alparslan Türkeş" in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, 571-577.

where everybody falls.”⁶⁰⁸ Therefore, although Türkeş was not new to the Turkish political arena and was a man of the military, he could still be considered in the same category as new young leaders of the time given his impact and his younger age than İnönü. He was even able to instill energy on right-wing students with his adoption of Islam and Turkish nationalism as unifying elements of the nation. He was, in fact, in line with official nationalism, along with an adherence to traditional values and Islam as a moral source. This understanding also reproduced the myth of the strong state as the protector of the homogeneous nation from communism.⁶⁰⁹

Therefore, the period witnessed a divergence between the ‘old guns’ and leftist students who started to prefer young and radical student leaders such as Deniz Gezmiş, Harun Karadeniz, as they perceived the older leaders to be slower and not idealistic enough. These students turned their faces to militarist activists from around the world. For the rightist students, the extreme-rightist MHP and its comparably young leader Türkeş were the sources of energy. All these were accompanied by the radicalization of politics in the country and increasing nationalism as a reaction to the Cyprus crisis.

4.6. Folk heroes of Anatolia in the Ottoman Empire as Inspiring Sources:

Regardless of their ideological orientation, students’ interests in societal inequalities took them back to Ottoman history. Thus, both right-wing and left-wing students revisited the Ottoman past to explain how to deal with social inequalities. In this regard, besides contemporary leaders, as mentioned in the previous section, the most significant inspiring sources for the leftist students were Anatolian and/or Ottoman folk heroes such as Dadaloğlu, Köroğlu, and Sheikh Bedrettin.⁶¹⁰ For instance, students transformed a folk song about Köroğlu’s fight against the unjust feudal lord of Bolu into a political one about the imperialist NATO and the US.⁶¹¹ Therefore, what aroused students’ interest was that these heroes were all known for their fights against cruel political authorities, wicked bureaucrats, and oppressive feudal lords in a time of Ottoman decline. Among them, Sheikh Bedrettin, with his disciples Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Kemal, had been brought back into the spotlight by the communist poet Nazım Hikmet in the 1930s and then became a symbol of communal ownership of property and equality for the leftists of the late 1960s and the 70s. Unsurprisingly, the focus

⁶⁰⁸ Osman Çakır, *Nezat Kösoğlu ile Söyleşiler Hatıralar yahut Bir Vatan Kurtarma Hikayesi* (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınevi, 2008), 221.

⁶⁰⁹ For a review of MHP’s pragmatist ideological stance, see: Alev Çınar and Burak Arıkan, “The Nationalist Action Party: Representing the State, the Nation or the Nationalists?” *Turkish Studies*, 3:1, (2002): 25-40.

⁶¹⁰ Leyla Neyzi, “Object or Subject? The Paradox of ‘youth’ in Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33, (2001): 421.

⁶¹¹ Gökhan Atılhan, “‘68’in Kapıları” in *Türkiye’nin 1960’lı Yılları*, 338.

on Anatolian heroes opened the gates of Ottoman history for the students as they started to search for the origins of inequalities and differences of Turkey from the Western world in terms of its economic development.

The folk heroes were appealing to the right-wing youth, also. A significant example is Haluk Kırcı, a militant student who later became the convicted murderer of seven university students in the Bahçelievler incident in 1978. In his autobiography titled *Zamanı Süzerken*, he mentions his love for the spirit of epic folk heroes, which made him ready to become a martyr.⁶¹² Besides, the Ottoman Empire was the core of their ideologies as unifying nationalism and Islam for the right-wing students. The second man of the MHP, Taşer, also stated that the empire was an Islamic state established by Turks and different from European societies with feudal origins. According to him, the Ottoman decline started during the siege of Vienna in 1683, and ended with the Battle of Sakarya in 1921 with the expulsion of Greeks from Anatolia. Therefore, the focus on the Ottoman Empire provided an opportunity for bringing both Islam and Turkish nationalism under the same umbrella. It also served to the myth of strong state by implying a continuity between different states established by the Turkish nation.⁶¹³

Complying with the young rightists' and leftists' search for a role model, several movies depicting late Ottoman folk heroes were shot. Some of these films have *efe* figures known for leading rebellions against the late Ottoman period's local pressures as outlaws and later contributing to the army in the Turkish War of Independence. Therefore, this group of movies served both the official nationalist discourse and the spirit of the period shaped by social rebellion. Through the lives of *efes*, the filmmakers reproduced the societal demands of the late 1960s without referring to any particular Sultan. In this vein, the four available *efe* films analyzed in this part are *İzmir'in Kavakları: Çavdarlı Murat* (dir. Sırrı Gültekin, 1966), *Kozanoğlu* (dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1967), *Köroğlu* (dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1968), and *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe* (dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1969).

4.6.1. The Warrior:

Unlike the action/adventure films of the 1960-1965 period with plural heroes, the *efe* movies narrate the lives of singular heroes. Instead of a band of heroic soldiers as in *Silah Arkadaşları* (*Brothers in Arms*) of 1960-1965, for example, there is a lone warrior named Köroğlu. This transformation from groups to lone warriors complies with the country's

⁶¹² Haluk Kırcı, *Zamanı Süzerken* (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz Yayınları, 2012).

⁶¹³ Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiye'si* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2012), 33.

increasing aggressiveness and social turmoil, which might have elevated the image of saviors by reinforcing the leadership myth. Besides, at the beginning of the movies, all protagonists are described as ordinary young men; let us say the ‘common man,’ who are no different from the rest of society. Then, at some point in the story, these men turn into folk heroes, thus proper role models for the youth of the 1965-1980 period, when they encounter the oppression of a beg, aga, or wicked Ottoman bureaucrats. In some cases, they first set the road to take their father’s revenge, who himself was an *efe* and got killed by oppressors, as in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe*. Either way, the folk heroes adopt the role of saving their people, and their transformation from a ‘common man’ gives the populist message that all men can be heroes because heroism is an intrinsic feature of an ordinary Turkish man. This, of course, complies with the myth of warrior nation.

4.6.2. The National Homeland and The Leader:

Unlike previous movies depicting the late Ottoman Empire except those connecting it with the War of Independence, the films about folk heroes take place in rural areas so in the periphery of the empire. This nurtures the myth of the fatherland as a place that is not only constituted by the center. “Even the Sultan forgot these places” (3:44), as Kozanoğlu character states in *Kozanoğlu*. This spatial choice might indicate a re-embrace of the Ottoman state while providing the opportunity to blame for the Ottoman decline on bureaucratic or military representatives of the Sultan instead of the central state structure. In this vein, these representatives are described as corrupted and abusive of the state’s power and sources in their hands as they wanted to oppress people by seizing their properties, receiving bribes, and collecting unlawful taxes. In *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe*, cruel military officers threaten peasants with death and take their money, although they have already paid their taxes. Similarly, in *Kozanoğlu*, a mufti issues a fake fatwa to support a pasha collecting unlawful taxes, and local judges make their decisions in favor of richer ones. The anti-bureaucratic perspective, which is one of the main lines of Turkey’s political culture, could easily be followed here. In this picture, when an *efe* says that he does not trust ‘the Ottoman’ (01:01) in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe* and *Çavdarlı Murat*, he means the bureaucrats and military. Therefore, the heroes never fight against the state or its embodiment, the Sultan, but fight against those who exploit the state, and hence the Sultan. Besides, these rural people are also crushed by evil landlords or agas/begs who make them work on lands in return for nothing and may even want to take their women forcefully, as it happens in *Çavdarlı Murat*. In *Köroğlu*, Bolubeyi, the landlord of Bolu, blinds Köroğlu’s father Yusuf because he thinks that the horse given by Yusuf to him is not good

enough. Yusuf says that these landlords are no longer respectful to the Sultan (2:54-2:57). Therefore, like state representatives, the landlords misuse rights granted by the state to oppress people. In this manner, oppressing people automatically brings exploiting the state and the Sultan. Therefore, when fighting against oppressors, folk heroes also protect the state. This representation nurtures the myth of the strong state while at the same time increasing the power of the Sultan. From another perspective, it could also indicate either censorship by the state or auto-censorship and so the impossibility of challenging the state.

The anti-bureaucratic approach also reveals that anything that belongs to them is sacred since the state and the Sultan are sacred. For example, in one scene, Çavdarlı Murat stops a mail coach to seize and give the peasants any valuables that it carries. However, he does not take anything when he learns that the coach is bringing the salaries of state officers. The same happens in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe* when the *efe* takes only a portion of the money. This portion equals the worth of peasant houses burned by Ottoman military officers who also imprisoned those peasants that failed to pay their taxes. He leaves the rest of the money for the state officers saying that orphans even have rights to this money. These examples show that neither bureaucrats nor the military are perceived as the true representatives of the state. In fact, the interests of the people's interests are before those of the others according to these representations. This, however, does not create tension between the state/Sultan and the people. In this picture, the folk heroes are seen as the real representatives of the people. What is missing, according to these films, is the Sultan's accessibility. According to this movie baggage, the military and state officers block the connection between the Sultan and his people and make the ruler unreachable. In accordance with this, Kozanoğlu wants people to inform the Sultan about the corruption in this town. This anti-bureaucratic view also works to absolutize the Sultan's rule. It is also an indication of the hero's loyalty to the state, hence its embodiment. Then, the hero formula goes as follows: the *efe* or folk hero is an ordinary man, and despite his bravery and charisma, he fails to approach the ruler. The ones who can approach are the much more aggressive ones, mainly fighting against the Christian enemies, the Greeks in particular, as mentioned in the following sections.

4.6.3. The Warrior Nation:

As in other nationalist action/adventure films or war films, in folk hero films, there are civilians that turn into heroes due to hardships they experience. Once they become heroes, they automatically start to use guns and display their physical strength. In folk hero films, the heroes all fight in their local traditional clothes, strengthening the characters' ordinariness. Since most

of these local heroes are from western Anatolia, filmmakers make some characters speak in the west Anatolian accent. The accent is underlined with local costumes and local folk songs. This kind of localization is unique in the sense that it did not happen before. It probably reveals the contemporary interest in folk culture in a period of social turmoil. In addition, there might have been a lot more familiarity with local cultures at that time, due to migration. Most importantly, this is a precise reproduction of the myth of the warrior nation. In addition, these folk heroes always hang out in the periphery where there is a lack of central authority. There, the hero rides horses, practices shooting, kills oppressors together with other members of his gang, and finally distributes the oppressors' properties to the oppressed peasants as Robin Hood may have done. He displays his masculinity and shows the audience the power of the common man. This kind of representation could give the audience more reasons to feel attached to a period of rapid industrialization, migration, and social turmoil in Turkey's late 1960s and 1970s.

4.6.4. External Others:

The historical mythmaking through folk heroes evolved into a nationalist reaction with the revitalization of the Cyprus issue. In November 1967, Greek Cypriots raided the towns of the Turkish minority in Boğaziçi and Geçitkale and killed 24 people. Both rightist and leftist students criticized Demirel for his passive attitude and then organized various anti-imperialist meetings, some of which were attended by more than 100,000 people. The rightist students even organized a voluntary army and went to the border between Greece and Turkey. Their demand was the 'liberation' of Cyprus and Eastern Thrace by the Turkish army.⁶¹⁴ In fact, for them, the Cyprus issue stood as an opportunity to go back to the great and glorious days of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the leftist students argued for military intervention to guarantee the rights of both Turks and Greeks and the Federal State of Cyprus.⁶¹⁵ Complying with this nationalist atmosphere, the only external enemy in folk hero films is the Greeks of both Anatolia and Greece. In a way, folk heroes fight against contemporary enemies. In this context, Greeks are depicted negatively. For example, the character Nikolai Çorbacı in *Çavdarlı Murat* is a merciless man who forcefully takes the belongings of an old Turkish man. Before killing Nikolai, Çavdarlı blames him for feeding somebody else by stealing Turks' money. Then, in the next scene, we see four Greek men waiting in a boat for Nikolai to take what Nikolai would bring them to Greece. While killing them, Çavdarlı repeats that all money, properties, and land belong to the Turks. He also adds, the Turks are not coming to these men's

⁶¹⁴ Milliyet, 25.11.1967 cited in Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye'de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, 372.

⁶¹⁵ Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye'de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, 178.

country, and they should do the same thing (43:28-44:18). Here the hero never uses the word ‘Greek.’ Despite that, the audience could quickly get the message from the characters’ accents, the Greek language, and Greek music in the background. Such a representation marks the enemy without saying its name but by strongly underlining its identity. It should also be noted that filmmakers do not distinguish Anatolian Greeks from the Greeks of Greece. These two groups are depicted as the same group, and therefore, they are referred to as collaborators. There are not many references to the word ‘Rum,’ which is the word for Anatolian Greeks in this vein. Only in one *meyhane* scene in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe*, the cruel and drunken ‘Rum’ gangs say that they watch half-naked ‘Rum *dilbers*’ dancing for them (37:12-28:37). One more point is that these ‘loose Rum women’ smile happily while dancing, contrary to the Turkish girl who rejects dancing. Obviously, this is a one-dimensional representation of the ‘other’ and the Turkish girl, depicting the Anatolian Greeks as negative and the Turkish girl with positive qualities. Moreover, by not distinguishing the two groups, the films reproduce the myth of a homogeneous nation and directly point to the enemy: namely, the Greeks, in line with the day’s political atmosphere. This directness makes the job of nationalist action/adventure heroes easier in their quest to take revenge for all the misfortunes that the Turks had been in throughout history with non-Muslims, Greeks in particular.

4.7. Guerilla Warfare:

The overall nationalist reaction against the Greeks does not mean that the rightist and leftist students were collaborating. Students were militarized, and so there were clashes between them everywhere. Contrary to the period before the May 27 coup, the rightist students were much more experienced this time. In fact, thanks to the victory of the rightist parties in 1965, they could find opportunities to organize themselves and even increase their activities in student organizations. They were especially powerful out of campuses thanks to non-student supporters, some of whom were associated with The Associations of Struggle Against Communism (*Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri*). These people mostly became the basis of Hearths of Ideals (*Ülkü Ocakları*), which were the youth branches of Türkeş’s MHP. Many were using sticks, guns, and knives, and from 1968 on, they were trained in commando camps to fight against communism, hence the leftist students.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁶ For more about commando camps and trainings there, see: Hakan Akpınar, *Kurtların Kardeşliği: CKMP’den MHP’ye (1965-2005)* (İstanbul: Bir Harf Yayınları, 2005), 59; “Interview with Rıfat Baykal, a member of National Unity Committee,” (1 August 1968), *Cumhuriyet* in Hikmet Çetinkaya, “Komando Kampları,” *68’den 78’e Sancılı Yıllar Kuşatılmış Sokaklar* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2010), 81-82.

Under these increasingly aggressive conditions, the sixth fleet protests intensified as well. In one incident in July 1968, the police stormed the ITU campus, causing the death of a student named Vedat Demircioğlu. This was the first death since the April 1960 protests and was perceived as a sign of returning to the pre-May 27 conditions for left-wing students. In addition to the TİP's passive attitude, the death caused some students to feel associated with the MDD line and adopt aggressive methods.⁶¹⁷ All in all, the campuses were like battlefields, and in January 1969, the US ambassador Robert Komer's car was burned by the leftist students during his visit to METU. In February 1969, the left-wing protestors of the sixth fleet clashed with the right-wing in Taksim, which caused the deaths of two leftists.⁶¹⁸ Outside the campuses, there were strikes and demonstrations mostly supported and even participated in by the leftist students. Peasants occupied lands mainly in the Western part of Turkey, and workers occupied many factories, including Derby, Singer, and Ereğli Iron and Steel. These incidents followed one after the other with an increasing number of participants. In June 1970, industrial workers in the Istanbul-İzmit area started a massive march to protest a new law regulating union organization and collective bargaining. The protest turned out to be the largest workers' protest of Turkish history involving over 100,000 demonstrators.

Furthermore, as a reaction to the increasing militarist atmosphere, the MDD line of the TİP was divided due to disagreements between the two groups. The first group was centered around the journal *Aydınlık* and led by Doğu Perinçek, a new doctoral graduate in law. It favored the army's active role in protecting the country from political and economic chaos. The other group, led by two political science students, Mahir Çayan and Yusuf Küpeli, who had been active in debating societies, played leading roles in university occupations. According to them, the Perinçek wing supported the junta, and both the TİP and MDD were passive and ignorant of the peasants' revolutionary potential. Meanwhile, the Federation of Debating Societies' name had been changed into the Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey (*Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu*, DEV-GENÇ) to support effective fighting. Besides, the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, THKO), an armed underground organization founded in METU, started its armed actions such as kidnappings of several US soldiers in Turkey and other persons, in addition to bank robberies to finance their activities. Among THKO members were Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Hüseyin İnan, Sinan Cemgil, and Taylan Özgür, all of who were young students executed in the following years. These students all perceived themselves as vanguard warriors, and to realize the revolution, some of them had

⁶¹⁷ Mustafa Şener, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 362.

⁶¹⁸ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 381.

been trained in Bekaa Valley in Al-Fatah Camps like many of their counterparts in Europe.⁶¹⁹ They all contributed to the myth of the national leader in the masses' minds in two ways. First, their dynamism nurtured myth of the young and dynamic warrior, sacrificing himself for his ideals. However, on the other hand, their rebellious attitudes led to a limitation on what the ideal young warrior should do, or 'is expected to do' by previous generations and the political elites. In this context, the national warrior is assumed to be not only young and idealist but also loyal to the establishment. The same historical political context is also influential in the movies of the next chapter, which mostly depict imaginary characters conquering new places and taking revenge on all the other characters.

4.8. The Anxious Elites and The Immediate Sacrificial of the 'Disloyals' with March 12, 1971 Memorandum:

The overall militarization of student politics increased the anxiety of the political elite. There emerged suspicions about the youth, and the elites thought that the youth was open to foreign ideas imported from foreign lands so that they could be deceived easily.⁶²⁰ So, they believed that the young people had to be shown some borders and taken under control. As a result, the CHP leader İnönü and Ecevit distanced themselves from the youth by criticizing leftist students' illegal activities. They also emphasized that with its mixed economic system, Turkey was not an enemy of the US. The reason for the cautious attitude of the CHP could be the fear of another coup, which could punish the leftists this time. The rightists also shared this fear, who was afraid of a coup similar to May 27. In this environment, there was an evident disengagement of the leftist students from the CHP and TİP. This meant that they conflicted with both the first generation of Kemalists, and the older Marxists known as the 'old guns' (*eski tüfekler*).⁶²¹ This tension is also explained in the account of Karadeniz, in which he mentions how disappointed students were with the behavior of their professors with whom they had shared the same anti-DP views. In his words: "The youth graduated from university as doctors, engineers, lawyers, and teachers. When these young people begin to work, there is only one

⁶¹⁹ Yiğit Akın, "Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye'de Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 86-113; Kerem Ünüvar, "Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu (1970-1971)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 830-833.

⁶²⁰ A booklet published and distributed by The General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces could be an example of public propaganda conveying anti-communist ideas. Its title is *Komünistler gençlerimizi ve işçilerimizi nasıl aldatıyor?* (How do communists deceive our young people and workers?). It mainly argues that the Turkish youth who wants to do something for their sacred nation is being manipulated by communists (İstanbul: T.C. Genelkurmay Başkanlığı İnci Ordu ve Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı, 1973).

⁶²¹ Bozarslan, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, 379.

ideal in their minds: working honestly, a happy future, a happy Turkey, and the determination to fix Turkey's corrupt order. (However) these young people encounter older men who caused the corrupt order, pessimists about Turkey's progress, and consider working for these as rowing against the tide. These older men always support the idea that Turkey will never get better. By destroying the ideals in the minds of the youth, these older men do the worst harm to the country. As a result, the youth, who have just graduated from university, begin working as older men."⁶²²

In the face of all these developments, the AP government was paralyzed. Basically, it stopped functioning because it could neither curb the terror in the streets and campuses nor pass any legislation through the parliament. Finally, on 12 March 1971, the generals sent a memorandum to the government and demanded it ended anarchy and chaos and carry out Kemalist reforms. Unlike the May 27 declaration, which emphasized democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms, the memorandum focused on the government's incompatibility and assembly as reflected on anarchy, fratricidal strife, and social and economic unrest put the future of the Republic in danger. It warned that the army would exercise its constitutional duty and take power into its hands if these continued. Consequently, the AP government resigned, and Professor Nihat Erim was given the responsibility of establishing a government of technocrats to implement reforms.⁶²³

Immediately after the memorandum, Deniz Gezmiş was caught. This increased the illegal activities of students, some of whom were turned into urban guerillas. By this time, the National Security Council had declared martial law in eleven provinces, including Ankara and İstanbul. Besides strikes, lockouts, political meetings, or seminars of professional groups or trade unions, political youth organizations had been banned. Two leftist newspapers *Akşam* and *Cumhuriyet*, were suspended for ten days. In addition, some of their writers and some professors were taken into custody. In May 1971, some THKO members captured Efraim Elrom, the Israeli consul general in İstanbul, and later killed him. Ahmad states that this was "a grave blow

⁶²² "Genç kişiler çıkar üniversiteden. Doktor, mühendis, avukat, öğretmen. O genç kişiler ki hayata yeniden atıldıkları anda, tek ülküleri vardır kafalarında. Dürüst çalışma, mutlu yarınlar, mutlu Türkiye ve yine kafalarında Türkiye'nin bozuk bir düzenle dönen çarklarını düzeltme kararı. Bu genç kişiler hayatta çarkların bozuk bir düzenle dönmesine sebep olan, Türkiye'nin kalkınabileceğinden ümitsiz, kalkınma için çalışmayı akıntıya karşı kürek çekmek sayan yaşlı kişilerle karşılaşılır. O yaşlı kişiler ki devamlı olarak Türkiye'de işlerin düzelemeyeceği tezini savunurlar. O yaşlı kişiler ki, genç kafalardaki ülküleri yok ederek bu memlekete en büyük kötülüğü yapmış olurlar. İşte böylece genc kisiler çıkar üniversiteden, fakat yaşlı kişiler olarak hayata atılırlar. Ancak, sevinçle söyleyelim ki, bugünün gençliği, hayatta, yaşlı ve hatta tek kendi çıkarları için çalışmayı amaç edinmiş bencil kişilerce karşılaçağını biliyor ve tedbirini alıyor." Karadeniz, "Kaybolan Ülküler," *Yeni Kovan*, No. 1 (18 March 1965), cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 8.

⁶²³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 262.

to the prestige of the state.”⁶²⁴ In addition, THKO members also kidnapped three British officers of the NATO base in Ünye. However, after a serious military operation supported by the CIA, the ten members were attacked and killed in Kızıldere village in Tokat. This incident left significant scars on the Turkish left, destroying a large and experienced cadre of revolutionary students. The fact that the government preferred them dead shows that it also wanted to display the state’s power and compensate for the prestige shaken with Elrom’s capture. Another compensating step was executing three THKO members; Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan, in May 1972. The operations then continued, and İbrahim Kaypakkaya, the founder of the Communist Party of Turkey and one of Turkey's most prominent Marxist theorists despite his young age, was tortured and died in prison in January 1973.⁶²⁵

All these meant the destruction of the youthful image of the national hero.⁶²⁶ In fact, although the succeeding generations of leftists regarded the dead students as revolutionary heroes who sacrificed their lives for society’s independence, these operations severely crushed the leftists. As a result, a climate of fear was created by strangling the political space and leaving no chance for alternative voices. One other development was the reconstruction in the youth's image from guardians of the regime to threats to national interests in newspapers by referring to student activists as bandits (*eşkiya*) manipulated by foreign powers to destroy Turkey’s unity.⁶²⁷ Thus, for example, the mainstream *Hürriyet* newspaper writes about Kızıldere as follows: “Rebels killing three innocent British men captured dead.” Similarly, *Cumhuriyet*, a leftist newspaper in line with the CHP, says: “Ten anarchists were captured dead,” “Anarchist killed 3 British men.”⁶²⁸ In these examples, regardless of each newspaper’s ideological orientation, the students are seen as anarchists and rebels who attacked innocent and armless men and intended to destroy the Republic.

Thus, between 1965 and the early 1970s, some students’ independent behaviors from authority figures such as their fathers, university professors, and politicians were not welcomed by the political elite. Furthermore, the increasing militarization of the student movement influenced the youth's image in their minds and led to its reassurance not merely as the regime's protectors but also loyal and obedient guardians of both the regime and the state. This situation

⁶²⁴ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 294.

⁶²⁵ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 292-294.

⁶²⁶ Tezcan Durna, “Yetmişli Yıllarda Politik Şiddet ve Basın” in *Modernizmin Yansımaları: 70’li Yıllarda Türkiye*, eds. Barbaros and Zürcher, (Ankara: Efil Yayınevi, 2014), 246.

⁶²⁷ Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye’de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, 288.

⁶²⁸ “Üç masum İngiliz öldüren şakiler ölü ele geçtiler,” *Hürriyet*; “10 anarşist silahlı çatışma sonunda ölü olarak ele geçti,” “Anarşistler 3 İngiliz öldürdü,” *Cumhuriyet*, (31 March 1972). For a reading of actions of political violence in different newspapers, see Tezcan Durna, “Yetmişli Yıllarda Politik Şiddet ve Basın” in *Modernizmin Yansımaları: 70’li Yıllarda Türkiye*, 230-268.

drew the borders of the ideal hero for the nation, not simply a young and dynamic man but a young nationalist warrior working only for the interests of his nation and the state. This was basically a noble and loyal warrior of the state and the nation who was young and dynamic and listened to the authority figures' advice, including their rulers, fathers, and the elderly. This resonates with the depiction of heroes in historical action/adventure films as loyal young warriors entrusted by the ruler for saving a community.

4.9. 'Men of Action' in Aggressive Post-March 12:

The period following March 12, 1971 Memorandum witnessed the peak of political violence, economic crisis, and nationalist fervor. Contrary to the liberal atmosphere of the 1960 coup, this time, the leftists were mainly targeted.⁶²⁹ Thus, the left had been crushed; universities were taken under central control, state security courts were established. These suppressing measures killed politics outside of the state's sphere and did not allow anything outside the center. On the other hand, the power of the right-wing elite significantly increased as they became much more united in compensating for the rise of Ecevit, whose left-of-center discourse led to positive results for the CHP in the first free elections after the memorandum in October 1973. The CHP was, in fact, the only representative of the pre-1950 military/bureaucratic elite in this period. However, Ecevit's strategy was different, and he aimed to change the party's elitist image by opening it to the grassroots, urban working classes, peasantry, and the nationalist wing of the commercial bourgeoisie.⁶³⁰ This strategy worked well to increase Ecevit's popularity, first, within his party. When he won intraparty pre-elections in provincial congresses, İnönü resigned. Finally, in general congress in 1972, he was elected as the chairman. This marked the beginning of a new era and the lessening influence of the previous generations, as represented by İnönü.

Nevertheless, Ecevit was able to bring a fresh breath to the party and increase his popularity thanks to international crises, such as the opium crisis in which he allowed poppy cultivation despite the US's push to Turkey to stop it, which contributed to the dominance of anti-western and nationalist discourses in the country. This move made Ecevit a popular figure in Turkey as reflected on political slogans of the period: "Ecevit is our hope" and "populist Ecevit" (or "man of the people, Ecevit"). In this context, Ecevit instilled hope of "carrying the nation towards bright days" in people that had been struggling with the political and economic crisis. In this vein, he was widely referred to as *Karaoğlan* (Blackboy), a folk figure who

⁶²⁹ Bozarlan, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları," 380.

⁶³⁰ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 314.

somewhat resembled Robin Hood, evoking the images of personal heroism, social justice, and glory.⁶³¹ Finally, despite his very short and limited political campaign due to martial law, in October 1973 elections, Ecevit gained a victory by taking 33.5 per cent of the votes.⁶³² This amount, however, was not sufficient for the CHP to establish a government alone; therefore, a coalition was established with the inclusion of the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP), which had gained 12 per cent of votes and 48 seats.⁶³³

The MSP was not new to Turkish politics because it stemmed from the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP), which had been closed down with the Memorandum a year after its foundation. The chairman of both parties was Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011), another representative of the same new young generation of politicians like his opponents Demirel and Ecevit. Born in 1926 in Sinop on the Northern Black Sea coast, Erbakan had both a traditional and elitist background. His father was a criminal court judge attached to a prominent family of Kozanoğulları from Adana. After attending İstanbul High School, a prestigious high school whose language of instruction was German, Erbakan studied at ITU mechanical engineering department. During his university years, he had a prayer group, including Demirel, one of his classmates. After finishing his undergraduate education, Erbakan pursued his postgraduate studies in Germany, where he also worked for Humboldt Deutz in the motor industry. When he came back to Turkey, he became the youngest associate professor at the age of 27. By 1965, he was a professor at ITU while at the same time working in leading positions in the industry. In 1969, he became the general secretary of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (*Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği*, TOBB). This family and career background meant that he combined conservatism, science, industry, and elitism. He represented another way of modernization by appealing to the people's imaginings of progress and technology without giving away their traditions and religious beliefs. By the time he became an MP of Konya, a conservative city in Central Anatolia in the 1969 elections, he had already explained his political views in his manifest entitled National View (*Milli Görüş*). In this, he stated that he was against westernism and capitalism but supported the development of the national industry and technology.⁶³⁴ Thus, it could be argued that with his emphasis on Islam and nationalism,

⁶³¹ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 329-330; Çolak, *Bülent Ecevit: Karaoğlan*, 164-166. Here the connection with the comic book hero Karaoğlan created by Suat Yalaz 1963 is not clear. This could be just a simple coincidence. In fact, the nickname "black boy" is very common in Turkish society and used for brave boys or boys with black hair.

⁶³² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 264.

⁶³³ "Turkey," Inter-Parliamentary Union Archive, http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/TURKEY_1973_E.PDF, 99.

⁶³⁴ Kerem Yavaşca, "Necmettin Erbakan: Lider, Hoca, Mücahit" in *Türkiye'nin 1970'li Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020), 495-499.

and the support he received from capital holders, Erbakan was a significant building block in the struggle against communism. Despite that, the CHP and MSP coalition lasted only nine months, in which they faced significant economic policy challenges once the fast progress of the early 1970s was replaced by stagnation in the national economy. After 1972, the manufacturing industry's growth rate in production and investment stopped increasing and stayed at the same level until 1978. The negative impact of the 1973-74 oil crisis also deepened economic problems.⁶³⁵

On the other hand, Turkey's intervention in Cyprus was the international crisis that increased Ecevit's support. In July 1974, when the Cypriot President Makarios was overthrown with a coup supported by the Greek government and Cyprus' unification with Greece was declared, Turkey sought effective action from Britain and the US. The answer it received, however, was negative. Consequently, Turkey started a military operation as one of the guarantor states and occupied the island's northern part. For the Turkish public opinion and the leaders, this was a peace operation carried out to bring peace to both Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks. This was a precise reproduction of the myth of benevolent conquerors regarding Turkey's mission. In this vein, in his declaration of the start of the operation, Ecevit stated that: "The Turkish Armed Forces (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*, TSK) will not open fire as long as it is not fired upon, they are in Cyprus not for war but for peace. (The TSK) is in Cyprus not for an occupation but to stop an occupation. With its operation launched at dawn, (the TSK) will save both Turkish and Greek Cypriots from the darkness of the oppressive regime."⁶³⁶

All these increased Ecevit's popularity not only in the eyes of the CHP supporters but also in those of the rightists. He had turned out to be the "second Atatürk" and "the conqueror of Cyprus" as a Cypriot journalist Metin Münir states just three weeks after the operation: "Almost overnight Ecevit has been transformed in many people's eyes from a well-intentioned, idealistic leader of a shaky coalition into a man of authority who could be looked upon to give the country new horizons and, more important, the unity which many Turks have felt lacking since the demise of their father figure."⁶³⁷ These lines reveal that the society had been looking for a father after the death of Atatürk, and Ecevit was, then, perceived as that figure who could take the revenge of the 'oppressed' Turkish nation from the West. With his dynamism, youth, and nationalist messages, Ecevit was able to arouse excitement in the society by fitting well

⁶³⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 270-271.

⁶³⁶ Ali Murat Alhas, "45 years on, Turkey's Peace Operation in Cyprus still echoes," *Anadolu Ajansı*, (20.07.2019), <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/45-years-on-turkey-s-peace-operation-in-cyprus-still-echoes/1536769>

⁶³⁷ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975*, 343.

into the myth of the ideal national leader, who is more of an Alexander in Girardet's categorization. Then, another historic moment came. Having confidence in his popularity, Ecevit resigned and called for an early election. The other parties, however, responded by not going to an early election but uniting against him.⁶³⁸ As a result, AP, MSP MHP, and the Republican Reliance Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi*, CGP)⁶³⁹ formed a coalition government. With Demirel as the prime minister, this coalition called itself the National Front (*Milliyetçi Cephe*) government and declared its principles as being nationalist and Islamic. Thus, it was a perfect match with the political climate influenced by the aggressiveness of the Cyprus crisis and anti-communism.

Meanwhile, the Cyprus crisis turned out to be a deadlock that would last for a very long time. As a reaction to Turkey's operation, the US implemented a military embargo between 1975 and 1978. This meant Turkey's alienation in international politics. It also harmed Turkey's armed forces, and by the late 1970s, Turkey could not even import the minimum of its army needs.⁶⁴⁰ As a result, the Western alliance gradually lost its credibility in the eyes of the Turkish elites.

Furthermore, due to decreasing industrial investments and economic downturn, İstanbul's economy was shaken, and many people, lower-class migrants, in particular, started to lose their jobs. By the end of the 1970s, living conditions in the city became much more difficult.⁶⁴¹ This brought a wave of political protests by students and workers across the country. Some demonstrations turned out to be violent incidents. In this context, memorable violent incidents include: the 1 May 1977 massacre, which led to the deaths of more than thirty people during the International Workers' Day celebrations in İstanbul; the 16 March 1978 massacre, in which İstanbul University students were bombed at the exit of the school; the 9 October 1978 Bahçelievler massacre, in which seven university student members of the TİP were assassinated; the 19-26 December 1978 Maraş Massacre which targeted the Alawites and finally caused the deaths of more than one hundred Alawites; and the May-July 1980 Çorum massacre, in which more than fifty Alawites again were killed. The overall death toll of the 1970s was 5,000, which makes nearly ten assassinations per day. By this time, the country was dominated by a governmental crisis, as revealed by various coalition governments that did not

⁶³⁸ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975*, 344.

⁶³⁹ The CGP had been established by a group separated from the CHP after Ecevit's declaration of his party's position as left-of-center.

⁶⁴⁰ Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Security and the Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Fall 1983): 158.

⁶⁴¹ Erman, "The Politics of Squatter (Gecekondu) Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, No: 7 (2001): 983-1002.

last long. In the 1977 general elections, the CHP attempted to establish a minority government but could not get a vote of confidence. Demirel's second National Front government failed, also, due to resignations. Ecevit established the 1978 government, but it was also dissolved because of the vote of no confidence. In the 1979 byelections, the AP was victorious, and a minority government was founded. This government served until it failed to elect the President for six months.⁶⁴² The end result was the September 12, 1980 coup, which still overshadows Turkey's democracy.

During this period of political tensions, street politics was defined by the conflict between leftists and rightists. This conflict, however, was not between equal sides. The 1971 Memorandum had already devastated the entire left, especially by executing charismatic student leaders. The rightists, however, were still quite active. There were the Idealists in the streets as commandos trained in commando camps. After the formation of the first National Front government in March 1975, the Idealists, who numbered between several hundred and a few thousand, started to clash violently with the leftist groups. This group was so confident because there was an unofficial and never acknowledged the connection between them and the MHP, a building block of both National Front coalitions. At this time, the MHP had stripped itself from Pan-Turkist codes to gain more votes. It broke up with its prominent Pan-Turkist members, such as Nihal Atsız and Mustafa Özdağ. The party's emblem had been changed, too, from a grey wolf, which was mythologically known as the ancestor of the Turks, into three crescents symbolizing the three continents dominated by the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴³ This meant the increase of Islamic and Ottoman elements in politics. All these were not without return, and in the 1977 election, the party's votes increased from 3.4 per cent to 6.4 per cent. Although seemingly negligible, this percentage was critical enough in determining the coalition partners, given the party's informal ties with the streets.

In this context, the Idealists functioned like paramilitary groups fighting on behalf of the state or basically the ones who were in power—the AP and other coalition partners in this case. They were primarily young people, and since what the group did was also beneficial to the other coalition partners, Demirel never tried to stop the violent attacks on the leftists that the Idealists participated in. Here, a closer look at the Idealists' profiles reveals their similarities and differences with the leftist students of the time. Both were the youth groups of the same generation, and their profiles present clues about the mentality that gave birth to the aggressive

⁶⁴² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 266.

⁶⁴³ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 156-158.

warriors of the nationalist action/adventure films. According to Bora and Can, Idealists in urban centers mainly were young castaways who failed to integrate into capitalism and the early military/bureaucratic elites' westernization project. Some were even second or third generations of migrants who had come to İstanbul from rural areas.⁶⁴⁴ At this point, Kandiyoti's analysis of the transformation of power dynamics in society due to the dissolution of the patriarchal economy in rural areas facilitates the understanding of the mentalities of migrant men who could be the potential supporters of Idealists, as mentioned by Bora and Can. She mentions the dissolution of the patriarchal economy in the 1950s and argues that the patriarchal economy led to a predetermined life thanks to the control of the wealth by the oldest man of the family. The oldest son inherited the wealth after the father's death, and therefore the young ones had to wait in line to get their shares.⁶⁴⁵ However, this picture changed when lands were divided among many siblings, so agricultural profit became insufficient. Then, young men from rural areas started to migrate to urban centers. As a result, "the material bases of classical patriarchy crumbled under the impact of new market forces, capital penetration in rural areas."⁶⁴⁶ This meant not only a decline in the power of the father or the elderly over the son or the youth happened, but life also turned out to be something to be earned, not inherited for the younger generation, Sancar also argues.⁶⁴⁷ Relying on this, one could say that survival anxiety might have been created in this new capitalist world. Moreover, this anxiety might have been magnified in the 1970s due to political and social turmoil. Then, as Bora and Can would also agree, feeling isolated, marginalized, and economically insufficient due to their homelessness and fatherlessness, these migrant men might have embraced their traditions more and more.⁶⁴⁸

To put it clearly, being isolated, homeless, and poor, some migrants could have embraced their ethnic and religious ties and derived a symbolic power out of these connections.⁶⁴⁹ Here it must be noted that not all migrants were Idealists, and not all Idealists were migrants. However, the relationship between the state of being a migrant and embracing traditions correlates well with the increasing nationalism of the 1970s. Thus, extreme-right

⁶⁴⁴ Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun: 1990'lardan 2000'lere MHP* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 67-68

⁶⁴⁵ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society*, 2(3), (1998): 281.

⁶⁴⁶ Kandiyoti, *Rural Transformation in Turkey and Its Implications for Women's Status, Women on the Move: Contemporary Changes in Family and Society*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1984): 17-29.

⁶⁴⁷ Serpil Sançar, "Chapter 4: Erkeklik Krizi mi?" "Chapter 5: Babalar ve Oğullar: Kuşaktan Kuşağa Erkeklik" in *Erkeklik: İmkansız İktidar, Ailede, Piyasada ve Sokakta Erkekler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2020).

⁶⁴⁸ Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edib Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 149; Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1997), 64.

⁶⁴⁹ For a discussion of symbolic ethnicity, see: Ayhan Kaya, "The Beur Uprising: Poverty and Muslim Atheists in France," *Eurozine*, (3 May 2006), <https://www.eurozine.com/the-beur-uprising/>

nationalism might have provided these ‘castaways’ the necessary tools to reformulate their identities. They might have been resorting to nationalist political myths to resist the challenges of the cultural modernization caused by the modernized city and to survive in urban life.⁶⁵⁰ On the other hand, some of them might have been attaching themselves to the Idealists, who also provided them a space for reperforming their masculinities that had been wounded by their encounters with modern westernized capitalist cities. In this picture, the attachment to a particular mob culture presented by the Idealists probably led to these young men’s reassurance of their identities as ‘men of action,’ who could gain strength in city life.

At this point, both Karaođlan Ecevit during the Cyprus Operation of 1974 and the Idealists, in addition to radical leftist student leaders, might have contributed to the formation of the myth of the national warrior in an aggressive fashion. As reflected in films made in this period, these warriors are all brave, aggressive, and militarist ‘men of action.’ Besides, they were more loyal to the state than ever. In fact, neither the radical students nor their representatives were perceived as loyal to the state, as shown through the execution of their leaders. Contrary to this, the Idealists, who were also mostly young, could be construed as loyal and obedient soldiers of the state. Here, although it is rather simplistic and problematic to directly consider these ‘loyals’ same as the popular heroes of historical action/adventure films, there is a contextual connection with the rise of Idealists as the obedient role models and the reproduction of the myth of the national warrior through films. This myth forms an ideal warrior fighting within a limited scope shaped not only by the rightists but also by the many leftists of the older generation and the CHP. This connection must not be ignored.

4.10. ‘Cinema in Action:’

The brave, aggressive, militarist and nationalist Turkish warriors were in action on nationalist action/adventure movies centered on the War of Independence. What made War of Independence movies of the 1970s different than those made earlier was their strongly polarized representations of the enemies, contrary to the much vaguer depictions of earlier movies. In recent movies, internal enemies are almost non-existent, and clear-cut messages are given about external enemies, the Greeks in particular, and what tactics Turks should adopt to fight against them. Again, this is an indication of an aggressive nationalist stance. The eight films analyzed in this section are: *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guards of the Crescent and Star*, dir. Semih Evin, 1966), *Diři Düşman (The Female Enemy*, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1966), *Aslan Arkadaşım Kuduz*

⁶⁵⁰ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun: 1990’lardan 2000’lere MHP*, 67-68.

Recep (*My Brave Friend Mad Recep*, dir. Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1967), *Fedailer Mangası* (*The Guards Draft*, dir. İlhan Engin, 1971), *Aşkın Zaferi: Aşk ve Vatan* (*The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland*, dir. Orhan Elmas, 1973), *Tek Kollu Bayram* (*One-Armed Bayram*, dir. Erdoğan Tokatlı, 1973), *Kahramanlar Bayrak* (*The Heroes Flag*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1974) and *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming, Hora*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1976).

4.10.1. *The Nation's Continuity:*

It should also be noted that although beyond the limits of the current dissertation, one can also think of the corpus of this part in relation to films depicting the Cyprus crisis.⁶⁵¹ However, the films which are solely depicting the Cyprus crisis have been omitted, and only those which represent the War of Independence or utilize the Cyprus crisis as a sign of the ethnic continuity of Turks through generations are taken into consideration. In this regard, there are examples in which the connection between Cyprus and Turkey is inserted in a historical narrative to build continuity with the past. For instance, in *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming, Hora*), the life stories of three generations are connected through wars: Kamil, who fought in the Battle of Gallipoli, his son Lieutenant Serdar of the War of Independence, and the grandson Barış, who became the captain of *Hora*, the ship that was actively used in 1974 Cyprus Operation. The film's most violent scenes depict Serdar's taking revenge on both his father and his wife by beheading many Greeks and even bringing the head of Hristo, the man who killed his wife, to his wife's grave. The grandson Barış, whose name means 'peace' in English, symbolizes the hopeful new generation in favor of peace. This might also be a reproduction of the myth of national warrior, so the message could be that the Turks, as benevolent conquerors, brought peace to the island.

A similar example depicting ethnic continuity is provided by the 1966 film *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*), which starts with a war scene depicting the conquest of İstanbul in 1453. After a crowded war scene, the audience sees a Byzantine commander hiding imperial treasures from Turks. It then turns into the story of a female Greek agent named Irene, who aims to find the treasures to sponsor the Greeks in Cyprus against Turks living on the island. This narrative path forms a continuity between the history of the Ottoman golden age and today's İstanbul besides Cyprus.

⁶⁵¹ Some of the available films on the Cyprus issue that contribute to the reproduction the nationalist myth of army nation are: *On Korkusuz Adam* (*Ten Fearless Men*, dir. Tunç Başaran, 1964); *Göç: Kıbrıs Ufuklarında* (*Migration: On Cyprus Horizons*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1974); *Kartal Yuvası* (*The Eagle Nest*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1974) and *Sezercik: Küçük Mücahit* (*Sezercik: Little Mujahid*, dir. Ertem Göreç, 1974).

4.10.2. *The Others:*

The emphasis on the nation's continuity also takes the enemy the same through ages and absolutizes it. In this regard, Byzantium and contemporary Greeks are taken as the same in *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*). Both *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*) and *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming, Hora*) reproduce the myth of the other by historically identifying the enemy as Greeks clearly and distinctly. Unlike the 1950s' or early 60s' films, which had a much more vague and softer representation of the enemy, as from 1965, the Greeks were depicted in a dramatically negative way. Contrary to handsome, sympathetic, and charismatic Turkish soldiers, the Greeks mostly have a barbarian appearance, as ugly men with messy hair and sometimes toothless, and this physical 'ugliness' also reflects in their characters. It should also be noted that there are no civilian Greek characters except some dancing women and *meyhane* owners. In this context, other than war scenes, the Greeks are put in *meyhanes* where they drink and eat lavishly and force girls to dance for them. The Greek Hrisantos during the War of Independence, in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*), even beats a Greek girl because she does not want to dance. His bad behavior toward the Greek girl increases his evilness in the eyes of the audience.

Moreover, the representation of Greek women as dancers or singers might be working to belittle the enemy. There are also representations of Greek women as dangerous. One is Irene in *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*), and the other is Despina in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*), both of whom are Greek agents. On the other hand, with their fighting skills and love for their nations, they could somehow be seen as role models for 'unaware' and not 'sufficiently national' Turkish women. In some examples, such as in *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming Hora*), Greeks are called "perfidious." What this means is explained in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*) with the scene in which Lieutenant Ahmet threatens Hrisantos in a *meyhane* with the following words: "We will crush those who eat our bread but dare to stab us in the back."⁶⁵² Given the political context, this message dangerously connects the Greeks of Anatolia with the Greeks of Greece or Cypriot Greeks. Besides, it establishes a hierarchy between the Greek minority in Turkey and the Turkish-Muslim majority as Turks made a favor in 'allowing' the Greeks to live in Turkey. As a result, the Cyprus Operation and Turks' arrival on the island is justified, and the story then is

⁶⁵² "Ekmeğimizi yiyip de sırtımızdan vurmaya kalkanları kahrederiz."

formed as the following: ‘barbarians attacked innocent people; therefore, Turkey must be there to protect those people.’

There is also an emphasis on the British through the insertion of Turkish characters educated in Britain, British characters somehow connected to the Turkish ones, or British flags in many scenes. Contrary to the films of previous periods, which do not show any symbols of the enemy, there is high visibility of British flags in these movies shot after 1965. Here, examples include the display of flags in hospitals during İstanbul’s occupation in the First World War in *Aşkın Zaferi: Aşk ve Vatan (The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland)*; in Yemen hotels and streets after the Ottomans’ withdrawal from the city and its subsequent occupation by the British, as well as *meyhanes*, mosques in *Kahramanlar Bayrak (The Heroes Flag)*. In *Fedailer Mangası (The Guards Draft)*, we see the British army coming to the city carrying British flags. This recognizable emphasis on flags may have two functions. First, it helps to identify the enemy much more clearly through the use of colored film. Second, it could be the filmmakers’ strategy of creating a distance with the more powerful enemy. Thus, through foreign flags, the audience feels the existence of an enemy, but that fear does not turn into a concrete one with an open target and most probably stays at the symbolic level. Interestingly, among those films showing British flags, none of them is centered on the Cyprus crisis, and they focus on the War of Independence and the First World War. This could be a way to distance the enemy in time. Consequently, the concrete and the ultimate enemy are the Greeks, who are represented not merely with their flags but with real evil people, given the Greek flag’s comparably less frequent appearance.

In parallel, although they are represented as supporting the Greeks, the depiction of the British characters is never as negative as that of the Greeks. In *Ay Yıldız Fedailer (The Guards of Crescent and Star)* that takes place during İstanbul’s occupation, Beatrice’s story is told in relation to how she was curious about Turkey in her childhood. Like European characters in the War of Independence films of the previous periods, Beatrice is the British commander’s daughter. For her, İstanbul represents the magical spirit of the East, where ancient chevaliers knew how to love and fight. This is an orientalist point of view based on a romantic nostalgia of the past. At some point, she understands how self-sacrificing Turks are and their love and passion for the nation. Then, thanks to her love for Lieutenant Ahmet, a Guards of Crescent and Star member, she decides to stay in İstanbul and join the Turkish National Forces. The transformation of Beatrice, here, also emphasizes the Turkish nation’s superiority while at the same time reducing the British enemy into a defeatable female character.

4.10.3. *The Warrior, Warrior Nation, National Homeland:*

In this framework, there are different candidates for the ideal national warrior. The first one is the British educated one who has not lost his/her Turkishness. Examples include İhsan Galip, the Oxford graduate member of the National Forces in *Fedailer Mangası (The Guards Draft)*, and Oya of *Aşkın Zaferi Aşk ve Vatan (The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland)*, who studies in England for her undergraduate education. Both characters are depicted as having taken the technology of the West without forgetting their cultural identities. They are equally heroic, too. Oya, for instance, becomes a member of the National Forces. She disguises herself as a British nurse and then learns about the time of the British arms' arrival to be used against Turks. Here, Oya reproduces is the myth of the warrior nation by giving the message that even our women could defeat the enemy. At this point, Bayram of *Tek Kollu Bayram (One-Armed Bayram)*, who can kill the occupying Greeks in the War of Independence even though he has lost one of his arms in another fight with the Greeks, is also a significant example that serves to belittle the enemy. Bayram's fight emphasizes the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority with the message that even "our crippled men" could defeat the enemy.

Although the above examples contribute to the ordinariness of the hero, the idealized national warrior, according to the films, is neither high-ranking soldiers, the physically disadvantaged ones, nor young women; instead, the heroic, courageous, aggressive, and nationalist representative of the 'common man.' At this point, first, it should be noted that education is never an issue for the common man. Here, an interesting yet complicated example showing 'common man' as a hero is *Aslan Arkadaşım Kuduz Recep (My Brave Friend Mad Recep)*, which tells the story of a disorderly group of National Forces. When some group members try to steal the money carried by the group to the Turkish army, Recep, a common man, kills them. Then, he follows the Lieutenant and, in the final scene, sends away him with the money to catch up with the army. It is like Recep, at some point, organizing things even for the lieutenant. Although Recep and the lieutenant seem to complete each other, and there seems no hierarchy between them most of the time, the finalizing and decisive step is taken by Recep in the final scene. Although he has been wounded, he loads the machine gun, directs it to the Greek gangs, recites "bismillah," and fires it (01:12:09). He is the first one to do it among the group. This is a significant scene showing the division of labor between the common man and soldiers; basically, what duties the common man could have and how they may turn into national heroes of the myth of the national warrior. Moreover, in one of the first scenes, Recep and his friends gatecrash a party organized by Ottoman pashas and the occupying countries' generals. There, they steal their jewelry, gold, and money to finance the National Forces. While

doing this, Recep forcefully takes the jacket of an Ottoman Pasha's military uniform, which is full of war medals. Ironically, throughout the film, Recep wears that jacket. This particular scene means that the power is shifted from those exploiting the country for their own interests to the 'common man.' The message, therefore, is that what the Turkish nation needs is not an educated man but a man of action, an ordinary man who is not necessarily educated but brave and aggressive enough.

There are also cases in which the representations of soldiers and common man fuse into each other. Unlike the previous films, even lieutenants do not wear military uniforms in the films made in the post-1965 period. This emphasizes the ordinariness of the hero, and it is definitely in line with the aggressive and militarized atmosphere of the period. An interesting example is Lieutenant Ahmet of *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guard of Crescent and Star)*. In the first half of the film, he never mentions his military rank and just appears as a member of the National Forces. To complement this, most of the time he is in civilian clothes. In fact, his duty is similar to the other lieutenants in the movies of the previous periods: to transfer guns from İstanbul to Anatolia. His attitudes, however, are similar to district bravados (*mahalle kabadayları*). He is like a civilian tough guy hanging around in his *mahalle* for the whole day and being involved in some fights with the Greeks hanging around in the same *mahalle*. This representation again contributes to the commonness of Ahmet.

In one scene, Ahmet of *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guard of Crescent and Star)* saves a street vendor from the hands of the Greeks. Here, the street vendor could be taken as symbolizing the nation, Ahmet is the idealized warrior, and the *mahalle* could be a miniature homeland. This focus on *mahalle* could be an indication of the closeness of the enemy. Thus, the message is that enemy is so close and not only on the battlefield anymore. Therefore, even 'our *mahalle*' is in danger. And since the enemy is near, 'our soldiers' are no longer in battlefields, barracks, or offices. Thus, in the films of the post-1965 period, the warriors are in streets, villages, neighborhoods, essentially the peripheries of the homeland.

Besides, given the proximity of the danger, the Turkish national warrior must be much more aggressive and masculine than he had been previously. This way of imagining the warrior also reflects the vocabulary and the masculine values used in the films. The heroes swear a lot on their honor, and 'manly fighting,' which is defined as not attacking civilians, is continuously praised by the heroes. In this case, women are discriminated against and are expected to serve the masculinity of men. For example, in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guards of Crescent and Star)*, İsmail from National Forces gets mad at his wife because she has told the Ottoman soldiers where her nationalist husband's friends are hiding to save her husband's life. İsmail, however,

thinks that she has destroyed the bond of brotherhood and betrayed his friends. The woman, then, kills herself because she has failed to fulfill her nationalist and womanly duty. This act of suicide is quite significant in revealing the gender roles in addition to the closeness of the enemy. In the world created by these movies, the danger is everywhere, and so the enemy even interferes with 'our' women in 'our' houses. This increases the feeling of insecurity, and consequently, much more aggressive heroes emerge to fight against the enemies.

The final point is that heroes' violence is frequently supported by many scenes, including military marches, machine guns, tanks, military ships, and jets. Newspaper headlines about the cruelty of the Greeks are also shown to increase the sense of reality. Besides, wounded people, bloody and violent scenes showing how the Greeks kill Turks or how the Turks kill Greeks are standard. The scenes in which blood spouting out of the bodies of enemies and bloody swords are significantly violent. For example, in *Kahramanlar Bayrak (The Heroes are Flag)*, the Turkish soldier from National Forces cuts the throat of a Greek with a knife, and blood wells out everywhere. Some of these violent scenes, none of which have been censored, include religious references as well. In fact, all films have several scenes depicting muezzins, praying people, azan, and people murdered while reciting the Islamic oath, the Shahadah. All in all, the audience is under a very heavy ideological bombardment because the films reproduce all kinds of political myths to intimidate and even provoke the audience against the Greeks.

4.11. Concluding Remarks:

The 1965 elections brought an increase in the rhetorical power and influence of the 'common man' with Demirel, with whom the masses could identify with. In fact, the electoral success of the AP, which was perceived as the heir of the DP by its electorate, was a shock for the traditional military/bureaucratic elite associated with the CHP. Then, to understand the wishes and desires of the masses who had voted for the AP, the traditional elite started to engage in intellectual discussions about what they might have done wrong. In this vein, various cinema movements arose such as People's Cinema (*Halk Sineması*), National Cinema (*Ulusal Sinema*), and *Sinematek* discussed what Turkish national essence should be represented. The discussions' common point was the elite's belief in transforming society from top to bottom. In this context, they did not hesitate to ignore the commercial cinematic production of Yeşilçam and look for alternatives. However, regardless of their attempts to distinguish themselves from Yeşilçam, what they produced was still in the same ideological pool in that it was nurtured from similar political and socio-economic changes. Therefore, the world they created was significant in the reproduction of nationalist political myths.

It was also the time in which a new generation of politicians started to attract attention. These were mainly Alexander type of leaders that became popular as the rivals of the older and wiser Cincinnatus İnönü, as Girardet would say. In particular, Demirel, Ecevit, and Türkeş were young and dynamic men-of-action, whose backgrounds and visions complied with the aggressive political context. Although followed a relatively low profile yet, Erbakan was a man of this age with his background and a harbinger of the future impact of political Islam. Due to their charisma, these leaders had wholehearted supporters who adopted them as role models. In fact, living the bitter effects of rapid industrialization without a radical increase in living standards, modernization, a severe economic crisis, subsequent social movements, and increasing demands of transforming society, each of these leaders were the ‘Fathers’ or the ‘saviors’ for certain groups. They constituted the embodiments of hopes and aspirations for the ordinary men, whose hearts and minds both the right-wing and left-wing parties were trying to capture.

One of the reflections of the general trend of young and aggressive leaders was the radical leftist student leader Deniz Gezmiş. Although there were not many university students, their impact on political history was tremendous. In addition to inspiring other social movements, students crystallized the generational conflicts within the leftist movement. In contrast to the old leftists, some students were in favor of using aggressiveness instead of non-violent formal methods of making politics to reach their goals. This was in line with the strategies of the new generation of leaders. They believed that only with these methods could they gain power.

The dynamic revolutionary atmosphere, which gradually evolved into militarist aggressiveness, was suppressed by the military memorandum of March 12, 1971. The following period brought political and economic instability in addition to the peak of Turkey’s isolation in international relations that had already started in the late 1950s. Ecevit, the new head of the CHP and later the prime minister, challenged the US in the opium crisis. Benefiting from the aggressive nationalist support he gained, in 1974, Ecevit pushed the button for the Cyprus Intervention. This action nurtured the reproduction of Girardet’s Alexander myth while at the same time creating a convenient atmosphere for the domination of a militarist and aggressive political discourse. Then, the increasing aggressiveness and militant nationalism gave birth to two successive National Front governments, which embraced strong nationalist, Islamic and anti-communist tones. These governments of the post-1974 period dealt with the economic downturn, increasing protests, the 1 May 1977 Incident, and other memorable incidents such as

the Bahçelievler, Çorum, and Maraş massacres against the opposing voices, communists and the Alawites.

The cinematic outcome of all these events was the inflation of action/adventure movies depicting national warriors as if confirming the myth of warrior nation, which considers all members of the nation as warriors. The myths reproduced in this supply were shaped around the anxiety of the nation's survival, militant nationalism, masculine values, aggressiveness, anti-communism, and Islam. There was, in fact, a more explicit depiction of the enemy as Greeks. But, on the other hand, the warrior became a symbol of the common man, that is militant, aggressive, violent, and not necessarily educated. This meant the transformation of the 'common man' into 'men of action.' All in all, as society became more disconnected and polarized, the national warriors of action/adventure movies with historical settings became more aggressive. This can also be followed through the second group of films from the same period, as shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V: The Cut: The Lone Heroes of 1965-1980 as Reproducers of Political Myths

5.1. Introduction:

The period of 1965-1980 witnessed the reproduction of nationalist political myths through an abundance of national warrior characters. These natural-born Turkish warriors rush to every place associated with the Turks, from the Central Asian steppes to the Mediterranean Sea, in different ages from the time of Attila to the time of Suleiman, fighting against many other enemies, including Vikings and Byzantium. In fact, as the politics became more aggressive, the warriors became more aggressive, masculine, and lonelier. They are all stripped of titles and ranks due to their idealist nature, and they are as ambitious as if they are fighting for Alexander, to use Girardet's conceptualization. Therefore, their aim is to attack the enemy violently. In this regard, the enemies are so evil that they aim to erase the Turks from history and oppress even their own people. The Turks, however, are just, merciful, and superior. Therefore, even the people of the 'other' needs their help. The national warriors, in this context, are considered to be protecting and saving the ruler, who is the embodiment of both the nation and the state attached to the fatherland. They pierce through different golden ages and homelands while taking the revenge of contemporary nationalist men and their ancestors from every available enemy buried deep in history.

The depictions of Turkish nationalism in the 1965-1980 period are not deviations from those of the 1950s and early 1960s, but complete them. I argue that there was a transformation in the reproduction of political myths in the films through time. The representations of the myth of national warrior as in the movies analyzed in this chapter provide a multi-layered supply for seeing this change. This change happens parallel to the shift in balance power in Turkish politics favoring the 'common man' as well as Turkey's foreign policy choices. This 'common man' is an ordinary Turkish person, who is a male, nationalist, conservative, believer of Sunni Islam, anti-communist, anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucrat, and most importantly, loyal to the ruler and the Father State. Most importantly, Turks in the 1950s-1980 are depicted as destined to conquer the world. In fact, it is only through *Pax Turcica* that the world could become a peaceful place.

Thus, this chapter continues the analysis of the reproduction of political myths in nationalist action/adventure films of the period between 1965-1980. Most of the idealized warriors and other characters dealt with in this chapter's films are imaginary and adapted from comic books. Many of the rulers represented are real characters. Some historical episodes are real-life episodes, although some of them are not. The films' imaginary side might have

provided the filmmakers with a kind of freedom of representation so that the audience could imagine freely, too. This might have also increased the films' aggressiveness by providing a convenient opportunity for the Turkish side to take a symbolic 'revenge' on the enemies.

To put it clearly, the corpus chosen for the current chapter takes place in the past, stretching from Central Asia to the Ottoman Empire. I have put these films in a separate chapter to reveal the continuity and change in the reproduction of political myths more clearly through an elaborate categorization. Besides, they all have lone warriors depicted primarily in series and resemble each other very much in terms of who their heroes are. The most significant difference of this chapter's corpus from that of the previous chapter is that most of those films take war and conquest as the center, unlike the films depicting the times or incidents when Turks are in a defensive position. Besides, the fact that most of the characters and episodes are not real could be considered another distinguishing feature of these films. Thus, in the current chapter, the warriors I discuss are the lone heroes from the past galloping throughout Anatolia or distant territories. Due to their militarist and aggressive nature, I consider these films the pinnacle of nationalist action/adventure movies with historical settings.

The chapter has been divided into three sections. The first is concerned with movies depicting the earlier period, and therefore lone heroes from Central Asia. This section compares and contrasts the reproduction of political myths in seventeen available movies from the 1965-1980 period. Since there is more continuity than change between the films, I did not divide them into groups. On the other hand, to reveal both continuity and change, I have created two main sections in the rest of the chapter: The first analyzes the movies of 1965-1971, and the other examines those of the 1970s. Each part includes two sub-sections, movies about the pre-Ottoman Islamic past, and those that take place in the Ottoman Empire. These sub-sections are again categorized based on which ruler the lone hero fights for.

In my analysis, I first look at the depiction of the national warrior to answer the questions of who the warrior is, and where and when he fights. Here, the reproduction of the myths of the golden age and decline, whenever available, and the myth of the national homeland are examined. Then, I look at the representation of the ruler whom the warrior serves. In this case, how the myth of the leader is reproduced in relation to the understanding of the state as the Father State is revealed. The analysis then concentrates on the warrior's mission, reproducing the myth of the national mission in relation to the hero's personal life and whether he also has a personal cause in realizing the national mission. This section also looks for anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucratic discourses through an analysis of the relationship between the warrior and the ruler. The following section depicts the representation of enemies, both internal and

external. The final section of the analysis concentrates on the different depictions of the women of the other and ‘our’ women, of whom there are not many. Hence, as the current chapter develops, first through a chronological and later a thematical framework, it reveals the gradual increase in the representations of violence and in the use of religious symbols, which run parallel to each other. All these happen, confirming an increase in the rhetorical emphasis in favor of the ‘common man’ in Turkey’s dominant political discourse. Finally, I argue that the films reveal the disengagement of society through time. In the end, the disengagement turned into ‘the cut,’ a chasm between the founding secular elite and the traditional conservative ‘common man,’ which defined Turkey’s political culture.

5.2. Warriors from Central Asia (1965-1980):

5.2.1. A General Look:

The films about the first group of loner heroes reproduce the myth of the nation’s antiquity by taking the hero back to as earlier as the 4th century. Except few in Byzantine lands, they all insert Turks into Central Asia and confirm the Turkish official history thesis. A crude categorization divides these films into three depending on their time frame. The first group, the *Tarkan* series, takes place in the 4th-5th centuries, when Attila and the European Huns are making raids in Europe. This series includes *Tarkan* (dir. Tunç Başaran, 1969), *Gümüüş Eyer* (*Silver Saddle*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1970), *Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1971), *Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1972), *Güçlü Kahraman* (*Strong Hero*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1973) and *Asyanın Tek Atlısı Baybars* (*The Only Horseman of Asia*, dir. Kemal Kan, 1971). The second group consists of *Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago* (*Armless Hero: Alpago*, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1966), *Gültekin: Asya Kartalı* (*Gültekin: Asian Eagle*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1968), and *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of the Khans*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1977), which are about the 6th-8th Göktürks. The third group depicts the 12th-14th centuries when Ghengiz Khan’s empire threatens Europe. These films are *Mete Han* (dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1969), *Cengiz Han’ın Fedaisi* (*Ghengis Han’s Guard*, dir. Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973), *Atlıhan* (dir. Naki Yurter, 1973), the *Karaoğlan* series: *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit* (*The Hero Coming from Altai*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1965), *Bayboranın Oğlu* (*Baybora’s Son*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1966), *Camokanın İntikamı* (*Camoka’s Revenge*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1966), *Bizanslı Zorba* (*Byzantine Tyrant*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1966), *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Hanın Hazinesi* (*Karaoğlan is Coming: Ghengis Khan’s Treasures*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1972). Thus, this part analyzes the reproduction of political myths in seventeen available movies.

A general overview of the movies reveals that they take place in periods in which Turks are believed to be threatening Europe. Given the late 1960s and the 1970s nationalist aggressiveness, insecurity, and turmoil mainly because of the rising political aggressiveness, increasing social inequalities, and isolation in the international arena due to the Cyprus issue, the movies could be serving to defeat all types of enemies, including the western world at a symbolic level. This portrayal reinforces the myth of the other, emphasizing the other powers being the enemy of Turks and the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority. This reflects national aggressiveness supported with increasing motivation and self-confidence in everyday life. The cinematic reflection of this is raider or warrior heroes fighting in a vast territory encompassing entire Asia and Europe against those enemies who want to erase the Turks from the map.

5.2.2. Religion:

Despite the increasing influence of Islam in political discourse, the heroes from Central Asia are all in pre-Islamic and/or non-Islamic settings; therefore, the hero never fights in the name of Islam. In fact, most of the time, the films in this part do not even mention the enemies' religious beliefs. However, there are some minor implied references to religious beliefs. For instance, in the *Tarkan* series, the ruler is called God's sword (*Tanrı'nın Kılıcı*) to indicate that God has appointed him. In *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero that Comes from Altai)*, the older accompany of Karaoğlan, Balaban, says, "may Gök-Tanrı forgive the sins" (38:12)⁶⁵³ for a dying man of Camoka, the Mongolian enemy. In contrast, Karaoğlan says, "may Gods take your life" (49:21).⁶⁵⁴ Although most of these messages seem to refer to a monotheist religious belief, they are generally inconsistent. For example, the film *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)* depicts Karaoğlan fighting against the Catholics who attack Byzantium. Karaoğlan thinks that Catholic men of religion are murdering people in the name of religion. The Catholic priest then calls him an "unbeliever" (*dinsiz*) several times (55:23, 59:02).⁶⁵⁵ At this point, although it is unclear what kind of a religious belief Karaoğlan has, especially in the last example, it is clear that the enemy is Christian. Here the general inconsistency could be a commercial choice of the filmmakers. Instead of dealing with polytheist or Gök-Tanrı references, which could challenge the Turkish-Islam combination as the only possible identity in the viewers' minds, they might have wanted to create a vagueness in terms of religion. In fact, despite the lack of sharpness in terms of the hero's religious belief, the audience must have probably received the message that

⁶⁵³ "Gök Tanrısı suçlarını bağışlasın." Hangi film?

⁶⁵⁴ "Tanrılar canını alsın"

⁶⁵⁵ "Baybora'nın dinsiz gölgesi," "dinsiz köpekler"

the enemy is associated with Christianity, given the increasing discursive use of Islam by politicians and the period's richness in terms of anti-Christian films.

5.2.3. *Landscapes and Leaders/Rulers:*

Among the heroes in question in this part, Tarkan lives the furthest back in time when compared with the other heroes. Fighting for Attila, the ruler of the European Hunnic Empire, he travels everywhere. Therefore, even though he is born near the Caspian Sea, as shown in *Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*, he fights in a vast land against many different enemies: Chinese, Vandals, Vikings, Alans, and Romans. This means that the territory in which he is active expands from China, Iran, and Anatolia to Northern and Southern Europe. In this geography, Tarkan, on his horse, gallops through steppes, lowlands, forests, caves, rivers, and the sea as a skillful hero. In fact, the borders of Attila's empire are not clearly presented, so Tarkan always fights to extend the territories. At some point in *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, the voiceover mentions that Attila is fighting in Western Europe. However, this is still a vague geographic naming probably used for emphasizing that Turks have been attacking and even defeating 'the West.' In regard, the Tarkan films do not only justify the Turks' Central Asian roots but also connect them with Europe by emphasizing their contribution to European civilization. At this point, a similar hero in the service of Attila is Aybars in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)*. Although he is a Hunnic Turk from Asia, he comes to Muncuk, located near the Danube River. There, he defeats the Byzantium Emperor Xenon, who had an agreement with the neighboring states to stop Attila's advancement. Compared to that of Tarkan, the geography of Aybars was much more familiar and appealing to the audience due to Balkan and Byzantine connections.

In the group of Göktürk heroes, two heroes fight for Meço Han. In *Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago (Armless Hero: Alpago)*, it is unclear where exactly Alpago resides in Central Asia, but the audience is presented with the information that he fights against the Chinese commander Hubing. His contemporary is Gültekin in *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*, who also fights in unknown territory. Where Olcayto fights for the Göktürk khan Tigin is stated in a relatively more specific way in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)*. He is in Turkestan and calls himself *Kırgız (Kyrgyz)*. This particular information might be related to the potential familiarity of the 1977 audience with 'Outside Turks' living in a land with uncertain boundaries, which is Turkestan. Therefore, the movie could even be considered as nurturing or being nurtured by the anti-Russian or anti-Soviet action/adventure movies of the late 1960s and 1970s.

confirming the Cold War atmosphere.⁶⁵⁶ Besides, the vastest territory is galloped by *Mete Han*, who arrives in the Roman Lands from Central Asia to conquer the Castle of Mezit in Byzantine lands. Nevertheless, it is not a coincidence that these national warriors, no matter where they usually fight, visit Byzantium at some point. This is, of course, related to the Turks' historical animosity with the Greeks. The 'ancient' reflection of the Greek enemy is Byzantium.

Three heroes fight for Genghis Khan, the Mongolian leader, in the 12th-13th centuries. Interestingly, although the Turkish nationalists of the early 1930s were strictly against any association of Turks with the Mongolians because the Western perception of Genghis Khan was based upon him being a plunderer and destroyer of civilizations, and European racists such as Gobineau considered the Mongolians in the same category as the Chinese as the yellow race, therefore not a member of the white and civilization-building Europeans.⁶⁵⁷ In this vein, the movie's focus on Genghis Khan was probably the result of his charisma and dynamism, making him a suitable figure for action/adventure stories. The Europeans' dislike of Genghis Khan might also provide a viewing pleasure of a symbolic attack on the Europeans. These heroes fighting for Genghis Khan include Celmenoyan of *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)* in the Gobi Desert, and *Atlıhan* and his companions. They all try to pass through the Selenga River, located in Northern Mongolia, to expand the boundaries. Celmenoyan's enemy is again the Chinese, whereas *Atlıhan* encounters both the Chinese and an Arab Sheikh Cebel while going to Urumqi Castle in China. Another hero in the service of Genghis is *Karaoğlan*, a Uighur Turk who sets the road from Khorasan of Central Asia in *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero that Comes from Altai)* and *Camoka'nın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge)*. He fights against some relatively unknown tribes in addition to the Chinese, and a Mongolian traitor named Camoka. In *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)* and *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)*, he comes to Byzantium and fights against Manuel I, Byzantine Emperor. His final stop, however, is again Central Asia in *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Han'ın Hazinesi (Karaoğlan is Coming:*

⁶⁵⁶ Some of these films are: *Hacı Murat*, (dir. Natuk Baytan, 1967); *501 Numaralı Hücre (Cell No. 501)*, dir. Nusret Eraslan, 1967); *Hacı Murat Geliyor (Hacı Murat is Coming)*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1968); *Kafkas Kartalı (Caucasus Eagle)*, dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1968); *Kafkas Şeytani Aslan Bey (Caucasus Evil Aslan Bey)*, dir. Yavuz Yalınkılıç, 1968); *Osmanlı Kartalı (Ottoman Eagle)*, dir. Osman F. Seden, 1969); *Kafdağını Terk Edenler (The Ones Who Left Kaf Mountain)*, dir. Natuk Baytan, Gündüz Yıldırımgeç, 1971); *Hacı Murat'ın İntikamı (The Revenge of Hacı Murat)*, dir. Yavuz Figenli, 1972) and *Güneş Ne Zaman Doğacak (When will the Sun Rise?)*, dir. Mehmet Kılıç, 1977). These movies depict the heroism of 'outside Turks' or 'enslaved Turks' living in the Russian dominated regions. Among them, some take place during the time of the Ottoman Empire. However, they use the Empire just as a backdrop to enrich the narrative, so the Ottomanness and conquests in the name of the Turkish nation are never at the center. Others refer to the impacts of communism in contemporary times. Nevertheless, the movies still contribute to the reproduction of nationalist political myths, but the historical setting is relatively vague compared to other action/adventure movies with historical settings analyzed throughout the dissertation.

⁶⁵⁷ See: Arthur de Gobineau, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races (1853-55)* (London: William Heinemann, 1915), <https://archive.org/details/inequalityofhuma00gobi/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater>

Ghengis Han's Treasures), where he aims to find the treasures of Ghengis Han after his death. Like other heroes, Karaoğlan, again, fights in a vast space.

Regardless of whom or where the hero fights against, his fight is always represented as legitimate and just. In this vein, the voiceover in the opening scene of *Tarkan* says that Attila, “the Great Hunnic Emperor,” has the legitimate right to conquer the world because he is the “Scourge of God” (2:28).⁶⁵⁸ Here, the fact that Attila is getting his legitimacy from God makes his warrior Tarkan’s fight legitimate. Tigin Noyan of *Hakanların Savaşı (The Clash of the Khans)* attains the state of legitimacy when he is born with blood in his palm. This means he is destined to establish the Great Göktürk Empire one day. Since Tigin is legitimate, his cause is legitimate, and this makes Olcayto legitimate as well. This representation of a legitimate ruler as chosen by God and the ruler’s legitimate warrior underlines the hero’s loyalty to God’s will and the ruler as the embodiment of the state and Turkishness. This understanding also reflects on representations of enemies by making them illegitimate, so they do not have God’s grace. At this point, interestingly, a coup narrative comes to the fore to justify the myth of national mission. In all films, the heroes collaborate with the legitimate rulers of the ‘other’ against the illegitimate ones. For example, Karaoğlan in *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)* helps a priest and two imprisoned senators against Manuel I, the former commander and the current ruler of the Byzantine, a cruel and ruthless man who causes great distress in the people of Byzantine. At the beginning of the film, Manuel I kills the commander Victor and harasses Victor’s betrothed, Eleni, the daughter of the priest whom people very much love. According to Karaoğlan’s father, Baybora and Karaoğlan, this cruel man, who is a rapist (*ırz düşmanı*), does not deserve to be the ruler. As a result, they collaborate with the anti-Manuel faction. The Byzantine people do not want Manuel I, either, because of his mercilessness, although they are the ones who have brought him to power. Karaoğlan thinks that the most valuable thing for a ruler is not the support of his paid soldiers but his people. Therefore, Manuel I is not the legitimate ruler. As a result, the hero kills Manuel I, the Byzantine tyrant, and saves Byzantium’s people. Here, by helping the legitimate ruler against the illegitimate one, Karaoğlan fulfills the Turkish national mission of bringing peace and order to oppressed people. Tarkan does the same in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*. The Viking commander, Toro, involves in a coup and kills the king Gero. Then, we see Tarkan collaborating with Ursula, Gero’s daughter, against Toro’s junta. Here, besides having a common enemy, Ursula’s confidence in Tarkan could indicate her belief in Tarkan’s justice and so Turks’ justice. In the last film of the

⁶⁵⁸ “Büyük Türk Hun İmparatorluğu’nun başbuğu, Avrupalıların Tanrının kırbacı ismiyle andıkları Attila”

Tarkan series, in *Güçlü Kahraman (Strong Hero)*, the Chinese commander Wing Yu kills many Chinese because he wants to take power into his hands to become the new emperor. Wing Yu plans a military coup against the legitimate ruler. In this context, the enemy of Tarkan is not the Chinese Emperor, but Wing Yu. A similar narrative is available in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)*, in which the hero Baybars helps Plintas, the former Byzantine commander of Muncuk castle, and who is imprisoned by Xenon, the current commander of the castle. As in the case of Manuel's people, Xenon is not supported by the people, who favor Plintas against the cruel Xenon. Consequently, as soon as Plintas takes power into his hand thanks to Baybars, he says that Muncuk is a Turkish castle from then on.

In the examples above, the emphasis on the illegitimacy of the ruler of the 'other,' of course, enhances the 'fairness' and 'justness' of the warrior's fight. This reinforces the myth that the Turks, as 'benevolent conquerors,' have a national mission. In this context, the hero is a wind that blows with the righteous ones to the iniquitous ones in the words of Alpago in *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*. To elaborate, this emphasis on an individual's will fits into the mentality of the late 1960s and early 1970s political context, which was mainly shaped by military intervention and a memorandum. Besides, in this period, the rightists were afraid of a leftist coup, and the leftists were fearful of a rightist one. The 1960 coup had created the false perception that the military coups always support the Kemalists. Starting with the late 1960s, this idea was challenged with the suppression of the leftists but still could not allay the rightists' fear of another possible Kemalist coup.

Despite various references to rulers, such as Attila being the greatest and always conquering new places, the rulers do not physically appear in films very much. It is usually through a voice-over that their stories or orders to the heroes are narrated. For example, the voiceover summarizes Attila's orders in *Asya'nın Tek Atlısı Baybars (Baybars The Only Horseman of Asia)*, although the audience never sees Attila. In *Tarkan*, Attila briefly appears at the end of the film in his *otağ*,⁶⁵⁹ waiting passively for Tarkan to bring the sword of Mars. A longer story of Attila is told in *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, in which Tarkan strives to save his wife, Honoria, and son from the Vandals. Other than these, Attila is always in the background giving orders to his loyal warriors. The same is true for Genghis Khan and Meço Han. Ghengis is in his *otağ* in *Atlıhan* and orders Atlıhan to go to Urumqi, and in *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)*, the audience does not see Genghis Khan. In the Karaoğlan series, Genghis Khan is briefly shown in *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero that Comes from*

⁶⁵⁹ *Otağ* is the name given to the tents of the rulers in Turkish nomadic culture.

Altai) in which the hero saves his life from the hands of the treacherous Kaşgarlı Burhan, the grand vizier who wants to take power into his hands. The series' last film *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Han'ın Hazineleri* (*Karaoğlan is Coming: Genghis Khan's Treasures*), starts in the *otağ* of Genghis Khan in the year of 1320, which is the date of Genghis Khan's death and further disintegration of the Mongols. In these very short scenes, Genghis is portrayed as an older man who is worried because of his children's potential of struggling over his throne. Besides, Gültekin saves Meço Han from prison in *Asya Kartalı* (*Asian Eagle*), but no other information is given about Meço Han except the scene in which he states the national cause: destroying the Vikings with the help of God's grace. This khan is also mentioned at the beginning of *Kolsuz Kahraman* (*Armless Hero*) as the ruler of Göktürks expecting Alpago and his father to bring some plans against the Chinese (3:08). However, again, he is not shown in the rest of the movie. At this point, *Mete Han* and *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of the Khans*) are different in the sense that they both take Mete Khan and Tigin Noyan as their focus. These, however, are not ordinary rulers; in fact, they are future young rulers.

Therefore, the stories tell how these rulers-to-be prove themselves. In fact, in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of the Khans*), even at some point, the focus shifts from Tigin Noyan to his loyal warrior Olcayto. Thus, one could say that the rulers only briefly appear, and whenever they appear, they are depicted in an inactive state, except for the future rulers. This means that the movie's real purpose is to concentrate on the adventures of loyal national warriors, the individuals with whom the Turkish people could associate. In this regard, what matters for the audience is not the ruler, but Tarkan, Atlıhan, Baybars, Gültekin, Olcayto, or Karaoğlan, who could be interpreted as the nationalist ideal role models for the common man of the 1965-80 period. Besides, the films do not refer to intermediate circles such as bureaucrats or soldiers of various ranks between the hero and the ruler. This could reflect an anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucratic mentality and definitely feeds the myth of the strong ruler. Consequently, the hero is so charismatic that, unlike Anatolian folk heroes, who try to save only their towns and cannot reach the Sultan, he saves the Turks and good others, attacks and conquers the world with the great ruler whom he could connect directly. This could be the kind of motivation that the common man of the period needed to deal with rapid social transformation and the bruises caused by the Cyprus issue and isolation in international relations.

5.2.4. Warriors:

Nevertheless, all the nationalist heroes are courageous, brave, and skillful warriors. They are all masters of using swords. Attila in *Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*) (07:35) and

his daughter Yonca on her way to a border castle in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*, call Tarkan equal to the worth of an army (02:48) due to his bravery and fighting skills. Gültekin is so powerful that he even strikes with his large fist if he does not have a sword in *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*. In fact, the heroes can fight with anybody, even fantastic creatures such as the Viking octopus and the magician Gosha in *Tarkan: Viking Kanı*. This, however, does not mean that the heroes are only made up of sheer physical power. As stated by the voiceover in *Mete Han*, they combine their physical abilities with intelligence. An example of that is Alpago in *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*, who disguises himself as an armless man. He, then, wins the Chinese ruler's confidence and becomes his friend. Finally, due to his intelligence, he discovers the Chinese plans against the Turks. Here Alpago is initially disadvantaged because he is alone in enemy lands, but he turns this into an advantage because of his intelligence. Similarly, Olcayto in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)* pretends to be Halit, the romantic and effeminate son of the Alamut Sheikh and deceives even the Sheikh. Similarly, Karaoğlan dresses as a monk and enters the Byzantium castle in *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)*. Therefore, the national warriors are represented not only as having physical endurance and military capabilities, but also as intelligent.

Another feature of the national warriors in reproducing the myth of the national warrior is their free-spiritedness. They do not want to be dominated by anyone or anything. In *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)*, the loyal warrior Olcayto says that he does not expect anything other than fulfilling his duty, and in fact, he is not used to bowing his head. Since they are all idealists, none of the heroes expect material gains such as money, ranks, or titles. In *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, Karaoğlan says that he does not aim to plunder palaces in foreign lands (07:56).⁶⁶⁰ He also rejects Genghis Khan's warrior Balaban's offer to be his stable boy by saying that he does not even want to be his father's stable boy. These examples reveal that heroes exist only with Turkishness and their national duty.

Meaningful fighting for their national duty is what the heroes always desire. In the Karaoğlan series, in *Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge)*, when a commander of Genghis Khan named Kurtcebe Noyan wants to recruit Karaoğlan to fight against other Turkic tribes and the Chinese, Karaoğlan rejects this offer by saying that he prefers to stay in his *oba* to protect women and children from Camoka (14:27). He also says that he does not believe in the benefit of this war because it happens only for Genghis Khan to gain glory: "Many young people will die; some others will be crippled in their most beautiful the healthiest age... We do

⁶⁶⁰ "Frenk ellerine gidip saraylar talan etmede gözüm yok"

everything for homeland (*yurt*) and independence (*hürriyet*), but not to make Genghis Khan gain glory” (13:23).⁶⁶¹ For Karaoğlan, war should have a meaning. Although war is an innate characteristic of Turkishness, this understanding refers to just war and fits Turkishness into the idea of benevolent conquest. It also shows that sometimes these heroes could challenge the rulers if they diverge from a nationalist path. In *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, Genghis Khan even apologizes to Karaoğlan because, instead of Karaoğlan, he believed in his bureaucrat Burhan, who wanted to take power into his own hands (1:25:09-1:25:25). These representations could also be taken as indications of rulers’ human side and that they can be mistaken sometimes. Then, it is the hero’s, in fact, common man’s duty to correct the ruler.

Since the warriors exist with their Turkishness, they do not even state their names very much. In some scenes, they do not even have birth names, and they gain names as they prove themselves, such as Alpago of *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)* does. A significant example is Karaoğlan, who says that he does not have a fancy and attractive name, and he is just called Karaoğlan when the Mongolian Camoka asks his name in *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)* (1:18-1:26).⁶⁶² The namelessness of the hero shifts the emphasis from his name onto his Turkishness. This feeds the myth of Turks being an army nation. This also contributes to the ordinariness of the hero by making him almost anonymous, so equivalent to other nationalist and loyal Turkish young men. In this context, a hero’s power comes from his inner strength, hence his Turkishness, not from his name.

One other complementary characteristic of the hero is his youth, which is mainly mentioned in the Karaoğlan series. In *Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka’s Revenge)*, he is belittled and not taken seriously due to his young age. The same thing also happens in the very first film of the series, *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, in which the older warrior Balaban calls him a “hairless shepherd” (*tüysüz çoban*) and “nameless boy” (*adsız oğlan*); Camoka calls a “callow warrior” (*körpe yiğit*), and Genghis Khan’s enemy, Burhan, calls him “hairless boy” (*tüysüz oğlan*). Again, the filmmakers’ message nurtures the myth of the warrior nation, giving the idea that Karaoğlan is more than he seems. In fact, this emphasis on the national warrior’s young, inexperienced yet heroic features, also complies with the May 27 Alliance’s emphasis on the youth’s duty to protect the regime. Besides, these young characters could also be interpreted as reflections of leaders of the youth movement or the new generation of young political leaders, such as Demirel and Ecevit.

⁶⁶¹ “Birçok genç ölecek, en güzel, en sıhhatli çağında birçoğu sakat kalacak. Fayda bunun neresinde?” “Yurt için, hürriyet için her şey göze alınır ama Cengiz Han ün kazanacak diye yurt savunmasız bırakılmaz.”

⁶⁶² “Benim senin gibi süslü adım yok. Bana sadece Karaoğlan derler.”

For all heroes, fighting against the enemy does not solely mean serving the ruler. In all movies, without exception, it also means taking their fathers' revenge from enemies who kill or imprison the heroes' fathers. This could be a contribution to the myth of ethnic continuity since the depiction establishes a continuity between the older and the younger generations in terms of nationalist causes. This continuity could also be attributed to the enemies by conveying that the Turkish nation always had enemies throughout the generations. According to Tarkan's life story as being told in *Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*, his father Altar, a significant commander of Attila, is first tortured and later killed together with his wife by the Alans like many other people of the same *oba*.⁶⁶³ In *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)*, the great warrior Baybora, Karaoğlan's father, is imprisoned by the Byzantines. The Chinese kill Olcayto's father, Toluğ Bey, when Olcayto was a little boy in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of Khans)*. *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*'s little Alpago's father, who is a warrior of Meço Han, is killed by a group of Chinese, too. According to the voiceover at the beginning of *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)*, Celmenoyan's father Kutluk Beg is killed by the Chinese who attacked their *oba*. In a similar attack, the Vikings kill the father of Gültekin of *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*. Mete Khan introduces himself as the brave Kürşat's son in *Mete Han*. These examples show two things. First, the fathers are all warriors, too, like the heroes themselves. This representation correlates well with the myth of the warrior nation by emphasizing that all Turks are born as soldiers. Second, in their fight against the enemy, all heroes have a personal cause other than a national one. This personal cause unites with the great cause of fighting for the leader and conquering the world. Here, confirming the myth of the father state, the warrior's father and the nation's ruler could be the same, because the *oba* could be a symbol of both the nation and the fatherland that needs to be protected by the warrior. The ruler, in this context, is the father and provider; therefore, his orders must be fulfilled by the hero. In this perspective, since nation is an indivisible organic whole, an attack on the *oba* has the same meaning as enemies attacking the nation and the state. Right at this point, the representation of the only internal enemy, Kaşgarlı Burhan, the grand vizier of Genghis Khan in *Karaoğlan Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)* is worth mentioning. He is an ambitious bureaucrat who wants to take power into his hands. For doing this, he tries to kill Genghis Khan by making him drink a poisonous drink. However, Karaoğlan discovers this and then kills Burhan. What makes Burhan relevant at this point is not only his political goals but also his personal problem with Karaoğlan's parents. Years ago, he fell in love with Karaoğlan's mother, who married

⁶⁶³ *Oba* is the mansion of the nomads and community brought by the nomadic families living in nomadic encampment.

Baybora. Then, to take revenge, the ambitious and cruel Burhan killed Karaoğlan's mother when he was just a baby. Therefore, Karaoğlan's national cause is not independent of his personal cause. This depiction also reinforces the idea that Genghis Khan symbolized the nation's father, and any attack made against the *oba* could be interpreted as a threat to the entire nation.

If the father is the ruler, the state, and the nation, the warriors, basically idealized citizens, are the sons who are expected to serve loyally. Some films present information about the childhood of heroes and reinforce the myth of the warrior nation. For example, in Tarkan's story, when his *oba* is attacked, and his parents are killed, a woman of the same *oba* sacrifices her child and hides Tarkan in a cave. There, a wolf family finds and raises Tarkan, as portrayed in *Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*. Then, a wolf becomes his accompany, which is why Tarkan always asks for food for both his wolf and himself in the *hans*, where he visits on his way to his duty. In *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*, the wolf's son also accompanies them, and in the *han*, Tarkan says to the other people showing interest in his wolves that the father wolf raises the son according to Turkish traditions so that the son never starts to eat before his father (05:35). Besides Tarkan's childhood story, this setting fits nicely into the Ergenekon myth, which tells that the Turks were descended from wolves. Here, although Tarkan is not descended from wolves, he still has a connection with them due to his warrior nature.

Another childhood narrative is found in *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*. In the beginning scenes, while the little Alpago and his father are in their camping place on their way to the *oba*, the little boy hunts a deer. His capabilities of hunting show that Alpago is ready to be a true masculine warrior. Then, there comes the moment of Alpago's passage to manhood. When some enemies stab his father, Alpago takes the knife from his father's back and promises to take his revenge. With all these skills and this type of bravery, Alpago, as a man-to-be, gives clues about the future heroic Alpago. Another example is *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Han'ın Hazineleri (Karaoğlan is Coming: Genghis Khan's Treasures)*, which partly tells Karaoğlan's childhood. In the story, Karaoğlan is shown as a sportive boy; he fishes, swims very well, rides horses skillfully, and can use a sword. At the same time, he is intelligent and confident that when the enemy kills his foster parents, he does not show any trace of trauma but instead immediately promises to take their revenge. Similarly, Olcayto's son in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)* is so brave that when the Chinese imprison him, he does not give up protecting the honor of his father. According to the story, his mother, and a group of women from the same *oba* are imprisoned. To learn who the wife of Olcayto is, the Chinese enemy plans to divide Olcayto's son into pieces the next day and ask women to consume his flesh and

blood. They think that the one that does not eat is the mother. When the mother asks her son what to do the night before, the boy bravely wants his mother to eat his flesh, drink his blood, and continue to disguise herself to not harm his father's honor. Here, this boy is a man-to-be, a real Turk who considers honor the most significant thing. He is also an authority figure whom the mother asks for advice. This is an apparent reproduction of the myth of the warrior nation, which includes a kind of sexual division of labor where 'real men' are expected to fight for the nation on the battlefield actively.

5.2.5. *The Others:*

Except for Burhan in *Karaoğlan*, there are no internal enemies in these films as there are no significant bureaucrats and statesmen. This depiction could be reinforcing the polarization between 'us' and 'them' by leaving no grey areas. Therefore, the 'others,' are foreigners who attack Turkish *obas* and kill all women, children, and men without sparing any. They are so evil that they hurt even their own people, therefore even their own people challenge them. In *Tarkan*, for instance, the Roman slave Jak wants to be a slave of Tarkan after Tarkan saves him from his Roman master, who does not emancipate him although he forcefully takes his gold coins. On the other hand, the Turkish hero, Tarkan, frees Jak and all the other Roman slaves. Here, the Turkish warrior brings peace and order to the oppressed people. In this respect, the others in this group of films are all cruel external enemies who attack innocent and defenseless people. Another enemy is the Alans commanded by commander Kostov in *Tarkan: Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*. Kostov tortures Altar and later attacks all "innocent Hunnic villages" in the Caucasus. Despite the enemy's cruelty, the Turkish hero does not give up his honorable code of war which is based upon the ideal of having an equal and manly fight. For example, in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)*, when the Byzantium commander Xenon begs Baybars not to kill him, Baybars says, Turks never kill people who ask for mercy and who do not have guns, nor do they leave brutal people like him alive. In the following scene, he gives another sword to Xenon to have a manly and just fight. In *Tarkan*, too, the hero beats a black gladiator severely, but he does not kill him because the defeated man asks for his mercy. One more point to note is that Turks never kill women of the enemy without reason, as says *Mete Han* in the eponymous film. All these examples convey the idea that Turks are always in favor of just fight.

Humiliating the king or the ruler of the other is another strategy of overcoming the enemy. For example, the merciless Vandal king Genseriko of *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)* is represented as short, fat, and with feminine behaviors. He is not only humble but also a

coward, so scared of Tarkan's wolf very much. When he tries to escape, the wolf pulls out his dress, which is unstitched, and the audience sees the king's buttocks. A similar representation very briefly appears in *Mete Han*, in which the Roman governor is depicted in a feminine way to reduce the enemy's power symbolically. In *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)*, when Karaoğlan calls the Byzantium Emperor a "fat lover" (*şişko aşık*) and "cheese tube" (*peynir tulumu*) when he sees him making love with the Queen. In *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)*, Karaoğlan also complains that Byzantines smell like goats. For him, Byzantine is "the country of dogs which swallowed a barn" ("*ahır yutmuş itler ülkesi*"). Karaoğlan's way of speaking here works to belittle the enemy. Simultaneously, it instills hope in the audience that even the common man could defeat the other's emperor. At this point, the depiction of the Chinese is also quite interesting. They are mainly represented as excelled in different torture methods, from throwing knives to putting the victim into a pool full of snakes in *Tarkan: Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)* or hanging the person downwards as they plan to do to Tarkan in *Tarkan: Güçü Kahraman (Strong Hero)*, the final film of the series. The film also portrays the Chinese as unclean with dirty nails. For Olcayto of *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of Khans)*, the Chinese are cowardly dogs, have yellow faces as if they all have malaria. Celmenoyan in *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)* calls them "*çapulcular*" (looters). The Chinese are depicted as slim and short most of the time. In *Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago (Armless Hero)*, these men wear triangular hats and tiny skirts, making them look ridiculous in the audience's eyes.

The representation of the Vikings relies on a much more fantastic narrative. They resemble pirates crossing the northern seas, according to *Tarkan: Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)* or barbarians as in *Gültekin: Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*. In the latter film, there is a one-eyed Viking that looks like a fantastic creature. This depiction must probably be influenced by the Western depictions of the barbarian tribes of the Middle Ages. This also reinforces the idea that Vikings are evil, even for Europeans. In *Tarkan: Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*, the Vikings are said to be taking advantage of a sandstorm that has left European countries defenseless and are plundering the southern coasts of Europe. This point does not only justify Turkish attacks on the Vikings, but it also finds an important place for the Turks in the history of Europe. This is a reproduction of the myth of the national mission, which attributes to the Turks the role of peace bringers. Therefore, Turks, here, become the savior of Europeans too. Besides, Turks in the film believe that they can bring the enemy to heel by heart. This is an interesting emphasis reinforcing the myth of benevolent conquerors. One example is the king of the Western Vandal Kingdom in *Tarkan: Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, who voluntarily bows down to Attila. All these examples work to legitimize the Turkish cause.

Given the above representations, the movies do not include enemies that could be directly connected to contemporary politics. The enemy is out there only for very careful viewers. It is, in fact, the Greeks if one considers the Greek words and the Greek music that could be heard in crowded *meyhane* scenes of *Bayboranın Oğlu* (*Baybora's Son*) in which Karaoğlan fights against Byzantium. Since enemies always speak Turkish in these films, subtle references to the Greek enemy that one can hear in the background are significant.

5.2.6. *Women of the Other:*

Another strategy of filmmakers to humiliate the kings and emperors of the others is to attribute negative qualities to their wives. The powerful enemy women, queens, in particular, are always associated with immoral sexual behaviors. In *Tarkan: Güçlü Kahraman* (*Strong Hero*), the Chinese Queen sleeps with Wing Yu, the commander planning a coup against her emperor husband. Similarly, the Roman empress sleeps with the gladiator chosen by the emperor in *Tarkan*. In *Tarkan Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*), the Vandal king's wife, the Queen, is the queen of prostitutes and secretly works in a brothel. In *Tarkan Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*), the commander Toro, who wants to take power into his hands, collaborates with Lotus, the Chinese emperor's daughter, against Attila and sleeps with her. In different scenes, both Tarkan and Toro call Lotus a "Chinese slut" (37:21).⁶⁶⁴ These are all dangerous women who can deceive men. One of them is Gosha, an immortal magician who lives on top of the mountains. Gosha's character has no geographic or ethnic reference; therefore, it is not truly known where she lives. This Gosha is basically a *femme fatale* who takes men under her influence with her magic and then manipulates them. She is blonde, beautiful, dances naked, likes to ride a horse naked, and drinks wine from her enemies' skulls. The Alans in *Gümüş Eyer* (*Silver Saddle*) and the Vandals in *Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*) collaborate with her. In the first film, she enchants Tan, Attila's son, and even Tarkan in the latter by making them fight against Attila. Although she becomes successful in Tan's case, Tarkan overcomes her magic because Attila will execute him due to his betrayal. In *Tarkan*, Tarkan is tricked by the wife of the Roman *han* owner. When Tarkan is in his room, the woman comes and distracts his attention by seducing him. As a result, the *han* is besieged by the Vandals. Karaoğlan does not fall into the same trap in *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Hanın Hazinesi* (*Karaoğlan is Coming: Genghis Khan's Treasures*). On his way to find Genghis Khan's treasures, he meets a naked dancing girl. Although she initially influences him, later, he realizes the trap and overcomes the enemy.

⁶⁶⁴ "Çinli kahpe"

From an utterly masculine perspective, the message here is that women of other are tricksters who can distract men from their paths.

In addition to those evil women of others, there is a small group consisting of the good women of others. These good ones are all connected with the legitimate leaders that sympathize with the Turkish heroes. They mainly help the heroes and even fall in love with the Turks. One of those women is Ursula, who collaborates with Tarkan in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)* against the Viking commander who murdered Ursula's father, the legitimate king. Another one is Honoria, the wife of Attila in *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, who is the legitimate Western Vandal king's daughter. The daughter of the Roman governor, who helps the Turks in their conquest of the castle of Mezit, is the third. She also falls in love with Mete Khan and helps against the Roman commander, who wants to be the new governor by dethroning the existing one. What she says at the end of the film *Mete Han* summarizes the nationalist dreams: "By accepting me as a Turkish girl instead of giving me the status of being a princess, you have given me the biggest award" (1:15:10-1:15:20).⁶⁶⁵ These words emphasize the Turkish hero's masculine superiority through the women of 'other.'

5.2.7. 'Our' Women:

Turkish women are expected to be patient and self-sacrificing so that they will not influence men's directions. For example, in *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*, when Bige does not want Gültekin to go to war, Gültekin, says that Turkish women should not such things. This is actually an indication of what is expected from both Turkish women and Turkish men. In *Tarkan Güçlü Kahraman (Strong Hero)*, Tarkan stays away from Alonya, the brave daughter of Ulu Gökçe, a Turkic wise man, because the girl falls in love with him. All these also mark a gendered division of labor. In *Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge)*, when Gülcan intends to fight, Karaoğlan tells her not to meddle in men's jobs. In fact, women in the heroes' world exist only in relation to men as somebody's daughter or wife. The only exception is Gosha, the magician. However, her independence is probably expected given her fantastic qualities, which make her dangerous.

The representations of women strengthen the hero's masculinity with an emphasis on gender roles. From this perspective, women's duty is not to interfere with man's space but to stay at home and take care of the household. On the other hand, men should be traveling as loyal and heroic national warriors of a great leader. In this regard, women should fight only in

⁶⁶⁵ "Bana prenseslik vermek değil de bir Türk kızı olarak aranızda kabul ettiğiniz an en büyük mükafatı vermiş olursunuz."

the absence of men. For example, the Hunnic commander Aybars in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)* leave three drafts of women in the castle to fight against the enemy. This gendered division of labor also works to belittle the enemy. At this point, an interesting case is Attila's daughter, Yonca, who trespasses from women's space to men's space. She is a courageous and good warrior in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*. She saves Tarkan from a giant Viking octopus by fighting with it and stabbing it at the end. In this way, she proves her strength. This, however, confirms her higher status than men as being the ruler's daughter.

5.2.8. Main Points:

Among the seventeen films analyzed in this section, nine were shot between 1965-1971, and eight in the 1970s, the first being in 1965 and the final in 1977. Although the Islamic and aggressive tone of the nationalist action/adventure films increased from 1965 to the 1970s, there is more continuity than change in terms of the films about Central Asian warriors. The main reason for this could be the lack of different stories about the warriors due to a lack of historical sources contrary to Islamic warriors of both pre-Ottoman and Ottoman times. In fact, the number of movies about Central Asia was less compared to the others. This might also be related to the audience's interest. It is not unsurprising that the audience was less familiar with the Central Asian past. For them, stories about Islamic heroes could be much more appealing.

The warriors in the seventeen films analyzed in this section all originated from Central Asia, complying with the Turkish History Thesis, which considers Central Asia the original homeland. The stories occur between the 4th to 14th century; therefore, reproduce the myth of national antiquity and ethnic continuity by connecting Attila's Hunnic Empire, the Göktürks, and Genghis Khan's empire. Although the warriors come from Central Asia to Byzantium as if befitting the official canonical discourse, which state that the Turks migrated from Central Asia, the movies do not touch upon this issue. Instead, the arrival to Byzantium is narrated as if it is expected and so the natural outcome of Turkish expansion. Compared to the story of migration, this is a more heroic discourse that nurtures the myth of Turkish national superiority. In this context, Byzantium and China are taken to be significant enemies besides barbarian communities such as the Vikings and Vandals. There are always some good others that help the warriors. The peculiarity is that none of these good others are Chinese. This association of the good other with the more Western and even European enemies could be interpreted as an attempt to place Turks into the European league. Besides, the warriors fight in an almost limitless area stretching from Central Asia to Northern Europe, to the Balkans and China. This

presentation connects all these areas and, at the same time, manifests Turks also as protectors of European civilization by contributing to the myth of national mission.

5.3. The Pre-Ottoman Islamic Warrior in 1965-1971:

5.3.1. Alpago:

5.3.1.1. A General Look:

Among the films of the period produced between 1965-1971, there is only one available film depicting the heroic activities of a pre-Ottoman Turkish-Islamic warrior: *Alpaslanın Fedaisi Alpago* (*Alpaslan's Guard Alpago*, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1967). The Turkish warrior in the film is Alpago, who works for Alp Arslan, the ruler of the Great Seljuks. Both are heroic characters fitting into the Girardet's Alexander category. They fight together in 1063 against Qutalmish, a Seljukid dynasty member that competes with Alp Arslan for the throne. Given the date it takes place, the film omits the Battle of Manzikert of 1071, one of the most epic events because the Byzantine army was defeated, and the Turkification and Islamization of Anatolia commenced. This might be a missed chance of representing an epic event, which discursively strengthens Turks' attachment to Anatolia in line with the Turkish History Thesis. However, on the other hand, any depiction of it would require a showdown with the presence of non-Muslim and even non-Turkic populations in Anatolia before the arrival of the Seljuks. Despite these points, with references to Alp Arslan being the future conqueror of Anatolia (*Anadolu fatihi*), the film still underlines Turks' future ownership of Anatolia and reproduces the myth of national homeland.

Despite the emphasis on Anatolia, the film takes place in Isfahan and the Castle of Rayy, both located in modern day Iran. However, Alp Arslan is never associated with Iran, probably to strengthen the Turkish side of his identity, which is further emphasized in the opening and closing scenes through a folk song with lyrics by the folk hero Koroğlu.⁶⁶⁶ Besides, Alp Arslan's grand vizier Nizam al-Mulk advises him to choose the color blue for his flag because it is the color of the Göktürks' flag. Here an ethnic continuity is constructed between Alp Arslan and the Göktürks of Central Asia. As a result, Alp Arslan is inserted into the Turkish nationalist discourse, and his significance is further justified by the voice-over stating that Alp Arslan's empire is the hope of all Turks and the Muslim world⁶⁶⁷ who want to get rescued from the hands of Byzantium. Here, a savior role is again attributed to the ruler, and therefore, the reason for Alp Arslan's conquests is not mere expansion but saving other Turks and Muslims. At this

⁶⁶⁶ Yiğit olan gümbür gümbür gürlesin/Yiğidi doğuran ana, bin yaşa

⁶⁶⁷ "Bütün Türklerin ve İslam dünyasının ümidi Selçuklu"

point, the focus on the Great Seljuks nurtures the Turks' imperialist grandeur, which reproduces the myth of the homeland as limitless and without any borders. As a result, both Alp Arslan and his warrior Alpago cover long distances and vast territories.

5.3.1.2. *The Warrior:*

Alpago is a common brave man like any other Turkish national who has a genetic disposition to warfare. He first meets Alp Arslan when the latter is going to Isfahan to find and eliminate Qutalmish. Alpago helps him without even recognizing who he is. This means, Alpago instinctively supports the legitimate heir to the throne without expecting any interests in return. Then, Alp Arslan asks him to become his commander-in-chief and takes him to his palace in Isfahan. For Alpago, palace life is not enjoyable because of burdensome details such as rules, rituals, bureaucracy, and titles. As a result, after spending some time in the castle, Alpago becomes restless and leaves the palace without even informing Alp Arslan. His behavior fits well into Turkish national warriors' free-spirited nature mentioned in other nationalist action/adventure movies. This is also a reflection of the anti-bureaucratic mentality in Turkish political culture, and it makes the warrior a purely idealist one. Besides, this representation reinforces his 'commonality' in the audience's eyes, who could easily associate with the warrior.

5.3.1.3. *The Others:*

The internal enemy of the film is Qutalmish, who has plans to destroy the unity of the Turks. He is, in fact, a traitor to Turkish unity and an arrogant man. He is punished to death by Alp Arslan himself at the beginning of the film. Besides Qutalmish, there are external enemies. What makes those significant is the fact that they are all Muslim. In this context, although the Byzantine enemy is mentioned as the "infidel" that should be defeated, Alp Arslan's army and the Byzantine army never meet. Therefore, the film can be considered a transitory one that talks about conflicts within the Muslim world before the unification of all Turkish-Muslims instead of depicting purely Muslim-Christian conflicts.

To be more specific, the real threats in the film are the governor of Aleppo and Hassan-i Sabbah, an Isma'ili missionary who later captures the Castle of Alamut. Here the first is an Arab-Muslim, and the second is an Iranian-Muslim enemy. The governor of Aleppo wants to occupy Anatolia; therefore, he tricks Alp Arslan to marry his sister Ayşim. His collaborator is the evil Hassan-i Sabbah, who has an army of slaves by recruiting those he hypnotizes. He also has uncontrollable sexual desires, so he has too many wives, mistresses, and sex slaves. One of

his wives is Yakute, whom he brutalizes because she does not have children. When Alp Arslan realizes the evil intentions of the governor of Aleppo, he sends out Alpago to save his sister Ayşim from the hands of the governor visiting the palace of Hassan-ı Sabbah at that time. Alpago infiltrates the place by disguising himself as somebody aspiring to be a warrior of Hassan-i Sabbah. Here, apart from his military capabilities, he uses his intelligence to defeat the enemy proving, that any common Turkish man could deceive the enemy by using his national essence. Besides, an external good other, Yakute, as the woman of the other who is also oppressed by the other, also helps Alpago to save Ayşim from being a slave of Hassan-i Sabbah. In the end, as a warrior with a mission, Alpago saves not only Ayşim but also the slaves in the enemy palace. However, information about whether or not these people are Turkish is not provided, Alpago becomes a savior, and this portrayal of him reproduces the myth of the national warrior.

5.3.2. Main Points:

As a warrior fighting in Iran, Alpago's adventure does not directly justify the Turkish History Thesis that considers Central Asia as the original homeland and Anatolia as the national homeland. What is indirectly narrated here is that having arrived from Central Asia, the Turks had once become the owners of Iran, and this was how they encountered Byzantium. This narrative allows the filmmakers to Islamize the national warrior whose religion was not even an issue in the films about the warriors from Central Asia. This Islamization, however, is not represented through Islamic symbols such as azan, prayers, or the Shahadah that are generously used in the films of the 1970s. Instead, some messages are given, such as Alpago making a call to the soldiers of Qutalmish to bow down before Alp Arslan because Muslim Turks would own Anatolia if they unified under the leadership of Alp Arslan. Other than similar references, being a Muslim is not an overt element of either Alpago's or Alp Arslan's identity. Therefore, this film reproduces the myths of the national warrior and national leader, through their Turkishness first. In this regard, Alp Arslan, and hence Turkish Muslims, are ushered as the future conquerors of Anatolia, who will save the national homeland from Byzantine invaders' hands. Therefore, the movie can be considered as situated somewhere between the less aggressive and more aggressive reproductions of nationalist political myths.

5.4. Ottoman warriors of 1965-1971:

To put it generally, most of the Ottoman heroes fight in the Ottoman Empire's classical age. In this vein, they confirm the dominant political discourse that focuses on the Ottoman

ascendancy and takes it as an indication of Turkish national superiority. This is not unsurprising given the increasing nationalism in the country. In terms of different sultans, the movies could be summarized as follows: between 1965 and 1971, the heroes fight in the period of Orhan Ghazi (r.1324-1360), Mehmet the Conqueror (r.1451-1481), and Bayezid II (r.1481-1512). Then, starting in 1972, there is Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566). I divided the films in accordance with their production dates into two groups because the difference in the dates marks the evolution of the themes into a much more Islamist one. Over time, the characters use a much more macho vocabulary in this framework, and their costumes become much more recognizable with their traditional and Turkish features. These changes in the depictions are all parts of the shrinkage of borders into Anatolia. All these coincide with the real political context of increasing political violence and aggressiveness in the 1970s. In this regard, the first group encompasses seven available movies shot between 1965-1971.

5.4.1. The Warrior fighting for Orhan and Prince Murat between 1965-1971:

5.4.1.1. The Warrior:

Among the Ottoman heroes, the one that fights during a relatively earlier period is Kılıçaslan in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saves the Fatherland*, dir. Tunç Başaran, 1966). He is the only hero who lives in the Ottoman Empire's foundation period, so he fights for Orhan Ghazi in 1362. The narrative does not provide any information about who he is or his father, dissimilar to the other heroes of the period. In this context, the film reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, not through Kılıçaslan's family, but only through himself. Kılıçaslan is depicted in relation to Orhan Ghazi and Murat, his legitimate heir to the throne. The film includes many scenes in which Kılıçaslan and Murat fight together; therefore, Murat constitutes a fundamental tenet. This uncommon and slightly off-center representation of the hero could be related to the fact that this film was one of the earliest examples of Ottoman lonely heroes and might carry some elements from the pre-1965 period. Nevertheless, the film provides a basic introduction to the nationalist arguments presented in other films centered on lone warriors fighting for a ruler.

5.4.1.2. The Ruler and the Mission of the Warrior:

The story begins when Orhan is about to die because of his deteriorating health and old age. He calls Kılıçaslan to his court in Adrianople and gives him the duty of saving Murat, his legitimate heir, from the hands of Byzantium. Orhan's primary concern is to have Murat continue the Rumelia conquests and finally conquer Byzantium. Orhan has three sons, including

Halil and İbrahim, and among them, Murat is the only trustworthy one that deserves the throne. Thus, Orhan thinks, if Murat is not saved, the sons of the Ottomans would come to an end. On the other hand, Orhan is right to feel like this because his other sons have been planning to make a long-term agreement with Byzantium and stop the conquest of Rumelia. This is, of course, a betrayal to the ruler and the great national cause, so these two sons are, essentially, internal enemies who only think about their personal interests. To realize their aims, they collaborate with a Byzantine governor, an external enemy, who aims to halt Turkish expansion into Rumelia, make Anatolia a graveyard for Turks, and imprison Murat. Thus, Kılıçaslan has a vital mission of not only providing the continuity of the Ottoman Empire but also saving the legitimate heir to the throne in addition to providing the westward expansion of the empire. As the movie title suggests, he should save the fatherland, and the fatherland here means Rumelia, the part of the empire that created a trauma once lost at the beginning of the 20th century.

Kılıçaslan receives his assignment directly from Orhan; therefore, there are no bureaucrats or men of the military between them. This direct relationship between Orhan and his warrior without any intermediaries could reflect the anti-bureaucratic mentality of the Turkish political culture. In this vein, the loyal hero even fights against the two other sons of the Sultan, which means that having a legitimate heir on the throne and the continuity of conquests are far more important for Orhan than the lives of his other sons. Immediately after informing Kılıçaslan about his duties, Orhan dies. At this point, what Kılıçaslan says upon Orhan's death could be interpreted as a summary of what is expected from him: "If I cannot save Murat blowing like a disastrous storm, only my dead body would come back here" (14:21-14:27).⁶⁶⁸ This means that Kılıçaslan is ready to die for Murat, and hence the fatherland. He is ultimately a loyal hero who continues to fulfill his mission despite the death of Orhan.

5.4.1.3. The Ruler-to-be and the Others:

In this context, unlike the traitors Halil and İbrahim, Murat is depicted as a brave and ambitious prince, like a future Alexander, who is courageous enough to threaten Byzantines by declaring that nobody could enslave Turks, even when they imprison him. In fact, when the Byzantines decide to burn him at the stake, Murat says that the Turkish nation will raise countless other Murats. This sentence marks the kind of duty that the younger generation must adopt. To save Murat, Kılıçaslan and three other warriors that he meets on his way disguise as Byzantines to get into the Byzantium castle. This reproduces the myth of Turks' superiority

⁶⁶⁸ "Felaket kasırgası gibi esip Murat'ı kurtarmazsam buraya ancak ölüm döner."

through the message that Turks turn a disadvantaged position into an advantaged one not only by using their militaristic skills but also their intelligence. These other warriors are Kutlu Boğa, Gül Hatun, and a mute man. They are all brave sword masters who adopt the sole aim of “saving the fatherland”. Gül Hatun also says that all Turks desire to be a martyr for their fatherland. These words reproduce the myth of the warrior nation and the fact that a female warrior declares them strengthens the emphasis. On their way, these four warriors rest in a Byzantine *han* in which a masked half-naked lady dances and then sleeps with Kılıçaslan. Later, it is shown that this lady is the queen of Byzantium. This narrative reinforces Kılıçaslan’s masculinity and allows him to defeat the enemy at the symbolic level. On the other hand, it humiliates Byzantium and women of other by presenting the queen as immoral.

Consequently, Kılıçaslan and his friends save Murat from the Byzantine prison and take him back to Edirne. Meanwhile, discovering the death of their father, Halil, one of the three sons, has already declared himself as Sultan with the support of İbrahim. While he has just adorned himself with the power symbols, the Ottoman royal gown and turban (*kavuk*), Murat comes to the court and gets into a fight with his two brothers. In this fight, Murat is helped by Kılıçaslan and the other three warriors. In the end, Murat kills his brothers and takes the authority symbols. The mute warrior also gives him the Byzantine crown and staff, which are the Byzantium symbols of authority. Although Murat has not conquered Byzantium yet, this scene is a future indication of his goals, all in line with his father Orhan’s vision. What else attracts attention is that Murat and the other warriors continuously say that they are fighting for the fatherland. Even the film title has the same emphasis on ‘fatherland.’ This could be revealing the mutual fertilization between the films about the Ottomans and the films about the War of Independence. Obviously, there is interaction in the vocabularies used in nationalist action/adventure films, although they talk about different periods. The use of the same vocabulary could be providing two things. The first is audience familiarity, which may arouse more interest in this film. Second, the myth of national continuity is also reproduced by linking the Ottomans and the recent past. In this vein, the movie gives the following messages: There is a continuity with the Ottomans and Turks of today. Rumelia was our fatherland, too, and the Turks sacrificed their lives for this piece of land as they also did for Anatolia in the War of Independence.

5.4.2. The Warrior Fighting for Mehmet the Conqueror between 1965-1971:

There is only one Ottoman-Islamic hero who fights for Mehmet II. He is Malkoçoğlu, who is the protagonist in six movies of the series. Among those films, four take place in the

time of Mehmet II These films are: *Malkoçoğlu Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*, dir. Süreyya Duru, 1966), *Malkoçoğlu Krallara Karşı* (*Against Kings*, dir. Süreyya Duru, Remzi Jöntürk, 1967), *Malkoçoğlu Akıncılar Geliyor* (*Raiders are Coming*, dir. Süreyya Duru, Remzi Jöntürk, 1969), and *Malkoçoğlu Ölüm Fedaileri* (*Guards of Death*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1971). In these films, the raider Malkoçoğlu fights in Serbia, Transylvania, and Byzantium, that is, the northwestern edge of the Ottoman Empire and hence the geographical beginning of Europe. The movies all take place in the 15th century in the period after the conquest of İstanbul. This skipping of the conquest of İstanbul, which is one of the most memorable events of Ottoman history, could signify filmmakers' caution to avoid potential criticisms by the audience.

5.4.2.1. The Landscapes:

As in the other films previously mentioned, the empire's borders are not again depicted clearly; they are instead fluid, and vague, allowing the hero and the ruler to conquer new lands. Malkoçoğlu journeys back and forth to the center from the edges of the empire. He receives orders from the ruler at the center and then goes to frontiers to fulfill his assigned mission. Like Central Asian heroes, he fights in open landscapes. Sometimes, he gallops in vast lands with forests, valleys, and rivers with his horse and a couple of friends. This representation of limitlessness suggests that Turks ruled over a vast area once upon a time, and their power was limitless. This could be why Malkoçoğlu introduces himself as "the owner of the entire world" (30:27) in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*).

5.4.2.2. The Warrior:

Malkoçoğlu is an already known hero, and even the enemies are aware of his power and appreciate him. For example, in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*), Belushi, the lover of Lazar, the younger son of the deceased Serbian king Brankovich III, defines him as "the raider that gives terrifies Europe, a tornado, a storm" (10:53). He is also called as *başbuğ* by the other five other raiders accompanying him in *Malkoçoğlu Ölüm Fedaileri*. Here, *başbuğ* means 'the leader,' and 'the commander-in-chief' in ancient Turkic states. This use of this word reveals the filmmakers' tendency to connect the 15th century with the ancient Turkish past to imply some ethnic continuity by confirming the myth of the nation's antiquity. Like Tarkan, a significant Central Asian hero, Malkoçoğlu's symbol is a wolf confirming the Turkish myth of Ergenekon. In fact, he also states that Turks are descended from wolves in the final scene of *Krallara Karşı* (*Against Kings*), in which he saves his hypnotized

son Polat from the hands of Vlad the Impaler by showing his ring with a wolf on it. He uses the ring to make his victims recognizable by imprinting a grey wolf seal on foreshadows of men he kills in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. All these images manifest how the myth of ethnic continuity is reproduced regardless of in which period the movies are set. This could also indicate the more significant role of Turkishness than Ottomanness in forming the nationalist myths because former is emphasized much more over the latter.

Furthermore, like other heroes fighting in Central Asia, the audience is provided information about Malkoçoğlu's father in *Krallara Karşı (Against Kings)*. His father is again a heroic raider named Bali Bey. This information justifies the myth of the warrior nation by revealing the message that all Turks are soldiers, both fathers and sons. In this context, at one point in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, Malkoçoğlu says that when he cried like a baby, his mother would give him a sword to comfort (30:56). However, there is Vlad, the Impaler's army of hypnotized people on the opposite side. This reveals Turks' genetic disposition to warfare, on the one hand, the artificiality of the other's army on the other hand.

Malkoçoğlu is extremely brave, heroic, and capable of using different weapons, including swords and arrows. He can shoot a target with his bow from a great distance, and he is as acrobatic as the other Turkish heroes. As explained in the following paragraphs, he is handsome and thus attracts many women from both the Turkish and other sides. He also knows how to mock the enemy, as well as knowing what to avoid. For example, in *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)*, when his stable boy, Balaban threatens a Christian monk with circumcision, Malkoçoğlu gets angry and says that there is no need to clown around. Through similar scenes, while the enemy is symbolically humiliated, limits of what should be done to the enemy are also shown. In fact, in one scene, the monk warns the Byzantium commander Nicola about the Turks, saying that he must not underestimate them because Turks always take revenge for their suffering (9:50-9:55).⁶⁶⁹ These words do not only emphasize Turks' bravery but also underline that Turks never attack defenseless people. This means Turks have no grievance with civilians. This message legitimizes the Turkish attacks, and it easily correlates with the nationalist arguments formed around the Cyprus issue, saying that the Greeks always attack civilian Turks, so theirs is illegitimate and unjust. In contrast, the Turkish intervention in Cyprus is the product of a legitimate and just cause.

⁶⁶⁹ "Türkler kimsede acılarını bırakmazlar, bazı şeyleri affetmezler."

5.4.2.3. *The Ruler:*

Malkoçoğlu fights for Mehmet the Conqueror, who is most of the time depicted at the center in his court, so in a closed inner space, unlike his loyal warrior. The audience sees him while giving commands to Malkoçoğlu or waiting for Malkoçoğlu's arrival. In fact, among the four films analyzed in this part, only in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, the audience physically sees Mehmet II, whereas, in the others, the Sultan is just mentioned by a voiceover. This kind of passive representation of the ruler narrative requires the hero to be much more dynamic. As the natural outcome of this narrative strategy, the parts about the hero in the story are always much more exciting. As a result, the audience naturally associates itself with the hero.

On the other hand, this representation does not mean that the ruler is unimportant. Instead, Mehmet II is elevated to a more sacred and unreachable status, contributing to the myth of the ideal ruler. Several titles attributed to him also reinforce his representation, such as the Ruler of Rumelia, the Sultan of Statesmen, and the Master of Seas (08:23-08:32)⁶⁷⁰ provided in *Avrupa'yı Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. Thus, the ruler is so glorious and supreme, and the hero exists only in relation to him or in the service of him as his loyal warrior. In connection to this, reaching the unreachable and exalted Sultan is significant in the hero's world. Among many bureaucrats and men of the military (begs and other raiders), only Malkoçoğlu is privileged enough to reach the Sultan. For example, in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, the Sultan directly connects with Malkoçoğlu with a letter for the mission. The older and hierarchically superior men do not like the Sultan assigning a young raider instead of themselves. Malkoçoğlu is, in fact, able to do this because he is the most loyal and brave warrior among all the others. This reachability of the Sultan by his most loyal warrior emphasizes the hero's ordinariness on the one hand. On the other hand, it puts the burden of loyalty on the shoulders of that ordinary man. In this context, the loyal hero's reward is to contact and communicate with the leader whom God has appointed. There is, however, a difficult point here. In the same film, the Sultan apologizes to Malkoçoğlu, as in *Karaoğlan Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, because he was mistaken in assuming that Malkoçoğlu only thought about his personal interest, not about bringing order to Serbia. This particular scene shows the strength of the relationship between the ruler and his loyal warrior. Besides, it reinforces the warrior's mission of correcting the ruler, who is considered the embodiment of the state and the nation. This understanding even leads to questioning the ruler's

⁶⁷⁰ "Diyar-ı Rum Hükümdarı," "Lalaların Sultanı," and "Denizlerin Efendisi!"

legitimacy by putting Turkishness and its survival through the state in a much more elevated status. In this perspective, the ruler only becomes a means of enacting political power and representing a superior thing, which is the state and the nation. Where the ruler's legitimacy, that is 'kut,' ends could also be connected to this understanding.

5.4.2.4. Internal Others:

The relationship between the ruler and the warrior reflects the anti-bureaucratic mentality permeated into the nationalist mythmaking of the late 1960s. This could also be why either few or no bureaucrats or men of the military are depicted in connection with the Sultan, as in the films about Central Asian heroes. The existing ones are all portrayed negatively as cooperating with external enemies. These constitute the very few stocks of internal enemies in this group of films made between 1964-1971. One of them is İshak Beg, the ambitious Sivrice (Ostrvica) castle commander, who plans to become the sanjak beg in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*). The audience first sees him sleeping with Beluchi, Lazar's lover, the deceased Serbian king Brankovich's younger son, and treating her rudely. Both İshak and Beluchi want Lazar to become the new Serbian king. In this scene, Beluchi also mentions the grand vizier Mehmet Pasha's support of İshak. At this point, although the film depicts Mehmet Pasha only very briefly as a part of the court, the audience considers him to be in the same category as İshak, making him the second internal bureaucrat enemy. In fact, Lazar's coronation is illegitimate because there is also Greguar, the older son, who is the legitimate king that is also ready to present his submission to the Ottoman domination as his father did before. Here, Greguar bows down to the Ottoman ruler not because he is forced to do by the Ottomans, but because he is the oldest son, so the legitimate heir, and he is respectful to his father's legacy. This again justifies the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors instead of being merciless and heavy-handed. In this context, both İshak beg and Mehmet Pasha support the illegitimate heir to the throne. Meanwhile, Mehmet II assigns Malkoçoğlu to reinstate order to Serbia by enthroning Greguar. For İshak, Malkoçoğlu is his rival, and to overcome him, İshak collaborates with Lazar and brings the Serbian treasure to the Sultan by giving the crown to Lazar. Malkoçoğlu, on the other hand, beheads Lazar, brings his head beside the Serbian crown and Greguar to Mehmet II. Here, Malkoçoğlu represents the ideal Turkish warrior who only fulfills his national duties by supporting the legitimate heir instead of İshak, who follows personal interests.

5.4.2.5. *External Others:*

The reason for the presence of either few or no internal enemies could be the filmmakers' desire to represent the Turkish side as a concrete block against external enemies to make it seem much more undefeatable. In this context, the external enemies are all from Europe, and they are all represented very similarly or even indistinguishable from one another. In fact, these enemies are represented not in relation to their ethnic or national identities, but their religious identity, which is Christianity, always comes to the fore. On the other hand, most of the time, the Turkish side is emphasized in relation to its Turkishness more than its Islamic identity. Therefore, in the audience's eyes, the fight always occurs between Christians and Turks, not between Serbians and Turks. This also reflects on spaces that the external enemies are inserted. Besides battlefields and palaces, they appear in church interiors, whereas Turks are depicted in battlefields, İstanbul's city walls, and outer spaces. Right at this point, it should also be noted that although there are no mosques in any of the films mentioned in this group, religious references are visible, unlike they are in the films about Central Asian heroes. For example, *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)* starts with the Byzantine commander Nicola saying that he will behead all Muslims" (0:51-0:54). Besides, the films are full of Christian symbols such as crosses on flags or the clothes of soldiers, and hymns are heard, in contrast to the simplicity of Islam, which can be seen only in the behaviors of its believers. Such an example is the Ottoman ambassadors' praying in a Serbian Palace in *Ölüm Fedaileri*. This scene means that Turks do not need a specific place to pray because the whole world belongs to them.

In *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, the warrior fights against Arnold, the Prince of Toronto. Although it is not clear which empire or kingdom Arnold is associated with, the audience still understands his side thanks to cross motifs on his clothes and the flags carried by his soldiers. In fact, all Christian enemies except Vlad the Impaler are depicted similarly to each other. They all have colorful and radiant clothes and carry religious symbols. Only Vlad, the Impaler, has dark garments, and his soldiers have the images of a scorpion on their clothes. This difference in representation could be working to put this Voivode of Wallachia at a fantastic level to mark his cruelty. In *Krallara Karşı (Against Kings)*, he lives in a palace full of naked people kidnapped and later hypnotized by him. These people are members of his army. This representation strictly stands in opposition to the myth of the warrior Turkish nation, which presumes that Turks are born as soldiers. Besides, his soldiers are named "red scorpions." As a political reference, the word "red" is associated with communism; therefore, the filmmakers might have wanted to make Vlad much more familiar to the audience by connecting him with something that the audience already knows. Vlad aims to marry the only heir to the throne of

the Duchy of Dabres to extend his territories. The other main enemy is the Serbian Lazar, who wants to be the new king by challenging his older brother Greguar, the legitimate heir. Lazar also mentions that he collaborates with Hungarian Jan Hunyap against the Ottomans “to wipe the Turks out of Europe” in *Avrupa’yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. In *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming)*, the Byzantine commander Nicola provokes the Serbian king Philip who wants to declare his subordination to the Ottoman Empire against the Ottoman domination. Nicola aims to marry Beatrice, Philip’s daughter, and unite against the Ottomans to wave the Crusaders’ flag in Ottoman lands. Interestingly, the Serbians come out as the most manipulated external other. This representation could be related to the fact that Serbians were the first to rebel against Ottoman rule at the beginning of the 19th century. In this context, the filmmakers might have chosen the option of Byzantine manipulation to emphasize that there was peace in the Ottoman lands before the Christian manipulation. This narrative reinforces the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors and just rulers.

Furthermore, the enemies are always so merciless. In *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming)*, the Byzantium commander Nicola says to Malkoçoğlu that he is going to build a castle and a palace by using the skulls of betrayers and Turks like him, put their white-skinned girls and women, even the wife of their pompous Sultan into these buildings as slaves (09:57-10:14).⁶⁷¹ These words are very intense and direct, so they could easily provoke the audience. In *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, a soldier of Arnold beheads a pigeon. This is a bare representation of cruelty that serves to increase the audience’s hatred towards the ‘other.’ In the same film, the Serbian princess Elza, who will be saved and protected by Malkoçoğlu, is tortured by her betrothed Prince Arnold, by being tied onto a turning wheel while Arnold’s friends throw knives and axes at her. Another example could be from *Avrupa’yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, in which Lazar, the illegitimate ruler of the Serbians, tortures his mother Irene and sister Illiona because they support the legitimate heir of the throne, Greguar. This depiction was probably quite radical for the Turkish audience. In *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)*, after Byzantine commander Nicola beheads several Muslims, the whole screen is painted in red, symbolizing the blood of the Muslims, then we hear the Ottoman army march, which is a symbol of the start of the war. All in all, unlike the historical action/adventure movies of the pre-1965 period, these films demonize the enemy severely. In this context, most of the women of ‘other’ are depicted negatively as manipulative villains. One

⁶⁷¹ “Senin gibi hainlerin ve Türklerin kellelerinden kale ve saray yapacağım. Beyaz tenli kızlarımı ve kadınlarımı cariye olarak dolduracağım hatta o kendini beğenmiş Sultanlarının karısını bile.”

such example is Maria in *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)*, who is the Serbian king's wife, but sleeps with Nicola, the Byzantine commander. She aims to get back to İstanbul with Nicola and become queen. Another woman is Beluchi of *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, the wife of Serbian Lazar, who also sleeps with İshak beg, the Ottoman internal enemy, and in one scene, tries to attract Malkoçoğlu. Both examples have erotic and immoral Serbian figures who collaborate with their enemies by cheating on their husbands. These show the Serbians as victims of evil, even their own women.

There are few good external others, and Turks always help them. In parallel to their God-given mission of being benevolent and just conquerors, Turks always support the legitimate ruler in the places they conquer, such as Greguar in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. It should also be noted that the people of Serbia also support Greguar. In this vein, Malkoçoğlu protects not only the interests of the Ottoman Empire but also Greguar and his people. A similar character is the Serbian king Mirkovich in *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, who wants to continue to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire. He calls the Ottoman ambassadors his friends. Philip of *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)* is almost the same as Mirkovich. Thus, the hero's mission is to bring peace to these places and bring them under order. As Malkoçoğlu says in *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, it is not to exploit them but to make everyone stay in their own countries and to fulfill justice in the world⁶⁷² (1:21:28). At the end of *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, Greguar is rewarded for his loyalty by being enthroned by the Ottomans. In this context, his sister Irene could be considered as the other example of good external other. In fact, at the end of the film, Malkoçoğlu marries Illiona, the Serbian princess. Thus, the Serbian princess is also rewarded in return for her support for Greguar, hence the Ottoman domination in Serbia. At this point, marriage is quite unusual for a raider because "love ties the raider down" (39:38).⁶⁷³ However, in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, Mehmet II unites them, and this scene could indicate the Sultan's power and influence on the raider. The Dabres princess Yolanda in *Krallara Karşı (Against Kings)* is a good other, too. Like Greguar, she is the legitimate heir to the throne and asks Malkoçoğlu's help against Vlad the Impaler. Once she is rescued by Malkoçoğlu, she falls in love with him. At this point, Beatrice of *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming)*, the daughter of the Serbian king Philip is depicted in parallel to good others. Like her father, Beatrice accepts the Ottoman rule, unlike her stepmother Maria who sleeps with the Byzantine commander Nicola. At the end of the film, she and Malkoçoğlu

⁶⁷² "Herkes kendi yurdunda mutlu ve özgür yaşasın."

⁶⁷³ "Aşk akıncının ayağını bağlar."

release the Serbian prisoners in the hands of Byzantines, and interestingly, all prisoners voluntarily convert to Islam as Malkoçoğlu saves them. Beatrice, too, wants to accompany Malkoçoğlu in the final scene. In *Ölümler Fedailer (Guards of Death)*, Elza, who is the daughter of the Serbian king Mirkovich is also protected by Malkoçoğlu from Prince Arnold because she is one of the two heirs to the throne. Unsurprisingly, once she is rescued and her little brother Enrico becomes the king, she wants to stay with Malkoçoğlu, although the Turkish hero rejects her saying that she will be the queen of her land. This representation of royal women of other falling in love with Malkoçoğlu reinforces the hero's masculinity in addition to the Ottoman rule or legitimacy over the 'others.' In one scene, although Elza bathes in the sea naked, Malkoçoğlu does not turn his head towards her. This scene emphasizes his will and strength in fulfilling the duties assigned to him. The warrior, here, does attract not only those women but also shapes their countries' politics.

Thus, the films in this group present an intense reproduction of nationalist political myths. In addition to Turkish superiority over other nations, the nation's antiquity, and the myth of the warrior nation, a mythical mission is mentioned. In this context, the Turks' God-given mission is to bring peace and justice to the lands they conquer. This means that they are benevolent conquerors, and they create a *Pax Turcica* in the world. As Greguar, the legitimate Serbian king in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, says, "Turks bring peace and justice to Europe, the things that Europe is devoid of nowadays"⁶⁷⁴ (3:19-3:25). This must be why Irene, his wife, asks help from Malkoçoğlu by saying that "let the wars be over, end the blood that has been spilled and the bad had been put on shame" (03:53).⁶⁷⁵ As Malkoçoğlu says, in the final scene of the same film, while riding his horse into the sunset with his bride Illiona, the sister of Greguar: "God created Turk as governor and ordered Turks to govern other nations, bring them justice, help the righteous and weak and oppress the unjust and powerful. He gave them horses, women, and guns. He said, the world is yours, fighting is your feast, martyrdom is your last rank. He said, Asia is yours; Europe is yours, too, and God made the Turk superior" (01:34:44-01:35:46).⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁴ "...Türkler gittikleri yere adalet ve barış getirdiler. Şu günlerde ise Avrupa'da yokluğu duyulan iki şey budur."

⁶⁷⁵ "Harpler, akan kanlar bitsin, artık kötüler utansın."

⁶⁷⁶ "Tanrı Türkü ilbay yarattı. Öteki ulusları yönetin, onlara adalet götürün, haklıyı ve zayıfı sevin, haksızı ve kuvvetliyi ezin buyurdu. At verdi, avrat verdi, silah verdi. Dünya senin yurdun, cenk bayramın, şehitlik son rütben dedi. Asya senin Avrupa da senin dedi ve Tanrı Türkü üstün kıldı."

5.4.3. To Fight at the Time of Bayezid II between 1965-1971:

There are two films which take place at the time of Bayezid II: *Malkoçoğlu Kara Korsan* (*Malkoçoğlu The Black Pirate*, dir. Süreyya Duru, 1968) and *Malkoçoğlu: Cem Sultan* (dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1969). These films were shot later than the ones mentioned earlier. Therefore, they are somewhat closer to the 1970s. This is significant because especially *Malkoçoğlu Kara Korsan* (*The Black Pirate*) includes more religious references than the previously mentioned films. This makes them precursors of the films of the 1970s, which are much more religious in terms of their tone.

5.4.3.1. The Warrior's Mission:

It is peculiar that in *Kara Korsan* (*The Black Pirate*), the hero fights for Bayezid II, and in *Malkoçoğlu: Cem Sultan*, he is with Cem Sultan, the other son of Mehmet II who competes with Bayezid II for the throne. In the latter, Malkoçoğlu fights for a prince who revolted against the legitimate ruler. He has more than sympathy towards Cem Sultan because he is his “blood brother,” as he says to Rüstem Pasha, whom Bayezid has assigned to catch Cem Sultan. This idea of Malkoçoğlu seems to be inconsistent with the general narrative centered on the legitimate ruler and leads to questions about whether Bayezid has not been perceived as legitimate by a portion of the population. At this point, brief background information might be helpful to comment on the significance of the movie's subject matter. In many accounts, Cem is said to be an intellectual prince also favored by his father. Bayezid, however, had a religious character according to popular novels such as *Cem Sultan*, written by Feridun Fazıl Tülbentçi. Ahmad states that Bayezid bribed the janissaries to have their loyalty.

On the other hand, Cem Sultan had the support of bureaucrats, including the Grand Vizier Karamani Mehmet Pasha. However, some janissaries killed the messenger sent to Cem by the Grand Vizier about his father's death. As a result, Bayezid was able to reach İstanbul, and he became the sultan immediately. Then, after several battles, Cem sought exile in Rhodes and later France and Italy as a captive of the Holy Alliance. For the rest of his life, they used him to threaten the Ottoman Empire and he became a tool of international politics.⁶⁷⁷ Relying on these, it can be said that Cem still does not seem to be the legitimate ruler, but the way Bayezid II ascended to the throne might also have been perceived negatively. Moreover, some Ottomans might have supported Cem Sultan, given the argument that Mehmet II also wanted

⁶⁷⁷ Gabor Agoston, “Cem” in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 128-130.

him to become the ruler after his death. This could also be enlightening for understanding Malkoçoğlu's perception of Cem.

In *Cem Sultan*, Malkoçoğlu primarily battles with Christian bandits and later *Şeytan* (Evil) Omerro to save Cem Sultan. Therefore, his real enemy is not Rüstem Pasha but these external others. In one scene, Malkoçoğlu warns Rüstem Pasha to get a grasp of himself and not to make Malkoçoğlu rebellious to the Sultan. Then they get into an agreement to save Cem Sultan. So, these two men never fight because "His (Malkoçoğlu's) sword never sheds the blood of Turks..." (25:32-25:37).⁶⁷⁸ Later, even a brotherhood is formed between the two men as they talk about what Malkoçoğlu and raiders like him must sacrifice to fight for the fatherland because the fatherland always comes first. Rüstem Pasha appreciates Malkoçoğlu by saying, "You established this fatherland on horse...My lions, may God protect you and bestow you to the fatherland" (28:51-29:34).⁶⁷⁹ These words could be a remnant of the anti-bureaucratic mentality of the political discourse that is also available in the earlier movies. Malkoçoğlu, here, makes himself listened to and appreciated by a statesman and finally shows his power and influence over him. Malkoçoğlu's challenge to Rüstem Pasha also indicates that the warrior can challenge the Sultan if he falls into the trap of being against the people of his own nation. This could also suggest that the warrior's loyalty is not simply for the Sultan but the state and the nation, which are above the Sultan. It could also be said that Malkoçoğlu does not directly rebel against the Sultan but opts for supporting and saving Cem Sultan, who has asked for his help. He says he would help even a farmer because the Turkish raider must help the desperate. This mission of helping all those who need help discourse contributes to the myth of a national mission.

Furthermore, since Bayezid is never shown, these two films' discourses might even be working in complementary to each other. Connecting to that, in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, the Spanish commander Lucio tortures Malkoçoğlu by saying, "One day your Sultan Bayezid, the son of the Sultan Mehmet Han, who destroyed the Byzantium walls will kneel before me" (1:02:40).⁶⁸⁰ Here Bayezid is mentioned in connection with his father, and this might also indicate that he is not perceived as heroic as his father. *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* does not represent Cem Sultan but still refers to him. Besides fighting against the Spanish Inquisition, the hero has the other duty of finding the little Prince Osman, the son of Cem Sultan. In fact, in the final scene, Christians who have just converted to Islam kneel before Prince

⁶⁷⁸ "...kılıcımız Türk kanı ... akıtmaz."

⁶⁷⁹ "Siz bu vatani at üstünde kurdunuz."

⁶⁸⁰ "Bizans surlarını yaran Sultan Mehmed Han oğlu Bayezid de karşımda diz çökecek."

Osman to show their respect. This particular scene might be an attempt to lessen Bayezid's influence.

Here it could be said that the key exciting figure enriching the nationalist action/adventure films was Cem Sultan.⁶⁸¹ He is portrayed as a brave and courageous prince. He stops Evil Omerro when he is about to throw an ax to kill the woman he has bound. So, Cem is an Alexander type of leader. Besides, he defines himself as a Turk and Prince when the men of Evil Omerro attack him. This means Turkishness, instead of Ottomannes, is the most significant element in the way he constructs his identity.

5.4.3.2. More about the Others and the 'Home'land:

Nevertheless, the enemies in *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan* are the bandits and Şeytan Omerro, who agree with Venice to exchange Cem in return for some gold coins. To fight against them, Malkoçoğlu and his raiders cover long distances by galloping through green fields and a river on their horses. There are also caves as the places that bandits live. However, where all these things take place is not clear. Although Omerro's castle walls are shown, no information is provided about which kingdom or empire he is associated with. It is also unclear whether these enemies are Christian because of the lack of reference to their religion. But the way they are represented as coward evils in colorful clothes and their collaboration with Venice makes the audience consider them Christians. Besides, the bandits' clothing stereotypically resembles that of gypsies. They are all ruthless; they think about their interests, and therefore kidnap women and rape them. It is later understood that they have also kidnapped Zühre, the wife of Malkoçoğlu who does not know Malkoçoğlu is alive, and Meryem, Polat's betrothed. Here, Evil Omerro, too, is depicted with colorful clothes and jewelry. He looks frightening like the other external enemies and he is surrounded by women. He likes to kill people and watch them while they are dying. Despite that, he is a coward and does not have fighting skills. When his men fight with the Turkish heroes, he gives them some orders and even promises to give them some gold coins at the end. The message here is that Omerro's men fight for money, whereas Turks fight for the fatherland, nation, and the ruler as the members of the warrior nation. Besides, as in many other films, this great cause gets united with Malkoçoğlu's personal cause because Omerro is the evil man who imprisoned Malkoçoğlu for so many years and caused him to lose his family. During the fight, he even causes the death of Malkoçoğlu's wife, as the leader of the bandits throws an arrow. He also says that Omerro has sold 'his prince' like a slave. Here

⁶⁸¹ There is another film which titled *Cem Sultan* directed by Münir Hayri Egeli from 1951. However, since it is not available, it is impossible to make a comparison.

Malkoçoğlu does not distinguish Cem Sultan from his family, showing his mission's importance.

The enemy in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* is the Spanish Inquisition, controlled by the Spanish king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Their goal is to use the power of religion to conquer new colonies. A voice-over gives this piece of information at the beginning of the film, accompanied by a text, which is also reflected on the screen. The use of sound and text simultaneously is an unusual method that was not used in other films. It could be just a random choice of the filmmaker or related to the filmmaker's desire to tell what exactly happened by referring to some foreign names that are unfamiliar to the audience. The movie is unique because, for the first time, a state out of the Balkans is represented as the enemy in nationalist action/adventure films about Ottoman heroes. It should also be noted that the film takes place in the Ottoman-dominated Ainos (Enez) in the Balkans, which is depicted as being attacked by Lucio, a Spanish commander known as "the right arm of the Inquisition." Like other films, Malkoçoğlu of *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* comes to Ainos by covering long distances on horseback. He passes through fields and forests for quite a long time. However, again, the audience is not provided with the information about whether Ainos is at the border or not as in other films. In fact, there are no references to the presence of borders in the film to give the impression that Turks ruled vast lands or even the world.

As in other films of the same group, the enemy is depicted as so cruel and merciless and even kills innocent people. The voiceover emphasizes that the town has been inhabited by both Muslims and Christians living there peacefully before the arrival of the Inquisition. Then, the voiceover gives some numbers, and according to those, 1,500 Muslims and 2,000 Christians have been captured, and the Inquisition has killed 3,000 people. The films show the bare cruelty of the Inquisition. There are scenes in which children, the elderly, and even some animals are killed, and half-naked women are raped. A man has been hanged upside down, and a rooster has been killed with a scythe. Watching all these, the audience must have felt the horror caused by the enemy and must have been filled with the emotions of hatred and revenge, although the film is black and white. These feelings are further amplified as Lucio is depicted shutting his eyes to the murder of his wife, Maria, who has supported the rebels against Lucio and poisoning his son. These rebels, here, are a group of Christian Ainosians who fight against the Inquisition. Here the message is that the enemy is the Inquisition, not all Christians. In fact, these rebels believe that only the sword of the Turks could save them from those evils who spill blood and violence because Turks bring justice and tranquility to the places they go. Therefore, Turks are

needed as benevolent conquerors to help desperate people and re-bring order. These depictions perfectly reproduce the myth of a national mission.

The other duty of Malkoçoğlu as the black pirate in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* is to find Bayezid II's brother Cem Sultan's son, Osman, as ordered by Bayezid II. In fact, Lucio's men want to kidnap him; therefore, he storms his house. The mother of Osman gives him to Zaloğlu, another raider, to protect and hide. Here the home of Osman and his mother is represented as a traditional Turkish house with its decoration, and confirming this, Osman's mother is depicted in traditional Turkish folk costume. With an emphasis on traditionality, this kind of representation is also present in the films about Ottoman-Islamic heroes of the 1970s. For example, *Cem Sultan* starts in a village that looks the same as any village in Turkey. Peasants all have traditional outfits, and there are cows, chickens, and roosters surrounded by broad farm fields and flowers. This familiar yet warm representation of the myth of fatherland as 'our' home. Of course, it could be an indication of increasing nationalism and a much more inward-looking state of mind, which at the same time makes the audience much more familiar with the characters.

In this vein, for the first time, the Turkish warrior Malkoçoğlu, as the protector of the fatherland, and thus 'home,' is depicted in detail way as having a wife and son. This, however, does not mean that Malkoçoğlu has succeeded in his mission and so decided to settle down. At the end of the film, he loses his wife Zühre, which shows that the nationalist fight is not over yet. In the beginning scene, Evil Omerro attacks the village, and then Malkoçoğlu thinks he has lost his family. His son Polat and wife Zühre think the same for him. Then, as a grown boy Polat, without knowing that Malkoçoğlu is his father, wants to join Malkoçoğlu's raiders. Later, he is assigned by Malkoçoğlu as the commander of Omerro's Castle. Right at this point, the transformation of Polat is also significant in contributing to the myth of the warrior nation. He is, first, depicted as a farm laborer like any common man with whom many of the audience might have felt associated with. Then, he is shown as working in green fields, which have been a life source for him. This representation establishes a link between man and land and strengthens the myth of the homeland, which says that the homeland is like our home. Later, his mother, Zühre, who is at the same time the wife of Malkoçoğlu, is also buried in a green field after her death in the enemies' hands. This enhances the link between Polat and his homeland by making the land the home of his ancestors through a reproduction of the myth of ethnic continuity. Zühre's burial scene is also enriched with a religious hymn in the background. Therefore, Islamic elements, ancestral connections, and land all exist in the same picture. When these are connected with Malkoçoğlu planting a green flag with Arabic script on it onto the wall

of Omerro's castle, the question that arises is whether Malkoçoğlu wants to settle. All these could be subtle references to the hero's conservatism and the sign of a future inward-looking nationalist narrative.

Given Malkoçoğlu's son Polat's involvement in agriculture, social inequalities also occupy a significant part of the narrative. In *Cem Sultan*, when Polat is just a farm laborer, he falls in love with Melek, the daughter of a beg who has promised an aga to give her daughter as a bride. Melek is beaten by her father when he finds out about her relationship with Polat. Here, it should be noted that this representation of violence against women in general by their fathers, lovers, brothers, or husbands gradually increased since the late 1960s, reaching a peak in the 1970s. This correlates with the conservatism of the heroes, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, Polat is belittled by the aga because he is just a farm laborer. Then, he is beaten by the men of aga. Polat does not even defend himself during the fight, probably because he respects authority, which again fits into the rise of conservative values in movies. Again, in the same mentality, when the aga calls his mother a "whore," Polat kills him. This is the point when Polat becomes a real man with traditional values and ready to defend the women of his life, basically his girlfriend and mother, as the symbols of his home in addition to his fatherland. This is how he decides to become a raider.

5.4.3.3. 'Becoming' Man:

In fact, Polat's transformation seems almost inevitable. Because, despite the emergence of his personal cause, he is a natural-born raider because of his connection with Malkoçoğlu and, most importantly, because of him being Turkish. As he becomes a raider, his passage to manhood is somehow completed. As a result, like any Turkish warrior, he rejects to stay with his fiancé Melek after saving her from the hands of Omerro. He says, "there are things beyond the love for a man, for a raider who could use a sword, and this is something she cannot understand"⁶⁸² (59:23-59:30). Polat justifies the myth of the warrior nation and emphasizes the national division of labor based upon gender. In this regard, as a 'manly' man, he believes in brotherhood and the beauty of battle for a raider. A particular scene revealing this is the one in which Omerro tortures both Malkoçoğlu and Polat. In that scene, Polat carries Malkoçoğlu on his shoulders with a rope tied to his neck. According to the evil plan of Omerro, if Polat gives up, Malkoçoğlu will be choked by the rope. This plan, however, fails because Polat endures for hours and hours. While carrying Malkoçoğlu, Polat wants him to call himself "my son" because

⁶⁸² "Bir erkek için, eli kılıç tutan bir akıncı için sevgiden öte şeyler var. Anlayamazsın bunu."

he is an orphan and does not have a father. This dramatic scene reveals the worry of the hero-to-be due to his fatherlessness. The underlying message could be that the nation is Polat, and it needs a Father or a savior as Polat needs his father. Here, 'saving the father' becomes the mission of Polat, and this could also mean 'saving the ruler and the state' reproducing the myth of the Father State. However, the tricky point is that Malkoçoğlu wants Polat to deal with Cem Sultan instead of himself. For Polat, this is also a way to prove his masculinity because, as Malkoçoğlu says for himself in prison in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, he is not scared of death but worried because he could not fulfill his mission. Therefore, the only duty of the raider is to achieve his mission.

There are other opportunities for the hero or hero-to-be to prove his masculinity. On his way to Ainos in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, Malkoçoğlu stops by a *han* to rest. There, as the proper ideal representative of Turkish man, he saves a woman harassed by some men, probably Christians. These men in the *han* are all represented as evil, so do not hesitate to harass women or kill them. They all laugh and speak loudly and eat and drink rudely. For Malkoçoğlu, this fight is a rehearsal of future battles. Then, he disguises himself as a Spanish pirate named Ojeda and infiltrates into the court of Lucio. There, he sleeps with Anna de Cordoba, an evil Spanish woman and a collaborator of Lucio. In fact, the women of other are always attracted by Malkoçoğlu's bravery and handsomeness. In *Cem Sultan*, even the woman who is tied and has swords and finally an ax thrown at her by Şeytan Omerro yells at Malkoçoğlu and wants him to save her after she sees him. This means, even the women of other want Malkoçoğlu's help against their own evil people. These, of course, strengthen Malkoçoğlu's charisma in the eyes of the audience and allow him to belittle the enemy through their women. For example, when he is brought to prison as being tortured by Lucio, who tied him to the back of his horse and then dragged him, Anna de Cordoba asks him to be hers and so get whatever status or rank he wants. Here, the reaction of Malkoçoğlu fits nicely into the depiction of the ideal nationalist Turkish warrior. He spits in her face, calling her a whore and saying that even the dead bodies of Turks cannot be slaves to her. This scene reduces the enemy to an evil woman and gets the Turks' revenge by referring to her sexuality.

5.4.3.4. Women:

At this point, a different representation is Jitan, a woman from bandits in *Cem Sultan*. When she meets Malkoçoğlu in a *han*, she removes her clothing, saying that she wants to heal Malkoçoğlu because she is aware of how hard the lives of raiders are, and all raiders need a woman. Malkoçoğlu, however, refuses her by covering her body with a piece of cloth and

saying, “you will catch a cold” (20:20). This reaction is unique compared to other raiders in other films, but on the other hand, it is understandable given the film’s emphasis on family and family values. Besides, Jitan could be considered a good external other because she helps Malkoçoğlu’s men in the fight and consoles Melek when Polat decides to continue fighting for Omerro’s castle. The other good external other is again a woman, and this kind of representation of the good external other through women could be related to the filmmakers’ subtle talent to preparing the audience for the possibility of a sudden belittling of the enemy through their women. They might have also aimed at showing the good women of other in need of Turkish heroes. This second external other is Elena in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*. She is helped by Malkoçoğlu and his men in her fight against Lucio, who is her cousin and betrothed. She is the leader of the rebels of Ainos who want to overthrow the rule of the Inquisition and want to be dominated by Turks. She hates Lucio because “he sold his fatherland and his people” (1:00:49) to the Inquisition. This great cause of Elena is presented at the same time with her falling in love with Malkoçoğlu. Then, she fights with Malkoçoğlu as if she is a Turkish woman and kills Anna de Cordoba. This makes her qualified enough to be Malkoçoğlu’s lover at the end of the film.

Furthermore, good women around Malkoçoğlu are always good fighters. In *Cem Sultan*, his wife Zühre and Melek, Polat’s beloved, are masters of swords. Both threaten the enemy by showing how brave they are and killing some of them. Melek, later, becomes almost a part of the army and says, “let us hit them, brothers” (1:1120)⁶⁸³ to Turkish soldiers in the last fighting scenes in Omerro’s castle while holding a sword in hand. The discourses these characters utilize as well as their skills show that Turkish women are as heroic as Turkish men. This representation, of course, reproduces once more the myth of the warrior nation.

5.4.3.5. The Others and Religion:

Malkoçoğlu humiliates the enemy also through their men of religion. In *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, when he is in Lucio's court disguised as a Spanish pirate, he gets into a discussion with a priest about punishment methods used by the Inquisition. He says that putting people on top of pyres and burning them cannot be a sacred religious goal. The priest, however, declares that the lives of three to five people do not matter for cleansing spirits, and they are, in fact, cutting gangrened limbs. The priest's answer reveals the Inquisition’s cruelty to Malkoçoğlu, who thinks that the Inquisition uses religion to mask ruthless colonial ambitions.

⁶⁸³ “Vurun kardeşler”

As a result, when his real identity is released, Malkoçoğlu forcefully takes a priest's clothes to hide. In this scene, the audience sees the priest as naked and crying. With this humiliating scene, the Turkish hero takes not only the revenge of Turks but also the Christians of Ainos who are oppressed by the colonialist Inquisition. In this example, to push it a little bit far, Malkoçoğlu does not only fight against some cruel enemies, but he also fights to eliminate colonial powers. This burdens his heroic identity with the duty of even saving Christians from colonialism. He does this by reinstating Turkish order to Ainos. The message, therefore, reproduces the myth of national mission and could be again interpreted within the context of *Pax Turcica*, in which Turks are benevolent conquerors and conquer different territories because they have this God-given mission of bringing peace, order, and tranquility to the world.

As opposed to the Christian priest figure, Yunus Baba (Yunus the Father) is in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*. He is an old blacksmith living in Ainos; he is also the Muslim community leader there. Here it should be noted that the Turkic Ergenekon legend probably inspired the filmmakers according to which Turks, led by Asena, a grey wolf, were able to release from the Ergenekon valley, where they had been trapped for four centuries, as a blacksmith melted the mountain made up of iron. Relying on this, it could be argued that Yunus Baba, with his wisdom and experience, is seen as the liberator of the Turks of Ainos. This depiction reminds me of Giradet's Cincinnatus. Yunus is, then, captured by Lucio's men. While he is being tortured, Lucio wants him to convert to Christianity, but Yunus Baba says, "Islam is the true religion for God. Jesus Christ, whom you claim to be the disciple of ordered Christianity by healing the sick and giving you miracles. You, however, destroyed the aims and orders of the true religion of Jesus and used religion as a tool for your own interests. Therefore, those who intervene in the relationship between God and the believer, who tyrannize in the name of religion, are always in iniquity and heresy" (52:04-52:28).⁶⁸⁴ In these lines, Yunus Baba, although he is a Muslim leader, warns Lucio and his men about Christianity and accuses them of misusing religion and hence not following the orders of Jesus Christ. Here the underlying message could be the reproduction of the myth of the other through the attempt to separate some good others from the bad ones.

In this regard, Yunus Baba does not say anything bad against all Christians, but only to those who 'misuse' it by limiting the extent of the other. In fact, adopting an utterly anti-

⁶⁸⁴ "Tanrı katında Hak dini Müslümanlıktır, mensubu olduğunuzu iddia ettiğiniz o Hazreti İsa ki hastalara şifa vererek mucizeler göstererek Hristiyanlığı buyurdu. Sizler İsa'nın Hak dininin gayelerini ve emirlerini bozup kendi çıkarlarınıza alet ettiniz. Tanrı ile kul arasına girenler din uğruna zulüm yapanlar her an günah ve sapkınlık içindedirler."

Christian discourse could be carrying the potential of being criticized due to the challenge towards Turkey's international politics that depended upon alliances with different countries. In fact, Turks are there not only to save Turks but also to save oppressed Christians. In this context, the Christian prisoners kept by the Inquisition are depicted in a too desperate situation. They are in prison for days, are all very crowded, and have to struggle with hunger. In one scene, a group of Christian prisoners kill a rat to eat it. Yunus Baba advises those to be patient even in these miserable conditions caused by the Inquisition. Even while he is tied to a wheel for torture, he starts to recite azan loudly in another scene. In fact, this is one of the most dramatic scenes of the film. Azan is followed by the Shahadah as Christian prisoners all convert to Islam. In the end, when Yunus Baba and the prisoners, including Elena, the betrothed of Lucio and the leader of the rebels, are about to burn at the stake, Yunus recites azan again; the prisoners accompany him, Elena also converts. Then, in an exceptionally aggressive way, Lucio says, "Die! The flames of hell are waiting for you. Die!" (1:20:52).⁶⁸⁵ He is followed by the Father, who, laughing loudly, states, "you the five-time God of the Muslims, where is God of Muslims?" (1:21:49).⁶⁸⁶ Anna de Cordoba then laughs loudly and says, "If you have God and if your God has power, let Him save you" (1:21:58).⁶⁸⁷ These statements increase the tension, and finally, a strong thunder sound is heard as the voice of God. The sound of azan blends with that sound. A heavy rain starts, and all prisoners are rescued. Here, the message given to the audience is that God also supports the Turkish national mission.

What needs to be taken carefully is that the hero's great cause in this film has a much more religious tone than the other ones previously mentioned. Therefore, the film could be interpreted as the precursor of the 1970s films, which predominantly have a religious emphasis. This is supported by Malkoçoğlu putting a green flag similar to that of Saudi Arabia with Arabic script on the walls of Omerro's castle in *Cem Sultan*. Although the Saudi flag's similarity could be coincidental, the religious tones are quite significant that did not exist in many of the nationalist action-adventure films with historical settings made in the second half of the 1960s. Thus, with all their emphasis on traditional values, family, land, and Islam, these two films taking place in the time of Bayezid II and shot in the late 1960s, take us to the films of the next decade in which the Islamic component of the hero's identity is in the forefront.

⁶⁸⁵ "Geberin, cehennemin alevleri sizi bekliyor, geberin."

⁶⁸⁶ "Ey Müslümanların beş vakitlik Allahı, neredesin?"

⁶⁸⁷ "Eğer Tanrınız varsa, Tanrınızın gücü varsa kurtarsın sizi."

5.4.4. Main Points:

There are seven available films that are about the Ottoman Empire produced between 1965-1971. One of them depicts the Orhan Ghazi period of the 14th century. There are four about the reign of Mehmet II, so the 15th century. The other two are on Bayezid II, Mehmet II's son, who reigned between the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The emphasis here is on the Ottoman Empire's ascendancy period, reproducing the golden age myth and complying with the Turkish History Thesis. Suleiman the Magnificent, unlike the films of the 1970s, never appears in this picture. In fact, since the 1950s, the audience witnesses the cinematic stretching of the Ottoman emphasis. That is, first İstanbul's conquest, which is an unignorable fact and the capital of the empire that is still within the borders of the contemporary Republic, was narrated. Then, his other conquests in the Balkans, basically the period after the conquest of İstanbul, became a subject matter in 1965-1971. This period was also interested in Bayezid II, mostly not to praise but criticize him. In the 1970s, in parallel to the rising aggressiveness in the country, films depict Suleiman the Magnificent's success in the 16th century. Therefore, there is extension of the subject matter, and the years between 1965 and 1971 constitutes a transition period.

Another point to note is that the films mentioned in this part consider the Ottoman Empire to be a Turkish empire. In this context, the word 'Ottoman' is not even used, and instead of it, 'Turk' is used. This also fits into the Turkish History Thesis. The increasing use of traditional outfits visually completes the Turkishness of the empire's people visually. Turkish women have headscarves and colorful loose dresses made of unique fabrics with easily identifiable Turkish motifs. This could be an attempt to emphasize ethnic and religious identity more strongly, and this increased in the 1970s.

Like many other films, the enemies are Christian, and the battlefields are in Europe. The interesting point, however, is that the films always distinguish Christians within themselves. There are always some influential good Christians, such as the dethroned Serbian king, who collaborate with the Turkish side against the other Christians. In fact, Christian people are good, too, although their ruler could be evil. Therefore, the boundaries with the Christians are not drawn as clear-cut black lines. To be more specific, the others are mostly either Byzantine commanders or Catholic rulers, and soldiers fight in the name of the Spanish Inquisition. There is an unknown enemy named Evil Omerro, but the audience automatically groups him with the absolute others due to his collaboration with them. However, his depiction in *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan* is still vague compared to the enemies of the 1970s. Apart from that, civilian Catholics are always portrayed as good. Here the Byzantine adversary is understandable not only because

of the absolute hatred between the Ottomans and Byzantine and the audience's already existing familiarity but also because of its non-existence today. For filmmakers, it must be easier to deal with because the Byzantine Empire does not live anymore. Here, it should also be noted that contemporary Greeks and Byzantine are never connected in any of these films made before 1971.

Besides, in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, the choice of the Spanish Inquisition as the external enemy, which had brutalized non-Catholic parts of Europe as from the late 15th century, is interesting yet strategical. Malkoçoğlu's fight against it is legitimized because he aims to save not only the Muslims of Ainos, but also the oppressed Christians from the hands of the Inquisition. This reproduces the myth of national mission by making Turks the saviors of Christians, and hence benevolent conquerors. This is a valuable and legitimate mission in the European world and helps the Turks to gain a civilization and peace bringer status. When taken together with the previous section, it can be said that the hero arrives from Central Asia by fighting against barbarian tribes, which also attack Europeans. Now, in Europe, he defeats all those enemies destroying Europe. As a result, the Turks deserve a legitimate place as a member of European civilization. This argument nurtures the Turkish History Thesis. Besides, the warrior comes to Byzantium and then to the Balkans through Serbia and Ainos. This journey is an indication of future symbolic attempts to take revenge for the loss of the Balkan lands, which created a significant trauma in Turkish nationalist minds.

Furthermore, a prevalent depiction is that the warriors always support and collaborate with the legitimate but dethroned rulers of the other against the novel and evil one. The other scenario in which the warriors serve to the legitimate heir to the Ottoman throne is also possible as it is shown in Kılıçaslan in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saved the Fatherland)* and Malkoçoğlu in *Cem Sultan*. In the first, Kılıçaslan fights for Murat, who is the appointed heir of the Ottoman throne. In the latter film, an interesting narrative arises, and Malkoçoğlu helps Cem Sultan fight against the crowned Bayezid II. This makes the movie a rare example and reveals that the question of who the legitimate leader is occupies a significant place in nationalist mythmaking. In this regard, Bayezid II might not be considered sufficiently legitimate because his period is associated with stagnation, and the filmmakers, as mythmakers, might have wanted to create a linear perspective which takes Mehmet II, who could be considered as an Alexander type of leader in Girardet's categorization, as the peak.

The last significant point is that there are no internal enemies except for Prince Halil and Prince İbrahim, the other sons of Orhan Ghazi in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saved the Fatherland)*. Even Rüstem Pasha of *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan*, who first supports

Bayezid II, therefore, could be a candidate for an internal enemy, later appreciates the bravery of Malkoçoğlu and other raiders. This representation may work to absolutize the ruler, strengthen the national warrior, and present the Turkish society without any disagreements by reproducing the myth of national homogeneity. This narrative is a remnant of the early 1960s, which, however, changes in the 1970s.

5.5. The Pre-Ottoman Islamic Warrior in the 1970s:

5.5.1. A General Look: *Battal Ghazi*:

Among all the other available action/adventure films with Turkish-Islamic heroes of the 1970s, the *Battal Ghazi* series consisting of four films are the only ones that insert nationalist political myths into the 8th-9th centuries, an Islamic period predating the Ottomans. These four films are *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi*, dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1971), *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1972), *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1973), and *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1974). As the titles imply, the warrior is Battal Ghazi. What distinguishes his adventures from the action/adventure films of the previous period is the strong, intense, and even excessive use of religious symbols. In the series, everything takes place against the backdrop of Muslim symbols such as azan, prayer, declarations of Islamic confession of faith of those Christians converting to Islam, green and yellow flags with Arabic scripts on them carried by ghazis on the one hand; chapels, priests, flags with crosses, crucifixions of rebellious ones, Baptist rituals, medieval punishments like those employed for those found guilty such as burning at stake and the Catherine wheel on the other. This means the nationalist political myths *Battal Ghazi* films all emerge in a context defined by the Muslims' fight against Christians. In connection to that, the Muslim component of the hero's identity is much more strongly emphasized than his Turkish side, making *Battal Ghazi* unique among all the other heroes mentioned so far.

5.5.1.1. The Warrior and His Mission:

Thus, *Battal Ghazi* is a Muslim raider; basically, a ghazi reproducing the myth of the national warrior with a strong attachment to his religious identity. However, the depiction of his ethnic identity has some interesting aspects, probably because of the 1970s' political context. Except for the last film *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*, Battal is mentioned as Turcoman, contrary to other protagonists whose Turkish identity is emphasized. For instance, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal is humiliated by the Byzantine

Emperor Leon with the words “ignoble Turcoman.” Similar wording is also used by Testor, the Commander of Amorion Castle, who calls Battal as “hairless Turcoman” due to his young age and seemingly inexperienced nature. This kind of reference to ‘Turcomanness’ never exists in other films of this kind. His Turkishness is only raised in the last film *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*), through which his mother and some slaves he saves from Byzantine are identified as Turkish. Besides, Karagülle, who is originally a Byzantine prince but raised by Turks because he had been switched with Battal’s son when he was a baby, calls himself Turkish despite discovering his real identity. From the first to the last film, this identity ‘transfer’ from ‘Turcoman’ to ‘Turkish’ pops up without any change in the representations of enemies and Battal himself. Besides, there is continuity in terms of actors and actresses. This probably makes the transfer less recognizable by the audience. Despite that, it makes sense given the zeitgeist of 1974, which was the Cyprus Peace Operation’s date and the year the last film was produced. For the filmmakers and audience of 1974, ‘Turk’ must have sounded a less complicated and much simpler category of identification. In this context, in the films, a Muslim-Christian conflict turns into a Turkish-Byzantine one, which could also be perceived as a Turkish-Greek conflict. Therefore, ‘Turkishness’ instead of ‘Turcomanness’ could be much more helpful in reproducing nationalist political myths during a time of a crisis roughly between Turks and Greeks. It should also be noted that whenever the word ‘Turk’ is used, it is always accompanied by the word ‘Muslim.’ To exemplify, in *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*), Karagülle defines himself as “Turkish and Muslim,” and Turkish slaves are not only Turkish but, in fact, “Turkish and Muslim.” This could also indicate a strong emphasis on Muslimness as a significant defining feature of the ideal nationalist warrior of the early 1970s.

At this point, Battal Ghazi’s debated ethnic origin in Turkish historiography could be relevant to understand his indecisive representation. The character could be considered as a direct reference to an actual Muslim warrior(s) named Abdullah Battal Ghazi, who fought against Byzantium mostly in Malatya in Central Turkey in the 8th or 9th centuries during the time of either the Umayyads or the Abbasids, both of which were Arab empires.⁶⁸⁸ This warrior’s heroic activities are the focus of *Battalname* (The Book of Battal), which is a collection of epic stories circulating in Anatolia both in oral and written forms since the 12th-13th centuries. These stories are also associated with the Seljuks. Besides, there is another source

⁶⁸⁸ Pertev Naili Boratav, “Battal,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.2, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1979), 344; Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 1980), 255; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Battal Gazi,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 5 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1992), 204.

from the same period named *Danışmendname* (Book of the Danishmend), which is about Melik Danishmend Ahmed Ghazi's activities, the founder of the Danishmends, a Turkic *beylik* ruling Malatya and its surroundings.⁶⁸⁹ Consequently, some sources mention Battal as an Arab,⁶⁹⁰ and some others consider him as Turkish.⁶⁹¹ Those various references to different ethnic origins of real Battal Ghazi(s) might be a cause of his unique representation. In this context, given the unfolding Cyprus issue in 1974, filmmakers probably did not hesitate to put Battal's identity as Turkish. And in fact, this 'translation' or 'transfer' of Battal must have significantly worked to reproduce nationalist political myths on the way of creating a raider ghazi image in Anatolia as a role model to justify Turkish-Islamic domination of Anatolia before the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁹²

Nevertheless, Battal Ghazi is the *serdar* (commander-in-chief) of Malatya principality and receives orders from Omer Beg, the principality's ruler. This beg is old, wise, and calm and, in this sense, different from Mehmet II's representation mentioned so far. He resembles the portrayal of Suleiman the Magnificent in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. However, the difference with Suleiman is that neither his court nor himself is portrayed as ostentatious as Suleiman; everything is rather humble, probably because he is a beg and the other is a Sultan. On the other hand, Ömer Beg is also just and fair like all 'our' rulers presented in films. For instance, in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*), he never favors Battal's son when old Battal wants his son to become his replacement as the new commander-in-chief. Instead, he says the son should also prove himself first (0:12-0:22). Then, unsurprisingly, since warriorship is in all Turks' blood, the son becomes the new commander after defeating his rivals. In fact, Battal's father, Hüseyin Ghazi in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), Battal himself, Battal's son Seyyid Battal Ghazi and Seyyid Battal Ghazi's son, so Battal Ghazi's grandson all succeed to become commander in chiefs of Malatya principality as if validating the myth of warrior nation. This familial continuity is also reinforced with the use of the same actor as the hero, Cüneyt Arkın, in all four films. This tactic, which could depend on economic choices or the audience's demand, enables the audience to perceive different characters as one great warrior automatically. Therefore, for the purposes of

⁶⁸⁹ The early Ottomans were also familiar with these epic collections. The tomb of Battal Ghazi near Eskisehir was very close to Söğüt (known to be the birthplace of the Ottoman beylik (and the tomb had already become a sort of pilgrimage destination by the end of the twelfth century. *Danışmendname*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/danışmendname>

⁶⁹⁰ Boratav, "Battal," 344; Marius Canard, 'al-Battal,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (2012), http://dx.do.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1288.

⁶⁹¹ Vecdi Yarman, "Behçet Kemal Çağlar Gözü ile Seyyid Battal Gazi," *Eskişehir I. Seyyid Battal Gazi Bilimsel Semineri 22-24 Eylül 1977 Bildiriler* (Eskişehir: Eskişehir Turizm ve Tanıtma Yayınları, 1977), 120.

⁶⁹² A. Nuri Yurdusev, "Ottoman Conceptions of War and Peace in the Classical Period, in *Just Wars, Holy Wars & Jihads: Christian, Jewish and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges*, ed. Shoail H Hashmi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 194.

the current dissertation, I preferred to mention all these different men of the same family, sometimes as one person.

Nevertheless, the narrative continuities in the Battal series might be giving the message about the continuity of the Muslim rule in Anatolia through generations by strengthening the myth of ethnic and/or religious continuity of the people and territory of Malatya through different generations. Here, the myth of the warrior nation is reproduced as identifying the nation as one great family and considering military skills as transferred from one generation to the next. In fact, among all the other heroes, Battal Ghazi is the only one whose family lineage is depicted in such an extended and clear way. In this context, the representative of each generation is the inheritor of his ancestor's skills and experience. It first happens through the training that the son receives from his father. For example, one of the two trainers of the little Battal around the age of ten, whose name is yet Cafer, is his father, Hüseyin Ghazi, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. Thanks to this training, Battal becomes very good at using swords, shooting arrows, and horse riding with acrobatic and athletic moves. *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)* includes a similar depiction, too. It starts with adult Battal training his son to use swords. His son is seven or eight years old and quite talented like the little Battal in the previous film. At this point, it should not be ignored that these scenes in which little boys are being trained by certain 'masters' or 'playing war' with their friends of the same age by sometimes using wooden swords are pretty standard in Turkish nationalist action/adventure films. While reproducing the myth of the warrior nation, these scenes convey the idea that fighting is an innate characteristic of the Turkish nation, and all men are born as soldiers.

5.5.1.2. Children and Fathers:

The representation of children in Battal Ghazi films is noteworthy. First, it should be pointed out that there are no portrayals of little girls, and women appear only in some cases, as will be mentioned in the following pages. Nevertheless, since the core of national identity is accepted as immutable by the essentialist perspective, Turkish-Muslim boys are always taken to be aware of their identities since their birth. A striking example of that is the portrayal of Seyyid Battal Ghazi's son in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*. This boy is switched by Byzantine emperor Antuan's wife because she has lost her baby and is terrified of her husband. Thus, the switched Battal is brought up as a Christian and the son of the emperor. However, since he is originally Muslim, he does not really fit into the environment he lives in. For example, when he is just a baby, he rejects being breastfed by his so-called mother as if he

knows she is Christian. In fact, he only accepts to be fed by a wet nurse who is Muslim and, surprisingly, his birth mother. When he is around seven or eight years old, he prefers to spend time with his wet nurse only and listen to stories told by her at his bedtime instead of attending lectures given by a priest tutoring both himself and his sister Irene. Besides, the young Battal symbolically takes all Muslims' revenge by degrading the priest to a laughable object. During one of the lectures that the priest is giving, Battal and Irene attach a donkey drawing onto the priest's back. This happens not because he instinctively understands that the wet nurse is his mother, but because he hates priests as in one scene, he says: "Do not leave me wet-nurse (*süt nine*), I do not want to see the dirty face of the priest. One day when I grow up, I will cut the heads of all priests" (20:16-20:56).⁶⁹³ These lines support the essentialist idea that Turkishness and Muslimness never change, and even little children are aware of who they are since their identities are in their blood. This could be why the filmmaker did not feel the need to provide Battal's Christian name. Complementing this, at one point, the young Battal says to Irene, "I have had a strange feeling inside since my childhood. I am disturbed by these clothes, this palace, even the knighthood rank." (25:36-25:48).⁶⁹⁴ Unsurprisingly, Battal can never get along with his emperor father. For him, his father is evil because he kills unarmed people. Therefore, Battal even helps Turkish prisoners of war escape, and these prisoners think that "the boy is as strong as Turks, his heart is as clean as Muslim, but he looks like a Byzantine" (33:40-33:48).⁶⁹⁵ Here, with his clean heart and strength, Battal creates question marks in the minds of Turks. Besides, to look from the other side of the medallion, what Battal does is never perceived as a betrayal because the betrayal is done for the sake of the Turkish-Muslim side. In fact, this is why before learning who his birth father is, he has already decided to leave Byzantium to join Muslim raiders, again because it is already in his blood.

The blood, family lineage, and fatherhood all emerge as very significant concepts defining the background of Battal's fight because they are considered as the guarantors and guardians of Turkish-Muslim continuity in Anatolia. In line with this, all Battal(s) adore their fathers and are therefore very respectful to them. In *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*, The Byzantine Emperor Antuan says, continuing his lineage is more important than being a father. As a result, he does not have a sincere relationship either with his wife or his children. Besides, nobody feels sympathetic to him since he is evil and wants to forcefully control his

⁶⁹³ "Bırakma beni süt nine, o papazın pis suratını görmek istemiyorum ben. Bir gün büyüyünce bütün papazların kafasını keseceğim."

⁶⁹⁴ "Nedense Irene çocukluğumdan beri acayip bir his var içimde. Bu elbiseler, bu saray, hatta şövalyelik rütbesi bile rahatsız ediyor beni."

⁶⁹⁵ "Bileği Türk kadar kuvvetli, yüreği Müslüman kadar temiz; ama görüntüsü Bizanslı"

people and family. Not only Karagülle, his real son replaced by Battal and has already been raised as a Muslim, but even Irene, who falls in love with Battal and changes her religion after finding out that she is not Karagülle's biological sister, leaves their emperor father at the end. If nation is a family, that disjointed Byzantine family could also be considered a representation of a nation or religion that is doomed to extinction.

It is also interesting that child Battal(s) want to be more potent than their fathers. This, on the one hand, fits well into the warlike and competitive nature of the boys, which may be beneficial in war. On the other hand, it is not acceptable for the oppressive political atmosphere of the early 1970s. The younger generation had no longer been considered the proper inheritors of the regime's values due to the radicalized social movements, particularly student movements in the late 1960s. In this context, the ideal son or the ideal warrior-to-be should not be a competitor of his father who could even defeat his father one day, but a follower who follows his father's footsteps in all his ideals and actions. Here the father may also be interpreted as the protector of authority and state order. An answer to the rebellious, disobedient generation comes from the wife of Battal and his son's mother in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), who says to her little son that if he raises his hand against his father, his hand will turn into stone. The mother draws limits to his son and corrects him. The boy, then, gets the message and says: "May God turn me into stone if I do this" (02:50-03:19). He swears that he will not rebel against authority. This is the ideal answer from an ideal warrior-to-be in 1970s Turkey.

Despite this emphasis on ancestors and ancestral connections, there comes a moment when the authority must be left in the younger generation's hands. It happens in *Battal Gazi Destanı* when the Byzantines murder Hüseyin Ghazi and the little Battal swears to take his father's revenge and become the new commander-in-chief of Malatya. Thus, the little Battal, is now on the ideal path of inheriting the bliss of his ancestor. In paving this path, his duty is to fulfill the gap left by Hüseyin Ghazi, not to follow an independent and selfish direction. And he gets this duty with his father's death, not by challenging him. In *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*) too, the father gives him the duty and defines it. When Battal leaves the village to help Ahmet Turani, his warrior friend, he says, "we cannot leave your mother without any man" (07:50-08:02),⁶⁹⁶ when the boy wants to join him in the battle. Here, the son is assigned by his father to the household in his absence. Thus, only when the father is absent, the son could take charge to protect the household established by the father. An analogy of this could be that the younger generation can say when the state allows them to do. Hence,

⁶⁹⁶ "Annemi erkeksiz bırakamayız."

the youth can voice their ideas within limits defined by the father state and can never diverge from the path inherited from their ancestors. In this regard, both Battal in the first film and his son in the second are suitable role models for the young audience. Through these boys, the new generation is advised to be loyal and obedient warriors complying with the oppressive political atmosphere of the early 1970s that followed a decade of flowering social movements.

In this setting, Battal's personal life, which portrays him as a settled man with a family, is never independent of the political context. His cause and the Muslims' cause always unite. For example, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, although Battal sets the road to take his father's revenge, he also fights in the Muslims' name against Christians of the Amorion Castle of Byzantium who do not pay their taxes under their new ruler. In *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, the same enemy imprisons Battal's son and burns his wife. Similarly, Battal's son Seyid Battal Ghazi fights to save his imprisoned father and avenge his sister raped by the enemy in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*. The last movie, *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*, tells the story of Seyid Battal Ghazi's son, who runs after the enemy because the enemy has attacked his village and murdered his heroic father that has tried to distract the enemy's attention by tying himself onto the gate of the town. Thus, Battal(s) always have a personal cause to fight. Indeed, this does not mean that he only pursues his selfish interest; in fact, what happens to Battal and his family is like a microcosm of what happens to the Muslim community of Malatya. As a result, his personal matter becomes a greater political one originating from a general background of the Muslim-Christian conflict. Thus, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, while stabbing the castle commander with seventeen sword strikes complying with the number of sword-strikes that killed his father, Battal says that these strikes are also for the people of Malatya terrorized by Byzantium. This kind of a setting in which personal and political fuse into each other strengthens the aggressiveness of anti-Christian political discourse. Then, the film's message against Christians becomes much easier to be understood by the early 1970s audience, whose chances of empathy probably increased.

Thus, the background of Battal Ghazi stories is mainly formed by Muslim-Christian fights over the domination of Anatolia in the 8th-9th centuries. Several Christian rulers in different scenes raise the goals of the enemy. For example, Andrea Alfonso, the commander of Amorion Castle in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, declares that he will not put his swordback into its case until no Muslim is left beheaded in Anatolia (04:38-04:44).⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁷ Antuan says: "Anadolu'da kellesi kesilmemiş tek bir Müslüman kalmayıncaya kadar bu kılıç kınına girmeyecek."

As a follow up to that, in the last film *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*), the Byzantine emperor Antuan says he declares himself “the only and unchangeable ruler of the Great Christian state which will last forever in Anatolia before the God and my subjects” (06:05-06:18).⁶⁹⁸ In this context, Battal emerges as a Muslim warrior that protects Anatolia from Christianization. At that point, the side of Battal’s mission that is hugely significant for Turkish nationalist discourse comes up: his attachment to a particular territory, Anatolia. This reproduces the myth of ethnic continuity on the national territory by presenting Anatolia as the land of Turkish-Muslims. From that perspective, Battal contributes to de-Christianization and so Islamification and Turkification of Anatolia.

5.5.1.3. *The Homeland:*

To put it clearly, Battal’s Anatolia is Malatya, which has been ruled by Muslims since the 12th century, first by the Seljukids and later by the Ottomans. Despite its ancient Armenian past,⁶⁹⁹ Malatya does not have a Christian connotation in the contemporary national memory. Therefore, probably nothing about a specific demographic heterogeneity in Malatya pops up in the audience’s minds. Nevertheless, Battal’s Malatya is basically a traditional Turkish village with simple wooden houses, beautiful gardens, and green fields. In *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), the audience also sees green and plain feast areas where feasts are going on. The feasts are represented as crowded, vivid, and joyful events adorned with folk music played by folk instruments such as drums and zurna besides wrestling contests, all enjoyed by the local people, some of which are having rest in triangular nomadic tents. As complementary to their surroundings, these people are all dressed up in traditional Turkish folk clothes meaning that men have shalwar, women have headscarves, colorful loose dresses made up of unique fabrics with easily identifiable Turkish motifs. The scenes are all very bright and very Turkish for those who are familiar with Turkish culture. All these representations lead to an emotional attachment of the audience to their territory by reinforcing the myth of homeland. The message here is that this beautiful land belongs to these lovely people, so the people are as beautiful as the homeland. Besides, Battal also goes to the frontiers to train his son or be trained

⁶⁹⁸ “Ben Antuan. Tanrının ve kullarımın önünde kendimi Anadolu topraklarının üzerinde sonsuzluğa kadar sürecek Büyük Hristiyan Devleti’nin tek ve değişmez hakimi olarak ilan ediyorum.”

⁶⁹⁹ Laurent Dissard, “Between Exposure and Erasure: The Armenian Heritage of Arapgir in Present-Day Eastern Turkey,” *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, No. 8, (2016): 25-49. A blog post of Armenian Community Council of the United Kingdom explains the Armenian past of Malatya: “Malatya: Post-Armenian life in modern Turkey’s once Armenian city” <http://www.accc.org.uk/malatya-post-armenian-life-in-modern-turkeys-once-armenian-city/>

by his father, Hüseyin Ghazi. These training areas are shown as endless empty fields without any trees or houses. The audience, however, knows that they are somewhat close to the enemy lands because, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Hüseyin Ghazi is murdered when he left the training area to circumvent the tomb of Süleyman Ghazi in the hands of the enemies. Hüseyin Ghazi is buried in that kind of a place, too, far away from the settlement area. It could be a sign of the vastness of the space belonging to Muslims. And in that narrative, Hüseyin Ghazi sheds his blood for this land. Then, the little Battal prays and swears near his father's grave that he will grow up to take his revenge. The grave is next to a very young and thin tree, and Battal says his father's blood will make this tree grow up. This whole representation emphasizes the sacredness of the national territory and reproduces the myth of homeland.

5.5.1.4. The Enemy's Land:

The land of the enemy can be divided into two parts: the outside and inside of the Amorion Castle. The castle's outer world is mainly represented as a land of rocks and mountains, contrary to the beautiful green fields of the Muslims. In *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal and the Byzantine warrior Hammer fight through nights and days on an arid and barren land next to some rocks. The only different representation can be found in the scene in which Battal meets Elenora, a Byzantine princess, and his future wife. These two lovers meet where Battal rests with his horse, a secluded place near a beautiful river in the woods. This representation exalts the love between Battal and Elenora and again makes Battal different than other freedom-loving heroes.

Moreover, on his way, the hero visits several *hans* as the other heroes. These are places of excessive food, drink, and sometimes dance and women of the other. In fact, they can be considered as a part of the manly world where men prove their masculinity against their enemies. Therefore, in these places, Battal or other heroes find an opportunity to show their bravery to the enemy because the first encounters with the enemy always take place in *hans*. At this point, what distinguishes Battal from other action/adventure heroes is that he does not sleep with the daughter of the *han* owner or any woman in the *han*. This could be related to his representation as a Muslim hero and the fact that he has been borrowed from a supposedly actual historical figure. Besides, these are also the places where the hero shows his civilized yet strong nature. For example, in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, Battal fights with two ugly and barbarian-looking knights, one very similar to red-haired comic book heroes, because these two have oppressed another Christian to drink wine.

Here, Battal provides the signal that he always protects the oppressed. This makes his cause just.

After the *han*, Battal goes into the Castle, surrounded by giant walls. The story, then, takes place in inner spaces as opposed to ‘our’ land with beautiful green outer spaces. The castle is depicted as made up of stones and marble, therefore cold and dark. It has secret rooms with secret doors in addition to chapels. All these are decorated extravagantly with colorful flags and crosses, in contrast with the modest and wooden Muslim houses. The representation of the people living in that space complements the picture. The Byzantine soldiers are depicted to have clothes with layers of dress with protective shields besides helmets, contrary to the simple-dressed hero who fights only with his bare chest. The emperor or prince usually wears long and quite colorful robes, something only to be worn by females; they put on jewelry, their women have revealing clothes. In this representation, the enemy is pretentious, giving the false message that it is also powerful. The reality, however, is different because it does not fit into the land it inhabits, at this point, where ‘the other’ lives is a walled, limited, and human-made space whereas Muslims live in line with nature surrounded by green fields, forests, rivers, and even animals are given Battal’s friendly relationship, with his horse Aşkar. This justifies even naturalizes the Muslim hence Turkish domination of the territory by attaching Muslims to nature, so making them a natural part of the homeland. It also strengthens the idea that ‘we’ are the natural inhabitants, but the ‘others’ are all artificial while marginalizing the Byzantium presence in Anatolia.

5.5.1.5. The Others:

The ‘unfitting’ enemies harass the land’s natural inhabitants and disrupt both people and the land’s tranquility from time to time. For example, in *Battal Gazi’nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, the colorful and joyful feast area is destroyed; innocent and armless people, including women and children, are all killed in the enemy attack. *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi’s Son)* includes a scene where the enemy destroys the village while looking for Battal’s son and says that they will kill all newborn boys if Battal’s wife does not reveal herself. One of the most aggressive sequences is from *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, in which the imam reciting azan is shot with arrows, a praying man is murdered, a pregnant lady is killed while doing her daily chores. Besides, Seyyid Battal’s sister Senem is tortured and raped, and even crucified. Likewise, *Battal Gazi’nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)* shows that Battal’s wife is first crucified and then burned at the stake like the Muslim slaves working in stone hearths in *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi’s Son)*.

These scenes resemble medieval witchcraft practices and increase the enemy's cruelty with reference to widely known historical facts chosen from Western history. The enemy, then, is merely evil. This evil tortures men and women, imprisons children, kills innocent people without distinguishing, even kills animals, like chickens and roosters in the villages they attack.

The others are so evil that they show no mercy to their own people as well. A Byzantine princess named Isabella, having rest nearby a lake, is almost raped by the knights of Byzantium before Battal saves her in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, Again in the same film, the pregnant Irene is stripped, raped, and then wounded with a knife by Alfonso, a virgin Byzantine prince who wants to gain some experience before he gets married. Irene's husband, Jack, is at the same time tied to a tree, beaten and tortured, and forced to watch his wife. In a similar vein, a Christian woman is raped by Byzantine soldiers in a *han* in *Battal Gazi'nin Ođlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*. In *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Irene, a nun who is at the same time a friend of Elenora, is whipped by Alyon, Elenora's betrothed, and the commander when he finds out about Elenora's amorous relationship with Battal. He then calls his soldiers and says: "Take this bitch. I am giving her virginity that she devoted to God to the Byzantine army...Take her and enjoy...Then, throw her dirty flesh into a pit" (31:10).⁷⁰⁰ All these too violent and disturbing scenes work well to justify the cause of Battal's fight. His fight, then, becomes much more legitimate even for the Christian world because he is also needed to save some Christians. Besides, from another perspective, the violent acts of the 'other' give Battal more reasons to respond in a much cruel way making his reaction as bloody as that of others. In all four films, he kills people, sometimes cuts their hands, beheads some, and sometimes puts their heads on spikes to show others as he does in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. The viewers see the cruelty of the other and the cruelty of 'us' without any censorship. The difference of the other's brutality is that it also includes cruelty directed against women, such as rape. The Turkish-Muslim side never does this. This could be a sign of the civilized nature of 'us' as opposed to the barbarian 'others.' Nevertheless, everything is presented in a vivid way. There are bloody heads, pumping blood out of dead bodies, and cut arms everywhere. These scenes work to increase hatred towards the 'others.' As a result, symbolic revenge is taken from Christians or maybe the Greeks involving atrocities against the Turkish Cypriot population.

⁷⁰⁰ "Alın bu kahpeyi. Tanrıya adadıđı mukaddes bekaretini Bizans ordusuna hediye ediyorum. Alın keyfinizi yapın. Pis leşini bir çukura atarsınız."

Furthermore, there is also an internal ‘other’ betraying the Muslim side. It is Abdulselam, the commander-in-chief of Malatya after Hüseyin Gazi’s death and before Battal becomes the new commander in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. He is an ambitious soldier and a rival of Battal. At some point, he is bribed by Byzantine and starts spying. He also uses a black servant, probably, a slave, named Akabe, to carry a message to Byzantium about Battal’s decision to set the road to Byzantium for taking the head of the emperor Leon. This slave, however, gets caught by Battal and Ahmet Turani on his way to Byzantine. When Battal says that he will put his head on spikes due to his betrayal, Akabe gets frightened very much and dies (40:07-40:17). The natural death of the messenger is quite interesting because he is punished without Battal doing anything. However, Battal could have killed him easily. The messenger is a weak person used by Abdulselam, the internal other, and this kind of direction in the story would not be complying with Battal’s charisma, which relies on him being the protector of the oppressed as he also saves some Christians in need of help. Nevertheless, this scene adds to Battal’s charisma, power, and even masculinity by depicting his frightening impact on an Arab internal other. This fits into the myth of national superiority again. Consequently, Abdulselam fails to reach Byzantium, and in the closing scene, Battal says that he is going to Malatya back to punish Abdulselam. Here, the point is that this character is never mentioned again except for the first film *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. This could be related to the change in the director and scenarists, indeed not an ideological choice. To open a parenthesis, Atıf Yılmaz directed the first, and he wrote the screenplay with Ayşe Şasa. However, the other films have Natuk Baytan as the director, accompanied by Duygu Sağıroğlu as the screenplay writer. From the second group's eyes, Abdulselam’s story might complicate the narrative and create multi-layers rather than direct messages that could be easily swallowed like a pill. Therefore, filmmakers could have just omitted the character to give more direct messages to the audience.

5.5.1.6. Tactics to Defeat the Enemy:

Encountering the enemies, both external and internal, is never a big deal for Battal. As a natural member of a natural habitat, which is Anatolia, Battal enters the enemy Castle, which is, in fact, non-natural to the land, quite easily. Like the other nationalist action/adventure heroes, he uses his intelligence to infiltrate the Castle by disguising himself as somebody else. The audience first sees this in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, where he takes the clothes of Akabe and paints his face in black to look like him to enter the palace. In another scene, he becomes a priest to save his warrior friend Ahmet Turani from prison and says he has

come to convert Ahmet Turani to Christianity. In *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, Battal kills a Byzantine prince on his way, puts on his clothes, and makes the commander of the Amorian Castle believe that he is the prince. With this disguising tactic, as shown in various films, Battal shows that even one of 'us' could defeat the enemy because the other is inferior in terms of intelligence. This is undoubtedly a step towards imposing the national superiority of Turks.

Besides, there are instances in which Battal raises the inferiority of the enemy by using derogatory words. Here, what strikes attention is the use of sexist words that feminize hence belittle the enemy by referring to its lack of morality and power. The most used word, in this context, is "perfidious" or "whorish." For instance, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, when Battal first sees Elenora, he immediately falls in love with her. However, after learning that she is the emperor Leon's daughter, he says, "perfidious Byzantium, perplexed us on our very first day."⁷⁰¹ For Battal, the Byzantine soldiers, and the bureaucrats, are all "dogs" (*kancık*) because they are all immoral and cowardly. He also says that Alyon, the commander of the castle, must be the commander of the whores, and the prostitutes in the Temple of Forty Virgins must replace his soldiers. This could be a reference to the impotence of the enemy. Again, in the same film, when Battal is killing the emperor Leon, Battal says, "You killed my father whorishly, I will kill you manly,"⁷⁰² (1:15:21-1:15:21) by referring to his father's murder by three Byzantine soldiers. All these words feminize or even emasculate the enemy and reduce it to the level of immoral women to symbolically defeat or control it. Apart from this, Battal's father, Hüseyin Gazi, calls Byzantine commanders, who attack him near the Tomb of Süleyman Gazi, as "ignorant" and "stupid" in *Battal Gazi Destanı. (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*⁷⁰³ Battal refers to Byzantine as "Byzantine crow" to make a parody of the double-headed eagle associated with the Byzantine Empire in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*. In another instance, he calls the commander Alyon "oxen head" to refer to his nickname "mad head" to belittle him. The Byzantines are also "godless pigs" (*imansız domuzlar*), "black pig" (*kara domuz*), and "mad dog" (*kuduz kopek*) in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*. All these bewildering names are for symbolic tactics to defeat the enemy by belittling it.

⁷⁰¹ "Kahpe Bizans ilk günden doğru yolu şaşırttı bize."

⁷⁰² Babamı kahpece öldürdün, ben seni erkekçe öldüreceğim".

⁷⁰³ "Cahille budalanın ne yapacağı belli olmaz"

5.5.1.7. More about the Mission of the Warrior:

Battal's youth is one of his features enabling him to defeat the 'other' despite his inexperience, similar to representations of the Central Asian hero Karaođlan between 1965-1971. For Testor, the Commander of Amorion Castle in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal, is just a "hairless Turcoman." One of the knights of Maria in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, who is a nun organizing an attack on Muslims, the fate of Anatolia is, now, in the hands of young and inexperienced Battal, who is an easy prey. What the enemies miss out here is the inner power of the warrior. Apart from his intelligence and the ability to defeat the enemy by using humiliating names, Battal has extraordinary fighting skills that he inherited from his ancestors. At this point, a small parenthesis is needed to reveal his features. When he is belittled by another Byzantine commander with the words: "ignoble Turcoman" (*sefil Türkmen*), he mocks him, saying, "you, the noble knight." Combining this with that emphasis on his youth creates Battal's image as a loyal, intelligent, young warrior with an ordinary look and a 'common man' before all. In this context, the physical strength of that 'common man' comes from his inside; whether his Turkishness or Muslimness. So that he can shoot four arrows simultaneously, attack the enemy with a sword even if he has been shot and in blood, and bend the prison's iron bars to provide a passage to his friend Ahmet Turani in prison, and can endure torture. In fact, it is not easy to kill Battal or any man of his family. Like Tarkan of *Tarkan*, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, although his bones have all been broken, he can gain his strength fully in a short period thanks to some medicine, exercise, and the confidence of people around on him. All these are made possible thanks to Battal's inner power, not merely because of his muscles or basically superhero body. In fact, this is the kind of warrior portrayed in all Turkish nationalist action/adventure films: an ordinary man with ordinary physical features who can turn out to be a hero capable of defeating even an army thanks to his national/religious identity.

Battal, basically, has a natural charisma and a talent that is born out of his identity. He uses this to fight for the Muslim community and fight for the legitimate ruler of the other. This manifests that Battal is constantly and naturally a champion of justice. This also leads to a very significant scene for understanding what mission is assigned to Battal and the Turkish-Muslim youth in general. In *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal collaborates with Hilarion, the dethroned Emperor of Byzantium, against Leon. Since he is dethroned, Hilarion is supposed to be the legitimate ruler, and as always, the hero helps legitimate rulers. Here, why Hilarion is more legitimate than Leon is not clearly provided to the audience, but it is stated that during Hilarion's time, Byzantium has been paying taxes to Malatya, but everything has

changed after Leon replaced him. Therefore, Hilarion is a friend of Malatya because he has accepted the Muslims' supremacy in Anatolia. At the end of the film, Battal kills Leon on top of the city's walls, Leon falls off, and his crown falls from his head, too. Then, in the middle of people, including Hilarion's men, clapping their hands with joy and happiness, Ahmet Turani gives Leon's crown to Battal, and Battal puts it on the head of Hilarion. Right at this time, Battal advises Hilarion "not to diverge from the path of God and truth, and be not your people's *efendi* (master), but their servant" (1:17:27-1:17:35).⁷⁰⁴ Thus, hierarchically, Battal is presented as superior to the Byzantium emperor, and so he can give him advice. This, of course, makes Ömer Beg, the beg of Malatya, is way more powerful than the emperor. Besides, Battal, in a way, brings order to Byzantium by giving the crown to its rightful owner. This representation reproduces the myths of national superiority and national mission, emphasizing Turkish-Muslims' being bringing order and civilization to the lands they conquer.

5.5.1.8. *Good Others and Conversions:*

As the loyal warrior and symbol of civilization bringer Turkish-Muslim, Battal also brings Islam to the 'good' people of 'other.' Hence, the most significant religious symbol used in the Battal series is the Shahadah, which is very much heard in any of the films in this part. This is happening because there are many scenes with some Christians converting to Islam. For instance, in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikami (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, a group of prisoners who have been forced to work in stone hearths as slaves escape from Byzantine prisons together with Battal under his leadership. Then, Battal says, "this is the fight of Muslims, my Christian brothers; you can go wherever you want now" (37:04-37:11).⁷⁰⁵ The Christians, however, tell that they feel indebted to Battal, and they are ready to die if Battal asks them to do.⁷⁰⁶ Then, they decide to convert to Islam and stay with Battal. A striking example comes from *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, in which a priest changes his religion to Islam after witnessing Prince Alfonso's rape and murder of Irene, a Christian peasant lady. Here, both examples underlie the cruelty of the 'other.' Therefore, the 'good' Christians convert not only because of Battal's leadership and charisma but also because of the oppression they encounter. As a loyal warrior, Battal just introduces them to Islam and shows them the correct path; then, they choose this path voluntarily, not by force. This narrative, too, plays a role in legitimizing Battal's cause again.

⁷⁰⁴ "Hak yolundan, doğruluk yolundan ayrılma. Halkına efendi değil, kulluk et"

⁷⁰⁵ "Bu kavga Müslümanların kavgası. Artık siz Hristiyan arkadaşlar istedikleri yere gidebilirler."

⁷⁰⁶ "Sana borçluyuz Battal Gazi, öl de ölel,m."

The oppression of Byzantium on its own people is also represented in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*). In the film, Maria, a Byzantine nun who also has some political goals and is responsible for recruiting knights to fight against Muslims, wants an increase in taxes taken by Byzantium from both Muslims and Christians. How Christians, too, are oppressed by taxes is shown in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), in which a poor and old Christian woodsman complains Byzantine soldiers because they take the property of those who could give them and the lives of those who could not.⁷⁰⁷ In the film, the older man meets Battal by chance, and when a group of knights comes to his house to search for Battal, he hides him. Then the knights say they would kill him if they do not need woods to burn Muslims the next day. When the knights attempt to rape the man's granddaughter, Battal reveals himself and saves him and the girl. As this sequence shows, another Christian, who rejects a toast proposal for the Christian domination in Anatolia in a *han*, says that these soldiers are just spilling the blood of innocent people. This kind of violence and cruelty never exists in any of the holy books as Angela, the niece of Elenora and betrothed of a Byzantine commander named Andrea, states after she sees Battal and some others as being tortured in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*). Amid this, some of the oppressed others decide to help Battal. For example, a group of Christians heals the blinded Battal by making some medicine. Likewise, he gains his strength with all his bones broken, thanks to the support of Christians in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*). These people are all 'good' others who have chosen the Turkish-Muslim superiority over the oppression by Byzantium and hence sometimes convert to Islam or at least collaborate with Battal. In this picture, these rulers hate Battal not only because he is a Muslim commander-in-chief but also because he played a significant role in many Christians' conversions into Islam in Anatolia, as it is said in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*).

One of the most significant converted good others is Hammer, a Byzantine warrior and sword master in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*). He is the only warrior that Hüseyin Ghazi could not defeat. His strength and talent are appreciated very much by Hüseyin Ghazi, who even wants his son Cafer, who has not taken the name Battal yet, to be trained by him, although Tebabil, the current trainer of Cafer, thinks that "nothing good will come from an infidel." Hammer also appreciates Cafer when he first encounters him and sees all the moves he inherited from his father. They fight each other when Cafer is on his way to Byzantium to take revenge for his father's murder. After Cafer defeats Byzantine soldiers, Hammer decides

⁷⁰⁷ "Verebilenden malını veremeyenden canını alıyor"

to fight with him to save the honor of Byzantium. Once they start to fight and recognize each other, their relationship changes from two enemies into a master and apprentice relationship. In connection to that, they respect each other and live the joy of having a perfect fight, as the audience could see from their happy and smiling faces most of the time. They fight for two days, and none becomes successful over the other. On the night of the second day, in the Temple of the Forty Virgins, they decide to wrestle to find out who is more powerful than the other. Before they start, they make a deal that the one who is defeated will change his religion. Then, as Cafer wins the fight, Hammer changes his faith as he recites the Shahadah, repeating after Cafer with religious music in the background. This whole conversion process finishes with Cafer renaming Hammer as Ahmet Turani, and later, Hammer renaming Cafer as Battal, which means big, brave, and heroic.⁷⁰⁸ Here it should also be noted that the wrestling between Hammer and Battal and then Hammer's conversion is probably one of the most memorable homoerotic scenes of Yeşilçam. To describe the scene, there are Cafer and Hammer in the bedroom of Faustina, with naked upper bodies. They wrestle for quite some time while Faustina is watching them half-naked. Although the two men are trying to beat each other, the audience can see the joy and little smiles on their faces. This exalts war and fighting by showing how beautiful and joyful it is. It seems that as they continue to wrestle, they somehow feel the joy more. Then, once Cafer overcomes Hammer, he gives Hammer his hand to help him get up from the ground. In this scene, Hammer's eyes are very much attracted by Cafer's talents and fixed on Cafer's eyes. They are like two lovers staring into each other's eyes. After Hammer becomes Muslim, the two men change each other's names and embrace each other. Watching all these, the viewer even forgets why Hammer is changing his religion because he seems to be doing this naturally and voluntarily.

Thus, the myth of national superiority is reproduced through the hierarchical relationship between Cafer -the future Battal- and Hammer, too. Cafer is superior because he is the one initiating the fight, defeating the enemy, and making the enemy convert to Islam. Cafer, now, is Battal and so a real man who has beaten another man that his father failed to defeat. He is, now, the actual national hero whose power comes from what he inherited from his ancestors and what he extracted from his inner identity justifying the myths of ethnic continuity and the warrior nation. In this setting, Hammer is inferior. This is even represented in the closing scene of *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, in which Hammer makes a joke about how he has become the stable boy of Battal while riding Battal's carriage with Elenora, although

⁷⁰⁸ Battal means "büyük, cesur, kahraman" in Turkish.

Battal leads the way on horseback in front of them. Given all these, Hammer is never a simple warrior. He is brave yet the most heroic warrior of Byzantium. He is already befitting into the Turkish-Muslim side, as the audience could understand from his bravery and fairness, reflecting on his sympathy towards Muslims and his appreciation of both Hüseyin Ghazi and Cafer/Battal. He also states his compassion towards Battal when he introduces him to Faustina, the most famous prostitute of Anatolia at the Temple of Forty Virgins: “rival in war, companion in the meal and the son of the famous commander-in-chief Hüseyin Ghazi”⁷⁰⁹ (34:50). Then, the two men toast and drink to all fights they could not defeat each other, their friendship and brotherhood.⁷¹⁰ Given this communication between the two men, Hammer’s conversion is not really a surprise. In fact, he does not even live a transitory period of adaptation. He automatically accepts his new identity and even repeats in several instances that he is no longer Hammer but Ahmet Turani.

In another scene, when Battal is wounded and worried because Byzantium tortured him, he loses some of his power. Hammer motivates him by saying that giving up is never a part of ‘our morals (*töre*).’⁷¹¹ His fast and almost natural adaptation that makes the audience forget that he has been Byzantine is peculiar if the essentialist idea of nationhood dominating nationalist mythmaking is considered. The same is true for Karagülle, the son of the Byzantine emperor who is raised as a Muslim because he was switched with the little Battal, in *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi’s Son)*. Although he finds out who he really is, Karagülle insists on defining himself as Turkish and Muslim.

The instances mentioned above, together with other cases of conversion, which all happen in an entirely smooth way, could be related to an attempt to explain the demographic heterogeneity of the homeland in addition to the national mission of bringing peace and order to Anatolia. Besides, the converted ones are never portrayed differently from other Turks or Muslims in terms of how they look and behave. However, this situation should not lead to an illusion of equality between those born as Muslims and those who convert afterwards. What exists, instead, is a subtle hierarchy where a pure Turkish-Muslim always leads the converted ones, as in the cases of Hammer or Karagülle, both of which choose to continue their lives as being secondary heroes to Battal.

The conversions all stand for symbols of the conquest of the ‘other.’ Another significant good other, whose conversion could be interpreted as the conquest of Byzantium, Elenora, the

⁷⁰⁹ “Cenkte rakibim, sofrada yoldaşım ünlü serdar Hüseyin Gazi’nin oğlu Cafer.”

⁷¹⁰ “Yenişemediğimiz cenklere, dostluğa, kardeşliğe”

⁷¹¹ “Yenilmek töremizde yok bizim”

Byzantine princess. As she falls in love with Battal in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, she gives up everything for her love, prefers “being a slave of Battal than being the queen of Byzantium” (1:04:13).⁷¹² As Hammer and Karagülle do, Elenora, too, accepts the superiority of Battal or, basically, his identity. Then, she converts and takes the name Ayşe, a ubiquitous and significant Muslim name from Prophet Muhammad's wives. Again, this is an indication of Byzantine's inferiority, nurturing the myth of national superiority. Like other converts, Elenora is different from evil Byzantines, such as her father. She is fearless so that she can meet with Battal secretly. When she first sees Battal, she even hides and protects him from Byzantine guards looking for him. She even attacks a Byzantine soldier with a dagger planning to kill Battal. Although she falls in love with the enemy of her father, she is still loyal to the emperor, whom she believes to be her father, therefore courageous enough to protect him from a sword strike. She is also brave enough to find Battal in the torture chamber to save him, so impressed by her character Battal calls her “wild beauty of enemy land”⁷¹³ and “the heroic beauty of the whorish Byzantium.”⁷¹⁴ Besides, he cannot believe that an angel like her is the evil Byzantine emperor's daughter.⁷¹⁵ As if she supports Battal's idea, she later finds out that she is the daughter of the dethroned Hilarion, the legitimate emperor of Byzantium. This justifies her bravery and courage besides her love of Battal and Battal's love for her. Besides, Elenora is never presented as a treacherous woman, even for Byzantium. The fact that she falls in love with Battal, the enemy of the Byzantine emperor, is clearly justified by her birth father being different. In fact, for the narrative, betrayal is never betrayal if it is good for the Turkish-Muslim side. Besides, in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, Elenora is shown as Ayşe, the converted wife of Battal. In the opening scene, including Battal's training of his son in the garden of their wooden house, Ayşe brings them food as if she is fulfilling the duties of a traditional, obedient, and caring wife and mother.

There are two more good other women. One is the sister of Karagülle, Irene, who is first thought to be the sister of Battal in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (The Son of Battal Ghazi)*. She is a good-hearted young girl. As she learns that she is not the sister of Battal, she falls in love with him, later converts, and takes the name Ayşe. On their wedding night, some Christian knights attack their home while Battal and Irene are praying. She is so heroic, and like Elenora, she also takes a sword into her hand to protect herself from the enemy. There is also beautiful Angela,

⁷¹² “Bizans'a kraliçe olmaktansa Battal'a köle olmak”

⁷¹³ “Düşman beldenin yaban güzeli”.

⁷¹⁴ “Kahpe Bizans'ın yiğit güzeli”.

⁷¹⁵ “O iblisten senin gibi bir melek nasıl türemiş”

Elenora's cousin, who physically resembles her. She criticizes her fiancé, Andrea, the Byzantine commander, due to his violent behavior against prisoners. She says no holy book includes that kind of violence. These women are all good others and, therefore, different than other Byzantine women who are primarily prostitutes, as in the case of Faustina in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. Another one is Maria, a Byzantine nun also called Saint Maria of *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*. She is shown to be the mastermind of all the evil Christian plans to conquer Anatolia. She is the one who recruits knights to create an army against Battal.

Nevertheless, all the women of other work to feminize and belittle the enemy. In fact, this picture could even be enriched with Prince Alfonso; the Byzantine prince portrayed stereotypically feminine in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*. Moreover, his representation as still a virgin despite his relatively mature age is taken as a sign of not only his impotence but also the impotence of Byzantium in general. All these take the masculinity and so the power of Byzantium away, giving the message that it is not hard to defeat the enemy.

5.5.1.9. Turkish Women:

Turkish women appear less in Battal Ghazi films compared to the other women. They are only the peasants in Battal's village, including Battal's sister Senem in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, converted wife Elenora in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, and Irene in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*. Therefore, the Turkish woman is usually either the mother of the Turkish hero or his child's mother. In *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, Battal's daughter or sister, Senem, whom the others have raped, commits suicide due to her shame. The absence of females in the Turkish-Muslim side underlines the Turkish-Muslim side's masculinity and power against the enemy.

5.5.2. Main Points:

The four films analyzed in this section reproduce the national warrior myth by reinforcing the Islamic ghazi image through Battal Ghazi character. Having a predominantly Muslim identity, Battal portrays a conservative, traditional, and brave warrior who participates in a Muslim-Christian fight over Anatolia. Unlike Central Asian warriors or the others represented between 1965-1971, Battal's Turkishness comes after his Muslimness. This indicates a discursive balance shift in favor of Muslimness, which can be considered the product of increasing aggressive nationalism in the country. Therefore, in an atmosphere formed by the

bitter effects of the oil crisis, economic inequalities, successive coalition governments, and the Cyprus issue, the national warrior has turned into a more traditional, conservative, religious, and violent one. In fact, this trend had already started in the late 1960s, but now in the 1970s, it reached a peak. Consequently, the myth of the national warrior was reproduced through this conservative family man, a loyal warrior of Islam, and a truly masculine man. In this regard, enemies are so violent that they even rape a pregnant Christian woman and Battal's sister Senem in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*. Here the rape of women also symbolizes the occupation of the homeland since a woman's body is the territory hence a life source for future generations. Therefore, whatever happens to those women is interpreted as happening to the homeland. Besides, since the nation is a family, the loss of family members means the destruction of the nation. The warrior Battal's reaction is unsurprisingly violent and bloody as the audience is shown all kinds of details regarding how Battal kills the others. This kind of open and transparent depiction of violence, besides the idea that 'the other is raping our women', never existed in nationalist action/adventure films of 1965-1971. This is a clear signal of the rise of aggressive and militant nationalism that was nurtured by a reference to Muslim-Christian animosity, especially through naming Byzantine as 'perfidious' or 'whorish'.

Furthermore, Battal does not fight as a nationalist man on his own. Unlike other nationalist action/adventure heroes presented between 1965-1971, he has a title, *serdar*, the commander-in-chief. In fact, although the warriors like him never like titles and never fulfill their duties for material gains, Battal's family is depicted as a family of *serdars*. Apart from reproducing the myth of the warrior nation, this representation makes Battal type of warriors much more legitimate, equipped, powerful, and significant than they were before at the discursive level. By extension, this could be interpreted as the domestication of the warrior, who is not a free rider anymore but fulfills his mission as a part of the state hierarchy. This depiction fits well into the post-March 12 political atmosphere in which social movements were severely suppressed.

5.6. Ottoman Warriors in the 1970s:

5.6.1. The Warrior Fighting for Osman Ghazi:

Most of the nationalist action/adventure films made in the 1970s depict the reigns of either Mehmet II or Suleiman the Magnificent. A rare example, in this regard, is *Kadıhan* (dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1976), which takes place in 1288, the time Osman Ghazi fights against internal and external enemies before he establishes the Ottoman Empire. Although the choice

of the Osman Ghazi period might be related to commercial reasons and the filmmakers' efforts to make something different than other films of the same genre, it completes the national narrative that starts with Orhan Ghazi in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saved the Fatherland)* and, in a way, trains the audience about whom to define as the national leader. The voice-over in the closing sequence also succeeds this in a didactic manner. Accompanying the shootings of Ertuğrul Ghazi commemorations in Söğüt, the voice-over states: "History is full of civilizations of states that were established by heroic acts of great commanders from Mete Khan to Attila, from Alp Arslan to Osman Beg, from Mehmet the Conqueror to Atatürk. The Turkish nation will continue to adorn history written on golden pages by its ancestors with the same care" (01:17:43-01:17:54).⁷¹⁶ These words insert different leaders into a linear continuum, with Mete Khan being the first and Atatürk being the last. This is a reproduction of the myth of the Turkish nation's antiquity that takes it back to Mete Khan's time and, at the same time, the myth of ancestral continuity by connecting all these leaders.

5.6.1.1. The Warrior and His Mission:

In this vein, Kadihan is the raider of Osman Ghazi. He is brave and obedient same as other warriors. What makes him different is that no information is provided about his family or at least his father. Given the film's general simplistic and cheap plot, the filmmakers probably did not want to spend time deepening both Kadihan and other characters. However, this might have increased his ordinariness by making him much more anonymous, he is like any other Turkish nationalist man. Therefore, he has no personal cause to fight and is thus a purely idealist warrior. It even reflects on how he introduces himself to some bandits attacking an old merchant. He says: "I am Kadihan, the inheritor of the Commander Attila near the Danube, Bilge Khan in Central Asia, Alp Arslan in Rumelia, and the faithful friend of Kayı tribe leader Osman Ghazi. All these lands from the Danube to the Chinese Wall are my responsibility" (09:03-09:16).⁷¹⁷ Here, Kadihan emphasizes national continuity in addition to the mythical vision of the Turkish national homeland as stretching from the Danube to Central Asia. The voice-over in the final sequence confirms this geography by saying that Osman Ghazi and his raiders created a magnificent state by galloping from Baghdad to Vienna, from the Caucasus to Tunisia, Crimea, and Yemen.

⁷¹⁶ "Tarih Mete Han'dan Attila'ya Alp Arslan'dan Osman Bey'e Fatih'ten Atatürk'e kadar büyük kumandanların kahramanlıklarıyla kurdukları devletlerin uygarlıklarıyla doludur. Türk milleti atalarının altın sayfalarına yazdığı tarihi aynı ihtimamla süslemeye devam edecektir."

⁷¹⁷ Tuna boyunda Attila başbuğun, Orta Asya'da Bilge Kağan'ın, Rumeli'de Alp Arslan'ın mirasçısı, Kayı beyi Osman Gazi'nin candaşı Kadihanım. Tuna boyundan Çin Seddi'ne kadar bütün bu topraklar benden sorulur."

5.6.1.2. *The Ruler:*

Despite the reference to vast geography, *Kadıhan*, however, focuses on the power struggle between Osman Ghazi and Byzantine landlords of İnegöl and İznik and the Germiyan principality in Anatolia. Therefore, it basically takes place in the Western part of Anatolia. Osman Ghazi is represented as a brave and dynamic ruler fitting into Girardet's Alexander category and reproducing the ghazi myth that centers on warriors fighting in the name of Islam. What also strikes attention is Osman Ghazi's outfit. Contrary to his athletic moves in a one-to-one fight, he wears a bulky outfit composed of royal authority symbols: a royal gown and turban (*kaftan* and *kavuk*). This makes him visually distinguishable from other characters. Besides, it could be functional for providing cinematic continuity between Osman Ghazi and other sultans.

The film starts with a scene where the Byzantine enemy attacks a Turkish village, which is depicted like any Turkish village with wooden houses, livestock animals, people dressed in traditional outfits. The familiarity in the representation helps the Turkish audience to feel attached to the film quickly. To discover the enemy, Osman Ghazi assigns his "faithful friend" (*candaş*) Kadıhan. Here, the close relationship between the ruler and warrior is revealed, and in fact, Kadıhan receives commands directly from Osman Ghazi. This could also reflect anti-bureaucratic political culture. In connection to that, Kadıhan is never after material gains such as money or titles. When the landlord of İznik offers him some money because he saved his betrothed Beatrice from the hands of bandits, he says he does not accept it, and it is the Turkish custom (*töre*) to help those who are in need. Although not rich in terms of narrative materials and symbols, this scene contributes to the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors. The voice-over also repeats this at the end: "Turkish raiders galloped from Baghdad to Vienna, from the Caucasus to Tunisia, Crimea, Yemen... They carried civilization, culture, and justice to all places they went" (1:16:03-1:16:22).⁷¹⁸

5.6.1.3. *The Others:*

The Byzantine enemies that Turks encountered are depicted as evils. At the beginning of *Kadıhan*, they attack innocent villagers, and while stabbing, they laugh mercilessly. Unlike the brave and dynamic Osman Ghazi, the Byzantine landlord of İznik is portrayed as an effeminate, powerless, fat, and cowardly man. As a sign of his impotence, his betrothed Beatrice sleeps with Kadıhan. Here, Kadıhan is depicted as a womanizer who attracts the women of other. In another scene, he also sleeps with a prostitute named Faustina. This woman is also the

⁷¹⁸ "Bağdat'tan Viyana'ya Kafkaslar'dan Tunus'a Kırım'dan Yemen'e at koşurdular Türk akıncıları. Gittikleri her yere uygarlık, kültür ve adalet götürdüler."

good other helping Kadıhan and his friends in infiltrating the enemy castle. The power of Kadıhan over women of the other serves to belittle and symbolically defeat the enemy. At this point, a significant other is the beg of Germiyan principality, who competes with Osman Ghazi and aims to establish the Great Germiyan State. His portrayal resembles that of Osman Ghazi in terms of his bravery. In this context, there is nothing different in his physical appearance, unlike the way İznik landlord is depicted, probably because he is the leader of an Anatolian principality. Here, given that Kadıhan was one of the last examples of nationalist action/adventure films in the 1970s, it unexpectedly does not have a predominantly Islamic tone. This might also be related to the presence of Germiyan beg, who is, in fact, Turkish and Muslim as the enemy. Nevertheless, this beg is still a betrayer because he collaborates with the Byzantine landlords and promises them some territorial gains when establishing his own state.

5.6.1.4. Turkish Women:

There are two significant Turkish women characters. The first one is Bal Hatun, the daughter of Sheikh Edebali, a highly influential Sheikh who advises Osman Ghazi about his state's policies. She is a traditional and proper Turkish girl, as could be understood from her traditional clothes. The only information provided about her is that she is the future wife of Osman Ghazi. In collaboration with the landlords, the Germiyan beg kidnaps and later imprisons her in Yarhisar Castle in modern-day Bursa. Kadıhan and his other friends disguise themselves as wine sellers and enter the Castle to save her. Here, they use their intelligence to counterbalance the numeric superiority of the enemy. Among those friends of Kadıhan, one strikes attention: a young and slim black boy. This boy is brave and has military skills, but never as good as any of the other raiders. Kadıhan continuously mocks him by using several derogatory words such as “black Arab,” “the one with ruined color,” “coon,” and “thief.”⁷¹⁹ This representation is like the representation of the black messenger Akabe in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, and it is obviously a problematic and humiliating one. Later, when he refuses to swim in a pool at the enemy Castle, Kadıhan finds out this black boy is Neslihan, the daughter of Akçakoca, who himself is a warrior. She is the second significant Turkish woman character and confirms the myth of the warrior nation through her father, displaying that fighting is a part of her genetics, and therefore her essence. Besides, her portrayal conveys the idea that Turkish women were brave and could fight and contribute to defeating the enemy.

⁷¹⁹ “Kara Arap,” “rengibozuk,” “marsık,” and “hırsız.”

Thus, although being a rather simplistic account, *Kadıhan* prepares the ground for establishing the Ottoman state. Then, what is expected from the audience is summarized by the voice-over at the end, saying that through Ertuğrul Ghazi commemorations, thousands of Turks from all over Anatolia presents their debts of gratitude to those heroes, these diligent and self-sacrificing warriors. According to the voice-over, nothing is enough to show appreciation to these warriors who established a great empire out of nothing (1:17:55-1:18:03).⁷²⁰ Then, the final sequence includes close shots of the busts of all the leaders mentioned above. Finally, the film ends with a shooting of the statue of Atatürk. This representation builds continuity between all leaders and states by reproducing the myth of ancestral continuity. Therefore, the film, in a way, summarizes all the nationalist arguments of political myths at once.

5.6.2. *The Warrior Fighting for Mehmet II in the 1970s:*

The warrior who fights for Mehmet II is Kara Murat, whose name means Black Murat. In naming this hero, the creator probably wanted to refer to the hair color of the hero, which is black and stereotypically associated with Turkishness as opposed to ‘Western’ blondness as in the case of Karaoğlan. This might have made the warrior considered an ordinary man by its viewers, so it is not different from most people. There are seven films of Kara Murat, and Natak Baytan directed all of them. The films are *Kara Murat Fatih’in Fedaisi* (*Fatih’s Guard*, 1972), *Kara Murat Fatih’in Fermanı* (*Fatih’s Edict*, 1973), *Kara Murat Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*, 1974), *Kara Murat Kara Şövalye’ye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*, 1975), *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar*, 1976), *Kara Murat Denizler Hakimi* (*Master of Seas*, 1977), and *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*, 1978). In all these films, the leading actor is Cüneyt Arkın, who also played Malkoçoğlu. The use of the same actor might have increased the audience’s familiarity with the national warrior represented here.

In terms of the narrative, there is no linear continuity between the subject matters and the dates the films were shot. Each film presents a separate adventure with back-and-forths in the reign of Mehmet II. For example, in the third film of the series, *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), Murat serves Prince Mehmet at the beginning of 1451 when the prince has just

⁷²⁰ “Büyük bir imparatorluğu kurmak için canlarını dişine takip insanüstü gayret ve fedakarlıkla bizleri bugüne kavuşturan atalarımızın anılarına hürmeten yurdun dörtbir yanından gelen binlerce Türk onlara minnet borçlarını karınca kararınca ödemek için şenlik yaparlar. Anadolu’nun yöresel milli kıyafetleriyle halk oyunları düzenlenir. Onlara ne yapılırsa azdır. Çünkü onlar hiç yoktan koskoca bir imparatorluk kurmuşlar. Doğudan batıya, kuzeyden güneye egemenlik altında olanları hiç incitmemiş ve bu devleti 600 yıl sürdürülmüştür tarih.”

been appointed as the Sultan by the dying Sultan Murat II. In the second film, *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), he participates the conquest of İstanbul in 1453 and then follows the dethroned Byzantine royalty in Lesbos. The other films depict the post-1453 period. Therefore, the stories mainly concentrate on the period following 1453. Given this focus, they are basically stories manifesting the power of Turks. In this vein, Kara Murat is the loyal warrior of either the legitimate ruler or ruler-to-be. His loyalty to the Sultan complies with the depiction of the other heroes, which reproduces the myth of the warrior nation by showing the warrior as a role model for the Turkish 'common man.'

5.6.2.1. The Warrior and Religion:

Fitting well into the rising Islamic discourse of the 1970s, the Islamic component of Kara Murat's world is significant in the reproduction of nationalist political myths. So, in *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), he describes himself to a couple of other Janissaries who mistakenly think him as Byzantinian due to his informal or simple, civilian clothes with these words: "I am Turkish and Muslim, and my name is Kara Murat." This short scene indicates that unlike previous heroes of 1965-1971, such as Malkoçoğlu, Kara Murat's Muslimness is as significant as his Turkishness. Therefore, he fights not only in the name of Turkishness but also Islam. This makes him a convenient fit for the 1970s' rise of aggressive nationalism and further production of political myths with predominantly religious tones.

As a reflection of increasing religious tones, these films include too many scenes depicting praying people dissimilar to the films of the pre-1965 period. In fact, Kara Murat films are generous enough to show scenes with prays, azans, and imams, which had been taboo issues for previous films. In this vein, they resemble Battal Ghazi films. For example, in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), Murat's mother is attacked by Christian enemies while she is praying. Likewise, the Turkish communities in Lesbos in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) and Morea in *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*) are attacked by certain Christians again while praying in a mosque. One of the most striking Islamic references is found in the opening sequence of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), which starts with showing the Fatih Mosque in İstanbul, built by Mehmet II. This scene is accompanied by a voiceover relating a hadith that says one day İstanbul will be conquered by Muslims commanded by the Prophet Muhammed. The scene is followed by a script in both Arabic and Latin found in the Mosque garden, which says: "How happy is the commander who conquers

the city of Constantine and how happy for his soldiers” (0:04-0:20).⁷²¹ In line with this Islamic justification of the conquest, there is a significant praying scene in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, where Murat prays in Hagia Sophia standing next to Sultan Mehmet II on the first Friday Pray after the conquest of İstanbul. Murat is, in fact, the first and the only national warrior represented as praying. The fact that this is happening in Hagia Sophia carries both political and religious significance. This Byzantine Orthodox Church had been turned into a mosque by Mehmet II. However, in the early Republican era, it was turned into a museum to promote secularism and eliminate the Ottoman past's influence.⁷²² Therefore, the building symbolizes not only religious but also political domination.

It must also be noted that in all Kara Murat films in general, only one sequence that lasts for seven minutes is devoted to the conquest of İstanbul. The scenes in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)* include only very brief references to the event's cornerstones, the last being the Prayer at Hagia Sophia. In this context, the first quick reference is made to the Ottoman army's march to İstanbul accompanied by the army band (*mehter*) and later the attack on the walls. Then, there is a close shot to the final moments of Ulubatlı Hasan, a legendary Janissary who is believed to have been killed while planting the Ottoman flag on Istanbul's walls. Here, he is depicted as being accompanied by Murat and reciting the Shahadah. The following scene shows Mehmet II's entrance to the city. As in the case of the Prayer in Hagia Sophia, which is the last scene of that sequence, Murat walks next to Mehmet II, holding the reins of his horse with another soldier. Ulema and other Janissaries follow them. In fact, where Murat stands in both scenes indicates his place in the state hierarchy as the Janissary commander. It also shows his closeness to the Sultan. Although there are ulema and other soldiers in both scenes, Murat is always the closest warrior and even the closest person to the Sultan. For example, in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, Murat protects Mehmet II when he is on a date with the Byzantine Princess Irene. In *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*, Prince Mehmet is also accompanied by Murat. Similarly, in the opening scene of *Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, Murat is depicted as participating in the war as he stands next to Mehmet II and his horse while he is marching. In *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*, he also participates in Divan assemblies, where the Sultan speaks to his viziers in person. There, he even criticizes what

⁷²¹ “İstanbul elbette Müslümanlar tarafından fethedilecektir. Ne mutlu o kumandana ki Konstantinin şehrini fethedecektir ve ne mutlu onun erlerine.”

⁷²² Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Life of An Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium in Hagia Sophia from the age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195-226.

Mehmet II is talking about. All these manifest that the national warrior is inserted into a state structure similar to Battal Ghazi, another warrior of the 1970s.

To put it clearly, the warriors of the 1970s mainly act in a state hierarchy; therefore, they are different from those of 1965-1971, who are free raiders rallying to their missions from a particular place, which is not necessarily the center of the state and always far from the bureaucratic hierarchy. Murat, in this regard, is a Janissary commander who always accompanies the Sultan. The fact that when Murat is in the court, he is always in his Janissary costumes with a red coat, white headgear, and his sword can also be taken as his uniform, which is a sign of his official status. This costume also makes him easily distinguishable from the other viziers, which might be interpreted as the army commander being more important than the other viziers.

5.6.2.2. The Warrior's 'Becoming:'

Murat's 'becoming' is depicted in relation to his insertion into the state structure. In *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, he is shown as being trained in Janissary hearth when he is around ten years old as a man-to-be or a soldier-to-be confirming the myth of the warrior nation. Therefore, from an early age, Murat is a part of the state and, in fact, protected by the powerful state. This, however, does not mean that he is forcibly taken under the control of the state. In fact, he is the one asking the Sultan to join Janissaries after his brother is killed violently by Vlad the Impaler before his eyes. When Murat tells what happened to the Sultan in a very mature and self-confident way, the Sultan offers him some money in return. Murat, however, says that he has nothing to do with money, and instead, he wants to be a raider to be able to fight side by side with Mehmet II under the Turkish flag. Then the next scene shows little Murat's training with swords in the Janissary hearth next to the walls of İstanbul. Murat grows up as he fights and finally gets ready to battle with the enemy and avenge his brother. In fact, he is already a part of the warrior nation, and now with proper training, his real essence is extracted.

Like other nationalist action/adventure warriors, Murat's personal cause is always united with the greater national cause. The enemy first harms somebody from Murat's family. For example, at the beginning of *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, Murat's older brother, another raider, is beheaded by the guardians of Vlad, the Impaler. In *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*, Murat's father Ömer Beg, a heroic raider, is killed because he has cut the arm of Prince Carlos. Then, Prince Carlos also kidnaps Murat's twin brother Mehmet. Later, Mehmet is converted to Christianity; his name is changed to Mark

and he is appointed as the Christian army commander that aims to murder Turks in the Balkans. Similarly, in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar*), Murat's brother, Turhan, is kidnapped and hypnotized by Sheikh Gaffar. In all these examples, Murat decides to take revenge for his brother or father or save him while at the same time fulfilling his other duties given by the Sultan. At this point, his family might represent the nation, and the filmmakers' message might be that what happened to Murat's family could also happen to any family. Hence, the whole Turkish nation is under threat.

Interestingly, the films offer a relatively minor representation of Murat's father than other fathers in other nationalist action/adventure films. According to this only representation, which is available in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), Murat's father Ömer Beg is a heroic raider. This man is killed by the Byzantines when Murat is a small child around the age of five. Murat, then, is raised with the idea that he would get revenge for his father one day. Except for this reference, which reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, there is no mention of Murat's father in any film. The reason for that could be Murat's insertion into the state structure when he was a child. This means he has been trained by the state for being a Janissary at Janissary hearths; later, he is appointed as Janissary commander. In other words, his resource provider and protector is no longer a father figure, but the state. In this context, the state is the Father State, the family is the nation, and the father is the land. Therefore, the warriors like Murat are all soldiers of the Father State.

With many family members being different in each film, one can consider the ambiguity in Murat's life story despite the false cinematic continuity created through the presence of Cüneyt Arkin as Murat in all films. Of course, this could be a commercial choice, and the filmmakers might have shot the films without thinking about the future films of the same series. However, it is interesting that they had seen no problem in these inconsistencies in terms of family members. This point, therefore, leads to a somewhat interesting nationalist narrative that the films could be telling the stories of different Murats. This means, although the films seem to narrate the same warrior played by the same actor, there might have been different Kara Murats. This fits into the period of the 1970s, which took warriors under state control. The message here could be that warriors are common men, and any Turkish man could be a nationalist warrior and then be protected by the Father State if he is loyal enough.

5.6.2.3. The Ruler:

Like other warriors of nationalist action/adventure films, Murat fights for the legitimate ruler. Mehmet II is appointed to the throne by his father, Murat II in *Ölüm Emri* (*Death*

Command). The fact that his father has approved him makes Mehmet II a legitimate heir to the throne. In fact, compared to other historical action/adventure films, the Kara Murat series has the most prolonged scenes portraying the Sultan. In these scenes, Mehmet II is depicted as an Alexander type of leader who is young, dynamic, and firm most of the time. He sometimes gives orders, discusses his agenda with the viziers and Murat, and waits for his loyal warrior's arrival in his palace. There are also memorable scenes in which Mehmet II marches on his horse and leads his army. Therefore, he is shown both in his court and in open green fields getting ready to fight. There, he is usually accompanied by the Ottoman military march (*mehter*). He is also brave; therefore, he could easily challenge the Byzantine emperor, who asks him to stop building the Rumelia Fortress if he wants to marry his daughter Irene in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*). Mehmet II's answer manifests how brave he is: "We are the son of Sultan Murat Han and have decided to realize the dreams of our ancestors. I will get both Constantinople and your daughter. While my soldiers are having Friday prayer in Hagia Sophia, your daughter will be my wife."⁷²³ With these sentences, Mehmet II first reproduces the myth of national unity by talking about how his aims and those of his ancestors are connected. Second, he underlines his masculinity hence military power.

Furthermore, Mehmet II's military successes are also continuously stated by a voiceover. In the closing scene of *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), which tells the story of Mehmet II's accession to the throne after eliminating his rival Prince Orhan, the voice-over ushers his successes: "A new sun is rising in the dark horizons of the Middle Age. The young emperor is going to Adrianople to change the course of history.... He is the sacred ancestor of heroic Mehments, who created that immortal Mehmetçik legend. He is the conqueror who honored history with magnificent conquests. He will attack Byzantine with his blessed soldiers, destroy an ancient empire of a thousand years, and give beautiful İstanbul to the Turks as a present. The unrivaled emperor Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror will be leading his army, gaining victories after victories, and the whole world will bow down before the power of Turk" (1:12:03-1:13:04).⁷²⁴ In these lines about Mehmet II's heroism, the formulation of the ideal national leader is provided. He is young, new, successful, and sacred, as opposed to the decadent

⁷²³ "Biz Sultan Murat Han oğlu Mehmet Han'ız. Dedelerimizin hayalini gerçekleştirmek kararındayız. Hem Konstantinopolis'i alacağım hem de kızını. Askerlerim Ayasofya'da Cuma namazı kılarken kızın da zevcem olacaktır."

⁷²⁴ "Orta çağın karanlık ufuklarından yeni bir güneş doğuyor. Genç hükümdar tarihin akışını değiştirmek üzere Edirne'ye gidiyor...O, ölümsüz Mehmetçik efsanesini yaratan kahraman Mehmetlerin kutsal atasıdır. Muhteşem fütühatıyla tarihe şeref veren fatihtir. Kutlu askerleriyle Bizans'a saldıracak bin yıllık köhne imparatorluğu yıkacak güzel İstanbul'u Türklere hediye edecektir. Eşsiz hükümdar Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han ordusunun başında zaferden zafere koşacak, Türk'ün gücü karşısında bütün dünya eğilecektir."

and outdated Byzantium of the dark ages. Mehmet II is also taken as the ancestor of Turkish soldiers, who are affectionally called *Mehmetçik* (Little Mehmet). Here, the military capabilities that make him Alexander-like are emphasized. Besides, Mehmet II is connected with modern-day soldiers through a reproduction of the myth of ancestral continuity. What also strikes attention is that Mehmet II is taken as a Turkish leader hence the representative or the embodiment of the Turkish nation. This representation firmly establishes a continuity with the past and present. The same remarks also exist in the opening scene of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), which is about the post-1453 period: “With God’s mercy and the Prophet’s favor, İstanbul has been conquered and has become the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the heart of Turkish nation. This sacred heart will never stop and will perpetually beat with a sacred excitement. A thousand-year-old obsolete Byzantine Empire has been destroyed; the Middle Age has ended; the Ottoman Empire has started to shine like the Sun at the beginning of a new age. Nobody can enchain wind. Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror has been a hurricane, a storm, a tornado. He is blowing from horizons to horizons, running from victory to victory. While this great leader (*başbuğ*) is leading his army, waters are giving him a way; lowlands are erased, mountains are bowing down and kissing his horse’s shoes. No enemy army could stand before this magnificent stream; kingdoms are destroyed; thrones are turning over. States were falling apart before the Conqueror’s power; empires were collapsing. The whole world was bowing down before the Turkish sword. Turks were rewriting history with golden letters by turning it upside down” (02:08-03:40).⁷²⁵ Here again, the myth of the Turkish nation’s superiority is reproduced. As the Alexander type of leader, Mehmet II is associated with “newness” in contrast to the decadent Byzantium. Without any question, he is taken as Turkish hence called “*başbuğ*,” which means chieftain of Turkish tribes. This also makes him a warrior-leader. In this context, the nation is taken to be the Turkish nation, and the Ottoman Empire is the state's name. Although there comes a strong emphasis on Ottoman history, this formulation also fits into the Turkish History Thesis, which takes the Turkish Republic as the continuation of the Ottoman Empire’s ascendancy period.

⁷²⁵ “Allah’ın inayeti ve hazreti peygamberin yardımlarıyla, İstanbul fethedilmiş, Osmanlı imparatorluğunun başkenti ve Türk milletinin kalbi olmuştu. Bu mübarek kalp hiçbir zaman durmayacak ve ebediyete kadar kutsal bir heyecanlar çarpacaktır. Bin yıllık köhne Bizans imparatorluğu yıkılmış, orta çağ kapanmış, Osmanlı imparatorluğu yeni çağın başında bir güneş gibi ihtişamla parlamaya başlamıştı. Rüzgara zincir vurulmaz. Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han bir fırtına bir bora bir kasırgaydı. Ufuklardan ufuklara esiyor, zaferlerden zaferlere koşuyordu. Yüce başbuğ Türk ordularının başında yürürken sular ona yol veriyor, ovalar önünde siliniyor, dağlar eğilip atının nallarını öpüyordu. Bu muhteşem akış karşısında hiçbir düşman ordusu dayanamıyor, krallıklar yıkılarak tahtlar devriliyordu. Fatih’in kudreti karşısında devletler çöküyor, imparatorluklar dağılıp parçalanıyordu. Bütün dünya Türk kılıcına boyun eğiyordu. Türkler Avrupa haritasını altüst ederek tarihi yeniden, altın harflerle yazıyorlardı.”

5.6.2.4. *The Homeland:*

Mehmet II's success is also displayed in an animated map shown in the introductory scene of *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*. This map manifests the Ottoman Empire centered on a significant portion of Anatolia and the Balkans surrounded by the remaining part of the Balkans and Anatolia, besides a small amount of the Middle East, Crimea, and Cyprus, all painted in different colors. This is interesting because, according to the map, contrary to many Central Asian warriors or the other warriors of the 1965-1971 period, the Ottoman Empire hence the Turkish nation, rule over a limited area instead of limitless and vast territories. This shrinkage of boundaries at the imaginary level could indicate Turkey's inward-looking nationalism as a reaction to its isolation in the international area. The map also includes an animated arrow showing the conquests of Mehmet II. The first arrow goes from the Balkans to İstanbul and then shows İstanbul in flames. Later, İstanbul turns into the color of the Ottoman Empire because it has been conquered. Then, another arrow goes to the Italian Duchy of Athens from İstanbul, followed by other arrows to the Kingdom of Serbia, Despotate of the Morea, Empire of Trebizond, Wallachia, Bosnia, Karamanids, and the Crimean Khanate. Each time the arrow arrives in one of these places, the color becomes yellow to indicate its conquest by the Ottoman Empire. Besides, some other scenes in which the Ottoman army marches are inserted in between two conquests. Both the arrows and the army move very quickly, conveying the message that the Ottoman army never stopped and continuously conquered new places.

The arrows also show the areas in which Murat rides through on his horse. In this vein, his starting point is never somewhere far from the place where the Sultan is. So, it depends on where Mehmet II is; therefore, sometimes, he starts from the capital. In *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*, Murat sets the road from Manisa, the central town of Saruhan sanjak, which had been the training ground for princes hence where Mehmet's court is, to Byzantium, then comes to Manisa again, and the final destination is Adrianople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire before the conquest of İstanbul. This tour is at the same time as the tour of Mehmet II as he becomes the Sultan and leaves Manisa for Adrianople at the end of the same film. In *Denizler Hakimi*, Murat is on the island of Chios, ruled by Prince Nicola, who cooperates with some corsairs. *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)* takes place in Morea, whereas, in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, Murat is in Lesbos against the Byzantines who left İstanbul after its conquest by the Ottomans. In addition to those islands, Wallachia is also a significant destination for Murat. The only eastward expedition of Murat is directed to the Mushar Castle in the Kharput region controlled by Sheikh Gaffar in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*. In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, the Byzantine attacks

Pınarköy, Murat's hometown located in Çatalca of Rumelia, besides other villages in the vicinity such as Atalan, Subaşı, Oklalı, and İhsaniye. Therefore, except for the islands and Wallachia, all these places are within the borders of contemporary Turkey. In fact, the audience was probably familiar with the islands because of history, but they might be interested in the islands also because of the surge of the Cyprus issue in the 1970s, which might have led audiences in comparing these islands with Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriots with the other Turkish communities living in other islands in the films. The films also served to justify the Turkish community's historical presence in these islands, which the Greeks currently own. Besides, the emphasis on Çatalca villages in Thrace in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, the series's first film, might be reviving the trauma of the Balkan lands' loss. All these could indicate a shift in the boundaries of the national homeland. Therefore, the national homeland myth is reproduced not through a limitless understanding of the homeland that dominated the nationalist action/adventure movies of 1965-1971; but instead through a mental shrinkage that reduced the homeland almost to the borders of contemporary Turkey.

In this regard, the representation of these places is worth mentioning to understand the reproduction of the national homeland myth. Murat always starts from the center. Depending on the period, this is either Manisa, where prince Mehmet lives, Adrianople, the capital before the conquest of İstanbul or İstanbul itself. Regardless of where Murat is, the center, as the court of Mehmet II, is depicted as a palace with Turkish/Ottoman blue and white tiles on walls and interior gardens. In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, before going to his mission, he visits his mother living in Pınarköy. This village is represented with wooden or mudbrick houses as quiet and colorless, which is a sign of modesty. In parallel to that, Murat's mother is portrayed as a humble lady with a typical traditional outfit, including a traditional headscarf and loose dress. The village is all peaceful; there are also children around, all dressed in traditional baggy trousers and turbans, are shown as playing games, some ladies, again with traditional loose robes and headscarves, do their laundry near a river talking about someone's wedding. In fact, both the village and its inhabitants are familiar to any Turkish viewer hence used in other films of the same series. For example, in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*, Murat's father, Ömer Beg, visits his wife and twin sons in a village after completing a mission. The village's representation is like Pınarköy only with the addition of livestock animals around. His wife and sons are in their traditional dresses, and in one scene, Ömer Beg is shown playing games with his sons next to a beautiful green river. The Turks of Chios in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)* also live in almost the same village without any remarkable difference. Lastly, in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, the Turks of Chios work

on the land, fetch water from the river showing their connection with the homeland. These familiar and typical surroundings, however, are disrupted with the arrival of enemies. So, when Murat visits his village second time in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, he finds his mother killed by the Byzantine in front of her home. Here, the village's typicality conveys that what happens to Murat's village and mother can happen to yours. His father in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)* is killed, too. Later, both parents are buried in the middle of a wasteland under a tree. In these burying scenes, we see Murat praying; the adult Murat prays for the mother, and the little Murat prays for the father. Thus, from then on, the land becomes the home of not only the living ones but also the deceased ancestors. Besides, national 'home,' in these examples, is represented through a rural place. This is, of course, not surprising given the fact that the films represent the 15th century. Still, it is interesting that this representation is meaningful, especially for those who started to leave their villages in the late 1950s for urban centers such as İstanbul. So, the national homeland myth's central tenet emphasizes that the village is Murat's homeland, and the dying peasants are the sacrificing nation who dies for the homeland.

5.6.2.5. The Enemy's Land:

Following the dramatic attacks on homeland/home and nation/family, Murat is given his mission and sets the road. For him, "One heart, one hero is enough" (19:43),⁷²⁶ as he says in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*. Murat rides his horse very fast, mostly alone but sometimes with a few other raiders whom he leads. No matter what, he is always at the forefront like the other loner heroes of the post-1965 period. On his way, he passes through wastelands, green fields, muddy rivers, and the sea in nice long shots. There is always a dessert as he approaches the enemy lands. This could be an indication of the harshness of his mission. Within this context, a dangerous raid is the one that he gallops to save Prince Mehmet II from being killed by a Byzantine Princess named Olympia, a collaborator of Mehmet II's rival, Prince Orhan, in *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*. In one scene, Murat and his raider friend Sinan beg cross a muddy river on their horses while struggling with the enemy soldiers, who pour a kind of oil onto the water and burn it. There are also cases in which Murat passes through the sea. Here the peculiarity is that although the Ottoman Empire was an empire by the sea, the sea is never incorporated into the part of the story that takes place in Ottoman lands. Instead, it is shown in relation to the enemy lands. That is to say; the sea becomes a part of the narrative only when

⁷²⁶ "Bir yürek, bir yiğit yeter"

the national warrior is about to arrive at the lands controlled by the enemy or even when he encounters the enemy. A convenient example is Murat's sea fare to Lesbos in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)* to fight with the Byzantine royalty who ran away after the conquest of İstanbul. He and his raider friend Mihal sail with a small boat giving the message about the closeness of Lesbos to Anatolia. They look at Lesbos and a castle there from a certain distance with a serious expression. In fact, these scenes include elaborate shots that always show the land in the sailing character's background. Therefore, the men are never depicted sailing in the open sea but are always connected to the land. So, Turkish warriors are never men of the sea, but men of the land and the sea is primarily the place of others, and these others are very close. A similar example is *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*, in which Murat goes to Morea to find out about the corrupted governor who cooperates with another pasha against Mehmet II. This time, Murat passes across the sea alone by ship, and the sea takes Murat to the land of the 'other.' In *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, some corsairs protected by the Prince of Chios attack the sailing Ottoman admiral navy commanded by the admiral Yunus Pasha. Murat sets the road by boat to save Yunus Pasha, who is kept hostage in enemy lands. Meanwhile, the corsairs attack the Turkish village in Chios and bury some Turkish villagers, including an older woman, up to their necks in the sand. The sea waves smash into the faces of those people when Murat rides his horse on the seashore to save them. This is the film's most memorable scene that depicts the enemy's cruelty, in addition to the peculiar relationship between the Turkish nation and the sea. Based on these scenes, it could be argued that the myth of the national homeland is reproduced mostly through a land-based discourse in which the sea is linked to being peripheral, out-of-control, or being owned by the other.

As Murat is about to arrive at the enemy's land, he visits *hans* or *meyhanes*, where he can prove his prowess through a rehearsal and flare of the main encounter. These are masculine places where men eat and drink lavishly. In this vein, *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)* includes a remarkable *han* scene revealing the pirates' barbaric and uncivilized attitudes under the control of the Prince of Chios. They eat and drink a lot, and one of them brings a bear and tries to fight with it, while the others all laugh loudly. In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)* in Lesbos, Murat and Mihal go to an open-air *han* where some travelers and the people of 'other' eat, drink, and have fun. There Murat saves one of the daughters of the dethroned Byzantine emperor from the hands of some Greek bandits naming themselves the Kopena brothers. According to the narrative, although there are many people there, nobody interferes with the bandits. Then this woman wants help, and Murat then shows his military skills and defeats the enemy through some acrobatic moves. Later in the same place, Murat also fights with a mighty

Byzantine fighter named Kabasakal sent by the other emperor's other daughter. During the fight, Murat overcomes the enemy not only with his fighting skills but also with his intellect. For example, since he quickly pulls his legs from the table he put, Kabasakal stabs a plate full of food on the table, and as he does this, the food flies and lands on his head. Murat watches this with a cynical smile on his face. The other people around also laugh loudly at Kabasakal's situation. As this example reveals, the *han* scenes always provide a convenient opportunity for Murat to show his abilities in addition to his masculine power to belittle the enemy. In this context, Barba Yanni's *meyhane* in *Ölümlük Emri (Death Command)* is also a significant place where two sides encounter. There, Murat uses all kinds of materials around him to reduce the enemy to a derogatory status. For example, he throws watermelons at Byzantine soldiers' faces, as he also does in *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*. In fact, Murat can use all kinds of material, including unusual ones, around him. In *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, since he is in an open market, he attacks the enemy by putting cabbages onto the two sharp ends of a pike. A point to note here is that this open market is depicted as a crowded and chaotic place like the representations of Arab marketplaces. This complies with any stereotypical cinematic representation of the east. Nevertheless, thanks to his intellect, Murat fights with Murat can defeat more than ten soldiers at once, as he does in *Ölümlük Emri (Death Command)*. So, he overcomes a disadvantaged situation using his mind and rationality.

Murat infiltrates the enemy palace also by using his intellect. For example, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, he enters the castle by disguising himself as a priest. In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, he deceives the Byzantine Princess Julia by introducing himself as Kosta after saving her from Greek bandits' hands. Then, he can enter the palace thanks to the Princess that asks him to become her guard. Similarly, he, disguising as Kosta Karelli, saves the Byzantine Princess Olympia in *Ölümlük Emri (Death Command)* from two fake bandits, who are initially the raiders accompanying Murat. Due to his bravery, the Princess suggests he to join a palace race to choose a guard. Murat, unsurprisingly, wins the race and becomes a guard in the enemy's court. In *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, the castle becomes the enemy ship, and Murat joins the Spanish corsairs by introducing himself as a Spanish corsair named Antonio. Finally, in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, Murat reveals his real identity but pretends that he has switched sides because he wants to be in the service of the more powerful one. So, he gains the confidence of Gaffar and even becomes the commander of Mustar castle. There is also a case where Murat disguises himself to defeat internal enemies. In *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*, he pretends to be Tuğrul Beg, the new Ottoman governor of Morea. Here, Murat behaves as if he is a simple, incapable, and

impotent person to observe the tactics of corrupted Rum commanders and bureaucrats governing in the name of the Ottoman Empire. In all these examples, he can deceive the enemy thanks to his intellect, which benefits him in defeating the enemy.

The enemy castle is mainly represented as a big building made of stone, sometimes marble, as an indication of its coldness instead of the familiar and warm representation of Turkish villages. The Christian enemy often uses colorful banners with dragons on them. The choice of dragons is probably not something ideological and, in fact, an outcome of the filmmakers' efforts to attach the strangest thing to the enemy in the eyes of the audience. In fact, the palace seems so unfitting into nature because it is urban, unlike the rural lands owned by Turks. In this manner, the villages on the islands are not depicted differently than those of Anatolia. The houses and primary landmarks, such as mosques, are all the same.

Moreover, the enemy palace also includes an arena where slaves are made to fight to the death, prisons in which people are tortured, and mysterious passages and tunnels full of water where the two sides clash. At this point, Sheikh Gaffar's palace in Kharput is presented similarly, except for the additional oriental motifs on his castle's decorations, such as the walls and his throne. In fact, although no information is provided about the nationality of Sheikh Gaffar, one may think of him as Arab due to these oriental motifs. This 'Arabization' is an indication of a prejudiced representation of a ruler in the east. In the castle, Murat sometimes finds a way to enter a Christian princess or queen's bedroom. For example, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), Murat sleeps with the Wallachian queen Lucia in her room as she invites him. In general, these bedrooms are colorful spaces with feminine decoration. His entrance to this room symbolizes the Turks' penetration into the deep corners of the enemy land. Besides, there are churches in the enemy castle, where people pray or sometimes make plans to defeat the Turks. In *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), the church is also a place where Mark, who is originally Murat's twin brother who seems to have forgotten his real identity, is sanctified by a Father. The most memorable scenes showing churches are the ones using Hagia Sophia as a part of the narrative. As mentioned before, in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), Murat, Mehmet II, and some other bureaucrats pray in Hagia Sophia. In that scene, Hagia Sophia serves as a symbol of conquest. The same place is inserted in *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor* as a fighting arena in Peloponnesus in the post-1453 period. Murat defeats Commander Davut in this place. Here, what is striking here is that Davut is the brother of Greek Kani Pasha, who is a devshirme in the court of Mehmet II. Since he wants to become the governor of Morea, he either imprisons or kills the governors appointed by the Ottoman center. Therefore, the scene in Hagia Sophia depicts the encounter of a loyal Turk and a disloyal one.

This scene gains more significance given the Greek origin of Davut, revealing that those converted Greeks may rebel against the Ottoman authority and cause problems. This representation aligns with the essentialist approach to nationhood, which mentions an unchanged essence as an accurate indication of Turkishness. In this context, the Greeks of Anatolia are perceived as traitors, and Byzantium is defeated again in Hagia Sophia as Davut loses the fight.

5.6.2.6. Bureaucrats:

In this regard, what makes Murat's missions different from those of other nationalist action/adventure warriors is his connection with high-ranking bureaucrats. Murat does not only save defenseless Turks oppressed by the enemy, but he also fights to save bureaucrats. For example, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, he searches for Turkish envoys imprisoned by Vlad when they ask him to pay his taxes to the Ottoman Empire. In the same vein, Murat is assigned to save the Rumelia governor (*beylerbeyi*) Karacapaşa from the hands of Prince Carlos, who does not want to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*. Another case is when Murat must save four envoys in the Castle of Mushar to collect taxes in *Kara Murat Seyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*. In *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, Chief Admiral Yunus Pasha's ship is stormed by the Black Corsair controlled by the Prince of Chios. Yunus again has just collected taxes from the islands, then Mehmet II sends Murat to save the Pasha. Therefore, unlike other nationalist action/adventure warriors for whom bureaucrats are always out of the picture, Murat's story revolves around bureaucrats. This narrative indicates a shift in the anti-bureaucratic discourse of nationalist mythmaking. In turn, this is related to the reproduction of the myth of national warrior as inserted into the state structure, confirming the 1970s' oppressive atmosphere as a reaction to various social movements and their subsequent criminalization in the late 1960s.

Murat's state appointment, however, does not lead to an entirely positive discourse about bureaucrats. In Murat's world, bureaucrats are divided into two: the loyal ones and the disloyal ones. He always supports and even saves those who are loyal to the Sultan. The disloyal, however, are the internal others that should be eliminated. The demarcation line between these two is defined based on whether the bureaucrat fulfills the Sultan's commands. At this point, a convenient example depicting this is *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*, in which Murat sets the road to learn about the three Turkish governors who got lost in Morea. Interestingly, Murat does this independently, not because Mehmet II has assigned him, but

because he decides to show the truth to Mehmet II. In the story, Mehmet II blames his grand vizier Mahmut Pasha. Murat, however, warns him, saying that he is sacrificing his grand vizier to palace intrigues and, in fact, instead of Mahmut Pasha, Greek Kani Pasha is responsible for bad governance and corruption in Morea. Then, since Mehmet II does not believe in him, Murat decides to quit his job by handing his sword back. This is a radical move and, in fact, a remnant of the early examples of the nationalist action/adventure films, which tell that since the state is above everything, even the Sultan, who is considered as the embodiment of it, the warrior is also responsible for correcting the Sultan. Mehmet II then imprisons Murat, and later, Mahmut Pasha helps Murat to set free. At that moment, as the most loyal warrior, instead of running away, Murat decides to go to Morea to find out the truth. In Morea, an imam acting as the leader of the Turkish community explains the situation there. According to that imam, bureaucrats exploit the people, so whether that land is a Greek or Turkish province is unclear. In his words: “soldiers became the greatest bandits, judges started to punish the victim leaving the criminal aside, no business can be carried out without paying bribes” (25:28-25:41).⁷²⁷ After a series of adventures, Murat understands that the Greek Mehmet Pasha and his brother, the commander Davut, eliminate appointed governors because these two want Davut to become the king of Morea and later revive the Byzantium Empire. So, basically, these devshirme pashas, who are originally Greek, ruin the state authority by eliminating state-appointed governors. The absence of state authority, then, leads to corruption in political and judicial systems, leading to the exploitation of the people. In other words, challenging the Sultan brings injustice and corruption to society. Here, it is remarkable that neither the system nor the Sultan himself is questioned. More importantly, the loyalty of his subjects to the Sultan is taken as the essential criterion of justice and good governance in the society. After learning about all these, Mehmet II agrees with what Murat, his most loyal warrior, has already told him at the beginning. Then, in his court, he furiously yells at the Greek Pasha: “Come here, you converted dog! We took you from garbage, made you vizier, helped you gain a good fortune that you cannot even dream of, and saved you from death. Is that what you do in return?” (1:21:35-1:22:00).⁷²⁸ These sentences reflect that Mehmet II is the state's embodiment, and the state is the Father State, a provider of all sources. Since the Father State is the resource provider and protector, the subjects are expected to be loyal to the state in any condition. However, despite the protection and grace

⁷²⁷ “Asker en büyük eşkıya kesildi. Yargıçlar tutukluyu bırakıp mağduru cezalandırıyorlar. Rüşvetsiz hiçbir iş görülmez oldu.”

⁷²⁸ “Beru gel dönme kopek...seni çöplükten almış vezir etmiş, rüyanda bile göremeyeceğin bir servete kavuşturup ölümden kurtarmışız. Bu mudur?”

provided to him, although he has been a “converted dog,” hence not a Muslim by birth, the Greek Kani Pasha has betrayed the Father. Then, as if he confirms what Mehmet II says, the disloyal Greek Kani Pasha picks a dagger, and while he is about to stab Mehmet II, the loyal warrior realizes this. Murat very quickly responds and cuts the Pasha’s arm. This can be a kind of symbolic castration of the disloyal ones. After this incident, Mehmet II says: “A Yanni of forty-year does not become Kani” (1:22:32),⁷²⁹ which means that despite their conversion and all the efforts of the Father State, Davut and Kani Pasha are betrayers because they have never forgotten their Greek essence. In fact, the words of Greek Kani Pasha that he put in a letter to Davut confirms this: “We are Muslim from outside, but we are still Christian inside” (1:21:22-1:22-26).⁷³⁰ Here, it should also be noted that Turkishness and Muslimness go hand in hand; therefore, this ‘unforgotten’ essence is both national and religious.

Another example representing both loyal and disloyal bureaucrats is *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*. In the story, although Murat II assigns Mehmet II to the throne and Zağnos Pasha already supports Mehmet II, the other vizier Çandarlı Halil Pasha favors Prince Orhan, who is the son of Murat II’s brother Süleyman Çelebi. Orhan, at this time, is kept by Byzantium Emperor Constantine as a hostage, basically, a potential tool to start strife in the Ottoman lands. With this background, Orhan initially seems to be like Cem Sultan portrayed in *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan*. However, he is very different from Cem in a negative way. Instead of challenging the enemy, Orhan collaborates with Byzantium. Therefore, he is never a fighting man, unfitting to Girardet’s myth of national leader based on Alexander. He indulges in earthly pleasures like entertainment, overeating, making women dance for him, and sleeping with them. He also sleeps with Princess Olympia, the wife of the Emperor. This, however, does not mean that Orhan proves his masculinity and power over the enemy. In fact, it is the outcome of Olympia’s plans to use Orhan to seize the Ottoman throne and become the Empress of the Ottoman Empire. In one scene, when Murat is disguised as Kosta Karelli, he says that he does not want to torture Muslims in front of him. Orhan says that he defines himself as more Byzantinian than Turkish, so Kosta can do whatever he wants. Here, Orhan seems to have forgotten his essence, which is both Turkish and Muslim. Thus, he is never the legitimate heir to the throne because he has not been assigned by the Sultan and does not have the grace of God, ‘kut.’ In this context, both Prince Orhan and Çandarlı are represented as internal others since they are disloyal to the Father State. Therefore, as the loyal warrior, Murat fights to protect the Father State's embodiment, hence the legitimate heir, who is Mehmet II.

⁷²⁹ “Kırk yıllık Yanni olur mu Kani?”

⁷³⁰ “Dışımız Müslümandır ama içimiz yine de Hristiyan kalmıştır”

5.6.2.7. *External Others:*

Besides internal others, Kara Murat has various external enemies. Some are mentioned only very briefly. For example, Magyars are said to be cooperating with Vlad in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, Byzantine in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, and *Ölümlük Emri (Death Command)*. Vlad also says that he can ask help from France, England, and Venice, and in *Ölümlük Emri (Death Command)*, it is also stated that the Byzantine has agreed with Venice. Apart from those, the enemies fight because they do not want to pay taxes imposed by the Ottoman Empire, so they do not bow down to the Ottoman authority. Therefore, they attack defenseless and innocent Turkish people. They storm Turkish villages, kill people, rape Turkish women, burn houses, imprison and torture the rebellious men, and do some work in stone hearths. These scenes usually show everything explicitly, and therefore, the representation is not different from that of other nationalist action/adventure films of the 1965-1970s. What makes Kara Murat's enemies unique is the evil laughter that they have every time they burn a village or kill a person. Vlad the Impaler in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)* or the Black Corsair in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)* loudly laugh as they mention their evil plans or harm people. This representation contributes to their cruelty and may strengthen the viewers' emotional attachment to the national warrior.

Each film has its own remarkable scenes portraying the evilness of the enemy. Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia, depicted in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, among all enemy rulers, is the cruellest. In this context, a significant scene is the one that takes place in a court setting in which Vlad asks one of his soldiers about what the crime of a man, woman, and their daughter is. The victims here are all dressed in traditional Turkish outfits, the woman and the little girl even having headscarves. Vlad's soldier gives a great answer, which is like a nationalism pill to be swallowed by the viewer: "To be Turkish and Muslim" (04:26). Vlad then tells the victims that he will not kill them if they change their religion and nation and kiss a Christian icon, which is a cross. They, however, do not do this; instead, they start to recite the Shahadah. Finally, getting mad at them, Vlad orders his soldier to impale the male victim and take out the female victim's heart. These are all carried out before their little daughter's eyes, who is later taken as a maid by Vlad. In the following scene, Hamza Pasha is impaled, too. Later, Vlad orders the little Murat in a traditional Turkish outfit to cut off his older brother's arm and leg. The older brother approves this to save Murat, and so the younger one cuts while crying at the same time. All these influential instances of cruelty are shown quickly, which is quite shocking for the audience.

Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict), in which Murat fights against Byzantium, also has memorable scenes of cruelty. In this film, the focus is on a Byzantine commander named Nicole. He leads the Byzantine army in attacking Turkish villages in Rumelia, including the hometown of Murat. In one scene, he kills Murat's defenseless and innocent old mother by attacking her back. In another scene, Nicole is in Lesbos where he flees after the conquest of İstanbul. There, he buries some Turks in the sand, shoots arrows at them while at the same time ordering those victims to convert to Christianity. The people, again, refuse to change their religion. As they start to recite the Shahadah, Nicole cuts off their heads. In the third scene, Nicole kills an imam leading the prayer while he and the community are still praying. These are all quite sensitive scenes. Lastly, Nicole is so cruel, and even courageous, that in another Lesbos scene, he kills Irene, the Byzantine Emperor's daughter, because she has fallen in love with Mehmet II. In fact, Mehmet II wants Murat to get revenge on Nicole for Irene as well. At this point, apart from the cruelty of Nicole, reducing the Byzantine enemy into a commander is also significant. In contrast with Nicole, the Byzantine emperor is not an evil man. In fact, even the emperor himself is a victim of Nicole because Nicole only knows where the Byzantine treasure is. Having this piece of information, he plans to overcome both the Byzantine Emperor and the king of Lesbos and finally to become the emperor of Lesbos. This kind of representation of the emperor might be related to a discursive effort to present the emperor as ineffective hence impotent. A similar perspective is available in *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*, where Byzantium is an enemy that aims to use Prince Orhan against Prince Mehmet II. Here, Byzantium Emperor does not come to the fore again, but instead, his wife Olympia is the main focus. This time not the cruelty of the Byzantine, but its intrigues are emphasized. In this context, Princess Olympia plans to deceive not only the Byzantine emperor but also Prince Orhan to become the empress of the Ottoman Empire one day. She even decides to fool Mehmet II with her beauty and presents, and she visits his court to poison him. Here, Byzantine is feminized, meaning that it is reduced to an enemy Princess, and this could again be an attempt to show the emperor as impotent and weak.

In *Kara Murat Kara Şövalye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*, the enemies are rather vague. They are indeed Christians, as understood from their names, visits to church, or sometimes crosses on the clothes of dark knights, but the audience is not provided the states' names. In one scene, Prince Carlos and Mark, the twin brother of Murat, who has converted and does not remember his past anymore, storm Murat's village in Rumelia. After killing some villagers, they go inside Murat's mother's house, strike her while she is praying, and later tie her to the back of a horse and drag her till she is severely injured. This remarkable scene conveys

the message that this Christian enemy could do the same thing to your mothers one day. This easily fits into the political context, given the bitter memories of the Cyprus conflict. Similarly, in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, Murat fights with some rather vague, but apparently Christian, enemies. They are some corsairs, possibly Spanish, as can be understood from their names and protected by the Prince of Chios. They are evils and capable of what the other enemies do to innocent and defenseless people. Before they attack the Turkish admiral navy, the leader Black Corsair says: “If there is anybody who wants to drink Turkish blood, you can quaff it today” (07:03).⁷³¹ These words indicate what they will do in the future. In fact, as they capture the ship, they kill the soldiers there amid screams and the sounds of clashing swords. More remarkable than that, they attack a Turkish village in Chios. Sneaking into the land with daggers in their mouths and swords, they storm the village while azan is being recited. This leads the audience to think that this is not a simple corsair attack but, in fact, an attack on Islam. As in other nationalist action/adventure films mentioned so far, the enemy destroys the quietness and tranquility of that typical Turkish village where people have been going about with their daily chores such as working on the land before their arrival. The Black Corsair laughs loudly in an irritating way as he and his friends burn people’s homes. However, the most remarkable scene is the one in which the corsairs bury some villagers into the sand in the seashore. This scene is not only an indication of the problematic relationship between Turkish national warrior and the sea, as mentioned earlier, but also an expression of the enemy’s cruelty, who can adopt every evil way to destroy Turks hence Muslims from the world. This scene shows the need for a Savior, in fact, an Alexander type of warrior.

The last external other to mention is Sheikh Gaffar, who leads a heretic sect in the Kharput region. In *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, Murat encounters Sheikh Gaffar because Mehmet II plans to extend the empire eastward. Like Hasan-ı Sabbah of Arab lands, the Sheikh has an army of hypnotized people who follow his orders without questioning. These readily sacrifice their lives for the Sheikh because he promises to take them to heaven. In this context, these hypnotized soldiers, manipulated by a religious figure, stand in opposition to loyal warrior Murat, a member of a warrior-nation who is ready to die voluntarily. The drama further increases as Murat’s older brother Turhan also becomes a victim of the Sheikh. Therefore, Murat’s personal cause united with the national cause, and this situation conveys the message that what happened to Turhan could happen to anybody’s brothers, too. Later, Murat finds out that the Sheikh uses “white powder” brought once a month

⁷³¹ “İçinizde Türk kanı içmek isteyen varsa kana kana içsin bu gece.”

by the Chinese to the Sheikh. Here, how filmmakers get the Sheikh and the Chinese together is quite impressive. They probably wanted to choose an enemy from the East and unsurprisingly, the historical enemy, the Chinese, was a suitable option. So, Murat also fights with the Chinese merchants, and there the audience sees Murat's martial arts skills, too. One last point to note is that Gaffar's daughter Zeynep is kidnapped by a bandit named Kurdish Abdo and his friends in one scene. Murat, then, comes to the scene and fights with those Kurdish men, who are depicted very similar to the corsairs of *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)* or the Greek bandits of Lesbos in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*. Hence, they are represented as evil barbarians who speak and laugh loudly. Although they are untidy like the other bandits, their clothes, including loose trousers, jackets, and headgears with Anatolian motifs, are familiar to the audience. Combined with their torture of Zeynep next to a cave on a mountain, this movie could be taken as one of the earliest examples of stereotypical representation of Kurds in Turkish Cinema.

Given these representations, it could be stated that the message about the cruelty and savagery of the external other is given sufficiently. However, from another perspective, the brutality of the Turkish side should not be ignored either. Like any other nationalist action/adventure film, the Kara Murat series includes long fighting scenes. What makes Kara Murat different than the films of the pre-1965 period is the degree of violence. Most scenes are very bloody, with beheaded people and severed limbs. Here it is not only the cruel enemy causing these, but also the Turkish side. A striking example is the final scene of *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, in which Murat kills Vlad and then puts his head on a spike. Then, he carries the head in his hand while riding his horse together with Zeynep and Mihal. What strikes most is the happy smiles on these characters' faces despite the bloody head in the hand of Murat. In another remarkable scene in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, the Byzantine commander Nicole shoots Murat with three arrows all on his chest. Although he is in blood, Murat can still stand and shoots Nicole with three arrows, one for each eye, and the last one for his throat, saying: "This is for my mother, this is for Kabasakal and Mihal, and this is for all Muslims you killed."⁷³² Then, the camera shows Nicole with bloody eyes and throat. Here, through using the same cruel methods adopted by the enemy, Murat takes revenge on behalf of the audience as a loyal Turkish warrior.

⁷³² "Bu anam için, bu Kabasakal ve Mihal için, bu da öldürdüğün tüm Müslümanlar için."

5.6.2.8. *Good Others:*

In his cause, three good others accompany Murat. The first one is Mihal, who is a Serbian victim of Vlad's regime. He says Vlad and the commander Nicole have taken all his property away, leading to his wife and children's death due to hunger and poverty. In *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, since he throws an arrow at Nicole, he is punished by being dragged from behind Nicole's horse. As Murat saves him, he asks whether Murat is Turkish because he looks so brave. This is a clear indication of a national/ethnic/religious hierarchy between Mihal and Murat that reproduces the myth of Turkish national superiority. In fact, he also asks to accompany Murat besides saying: "if you kill Vlad, the whole of Serbia will be your slave" (26:44). In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, Mihal is depicted as a loyal friend of Murat in his raids. Mihal is severely injured at some point, and since he wants to die as a Muslim, he recites the Shahadah. Here it is interesting that Mihal has not converted earlier. This shows that there are some good Christians, and these also support Murat's cause. Besides, to be a friend of Murat, one does not need to change his religion showing how just and tolerant Murat is. In this vein, a similar character is Vlad's hangman Papescu. In *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, when Vlad imprisons Murat, they make him fight with Papescu. While Murat is about to win the fight, Papescu begs him to forgive his life. Murat does this, so he does not kill him. In return, on the day of Murat's execution, Papescu places the knot around Murat's neck loosely, so he saves Murat's life. Later, he helps Murat escape the enemy palace, saying he has learned courage and bravery from Murat.⁷³³ When Murat gets back to the castle together with Mihal, Papescu leads them in secret passages. At one point, he is wounded, and when dying, he says, "Throughout my life, I have lived like a dog; now, I am dying as a human being" (1:14:13).⁷³⁴ Here, it is interesting that in Papescu's eyes, dying when helping to Murat's cause is something that elevates himself. The last similar character is a Byzantine warrior named Kabasakal in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*. In Lesbos, Murat is made to fight with him, and when he is about to kill Kabasakal, very much like Papescu, Kabasakal asks him to forgive his life. Murat, as a just and fair warrior, accepts this. The two meet again, and Kabasakal is ordered to blind Murat with a hot metal piece. Knowing that Murat has saved his life before, Kabasakal only burns the eyelids of Murat instead of blinding him completely. Then, he helps him to get cured. However, he is killed at the end because he does not say where Murat is to Byzantine soldiers. All these examples reinforce the myth of Turkish national superiority while conveying that even

⁷³³ "Mertliği ve yiğitliği senden öğrendim, yolun açık olsun."

⁷³⁴ "Ömrümce köpek gibi yaşadım, şimdi insan gibi ölüyorum"

able-bodied men of the other support the Turkish cause. This also underlines the masculinity of the Turkish national warrior over men of the other.

In addition to men, there are also women of other who help Murat. In fact, unlike the other nationalist action/adventure films of the same period, there are many women in the Kara Murat series. Whether they are Turkish or not, these women are the bravest, most idealist, and determined women among all the others portrayed in other nationalist action/adventure films. A remarkable example is the corsair Maria in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*. She is a sword master and even able to fight with the Black Corsair. Although she finds the Black Corsair cruel, she still hates the Turks because they have killed her father. She meets Murat when Murat has disguised as a Spanish corsair named Antonio. Then, she falls in love with him. When his real identity is revealed, Maria first cannot decide what to do but later does not give up her love and even helps both Murat and Yunus Pasha run away from the corsairs' ship. A similar character is Elen in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*. She is the daughter of the dethroned Byzantine emperor living in Lesbos. Like Maria, she is an idealist and ambitious woman who hates Turks. She constantly criticizes her sister, Irene, because she has fallen in love with Mehmet II. In fact, Elen says she prefers death to fall in love with a Turk.⁷³⁵ Then, she falls in love with Murat when he pretends to be Kosta Karelli. When Elen learns about who he is, she takes a dagger into her hand and attempts to kill Murat. However, Murat stops her, and Elen decides not to give up her love like Maria. These two women are both strong idealist women. The fact that they continue to love the warrior marks his masculinity and can be interpreted as a domestication of the enemy. Besides, although Maria and Elen are women of other, they could be convenient role models for Turkish women.

Three other memorable women of other are entirely evils. One is Vlad's wife, Queen Lucia, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*. She is merciless and has some sadistic behaviors, such as killing the men she sleeps with. She is, in fact, a beautiful and erotic woman who is always scantily dressed. Therefore, this representation is typical of the period. The second character is the Byzantine Princess Olympia. On the one hand, she is beautiful and erotic like Lucia, but on the other hand, she is an idealist, ambitious, and determined woman like Maria or Elen. She wants to be the empress of the Ottoman Empire, and through the end of the film, she attempts to kill Mehmet II. The last powerful woman of the other is Zeynep, the daughter of Sheikh Gaffar in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*. She kills her father, an enemy of the Turks, and later becomes the Kharput region's queen. At this

⁷³⁵ "Asla bir Türk'e gönül vermem, ölmeyi tercih ederim"

point, although what Olympia and Zeynep do is quite radical, as being idealists, they could be added to those other women that have the potential of being role models for Turkish women, who are expected to be nationalist and patriotic like them or maybe sometimes as cruel as those women of other.

5.6.2.9. Turkish Women:

There are significant Turkish women characters who are also represented as very active and brave. What strikes attention is the women's increasing visibility in the Kara Murat series despite still playing secondary roles. Although it might be related to increasing female artists, women's representation always underlines the warrior's masculinity. For example, *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) and *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*) include a portrayal of Murat's mother, too. In the first film, she is a humble and sympathetic lady who misses her son very much because her son is always fighting. In the second, Murat's mother is depicted as a powerful and tough woman. When Murat's father, Ömer Beg, is murdered, she gives his sword to Murat, saying that he will get revenge when Murat is just around five years old. Here, the younger Murat is presented as a man-to-be, and his mother is given the mission of encouraging him in his 'becoming.' This narrative nurtures the myth of the warrior nation by showing a little boy as a future soldier and his mother as underlining his masculinity. Besides mothers, there are younger Turkish women. Compared to other female Turkish characters of nationalist action/adventure films, the women here are generally multi-layered characters. This means they do not merely follow the warrior because they fall in love with him. Instead, they all aim to take revenge for their fathers or families, and they collaborate with Murat because of that. Given this, these women can be taken as ideal role models for Turkish women. At this point, one small thing to note is that Another issue is that all are named Zeynep, probably because of the filmmakers' efforts to simplify the narratives for the audience. Regardless of the reason, this helps the audience to have an easier attachment to their ideal nationalist role models in the Kara Murat series. This discourse, in the end, reproduces the myth of the warrior nation by conveying the idea that we all can be loyal national warriors.

In this regard, the first significant Turkish female character is Zeynep of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*). She is the little girl whose parents have been killed by Vlad at the beginning of the film. Years after, she comes to the scene as Angela serving in Vlad's palace. Despite that, she never forgets her real identity. While being tortured because she has tried to poison Vlad, she says: "My life does not have any value given the cause to which I have dedicated myself. I

am a Turkish girl” (1:05-35-1:05:43).⁷³⁶ Through the end of the film, Vlad’s wife Lucia tries to kill Zeynep with a dagger, but Zeynep takes it and kills Lucia, saying that “This is for my mother, this is for my father and this is for all innocent Turks you killed” (1:19:17-1:19:22).⁷³⁷ Her bravery is not surprising given the myth of the warrior nation that considers all members of the Turkish nation as members of an army. The Karacapaşa’s daughter, Zeynep, in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*) is also an idealist and brave Turkish girl who aims to take revenge for her father. She leads rebellious Turks against the cruelty of Prince Carlos. In *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*), Zeynep pops up as the daughter of Yunus Pasha, the previous governor of Morea. Like Zeynep in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), she wants to take the revenge of her father. She is even tortured because she has harshly criticized the new governor and the commander without any hesitation. In *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), the audience is not provided the information about Zeynep’s personal cause, but it is said that she is the sister of a raider named Sinan Beg. In line with this familial connection, which reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, Zeynep has a sacred duty of finding out the Byzantine plans. Therefore, she works so close to Olympia and Orhan as their maids. She later informs Murat and other raiders about those, and so fulfills her national duties.

As a result, with his seven different adventures, Kara Murat firms Turks’ existence in a limited area constituted by Anatolia and a part of the Balkans. The islands of Lesbos, Morea, and Chios are interesting because they are taken not as originally Turkish islands but instead as islands that have Turkish inhabitants in addition to Christians. The link with the islands, in this picture, is established with the taxation of their rulers. Here, the Turkish rule's justification through taxation and the later fight because the enemies do not want to pay taxes and attack Turks could also be interpreted as a sign of islands being periphery hence out of control. This could be why Turks do not claim ownership of the island but simply focuses on how the enemy terrorizes the Turkish communities. This relatively limited reproduction of the myth of the national homeland makes Murat different from many other warriors who fight in limitless territories. In connection to that, Murat primarily fights with Byzantium and Vlad, the Impaler of Wallachia. In fact, even if the story takes place on an island, there is always a Byzantine intervening with the local king against the Turks. Both Wallachia and Byzantium are enemies from the past, and Sheikh Gaffar is an imaginary figure. None of them have a direct present-day counterpart as a state. Despite that, the series in general and the islands' incorporation into

⁷³⁶ “Kendimi adadığım dava yanında hayatimin değeri yoktur. Ben bir Türk kızıyım”

⁷³⁷ “Bu anam için, bu babam için, bu da öldürdüğünüz tüm masum Türkler için”

the stories have contemporary meanings, given the 1970s' political atmosphere dominated by aggressive military nationalism as reflected on the Cyprus issue.

The second distinguishing feature of Murat is his connection with the high-ranking bureaucrats. He fights to save those bureaucrats, most of whom are envoys that visit Ottoman lands to collect taxes. Why these envoys collect taxes is never justified through a reproduction of the myth of national or ethnic continuity with these lands. Instead, tax collection is represented as a natural relationship. This point might be related to the myth of benevolent conquerors in minds. To dig deeper, the naturalization of taxing different lands could be perceived as the natural outcome of Turks being benevolent conquerors. That is, Turks conquer new places, protect these places, and rule them just, and receive taxes in return. This kind of perceivably smooth connection between taxation and ruling directly represents the myth of benevolent conquerors inscribed on the Turkish political culture.

5.6.3. Warriors Fighting for Suleiman the Magnificent:

5.6.3.1. A General Look:

Besides the 15th century and Mehmet II's reign, Suleiman the Magnificent's 16th century is the other period film producers utilize by contributing to the Ottoman Golden Age myth. There are four available historical action/adventure films made in the 1970s depicting this period. The first is *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* (dir. Süreyya Duru, 1972), which refers to the son of Malkoçoğlu, a renowned hero; the others are *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, dir. Kemal Kan, 1972), *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, dir. Kemal Kan, 1972) and *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan* (dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1975), which are about the adventures of Çal Hasan. Amid the political turmoil and oppression caused by the 1971 Memorandum, nationalist aggressiveness of the Cyprus issue, Turkey's isolation in the international arena, and the rise of political Islam in connection to all these, the 1970s' historical action/adventure films taking place in the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent mainly worked to revive the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans at a time when the Ottomans were in their golden age, and hence more potent than Europeans.

A general look at the films reveals that Malkoçoğlu Kurt bey and Çal Hasan are not different from other heroes mentioned so far in their great duties: both are loyal warriors of a political leader. Çal Hasan's loyalty is depicted in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* with a comparison to paid soldiers of Pope Paul, who kill for a material gain as opposed to Turkish warriors, who only wish a healthy life for their pashas that give them orders in addition to gaining the love of the people they saved. For instance, in *Akma Tuna*, when Yahya Pasha

asks Çal Hasan and his friend Bölükbaşı Cafer what they want in return for their heroism in the conquest of Esztergom, both men say that they wish Yahya Pasha to be healthy. When Kara Ahmet Pasha asks the same question in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan* to Çal Hasan and the other raider Bal Murat, the answer is again the same, and the two men also say that they have already gained the love of people they protected. A Magyar soldier also praises the Turkish warriors' loyalty in the Esztergom Castle in *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*: "these warriors are loyal people unlike ours who are traitors" (42:31). So, as the voiceover states several times in Çal Hasan films, Turkish warriors set the road for "taking and giving heads" or 'to kill and be killed' unlike Christian soldiers who fight for a monetary return. This message reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, which attributes war-making to qualities of Turkishness that are given by birth. To open parenthesis at this point, it is also interesting that in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, the commander of the castle Vitelli and his men call each other by adding the word 'noble' before their names. This could be just a narrative choice of the scenarist to enrich the story. Still, it also serves to polish the image of Turkish nationalist 'common' men fighting against the privileged 'nobles' or the paid soldiers of the Pope.

5.6.3.2. The Ruler and the Mission of the Warrior:

Like the other heroes mentioned so far, Kurt bey and Çal Hasan fight for the 'legitimate' ruler. This legitimacy is defined in relation to the divine right of the kings. As mentioned in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, Suleiman has been 'given the state' by God.⁷³⁸ In this context, any challenge to Suleiman's authority means a challenge to God. This strong emphasis on the divine connection between the state and the ruler elevates Suleiman's status in his subjects' eyes. This kind of legitimation tactic is not novel, given the religious justification of the conquest of İstanbul in Kara Murat films. Therefore, unsurprisingly, Kara Murat films and the four films mentioned here complete one another. In this regard, in war scenes, both Suleiman and Mehmet II are depicted similarly. They do not actively fight; both march on their horse on a greenfield leading their armies accompanied by the army band (*mehter*). Other than these scenes, both sultans are in their courts or tents on battlefields. In general, contrary to the young, energetic, idealist, and excited Mehmet II, Suleiman in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* is represented as older, wiser, more serious, more rigid, and much more experienced like Cincinnatus of Girardet.

⁷³⁸ "Allah devleti Süleyman'a nasip etmiş."

Unlike Mehmet II, who consults with his viziers and pashas or even with Kara Murat in Divan meetings, Suleiman just gives orders in a calmer but aggressive way. He speaks less and sometimes only shakes his head from right to left or up and down to state his opinions.

The other interesting point is that although Mehmet II appears in all Kara Murat films, Suleiman is represented only in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. In the other three films, only a voiceover mentions Suleiman's success and the fact that he is "Sultan of the World" (*Cihan Padişahı*). In connection to that, while Kara Murat and other heroes mentioned so far receive orders about their missions directly from the rulers, Suleiman's loyal warriors are not like that. Only Kurt Bey can communicate with Suleiman in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, in which Suleiman orders him to prove his bravery and heroism in finding the Black Knight of the Pope who terrorizes a border village. In the other three films, bureaucrats such as pashas and viziers communicate with Çal Hasan about the orders of Suleiman. For example, in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan*, Kara Ahmet Pasha informs Çal Hasan about his mission in Andalusia as ordered by the Sultan. The portrayal of Suleiman as such elevates him and so makes him unreachable and glorious. This also means that the warriors are all taken under state control, which is also a step towards the anonymization of even the loner warrior in a period of oppression and aggressiveness following the flowering and later criminalization of social movements in the late 1960s.

Consequently, the national missions of the warrior have transformed, too. Kurt bey of *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* sets the road after Rıdvan Pasha is killed. In *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, Çal Hasan and his raider friend Bölükbaşı Cafer must take revenge for Sinan Pasha and the Turkish committee led by him murdered by Christians in Buda. It is said that Sinan Pasha has been there with İbrahim's Pasha's order and the Sultan's edict. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, Çal Hasan and his friends are known to be the raiders in the service of Yahya Paşazade Ahmet bey. This Pasha sends Hasan after the conquest of Esztergom to the raid for conquering the Sabac Castle and join other raiders. Bal Murat and Çal Hasan in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan* join those raiders led by Kara Ahmet Pasha for Timișoara after they complete their mission of saving the Muslim community in Andalusia from the hands of the cruel Spanish. These examples manifest the withering away of the anti-bureaucratic discourse. It can also be an indication of a hierarchy between bureaucrats and loyal warriors. In this hierarchy, the heroes are in a lower position, and this never existed before. In this vein, Kara Murat's place in the state hierarchy is higher. In fact, Kara Murat has already been taken under state authority, but he is never lower than bureaucrats. Here in the films depicting Suleiman, however, the warrior completely loses his independence. This narrative, which takes heroes somehow under the control of bureaucrats,

perfectly fits into the politically oppressive nature of the early 1970s, following a period of political liberalization in the 1960s. The heroes here operate as part of the state apparatus; therefore, they are under the state's control. This represents domestication of the warrior, which complies with the state's attempts to take all different voices under control with the 1971 Memorandum.

5.6.3.3. *The Warriors:*

Compared to historical action/adventure films of previous periods, the films analyzed in this part include more references to other raiders. For example, *Çal Hasan* is never alone, and there is another raider always accompanying him: either Bal Murat or Bölükbaşı Cafer. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, Esztergom's imprisoned commander, Verben, mentions thousands of Turkish raiders coming to Esztergom. At the end of the same film, *Çal Hasan* is sent to join other raiders in Sabac Castle. Similarly, in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan*, after completing his mission in Andalusia, the protagonist joins those fighting for Timişiora's conquest. Then, in the closing scene of the same film, a voice-over says, "we cannot finish the adventures of our raider forefathers by telling" (53:40),⁷³⁹ to emphasize the abundance of heroic raiders. These references to raiders other than the protagonist reveal the anonymity of the warrior. Besides, the audience hears Yahya Kemal Beyatlı's poem titled *Akıncılar (Raiders)*. It mentions many raiders galloping on their horses during the Balkan conquests. The initial lines heard by the audience are: "We were merry as children at the raids which had a thousand raiders/That day, we conquered an army like a giant which with a thousand raiders." In the end, the voice-over says: "The fatherland is thankful to you"⁷⁴⁰ (54:27-56:03). In Turkish nationalist discourse, this is a prevalent phrase used for soldiers who became martyrs. The point is that this phrase is instead a part of nation-state discourse. Thus, it could be an indication of the Ottomanization of national memory. That is to say; the filmmakers are using concepts, phrases, or words which are commonly associated with Turkish soldiers of the Turkish nation-state. By doing this, they look at the Ottoman past through the lenses of today. This emphasis on how raiders spilled their blood in the Balkans, in the end, serves to justify the Turkish presence in Europe while reproducing the myth of national homeland. More significantly, in this picture, the raiders are basically soldiers. In this regard, they are not freedom-loving, loner men of swords anymore. Instead, they are members of a raider group, not in the forefront because many other raiders like them are fighting in other

⁷³⁹ "Akıncı cedlerimizin maceraları anlatmakla bitmez."

⁷⁴⁰ "Bin atlı akınlarda çocuklar gibi şendik/Bin atlı o gün dev gibi bir orduyu yendik." "Vatan size minnettardır."

places. As the voiceover states in the final scene of *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, there are hundreds of thousands of Turks who become martyrs on horseback running from war to war, victory to victory (54:27-56:03).⁷⁴¹ If these references are taken in connection to bureaucrats' insertion into the picture, it could be argued that the 1970s' hero is anonymous. This could also be why both Çal Hasan and Kurt Bey are expected to prove their bravery to the Sultan, as the Sultan says at the beginning of *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* and the voiceover states in *Esztergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*. Therefore, the hero is much more ordinary; in fact, a loyal common man working as a part of the state hierarchy that puts him below bureaucrats. This could be taken as an indication of the hero's domestication and commonization, which is already seen in the Kara Murat series in line with the oppressive political atmosphere of the 1970s.

Furthermore, like other heroes mentioned so far, both Kurt bey and Çal Hasan have excellent fighting skills and are sword masters. They are on horseback most of the time. They are athletic and robust. The enemies in *Akma Tuna: Esztergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)* even praise Çal Hasan's strength. Similarly, some warriors from the border village (*derbent köyü*) in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* recognize Kurt Bey thanks to his fighting style that rests on solid punches as those of Malkoçoğlu. What is more significant is that the heroes' strength does not come from their physical features but their Turkishness. In fact, in these films, the warriors are never physically superior, meaning that they do not have a seemingly muscular body; they are not tall or not with well-built bodies. The key to all these heroes, which make them unique, is their ordinariness at first sight. This could be a factor in catalyzing the audience's attachment to the heroes by paving the way to represent the common man. This, in the end, gives the message that every common Turkish man is or should be a loyal warrior for the one who has the 'state.' Thus, the heroes are warriors since their birth because they are the members of the warrior nation, and they bring their capabilities to perfection by training. Kurt bey, for example, is trained by a raider Muslu beg at the age of seven or eight. His twin brother Doğan bey, kidnapped by the Christian enemies when he was a little child hence raised as a Christian, is also quite good at fighting because he carries Turkish blood. In complementing the picture, the heroes are always very self-confident; therefore, they know how to use their intelligence to overcome disadvantaged situations. For example, Çal Hasan in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan* goes to Andalusia disguised as a Spanish man after changing his Turkish-folk clothes with oriental motifs vest and baggy trousers into a landsknecht hat, black jacket, and leggings. This tactic enables him to infiltrate into the castle easily and, as a

⁷⁴¹ "At sırtında savaştan savaşa, zaferden zafere koşmuş yüzbinlerce şehit Türk'ün ruhu şadolsun."

result, creates an advantage out of a disadvantaged situation. In this example, it should also be noted that certain clothes such as baggy trousers and clothes with oriental motifs gain a national character, whereas the others are considered non-national.

5.6.3.4. *The Landscape:*

All these adventures take place at a time when the Ottoman Empire is strengthening its presence in Europe. Therefore, both heroes ride their horses in Balkan lands; pass through rivers and mostly green fields shown with wide shots as in other action/adventure films mentioned so far. Only when going to Andalusia in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan*, besides greenfields and rivers, Çal Hasan and his raider friend Bal Murat sail across the Mediterranean Sea. During this journey, the sea is never shown to the audience. This could be, on the one hand, related to budgetary concerns. On the other hand, given that Bal Murat gets seasick, it also fits well into the problematic and distant relationship of the Turkish loyal common man with the sea that is also present in other films. Besides, as always, one of the popular stops of the warriors is *hans*. In these cheap hostels and restaurants, warriors present a rehearsal of the actual battle with the enemy. For example, on his way to Andalusia in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan*, Çal Hasan fights with the Spanish, who remove Muslims from their seats and beat them in a *han*. In fact, here, Muslims, but Turks in other films, are always depicted as innocent and defenseless who do not attack the enemy if the enemy does not attack beforehand. Besides, on his way to Esztergom, Çal Hasan stops by a *han* in *Esztergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*. There, he meets a Turkish folk bard (*aşık*), singing a folk song and playing *bağlama*. When a Christian man very rudely asks that *aşık* to stop saying that this land is of Ferdinand so he cannot play and sing freely (16:15-16:23),⁷⁴² Çal Hasan attacks and beats this man, who is, in fact, the hangman of the castle. The scene shows how mighty the Turkish warrior is and can even defeat the other's mighty men. At this point, the *aşık* reference is worth mentioning. It is also present in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, in which Kurt beg sometimes prefers playing his *bağlama* over his military training even when he is a child around the age of ten. Then, his trainer Muslu Bey, a friend of the deceased Malkoçoğlu, gets mad at Kurt Bey, saying that this is not proper for a raider. This complete reference to a folk singer/poet and a folk musical instrument can be a narrative strategy that strengthens the warrior's links with Anatolia by making him an ordinary man from Anatolia.

⁷⁴² “Burası Türk toprağı değil; Ferdinand’ın toprağı. Bu manasız türküye devam etmeyeceksin.”

In this regard, the geographical region that the warrior fights includes Esztergom, Timisoara, and Buda in the Çal Hasan series. Setting the road from Adrianople in Eastern Thrace, Hasan goes back and forth between today's Hungary and Romania several times. In this context, Esztergom, nearby the Danube, is his final destination in both *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)* and Çal Hasan play a significant role in its conquest, which was a real event that took place in 1543. These places, in particular Esztergom, are symbolically substantial because historically, they had been the endpoints of the Ottoman's expansion into Europe. Hence, they occupy an important place in Çal Hasan's nationalist world created in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*. Therefore, in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, when the Christian guards of Esztergom say, "get out of European territories" (26:04),⁷⁴³ Hasan says, "nobody can turn me even if all armies of Europe would come" (26:06).⁷⁴⁴ Relying on this, it could be argued that Çal Hasan symbolizes the claim of the Anatolian common man in Europe. Apart from that, in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, where the hero fights is not entirely clear. However, the audience understands that the hero is still in the Balkans and somewhere close to Adrianople, which is said to be closer to Malkoçoğlu's farm. For his mission, Kurt bey is sent to a certain border village (*derbent köyü*). Here, interestingly, a border is mentioned, although the name of the village is not given. This understanding of a 'limited' land piece is rarely found in nationalist historical action/adventure films. This hero, therefore, could be interpreted as less aggressive in terms of expansion. Nevertheless, both warriors are in the Balkans, and they both deal with the borders.

On the other hand, Çal Hasan also fights in Andalusia, which has a Muslim community dominated by the Spanish Habsburgs. Complementing the narrative created in other Çal Hasan films, this visit is realized for saving the Muslim community there; therefore, it is not made for expansion purposes. To push it a little bit more, this geographical information might indicate that the hero's aim is not to conquer distant territories anymore but to deepen or firm the Ottoman presence in the Balkans and within the Muslim community. This point revives the myth of benevolent conquerors by attributing the Turkish nation to the mission of saving or protecting those people who need Ottoman/Turkish help. According to the narrative, the Andalusian Muslims are forced to convert to Christianity by the Spanish. They are either imprisoned or killed if they do not accept this. As an Andalusia envoy in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan*

⁷⁴³ "Defol git Avrupa topraklarından."

⁷⁴⁴ "Avrupa'nın bütün orduları gelse beni yolumdan döndüremezler."

says to the Ottoman Pasha: "...innocent children are killed, women are raped...*Devletlum*, only the iron wrist and merciful heart of the glorious Ottoman state could save us from this inexorable slaughter" (13:06-13:51).⁷⁴⁵ This narrative reproduces the myth that Ottomans/Turks are benevolent conquerors and act if needed. Here, the 'benevolence' is not shown through conquest, but through 'help.' So, as the benevolent conquerors, the Turks also teach how to govern to the Andalusians. In fact, as a representative of the Ottoman state, Çal Hasan knows what is best for the Andalusians. He urges them to unite and later protects them until the Ottoman navy's arrival to take them to Algeria. The Turkish benevolence or mercifulness is also emphasized in depicting the 'Turkish/Ottoman style of conquest' in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*.

In both films, before the military attacks on the Castle of Esztergom, a committee of bureaucrats and envoys is sent to the enemy to ask if the enemy wants to surrender on the condition of accepting paying taxes. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, the committee led by Yahya Pasha, who is the governor of Smederevo sanjak, also says that the Ottomans are in favor of religious freedom; therefore, people can pursue to believe in whatever religious belief they have. This whole setting gives the message that the first choice of Turks is a somewhat peaceful conquest without spilling blood, and they are never cruel, unlike the 'Other.' Instead, they are superior and benevolent conquerors not only for Turks but also for the Islamic community, even those living in Andalusia. This adds to the myth of Turkish national superiority by attributing the feature of being a protector to Turkish national identity. At this point, the Ottoman commander Yahya Pasha *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)* adds that if the enemy does not voluntarily bow down to the Ottoman rule, "we will perform the afternoon prayer in the big cathedral of Esztergom and convert it into a mosque" (1:03:38).⁷⁴⁶ These words obviously show the courage and self-confidence of the Turkish side of the attack.

5.6.3.5. Religion:

As the geographical analysis in relation to the 'benevolent conqueror' discourse also reveals, Islam occupies a significant place in the formulation of Turkish national identity

⁷⁴⁵ "Devletlum bu insafsızca katliamdan bizi ancak yüce Osmanlı devletinin müşfik yüreği, demir bileği kurtarabilir."

⁷⁴⁶ "Cuma ikindi namazını Estergon'daki büyük kilisede eda eder, onu camiye çeviririz."

represented in the four films complying with the other nationalist action/adventure films of the 1970s. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, this happens through a narrative that combines three-crescent Ottoman historical flags planted on Esztergom Castle while the hero is swearing to open holes in the body of the Christian commander for every Turk the commander killed (1:18:53).⁷⁴⁷ After the conquest of Esztergom, Çal Hasan and his raider friend Bölükbaşı Cafer decide to participate in other conquests because they want “to spill their blood for their nation” (1:20:51).⁷⁴⁸ In *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, the members of “the Turkish committee” that have been in Esztergom to convince the commander for the city’s surrender are murdered from their back with guns by the men of the Pope when they are praying. As these anecdotes show, the films include great use of both religious and nationalist symbols. More interesting than that is the fuse of these symbols with one another by forming through a novel slightly perceivable hierarchy between Turkishness and Muslimness. In this context, ‘Ottomanness’ is used concerning things related to the state, similar to its use in other nationalist action/adventure movies. For Çal Hasan, for example, the army is the Ottoman army, the state is the Ottoman state, and the navy is the Ottoman navy. On the other hand, in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, when sending Kurt bey for his mission to a border village, Suleiman mentions how Christians are “terrorizing our Muslim community” (17:42).⁷⁴⁹ Another example is that just before Kurt beg shows his physical strength by flinging off the ropes he has been tied with by the Christians, he sings a medieval religious hymn (*ilahi*)⁷⁵⁰ although he is tortured. Besides, only the enemies call Kurt bey’s community Turkish; in fact, both Suleiman and Kurt beg emphasize Muslimness before Turkishness.

5.6.3.6. External Others:

It does not really matter whether the victims are Turks or not; the significant point is the presence of an evil Christian enemy. Therefore, in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, what is happening to Turks happening to Andalusia's Muslim community, the Turkish audience is expected to empathize with these people. Besides, the enemies whip Muslims calling them: “you dirty Muslims, you will die” (23:28). Kara Ahmet Pasha says these cruel and bigoted Christians (*insafsız yobaz hristiyanlar*) (18:23). At the end of the film, the pasha says to Çal Hasan: “you

⁷⁴⁷ “Hain kefere, kurban ettiğin her Türk için vücudunda bir yara açacağım.”

⁷⁴⁸ “...milletimiz uğruna kanımızı akıtmaya gidiyoruz.”

⁷⁴⁹ “Müslüman ahalimize dehşet saçıyormuş”

⁷⁵⁰ “Şol cennetin ırmakları/Akar Allah deyu deyu/Çıkmış İslam bülbülleri/Öter Allah deyu deyu” by Yunus Emre

saved thousands of Muslims from the rule of the sword and anger of black bigotry” (52:56).⁷⁵¹ The religious emphasis is also available in *Akma Tuna*. Through the end of the film, while Hasan is taking the flag from the hands of a dying soldier in blood and planting it on the walls, he prays aloud. In the next scene, Yahya Pasha says that Esztergom belongs to the Turks, and God has made Turks victorious. This is an Islamic justification of the conquest reinforcing the myth of the national homeland by showing how Turks sacrificed their blood. All these increase the tension by mounting up the cruelty of the Christian enemy.

Although both warriors fight against some Christian enemies, it is hard to specifically determine the enemy except the Spanish in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*. The reason is that the films always mention more than one European state at the same time. For example, in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, the castle is protected by both German and Spanish soldiers because Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman Emperor, rules the castle. This crowded list of enemies reveals the already complicated history of the region in the 16th century. Nevertheless, this kind of generalization of the enemy creates a single and straightforward category: Christians. It is an easier formulation of the myth of the enemy and could be easily digested by the audience of the 1970s. It also justifies the myth of the Turkish nation’s superiority repeatedly by attributing Turks the capability of fighting against the entire Christian world. At this point, being a Christian is not the only criterion for being an enemy. In fact, in determining who is a good and who is a bad other, the other’s willingness to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire is essential. Here, the Ottoman Empire is taken as the natural ruler of Esztergom. Since it conquers with the help of God’s grace, the place is destined to be ruled by it. In this context, being unwilling to pay taxes to the Ottomans carries almost the same meaning as challenging God’s grace. This is how and why Çal Hasan’s fight is justified. So, the Magyar commander Verben is considered a good other since he has accepted paying taxes and not challenged God’s will. Vitelli, however, is bad because he challenges the Ottomans hence Islam. Verben also becomes a victim of Vitelli as he is imprisoned and tortured by him. When he is dead in *Akma Tuna: Estergon’un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, Çal Hasan says: “Poor Verben, he sacrificed his life for his nation” (34:26).⁷⁵² This remark allows the audience to distinguish between good and bad other.

The fight, however, is not between nations; but between the Turkish nation represented by the Sultan and his warrior and the evil rulers of the other. The Christian enemy’s goal is “to

⁷⁵¹ “Kara taassubun kılınıcı, hıncı altından kurtardınız binlerce Müslüman”

⁷⁵² “Zavallı Verben. Milleti için hayatını feda etti”

wipe the barbarian Turks out of not only Europe but also the entire world” (34:40),⁷⁵³ as declared by Don Diaz, possibly the Spanish leader of Christian enemies in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. The enemies aim to realize that goal by killing, torturing, and imprisoning unarmed and innocent Turks in the Balkans. This situation justifies the Turkish attack on the enemies. It also means that Turks never attack because they are thirsty for new lands and resources, but because the enemies oppress Turks. Therefore, scenes depicting the cruelty of the enemy are particularly significant. A memorable scene of that kind is in *Esztergom Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, in which Vitelli, the Commander of the Esztergom castle, tortures Bölükbaşı Cafer, an Ottoman raider. While torturing, he peels the skin off Cafer’s feet, puts salt underneath, and makes a goat lick his wounds. The audience sees all the details of that rather shocking scene. In another scene in *Akma Tuna*, Vitelli, the Esztergom commander, also states that he wants to make Turkish prisoners eat the bodies of the murdered Turkish envoys. Other provocative scenes include the murder of Sinan Pasha and his men during a Friday Pray in the same film. The Christians’ attack Ana Hatun, the wife of Malkoçoğlu and the mother of Kurt beg and Doğan beg in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, is equally sensitive. She is wounded and later becomes blind. In the following scene, the little Doğan bey, whom the enemy kidnaps, is shown in a church practicing a Christian ritual. When he is a grown-up, he says that he wants to be the new Milos Obilic by referring to a Serbian knight that is assumed to murder Murat I in the Battle of Kosovo of the late 14th century. These scenes make the audience feel absolute hatred towards the Christian enemy. Consequently, ‘our’ cruelty is justified, too. For example, in *Esztergom Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, when Çal Hasan attacks the hangman of the castle in a *han*, the man vomits blood as clearly shown to the audience. In the final scene of the same film, Çal Hasan cuts off the Christian commander Antonio’s head and throws the skull down the castle walls, saying that the same will happen to all Christians in Esztergom if the commander does not surrender in three days. Then, the bloody skull of Antonio is shown to the audience. As in the case of other nationalist action/adventure films of the 1970s, these violent scenes are never censored, which could indicate the politically aggressive nationalist atmosphere that already unofficially confirms violence against external others.

5.6.3.7. Internal Others:

Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey also refers to internal enemies that collaborate with the Christian others. Here, the main internal enemy is Murat Han III, the nephew of Selim I, who aims to

⁷⁵³ “Barbar Türkleri yalnız Avrupa’dan değil tüm dünyadan silecektir.”

take power into his hands after killing Suleiman. He, however, ‘does not have the state;’ therefore, his claim is illegitimate. In this regard, he resembles Prince Orhan in *Ölümlük Emri (Death Command)* but far more ruthless than him. He whips prisoners and makes them work as forced labor in producing gunpowder to be used against Ottoman armies. He also kills Rıdvan Pasha with a spike when that Pasha warns him that what he is doing leads to strife between brothers. Despite that cruelty, Murat III is a coward because when he gets caught by Kurt bey, he bends on his knees and begs the Sultan while crying. His major accompany is the bureaucrat Mahmut Pasha. When he calls Mahmut his grand vizier, Murat kisses his skirt to show how grateful he is. This scene reveals Mahmut’s lust for money and titles. He is also a cruel man who tortures even his people in a border village (*derbent köyü*) because they fail to pay additional taxes illegitimately mandated by Murat III. Therefore, both Murat III and Mahmut are traitors hence the enemies of the state. Here, as in the Kara Murat series, there is a thick line between loyal and disloyal bureaucrats. The disloyal ones deserve to get punished, as in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*.

5.6.3.8. Women:

As in other nationalist action/adventure movies, both warriors are very handsome and very attractive to women. In fact, this is another reason that makes them threatening, as confirmed by a soldier of Vitelli, the Esztergom commander, who says that Turkish men have all kinds of features that can fool beautiful women in *Akma Tuna: Estergon’un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)* (16:58).⁷⁵⁴ Even the male enemy appreciates the masculinity and superiority of the Turkish men. Then, at some point, Vitelli’s wife Manushka sleeps with Çal Hasan in *Akma Tuna: Estergon’un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*. This is a big stroke to the masculinity of Vitelli. There is also Princess Maria, the daughter of the commander Don Alvarez in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. She is an erotic dancer and dances before Murat III with a few other dancers to entertain him. Here, both Manushka and Maria are represented as dishonorable women wearing scanty clothing. This representation humiliates the power and masculinity of the ‘other.’ So, in the case of Maria, even the masculinity of the internal enemy Murat III overcomes that of the external enemy. In this context, there is also a good woman of other underlining the warrior’s masculinity. She is Princess Nadezia, the daughter of Verben, in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna*. As she falls in love with Çal Hasan and helps him escape from the castle, she

⁷⁵⁴ “Türk erkekleri güzel kadınları kandırabilecek her türlü özelliğe sahip olmalarıyla bilinmektedir.”

becomes interested in Islam. She then says she wants to go to İstanbul and listen to the call to prayer (*azan*) from the beautiful voices of imams in minarets in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*. Therefore, she is transformed because of her love for the warrior. This is, of course, a manifestation of the warrior's power hence the national superiority of Turks, men in particular. At this point, the fact that Nadezia is not an ordinary person but a princess, is a tool that increases the warrior's power.

Nevertheless, Ana Hatun, Kurt bey's mother in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, could also be added to that list of women showing the warrior's power. After the murder of her husband Malkoçoğlu, she gives one of his swords to her son Kurt bey and advises him to take his father's revenge. This scene reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, and the woman, here, becomes a tool to transfer or basically transmit this piece of information from father to son. At this point, the way she dresses in a headscarf and traditional folk dress, which is loose and long, makes her look very recognisable. This may increase the audience's attachment to the character by making them feel that what happens to Ana Hatun may happen to any Turkish mother, including the mother of whoever is watching. Her mansion is in the rural countryside, which is located somewhere near Adrianople. This confirms the mental shrinkage in the reproduction of the myth of the national homeland. The homeland here is imagined in relation to the current borders of Turkey. The point that Edirne is in Rumelia could still be a reference to the trauma caused by the loss of the Balkan lands. On the other hand, the location of Adrianople also gives the audience a kind of an understanding of where the national core and borders are and where the outreaches of the empire from which the Sultan collects taxes are. Besides, the inside of Ana Hatun's house is decorated with carpets on the walls, and that must be familiar to the audience. The difference, however, is the plates with Ottoman-Arabic script on them besides the swords of Malkoçoğlu, all of which are placed onto the wall. This provides information about the significant values in the warrior's life. These are Islam and the state's power, and of course, the Sultan symbolized by the swords. Here, Kurt bey inherits those as a member of the warrior nation with a natural ability to fight.

Thus, the warriors Çal Hasan and Kurt bey reproduce the myth of the warrior nation by attaching the nation to Anatolia and a part of the Balkans, similar to Kara Murat. Here, although the warrior is still powerful and violent, what makes especially Çal Hasan different is his representation as a warrior among many other warriors. This is a step towards the hero's anonymization, which does not allow any individual hero to come to the forefront and shine. It is also realized through the insertion of the warrior into a state structure and the addition of bureaucrats in between the Sultan and the warriors. This perfectly fits into the oppressive

environment of the 1970s, which took the cinematic representation of national warriors under state control. As a natural outcome of this, Sultan Suleiman is represented as a tougher and much more serious character than the other rulers mentioned so far. Therefore, while the warrior is anonymous anymore, the Sultan is less reachable. This contributes to the ruler's omnipotent representation and makes him the only provider who is above everything. In this regard, the national will becomes the Sultan's will because he is also the incarnation of the nation. And, since the Sultan is already considered the embodiment of the state and the nation, both the state and nation become monolithic.

5.6.4. Warriors Fighting After Suleiman:

There are two available historical action/adventure films that narrate the period after the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. They are *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, dir. Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973) and *Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*, Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973). As the names imply, the hero, this time, is called Black Claw. However, his real name is Osman and given the nickname the Black Claw after he proves his strength and bravery to other Turkish raiders in *Kara Pençe*. This shows that although the titles of the films seem to emphasize Kara Pençe as a loner warrior, he fights together with other raiders, confirming his potential anonymity and emphasizing his role as one of the many raiders.

5.6.4.1. The Warrior's Mission:

Unlike the other nationalist action/adventure movies analyzed so far, *Kara Pençe* films do not include any information about whom Kara Pençe serves. The period that he fights can only be understood from the missions Kara Pençe participates in. At the end of *Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*, a pasha states that Kara Pençe and his raider friends have significantly contributed to the conquest of the Remn castle, which is a strategic place for gaining Nagykanizsa (Kanije). Given that Nagykanizsa was captured in 1600, it is probable that the films take place at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th, so during the reign of Mehmet III. The fact that there is no reference to the Sultan might be related to this period's association with the beginning of the Ottoman Empire's decline. The reigning Sultan of this time might not be interesting for the audience. Therefore, Kara Pençe never receives orders directly from the Sultan. Instead, a pasha informs him about the Nagykanizsa mission in *Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*. The peculiarity, however, is that the pasha's name is not provided either. Therefore, both the pasha and the warrior could be considered anonymous besides the Sultan, who is deliberately omitted.

When Kara Pençe refuses to accept any material gains due to his contributions for the conquest of the Remn Castle and just wants to continue galloping on horseback,⁷⁵⁵ the Pasha says, “There are no earthly blessings in your mind. You only think about serving your state in any condition. Go, may your road be open for your lifetime” (40:35-41:10).⁷⁵⁶ This means that Kara Pençe is not perceived as the loyal warrior of the Sultan but the state. This may indicate the Sultan’s powerlessness and that the state’s survival was much more important than the Sultan.

5.6.4.2. *The Landscape:*

Kara Pençe fights in Habsburg-dominated Central Europe. Although the Balkans are always depicted as greenfields in other films, Kara Pençe’s fighting area is set in Cappadocia, a semi-arid region in Central Anatolia, known for its rock formations. This representation of Central Europe makes it seem unfamiliar to the audience, contrary to the Balkans’ familiar heaven-like representation. On the other hand, Kara Pençe’s hometown is a typical Turkish village in the Balkans in the middle of green fields, with its wooden houses and farm animals around like any other representation of Turkish villages. According to the narrative, this village is Karaisa, located in today’s northeastern Bulgaria in Ludogorie. The choice of that village can be interpreted as a sign of the trauma caused by the loss of Balkan lands and later permeated into the Turkish nationalist political culture. The familiarity of the village undoubtedly makes the audience attachment easier. Besides, the village becomes a micro example of the whole nation, so what happens to that village could happen to the other villages, and by extension, the entire nation.

5.6.4.3. *The Warrior and Religion:*

The inhabitants of the village are portrayed in traditional Turkish folk costumes, and women are with headscarves. The only significant Turkish female character in the films, Kara Pençe’s mother, Emine, is a humble lady living in a modest house. This house resembles that of Çal Hasan, having swords and plates with Arabic scripts on walls. The swords belong to Kara Pençe’s father, Sinan, who is a raider. Kara Pençe, however, does not know this because neither of his parents wants him to become a raider. Despite that, due to his unchanged Turkish and Muslim essence, which makes him a natural member of the warrior nation, in *Kara Pençe*,

⁷⁵⁵ “Kulunuzu at sırtından indirip şatoya bağlamayınız. Paşam izin versin biz at sırtında koşalım.”

⁷⁵⁶ “Senin gözünde dünya nimeti namına hiçbir şey yok. Varsa yoksa sadece devlete hizmeti düşünüyorsun sen, var git ömrünce yolun açık olsun.”

he decides to join a group of raiders. What triggers him is his worrisome love relationship with Ayşe, who is the daughter of an aga. This aga is so evil that he does not allow the couple to marry because Kara Pençe is poor and does not have a father, so he wants to kill Kara Pençe. Kara Pençe then runs away. On his way, he meets the raiders and joins them after proving his fighting skills to them. Here, Kara Pençe's 'fatherlessness' can be interpreted as an allegory of the nation's 'fatherlessness' under weak rulers both in the reign of Mehmet III, when the expansion of the empire halted and during the post-1971 period, which witnessed political aggression and unstable governments. At this point, Kara Pençe's poverty leads to class conflict, strengthens the hero's ordinariness, and enabling audience attachment. In this regard, Kara Pençe is a representative of the nationalist 'common man.' He is also a religious man, reflecting not only the values he fights for but also his daily life. For example, in the first *han* scene of *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, he refuses to drink wine because it is a sin. Apart from the usual Shahadah that Turks recite before dying, Kara Pençe and his raider friends greet each other by saying "selamun aleykum." They also say, "May God protect you"⁷⁵⁷ to each other before the raid. In fact, religious symbols are used quite a lot in these films. In another scene, the older woman that looks after Kara Pençe's son recites Quran in *Kara Pençenin İntikamı*. In *Kara Pençe*, the raiders pray together in the *han*. Like the inhabitants of Karaisa village who have traditional folk clothes, these raiders all wear waistcoats with oriental motifs on them, supporting their familiarity and ordinariness. These scenes are all adorned with Ottoman military marches and flags with three crescents as in other nationalist action/adventure movies of the 1970s.

5.6.4.4. External Others:

Therefore, the external enemy is the Magyar Count Fley, an evil character planning to create a new Crusaders' army composed of Magyars and Austrians. He is a cruel man, and at some point, he and his soldiers attack Karaisa, which is Kara Pençe's village. As in similar representations, in *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, they torture and kill people, even children, and rape women in Kara Pençe's village. Ayşe, the daughter of the evil aga, becomes their victim, too, and the enemy men hang her. Consequently, since this village is the allegory of the homeland, Kara Pençe's personal cause unites the great cause he is fighting for. On his way, Kara Pençe shows his heroism before the actual battle. In *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, he first fights against some Magyars who harass the waitress in a *han*; then, he and his friends save

⁷⁵⁷ "Allah korusun!"

the Count's mother Isabel and sister İbolya from the hands of Magyar bandits, who storm their house. In fact, these bandits have been planning to plunder the house and to blame the Turks. Their plans, however, are disrupted with the arrival of Turkish raiders. The warriors prove that they are always in favor of those who need help regardless of those people's religious beliefs. This is a confirmation of the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors. So, they protect the Count's family even from their own people, as stated by Isabel: "Turks are protecting us, our property, lives, and honor against our own citizens" (41:15-41:21).⁷⁵⁸ All these also justify the cruelty of 'us.' Kara Pençe cuts off the right arm of the Count in the first film, *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)* and later kills at the end of *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*. He also kills the bandits one after the other, and the audience witnesses every death. Although there are no close shots focusing on the victims, this scene is still disturbing, primarily because of what one of Kara Pençe's friends says: "Kara Pençe has turned this place into a slaughterhouse" (37:57).⁷⁵⁹ in *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*.

In all the instances mentioned above, Kara Pençe overcomes many enemies. In fact, although not a muscular man hence does not have an extraordinary outlook; he can defeat enemies thanks to his bravery and strength. For instance, he beats the aga's ten men attacking in the house at the beginning of *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*. Even the Count gets surprised when Kara Pençe and his friends successfully conquer Remn castle. He says: "We surrendered this huge castle to a handful of Turks" (47:22-47:25)⁷⁶⁰ in *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of Black Claw)*. These words all confirm the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority. Furthermore, there are also times when Kara Pençe is in a relatively disadvantaged situation. But he always overcomes this by using his intellect. For instance, to learn about the Count's plans, he disguises himself as a Magyar named Simon and approaches Ayşula, the Count's stepsister. In *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*, he enters the Remn castle as the saddle boy of a commander's daughter. These examples give the message that the Turkish intellect could easily defeat the enemy.

5.6.4.5. Women:

Like other nationalist action/adventure warriors, Kara Pençe has an attractive power over the women of other. This does not happen only because he is handsome but also because he is a gentleman who helps those women of other that need help. Later, these women want to

⁷⁵⁸ "Türkler öz vatandaşlarımıza karşı bizi, malımızı, canımızı, namusumuzu koruyorlar."

⁷⁵⁹ "Kara Pençe burayı mezbahaya çevirmiş."

⁷⁶⁰ "Koskoca şatoyu bir avuç Türk'e teslim ettik"

sleep with him, as in the cases of Ayşula, the stepsister of İbolya, the waitress he saves in the *han*, and the Magyar commander's wife. This reproduces the myth of national superiority by underlining the masculinity of the warrior and, at the same time, emasculating the enemy. The most remarkable female character, in this context, is İbolya, who falls in love with Kara Pençe after he saves her. She is a brave woman, so in one scene, she cuts off a bandit's hands when he tries to jump into her house from the window. She is also able to run away from the hands of another man who is about to rape her. Therefore, with his bravery and courage, she is, in fact, a convenient woman for the Turkish warrior. Then, although for Kara Pençe, his mission is above everything, the couple has a baby. Then, İbolya goes through a transformation and decides to convert to Islam in *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*. This is how she 'deserves' to become Turkish. Then, she says: "I will strive for being a worthy bride for you, your family, and all Turks" (49:32-49:38).⁷⁶¹ This means that the enemy has been defeated, and its masculinity has been destroyed by the Turkish nation, which is superior.

Thus, Kara Pençe is comparable to the other nationalist action/adventure warriors analyzed so far in many aspects. Through his adventures, the myths of the warrior nation, national homeland, the Turkish nation's superiority, and Turks being benevolent conquerors are reproduced, confirming the 1970s' aggressive political atmosphere. What distinguishes him, however, is the everyday visibility of Islamic values in his life. Besides, the omission of the Sultan, less emphasis on the pasha, and the warrior's insertion into a group of many other raiders are crucial tools for making both the warrior and his adventures anonymous. This understanding takes state above everything, even the unsuccessful Sultan. The warrior, in this regard, is just a nationalist common man who is never at the forefront. He is the kind of person who is loyal and religious at the same time with whom the audience is expected to associate itself with. This fits well into the period that is immediately after the declaration of the 1971 Military Memorandum.

5.6.5. Main Points:

Among the fourteen films analyzed in this part about the 1970s, one is about the period of Osman Ghazi, seven about Mehmet II, four about Suleiman, and lastly, only two are about the period after Suleiman. Like the nationalist action/adventure movies of 1965-1971 featuring Ottoman warriors, the focus is on the Ottoman Empire's ascendancy period. This shows that the golden age myth is reproduced in relation to this expansion period, which completes the Turkish

⁷⁶¹ "Sana, ailene ve Türklere layık bir gelin olmaya çalışacağım."

History Thesis. At this point, *Kadıhan*, which depicts the establishment period, and *Kara Pençe*, which shows the post-Suleiman period, reveal the two endpoints of nationalist mythmaking in terms of timespan. The filmmakers were not interested in periods in which the Sultan has been impotent following the reign of Suleiman. This approach also works to underline the myth of decline, which provides the opportunity to take the establishment of the Republic as a new beginning. The period of Ottoman establishment, in this context, is significant to manifest that the Ottomans went through several hardships in establishing the empire. *Kadıhan*, using a didactic tone, connects the establishment, ascendancy, and the Turkish Republic. In a way, it manifests the ‘true national lineage’ to the audience with a reproduction of the myth of ancestral continuity.

In line with the rise of conservative nationalism, the films of the 1970s never depict the Ottoman Empire only as a Turkish one. According to them, it is also Muslim, and in fact, the Muslim element comes to the fore more often than the Turkish element. This reveals through the abundant use of religious symbols such as pray and the Shahadah in different scenes, including those depicting the everyday life of the warrior, as in the case of *Kara Pençe*. Such an increase in the use of these symbols is accompanied by the presence of more bloody scenes showing not only the cruelty of the enemy but also the cruelty of ‘us.’ In connection to that, the films reproduce the myth of national homeland in relation to a much more limited territory. The warriors, therefore, mostly fight either in Anatolia or the Balkans. The narrative incorporation of several Aegean islands is also noteworthy, because it shows that the films made use of the Cyprus issue. At this point, for the first time, those places which are out of the boundaries of modern-day Turkey are shown as connected to the empire through taxation rather than being originally Turkish. This contributes to the myth of benevolent conquerors by conveying the message that Turks do not kill or forcefully convert those places they conquer; instead, they make them pay taxes. Besides, to legitimize the warrior’s cause and increase the drama, a Turkish village attacked by the enemy is always added to the picture. In fact, as there happens a shrinkage in the imagined borders, the number of enemies increases. But since it is hard and complicated to portray them separately, a totalizing and simplified category is adopted. It is Christians, so no matter which state they represent, that all have the same purpose of erasing Turks from the world. Therefore, Christian characters are represented homogeneously. Besides, they all wear the same costumes, and they are mostly played by the same actors and actresses. This might be related to financial concerns on the one hand, but on the other hand, it contributes to the homogenization of the enemy.

As in other films, the warrior serves the legitimate ruler. Among these rulers, Osman Ghazi and Mehmet II are depicted in line with Girardet's myth of Alexander, who is young, dynamic, and active. Suleiman's depiction, however, is different. He is older, much more experienced, more serious, and tougher. He is also unreachable and therefore is not depicted in all films taking place during his reign. At this point, the fact that no Sultan after Suleiman is portrayed could be related to the perception of the later Ottoman rulers as impotent. In fact, from Osman Ghazi to Mehmet III, the Sultan visually gets lost. The warrior, then, is inserted into the state structure and starts to relate to the center through some bureaucrats. Besides, with other warriors' addition into the picture and complicated life stories as in the Kara Murat series, the warrior gradually becomes much more anonymous. This does not allow any of the warriors to come to the forefront and shine. Instead, he is reduced to 'one of many' as always under state control and receiving bureaucrat's orders. Therefore, the warrior is just a nationalist and conservative ordinary member of the warrior nation. He is, in fact, the ideal type of Turkish person who is loyal and religious at the same time with whom the audience is expected to associate itself with. He is also insignificant, easily controllable, hence more loyal than free riders of 1965-1971. This reproduction of the myth of the national warrior perfectly fits into the oppressive environment of the 1970s.

5.7. Concluding Remarks:

The period between 1965-1980 was vibrant in terms of nationalist action/adventure movies with historical settings. The heroes in those films take revenge from internal and external enemies. Given the rise of aggressive nationalism and conservative right at this period, besides the bitter effects of the oil crisis, economic inequalities, successive coalition governments, and the Cyprus issue, the forty-three available films contribute significantly to the reproduction of nationalist political myths. In this regard, the warriors in the films could represent the common man who is idealized as a nationalist and loyal warrior in the legitimate ruler's service. As a result, the period witnessed the national warrior's gradual transformation from an active, free-spirited, and secular warrior into a more traditional, conservative, religious, and violent man. This depiction fits well into the post-March 12 political atmosphere in which social movements were severely suppressed, and the young and idealist national warrior of the pre-1965 period was lost.

The films could be divided into three main groups depending on the period in which the warriors serve. The first is the films featuring Central Asian warriors in pre-Islamic times. There are seventeen films analyzed in this part: nine from 1965-1971 and eight from the 1970s.

Although the Islamic and aggressive tone of the nationalist action/adventure films increases from 1965-1971 to the 1970s, there is more continuity rather than a change in the case of this first group of films. Complying with the Turkish History Thesis, which considers Central Asia the original homeland, the films reproduce the myth of national continuity since starting with the 4th century. In these films, the warrior fights against numerous enemies, including Byzantium, the Chinese, Vikings, and Vandals. There are also good others except for the Chinese. These warriors fight in an almost limitless area stretching from Central Asia to Northern Europe to the Balkans and China. This presentation connects all these areas and, at the same time, manifests Turks also as protectors of European civilization, contributing to the myth of national mission. Therefore, these films basically justify *Pax Turcica*.

The second group of films depicts Islamic warriors fighting in pre-Ottoman times. These five films could be divided into two subgroups, depending on when the films were shot. The first subgroup is constituted by only one film that was made between 1965-1971. This film is about Alpago, a warrior fighting in Iran and preparing to fight against the Byzantines in Anatolia. This narrative allows the filmmakers to Islamize the national warrior whose religion was not even an issue in the films about the warriors from Central Asia. This Islamization, however, is not represented through Islamic symbols such as azans, prayers, or the Shahadah that are generously used in the films of the 1970s. Instead, some messages are given, such as Alpago making a call to the soldiers of Qutalmish to bow down before Alp Arslan because Muslim Turks will own Anatolia if they unify under the leadership of Alp Arslan (06:20-06:38).⁷⁶² Therefore, this film reproduces the myths of the national warrior and national leader, first, through their Turkishness. The insertion of the warrior in a region other than Anatolia, but close to it, could indicate a distanced approach to religion. This approach, however, changes in the 1970s with the rise of Islamic warriors. So, these films reproduce the myth of the national warrior by reinforcing the Islamic ghazi image through a predominantly Muslim warrior named Battal fighting in Anatolia. This is an indication of a discursive balance shift in favor of Muslimness. In this regard, the enemies are much more violent and cruel, as depicted in quite influential scenes with close shots. Consequently, the myth of the national warrior is reproduced through a conservative family man, a loyal warrior of Islam, and a truly masculine man. This is a clear signal of the rise of aggressive and militant nationalism. Furthermore, unlike other nationalist action/adventure heroes presented between 1965 and 1971, Battal has an official

⁷⁶² “Büyük Selçuklu hakanının önünde eğilin, bütün Türkleri birleşmeye davet ediyorum, Alpaslan’ın etrafında birleşin. O zaman bütün Anadolu Müslüman Türklerin olacaktır.”

title. This could be interpreted as the domestication of the warrior, who is not a free rider anymore but fulfills his mission as a part of the state hierarchy.

The third group of films consisting of twenty-one films takes place during the Ottoman Empire. Seven of these films are from 1965-1971, and fourteen are from the 1970s. Amongst them, eleven are about Mehmet II. This shows that the films reproduce the myth of the golden age in relation to the ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire. For the first subgroup from 1965-1971, Turkishness is more important than being a Muslim, as it could be seen from the occasional use of Islamic references in the *Alpago* case. In the 1970s subgroup, however, the Muslim element comes to the fore more often than the Turkish element in line with the rise of the Turkish Islamic Synthesis. This reveals through the abundant use of religious symbols such as pray and the Shahadah in different scenes, including those depicting the everyday life of the warrior, as in the case of *Kara Penge*. Such an increase in the use of these symbols is accompanied by the presence of more bloody scenes showing not only the cruelty of the enemy but also the cruelty of 'us' as in the case of *Battal Ghazi* films of the same period. For both subgroups, the enemies are Christians. The 1965-1971 films, however, divide Christians into two parts: good and bad Christians. Therefore, there are always some powerful good Christians, such as the dethroned Serbian king, who collaborate with the Turkish side against the bad Christians. However, in the 1970s' group, the good Christians are either Christian slaves used as executioners, or women of others who fall in love with the warrior. This can be interpreted as a mark of increasing aggressiveness against Christians. In this context, the 1965-1971 films take place in relatively extensive geography. This enables the characters to perceive Turks as the representative of oppressed Christians. This could result from the attempts to gain a legitimate status in Europe, and it also justifies the myth of Turks being civilized peace-bringers and benevolent conquerors. The 1970s group, however, fights against all Christians, mainly in a limited area, only encompassing Anatolia and the Balkans. The inclusion of some islands on the Aegean can relate to the Cyprus issue, which occupied the political agenda of the time. Despite that, these places are depicted as linked with the Ottoman Empire through taxation rather than Turkishness. This might be an indication of shrinkage in the imagined borders. It seems that the rulers give up their claim on the whole world in films of the 1970s. Despite that, the number of enemies increases in the 1970s with the insertion of internal enemies into the picture. In fact, the 1965-1971 group does not include internal enemies except *Rüstem Pasha*, who later confirms *Malkoçoğlu*. In the 1970s group, however, some internal enemies seriously threaten the Sultan.

More significantly, the status of the warrior changes through time in parallel to the paradigmatic shift from Turkish History Thesis into Turkish Islamic Synthesis. In the 1970s, the warrior attains an official position, unlike the 1965-1971 warriors who is never in the center of the empire and connected to bureaucrats. He is inserted into the state structure and at some point, he receives commands not directly from the Sultan but some bureaucrats. At this point, with the addition of complicated life stories as in the Kara Murat series or the other warriors, some of which are almost as heroic as the protagonist, the warrior gradually becomes much more anonymous. In other words, he is not the only one who shines anymore. Rather, he is one among many. Thus, through time, the warrior becomes just a nationalist and conservative common member of the warrior nation. This is, in fact, the ideal type of Turkish citizen, who is loyal and religious at the same time with whom the audience is expected to associate itself with. Thus, the 1970s' idealized national warrior is insignificant, anonymous, easily controllable, and, hence, more loyal than free riders of 1965-1971. This reproduction of the myth of the national warrior perfectly fits into the oppressive environment of the 1970s.

CONCLUSION: “Which one of you is Kara Murat?”⁷⁶³

“Which one of you is Kara Murat? Reveal yourself!” (1:11:22). Thus, Davut asks the Turkish inhabitants of Morea, who rise against his unjust policies in *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor (The Giants are Fighting)*. He is a corrupt devshirme pasha that collaborates with the Kingdom of Morea and exploits the Turkish Muslim community by imposing unbearable taxes. Kara Murat is a Janissary commander mistakenly imprisoned by the Sultan because he has told negative things about Davut and his brother, who is the grand vizier Greek Mehmet Pasha. As he runs away with a good pasha’s help, he goes to Morea to prove his loyalty to the Sultan. He aims to punish Davut to provide order and protect the state, nation, and the Sultan, who is the embodiment of all. In Morea, he disguises himself as the new Ottoman governor appointed by the center. After he makes sure of Davut’s corruption, he starts to help those who need it by covering his face with a black mask, in the style of Zorro. In one of many instances, he saves a woman when her livestock is about to be taken away by the black knights because she has failed to pay her taxes. For the leader of the community, who is also an imam, Kara Murat is a savior and a folk hero. Realizing all these, Davut interrogates the villagers about Kara Murat, asking them the question above. Although he threatens the villagers that he would impale them if they do not tell where Kara Murat is, each villager risks death and says, “I am Kara Murat” (1:12:42-1:13:01),⁷⁶⁴ one after the other. This is a momentous scene, even a pinnacle of a long journey in my quest for understanding the reproduction of political myths.

Amongst the seventy-one films analyzed in this dissertation, *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor (The Giants are Fighting)* is the latest one shot in 1978. Its protagonist is the crystallized image of the ideal Turkish warrior that has been evolving over the decades. This warrior represents the ‘common man’ or, essentially, the ‘ideal citizen’ who is an obedient nationalist male, a proponent of Sunni Islam with a non-elitist rural background contrary to westernizing elites. He follows the ruler’s orders as his loyal warrior and can even correct him when the ruler is deceived by the enemy, whether internal or external. The ruler is the embodiment of both the nation and the state, and his warrior is like his extension. Since the warrior does not survive without the nation and the state, his cause is always united with the great cause. Therefore, what is good for him is also considered good for the state and the nation. In this regard, due to his bravery and loyalty, in addition to his ordinariness, the warrior is the ideal citizen. It also makes him the best representative of the national will. Since the warrior is

⁷⁶³ “İçinizde Kara Murat kimse ortaya çıksın”

⁷⁶⁴ “Kara Murat benim!”

always expected to be loyal to both the ruler and the state, his will hence the nation's will, is designed around the wishes and interests of the state and the ruler. In fact, the ruler or the state knows what is best for the nation. Therefore, the Kara Murat character stands for the national warrior whose identity has been built on merging the state, the nation, and the ruler. As the idealized member of the Turkish nation, he conquers lands in the name of Islam, takes the revenge of his nation from all its enemies, protects the oppressed people, defeats the enemies sieging the homeland, and threatening the unity of the state hence, the ruler.

How the myth of national warrior is represented in nationalist action/adventure films through Kara Murat and various other warriors besides the political myths about the past, future, and the current situation of the nation are reflections of a particular ideological universe. In this universe, Turkish cinema developed outside of the realm of the state by adapting its own economic system based solely on consumer demands and the purely commercial interests of the filmmakers'. While creating economic opportunities for many people, this alienated elites from the cinema. The unfriendliness between the elites and the filmmakers was, in fact, the product of the struggle between westernizing military-bureaucratic elites and the conservative peripheral elite about who was more *devletlu* and therefore a more appropriate representative of the national will. In the 1960s and 1970s, while cinema was a popular form of entertainment, the electoral balance of Turkish politics had already shifted in favor of the conservative peripheral elite, which manifested itself as the common man's representative against the 'privileged' founding elite. This happened against a backdrop of increasing social movements, economic crisis, Turkey's questioning of its membership in the Western alliance as the Cyprus crisis mounted up, and further militarization of everyday life through both military and non-military means.

In this context, Turkish cinema became a significant playground for the reproduction of political myths out of the realm of the state. Basically, it became an area of everyday life where different nationalist discourses meet and negotiate. What emerged from this was a fusion of unofficial and official discourses of Turkish nationalism working together to reproduce nationalist political myths pertaining to specific contexts during the period. From this perspective, the 1950s' were a transition period in terms of the reproductions of the myths of the golden age. Action/adventure movies with historical settings were mainly dominated by the War of Independence. The Ottoman Empire was depicted in relation to the conquest of İstanbul. The selective appropriation of the Ottoman past can be considered as a step towards Turkification of the past because it justifies the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority and the warriors being benevolent conquerors. Mehmet II is introduced as a tolerant Turkish ruler, and

the conquest is considered an exception to all these representations is the evil depiction of the Bulgarians. This might be an indication of anti-communist leanings of the Turkish political culture. Besides, in these films, the Turkish nation is imagined as a homogeneous body with members fighting for the same interest. Therefore, nothing is provided about the ethnicities and classes of the characters. In this fight, the lower-ranking soldiers always accompany the lieutenants, who are giving orders. None of the characters are represented at the forefront. Therefore, the ideal national warrior is still collaborative and fights as part of a group.

The political myths of the 1960-1965 period were mainly shaped by the May 27 intervention of by the military/bureaucratic elite. The focus was primarily the War of Independence. This time, the filmmakers did not ignore the heterogeneity of the population but reduced it to class-based and hometown-related differences. For example, soldiers with different social backgrounds are depicted as coming from different areas of Turkey. Despite that, they are still homogeneous because they all fight for the national interest in solidarity. No conflict emerges between lower-ranking and higher-ranking soldiers, and no character is at the forefront. Besides, as in previous representations, the Western enemy is depicted as technologically superior, civilized, heroic, and respectful. In this context, for the first time, women of other are inserted into the picture. They appear as the daughters of European commanders. Unsurprisingly, they are never evil. So, as the Turkish nation's heroism influences them, they fall in love with the lieutenant protagonists. Then, they decide to stay in Turkey, leaving their homelands; their fathers also appreciate these choices. This narrative, of course, reproduces the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority.

The first half of the 1960s ended with the Johnson Letter, which marked Turkey's marginalization in the international arena because of the Cyprus crisis. This was also a period of disengagement in the society following the 1965 elections that increased the rhetorical emphasis on the 'common man' with the electoral success of the AP despite the efforts of the founding elite. In addition to the rural-urban one, the generational encounter also contributed to the vibrant political atmosphere of the country. The decade ended with the criminalization of social movements and the leftist leaders' withdrawal from their support. The 1970s started with the 1971 memorandum, which caused the suppression of all political activities besides the execution or imprisonment of the leaders of social movements. Consequently, the disengagement has turned into 'the cut' with the increasing polarization in society. Given 'the cut,' the political outcome of the oil crisis, the opium crisis, and the Cyprus Operation was the formation of national front governments, which implicitly and explicitly prepared convenient conditions for ethnic and religious strife in the country.

The reflection of all these events since 1965 in cinema was the inflation of national warriors fighting in the name of a homogeneous nation both in Central Asian times, the ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire, the War of Independence, and the time of the Cyprus Operation. These warriors are all men of action, rather than men of ideas, who came to the fore. An overwhelming majority do not fight as members of a harmonious group but as loners who are sometimes accompanied by low-profile characters. They are more aggressive, nationalist, violent, and religious than previous warriors. In fact, except for those featuring Central Asian heroes, the films included many religious references, from praying soldiers to hymns. The enemies, therefore, are mostly Christians, particularly Greeks. They are represented as much more evil than ever with scenes in which they attack innocent and unarmed Turkish civilians. Among the enemies, the Greeks were the cruelest. The closeness of the enemy also justifies the Turkish mission. In this vein, the films include many close shots of one-to-one fights between two sides. These scenes help the audience take revenge, at least symbolically, while also justifying the Turkish side's cruelty.

Thus, in 1965-1971, the myth of the national warrior was first forged through a free-spirited raider, who is not a regular soldier and even indistinguishable from civilians. This warrior is far from any marks of state structure and receives orders directly from the ruler as being his loyal warrior. However, as political polarization in the country increased, this active, free-spirited, and secular Turkish warrior was transformed into a more traditional, conservative, religious, and violent man. Besides, as the 'common man' grasped more political power, the warrior has found himself placed in the state hierarchy.

Therefore, the 1970s' idealized national warrior was insignificant, anonymous, easily controllable, and more loyal than the free riders of 1965-1971. This reproduction of the myth of the national warrior perfectly fits into the oppressive environment of the 1970s. Then, given the evolution of the political myth of the national warrior into a more anonymous one, the answer to Davut's question mentioned above as "I am Kara Murat" means that all of 'us' are expected to be Kara Murat(s). Therefore, the image of the national warrior confirms the representation of the idealized Turkish citizen. This citizen is a male, moreover a Muslim male. He must be ready to sacrifice his life voluntarily for the survival of the Turkish ruler, and by extension the nation, state, and homeland, because 'all Turks are born as soldiers,' as the myth of warrior nation puts forth.

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APPENDIX

FILMOGRAPHY

Chapter II:

Allahısmarladık (Goodbye). Directed by Sami Ayanoğlu, 1951: According to the film's opening credits, the film was shot with the support of the Turkish General Staff, land forces, and navy. It takes place in occupied İstanbul and centers on Lieutenant İzzet, who supports the Nationalist Forces. İzzet is responsible for transporting arms from İstanbul to Anatolia to start the War of Independence. One day, he kidnaps Ms. Betty, the daughter of the occupying British commander, as a reaction to a raid, as a result of which many nationalists are put into prison. In the end, Betty and İzzet fall in love with each other. When the occupation has ended, Betty decides to stay in İstanbul together with İzzet.

Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (Hayrettin Barbarossa). Directed by Baha Gelenbevi, 1951: The film focuses on Barbarossa, a commander in the Ottoman army in the 16th century. He fights against Italian Count Vespasio in Fondi Castle, somewhere in the Mediterranean. As he defeats the Count, he takes Countess Julia, the sister of the Count. Meanwhile, Duke Vespasio attacks the Turkish-Muslim community in Lesbos. Then, Barbarossa goes to Lesbos to save his community besides the Christians living there who have been oppressed by Vespasio. Due to his heroic actions, Barbarossa is appointed as the admiral of the Ottoman navy by Suleiman the Magnificent and continues to gain victories despite technological imbalances between the navies of the Ottoman and enemies.

Bulgar Sadık (Sadık the Bulgarian). Directed by Osman Seden, 1954: The film takes place in the 1910s when Bulgarian gangs follow and attack the Turkish-Muslim community migrating to Edirne in Rumelia. These attacks happen despite the just and tolerant regime of the Ottoman Empire in the region. The leading character Sadık who resembles a Bulgarian gang leader named Boris Dasakalov infiltrates the Bulgarians and learns about their plans. Thanks to his help, the Ottoman army becomes successful, and Turkish Muslims continue to migrate safely.

Düşman Yolları Kesti (Enemy Blocked the Road). Directed by Osman Seden, 1959: The film takes place during the War of Independence. A group of nationalists secretly carry munitions and some official documents to Anatolia. They fulfill this mission despite that some of them would be trialed due to betraying the Ottoman Sultan.

İstanbul'un Fethi (The Conquest of İstanbul). Directed by Aydın Arakon, 1951: In its opening credits, the director presents his gratefulness to the army, academics, and administrators for their support. The film takes place in the 15th century during the time of Mehmet II. It tells the story of three Ottoman soldiers spying in Constantinopolis to explore the terrain for helping to the conquest preparations by Mehmet II. It also narrates how the grand vizier Çandarlı Halil Paşa collaborates with Byzantium to catch the three Ottoman spies.

İstiklal Harbi Ruhların Mucizesi (War of Independence, The Miracle of Souls). Directed by Hayri Esen, 1954: According to its opening credits, the film is dedicated to Turkish soldiers. It starts with several documentary scenes from the Gallipoli Campaign and the occupation of İstanbul. Then, the story focuses on the heroism of Lieutenant Süha, who goes to Anatolia to join nationalist forces after resigning from his job as the imperial aide-de-camp. In Anatolia, he shows his heroism in different places. Then, the film devotes a considerable time to showing

how the occupying forces have brutalized the Turkish-Muslim people of Maraş, Urfa, and Antep. The scenes are also enriched by Atatürk images in different stages of the War of Independence.

İzmir Ateşler İçinde (İzmir is in Fire). Directed by Onur Ergün, 1959: The film is dedicated to those who became martyrs for the fatherland and Turkishness. It tells the story of Kemal, a Turkish soldier pretending to be a journalist to infiltrate the English army. He even replaces an American journalist named Harry in the front, which learns the secret plans of the British army. Meanwhile, he also falls in love with Suzy, the daughter of the commander of occupation armies. Throughout the film, the voiceover summarizes the heroism of Atatürk several times.

Kendini Kurtaran Şehir “Şanlı Maraş” (The City that Saved Itself Glorious Maraş). Directed by Faruk Keleş, 1951: The film is about how the people of Maraş collaborated against the French occupying forces and fought to liberate their cities during the War of Independence. The story starts when French soldiers attack a Turkish girl Zeynep. She is saved by Ali, the leader of the nationalist forces in the city. Throughout the film, the imbalance between the occupying forces and the people of Maraş is emphasized several times. Finally, however, the Turkish-Muslim people, including men and women, of different ages and occupations, become successful.

Meçhul Kahramanlar (Unknown Heroes). Directed by Agah Ün, 1958: The film takes place during the War of Independence and narrates Turkish soldiers' heroism. It also depicts the divisions within the army through Ayşe, whose father supports the Sultan and wants his daughter to marry a Lieutenant like himself. Later, Ayşe also joins the nationalist forces and falls in love with a nationalist soldier named Osman. The film includes many references to internal enemies. Through the end of the film, the voiceover summarizes Atatürk's heroism by accompanying some documentary scenes.

Vatan ve Namık Kemal (Fatherland and Namık Kemal). Directed by Cahide Sonku, Talat Artemel, and Sami Ayanoğlu, 1951: The film tells the story of Namık Kemal, a nationalist poet in the late 19th century. First, the newspaper published by him and his other nationalist friends is shut down, and later they are all put into prison. The film includes many men and women, young and elderly, who desire to join the army against the Russian occupying forces. The last scene consists of an image of Atatürk and unknown heroes.

Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor (Sultan Selim the Resolute is Crying). Directed by Sami Ayanoğlu, 1957: The film tells Yavuz the Resolute's wars and conquests in the East in the 16th century. In the story, the accession of Selim has not been supported by the grand vizier Ali Paşa. Therefore, Selim fights not only against Shah İsmail in Iran but also various internal enemies. The film ends with Yavuz's wish to fight in the Balkans, especially against the Magyars.

Chapter III:

Çanakkale Arslanları (The Lions of Gallipoli). Directed by Turgut Demirağ, 1964: This is one of the rare colored films of the period. It tells the heroic actions of Turkish soldiers in the Gallipoli campaign, particularly against the British enemy. It includes many characters as symbols of different ranks in society. It also makes many references to the heroic actions of Atatürk.

Genç Osman ve Sultan Murat Han (Young Osman and the Sultan Murat). Directed by Yavuz Yalınkılıç, 1962: The film is about the friendship between Sultan Murat IV and a young boy

named Osman in the 17th century. In fact, Osman is the only person that Murat is sure of because, since the day he accessed the throne, he is tried to be manipulated by some internal enemies. Later, he tries to get rid of them while Osman shows his heroism in the Ottoman army.

Harem'de Dört Kadın (Four Women in the Harem). Directed by Halit Refiğ, 1965: The film depicts Sadık Pasha and his harem in the late Ottoman Empire. Sadık wants to get marry Ruhşan from Anatolia. While wedding preparations are being made, Ruhşan falls in love with Cemal, a nationalist Faculty of Medicine student who is also the nephew of Sadık.

İsimsiz Kahramanlar (Nameless Heroes). Directed by Semih Evin, 1964: The film tells the story of two brothers, Ali and Veli, fighting on different sides during İstanbul's occupation. It has severe references to the Ottoman Sultan. The film also includes some documentary scenes with Atatürk.

Silah Arkadaşları (Brothers in Arms). Directed by Şinasi Özonuk, 1962: The film narrates the heroic actions of Lieutenant Doğan in his search for a kidnapped boy. The story takes place somewhere in Anatolia, terrorized by bandits. It includes many references to Atatürk's heroism.

Chapter IV:

Aslan Arkadaşım Kuduz Recep (My Brave Friend Mad Recep). Directed by Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1967: The film centers on Recep, a gang leader who helps nationalist Lieutenant Murat carry gold to Ankara. When anti-nationalists kill Murat, Recep takes the gold to Ankara to support the War of Independence. However, on his way, he gets into a fight against Greek gangs.

Aşkın Zaferi: Aşk ve Vatan (The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland). Directed by Orhan Elmas, 1973: The film tells the story of Oya, a young teacher appointed to a village in Anatolia during the First World War. She is the only teacher of the place which does not even have a school building. There, with the help of two young people Fatma and Bekir, she constructs a building. Meanwhile, an Ottoman corporal assaults Oya and makes her gain a bad reputation. Oya, however, gets the help of Major Suat, and the two join the nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal during the War of Independence.

Ay Yıldız Fedailerini (The Guards of the Crescent and Star). Directed by Semih Evin, 1966: The film focuses on Ahmet, a soldier who fights against the occupying forces during the First World War. He and his friends make some preparations to transfer munitions to Anatolia to support the War of Independence. Thus, the film depicts both internal and external enemies. At the end of the film, Beatrice, the daughter of the occupying forces, falls in love with Ahmet and decides to be one of the guards of crescent and star.

Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe, Directed by Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1969: The film tells the story of a bandit named Çakırcalı Mehmet. He wants to take revenge for his father killed by a low-ranking Ottoman soldier named Hasan during the late Ottoman period. Meanwhile, the state allows the bandits to get back to their homes from the mountains they live in. Hasan, however, ambushes Mehmet and his friends by challenging to state's security of the bandits. Thus, the film basically tells how corrupted the late Ottoman bureaucrats are.

Dişi Düşman (The Female Enemy). Directed by Nejat Saydam, 1966: The film depicts the adventures of a Greek spy named Irene who seeks a Byzantine treasure in İstanbul. However,

there is also Şemsi and his friends who are after the same treasure. Meanwhile, Irene deceives Cengiz, who falls in love with her. The film, then, tells how these Turks spoil Irene's plans. Although the film takes place in the 1960s and includes many direct references to the Cyprus issue, a large part is devoted to the origins of the Byzantine treasure hidden during the Ottoman conquest of İstanbul.

Fedailer Mangası (The Guards Draft). Directed by İlhan Engin, 1971: The film is about the heroic actions of nine Turkish soldiers who set the road to go to the Suez front from Anatolia during the First World War. These soldiers, led by Cemal, are all from different parts of Turkey. They fight together against the British to save the lives of thousands of other soldiers on that front.

Hora Geliyor Hora (Hora is Coming Hora). Directed by Remzi Jöntürk, 1976: Although he is an old veteran soldier, Himmet joins the crew of Hora, an oil exploration ship, during the Cyprus Operation in 1974. On the ship, Himmet remembers the heroism of Turks in the Gallipoli campaign. Therefore, memories of Himmet, the film provides many documentary scenes and flashbacks related to the Gallipoli Campaign, although it takes place in contemporary times.

İzmir'in Kavakları: Çavdarlı Murat. Directed by Sırrı Gültekin, 1966: The film depicts the rivalry between a poor boy Murat and Tahir, a bandit forcefully takes the properties of poor people in the late Ottoman Empire. The leading cause of the rivalry between the two is Elif, the girl they love. The girl is Elif, who is the daughter of the aga. When Murat kidnaps Elif, she feels humiliated, and Murat becomes her biggest enemy. Murat then escapes to the mountain and continues to fight against Tahir while at the same time trying to convince Elif. On the other hand, the aga is a cruel man oppressing the villagers in collaboration with the Greeks and corrupted Ottoman bureaucrats. Therefore, Murat also fights against some internal and external enemies.

Kahramanlar Bayrak (The Heroes are Flag). Directed by Remzi Jöntürk, 1974: The film tells the story of İstanbul's occupation by the Allied Powers in the First World War. A group of nationalists in İstanbul join the national resistance in Anatolia under the leadership of Colonel Fikret.

Kozanoğlu. Directed by Atıf Yılmaz, 1967: The film depicts the story of Hüseyin from Kozanoğlu family. He turns into a folk hero as he decides to take revenge on his father, murdered by an Ottoman officer because he rejected unjust taxes. He fights against oppressed villagers, including oppressive rulers and some bandits in the late Ottoman Empire.

Köroğlu. Directed by Atıf Yılmaz, 1968: The film is about the fight of Ruşen Ali, whose father, Yusuf, has been blinded by Bolu's landlord as a punishment because the landlord did not like the horse provided by Yusuf. Ali then becomes a folk hero fighting against an unjust landlord.

Tek Kollu Bayram (Bayram with Single Arm). Directed by Erdoğan Tokatlı, 1973: The film tells the story of Bayram, who fights against Cafer, the cruel landlord for the girl he loves. This girl is Cemile, the daughter of a landlord named Üzeyir. Cafer is also a collaborator of the Greeks during the War of Independence. Therefore, Bayram fights to save Cemile and the entire village from Cafer's oppression besides defeating the Greek enemy.

Chapter V:

Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, the Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom). Directed by Kemal Kan, 1972: The film takes place in the 16th century, the period of Suleiman the Magnificent. It tells the story of the raider Çal Hasan and his friends' fight against the Holy Alliance in Austria-Hungarian borderlands. The raiders conquer the Castle of Esztergom.

Alpaslan'ın Fedaisi Alpago (Alpaslan's Guard Alpago). Directed by Nejat Saydam, 1967: The film narrates the commander Alpago's heroic actions in saving Ayşim Sultan from the hands of Hasan Sabbah, who collaborates with Byzantium in the 11th century. Ayşim is the sister of the Seljuk Sultan Alparslan, and he is the one assigning Alpago this duty. In fact, Ayşim has already fallen in love with Alpago.

Asyanın Tek Atlısı Baybars (The Only Horseman of Asia). Directed by Kemal Kan, 1971: Baybars is assigned by the Hun emperor Attila in the 4th-5th century. He fights against Byzantium and Western Roman Empire, who want to stop Attila's advance in the Danube. He saves Plintas, the commander of Muncuk Castle, who bows down Attila but has been put into prison by the priest Lucas and commander Zenon, the rebellious administrators that aim to establish a new empire against Turks.

Atlıhan. Directed by Naki Yurter, 1973: The film takes place in medieval times in central Asia, the castle of Urumçi. Atlıhan is the raider of Ghengis Khan and fights against black knights.

Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi). Directed by Atif Yılmaz, 1971: The film tells the story of Cafer, the raider of Malatya Principality in the 8th century. When the Byzantine kills his father, Hüseyin Ghazi, Cafer decides to take his revenge. He meets Hammer, a great Byzantine warrior and his father's friend, on his way to Byzantium. Later, Hammer converts into Islam, and Cafer and Hammer fight together.

Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1972: The film narrates Battal's fight against the Black Knight Alfonso, who killed his wife and kidnapped her son in the 8th century. As a result, Alfonso raises Battal's son as a Christian. Later, Battal takes revenge and saves his son.

Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1974: In the 8th century, Battal takes revenge on Antuan, who killed his family. Then, Antuan kills Battal and annexes Malatya principality. He even orders the killing of every newborn boy in the land. However, Battal Gazi's wife puts her son in a basket and leaves it to float down the river. Antuan's wife finds the abandoned baby by the river and adopts him, having just lost her newborn son herself. Consequently, Battal Gazi's son is raised in the Byzantine palace as a Christian. However, he finds out his actual identity and takes revenge of his father.

Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Ghengis Khan's Guard). Directed by Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973: The film takes place in medieval times. Celmenoyan, the raider of Ghengis Khan, takes revenge for his father killed by the Chinese. He also fights against Camoka, who collaborates with the Chinese. On the other hand, Chinese princess Sarı Çiçek falls in love with Celmenoyan.

Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom). Directed by Kemal Kan, 1972: The film narrates the conquest of Esztergom castle by the raider Çal Hasan and his friends during Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century. He fights against Magyars and the Holy Alliance.

Gültekin: Asya Kartalı (Gültekin: Asian Eagle). Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1968: The film tells Gültekin's fight against the Vikings in medieval times. Vikings kill his family and the people in his tribe and at the same time capture Meço Khan, their leader. Gültekin, then, fights to save Meço Khan and his daughter Bige, who falls in love with Gültekin through the end of the film.

Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of Khans). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1977: The film tells the story of a Göktürk warrior named Olcayto who takes revenge of his father in Turkistan, Central Asia. On the day of his birth in 55 BC., which is also the day of the Ergenekon feast, Olcayto's oba is attacked by the Chinese. First, Olcayto's father's arm is slaughtered in this raid because the Chinese want to be the owner of kızılтуғ, a power symbol. Then the father is murdered before the eyes of Olcayto. When Olcayto grows up, he seeks revenge against the Chinese and fights as a loyal raider of Tigin, the khan who aims to unite all Turkic tribes. Meanwhile, Olcayto's son and wife are also kidnapped, and he also fights to save them.

Kadıhan. Directed by Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1976: The film tells the story of Osman Ghazi's raider Kadıhan in the 13th century just before the foundation of the Ottoman state. He helps Osman Ghazi in eliminating rival principalities besides the Roman forces in northwestern Anatolia. The film's end includes long documentary scenes from the feasts dedicated to Ertuğrul Ghazi, Osman's father.

Kara Murat Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1977: The film tells Kara Murat, who aims to rescue the kidnapped Yunus Pasha, admiral of the Ottoman army in the 15th century during Mehmet II's reign. Yunus has been captured by the Black pirate, presumably Greek. Murat infiltrates into the pirates and rescues Yunus Pasha and his crew.

Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1978: The film tells the story of Kara Murat saving a grand vizier whom former Greek viziers have slandered. Murat fights in the 15th century during the time of Mehmet II. His fight is basically against corrupted Greek-originated bureaucrat Kani Pasha manipulating the administration of Pelaponesyus to replace the Grand Vizier with the help of his corrupted brother, Davut Pasha, who is the commander of the Ottoman army in Pleaponnessus. Disguised as the new governor of the peninsula, Murat finds out their secret plans and proves who is more loyal and trustable among the bureaucrats to the Sultan.

Kara Murat Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1972: The film tells the fight of Kara Murat against Vlad the Impaler in the 15th century during the time of Mehmet II. When Murat is a little child, his brother Hamza gets killed by Vlad, who does not want to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire, although that territory has been under the control of the Ottomans. Then, Murat decides to become a raider of the Sultan to take revenge. When he grows up as a Janissary, he is assigned by the Sultan to take Wallachia under control. In the enemy lands, Murat meets Angela, a Turkish girl kidnapped and converted by Vlad. With her help, Murat somehow infiltrates the enemy castle. Finally, Murat kills Vlad by impaling him.

Kara Murat Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1973: The film tells the story of Kara Murat fighting in the 15th century as a raider of Mehmet II. His goal is to take revenge of his mother and the Byzantine Princess Irene, whom the Sultan has fallen in love with. At the same time, Murat rescues the Turkish-Muslim community, which is terrorized by

Byzantines who migrated to Lesbos. At one point, he infiltrates the palace by disguising himself as a Christian man named Kosta and finally kills the Byzantine commander named Nikola.

Kara Murat Kara Şövalye'ye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1975: The film takes place in the 15th century when Kara Murat fights as a raider of Mehmet II. When he is a little child, Murat's father, who is a raider, is murdered, and his twin brother Mehmet is kidnapped by the black knight. Later, this knight named Prince Carlos does not want to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire and terrorizes Turkish villages. Murat, then, is assigned by the Sultan to defeat him. For Murat, this is an opportunity to take revenge of his father and find out his brother. In fact, he learns that his brother has been grown up as a Christian with his name changed into Mark and appointed as the commander of Prince Carlos' army. So first, Murat and Mark fight, and later Mark is told about his real identity by Murat.

Kara Murat Ölüm Emri (Death Command). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1974: The film takes place in the 15th century during the time of Murat II, the father of Mehmet II. Prince Mehmet assigns Murat to discover the Byzantine plans of using Prince Orhan to destroy the Ottoman Empire. So Murat infiltrates into the Byzantine palace as a guard named Kosta. He also protects Prince Mehmet from Olympia, the Byzantine Princess, who wants to poison Mehmet to eliminate the Ottomans and become the Ottoman lands' queen.

Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffar'a Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar). Directed by Natuk Baytan and Ernst Hofbauer, 1976: Murat fights against Sheikh Gaffar in the 15th century for Mehmet II, who wants to extend the eastern borders of the Ottoman Empire. This sheikh does not want to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire, so the Sultan assigns Murat to defeat him. In his fight, Murat also finds out how the sheikh uses opium to manipulate people and form an army for himself. Meanwhile, Murat's brother Turhan is also given opium by the sheikh and kept as a hostage. Therefore, Murat also has a personal cause in fighting with the enemy.

Kara Pençe (The Black Claw). Directed by Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973: The film tells the story of Kara Pençe, a raider in the 16th century. He is a poor peasant boy who does not know who his father is. However, he falls in love with the landlord Ali's daughter, Ayşe. When Ali finds out about their relationship, he attempts to kill Osman, so Osman runs away. On his way, he joins Turkish raiders on their mission in the Balkans against the Magyars led by Count Fley. Unfortunately, the Count also attacks the raider's village and kills his mother and Ayşe. During this fight, the raider proves his strength and courage while at the same time learning that his father is one of the other raiders with him.

Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Paw). Directed by Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973: Kara Pençe fights to conquer the Remn Castle, which is a strategic place to capture Kanjiza. Meanwhile, he gets married to Count Fley's sister İbolya, whom her brother murders. Therefore, for the raider, the fight against the Magyars has a personal meaning as well.

Karaoğlan Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai). Directed by Suat Yalaz, 1965: The film narrates Karaoğlan's story who fights against Kaşgarlı Burhan, the vizier of Ghengis Khan. This vizier is, in fact, a corrupted bureaucrat and aims to kill Ghengis Khan. However, for Karaoğlan, he is a closer enemy because he is the one who has killed Karaoğlan's mother years ago and put Karaoğlan's father into prison. Karaoğlan, then, sets the road to protect Ghengis and take revenge of his parents. On his way, he meets Balaban, and they decide to fight together. He also defeats the Mongolian Camoka, who tries to capture Ülger, the woman he falls in love with.

Karaođlan Bayboranın Ođlu (Baybora's Son). Directed by Suat Yalaz, 1966: This is the story of Karaođlan, who comes to Byzantium from Central Asia to rescue his father. The Byzantine emperor mistakenly thinks that Karaođlan may get rid of Baybora, who is still threatening Byzantium. Later Karaođlan saves Baybora, and they fight together against the enemy

Karaođlan Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant). Directed by Suat Yalaz, 1966: The film tells the story of Karaođlan in the 13th century. He fights against Vasileas, the cruel Emperor of Byzantium. He is accompanied by Eleni, the daughter of the priest who seeks Karaođlan's help to get rescued from the hands of the Emperor that wants to marry her. Throughout the story, Karaođlan is supported by his father, Baybora, and the two reject any monetary gains after Karaođlan kills Vasileas.

Karaođlan Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge). Directed by Suat Yalaz, 1966: The film tells about Camoka, who survives the fight with Karaođlan and wants to take revenge for the defeat. So he seeks Karaođlan, and when he finds out the village Karaođlan stays, he raids there. Karaođlan, however, has already started to make some preparations against him, so the villagers, including women, are all ready to fight.

Karaođlan Geliyor: Cengiz Hanın Hazineseri (Karaođlan is Coming: Ghengis Han's Treasures). Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1972: The film tells the story of Karaođlan, who looks for Ghengis Khan's treasure. In fact, once upon a time, Ghengis Khan appoints Karaođlan's father Otsukarci and Tokta to protect his grave when he dies because his treasure has been buried with him. Tokta, however, wants to own the treasure and so steal it. For this purpose, he wants to eliminate Otsukarci threat and so kills Otsukarci's wife and kidnaps his son Karaođlan. Karaođlan then runs away from his hands, becomes a grown-up, and fights to avenge his family and find the treasure. In the end, Otsukarci and Karaođlan defeat Tokta, bring the treasure back to loyal soldiers. They think that the treasure could be helpful for the order of the country.

Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago (Armless Hero: Alpago). Directed by Nejat Saydam, 1966: The film takes place in Central Asia in Medieval times. It tells the story of Alpago, who gets his name as he takes revenge of his father and at the same time fights for the Göktürk khan Gültekin against the Chinese.

Malkoçođlu Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming). Directed by Süreyya Duru, Remzi Jöntürk, 1969: The film tells the story of Malkocoglu, who fights against Byzantium and Serbia in the 15th century during the time of Mehmet II. The main evil character is the Byzantine Prince Nikola, who aims to collaborate with the Serbians against the Ottomans. Therefore, he plans to marry Beatrice, the daughter of Serbian king Philip. Malkoçođlu attacks Nikola's palace, then infiltrates into King Philip's palace by introducing himself as Nikola. There, he fights against King Philip, too. Malkoçođlu also rescues Orban, an iron founder and engineer whose bombarding technology would be helpful to the Ottomans in the siege of Constantinople in the following years, from the hands of Byzantium.

Malkoçođlu Avrupa'yi Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe). Directed by Süreyya Duru, 1966: The film tells the story of Malkoçođlu, who fights against Prince Lazar, one of the sons of the deceased Serban king, Brankovich, in the 15th century during the time of Mehmet II. Brankovich leaves the throne to his son Greguar who is loyal to the Ottoman Empire and praises its just administration. However, this other son Lazar takes power into his hands by force. Lazar is the enemy of Turks and collaborates with the Magyars against the Ottomans.

Then, Mehmet II assigns Malkoçoğlu the duty of killing Lazar and giving the throne back to the legitimate heir, that is Greguar. Besides, the Serbian spy Belushi and the internal enemy İshak Pasha also make plans against Malkoçoğlu. In the meantime, Illiona, the sister of Lazar and Greguar, falls in love with Malkoçoğlu.

Malkoçoğlu: Cem Sultan. Directed by Remzi Jöntürk, 1969: The film tells the story of Malkoçoğlu who aims to rescue his blood brother Cem Sultan from the hands of the Spanish state and the internal enemy Rütem Pasha. Meanwhile, he also meets the shepherd and peasant Polat, who escapes from his village because he has killed Sarı Cafer for taking the girl he loves. Polat, then, wants to become a raider and joins Malkoçoğlu and his friends on their mission. Later, it is found out that Polat is the son of Malkoçoğlu.

Malkoçoğlu Kara Korsan (Malkoçoğlu The Black Pirate). Directed by Süreyya Duru, 1968: The film tells the fight between Malkoçoğlu and the cruel Spanish Prince Lucio. It is the time of the Spanish Inquisition, and during that time, Spain raids and massacres European lands in the 15th century. One day Lucio attacks Ainos in the Ottoman Empire and captures Prince Osman. So, Malkoçoğlu is assigned by Bayezid II to rescue the Prince and defeat Lucio. Hiding his real identity and introducing himself as a pirate named Ojeda, he fights against Lucio's men. He also saves the peasants whom Lucio is terrorizing.

Malkoçoğlu Krallara Karşı (Malkoçoğlu against Kings). Directed by Süreyya Duru, Remzi Jöntürk, 1967: The film tells the story of Malkoçoğlu's fight against Vlad the Impaler in the 15th century. It starts when Vlad attacks Malkoçoğlu's village, destroys his house, murders his wife and kidnaps his son named Polat while Makoçoğlu is in a campaign. On his way to take revenge, Malkoçoğlu finds out that Vlad forms his army by hypnotizing people including Polat. At the end, Malkoçoğlu kills Vlad.

Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey. Directed by Süreyya Duru, 1972: The film tells the story of Kurt Bey, the raider of Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century. He is the son of Malkoçoğlu, another great raider murdered during a raid by the soldiers of the Holy Alliance. Before dying, he divides the map of a Christian treasure between his twin sons Doğan bey and Kurt bey. However, Doğan bey is kidnapped by the Iranian Mahmut, a man of Prince Murat who collaborates with the Christians to seize both the treasure and the Ottoman throne. Meanwhile, Doğan bey is raised as a Christian and becomes an army commander. On the other hand, Kurt bey is assigned to fight against Prince Murat and the Christians terrorizing the Turkish villages in the Balkans. The two brothers meet when Malkoçoğlu's village is also attacked. Doğan bey remembers his origins, and then they defeat the enemy together.

Malkoçoğlu Ölüm Fedaileri (Gurds of Death). Directed by Remzi Jöntürk, 1971: The film tells the story of Malkoçoğlu and his raider friends fighting against the Crusaders and Toronto prince Arnold in the 15th century, during the time of Mehmet II. The goal of Arnold is to ally with Serbia to eliminate the Ottoman Empire. For this purpose, he plans to marry Princess Elsa, the daughter of the Serbian King Mirkovich, and take Prince Enrico, the little heir to the Serbian throne, under his protection. Meanwhile, Arnold's men murder Mirkovich. Malkoçoğlu, the, is assigned by Mehmet II to save the princess and the Prince, who is considered the legitimate heir to the Serbian throne.

Mete Han. Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1969: The film is about the fight between Mete Khan and the Romans in the 3rd century BCE around the Mezit Castle in northwestern Anatolia. Mete Khan is the son of Kürşat, a prominent commander and soldier. In his quest, he is helped by

Akçakoca, the leader of the Turkish community there. Meanwhile, the Roman governor of Mezit plans to ally with the commander Samas by marrying his daughter Anet to him. Thus, he aims to protect his throne and the castle from Turkish attacks. Samas, on the other hand, has plans to seize the governor's throne. In the end, Mete Khan does not only save Anet but also conquers the Mezit castle.

Tarkan. Directed by Tunç Başaran, 1969: The film tells the story of Tarkan, who is assigned to find a legendary sword by Attila, the leader of the Great Hunnic Empire in Medieval times. This sword is very significant because the one who holds it is considered the ruler of the world. The only person who knows where the sword is the priest Moro. Tarkan fights against the Vandals and the Roman Empire in his search for the sword.

Tarkan Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion). Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1972: The film is about Tarkan's fight against the Vandals to save Attila's wife Honoria and son in Medieval times. Honoria is, in fact, the daughter of the King of the Western Vandal and so is murdered by the Vandals. In the end, Tarkan rescues Attila's son and also defeats Gosha, the female magician/witch who hypnotizes people.

Tarkan Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle). Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1970: The film is about Tarkan's fight against the commander of Alans named Kostov, who has killed his father, Altar, in Medieval times. The story starts with Tarkan's childhood and reveals how heroic he has been since the beginning. His father, Altar, is a heroic raider too, and the owner of the silver saddle that has been given to him by Attila as a reward after Altar defeated the Alas. However, one day, his village has been attacked and terrorized again. Altar and Altar's wife are murdered in this fight, the older son is enslaved, and the younger son Tarkan is somehow rescued. After this, Tarkan is raised by wolves in a cave. Tarkan decides to avenge his family when he is fully grown up, and the Alans threaten all the Huns.

Tarkan Güçlü Kahraman (Strong Hero). Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1973: The film centers on Tarkan, who wants to find the golden sword in a Chinese temple at the beginning of Medieval times. Attila assigns him that duty because he wants to expand his empire's borders, and the one who owns the golden sword is considered the country's ruler. However, while Tarkan is on his way to find the sword, the Chinese Emperor also assigns his soldiers for the same purpose. In the end, Tarkan succeeds in taking the sword after many battles.

Tarkan Viking Kanı (Viking Blood). Directed by Mehmet Aslan, 1971: In the film, Tarkan fights against the Vikings and Chinese as Attila's raider in Medieval times. He is assigned to protect Attila's daughter Yonca. According to the story, the Vikings are expanding their borders and also collaborating with the Chinese. The Viking king Toro even agreed with China to capture and later surrender Yonca to them. However, Toro has not been the legitimate King because he has forcefully seized political power by putting the legitimate King named Gero into prison. Meanwhile, Gero's daughter Ursula comes to the Viking castle and fights together with Tarkan

Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming). Directed by Natuk Baytan, 1973: The film tells the story of Battal, who fights against the Black Knight, representing the Christians aiming to establish a kingdom in Anatolia by eliminating Turks. Battal, the commander of Malatya principality, is depicted as an older man. After proving how heroic he is in many races, such as sword-girding and horse-riding, Battal's son Seyyid Battal replaces him. For the Christians, the young and inexperienced commander might be an opportunity to take Anatolia. So, the Black Knight attacks Malatya, kills people, including

Seyyid Battal's sister, and captures his father. Then, Seyyid Battal takes revenge for everything and protects Malatya from falling into the hands of Christians.

Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan. Directed by Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1975.: This film is the story of Çal Hasan, who fights against Spain and the Catholic Church in the 16th century, during the time of Suleiman the Magnificent. He fights in Andalusia to rescue the Muslim community brutalized by the Catholic Church. His raider friend Bal Hasan accompanies him, and they help Muslims escape from Andalusia with an Ottoman ship. They protect the ship until it arrives on the Spanish coast.

Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saves the Fatherland). Directed by Tunç Başaran, 1966: The story takes place in Edirne in the 14th century. The raider Kılıçaslan fights for Orhan Ghazi and the Prince Murat. The story starts when Orhan Ghazi assigns Murat to the throne and wants his other sons Halil and İbrahim, to work for Murat. However, Halil and İbrahim have their own plans and want to capture the throne. For doing this, they even make some secret agreements with the Byzantine. As Orhan Ghazi and Murat find out about those, Kılıçaslan is sent away to fight with them. On his way, Kılıçaslan cooperates with some other raiders. As a result, they defeat not only Byzantium but also other princes.