



DE GRUYTER
OPEN

Research Article

© 2017 Tutku Akter and Serife Incirilli.
This is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

The Reciprocal Relationship between Turkish Cinema and Politics: The Portrayal of 'Atatürk' as a Political Leader in Filmic Narrative

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tutku Akter

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Eastern Mediterranean University
Famagusta/ Northern Cyprus, Mersin 10 Turkey

Sen. Lect. MSc. Serife Incirilli

Faculty of Humanities, The American University,
Kyrenia/ Northern Cyprus, Mersin 10 Turkey

Doi:10.5901/ajis.2017.v6n1p77

Abstract

As is known, various studies on the history and development of cinema have shown the reciprocal relationship between cinema and politics. In this regards, it is possible to assume that Hollywood cinema, is not the only cinema that draws attention. During the study, for the purposes of clarifying the interrelationship between "representation" and "ideology" as a *modus operandi* of Turkish cinema, the portrayal of Atatürk in "Mustafa" will be investigated. The main reason for analyzing this movie in particular is that it is one of the most widely criticized (ideologically) movies on Atatürk.

Keywords: Cinematographic apparatus; Ideology; representation; Turkish cinema; Aesthetics.

1. Introduction

When we are shown scenes of starving children in Africa, with a call for us to do something to help them, the underlying ideological message is something like: "Don't think, don't politicize, forget about the true causes of their poverty, just act, contribute money, so that you will not have to think!" (Žižek, 2011, p. 4)

Many discussions have been had by scholars on the relationship between media and ideology by emphasizing the articulation between *representations* [not re-presentation] that take place in media; the relationship between representation and *ideology*, the role of the media on the *perceptions* of the audience both regarding themselves and the world around them, and even the role of media in the construction of the 'self' and *identities*.

Film or cinema, as a means of communication, has been subjected to many studies not only within communication studies but also within the fields of psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology, political science, economy, and cultural studies. Its power to sanction, influence, manipulate and cultivate ideas because of its incorporation of both audio and visual features, which enables it to re-construct existing structures, could be one of the main reasons for why it is widely studied. As Kellner (2004) has stated, films "translate, representations, discourses, and myths of everyday life into specifically cinematic terms" (1). Films are means of communications based on a *montage* supported by a *representational* script (Braudy and Cohen, 2004). Thus, they are also able to *reflect*, construct and re-construct 'reality'. In other words, the social and political economic equilibrium and thus *knowledge* is constructed.

To be able to analyze the way film works, it is essential to convert these systems of knowledge into a system of codes understood as another ideological structure. Semiotic analysis, which can briefly be defined as the analysis of a system of signs, is one of the most commonly used methods.

Within this context, and for the purposes of the present study, the research is limited to the semiotic analysis of Turkish motion pictures, which are full of portrayals of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey, connoting both introspection and the auto-criticism of a society.

2. Context

The media exerts innumerable influences. It identifies our behaviors and actions in real life, determining our association

with the world; it influences personal memory, cultivates particular ideas or beliefs, determines what and how to think about a particular issue and molds public opinion, among others. Katz and Lazarsfeld, while pointing to the significance of opinion leaders at molding public opinion, assume that they are just as effective as reporters and film producers (Laughey, 2010), thus emphasizing the impact of film producers even if between the lines.

Baudry, (Rushton and Bettinson 2010a), suggests that if cinema serves the discourse of the dominant power relations it can then be defined as forming part of an ideological apparatus. On the basis of Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) he explains how any means of communication can form part of one of those apparatuses. Baudry emphasizes the significance of Althusserian studies for a better understanding of the relationship between ideology and film/cinema. ISA's are not repressive state apparatuses. Rather, they are institutions that reinforce the performance of laws and regulations that are imposed by the dominant power relations. Within this context, cinema can be referred to as '*cinematographic apparatuses*' because it serves to the benefit and interests of the ruling class/dominant class.

According to Baudry, even if ideology represents the imaginary relationships of persons to their real conditions of existence, and even if one of cinema's characteristics is being able to represent the real conditions of existence, cinema is still ideological. The Althusserian perspective suggests that ideology interpellates persons as subjects. In other words, it subjects people so that the perception they associated with themselves is constituted accordingly (Rushton and Bettinson 2010a). Baudry and Metz, at this juncture, refer to the *transcendental subject*, which leads to a re-conceptualization of the significance of the cinema spectator. Finally, while questioning whether it is possible to escape ideology, they claim that it is only possible by constituting real relationships by way of breaking free from the ideology of the ruling class.

Overall, Rushton and Bettinson 2010a) clarify Baudry's view regarding the ideology-cinema interrelation by underlining the fact that, as long as cinema keeps representing (which is ideological) reality by images as if presenting the itself, and as long as it keeps transforming objective reality and a giving linear perspective or monocular vision to its spectators, it will remain an ideological apparatus. At this point, it is possible to say that even revolutionary movies, a genre which was defined by MacCabe (Rushton and Bettinson 2010b) as '*representing*' reality, can be defined as ideological apparatus.

Media representations are processes of portrayal standing for 'reality'. The meanings of most of things are obtained from media representations. Our knowledge about the things that we have not directly seen or know are constructed through media representations. However, representation is not reality itself but one that is constructed. This construction process is ideological. As Sire (2000) has suggested, "Truth cannot be constructed. To live in ideology is, as Havel so eloquently reminds us, inevitably to live in a lie. Truth can only be revealed. We cannot be creators, only receptors." (215). Thus, all the messages that are coded for readers are the product of an ideological structure. It is the distortion of real world which absorbs various groups of people (Laughey, 2010). Hence, mass media serves the interests and works to the benefit of a particular dominant group or group of people that perceive audiences as 'consumers' of the produced meanings.

Adorno's *The Culture industry* (from the German *die Kulturindustrie*, a term coined by the critical theorist Theodor Adorno (1903–1969)) argues that audiences/readers are detracted from political agency and social progressivism by being standardized (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2007). Because of their power and control, media owners or proprietors ingeniously impose an ideology upon audiences that fits their own interests and functions to their benefit. This is carried out in all social spheres: *political*, *economic* and *cultural*. Even the public sphere, a place where people come together to freely discuss and identify central issues such as politics, economy, morality/ethics, is demolished by media proprietors and dominant classes who create an illusionary sphere. Habermas called this development and expansion of mass media a re-feudalism of the public sphere (Calhoun, 1992).

The media, as an 'extension' of our lives, has a significant role in our perception of the world and *reality*. Representations are in a close relationship with the power of the media, which gives meaning to messages. Moreover, it codes the meaning of the messages to be read by audiences. Because meanings are not natural nor universal realities, they are constructed by the dominant power relations. Thus, media is *ideological* and thus holds a set of beliefs, values and ideas. As Žižek ("*Tarrying with the negative: Kant, Hegel, and the critique of ideology*") claimed, "as soon as we renounce fiction and illusion, we lose reality itself; the moment we subtract fictions from reality, reality itself loses its discursive-logical consistency" (88).

Ideologies are systems of representations that are not *conscious*. They are, rather, 'images' and 'concepts'. Furthermore, they are constructions that are imposed to the majority. They are a coding system of *reality*, not the entirety of the codes that are identified within this system. Furthermore, ideologies are the level of signification that are present in

all kinds of media (Carmago-Heck, 1974).

Hegemonic media representations also produce particular stereotypes for readers to consume. Moreover, most of these representations are constructed by power relations and not by the '*present*'. For this reason, as Carmago-Heck (1974) has also suggested, the system of knowledge should be converted to a system of signs to be analyzed. He highlights the significance of the message, a message that is coded in a particular way:

When a message is emitted it is not only what is *said* that has significance but also the *way* it is said, and what is *not said but could be said*. The significations in a message are established by means of a code, and it is this code which permits the message to be organized... (6)

On the other hand, Baudrillard (1994) calls attention to the fact that the media creates simulations about the real world as it represents reality. Our perception related to the *real* world is constructed by the media itself.

It would not be absurd to point towards the considerable influence exerted by world politics and politics on existing settled social patterns all around the world. As in every single aspect of life, politics shows itself in the cinema industry via subliminal messages or cultivated ideologies. To be more precise, political-economic and cultural systems have obviously been articulated with aid from the cinema industry. Motion pictures produced during the Balkan War and the First World War (WW1) had these armed struggles, history and politics as their themes. Moreover, during the infancy of cinema studies in 1916, the National Defense Society in Turkey examined documentary films that had the characteristics of newsreels to be able to monitor events on-

During World War II, while fascism, Nazism and communism were regarded as a threat to peace and humanity, cinema was considered an ideal apparatus for delivering this message across to communities. Turkey was also aware of the situation. Atatürk was the one who, during WWI, initiated the idea of cinema as an art, industry and investment. Moreover, in 1932, the Central Censorship Agency, which was comprised of civil and military bureaucrats, set forward regulations regarding censorship of motion-picture films; in 1932, it set forward regulations regarding the censorship of films and film scripts. This action articulates the formal ideology of the state.

Undoubtedly, the articulation between cinema, politics and society cannot be ignored regarding the construction of true life. According to Diken and Lausten (2008), cinema, which had been conceived as an apparatus for recording a different and intense world, was providing spectators with the opportunity to establish a relationship with simulacra ("Sociology through the Projector"). Diken and Lauste (2008) also argued that cinema is life and life is cinema. In this sense, cinematography and social structures exist as one.

Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, within the globalized world, Turkey's endeavor at gaining a seat within this system accelerated its understanding that cinema and true life experiences were collated with the personal experiences of directors in the cinema industry as method of presentation (Sayıcı, 1990). Well into the 1990s, unproductiveness and apathy towards Turkish cinema resulted in a monopolism, leading to cost-efficient productions. The 2000s saw an increased interest in Turkish cinema and directors who blended their productions with Hollywood techniques were rewarded. Moreover, a review of existing marketing strategies led to the attention of Turkish society as a whole.

Previous studies suggest that, particularly after 1990, motion-pictures, which had been fictionalized towards reflecting 'reality' and 'history', gained the favor of the cinema industry and their spectators. Thus, in the mid-2000s, Turkish cinema gained a favorable momentum. Increasing news about Turkish movie-makers winning awards and earning success at various international competitions together with a quantitative increase of Turkish motion-pictures just after the mid-1990s, attracted considerable attention to locally produced films (Ozkan, 2009). According to Ulusay, as a result of the increase in attention to local productions, by the 2000s, interest in Turkish cinema was inversely proportional with the interest in Hollywood cinema. The main milestone for Turkish cinema came in 2003-4 (Ozkan 2009).

"Mustafa", written and directed by Can Dündar, is a 2008 Turkish biographical documentary about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey. It premiered on October 29th, 2008, coinciding with Republic Day in Turkey. According to its director, Mustafa, unlike other movies about Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, is a fictionalization of the rising generation and has a strong narration. As mentioned above, cinema sought a reflection of the relationship between society and politics. In this context, the premiere date for this movie was not a coincidence.

During the period surrounding the release of the film, the historical interpretations narrated by "Mustafa" were criticized as was the ideological message that the film allegedly spread.. In 2000s, political and social issues were dominated by the dominant political party, the conservative AKP (The Justice and Development Party), and thus the party's adopted attitudes toward different ideologies should be taken normally.

Although the political view of the director, a secular Kemalist, does not match up with the ideology of the dominant political party, because he scripted this type of motion-picture by sticking to the facts, which irritated and bothered certain political sectors. This might be the result of the political situation of Turkey, which is clearly divided into at least two dominant

factions, Kemalists and anti-Kemalists. The apprehensiveness and sensitivity of Kemalists might have influenced their perception, leading to an interpretation of the movie as an “attack” to the image and prestige of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research question

The present study focused on the representation of Atatürk as a political leader and as the first President of Turkey particularly in this motion-picture which was resounded and criticized by Kemalists for being a documentary film that “misrepresents Atatürk”. For this the present study constitutively seeks to answer the following questions.

R1_ Whether or not Atatürk was idolized during the motion-picture?

R2_ If he was then what sort of aesthetic codes were used to cultivate particular impressions?

3.2 Research Design

Semiotic theory which was defined as “a unified approach to every phenomenon of signification and/or communication” by Eco (1976, p. 3) was taken for granted during the present study. Particularly Peirce's Theory and his Triadic Model were used to obtain and interpret the data. Due to this, indices, symbols and icons that were used during the motion-picture were studied.

3.3 Case study

Because there are various movies and documentaries about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the present study focuses on the analysis of those films that are Turkish motion pictures and in which Atatürk was portrayed by an actor. This study includes introspection and a self-criticism of society. Overall, seven motion pictures were found that included representations of Atatürk by an actor. These motion pictures are “Cumhuriyet” [The Republic], “Son Osmanlı Yandım Ali” [The Last Ottoman: Knockout Ali], “Mustafa”, “Veda”, “Çanakkale 1915” and “Atatürk'un Fedaisi Topal Osman” [Atatürk's Bouncer Lame Osman].

“Cumhuriyet” [The Republic] was written by Turgut Ozakman and produced by Ziya Oztan in 1998. The second film, “Son Osmanlı Yandım Ali” [The Last Ottoman: Knockout Ali], was a 2007 Turkish action film directed by Mustafa Şevki Doğan and based on Suat Yalaz's comic book. In general, most of the comments and criticisms leveled at the film were positive but it was also negatively criticized for “not having a dramatic structure even though it contained dramatic materials” (Ercivan (a), “Çizgi Kahramanımız Yandım Ali: Beyazperde Eleştirisi Son Osmanlı: Yandım Ali”).

Another Turkish biographical movie, “Veda”, written and produced by Zülfü Livaneli in 2010, is based on the memoirs of Salih Bozok and traces the life of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This movie was also criticized for misrepresenting Atatürk, especially within the context of his attitudes towards religion. (“Tarihçilerden Veda filmine eleştiri”, 2010)

“Çanakkale 1915” is a Turkish historical drama directed by Yesim Sezgin and written by Turgut Özakman in 2012. It was based on Turgut Özakman's novel *Diriliş: Çanakkale 1915* from 2008. It was criticized about not having “a plot” and “not having an effective story” (Ercivan (b) “Sezonun Çanakkale filmleri, varan iki...: Beyazperde Eleştirisi Çanakkale 1915”). “Atatürk'un Fedaisi Topal Osman” [Atatürk's Bouncer Lame Osman], also entitled “Cumhuriyete giden yol” [Road to Republic], was produced and written by Atilla Akarsu in 2012.

“Mustafa”, written and directed by Can Dündar, is a 2008 Turkish biographical documentary about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It was one of the most criticized movies on Atatürk. In general, critics thought that the movie portrayed Atatürk as a ‘lonely man’ who was ‘fond of alcoholic beverages’ (Guclu, 2008).

However, for the purposes of this study, only “Mustafa” was chosen as it was the most criticized for portraying “Atatürk” from a variety of perspectives.

4. Findings

4.1 Plot of the ‘Mustafa’

Unlike other films about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “Mustafa” is unique in terms of blending aesthetic narration of ideological referents with sign patterns. Goran Bregović, the international musician who composed the movie soundtrack, was raised

in the Balkans as was Mustafa Kemal.

The film, which begins with a depiction of Atatürk on his deathbed, attracted critics' attention due to its successful visual effects using transitions into his childhood, youth, adulthood and then back to his deathbed. To construct the narrative, real images (mostly pictures) of Atatürk were used, as were personal letters and those of friends, local and foreign newspaper articles of the period, diplomatic letters, and personal and friends' diaries. The film highlighted not only his successes but also Turkey's existing socio-cultural and economic infrastructure, as well issues in foreign relations during those years. During the film Mustafa Kemal's struggle to belong to a nation was highlighted by means of the term "a homeland in exile".

In its essence, the film reflects Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's life beginning with his childhood in Salonica, then moving to Dolmabahçe Palace and finally focusing attention to his military, political and personal experience, as opposed to the routinely treated subjects. Via "Mustafa", Can Dundar's purpose was to highlight Mustafa Kemal's persona and his humanitarian features rather than on the well-known aspects that are subject of most motion-pictures. In this way, the director's aim was to show "Mustafa" at the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey.

The reason behind the negative reactions, which came mostly from Kemalists, is probably because the film did not attempt to glorify Atatürk. Rather, it portrayed him as a "human" first and as a successful political leader second. In general, while underlining his humanity, the film portrayed the crises he survived and his psychological breakdowns. Although it left the criticism of his character to its spectators the film insinuated that "to love someone is to love him with his imperfections as well as his merits". Atatürk's "unfavorable" characteristics did not invalidate the significance of his successes and the positive changes brought about by his leadership. In this sense, the director tried to be as objective possible; however, his overall ideology could be perceived in the film's montage and narration.

Another salient point of the film was the fact that the issues that had put a question mark in the minds of spectators were the issues that had already been treated by previous motion-pictures on Atatürk (e.g., the movie dealt with the story of his taking 'Atatürk' on as a surname, which had been addressed in the movie "Dersimiz: Atatürk"). Furthermore, the included issues were the ones that had been dealt with incorrectly or deficiently by other motion-pictures (e.g., he engaged in the Battle of Gallipoli himself, unlike what was portrayed in "Canakkale Yolun Sonu").

The documentary film, which handled Atatürk's successes in chronological order, goes back to the beginning by showing him at his deathbed. The scene shows an oil painting, which was used as a transition into the story at the opening scene. The oil painting, whose title is "Four Seasons", was included as a signifier of Atatürk's life.

5. Representation of the 'Mustafa' Character

"Mustafa", as the most criticized motion-picture for "misrepresenting" Atatürk's personality, as mentioned above, did not portray any negative message about his persona. Naturally, this inference may vary depending on the perception of the spectator. However, after an in-depth analysis, it is clear that the film cannot be characterized as anti-propaganda nor that a defamation of Atatürk was carried out.

As mentioned earlier, the motion-picture, in general terms, tried to draw attention to unknown facets or features of Atatürk. "Mustafa", which did not attempt to glorify him, called attention to his persona. Critics that censured the film because it emphasized his loneliness were partial and shallow. However, in spite of living a lonely life and being afraid of loneliness, he was portrayed as broke but charitable and thrifty, fortuneless but proud. Character-wise he was emotional and sophisticated, ambitious but conscientious and compassionate. He displayed an infatuation with Europe and was portrayed as a progressive, revolutionary and intractable man.

This lonely man's biggest fear was not to be alone but to be forgotten. For this reason, he adopted a number of kids (also because of his humaneness), wrote several plays about himself and even made a sculpture of himself. This could easily be interpreted as a sign of narcissism or as an ego-trip, but the narration, through its discourse and subliminal messages, did not reinforce this image.

'Mustafa', which was an attempt to explain the loneliness and poverty of Atatürk as the main reasons for his misfortune, highlights his sentimentality by means of his memories, which, in several opportunities, bravely showed him crying for his nation and homeland. Moreover, a diary of a friend of his also showed that Atatürk never hesitated to cry (a very human attitude) in front of others and never acted under false pretenses.

The film portrayed him as being wise and challenging through its highlighting of his ability to blend in in any place he had been and his ability to also distinguish himself. Moreover, his intellectual and well-informed nature, as well as his drawing to Europe as a model for Turkey's process of modernization, was indicated by emphasizing that he was an avid reader, that he had an interest in translating books, as well as showing that he was able to discuss political issues with

German and French military units. Being ambitious but not adhering to the status quo, and trying to be fight for his homeland were other reoccurring themes.

His ambition was clearly indicated in one of the scenes that pictured him and his friends at a meeting in which they were talking about the future of the country. In that scene, he was telling his friends about the offices that they would be taking in the future. Later on, one of his friends asked him about his future office and position. To this he replied: "I will be the appointing authority and will be in charge of nominating you for offices!"

Another important point about the representation of Atatürk was his modest persona. This was highlighted in the movie by showing real images of him swimming with civilians, driving a tractor with farmers and talking with community members.

His progressive values and his tendency to take Europe as a role model, was also narrated into the portrayal of his marriage. His decision to marry Latife instead of Fikriye (the daughter of his step uncle) was not an emotional decision but a rational one. The basic reason behind this 'marriage' was that he wanted it to serve as a model for the new Republic he had established: secular, educated and modern, not only for men but also women. However, his marriage did not hold up due to Latife's 'jealousy' and 'intrusiveness'.

His aspire to be known as "unique" or "phoenix", is also highlighted at the costume party scene in Sophia that he had attended with janissary uniform to show how pretentious Ottoman tradition was. In addition to this instance, during the movie, his attitude toward his culture and how much importance he attached to all of its cultural patterns was emphasized. While modelling the West and Western countries in terms of progress, he was also trying to apply it to his own culture without deforming the original forms. He claimed that emulating developed countries is not necessarily a way to lose one's identity.

He had full self-confidence within the context of his responsibilities. That is why he was represented as a leader who discharged his missions, especially during the scene where he was talking about the revolutions he was going to put into practice in the future.

Atatürk was also represented as rebellious and oppositional by drawing attention to the fact that he did not attend one of the "long live my sultan" ceremonies at the early stages of the fall of Ottoman empire. He was also portrayed as holding secular values by giving place to his speech about the significance of separating the state from religion.

To sum up, this documentary film tries to portray Atatürk's life from the most objective point of view. "Mustafa" attempts to give a sympathetic account of a real-life story, in addition to disengaging him from the well-known stereotypes. It presents him as a human being who has weaknesses, fears, worries, desires but also ideals, principles and values. Without a doubt, "Mustafa" is the first film that portrays the private side of the idolized leader.

5.1 Aesthetics Codes as mean of re-construction of ideologies

The movie starts with the sound of sea waves accompanies the verbal narration. It then transitions to the only room where there are lights on, which is the one where he is at his death bed. It starts with an extreme wide shot and then closes in on the room with a medium shot. The narration about Atatürk's childhood then begins with an extreme close up focusing on the oil painting 'Four Seasons'. After a bit more focusing, a child appears as a distant memory deep inside of the painting and comes toward the spectator. In the meantime, the verbal narration transitions from his existing situation (being on the death bed) to the beginning of his life story, grabbing the attention of the spectator. The reason for using the oil painting instead of a photograph was to try to link his life and what he had left behind to the aesthetic of a work of art. In addition to this, the reason for shooting a sunset in almost every scene as a background and for using the sunset as the font color for the title of the film was to emphasize the idea of the "Sunset of a nation" (see Image 1). During the film, the sun was mostly used as a metaphor for Atatürk as a political leader and sometimes as an indicator of change in a negative sense.



Figure 1. The title of the film

It can be observed that the house that was being built by this child with brushwood, shown at beginning of the film just after the beginning of the narration of his childhood, was an intentional detail, which would be later used as a metaphor for the new political formation—a Republic. That brushwood ‘house’ was making reference to the socio-cultural, political and economic structure of Turkish society.

Atatürk, as a pioneer of this reconstruction and the founder of the Turkish Republic, succeeds by pushing everyone who wanted to stop his progress toward modernization out of the way. This was signified through a scene with weasels that were trying to destroy Atatürk’s older brother’s grave. Mustafa was also portrayed as a little boy who used to chase crows with a wooden club in the farm. The child stood for a “rescuer” of the “nation” (farm) in which crows stood for both internal and external “enemies” of the nation.

In that scene, the weasels stood for the defenders of the monarchy and imperialism; the grave of the child stood for Turkish society under the yoke of monarchy, and the stroke of lightning indicated the birth of Atatürk (see Image 2). It was a stormy, dark and scary night until a stroke of lightning brightens the scene. With the successful harmony of audio-visual effects, as well as the accompanying verbal narration, the film calls attention to Atatürk as a pioneer and liberator of Turkish society.



Figure 2. The birth of Atatürk

The documentary-film, whose soundtrack was composed by Goran Bregovic, who, like Atatürk, came from Balkans lent meaning to experiences by means of the audio tracks that were playing in the background of climatic scenes.

Even the playing of ‘Hatirla beni’ [Remember me] twice (once at the beginning and once at the end of the movie), which was not coincidence, supported Atatürk’s wish to be remembered and not forgotten.

Not only was the sound track of the film important, so were the visual effects in the montage of the narration. When he was expelled to Damascus because he had been accused of ganging up against the political system, he was looking toward Istanbul. It was sunset again. He was portrayed as looking toward the *church* (see Image 3) and the *mosque* in Istanbul (see Image 4). In this scene, ‘religion’ was identified with the sunset (as in the ‘sunset of humanity’, or secularity). Hence, Atatürk, who was afterwards branded as being ‘irreligious’ used religion to bring people together during the process of establishing a new homeland and Republic. Right after the proclamation of the Republic he had carried out a constitutional amendment about the ‘official religion of the nation’, leaving it to the will of each individual.

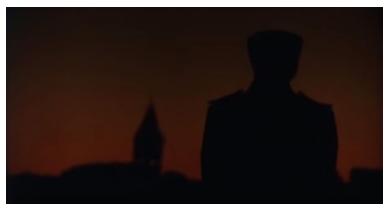


Figure 3. Atatürk as looking toward the *church* in Istanbul

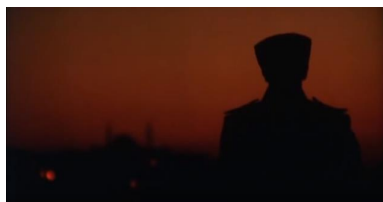


Figure 4. Atatürk as looking toward the *mosque* in Istanbul

To consolidate a sense of reality affluently, the film showed Atatürk's photos and old videos. Apart from the last few scenes, only the hands of the actor who portrayed Atatürk were shown. This was done so as to claim the significance of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for the establishment of the Turkish Republic. In the first scenes, which were full shots, he was portrayed writing or thinking or in a room full of books to emphasize the importance he gave to education.



Figure 5. The first moments of the new formation of Turkey (Birth of a Nation)

In every scene where he leaves the city, the sunset is used as a metaphor for Atatürk. It referred to the collapse of an empire, as can be understood from the verbal narration in which he leaves for Istanbul as imposed by Vahdettin (36th and last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire) to save the homeland. In the following scene, the sunrise was used for the first time, and “March of Youth” played in the background. This was the scene which heralded the first moments of the new formation of Turkey— Atatürk (at the front by a long way) and his men were walking towards the sunrise (see Image 5)

Fine details were used in the production of the movie, from folk songs, lightening and sound effects to other details such as costumes, period paraphernalia, hairdos, mustaches etc., all creating a sense of reality.

In most of the climatic scenes, the narration awakens a sensation in spectators with the use of soundtracks and anthems: the ‘Anthem of Izmir’ at the liberation of Izmir, ‘Two women’ when visiting Ms. Fikriye when he got married; and ‘New homeland’ for the process of modernization. In addition to this, for the tenth anniversary of the Republic, Atatürk's speech on (original record) together with the ‘10th Year March’ to arise nationalist feelings.

At the final scene, as mentioned before, the film comes back to the opening scene. The child (who stands for Atatürk), who ‘came up’ from the ‘Four Seasons’ (the oil painting in his room) was shown again but this time getting deep inside the scene and dissolving it to declare his death (see Image 6). Students of the military school were singing “March of the Youth” in the background while bidding farewell to him. Then, the final track, ‘Cenk’, plays in the background, and its lyrics again in a final scene highlighting his inner world, his emotions and the difficulties that he had faced. The soundtrack also tells audiences that feelings about being an ‘orphan’, ‘homeless’, ‘dispirited’, ‘insufficient’ or ‘alone’, can lead to other possibilities.



Figure 6. The child (who stands for Atatürk), who ‘came up’ from the ‘Four Seasons’

6. Discussion

One of the main reasons for viewing and analyzing this film was the criticism it received and that it caught the eye of the foreign press. None of the other motion pictures on Atatürk, documentary film or otherwise, remained on the critics' agenda. The director and writer of the film, who was sued because of the movie, was sentenced for ‘committing a crime’, just as in the ‘WikiLeaks case’, until April 26th, 2016.

Despite what the critics said, it can be claimed that the film was perfectly successful in its usage of both audio-visual effects and narrative structure. Critics who were misinformed never influenced our perspective or point of view because of our awareness of the 'structure' of the production, just as we were aware of the distinction between the past and the history. As mentioned above, 'production' consists of a process of 'construction'. Each monument is the document of the one who 'produced' it and what was handed to us could not be 'objective'.

In the documentary film, the audio-visual effects were used in harmony with the music, and ideological references were aestheticized within a cinematographic structure.

In brief, 'Mustafa', a film that handled issues that were not discussed in any other motion-picture on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, attracted attention not only on an aesthetic level but also in terms of its *mise-en-scène*, editing, and harmony of the audio-visual effects.

The reason behind the creation of a remarkable impression, as mentioned earlier, is the influence cinema has in *reflecting* as well as constructing and re-constructing 'reality', the social and political economic equilibrium, and thus *knowledge*.

The articulation of the motion-picture 'Mustafa' shows, once more, how influential motion-pictures or films can be. One of the most important reasons for being criticized so strongly, unlike other motion-pictures about Atatürk, was the fact that it was referring to Turkey's current social and political structure and highlighting how 'the leader' got to be successful.

In this way, it can be noted that because ideologies represent the imaginary relationships of people to their real conditions of existence and because one of cinema's main features is its ability to represent the real conditions of existence, cinema, therefore, is ideological.

The reason why other motion pictures about Atatürk did not get a similar reaction is the fact that media representations 'are the processes of portrayal that stand in for 'reality', and the meanings of most things are obtained from media representations'. Due to this, spectators' knowledge of issues that have not been seen or are not known are constructed through media representations. Nevertheless, representation is not reality itself but a constructed one. This construction process is ideological, even if it is aesthetic.

7. Acknowledgment

The authors of the present study acknowledge that no funding has been taken by them as far as the preparation of the present study is concerned.

References

- Adorno T, Horkheimer M 2007. The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. *Stardom and celebrity: A reader*, 34.
- Baudrillard J 1994. *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan press.
- Braudy L, Cohen M 2004. *Film theory and criticism: introductory readings*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Calhoun CJ 1992. *Habermas and the public sphere*. MIT press.
- Diken B, Laustsen CB 2008. *Sociology through the Projector*. Routledge.
- Heck MC 1974. The ideological dimension of media messages (No. 10). Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.
- Beyazperde Web Page: Çizgi Kahramanımız Yandım Ali: Beyazperde Eleştirisi Son Osmanlı: Yandım Ali, by Ercivan A(a). From <http://www.beyazperde.com/filmler/film-125831/elestiriler-beyazperde/> (Retrieved March 18, 2016)
- Beyazperde Web Page: Sezonun Çanakkale filmleri, varan iki...: Beyazperde Eleştirisi Çanakkale 1915, Ercivan A(b). From <http://www.beyazperde.com/filmler/film-125831/elestiriler-beyazperde/> (Retrieved March 18, 2016)
- Eco, U. (1976). *A theory of semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Guclu, Abbas 2008. Mustafa, Can Dündar ve eleştiriler. *Milliyet Newspaper*, Daily, December 8, 2008.
- Kellner D 2004. Reflections on Hollywood film in the age of Reagan. *Hollywood: Cultural dimensions: ideology, identity and cultural industry studies*, 4, p.69.
- Laughey D 2010. *Media Studies*. Oldcastle Books.
- Rushton R, Gary B 2010a. Apparatus Theory: Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz. In: Richard Rushton and Gary Bettinson (Eds.). *What Is Film Theory: An Introduction to Contemporary Debates*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, pp. 34-52.
- Rushton R, Gary B 2010b. Screen theory: Colin McCabe and Stephen Heath. In: Richard Rushton and Gary Bettinson (Eds.). *What Is Film Theory: An Introduction to Contemporary Debates*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, pp. 52-70.
- Özkan Z Ç 2009. Günümüz Türk Sineması'nın Dünya Sinemasındaki Yeri.
- Sire J W 2000. *Habits of the mind: intellectual life as a Christian calling*. InterVarsity Press.
-2010. Tarihçilerden Veda filmine eleştiri. *Hurriyet Newspaper*, Daily, march 2, 2010.

Sayıcı Fırat 2011. 1990 sonrası Türk sinemasında gerçekçilik .Ph. D. Thesis (Unpublished), Selçuk: Selcuk University.
Žižek S 1993. Tarrying with the negative: Kant, Hegel, and the critique of ideology. Duke University Press.