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Cinema as Carrier of Memory & Transformation of the Image of the Greek/Turkish Citizen of Greek Descent in Turkish Cinema

Abstract: Cinema is the most efficient memory tool which carries the past into our day. The perspective of the film maker takes on significance, it can dominate the masses, shape opinions, and transmit the social traumas encountered in the past to future generations. On the one hand, the ways in which the traumas experienced by the Greeks and/or Greek of Turkish nationality minorities who once lived in Turkey are transmitted through cinema are indicators of the state policies in that period; on the other hand they constitute data about certain periods during which the relations have been shaped positively or negatively. While the image of the Greek and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent has historically been represented negatively in Turkish cinema, it is replaced by more moderate perspectives today, parallel to Turkish-Greek politics. In this study, we shall deal first with the significance of cinema as a space of memory, mentioning the 6–7 September Pogrom, which caused Turkish citizen of Greek descent to be separated from their homelands, and the Cyprus events of 1964 followed by the exile of Turkish citizen of Greek descent. We will discuss the recent period of Turkish cinema, dealing with this 1964 exile of Turkish citizen of Greek descent in the movies ‘*Sürgün*’ (Exile, Erol Özlevi, 2013) and ‘*Çalsın Sazlar*’ (Let the Instruments Play, Nesli Çölgeçen, 2015) within the framework of cinema and memory. We will also document the transformation of the image of Greek and/or Greek of Turkish nationality in Turkish cinema, following the storytelling concept of Michael Schudson.

Introduction

‘I start making a journey in time while I remember, within seconds I go to a distant corner of my past, meeting the ones I have lost already, then return back to my present ...’, says Münir Göle (Göle, 2007: 29) while talking about remembering. Cinema, which is itself a journey in time, has the capacity to play freely with time in a film. It stops time, multiplies it, turns it back; it unites all times in this moment. Showing such slices of time to the masses transforms cinema into an

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enormous visual archive, into a space of memory, just like the memory. Memory is a space of memory which enables the past to be present in the present time. The past influences today thanks to memory, and it contributes to the construction of perspectives and opinions.

Cinema is a significant tool in terms of documenting the traumas which the minorities in Turkey, especially the Turkish citizen of Greek descent, faced in Turkish history because of the periodical effects of the Turkish-Greek relations. Just like the mass media tools such as newspapers, radio and television can dominate society, the way in which the moviemaker is dealing with history can also both harden feelings of animosity and hate, and enhance feelings of friendship and tolerance among the people.

Works of cinema also have influence over the social memory by carrying the events of memories of the past into present as a fiction. In this study, we shall elaborate on how cinema, by scripting history, deals with the storytelling process, which Michael Schudson lists among the distortion processes in collective memory, while also mentioning the significance of cinema as a memory carrier. By determining how the image of a Greek or a Turk has been dealt with in Turkish cinema from its start to the present parallel to the political relations of Turkey and Greece. The present situation shall be exposed by way of looking at two recent movies about the exile of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent in 1964 as a consequence of the Cyprus events.

1. Cinema as a Space of Memory

The philosophers who produce ideas about the concept of time try to understand the past, the present and the future. According to Augustinus, every point in time must be seen as the present moment. The past should not be seen as something which is left in the past. The past still influences this moment. When the past is remembered and told, the image of the narrated is visible in the present time; it is still within the memory. What is expressed within this context is that there is indeed no distinction between the three points in time, but that the present time has three different aspects: the present in relation to the past: a memory; present in relation to the present: momentary vision; and the present in relation to the future: expectation.

Cinema, in today's world, is the most influential communication tool which shapes social memory. Cinema is the bridge connecting the oral culture with the written culture, but also with the visual culture in which we are living; it is the apparatus which creates our visual memory in the most effective way. Cinema was a scientific invention, a tool of entertainment which turned the perception

of reality of the audience upside down, which recreating the animated motions of everyday life when the first mass screening was performed at Paris Grand Café, in 1895. Soon, it turned into a form of art, then into an industry, which is its defining characteristic today. While the manipulative effects of cinema were discovered during the wars, its power of driving the masses was employed especially during the Second World War, in the propaganda films of the National Socialists in Germany. Documentary cinema, which is recording the existing, turned into the leading tool for social movements and issues, even proposing solutions by announcing the problems in distant corners of the world to the masses.

We experience today in relation to our memory, depending on our knowledge about the past. The past influences our opinions about today in our memory. In this sense, it is very important to know how the past history is established and upon which we build. Paul Connerton, when he is stressing the importance of the social memory which may be called the re-establishment of history, states that the knowledge of all human actions performed in the past can only be achieved by starting from the tracks our predecessors have left. He emphasises that the practice of re-establishing history can find a leading, driving power within the memories of social groups and consequently, it may have important contributions to shaping the memories of said social groups (Connerton, 1992: 25–27). Maurice Halbwachs, one of the most important social theoreticians researching memory, states in his works *The Social Frameworks of Memory* and *On Collective Memory* that individuals can draw from their collective memories through their membership to a social group and especially through their kinship, religious and class connections and they can remember them by fixating on a certain place.

Especially the visual codes, as they function as the stimuli of the memory, transmit the dominant discourse. Asuman Susam emphasises that cinema too has an important role, in the fictionalisation of memory and healing traumatic recollections by transforming memory into narrative (Susam, 2015). While cinema, which performs the reproduction of the real world through representation, has an effective power especially in reinforcing the discourse of political power and shaping society in this way, at the same time, it is influential in presenting distinct perspectives by showing those invisible things which are left which have been disregarded and unknown to the masses.

Since cinema is a memory tool which carries over the past to today in terms of social and historical events, it also assumes a significant role in preventing the loss of and recalling history. Jan Assman emphasises that in order for an experienced event to be able to stay in the memory of a group, it must be enriched with a meaningful reality (Assman, 2015: 46).

On the other hand, it is nearly impossible to escape from the images in the new forms of social life. These images in turn influence our social memory and the social memory influences the images. Today, a modern human being living in today's society perceives everything through images and symbols (Ateş, 2003:1). Now, in the society in which we are living and where experience is everything, everything is symbolic. Our age is the age of the image.

Image is in the sense of a fictional look which is performed in a certain social position for a certain aim. This look is coded and equipped in order to reach a certain target in a fictionalisation process and the level of availability of this coding is the measure of its success. This emphasises the instrumentality of the image. The fact that the image not only represents itself, but also stands for another image leading it to be branded as being misleading. (Türkoğlu, 2000: 103).

In a social order where the tools of communication are dominant, image comes to the forefront as an important concept for creating the required 'difference' for the individual to be meaningful among the short messages, fast-flowing pictures and fictionalised realities (Yıldız, 2002:13). In today's modern production and social conditions, which are shaped by the tools of communication, entire life is seen as an 'accumulation of performances'. In the expression of Guy Debord: In a society of performances, everything, which an individual has not experienced personally, is replaced by a representation, an appearance or an image. In a society where the real world is transformed into simple images, the simple images in turn are transformed into real entities and into affecting stimuli triggering a hypnotic behaviour (Debord, 1996: 17–18). Everything which has been lived through indirectly in the past gave its place to a representation (look or image) in the modern society and went far away. Thus, what is lived through is not real, but only a representation of reality:

The images detached from every aspect of life fuse in a common stream in which the unity of this life can no longer be reestablished. Reality considered partially unfolds, in its own general unity, as a pseudo-world apart, an object of mere contemplation. The specialization of images of the world is completed in the world of the autonomous image, where the liar has lied to himself. The spectacle in general, as the concrete inversion of life, is the autonomous movement of the non-living (Debord, 1996: 13).

And cinema too, which re-establishes reality through images, and even has made a great contribution to creating the social memory, starting from experienced real events, constructs the representation of reality by narrating the fictional world it presents. Michael Schudson talks about at least four important and distinguishable distortion processes in the collective memory: remotion, instrumentalisation, storytelling and conventionalisation.

Although storytelling is narrating a story about the past, it does so in various ways. The story, in addition to telling an event which is in the past, may also tell us the relation of that event with today. Understanding the past is frequently under the conviction of a dominant story which shows how today adopted itself to the history of humankind. Hence cinema narrates the memories in the memory. Storytelling does not only include a mere transfer of past events, but also the effort to decorate them and trying to make them interesting. In order to make storytelling efforts come alive in the memory, some different constructive methods of narration may be required. To transfer a certain interpretation, the past must be culturally blended. In storytelling, the form is generally that of a story, constituted by an introduction, a development and a conclusion; first there must be an order, then collapse of the order and conflict and then disintegration and conclusion (Schudson, 2007: 189–191).

In this context, Turkish cinema became a tool of social memory carrying over historical events into the future, together with examples where it narrates the endured social trauma. Turkish cinema plays an especially important role in the construction of the social memory when social traumas experienced by the minorities living in Turkey are dealt with. On the other hand, it becomes a kind of indicator of the alternating state policies in different periods.

The changing representations of minorities in Turkey, especially of Turkish citizen of Greek descent, within the history of cinema, give us data about the changing policies and perspectives. Before looking at the reflections of the traumas faced by Turkish citizen of Greek descent during the historical process in their homeland in cinema, we shall put into historical perspective three events which most affected the lives of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent in Turkey, namely the 6–7 September Pogrom, the events of Cyprus and the 1964 Exile.

2. A General Perspective on the Turkish Citizen of Greek Descent in Historical Process

The Turkish citizens of Greek descent who constitute a large part of the minority people in Turkey are one of the oldest residents of Anatolia and Thrace. They say that they are the children of the Lykians, Phrygians, Carians, Lydians and Trojans. After Mehmet the Conqueror's conquest of Istanbul in 1453, the Greek people who left Istanbul returned to their homeland, after a royal decree guaranteeing all their rights. The Greeks were influential in trade, architecture, banking and art. Although there were some troubles in various periods, the Greeks, under the influence of rapid modernisation since the 1840s, were also brought to important state seats. The First World War is a period when the relations were totally turned

upside down. As a result of the wars, the peace among the peoples who lived in peace and friendship for centuries was spoiled. After the population exchange of 1923, though the rights of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent were again guaranteed, these problems could not be resolved. The Turkish citizen of Greek descent, together with the Wealth Tax of 1942–1944, to which the minorities were subjected, suffered great economic troubles (Kalkan, 2005).

In the following years, in a process which lasted until the events of Cyprus, the 6–7 September Pogrom and subsequent exile of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent in 1964, the Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent in Anatolian and Turkish lands diminished.

The events which are historically known as 6–7 September Events or 6–7 September Pogrom are events of destruction, looting and violence against non-Muslims, especially the Greeks, starting on the evening of 6 September 1955 and continuing well into the next day. Tensions had risen to such a level due to the negative campaigning against the Greeks and the Greek Patriarchate since 1955, in addition to the rising of nationalist feelings following the widespread media coverage of the murders and injuries of the Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus. The last drop was when, after increased tensions following the news in the media about the alleged bombing of Atatürk's house in Thessaloniki, a 'protest meeting against the events in Cyprus' was organised at Taksim Square. After the meeting, shops and houses were attacked; graveyards, schools and churches very heavily destroyed, especially in the districts in Istanbul with a dense population of minorities (Güven, 2005:135–136). During the 6–7 September Pogrom, the houses and workplaces of hundreds of non-Muslims living in Istanbul were hit; lots of women were raped; many people were injured and lost their lives.

According to Dilek Güven, although it was attempted to connect the emergence of 6–7 September Events to the Cyprus problem, the political timing of the Cyprus events created an opportunity for efforts to rid Turkey of non-Muslims Turkey, efforts which were ongoing since the 1920s (Güven, 2005: 151).

The policies implemented against the Turkish citizen of Greek descent are the result of the 'Turkey belongs to the Turkish' approach which had been employed since the Ottomans. However, the reasoning for the exile of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent, which is one of the important turning points of such policies being implemented against minorities in Turkey in the 20th century, was to have important leverage in order to intervene in the developments in Cyprus, rather than Turkification of Turkey (Demir & Akar, 1994: 17). Together with feelings of hatred and anger caused by the conflicts in Cyprus, the Turkish citizen of Greek descent in the country and their institutions became a focus (Demir & Akar, 1994: 26).

It was the Turkish citizen of Greek descent who most suffered from the rising nationalism during the 1960s. The press with its anti-Greek/Turkish citizen of Greek descent discourse became an influential factor in the negative attitude of the people towards the Turkish citizens of Greek descent; so much so that the idea that *'Turkish Citizen of Greek Descent are not only the enemies of Turks historically, but they are almost genetically evil'* had started to settle. Although people distinguished in their daily language between the Greeks and Turkish citizen of Greek descent, in periods when there was a problem in the political relations with Greece, the feelings of hatred against the Greek of Turkish nationality were aroused again (Demir & Akar, 1994: 30).

The Cyprus constitution brought about a bi-societal administration system in 1960. While the president of the state was a Greek Cypriot, the vice-president was a Turkish Cypriot. The first president of the Cyprus Republic, Makarios III, decided to amend the constitution in 1963. But in 1963, violent conflicts known as the Bloody Christmas occurred. The Turkish government, not being able to accept the support of the USA in making a military landing in Cyprus, stated that it would deport the Turkish citizen of Greek descent with Greek passports from the country in order to force Makarios to change his policies. Although the aim was to use the Turkish citizen of Greek descent to move Athens to stop Makarios, and hence to stop EOKA violence, the events could not be stopped (Akgönül, 2007: 257).

Although the Turkish government waited for the Greek government to change its attitude and for the bloody events in Cyprus to end, such moderation did not happen. As a result, the deportation of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent became a punishment against them, and the policies for the Turkification of the economy were implemented (Akgönül, 2007: 265).

The 'Agreement of Residence, Trade and Navigation' which was signed between Turkey and Greece in 1930 and which gave the right to free entrance, residence, possession, employment, making export-import and establishing companies in both countries easier for both of their citizens, was unilaterally cancelled by the Turkish government in 1964 after the tensions in Cyprus (Koçoğlu, 2008: 114).

As a result of the termination of the agreement, the Turkish citizen of Greek descent were forced to emigrate in July 1964. In addition to 12,592 Greek citizens who were deported, there were also Turkish citizen of Greek descent leaving the country (Demir & Akar, 1994: 90–91). Especially between the years of 1960–65, the population of this minority group strongly diminished every year, as a result of nearly 31,000 residents with Greek and Turkish nationality departing (Akgönül, 2007: 290–291). While according to a 1935 population census Greek speaking

people constituted 9% of Istanbul, this number had decreased to 1,5% in 1965 (Murat, 2006: 150–151).

As a result, in the expression of Rıdvan Akar, the Turkish citizen of Greek descent was used as hostage as leverage for international bargaining against the actions committed by the Greek Cypriots (Demir & Akar, 1994: 14).

3. Image of Greeks and/or Turkish Citizen of Greek Descent in Turkish Cinema from the Past to Today

Cinema reflects the society it is born in as a mirror. It documents and carries to the future the trends, turbulences and social moods of the periods it is passing through. We will see that the policies carried out by both states and their political problems directly affected the image of the Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent in Turkish cinema.

We have to state that the studies on the image of Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent in Turkish cinema are insufficient. While in this study mainly draws from three articles by cinema historian Agah Özgüç from his book *Türlerle Türk Sineması* (*Turkish Cinema in Types*), namely 'Byzantium Movies in Yeşilçam', 'Cyprus Movies' and 'Turkish-Greek relations in Turkish Cinema', Dilara Balcı's book *Yeşilçam'da Öteki Olmak* (*Being the Other in Yeşilçam*) is the most comprehensive study made on this subject, examining movies in the history of Turkish cinema. Another comprehensive study on this subject is Gül Yaşartürk's book *Türk Sinemasında Rumlar* (*Greek of Turkish nationality in Turkish Cinema*).

The first image of the Turkish citizen of Greek descent in our cinema goes back to the days of the Ottoman state. Before 1923, as Ottoman law prohibited women of Turkish origin from play in theatres and movies, actresses of Greek or Armenian origin were prevailing. And during the first years of the Republic, a time of increasingly warm relations thanks to the meetings of Prime Minister İsmet İnönü and Atatürk with Greece, many Turkish-Greek joint productions started to emerge in those years' cinema (Özgüç, 2005: 339).

The movies of Muhsin Ertuğrul, who may be considered the only film maker of the so-called period of theatre actors in Turkish cinema, not only addressed Muslims/Turks, but appealed to different audiences. Some movies played Greek songs, featured non-Muslim actors, and some movies even had copies in Greek language shown in Turkey (Balcı, 2013: 93–94).

We see the representations of Turkish citizen of Greek descent and/or Greeks in Turkish cinema, especially in the historical movies, as 'enemies' with the representation of the Byzantines.

The Byzantines entered Turkish cinema with the movie *Istanbul'un Fethi* (*The Conquest of Istanbul*), directed by Aydın Arakon in 1951. In such movies, we see 'brutal' and 'faithless' Byzantines on the continuum of the historical process. By the 1970s, we frequently see some epic movies where fictional heroes such as Battal Gazi, Kara Murat, Malkoçoğlu and Tarkan take their revenge on the Byzantines (Özgüç, 2005: 34–36).

The era of those historical movies ended towards the end of the 1970s, and for the next 20 years, were not seen again in our cinematic history. The 1997 movie *Kuşatma Altında Aşk* (*Love under Siege*), directed by Ersin Pertan, who looks into the movies depicting the Byzantine era with a different perspective, is an interesting example, as it considers the conquest of Istanbul from the side of the 'invaded' (Özgüç, 2005: 37).

Agah Özgüç states that the evil and murderous Byzantine in our cinema is similar to the image of the evil and murderous Indian in the Westerns of the West, referring to cinema historian Giovanni Scognamiglio, who calls this type of movies not consistent with historical realities 'Byzantine westerns'. Özgüç emphasises that such stereotypes and approaches are epic (creating fictional heroes that appear to be real) and racist (Özgüç, 2005: 34–36).

Other movies furthering animosity against Turkish citizen of Greek descent are about the Aegean region's swashbucklers, or movies about the national struggle, narrating the time of the occupation of Istanbul. In movies about swashbucklers, the Greek bandits are portrayed bearing the image of the 'enemy', making theft and killing people. In such movies, the swashbucklers are always brave heroes and characters who prove the glory of the Turks by teaching the Greek gangs a lesson and overpowering them (Balci, 2013: 129–130).

One of the few non-Muslim historical personalities to emerge in Turkish cinema is Hrisantos, a villain who lived during the years of the occupation of Istanbul, infamous for killing many Turkish policemen. In many movies about the War of Independence, the Greek 'palikarya' Hrisantos is mentioned with fear and hatred (Balci, 2013: 106). During the last years of the Ottomans, the non-Muslims were at the forefront of the industrial and commercial fields of society. Non-Muslims were employed as officials and managers in the banking sector; they acted as interpreters due to their knowledge of languages, took many political posts, worked at the palace and even became viziers. During this period, there were many prominent lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, bankers, merchants, printers, composers, actors. But in spite of that, the only historical personality we see in movies about the Ottoman period is Hrisantos, the gang chief, who spied for the English forces and killed people (Balci, 2013: 106–107).

On the other hand, we also frequently see a stereotype as a Greek barkeeper or 'Barba' in Turkish cinema. However, such characters do not go beyond side characters. Among 26 male Greek characters in the movies which Balcı watched for her study, eight were barkeepers/victuallars, and four were waiters or barmen. The rest are criminals, enemies or other shopkeepers. In these movies, there is always a white towel slung over the shoulders of the Barbass. They are called by names such as Kosti, Stavro, Ispiro and Niko. The customers of these bars are Turks (Balcı, 2013: 133–134).

When we look at the Yeşilçam movies of 1960–1980, we see Greek women play, in general, potential prostitutes. In the Yeşilçam movies shot in that period, the Greek female characters mostly play the roles of owners of whore houses, prostitutes or smugglers, or they gain their subsistence not by work, but by having extramarital relationships with men (Yaşartürk, 2012: 44).

The Greeks who were presented with negative features in movies shot during the 1960s were transformed into sadistic rapists and killers of children in the movies of the 1970s, due to the rise of nationalistic feelings which started with the military landing on Cyprus during those years (Balcı, 2013: 131–132).

Before 1990, the representations of Greeks, Turkish citizen of Greek descent or Armenians in Turkish cinema take on more positive features, especially during the 1980s. After the 1980 coup d'état, the policies of Turgut Özal were moderate towards different identities. But the emergence of different identities in Turkish cinema had to wait until the 1990s (Yaşartürk, 2012: 53).

It is seen that in Yeşilçam movies, non-Muslim characters such as Greeks, Armenians, or Jews do not go beyond typologies without any depth; they have funny elements to their speech and appearances, or they are presented as evil characters who constitute a threat to Muslims/Turks (Balcı, 2016: 214).

Dilara Balcı, in her book titled *Yeşilçam'da Öteki Olmak*, reports that among the nineteen female characters whom she examined regarding the image of Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent, four are owners of brothel houses, four are mistresses or prostitutes, two are gang members, one is a spy, one is a dancer and one a chanson singer. Of the remaining six characters, one is a flower seller, two are servants and the occupation of the three others is uncertain. She states that the characters of flower seller and servant have unimportant side roles in the movies (Balcı, 2013: 128).

Under the Public Officers Law, enacted in 1926, the Securities and Stock Exchange Law of 1929 and the Law on Arts and Services strictly for Turkish citizens dated 1932, for the non-Turkish minorities were prohibited from first being public servants, then from establishing from exchange agencies and lastly from working

in various fields in the private sector. Thus, the minorities shifted mostly to shop-keeping occupations. This is also reflected in the representation of the characters of Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent in the cinema. Greek, Armenian and Jewish characters are frequently seen as barkeepers, photographers, antique dealers, tailors and flower sellers in these movies (Balcı, 2013: 152).

The increased production of movies in Turkish cinema after the 1950s caused not only for the taste of Istanbul or big city audiences, but also of the Anatolian audience to be taken into consideration. Corresponding with the rise of nationalism and the prejudices of the audience, parallel to the Cyprus problem, it is possible to tell that the significance of the non-Muslim characters in the movies started to decrease (Balcı, 2013: 94). While in the movies of the 1950s in Turkish cinema, non-Muslim characters were dealt with in a more neutral and realistic manner, starting with the 6–7 September Pogrom until the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, revilement against non-Muslim characters in our cinema and their prejudiced representations increased every year (Balcı, 2013: 102).

The effect of the 6–7 September Pogrom of 1955 can be seen in the emergence of the movies about Cyprus in 1959, a reflection of the deteriorating Turkish-Greek relations (Özgüç, 2005: 341).

The first movie about the Cyprus issue is about the Turkish Cypriots who were killed in Cyprus in 1963. The heroes of the movie, *10 Korkusuz Adam (10 Fearless Men)*, directed by Tunç Başaran, go to Cyprus in order to defend a Turkish Cypriot village against the Greeks. In the beginning of the movie, painful pictures of the real massacre in Cyprus are seen. Agah Özgüç tells that the Cyprus movies, which were produced in the tense environment of the period and under the influence of rising nationalist feelings, rub salt into the bleeding wound, rather than approaching the Cyprus problem with a peaceful angle and original scenarios, and adds that such movies based on epic stories are open to abuse. It is stated that such movies which directly or indirectly deal with the Cyprus issue continued to be made until 1968 (Özgüç, 2005: 182–183).

4. Reflection on Winds of Change after 1990 on the Greek Image in Cinema

There's a similarity to be found between the moderate environment after 1990 among Turkish-Greek states and the period of the 1920s, the period of Atatürk and Venizelos, when the pain and trauma of the wars were still so recent. This period of reconciliation in which both states preferred not 'othering' one another but put forth a feeling of neighbourhood continued until the 50s. After the 50s, the relationship between the two states was informed by the fact, according to Tılıç,

that 'strong political, military and economic institutions were developed against dialogue and collaboration in both of the countries', and these were consolidated with various slogans and theories of conspiracy. Those who opposed this situation were stamped either as 'naïve' or as 'traitors' (Kirişçi, 2002).

These circumstances continued likewise until the end of the 90s, when they, in a manner on which every researcher of the issue agrees, started to re-transform into a sense of 'neighbourhood' with the 'Other', together with the 'shared sentiments for the earthquake' which emerged after the 1999 earthquake shaking both countries. The signals of such a convergence of the states and the leaders started well before the earthquake disaster; Yorgo Papandreou, Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs and his Turkish colleague İsmail Cem had important roles in this positive progress of the relationship (Tılıç, 2010: 203).

We start to see movies which characterise the Turkey-Greece relationship, not through the feelings of hatred caused by the state policies, but through the friendship of two peoples which lives on both sides of the Aegean Sea and previously shared the same geography, especially after 1990. One of the first examples of such movies is *Düşman (The Enemy)* directed by Zeki Ökten, with Yılmaz Güney in the leading role of the Anatolian Greek. In the movie, the return of the Anatolian Greek to the land is dealt with through the angle of friendship. In this sense, the movies *Gece Yolculuğu (Night Journey)*, directed by Ömer Kavur and *Fotoğraflar (The Photographs)*, directed by İrfan Tözüm, deserve mention. Özgüç underlines the positive influence of the formation of Euroimages, which supports the joint production of European cinema with some funds, on the Turkish-Greek convergence seen in our cinema during the 90s. Among the first movies of this moderate period, *Çıplak (Nude)*, directed by Ali Özgentürk, *Mavi Sürgün (Blue Exile)*, directed by Erden Kıral, *Sen de Gitme (Don't Go)*, directed by Tunç Başaran and *Kayıkcı (Boatman)*, directed by Bilet İlhan, may be mentioned (Özgüç, 2005: 342). A more peaceful approach seems to prevail in such movies and at the end of the movie *O Şimdi Asker (He Is a Soldier Now)*, directed by Mustafa Altıoklar, Greek and Turkish soldiers who meet on an island in the open seas of the Aegean, return to their homes after putting the flags of both countries on the island rather than making war (Özgüç, 2005: 182–183).

In the New Turkish Cinema, which emerged thanks to the development of independent productions and auteur cinema after the 1990s, we can see movies which interpret the problems of the others through their own eyes, but with an awareness of the 'Other'. In *Güz Sancısı (Fall Pain)*, Tomris Giritlioğlu, 2008), *Salkım Hanımın Taneleri (Grains of Salkım Hanım)*, Tomris Giritlioğlu, 1999) and *Bulutları Beklerken (Waiting for the Clouds)*, Yeşim Ustaoglu, 2003), the traumatic

past of non-Muslims, especially the Greeks, for the first time became visible in a holistic manner (Balci, 2016: 215–216).

We see that the abovementioned reconciliatory approaches in cinema increasingly started to be conscious of friendship, love and neighbourhood in the relationship of Turkish-Greek peoples. In addition to the spirit of solidarity after the abovementioned 1999 earthquake, there is a convergence and sharing which may be especially seen in cultural film festivals. Özgüç states that Turkish movies participating in the Thessaloniki Film Festival, the Drama Film Festival and the Gezici Ankara Film Festival are proof of the ‘consciousness of solidarity’ among the peoples, in the cultural field (Özgüç, 2005: 344). The power of film festivals, as artistic activities independent from politics, and consequently of cinema, in bringing the societies together in a cultural sense, is also seen in the artistic activities of Turkey and Greece. Turkish movies participating in the Thessaloniki Film Festival, one of the biggest festivals in Greece, and again, the collaboration of the Drama Film Festival, organised by Greece, with Turkey’s Gezici Ankara Film Festival may be shown as examples of this.

We previously emphasised, as Paul Connerton stresses in his book *How Societies Remember*, that the practice of re-establishing history may find a leading, driving force in the memories of social groups. In this sense, Agah Özgüç also emphasises that cinema, despite state policies, can be a bridge between memory and perspective:

As long as the Turkish-Greek relations have a course of politics with ups and downs, it is inevitable to see a disruption of dialogue among the filmmakers of the two countries from time to time. But still, one should not be pessimistic. It is so meaningful to have peaceful messages for the peoples of the two neighbouring countries in the relationship of such film makers, despite the politicians ... even though the Cyprus problem continues for years among the two countries (Özgüç, 2005: 344).

5. Two Movie Examples for the Image of Greeks and/or Turkish Citizen of Greek Descent in post-2000 Turkish Cinema

Cinema may be seen as an archive and a tool of leading today; it carries over the past into today and prevents forgetting, produces ideas and provides perspectives. In this context, the question of how the forced migration processes, together with the 6–7 September Pogrom which Turkish citizen of Greek descent faced in 1955 and the 1964 Greek Exile after the Cyprus dispute, were dealt with in the recent period of Turkish cinema, is a significant factor in shaping the social memory of Turkish-Greek relations. As it is seen, while historically in Turkish cinema, the image of Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent was represented generally

as that of strangers, not one of their own, and even of the enemy, and while the cultural distinctions were emphasised over the characters, in the recent period, the visibility of themes such as cultural and historical commonness, homeland, friendship, tolerance and love is striking. The traumas lived in the past are reflected in a more uniting manner today. Even though this reflection is not sufficient, it is considerable as a positive step.

In this context, we shall examine how historical data on a period is transmitted to today, in the movies *Let the Instruments Play* and *Exile*, through the storytelling concept of Michael Schudson, known for his studies on the subject of memory.

5.1 Screen Memories of the Past: *Çalsın Sazlar – Let the Instruments Play*

5.1.1 About the Movie

Sigmund Freud (1996), in his book *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, mentions that our memories sometimes transform into ‘screen memories’ which cover up the reality for various reasons such as trauma. These screen memories are created to replace old ones by distorting the past realities lived, especially during childhood. In *Çalsın Sazlar* (2014), the last movie by director Nesli Çölgeçen, who has directed the most important movies of the Turkish cinema, such as *Züğürt Ağa* (1985) and *Selamsız Badosu* (1987), we witness the establishment of a new order through the use of screen memories, erasing past ones and replacing them due to amnesia, by a previous Barba, now a Hacı Baba. The movie tells its story in two different times: the past and today. The secrets of the past are solved in the today. In the movie, the connection between the past and today is established by grandson Onur, who tries to find the real identity of his confused minded grandfather. Onur is a kind of visible documentary-like narrator.

Çalsın Sazlar is about two close friends, one Greek, one Turkish, and a woman called Yasemin with whom they are both in love. The movie takes place in the period when the Cyprus events, and consequently the oppression of Greeks in Turkey, accelerate and exile starts. Although it is not directly about the Cyprus events, those events provide the basis for the changes which will dictate the lives of the characters. We witness the reflections of the Cyprus events on the Greeks in Turkey, first on the barkeeper Barba and the tailor Aleko, who live in the neighbourhood of the events and are exiled to Athens, and on the side characters who leave for security reasons until the events settle. The oppression, arrests and interrogations in the wake of the Cyprus events shall affect the love triangle of the main characters, which falls apart, to see the three characters going in different directions.

As Schudson states about storytelling as one of the collective memory tools, in the movie, not only past events are narrated, but they are made interesting by making connections between the past and today. The director's interpretation of the past is also supported by screening, décor, dialogue and use of space reflecting the cultural characteristics of the period dealt with. The movie preferred to use a documentary narration like method of depicting, and thus constructing, the historical social past in the memory with the presence of a visible narrator.

In the movie, events are not told in a classical narrative order, but through the use of a narrator. This narrator, who is the grandson of Hacı Baba, has the function of a memory questioning the past and present and is in the position of a mediator who brings together the past and today by unearthing the memories which his grandfather cannot remember because of a kind of memory loss. In this sense, the movie proceeds in two different times and is directly dealing with the issue of 'remembering.' In the movie, Onur is a narrator who outlines the introduction, progress and conclusion of the film and forms its story. He lives in the today, but he unearths the secrets of the past by searching for them. The movie contains fiction and frequent flashbacks, paralleling the unearthed real past of Hacı Dede and its story flowing in the present.

We are introduced to Onur in the opening scene of the movie, in an interview format. The narrator tells that his grandfather started to show strange manners when the sale of the house they lived in was starting to be questioned by the household members. All of them go to the land title office, but for the sale to be completed they also need a report about the mental state of the old grandfather. At that time it is understood that Hacı Dede's mind is confused. The doctor tells the family that Hacı Dede thinks he is a Greek Orthodox barkeeper, named Barba. Although at first it is thought he has multiple personality disorder, the grandson Onur starts asking himself, 'Why not?' and 'How much do I know about my grandfather?', and begins to look for the realities of the past. Onur needs the past both for knowing and defining himself and his grandfather.

The remembered past in *Çalsın Sazlar* rests on the times when Hacı Dede was Barba. We see the oppression experienced by the Greek people in Istanbul because of the Cyprus events. Historically the story is about the exiling of the Greeks from Turkey in 1964. Despite the accelerating events, they try to lead their lives outside of social developments; although Yasemin has a child from Mahir, they become close with Barba. The tension among the three increases. Barba prepares his suitcase in order to go to Athens because of the oppression, Mahir comes to his house to fight with him; during the fire which breaks out in the meantime Mahir says: 'leave me here, take my identity card and stay here with Yasemin in

my stead'. Barba is not able to pull Mahir out of the house and continues his life as Mahir together with Yasemin. Afterwards Yasemin leaves her children and goes after her dreams as a singer. Their roads separate.

5.1.2 Image of Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent in Çalsın Sazlar

The movie documents the social life of the time by showing those who were forced to leave their homeland and the social trauma of the Greeks due to the Cyprus events and the 1964 Greek Exile. On the other hand, it is striking that despite the oppression, in the daily relationships, the distinction between Greek/Turkish or Muslim/non-Muslim is not so significant. Especially the family members, who understand that Hacı Dede is actually an Orthodox Greek and later became a Muslim, do not attribute any importance to this. They only care to learn the past of their father and grandfather. They accept him as he is and only focus on eliminating the mental confusion he is in. In this sense, the significance of the movie is that it deals with the events, not categorising anyone within the framework of human relations and through the theme of love, between the axes of remembering/forgetting and past/future. Barba being on odds with his closest friend Mahir is never told by way of Turkish/Greek distinction. On the contrary, Mahir is drawn as a more irresponsible character, addicted to drink.

Barba, who is one of the most important Greek characters of the movie, is an honest shopkeeper, a good friend, well-liked neighbour and a barkeeper, like most Greek characters in Turkish films. He is represented with positive qualities. The butcher does not want Barba to come to his shop as he is afraid of the pressure from neighbours, but still he secretly sells something to his neighbour. Especially the excitement of the people, under the influence of the news in the press, is documented. In the film in general, some elements documenting the acceleration of the reaction of people towards Greeks are used: above the shop of a Greek shopkeeper they write 'Get out'; Barba's pregnant wife tells him that Istanbul is insecure and she wants to go to Athens, and in the end, she does. The boy selling newspapers on the street shouts: 'Turkish villages fired upon in Cyprus.' As it was experienced by many Greek shopkeepers, Barba's bar is destroyed, Barba is beaten. And it is also mentioned that Barba's father, who was also a barkeeper, died after the 1955 6–7 September Pogrom. However, Barba is pictured as an ordinary citizen who sees the land he lives in as his beloved home. Although he is in love with the same woman as his friend and becomes a couple with her, this only affects their friendship; no connection is found to the Turkish/Greek distinction, this is only the result of a love triangle. Another Greek character seen in the movie is the tailor Aleko. He is

also someone who loves the land he lives in, who does not want to go, and does not think the events will reach the point of exile. As a result, he is exiled to Greece with only a suitcase and 200 liras in his hand.

In the movie, there is a scene where all distinctions are ignored: the scenes where Hacı Dede forces his memory and when young barkeeper Barba and Hacı Mahir Dede, the present Barba, sit side by side and in this unconventional manner, come to terms an important scene where past and present, Greek and Turk, Muslim and Non-Muslim meet.

During the last scenes of the movie, narrator Onur finds his grandmother Yasemin and takes her to their home to meet with his grandfather. Then the real Mahir, who was thought to have died in the fire, and his Greek son drive to see Hacı Dede. In this scene where past and future are intertwined, all racial, religious and temporal distinctions become abstract and only the main elements, such as friendship and love, are left.

Construction of memory is establishing a meaningful story from life pieces staying otherwise dispersed. And narrator Onur assumes this task. By uniting the forgotten and remembered he pieces together his grandfather's life story, the scenario of the film. What is remembered is related to the marks it has left on us, as well as to our present position and how we define ourselves. *Çalsın Sazlar* assumes the role of bringing the social events to our day, adding them again to the agenda, by taking those events which resulted in the exile of Greeks as its basis. With its naïve, human focused approach, distanced from all kinds of categorisations about these events, it takes its place today among the considerably good examples.

5.2 The Other Side of the Water: *Sürgün – Exile*

5.2.1 *About the Movie*

Sürgün, directed by Erol Özlevi in 2013, is a story which starts in Istanbul in 1964 and goes to Greece and back to Istanbul again. The basis of the movie, adapted from the book *The Last Exiles of Istanbul* by Hülya Demir and Rıdvan Akar, is constituted by the 1964 Cyprus events and the Greek exile.

The movie is about the period when the 'Agreement of Residence, Trade and Navigation', signed between Greece and Turkey in 1930, which enabled citizens with Greek passports to take up trades and lead their lives was unilaterally cancelled by the Turkish government in 1964. In a period when the Greek people who had to leave their homeland due to the oppression during the 6–7 September Pogrom, the time of exile by force, the impossible love story of rich Greek girl Eleni and Sedat, son of a poor coachman, is told.

Sürgün starts in the good days, when Greek and Turkish people lived together in friendship on the Prince Islands. The movie considers itself a period drama starting from its first frames, with distressed film effects in sepia toning and by using newspapers, magazines and costumes of the period. Sedat and Eleni go to university and at the same time have dreams of marriage. Despite the news of the accelerating Cyprus events, no one thinks that the events will reach the point of exile. Eleni's father, factory owner Stavro, humiliates Sedat and does not permit their marriage. Sedat becomes angry and goes away for a time. Meanwhile Stavro is exiled to Greece as the Agreement of Residence, Trade and Navigation is cancelled and he has a Greek passport, leaving his daughter and wife. Sedat comes back to support Eleni, and they again become close. Eleni graduates from her school and goes to Greece, together with her parents, promising Sedat to return. As it is understood that they cannot take the money from the sale of the factory needed for creating a new life in Greece across the border, either by themselves or by the bankers, Sedat offers his help: Sedat, who is a swimming champion, will deliver the money by swimming across to the other shore. He does what he says, but when he is returning, he is caught by Turkish soldiers, accused of being a spy, and convicted to 20 years. Meanwhile, Eleni and Sedat try to reach each other, but can't, they have no connection. Sedat finds his solution in writing his memories in a book he sends Eleni. Eleni has a son from Sedat, named Ege (Agea). Eleni's father Stavro cannot forgive her about Sedat, and does not show kindness to his grandson Ege, until he reads Sedat's book, *Exile*. Sedat comes free when the Ecevit government grants him amnesty after 13 years of imprisonment, and marries his lawyer Ada, his greatest and only supporter. Stavro regrets that he separated Eleni and Sedat and tells Eleni to go to Turkey and find Sedat. When Eleni arrives together with her son, she sees Sedat with his lawyer wife and baby from a distance. She sends Ege, her son, to introduce himself to his father. But Eleni and Sedat cannot come together. It is now too late.

Like in *Çalsın Sazlar*, the movie takes the Cyprus events and 1964 Exile as its basis for telling a love story. Compared with the nostalgic mood of *Çalsın Sazlar*, the events in *Sürgün* are dealt with in a more tragic manner. It is a movie emphasizing the mood of the times, the friendly practice of the Greek and Turkish people living together and the trauma of being exiled.

Sürgün is narrating a lived historical period; it gives significance to the cultural and daily life of the period. In the movie, the events are told in a linear fashion, in a classical narrative structure without any flashbacks. This makes possible the establishing of emotional connections and identification with the characters. *Sürgün* brings the past to this day by shooting in different locations, its costumes and

decors reflecting features of the period, which makes the story more interesting, influential and watchable. The historical reality of the events is supported by using real archive footage and newspaper prints featuring the marches and protests of the Turks in Istanbul during the Cyprus events.

5.2.2 *Image of Greeks and/or Turkish Citizen of Greek Descent in Sürkün*

In the movie in general, the perceptions of both sides about each other are shown through dialogues on race and religion between the Greeks and Turks. The first part of the film shows Greek residents playing backgammon with a Muslim Imam in a coffee shop and joint entertainments that take place in Prince Island clubs in the evening before exile. Among the young ones, love and friendship between Greeks and Turks are dominant. Tolerance among the people is emphasised.

Eleni's father, the rich factory owner Stavro, loves his family and his daughter very much. At the same time, he is a fair boss loved by his employees. He is a sociable and loved person spending time with both his Turkish and Greek close friends. Although Stavro is someone who has friendships with Muslim Turks in his daily life, respectful of their beliefs and traditions without making any distinctions, he behaves differently when the issue is his daughter. He objects to the marriage of Sedat and Eleni both because they are poor and members of different religions: 'Your belief is different than ours; are you getting married in a church; what will be the language, religion and manners of your children?', he asks. At the end of the film Stavro understands his mistake and asks for forgiveness. Stavro defines himself in the following manner when they call him in to the police station and make him sign the words 'I leave the country willingly': 'I did not apply for Turkish nationality; I have a Greek passport, yes – but until today no one asked me something like this. Ottomans gave this right to me. I am Greek, I am Byzantine. I am exiled from my homeland', he says. And when he leaves he describes his connection with Istanbul: 'I was born in this island, like my father and his father before him. I learned to walk on this street. I never thought I would dream about the lands I was born in my dreams. When Stavro arrives in Athens, a Greek friend who had migrated there before tells him about the situation in Athens: 'The people here are not like the ones of the Island, of Istanbul. We were faithless in Turkey, here we are Turkish offspring, as you will come to understand later. At this point the traumatic aspect of exile and the feeling of belonging to nowhere are underlined.

Stavro's daughter Eleni is in love with Sedat, a Turkish man. They never have any problems because of their being Greek or Turkish. They even pray together, each according to their beliefs, and want the same thing.

In the movie, being exiled from the motherland is told in a tragic manner. Stavro says farewell to Istanbul; he looks at the Maiden's Tower, Golden Horn and Bosphorus one after the other. The train whistles and he is taken from his homeland. While the film emphasises life together by its narrative language supporting the dialogue, showing the pleasurable and tolerant life on the Prince Islands until the exile, in what we may call the first section of the film, it also exposes the unfairness of the events. The problem is not between the people, but only between the governments. But many lives are ruined in the meantime.

Conclusion

The image of Greeks and/or Turkish citizen of Greek descent is found from the start in Turkish cinema. However, consistently negative, hostile representations during the first periods gave their places to examples in which human relations are underlined, affirming friendship and common life in recent times.

The social events faced by the societies live as they are remembered in the memories and carried into today. According to Mithat Sancar, remembering is the first condition for settling down. And cinema too, as the most effective carrier of memories, has a role in refreshing memories as to how to remember what. For this reason, the change of the image of the Greek and/or Greek of Turkish nationality in cinema is both a factor which may influence the perspective about it, and an indicator of the change.

Cinema brings the past to today by storytelling. Schudson mentions two methods of storytelling. One is telling a story about the past and the other is telling a story about the relationship of the past with today. Both of the films chosen as samples are about remembering. While *Çalsın Sazlar* deals with the past through the relation it forms with today, *Sürgün* tells a story about the past.

Sürgün and *Çalsın Sazlar*, the movies examined in this study, were produced recently in Turkish cinema, and about the lives of Greek people who had to leave Turkey in the Greek Exile after the Cyprus events of 1964. While the movies assume a memory-refreshing role as they bring these issues to the agenda, they also carry important messages for today in terms of their naïve approach to the events and their themes on friendship. When the Greek's and/or Greek of Turkish nationality's image in Turkish cinema history is considered, both films symbolise a positive change in this image.

Especially in the independent productions of the New Turkish Cinema, as a result of the moderate policies after 1990, and disasters such as the earthquake bringing together the peoples of the neighbouring countries and consolidating a feeling of solidarity, which was shared in the cultural field and in cinema, it is

seen that the image of the Greek and/or Greek of Turkish nationality in Turkish cinema evolved towards 'friendship' and 'neighbourhood', moving on from the perception as the enemy and the Other in the past. These efforts of New Turkish Cinema inspire hope when the significance of cinema in the construction of the social memory is considered. However, it is not possible to say the same thing to all examples of Turkish cinema from a wholistic perspective.

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