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CULTURAL ANXIETIES ON THE SILVER SCREEN: PARANOIA IN NEW TURKISH CINEMA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to capture the affective cinematic imageries of anxiety and paranoia, as reflected in the New Turkish Cinema. My main objective in undertaking this study is to explore how cinematic representations seize the current period in terms of cultural anxieties and paranoia experienced both as an ordinary crisis as well as projected in terms nation's imagination and negotiation of its identity. Drawing on the recent affect theories and phenomenological film theory, I propose investigating the selected films as manifestations of affective sensations of paranoia and anxiety 'circulating' in the present moment, which are involved in a dialogical interaction with the cultural-political context.

This study intends to approach anxiety and paranoia as affective-experiences and felt sensations embedded in the historical present with their cultural overtones apart from the clinical and neuroscientific understanding. To capture the vitalism of a nation's collective lived experience in the current cultural and political atmosphere, this study proposes moving beyond the conventional methodology of a symptomatic reading. The films selected for this study are: *Beyond the Hills* (2012), *Ivy* (2015), *Frenzy* (2015), and *Inflame* (2017).

Keywords: anxiety, paranoia, affect, cinema

ABSZTRAKT

Ezen tanulmány célja a szorongás és a paranoia affektív filmes képzeteinek megragadása, ahogyan az új török filmművészetben tükröződnek. A tanulmány elkészítésének fő célja annak feltárása, hogy a filmes reprezentációk hogyan ragadják meg a jelenlegi időszakot a kulturális szorongások és a paranoia szempontjából, amelyet a nézők hétköznapi válságként és a nemzet képzeletében és identitásának tárgyalásában kivetítve élnek meg. A legújabb affektuselméletekre és a fenomenológiai filmelméletre támaszkodva javaslom, hogy a kiválasztott filmeket a jelen pillanatban "keringő" paranoia és szorongás affektív érzéseinek megnyilvánulásaiként vizsgáljuk, amelyek a kulturális-politikai kontextussal dialogikus kölcsönhatásba kerülnek.

Ez a tanulmány a szorongást és a paranoiát mint a történelmi jelenbe ágyazott affektív-élményeket és érzéseket kívánja megközelíteni, amelyeknek a klinikai és idegtudományi megértésen túl kulturális felhangjaik is vannak. Annak érdekében, hogy megragadjuk egy nemzet kollektíven megélt tapasztalatának vitalizmusát a jelenlegi kulturális és politikai légkörben, ez a tanulmány azt javasolja, hogy lépjünk túl a tüneti olvasat hagyományos módszertanán. A tanulmányhoz kiválasztott filmek a következők: *Beyond the Hills* (2012), *Ivy* (2015), *Frenzy* (2015) és *Inflame* (2017).

Kulcsszavak: szorongás, paranoia, affektus, filmművészet

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: AFFECTIVE REALISM IN NEW TURKISH CINEMA

When accepting the Best Director Award at Cannes 2008 for his film *Three Monkeys* (Üç Maymun), Turkish Film Director Nuri Bilge Ceylan said he wants to dedicate the prize 'to my lonely and beautiful country which I love passionately.'[1] While Ceylan speaks from a common mood shared by a new generation of film directors who feel socially and politically alienated from the country, his speech essentially reveals a sense of loneliness and solitude of a country located between East and West (Özdüzen, 2014, p. 77).

Being seen as the 'Other' by Europe, Turkey's self-perception of its national identity has always been shaped in relation to Europe's attitudes towards Turkey (Keyder, 2006). This has created paradoxical feelings of both the strong desire to belong to Europe and the bitterness of being rejected. Along with the perpetual 'perception of psychological isolation', the country's apparent turning away from Europe and even from the rest of the world recently has deepened the sense of stuckness and impasse for occupying such a liminal position (Nas, 2001, p.187).

Inspired by Ceylan's statement and based upon Turkey's current political and cultural climate, this study aims to capture the affective cinematic imageries engaging with the historical present as an embodied reality that is experienced, felt and mirrored in Turkish Cinema. My main objective in undertaking this study is to explore how cinematic representations apprehend the current period in terms of cultural anxieties and paranoia collectively felt and experienced as a crisis and projected in terms of the nation's (re)imagination and (re)negotiation of its identity.

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[1] Ceylan's speech at Cannes Film Festival 2008. Turkish filmmaker wins best director prize at Cannes. *Hürriyet* (2008, May 26). https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/turkish-filmmaker-wins-best-director-prize-at-cannes-9023268.

To explain more in detail, I aim to explore contemporary cultural anxieties as reflected in New Turkish Cinema via affective sensory experience of paranoia by undertaking a critical film analysis. Drawing on the recent affect theories and phenomenological film theory, I propose analyzing the selected films as manifestations of affective sensations of paranoia and anxiety 'circulating' in the present moment, involved in a dialogical interaction with the cultural-political context. Such an analysis entails moving beyond a representational study that will gradually allow us to comprehend these films not as precise representations of Turkey in the 2000s but as images actively participating in 'the collective effort…to create an itinerary of the present' (Abel, 2013, p. 23). Therefore, this dissertation can be considered a comprehensive investigation of how films reflect the historical-social and contextual characteristics of the present history and constitute a part of this history.

As the theoretical and methodological rationale of this framework will be explained more in Chapter II, this study builds on and aims to contribute to affect studies recently rising in humanities and social sciences. It should be pointed out that the interdisciplinary methodology of this research has been developed meticulously in connection with the theoretical framework and the subject matter. Following Mieke Bal's suggestion for interdisciplinary cultural analysis, I will build the methodological grounding and the heuristic understanding of this study in 'concepts' instead of pre-established methodologies (2009, p. 14). To better understand the object of the study 'on its own terms', the concepts of affect, emotion, atmosphere, anxiety and paranoia will be utilized in this investigation not as 'abstract representations of an object', but rather 'key[s] to intersubjective understanding' that are indispensable for cultural analysis (Bal, 2009, pp. 18–19).

Cinema is a pertinent artform for examining anxiety and paranoia as felt sensations and affective experiences embedded in the historical present. Films can testify to the ongoing anxieties and the ethical issues that stimulate the social and cultural context, raising essential

questions about ‘politics and political agency’ (Giroux, 2011, p. 692). Besides, cinema as a mode of ‘public pedagogy and form of cultural politics’ can intentionally affect ‘the production of meaning, subject positions, identities and experience’ (p. 689). Miriam Hansen’s arguments on the relationship of cinema and experience of modernity are highly relevant to the subject matter in hand. Bearing in mind the relationship between the current cultural anxieties with Turkey’s troubled trajectory of modernization, films can be viewed as ‘a sensory-reflexive horizon for the experience of modernization and modernity’ (Hansen, 2000, p. 10). According to Hansen, cinema is a distinguished ‘public horizon in which both the liberating impulses and the pathologies of modernity were reflected, rejected, or disavowed, transmuted or negotiated, and it made this new mass public visible to itself and to society’ (p. 12). Hansen’s proposition provides significant guidance in analyzing films from non-western countries like Turkey, where modernity has been experienced mostly as a self-reflexive process entangled with cultural introspection; where the issues of cultural representation have always been self-perceived and reflected as the double anxiety of seeing and being seen.

Cinema does not merely hold a mirror to society, inviting the audience to interact with the broader extra-cinematic issues only at the cognitive level (Ott, 2010). By invoking several embodied sensations and experiences, films offer more than a ‘disembodied realm of “representation” or “discourse”’ (Shaviro, 1993, p. viii). Such a perspective is essential, particularly in the contemporary era, in which new forms of visibility pervasively build our trust in the visible, misguiding us to believe that we should pay attention only to ‘measurable, large-scale events’ (Del Rio, 2008, p. 210). In this respect, cinema as a vital aesthetical and cultural medium enables us to grasp how ‘the micro- and macropolitics keep on influencing each other continuously’ (Pisters, 2001, p. 25) and confronts us with the ‘real as exceeding

the visible, and of real events as concerning bodies' that remains outside perception at the macro level (Del Rio, 2008, p. 210).

Accordingly, I propose to capture the historical present as an embodied reality experienced, felt and mirrored in films, by attending to ordinary stories as the 'exemplary laboratories for sensing contemporary life in new idioms of affective realism' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 54). In this respect, I contend that ordinary lives are the intersection points where both the macro events and the ordinary affects as 'felt forces' are 'intimately encountered' (Ashcraft, 2017, p. 46). Therefore, the local stories or 'the lower-case drama[s]' of everyday life can expose the collective sense of the historical present (Highmore, 2017, p. 50).

What I seek to engage in this study is to capture the 'affective realism' conveyed by films through creating a cinematic experience that involves the viewer's participation in the artwork. According to Karl Erik Schollhammer, affective realism is not achieved through a 'representational faithfulness' to reality or the shocking effects of a traumatic realism (2020, p. 13), but through an affective cinematic experience altering 'the ethical dimension of experience to the extent that dissolves the boundary between exposed reality and the reality involved aesthetically' (Schollhammer, 2012, p. 138). This realistic aesthetic operates through the affective experience of films that the 'work of art becomes real with the power of an event' involving the viewer in its unfolding (p. 138). In Schollhammer's words, through affective realism,

> fiction gains reality while reality in fiction shifts its status by no longer being only a "historical reality". Instead, it is converted into pure present and "pure everyday reality"… fiction encounters a challenge in exploring the conversion of certain images into reality, thus accentuating its performative and affective dimension. (2020, p. 3)

What is meant by reality here is about 'what the text does and not what it represents' (Schollhammer, 2012, p. 140). Therefore, without necessarily rejecting issues of representation, I want to pay particular attention to the affective power of the films not stemming from their claims to contextual and historical accuracy but rather embedded in their capacities to 'manufacture a present' (Schollhammer, 2020, p. 80). It is the presence of the historical present 'that reclaims the everyday, the intimate, the private and the common as sources of an experience anchored in a time that is more vivid and real' (p. 7). The affective immediacy to which the films have subjected us diverges from the mass mediated culture of immediacy, sense of connectivity and claimed access to the reality of a historical experience. Unlike the contemporary media culture committed to conveying a sense of immediacy and intimacy with the claim to the actuality of a shared present through ordinary everyday dramas, the films offer an alternate view that does not involve judgment and identification. On the contrary, they invite us to a new mode of perception and thinking, which Brian Massumi calls the 'thinking-feeling' (Massumi, 2008, 2009). The images act as microshocks or 'micro-perceptions' that are 'felt without registering consciously' (Massumi, 2009, p. 4). They evoke a familiar sensation for the viewer that is not understood or named yet but affectively felt. In Massumi's words, this felt 'quality of the experience' evokes the sense of a shared experience in the audience (p. 5). The interruptive quality of the present is recognized from its 'distinct affective tonality and force' (Massumi, 2017, p. 86). As feeling is always involved in thinking, thinking-feeling refers to 'a duplicitous sensation, a "double vision," in which our habits of perception are immediately doubled' (Thain, 2017, p. 14). And there is always a sense of 'suspense' involved since the emerging present compels us to enter 'into conversation or into a convivial situation and reinvent them, without necessarily knowing what will come of it' (Massumi, 2017, p. 96). It is a 'perceptual sensation of belief in the world, a vertiginous swept-upness, affirming a becoming that precedes and exceeds

knowing.' (Thain, 2017, p. 53). But in Massumi's thinking, it is 'a productive indecision…a constructive suspense' open to all kinds of possibilities (Massumi, 2009, p. 5). Accordingly, in my contention, paranoia as an affective force of the films activates such a thinking-feeling. The images connect us with our ways of being in this shared present and confront us with our responsiveness to the constant flow of mediated realisms we encounter daily and practices of public intimacy (Scholhammer, 2020)

Such a cultural analysis necessitates moving beyond several established epistemologies. These can be briefly summarized as: the corporeal turn in film studies; ontological affect theories of the 'body' emphasizing the 'capacity to affect and be affected'; and prioritizing an epistemology of 'becoming' instead of 'being'. Principally, this study situates itself at the crossroads of the affective turn in cultural analysis and the corporeal turn in cinema studies that complement one another, raising concerns about approaching the body/corporeality beyond the Cartesian duality. Since the early 1990s, the corporeal turn in film studies has focused on the cinema's unique mode of representing bodies. Although such a shift was initiated by Linda Williams' (1991) notion of 'body genres', several film scholars recently contested the confinement of the sensual and affective bodily cinematic experiences within the limits of 'body genres' (Barker, 2009b). However, the corporeal turn is not concerned only with the representation of bodies on the screen but also with the notion of embodied spectatorship concerning films' sensuous and haptic qualities acting directly on the spectator's senses and body. For key thinkers of embodied spectatorship such as Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks and Jennifer Barker, it is not only that there are bodies on the screen, but that the film as a 'body' has its own embodiment and life: 'The film's body, like our own, is a *subjective object.* It is an intentional instrument able to perceive and express a perception, to have sense and make sense' (Sobchack, 1992, pp. 247–8). Hence, film experience is a dialogical interaction between two bodies.

This brings us to another epistemological shift: conceptualizing the notion of body in terms of the capacity to 'affect and be affected'. This ontological perspective of affect theory leads to redefining the conception of body inclusive of both human and non-human bodies. A capacity for affecting and being affected implies reconsidering cinema's power in bringing 'to consciousness the body's powers of affection' that cannot be confined to the experience at the movie theatre alone (Del Rio, 2008, p. 213). Instead of the segregation of life and cinema, or the 'fiction versus reality' presumed by representational thinking, the affective intensities of the films are not

> just isolated aesthetic events disconnected from life…but events that have the courage to engage in affective flows and exchanges that our media culture is generally rather afraid to activate. At its best, the cinema breaks rank with the kind of affective neutrality that we are encouraged to maintain in our daily lives, a neutrality that entails the reduction of our capacity for both joy and sadness. (Del Rio, 2008, p. 212)

A final epistemological sensibility refers to privileging with 'an ontology of becoming rather than being,' having ramifications for bodily ethics (Del Rio, 2008, p. 7). Being attentive to the powers of the body and 'becoming' rather than the stable conceptions of 'being' demands shifting attention away from the 'negative and deterministic accounts' of prevalent approaches like psychoanalysis (p. 8). Instead of psychoanalytic approaches assuming the human body as driven by lack, the ontology of becoming, based upon Spinozian bodily ethics, prioritizes production, situating the body at 'the intersection of affect, expression, and power' with capabilities to affect and be affected by other bodies (p. 8).

Following from this, this study intends to explore the films through the lens of affect-informed perspectives and focus on cinema's affectivity as 'a capacity that expands the concept of the individual human body into the concept of the film itself as body' (Del Rio, 2008, p. 54). This also means being more attentive to the impacts of cinematic experience on

the 'materiality of the viewer, and how affect and sensation are part of that material engagement' (Kennedy, 2000, p. 16). Accordingly, the focus of the analysis section will be on the moving images' capacities to transform different bodies (film as a body and the spectator's body) into one 'collective, expansive, and permeable body' (Del Rio, 2008, p. 55).

This theoretical and methodological path will allow us to understand how the selected films embody an aesthetic interpretation of the 'emotionally complex sensual experience' of the historical present (Berlant, 2008a, p. 846). Cinematic experience as the reciprocation between 'the perception of expression and the expression of perception' promises a comprehensive view of how the historical present is being shaped, lived and aesthetically apprehended collectively (Sobchack, 1992, p. 5). This collectivity includes all the viewing subjects (the filmmaker, the spectator, and the film) as participants. In other words, as it envisions these films as not only 'express emotions but they also embody emotions' (Laine, 2011, p. 3), this study seeks to understand how the films and their audiences, through the cyclical cinematic experience, mutually constitute a 'temporal and historical becoming' (Del Rio, 2008, p. 60).

I.1. THE NEW TURKISH CINEMA BEYOND THE REPRESENTATIONAL PARADIGM

As previously mentioned, the subject matter and the interdisciplinary approach adopted in this study necessitate moving beyond the conventions of a representational analysis. First of all, I want to emphasize that I do not reject representation totally. Rather, I want to point out several assumptions of representational paradigm that might limit and even complicate the theoretical and methodological premises of this analysis. This dissertation has to leave aside the diversity of concepts of representation and the vast array of questions raised on representation in academic fields. In the following paragraphs, I will remark on my doubts

about representational epistemology taking into account the notion's cultural, aesthetical, social, and political connotations. My point of view intersects with the epistemological and ontological questions raised by affect theory, which has strong implications for the subject matter of this current study.

Cinematic representations are affective in shaping our knowledge and opinions on issues such as gender, ethnicity, cultures and identities, having significant impacts on the cultural and political discourses. Cinematic representations are frequently perceived as a mode of cultural knowledge and film as a medium of public pedagogy (Giroux, 2011). Films 'approached through a model of the politics of representation' (Coleman, 2013, p. 26) may lead to a cultural knowledge associated with negative 'religious, esthetic, political and semiotic' connotations and interpretation of the films as essentializing views on the non-western Other (Shohat & Stam, 2014, p. 182).

Representational thinking is dominantly built upon the dialectic of objective and unchanging 'knowable objects' and the 'knowing subject' (Naiboğlu, 2018, p. 13-14). The implication of knowability through representation for cinematic spectatorship is surely significant; assuming a vision of cinematic experience that is alienated, distanced experiences of the 'Other' situating the spectator at a contextual and temporal distance from the film's lifeworld. Related to this, I find Gary Bettinson's (2015) arguments relevant in this study. Commenting on the reception of Wong Kar-wai films, he underlines two main common tendencies dominantly informing culturalist criticism and allegorical readings of films. Bettinson argued that it is a prevalent disposition to draw a representational meaning and significance from 'thematizing the film's characters and personifying geographical regions' (2015, p. 10). Another equally reductive characteristic of such criticism is 'stressing local identity as central to a film's concerns', which underestimates the power of the moving images to appeal and affect the global audience (p. 12–13). Placing the central emphasis on

strict referentiality to contextual reality and locating the questions of identity at the core prevents us from perceiving the complexity of the films in their potential for 'transcultural expression' with sensibilities raised by the materiality of the films (p. 19)

Furthermore, the identitarian logic of representational analysis not only informs the international reception of national films. Domestic film criticism and scholarship can also run into similar pitfalls. Yet, in countries like Turkey, where "identity" is predominantly ideological by definition and taken for granted in 'oppositional models' (Jones, 2012, p. 3), an identitarian film analysis will inevitably result in stereotyping the characters disclosing 'a stable marker of sameness or difference' (Anthias, 2006, p. 20). A film analysis focusing only on the conflict between identities with their essentialist definitions and stereotypes common to identity politics discourses will not only consolidate and replicate the pre-existing interpretations and appreciation of films. Such a stance will possibly lose sight of how films are speaking more from and about the current experiences of being in this world in which identities are 'intersectional, complex, relational, and never unitary or fully coherent' (Jones, 2012, p. 8). Amelia Jones, in her book *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (2012) pointed out how aesthetic judgment today is informed by the identity politics of the 1960s and 1970s which is essentially based on binary oppositions. For Jones, they 'no longer have explanatory value, or at least this value is limited now to understanding past formations and the permutating relationships of today' (p. 7). Although Jones mainly referred to Western culture, I find her argument compelling and pertinent in the Turkish case. Likewise, identity politics—based dominantly on binary thinking—have saturated not only film criticism, but more extensively cultural and political discourses in Turkey.

Politics of representation raises various dilemmas for national cinemas regarding self-presentation and reception, particularly in non-western countries: issues of national allegory

and burden of representation. These two issues are also relevant to Turkish Cinema. It is evident that many film criticism and academic studies on Turkish Cinema are inclined to read the film texts as allegorizations of the nation itself, following Fredric Jameson's well-known national allegory argument. It is impossible to conduct an extended discussion of Jameson's 'national allegory' concept within the limited space of this study. Briefly, in his *Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism* (1986), Jameson argued that all third world texts and cultural products necessarily 'project a political dimension in the form of national allegory' (p. 69). According to him, 'the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society' (p. 69). However, contrary to mainstream tendency, I dispute the assumption that the films' artistic value emerges strictly from their enclosed social and cultural meanings.

The project at hand contests the prevalent premise that Turkish Cinema films can be interpreted from a cultural or 'national allegory' framework. Criticisms raised against Jameson strengthen my argument for focusing on the experience instead of representation. The most well-known criticism of Jameson's national allegory concept was made by Aijaz Ahmad (1987). Objecting mainly to Jameson's universalist and essentializing assumptions on the third world writers and their art, Ahmad criticized Jameson for ideologically classifying 'the World between the ones who make the history and those who are mere objects of it' (Ahmad, 1987, p. 7). For Ahmad, Jameson's classification 'leaves the so-called third world in a limbo', allowing no opportunity for so-called third world texts to be understood in any alternative way (p. 7). Moreover, Jameson's assertion underlines and re-emphasizes a Eurocentric understanding that the third world development 'lags behind the first' socially and aesthetically (Szeman, 2001, p. 808). As Ahmad pointed out, Jameson's claims essentialize the difference between the first and the third world as an absolute 'otherness' and homogenize the experience into one 'singular identity' (Ahmad, 1987, p. 10).

'Burden of representation' is another troubling issue that non-western cinemas have to confront (Naficy, 2012, p. 182).[2] Hamid Naficy's comment on the reception of Iranian Cinema provides helpful insights revealing how the burden of representation generates a dilemma for non-western national cinemas. Iranian Cinema is a productive case study for understanding the similar anxieties in Turkish Cinema, particularly in relation with the films screened in international festivals. As Naficy (2012) explained, while educated upper-middle class Iranians praised these films for their humanism, they were also concerned about the poverty, marginality and rural lives exposed by these films reproducing the western prejudices towards Iran (p. 253). In Naficy's words, 'they could neither find themselves or their homeland' in these films (p. 253). Naficy's description of how Iranian spectators, particularly those living in the diaspora, felt about the Iranian art-house films that gained international success is worth quoting here:

> These spectators felt ashamed of these movies, for the 'burden of representation' that they themselves had placed on them was too much. No single Iranian film could represent the entirety of Iranian 'national culture'. Since rarely a small body of films is able to fulfill this high expectation, there will always be criticism of their national representation when movies cross national boundaries. (Naficy, 2012, p. 253)

National allegory debates around Turkish Cinema indeed disclose an essential characteristic of cultural criticism tradition in Turkey. Many cultural artifacts from novels to films have been criticized harshly for failing to portray a genuine or authentic representation

[2] The term 'burden of representation' originally belongs to Kobena Mercer. According to Mercer, minority artists in general and Black artists in particular are seen as representatives of their whole community or culture. The art produced by these artists carries 'the weight of the double meaning of' the concept of representation, since s/he is presumed to speak for their communities 'as if she or he were its political "representative"' (Mercer, 1990, p. 65). Mercer is mainly concerned with the artists' dilemma on the misconceptualization of the notion of culture 'as a fixed and final property of different "racial" groups' (p. 63). I believe Mercer's argument on the burden of representation can be extended to a broader scale to include national cinemas. For more see: Mercer, K. (1990). Black art and the burden of representation. *Third Text*, *10*(4), 61–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/09528829008576253

of Turkey or for reproducing an Orientalizing image of the country to please Western audiences. Many critics severely judged the films of Fatih Akın and Ferzan Özpetek, Orhan Pamuk's literary works, and Sertab Erener's performance in the 2003 Eurovision song contest.[3] Orhan Pamuk, the winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in literature has been criticized for writing predominantly for the European Orientalist gaze and taste. In cinema, Turkish-Italian film director Ferzan Özpetek is frequently accused for the Orientalist discourse in the construction of Turkishness in some of his films such as *Hamam* (1997) and *Harem Suare* (1999). Fatih Akın has also been criticized by many for evoking 'an archetypal Orientalist imagery that reinforces a staged performance of ethnicity' in some of these films (Kılıçbay, 2014, p. 513).

As a recent example, the 2016 Oscar movie candidate Turkish-French film *Mustang* received polarized critiques in Turkey. Several Turkish critics have condemned *Mustang* for being inauthentic, misrepresenting the country and reflecting an unreal 'orientalist fantasy' (Genç, 2016). However, as Kaya Genç (2016) commented, it was not the Western audience but the Turkish critics who insistently read the leading female character's fate in the film 'as an allegory for the nation itself'. In my contention, his argument points to a common reflex of a mindset underlying Turkey's self-perception anxieties.

Exposing the double-edged anxieties established between the fears of cultural authenticity versus the desire for modernity unveils how Turkey's self-perception and self-representation of its identity have intertwined with worries about how the West perceives Turkey. However, it should also be kept in mind that the imagined European gaze is not the only reason for Turkey's self-perception issues. For instance, some cinema critics recently

[3] Sertab Erener's victory at the 2003 European Song Contest (Eurovision) is also an intriguing case to mention. The victory was highly celebrated by many for realizing the country's dreams come true. However, the video prepared for the promotion of the song and the stage performance were criticized for misrepresenting Turkish national identity by invoking the oriental image of the country.

complained that Turkish Cinema could not have been as authentic as Iranian Cinema. 'Why could not we be like Iran?' became a frequently asked question (Süar, 2016). Despite fears about becoming like Iran in political and social terms having prevailed for a long time, ironically, there has been a sense of inferiority in terms of cinema.

Similar questions have been asked many times, based on different comparisons. A query was raised in a periodical dated 1945. The essay-interview was even titled 'Why can't we make good films?...What do we lack?..Is it our brains or, or is the money?..'; it contains lines such as these: 'Why can't we see beautiful national films? Put aside the European and American film, isn't it true that even Egyptian films are liked better than ours? What is our fault, what is our lack?' (cited in Arslan, 2007, p. 1).

According to Nurdan Gürbilek, the questions raised since the early days of modernization unveil a national reflex based on the East/West duality rhetoric and self-questioning tradition. The same issue takes different forms: 'We don't have a novel of our own' or 'We don't have a tragedy, a criticism, a philosophy, or an individual of our own' (Gürbilek, 2003, p. 599). Always having a comparative character, such criticisms indeed reveal that we don't have something the Other has (p. 599). What is also significant is that the discourse on lack is not just 'a discursive fallacy' but rather 'an almost automatic response, a reflexive action' of critics and ordinary people (p. 599–600). Therefore, such complaints are not actually about other cinemas, but they rather reveal a sense of lack of Turkishness (Yalur, 2016, p. 57).

The discussions reflect the uncomfortable stance of Turkey's self-perception and self-representation within the broader context of modernity and national identity dilemmas. The polarized criticism of recent Turkish films unravels the self-reflexive positioning and negotiation of Turkish identity and its current atmosphere with its deep-rooted cultural concerns. It is certainly not my intention to conclude that Jameson's national allegory cannot

be applied to the analysis of Turkish film texts. Rather, I am critical of the allegorical readings of films reaching a reductive view and presuming that 'any film shown abroad might come to speak for the nation irrespective of its content or aesthetic form' (Larkin, 2009, p. 167). Before interpreting the films exclusively as 'national allegories,' I suggest taking into consideration the 'new modes of imagining and conceptualizing of social life in relation to transnational and post national formations' as well as the assumptions about the critical western reception of these films as non-western texts (Adelson, 2005, p. 2). Accordingly, I propose to move beyond the conventions of contextual film analysis informed by representational thinking.

My other concern germane to the issues of the representational paradigm is related to the concepts of anxiety and paranoia. Both concepts are studied and analyzed commonly through the lens of symptomatic reading in literary criticism and film analysis. However, as I see it, a conventional methodology of a symptomatic reading informed by psychoanalytic film analysis may risk diminishing the vitalism of a collective experience into pathologized and essentialized categories. Reducing existential, political, and moral issues into psychiatric disorders will eventually cause overlooking the historical and social compulsions that affect life experiences. Instead, I intend to deploy anxiety and paranoia as affective experiences and felt sensations embedded in the historical present, with their cultural overtones apart from clinical and neuroscientific understanding.

Let me clarify beforehand that my intention is not to minimize the importance of psychoanalytical film analysis. The four films included in this study are rich in narration and style to be analyzed from a psychoanalytical framework. However, I propose approaching the selected films as aesthetical self-reflections of the current emotional states of anxiety and paranoia with their fluid and dynamic features instead of framing them within a limited descriptive analysis of symptomatic reading that might generate a pathologizing

comprehension of the collective unconsciousness of a nation. At this point, a quote from Laura Mulvey will be insightful. Mulvey (1996), who defined cinema as ‘phantasmagoria, illusion and a symptom of the social unconscious’, emphasized that psychoanalytic film theory can analyze the collective unconsciousness of a mass culture symptomatically (p. xiv). Cinema is ‘a massive screen on which collective fantasy, anxiety, fear and their effects can be projected, it speaks the blind-spots of a culture and finds forms that make manifest socially traumatic material, through distortion, defence and disguise’ (p. 12). Although I essentially agree with Mulvey that one can reveal considerable knowledge about collective emotions of a particular culture or historical period symptomatically, I still have doubts about using the psychoanalytic paradigm and symptomatic reading as modes of cultural inquiry.

Refusing the symptomatic analysis might contradict the psychopathological understandings of anxiety and paranoia. However, symptomatic interpretation carries the risk of being inattentive to the uniqueness of the object of analysis since it ‘treats the text as the symptom of something non-textual, something supposedly “deeper”’ (Culler, 1997, p. 69 quoted in Kalmar, 2014, p. 212). It can obscure one’s vision of how films convey anxiety and paranoia as emotional-affective lived experiences of a community sharing a particular atmosphere and result in a pathologizing understanding. Psychoanalytic film theory is generally assumed to be the most convenient approach to interpreting filmic emotions. However, whether ready-made categories of psychoanalytic analysis could provide us with a comprehensive interpretation of film experience in terms of emotional engagement and affective appraisal is questionable. As Greg Smith (2003) convincingly pointed out, even the replacement of ‘emotion’ with the psychoanalytical terms of ‘pleasure’ and ‘desire’ implies that such distinction is ‘not purely terminological’ but rather symptomatic, which has resulted in the negligence of emotion in film analysis (p. 174). Thus, the psychoanalytic approach concentrating on subject positions and mechanisms of desire and pleasure emphasizing the

‘processes of identity, identification and ideology’ overlooks cinematic experience as an affective-emotional appraisal (p. 175).

The psychoanalytical scholarship prioritizes vision over all other senses in the cinematic experience. For Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, ‘the phenomenon of cinema relates to the psyche of the individual spectator’ (Laine, 2007, p. 11). Furthermore, cinematic identification grounded on the Lacanian mirror stage always involves an image. Visually-oriented premises of psychoanalytic film theory and the notion of ‘mastering gaze’ underlying cinematic voyeurism presume ‘a distanced, decorporealized, monocular eye mastering all it surveils but not physically implicated in the objects of its vision’ (Williams, 1991 quoted in Sobchack, 2004, p. 65, endnote 33). As Sobchack argued, a disembodied understanding of vision does not even embrace sense perception, which is essentially the primary basis of consciousness and experience (Sobchack, 1992). She further maintained that human beings perceive the world and express themselves with an existential language of being in the world before being constrained in the Lacanian symbolic system. This is also true for the moving picture, as Sobchack pointed out that cinema ‘perceives and expresses itself wildly and pervasively before it articulates its meanings’ with any particular and systematic form of signification (1992, p. 12). The psychoanalytic approach represses the viewer’s actual bodily experience and restrains the lived experiences within the limits of a ready-made terminology that detaches cinema’s ‘wild meaning’ into ‘codes governed by montage, mise-en-scene, syntagmatic categories, binary and oppositional structures, and particular ideological and poetic pathologies’ (Sobchack, 1992, p. 12).

I hope that I have clearly outlined my doubts about representational epistemology and my reasons for not adopting psychoanalysis as a tool of cultural criticism in my study. I hope to clearly outlined my doubts about representational epistemology and my reasons for not adopting psychoanalysis as a tool of cultural criticism in my study. I should also add that it is

not my contention to reach overarching conclusions and claim that anxiety and paranoia are the only affective sensations observed in the chosen films. Nor do I claim that all spectators experience the same emotional appraisal intended by the directors. The films included in this study are indeed open to multiple interpretations by diverse spectators, recalling Miriam Hansen's argument: 'to engage that public, to address its specific needs and fantasies, films had to be at once robust and porous enough to allow for multiple readings' (2000, p. 20).

Alternately, this study intends to view the films as 'a performative and communicative *act of vision'* rather than merely visible objects (Sobchack, 1992, p. 56). Having this perspective, I will draw upon phenomenological film approaches informed by affect studies to conceive the films not only as 'viewed object[s]' but as 'viewing subjects' (Laine, 2007, p. 113). Therefore, I suggest interpreting the films without reducing them to representational assumptions about their context and seek to adopt a methodology that will approach the object as a 'subject participating in the construction of theoretical views' (Peeren, 2008, p. 3). Consequently, this study seeks to differentiate itself by focusing on the affective power of the films and asking the question of 'what the film does' instead of 'what does it represent' (Laine, 2011, p. 4).

Following Sobchack, I also contend that since the cinematic experience offered by these films is grounded on 'the intelligibility of embodied vision,' essentially 'reflect[ing] the universality of specific scopes of experience' (Sobchack, 1992, p. 6), transforming the cinematic experience into a dynamic, reciprocal and dialogical relationship of two subjects: the film and the spectator (Laine, 2004, pp.10–11).

However, it is also important to note that besides the universal viscerality the films enact, they also offer a sense of immediacy and verisimilitude for the Turkish spectator. Laura Marks' arguments offer novel insights for this study concerning this matter. Marks (2000) proposed that an embodied experience offered by films is 'especially important for

representing cultural experiences that are unavailable to vision' (p. 22). The visceral immediacy conveyed by the films enhances a sense of verisimilitude for the viewer. The 'culturally specific construction of […] sensorium' (Kalmar, 2004, p. 205) conveys the sense of verisimilitude for the Turkish spectator. My research asserts that the culturally specific sensorium turns film viewing into a 'unique, strongly affective experience' of the film's life-world, reminding the spectators of their own habitus (Kalmar, 2014, p. 212). The visceral immediacy conveys a sense of reality about the current cultural-social and political realities that Turkish spectators experience in their everyday lives. Although the stories told in the films do not necessarily correlate with the spectators' exact life-experiences, the visceral cinematic experience of the moving images stimulates their sensations of being situated in the same present history.

As a final statement about methodology, I want to assert that adopting a phenomenological approach informed by affect theories rather than psychoanalytical film theory is an epistemological choice that defines my methodology. As mentioned previously, this study develops its research methodology in keeping with the theoretical framework and the peculiarities of the subject matter. Indeed, such an epistemological stance appeals to a methodological route in which 'theory and object involve each other in a productive relationship of reciprocal intersubjectivity' (Peeren, 2008, p. 3). This perspective implies that embracing an interdisciplinary approach is not sufficient. It is also imperative to build an intersubjective relationship between 'the analyst and the audience but also between the analyst and the object' (Bowman, 2003, p. 37). Instead of a hermeneutical methodology that entails 'positioning oneself as a "reader" with a proper distance to the film as an objectively readable text,' this study prefers to position the analyst as an active participant who directly engages with the affective qualities of cinematic experience (Laine, 2011, p. 3). In other words, it means my active engagement with the object of analysis not as an objective

observer but as a spectator experiencing the same historical present via my situatedness and self-reflexivity. As Sobchack (2004) reminds us, film theorists are not immune from being 'sensual beings at the movies':

> As "lived bodies" … our vision is always already "fleshed out." Even at the movies our vision and hearing are informed and given meaning by our other modes of sensory access to the world: our capacity not only to see and to hear but also to touch, to smell, to taste, and always to proprioceptively feel our weight, dimension, gravity, and movement in the world. In sum, the film experience is meaningful not to the side of our bodies but because of our bodies. (p. 60)

However, my situatedness also imposes a similar burden of representation dilemma as an analyst. As Dimitris Eleftheriotis (2006) rightfully pointed out, critics or theorists analyzing Turkish Cinema may feel the pressure 'to balance the political necessity to represent to a foreign public a "valued" aspect of national cinema with the epistemological demands of the object of study' (p. 226). Such pressure puts them in the position of having 'to either "advertise" a national cinema or become subjected to accusations of "devaluing" its artistic achievements' (p. 226). To negotiate with such constraints, I will try to mediate between the conventions of established film paradigms and the cultural aesthetics of Turkish Cinema.

A distinguishing feature of this study is its intention to conceive the experience of a historical period as a feeling or a sensation. The ongoing present will be envisioned both as an embodied reality that we experience and simultaneously try to make sense of. It is also an affective and a political temporality. On these grounds, I want to capture how ordinary people experience their sense of belonging to the present history first as 'a sensation [*Empfindung*], a feeling' rather than as knowledge, and how these sensations are reflected and embodied in these films (Von Moltke, 2007, p. 17). In this respect, my study proposes to focus on the

present suffering and to view trauma as embedded in the historical present, being specifically attentive to the ways anxiety and paranoia confront the spectator with visceral immediacy. I also argue that by building visceral proximity to our own lived reality, the films invite and even provoke the spectator to embrace a particular mode of thinking similar to paranoid knowledge that constitutes the inner rationale of the films and informs our understanding of the historical present in which they are situated.

This study's significant contribution lies in its approach to viewing the chosen films as aesthetical evidence of the historical present without prioritizing past traumas' exceptionality. Several excellent academic works on New Turkish Cinema analyze the contemporary zeitgeist as reflected in films. These sources reveal the persistent themes of an identity crisis, issues of belonging and memory in new cinema mainly associated with the broader picture of past traumatic events and contested memories that the nation has not come to terms with.[4] Although I substantially agree with their arguments, I dispute that apprehending the historical present only from the lens of trauma as a scene of an exception might essentially ahistoricize the analysis (Berlant, 2011a, p. 10). As it will be discussed in the following chapters, I maintain that the films mainly do not deal with past traumas (except partly in *Inflame*), but they explicitly disclose how traumas come into being with 'the shock, of destabilization, of discomfort of/for the present' (Nikolaidou, 2014, p. 32).

Alternatively, this study intends to shift its attention towards understanding the present experience that has not been overshadowed by past traumas. This is not to deny the past traumas' impact on the present history or to claim that the chosen films are not dealing with a traumatic history. Particularly, Özçelik's film *Inflame* questions the issues of erasing past traumatic events (the Sivas Massacre) that haunts the present like a nightmare. However,

[4] See: Suner, A. (2010). *New Turkish cinema: Belonging, identity and memory*. IB Tauris; Dönmez-Colin, G. (2008). *Turkish cinema: Identity, Distance and Belonging*. Reaktion Books.

what distinguishes the four films discussed in this study is that the past traumas are not fetishized to prevent the characters from experiencing the 'the historical present' affectively (Berlant, 2011a, p. 10). In other words, the sensual and visceral experience of the historical present is conveyed by the films without invoking a sense of detachment from the present. In *Inflame,* although the protagonist (Hasret) is obsessed with the trauma of the Sivas Massacre, she does not situate the spectator in the past. Apart from drawing attention to how past memories are erased, the film also continuously emphasizes how the memories belonging to the ongoing present are being eradicated through media censorship and urban renewal as we are watching the film.

Therefore, diverging from previous works, the current study intends to move beyond a trauma-centered cultural criticism that reduces identities, subjectivities and bodies to psychologism obsessed with 'bringing forth ghosted bodies and the traumatized remains of erased histories' (Clough, 2007, p. 3). Instead of a present history defined extensively by a pathological sense of past trauma, such a perspective will allow this analysis to conceive 'memory, image, and time,' as well as trauma, differently (p. 13).

I also want to emphasize that the analyzed films convey the historical sensation of the present to the viewer not merely cognitively but also by haptic visuality triggering the bodily sensorium. This entails approaching these films as intersubjective cinematic experiences that are 'seen, heard, reflectively felt and understood' intellectually and emotionally (Laine, 2004, p. 131). The films create a multi-sensory and intersubjective cultural experience by stimulating the spectators' sense-memories. Thus, following Sobchack's argument that cinematic experience is 'a system of communication based on bodily perception as a vehicle of conscious expression' (1992, p. 9), my research alleges that the films offer 'an intimate experience' similar to an extra-cinematic appraisal instead of 'a distant experience of observation' (Barker, 2009a, p. 1-2).

I.2. Films

After a comprehensive search, four films were chosen for analysis in this study: *Beyond the Hill* (2012), *Ivy* (2015), *Frenzy* (2015), and *Inflame* (2017). The films testify to the multi-faceted crisis surrounding the country under the existing authoritarian, Islamist-populist governance and engage with the cultural anxieties in Turkey in the 2000s. The films share similar thematic preoccupations with several films of New Turkish Cinema through focusing on the survival struggles of ordinary people who are trapped in a sense of powerlessness and loss of agency and consequently descending into paranoia and a paralyzing existential terror.[5]

Despite a common thematic concern, these four films distinguish themselves from their counterparts with their several unique features. To start with, the analyzed films expand their directions away from mainstream cinema, with their narrative and stylistic strategies introducing new aesthetic and political sensibilities. They engage with the present history with unique aesthetic expressions and representations which overlap with the felt sense of this particular historical and cultural experience. The directors' experimentation with diverse genre conventions and performance traditions announce how the affective intensities of crisis in the present history as a 'structure of feeling' inform not only the film narratives, but also the representational strategies and aesthetic expressions of the images that consequently shape the affective perception of the viewers (Williams, 1977).

Although having common traits with the social realist filmmaking tradition of Turkish Cinema, the directors adopted novel aesthetic strategies to deal with the social issues

[5] Films such as: Özer Kızıltan's *A Man's Fear of God* (2006), Ümit Ünal's *9* (2002) and *The Shadowless* (2009), Tayfun Pirselimoğlu's *The Sideway* (2017) Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, (2011); Zeki Demirkubuz's *Underground* (2012); films of Onur Ünlü, such as *Police* (2006), *The Extremely Tragic Story of Celal Tan* (2011), *Thou Gild'st the Even* (2013) and *Let's Sin!* (2014). The films were not included in this analysis due to various reasons. While some of them built their stories more on clinical pathologies, the others were eliminated due to surreal dynamics of their stories, which cannot provoke spectators' visceral and immediate responses.

compared to their earlier and contemporary counterparts. The affective quality of the films does not reside in the spectatorial identification with the characters or the dramatic structure. On the contrary, directors intentionally avoid the audience's sympathetic engagement or identification with the characters. Rejecting cliched representations of social issues in terms of causal logic and clarity, and deliberately avoiding any resolution or a moralizing pedagogy, the films intend to present the immediate and intimate experience of the current atmosphere rather than to represent it. They depict the ongoing present as **'**a shattered, formally inconsistent, yet intelligible zone' (Berlant, 2016 cited in Cameron, 2021, p. 248). Their main intention is not to deconstruct the crisis and offer an explanation but to convey 'sensory explorations of realities yet to be properly understood' (De Luca, 2014, p. 240). The films' 'aesthetic sensuousness' (Casey, 1973, p. xxv) demand us to question our cliched 'perceptions of reality' by evoking a 'different experience of it by making reality itself appear more intensely *sensible***.**' (Abel, 2013, p. 16). The intensified sensibility confronts us with something ''real' enough…but that usually remains outside of our day-to-day purview' (p. 16). Their main purpose is beyond opening a window onto the marginality of the characters, lives or stories, but rather to invoke the common feelings of living in the same atmosphere that is shared by the audience. They remind the 'overwhelming complexity of these realities' by emphasizing the emotional and affective aspects to 'and, in so doing, enable us to see, hear and feel them afresh' (De Luca, 2014, p. 28).

With given aesthetic and representational strategies, the moving images qualify to capture a heterogeneous global and local audience from a common point of shared sensibilities and feelings by portraying a 'dense tapestry of emotions that configure embodied experience' of living in crisis-ridden present (Cameron, 2021, p. 249). The intangible intensities of a state of crisis become affective when shared and felt collectively. In Berlant's words, this is 'the affective presence of an atmosphere that is sensed rather than known and

enacted, a space of affective residue that constitutes what is shared among strangers' (Berlant, 2015, p. 194). With their affective atmospheres, the films can address the audience from a common 'ground from which subjective states and their attendant feelings and emotions emerge' (Anderson, 2009, p. 78). The affective atmospheres of the films invoke uncanny sensations that are strange but familiar at the same time: that is, the felt sense of being in the same historical present, embracing 'the familiar and the strange, the known and the unknown' simultaneously in Freudian terms (Hitchen, 2021, p. 15). The characters and the stories may not be easily identifiable with, but the feelings evoked by the images stimulate the spectators to find a 'familiarity in the strange' (p. 15). That is the 'collective and acutely familiar feeling' of living in and sharing the anxious temporality, the impasse and the enduring sense of the 'unknown' (p. 4). Blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction; imagination and the real, the films evoke the sense of living in 'an intensified present', defined by Berlant as 'a stretched out 'now' that is at once both intimate and estranged' (Berlant, 2008c, p. 5). It is not about experiencing a similar crisis in terms of the events which are sometimes 'predictable' and 'tractable' and limited with temporality, but rather, encountering with the resonating the sense of a 'crisis ordinariness' (p. 5). Consequently, paranoia conveyed in the films not only embodies a pervasive mood disclosing the felt experience of the present. It also acts as a prevalent way to respond to and to live in an uncanny temporality: 'as a way to *make known* the unknowns generated' by an ongoing crisis in the ordinary (Hitchen, 2021, p. 4).

Looking from this perspective, it can be argued that the films echo the 'cinema of crisis'. Cinema of crisis has been discussed extensively in European and American Cinema—in Greek and Spanish Cinemas in particular—in films dealing with the global economic crisis of 2008 and afterward. There is no defined category of a 'cinema of crisis' applied to any particular films in Turkish Cinema. But following Dean Allbritton's extended definition

inclusive of all films that deal with any current crisis that a country faces with, I also argue that these four films are examples of a cinema of crisis as they 'engage with or confront what it means to live in crisis' (Allbritton, 2014, p. 3). Beyond the peculiarity of how the crisis is lived and felt in its historical and geographical context and its aesthetic and cinematic expression, the films, in my contention, raise several universal aspects of a crisis experience: the individual and collective sense of precarity and vulnerability (Allbritton, 2014); 'invisible routinisation and internalisation of states of crisis' (Vidal, 2019, p. 54); emerging new forms of citizenship, failing sense of agency, sense of belonging and 'attachment to social order' (Cameron, 2021, p. 248) and on the more general sense the 'failed expectations of reciprocity, having 'trust in the world's ongoingness and our competence at being humans' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 52).

In this respect, it can be argued that the directors' concern is beyond representing the social reality in the conventional sense allowing a simple contextual reading of the images as a national allegory. There is no doubt that these films can be interpreted as cultural-political allegory. However, the common disposition to read the films as a political allegory underestimates the affective quality of the films beyond their content and narration. The films are socially and politically motivated at the core, engaging with several issues of social-economic inequalities, oppression and exploitation, class conflicts, as much as oppressive cultural norms, and discontent of urbanization. Such a stance would lead to devaluing 'the sense and sensibility of materiality' of the films in appealing to a wide range of spectators, including the global audience (Sobchack, 2004, p. 65). On the other hand, this is not a claim to reduce films tacitly to 'aestheticism' prioritizing their aesthetic vision (Abel, 2013, p. 19), but rather to suggest that a broader look is necessitated to appreciate these films beyond the accustomed understanding of 'political films' or 'social realist films' based on their contents and focus on local identities as films' central concern (Bettinson, 2015, p. 12). Further to

their social and political concerns, the affective relationship they aim to build with the audience with all their complexity and aesthetic strategies, the films in concern raise a novel sensibility, mapping the political in the invisible, the intangible, the unpredictable, and the emerging; on the intensities and the 'excess' that circulates between the bodies.

The films also built their social and political commentary on states of liminality, in-betweenness and processes of becoming and unbecoming. The sensorial aesthetics and the affective realism of films demand that the spectator visualize the films beyond the boundaries and hierarchies of "identity" with their clichéd understandings of gender, class and ethnicity. The films do not expect spectators to identify with the characters but impel them to 'identify with the rhythm of becoming and begin to experience the dissolution of boundaries between self, other and world' (Rogers, 2013, p. 39). Thus, the films derive a great deal of their dramatic affect by foregrounding human vulnerability and invoking the 'universality of possible questions to any human being' through sensorial affects of reality (Facchin, 2015, p. 99). Although the characters and life stories may not be necessarily familiar to the average spectator, the embodied and intersubjective cinematic experience created by the films demands that the audience be more than passive witnesses but rather active participants who respond (Laine, 2007).

The films' affective aesthetics engaging with the sensibilities of liminality and becoming make crucial sense for this study. Above all, liminality carries vital importance in contextualizing the films in contemporary Turkey, where geographical and historical in-betweenness intensely affects the subjectivities of citizens, underlying the deep-rooted cultural anxieties. Therefore, ordinary stories remind us how emerging anxieties blended with existing ontological insecurities transform into individual pathologies and create anxious subject positions. The peculiar social and cultural expressions of anxious subject positions or figures of crisis in these films invite the audience to apprehend the sense of living in this

present history as embodied realities that are in the process of becoming rather than consolidating pre-existing identity categories.

As Mikel Dufrenne (1973) asserted, the affective quality of a film is rather immanent to the 'expressed worlds'. What creates immediacy is not a 'representational faithfulness' to the empirical reality (Schollhammer, 2020, p. 13) but the sense of truth expressed in the film images through the 'reality of the image' (Abel, 2013, p. 19). Dissolving the boundary between 'the exposed reality and the reality involved aesthetically' the expressed worlds become real with the power of an event' involving the viewer in its unfolding (Schollhammer, 2012, p. 138). According to Ben Anderson (2009), through film atmosphere 'the expressed world overflows the representational content of the aesthetic object' communicating 'itself in arousing a feeling' (p. 79). Contrary to visual perception, the materiality of the film provides the immediacy of both emotional and cognitive, and bodily experience of the films. Accordingly, averse to mastery of the audience over the film, sensory aesthetics make the viewer 'vulnerable to the image, reversing the relation of mastery that characterizes optical viewing' (Marks, 2000, p. 185). The audience finds themselves hesitating about their pre-existing 'tendency to read images through the framework of representational realism' (Abel, 2008).

Besides their appeal to a global audience, with their sensuous apprehension and experience, the films evoke the sense of being situated in the same historical and cultural present and their active participation in the current 'mass production of senses' for the Turkish audience (Hansen, 2009). The films not only trigger the spectators' cognitive appraisal of the present crisis through narrative and fictional content, but they also create an affective cinematic experience for the spectator who 'is at once receptive and form-giving' (Kiraly, 2010, p. 137). Re-positioning film viewers as embodied subjectivities expose 'a new regime of the image, one in which vision is visceral and intensive instead of representational

and extensive' (Shaviro, 1993, p. 139). I argue that these films are not plain cinematic representations of reality, but rather self-reflexive quests intensifying 'the viewer's consciousness of the act of viewing' (Gyenge, 2016, p. 128).

In conclusion, the films testify to the multi-faceted crisis besieging Turkey in the 2000s, providing a window onto a common sense of paranoia resonating with the cultural anxieties. The films address the crisis in the present history with novel aesthetic expressions and politics of representation shaped by the felt experience of this historical and cultural experience. It is my contention that, with a socially concerned and politically motivated affective realism and aesthetics, these four films are pioneering examples distinguishing themselves from their counterparts in Turkish Cinema.

I.3. OUTLOOK AND THESIS STRUCTURE

The study continues with the second chapter, which is dedicated to mapping the epistemological and methodological terrain, outlining the basic conceptual tools and methodological paths for analytical clarity. First, I will provide a brief overview of 'affective turn' in the humanities and social sciences, followed by film theory's renewed interest in the emotional and affective aspects of cinematic experience. Next, a conceptual framework will be developed to flesh out the key concepts of anxiety, paranoia, and affective and historical present in the study, which constitute the affective characters of the analyzed films. The concepts of affect, emotion, atmosphere, anxiety and paranoia will be utilized not 'abstract representations of an object' but rather as methodological tools for an interdisciplinary analysis (Bal, 2009, pp. 18–19).

In contextualizing the New Turkish Cinema, I will first briefly review the trajectory of the Turkish experience of modernization (Chapter III). My intention is not to provide a preview of the history of Turkish modernization but rather to emphasize some points that I

believe will clarify my critical stance towards the ideologically laden perceptions of Turkish modernization, national identity issues, and present-day cultural anxieties. In addition to the awareness of the embeddedness of national identity dilemmas in Turkish modernization, this study will interpret the anxieties, focusing more on the affective atrocities of the current global developments intertwined with local articulations. Accordingly, in this chapter, I will explain why this thesis does not aim to situate itself within the mainstream macro perspectives, focusing on state-level transformations and the construction of the national subject as the modern self. Neither does this study plan to dwell on the over-exhausted identity crisis approaches. Following this line of thought, I will be adopting a more nuanced perspective on the hybridness, situatedness and emotional characteristics of subjectivities.

The fourth chapter, 'Turkish Cinema and Anxious Belonging' starts with a brief history of Turkish Cinema and continues with outlining the characteristics of the New Turkish Cinema that emerged in the 1990s. I agree with the arguments that the films chosen in this study share the common concerns and styles of a new cinematic movement, but I also argue that they constitute new examples of Turkish Cinema offering an intersubjective cinematic experience as 'seen, heard, reflectively felt and understood' intellectually and emotionally (Laine, 2004, p. 131). Therefore, as aesthetic expressions of the current social-cultural and political climate of Turkey and the national psyche, these films contribute to the production of a collective sense of living in the present history beyond representation. In other words, I claim that these films are pioneers of sensuous filmmaking in Turkish Cinema, turning the cinematic experience into a 'unique, strongly affective experience' of a filmic life-world reminding the Turkish audience of their own habitus (Kalmar, 2014, p. 212). Also, with their affectivity and sensibility besides narration, they offer a transnational and intercultural cinematic experience (Marks, 2000). This chapter will be followed by a film analysis chapter (Chapter V).

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL TERRAIN

For analytical clarity, this chapter will map out the interdisciplinary approach this study necessitates and the novel methodological insights offered by the theoretical literature, including essential conceptual tools and methodological paths. The theoretical framework applicable to the research problem is drawn mainly from film theory and affect studies. I will start with a brief overview of the epistemological and methodological implications of contemporary affect theories in the humanities and social sciences. Then, I will continue with the affective turn in film theory (Duncan, 2016). Seeking a transdisciplinary synthesis and contextualizing in the Turkish context necessitate grounding the heuristic understanding of the concepts and the methodological applications rather than using pre-established methodologies. Therefore, I will proceed with particular concept clusters that will function as key tools for this interdisciplinary analysis and try to relate these premises to the Turkish case.

II.1. AFFECTIVE TURN

This study positions its argument within the diversity and richness of the affect and emotion theories that have occupied a significant place in social and cultural theory in recent decades. The renewed attention on emotions and the recent affective turn that have inspired this study, and countless others, have opened up new venues for many disciplines, including cultural studies, anthropology, history, sociology, and cinema studies. Interest in emotions and affects is not new. Philosophy has always been interested in concept of affect including 'passions, moods, feelings, and emotions' (La Caze and Lloyd, 2011, p.1). As Ann Pellegrini and Jasbir Puar (2009) pointed out, the recent affective turn is indeed a revived involvement in various studies such as 'sentiment studies', 'theories of emotion,' Raymond Williams'

theory of ‘structures of feeling’ and in non-Cartesian philosophical traditions of Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (p. 36). Affective turn can be broadly described as ‘renewed and widespread scholarly interest in corporeality, in emotions, and in the importance of aesthetics’ (La Caze and Lloyd, 2011, p. 2). However, the affective turn has not only given priority to emotions and affects as objects of academic and intellectual inquiry but also caused epistemological and methodological shifts opening ‘new ways of doing criticism’ (Cvetkovich, 2012, p. 3). Although definitions and approaches diverge among affect theories, the common emphasis is inspired by the Deleuzian understanding of ‘affect as force, intensity, or the capacity to move and be moved’ (p. 4). Affect as a force or intensity refers to visceral forces beyond emotion and conscious cognition that can either ‘drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension’ or, on the contrary, withhold us from taking any action (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. 1).

Furthermore, shifting the attention to the ‘intensities’ and the ‘excess’ that circulates between bodies, affective turn widens our vision to track the emerging and the unexpected, what is ‘not-yet formed, the pre-reflective, the nuanced presences prior to reflection and articulation’ (Röttger-Rössler & Slaby, 2018, p. 2). It gives us the tools to sharpen our attention and sensibilities to grasp the dynamic multiplicities and the ‘excess’ composing ‘the very fabric of our being’ left out of concern by constructivist paradigms (Hemmings, 2005, p. 549). The ‘excess’ that circulates between the bodies autonomously, unintentionally, and pre-cognitively is what the prevalent theories are missing in explaining the emerging and the unexpected. By calling attention to what is ‘non-conscious, non-cognitive, trans-personal, and non-representational processes’ (Lara et al. 2017, p. 31), affect liberates our understanding of human relations from the constraints ‘of established discourse, of stable identities, institutions, codified cultural norms or categories’ and offers a more critical engagement with the sensuous dimension of a ‘bodily reality beyond codification, consolidation or ‘capture’

(Röttger-Rössler & Slaby, 2018, p. 1). In this respect, the affective turn offers new prospects and methodologies for a more nuanced understanding of contemporary social relations and the world. It opens our vision to the diverging and multiple dynamics of human relations, from micro-level everyday interactions to macro-level global developments (Slaby & von Scheve, 2019). Moving beyond subject/object epistemologies and dualistic abstract categories, affect theory calls attention to 'the heterogeneous connections that are made possible through sensations and intensities of life as they are experienced by sentient beings' (Martin & Ortiz-Ceberio, 2020, p. 264).

With an emphasis on intensity, excess, and potentiality articulated with its concern for the body and materiality, affect theory opens up bold new visions to conceive the present history, which this study is specifically attentive to. This is particularly useful in capturing the affective sensations and emotions circulating in the present moment by capturing the vitalism of a nation's collective experience without falling into the traps of 'a reductionist sociology of culture' (Benhabib, 2002, p. 4). This study, avoiding any cultural essentialism, aims to employ a more dynamic view of a culture whose 'boundaries are fluid, porous and contested' (p. 184). Affective apprehension of the present history in Turkey necessitates being attentive to the global transformations as much as the contextual and historical peculiarities.

Seyla Benhabib (2002) asserted that we need to view how 'cultures are formed through complex dialogues and interactions with other cultures' (p. 184). This is particularly relevant to the case of Turkey. Geographically forming a bridge between two continents and civilizations, the country has been open to cultural interactions for ages. Thus, the interplay of global and local dynamics has a fundamental role in giving rise to cultural anxieties, which reconfigure unconventional patterns of belonging and new definitions of inclusion-exclusion. In this respect, affect theories underlining the embodied, relational and situational dimensions of the lived experience in the texture of the intersubjective operation allow us to grasp better

how such experiences are formed by several sources of influence with all the complexities involved.

To make my argument clear, I will briefly touch upon several concepts and approaches of affect theory as relevant to this study. Two dominant streams have shaped the affective turn in humanities. According to Brian Ott (2017), these two significant perspectives can be classified in terms of how affect is defined: affect as an 'elemental state'[6] and affect as an 'intensive force'[7]. Both perspectives are too extensive to be reviewed thoroughly within the limits of this study. However, it is important to highlight a common premise shared by both accounts: the exclusive emphasis they put on the embodied nature of affects.

Affective turn has been mainly influenced by non-Cartesian philosophies of Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Henri Bergson, Michel Foucault, and many others. Among the eight orientations grouped by Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth (2010), the philosophical traditions that fed this affective turn were mainly the 'phenomenological and post-phenomenological theories of embodiment' and philosophical traditions that reject the Cartesian dualism of mind and body mainly based upon Spinozian corporeality (La Caze & Lloyd, 2011, p. 6). Premised on the critique of Cartesian dualistic

[6] The first line of thinking is exemplified by Silvan S. Tomkins' tradition of 'psychobiology of affects' and Antonio Damasio's theory of basic emotions based on premises of psychology and neuroscience (La Caze & Lloyd, 2011, p. 3). Despite the disparities among these scholars, affect as an elemental state theory shares a common assumption: that 'affects are elemental body states arrived at through automated biological processes', making them universal (Ott, 2017, p. 7). Although affect is 'precognitive' in a certain sense, the experience is captured and labeled as a 'conscious feeling' (p. 7). Tomkins and Damasio have been followed by scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Teresa Brennan, and film scholar Lisa Cartwright. For a detailed and critical account on both approaches see Ott, B. L, (2017) Affect in Critical Studies. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.56.

[7] The second approach to affect is led by several scholars from literary and cultural studies, geography, communication, and art history. The well-known pioneers are Brian Massumi with his influential article 'The Autonomy of Affect' (1995) and Nigel Thrift with his book 'Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect' (2008). For further see: Massumi, B. (1995). The autonomy of affect. *Cultural Critique*, *31*, 83–109. https://doi.org/10.2307/1354446; and Thrift, N. (2008). *Non-representational theory: Space, politics, affect*. New York. Routledge.

ontology, the Spinozian conceptualization of affect prioritizes the bodily capacities to affect and to be affected. According to Brian Massumi, in the Spinozist ontological tradition, affect 'is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act' (Massumi, 1987, p. xvii). However, it is crucial to remember that affect theory is not concerned only with the human body. Influenced essentially by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of a 'body without organs', the affect approaches accept anything as a body as long as 'it has the capacity to affect and be affected, human or non-human'(Ott, 2017, p. 2).[8]

Despite offering dynamic and exciting challenges to conventional scholarship in humanities and social sciences, several methodological and conceptual complexities still exist in affect studies. Due to its interdisciplinary quality, various studies emerging in different disciplines inevitably led to theoretical and epistemological conflicts to arise (Frykman & Frykman, 2016). One of the main difficulties stems from the interchangeable usage of the terms 'affect, emotion, feeling and sentiment' that often caused confusion across different disciplines (p. 10). However, as Pellegrini and Puar (2009) emphasized, focusing more on the definitions and boundaries of affect will lead us to overlook the 'generative and productive multiplicity of its deployment as an analytic and political frame' (p. 37). Therefore, this study is also less interested in the definitions of affect and emotion but driven more by the promises of the affect theory that opens up for this study. However, a brief overview of the different perspectives on the affect-emotion distinction through the lens of affect theories will be insightful before situating this study in the field and how it will conceptualize both terms.

[8] For more, see Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*: *Capitalism and schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.

Some affect scholars led by Brian Massumi are insistent on making a clear distinction between the two notions of affect and emotion. Drawing inspiration mainly from Spinoza and Delueze and Guattari, Massumi described affect as a 'nonsignifying, nonconscious intensity' which is embodied and 'autonomous' (Leys, 2011, p. 441). For him, unlike emotions, affects are associated with *potentiality* and *process of becoming* since they have not been 'represented, labeled, communicated, shaped and structured' yet (Wetherell, 2012, p. 59). For Massumi, emotion is a 'socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience' (Massumi, 1995, p. 88). Compared to emotions, However, affects are not 'colonized' by language or not 'extensively studied', and they are more flexible to set up and hold any 'multiple connections and ways of being' (Wetherell, 2012, p.58–59). Steven Shaviro summed up a comprehensive summary of Massumi's distinction between emotions and affects as (2010):

> Affect is primary, non-conscious, asubjective or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified, and intensive; while emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified, and meaningful, a 'content' that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject. Emotion is affect captured by a subject, or tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurate with that subject. Subjects are overwhelmed and traversed by affect, but they *have* or *possess* their own emotions. (p. 3)

Conceiving affect as 'a non-conscious experience' that 'cannot be fully realized in language' (Shouse, 2005) poses serious challenges to critical theory, informed by linguistic turn, structuralism-poststructuralism, and Lacanian psychoanalysis (Ott, 2017, p. 9). As Margaret Wetherell (2012) commented, one of the most challenging characteristics of affect studies is the main goal of reaching 'a lively sensual realm beyond the conventional, the cognitive and the discursive' (p. 52). Discourse is usually defined as 'the conscious, the

planned and the deliberate' whereas, affect is conceived as 'the automatic, the involuntary and the non-representational' (p. 52).[9]

Not all affect scholars are insistent on making a clear distinction between the notions of affect and emotion as Massumi. Before proceeding with the affect-emotion distinction through the lens of affect theories, it is crucial to bear in mind the enduring perplexities and lack of consensus on the concept of emotion. Since paradigms on emotions are central to affect theories, situating this study within recent affect theories demands that some of the inherent issues in the field will be highlighted.

Conceptualization of emotions and affects has a long history dating back to ancient philosophy. As Thomas Dixon (2012) wrote, the word emotion that existed in the English language since 17th century was translated from the French word 'emotion' meaning 'physical disturbance' (p. 338). Emotions became 'a subject for systematic enquiry only since the 19th century' (p. 338). Conventionaly, emotions have been differentiated from affects mostly based on the premises of their 'intentionality'. Emotions are 'intentional,' meaning that they are directed towards some 'object', whereas affects lack 'this intentionality or *aboutness*' (Plantinga, 2008, p. 87). Nevertheless, the term emotion is still an ambiguous and even a controversial concept, causing disagreements in and among several disciplines.

It is impossible to conduct an extended review of the definitions of emotions within the limited space of this study. Rather I want to briefly point out several important characteristics of the term commonly emphasized in recent affect and emotion studies that will allow me to use emotion as a productive conceptual tool. Firstly, as Christian von Scheve

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[9] Non-representational theory, proposed initially by Nigel Thrift in the mid-1990s in the area of human geography, became one of the foundational sources affect theory many affect scholars from different disciplines have drawn upon. Thrift's Non-Representational Theory (NRT) puts forward a novel perspective of 'understanding the world in terms of *effectivity* rather than representation; not the what but the how' (Thrift, 2008, p. 216). Similar to Massumian line of thinking, NRT understands the affect as autonomous and distinct from discourse and that it is inevitably antagonistic to representation. For more, see Thrift, N. (2008). *Non-representational theory: Space, politics, affect*. New York. Routledge.

and Jan Slaby (2019) noted, contrary to commonly held understanding across various fields, emotions are not privately owned subjective mental states, nor do they refer to 'some social or material' exteriority (p. 43). Rather, they reflect the evaluative engagements of the subjects with their environment; in other words, they 'mirror specific kinds of *evaluative world-relations*' (p. 43). This makes them imminently 'relational categories', meaning that emotions are 'indicative of situational entanglements and the relational co-constitution of actors, situations and evaluative orientations' (p. 43). This understanding poses a challenge to the prevalent models that view emotions as moving from the 'inside out' or just emanating outside (Ahmed, 2010, p. 36). Instead, in recent affect studies, emotions are approached as an inter-subjective exchange, circulating within and between the bodies and 'affecting bodily surfaces or even how bodies surface' (p. 36).

As von Scheve and Slaby (2019) also underlined, it is important to conceptualize emotions as 'situational—rather than the dispositional—affective world-relations and also 'episodic' ones' (p. 44). One has an immediate consciousness of 'what it feels like' when s/he expresses emotions such as anger (p. 44). However, unlike social constructivist approaches to emotion, emotions are not conceptualized merely as cognitive accounts directly described by language. Ruth Leys (2011) argued that emotions and affects are not 'intentional states governed by our beliefs, cognitions, and desires' as conceived by psychoanalytical approaches or by the 'appraisal theory', but they also include 'non-intentional, bodily reactions' (p. 437). Nevertheless, affects should not be confused with 'the qualitative expression of our drives' energy and variations' that needs to be satisfied or 'what tie us to the world' (Hemmings, 2005, p. 551). On the contrary, affects 'can be transferred to a range of objects in order to be satisfied (love may have many objects, for example), which makes them adaptable in a way that drives are not' (p. 551). Unlike drives, affect is not oriented towards the satisfaction of a need, yet it can even interrupt this satisfaction.

As mentioned previously, some affect scholars have insisted on the divergence of emotion and affect, drawing upon the assumption that '*emotion* refers to cultural and social expression, whereas affects are of a biological and physiological nature' (Probyn, 2005, p. 11). However, as Wetherell reminded us, being more instinctual or physiological does not make affects asocial (2012, p. 58). Although both terms are distinguished, emotions always indicate the affects involved. As Shaviro (2010) explained:

> Emotion is representable and representative; but it also points beyond itself to an affect that works transpersonally and transversally, that is at once *singular* and *common* (Hardt and Negri 128-29), and that is irreducible to any sort of representation. Our existence is always bound up with affective and aesthetic flows that elude cognitive definition or capture. (pp. 4–5)

Alternately, some other affect scholars have adopted more integrated approaches to emotions and affects rather than accepting a sharp distinction between the two concepts. For instance, Carl Plantinga (2008) proposed viewing affect as a broader category of 'any felt bodily state, including a wide range of phenomena, including emotions, moods, reflex actions, autonomic responses, mirror reflexes, desires, pleasures, etc.' (p. 86-87). Another scholar, Sianne Ngai (2005) interpreted the distinction of two concepts as a 'difference of intensity or degree, rather than a formal difference of quality or kind' (p. 27). For her, drawing a difference between emotion and affect is another way of solving 'the same basic and fundamentally descriptive problem' that psychoanalysis intended to resume (p. 27). Although affects are not structured as emotions and are 'less sociolinguistically fixed,' this does not mean that they are altogether 'code-free or meaningless' and 'entirely devoid of organization or diagnostic powers' (Ngai, 2005, p. 27). Instead of solving the 'subjective/objective problematic by creating two distinct categories of feeling', Ngai advocates using the two concepts interchangeably for 'aesthetic productivity' (2005, p. 27-8).

Her relational perspective on affects and emotions constituting each other gives us 'the possibility of bridging the epistemological gap between what we feel and what we know about what we feel—between affect and emotion' (White, 2014, p. 102).

Another alternative approach was offered by Sara Ahmed, who provided significant insights into this study. Rather than focusing on the ontological discrepancy of emotion and affect, she suggested shifting the attention to the 'sociality of emotions' and the relational feature of affects (Ahmed, 2004; 2014). She proposed 'affective economies' model based on the sociality of emotions, arguing that the 'distinction between sensation or affect and emotion risks cutting emotions off from the lived experiences of being and having a body' (2014, p. 40). For Ahmed (2014), one should be more interested in the question of 'what emotions do' instead of 'what are the emotions.' Her model proposes moving past emotions as subjective inner states or individual experiences toward an understanding of emotions that 'do not reside in subjects or objects but are produced as effects of circulation' (p. 8). Her model allows viewing the emotions, not as internal subjective states but rather as dynamic affects that circulates between bodies with the power to shape 'the surfaces of individual and collective bodies' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 117). Emotions 'involve (re)actions or relations of "towardness" or "awayness"' with respect to how we respond to objects and others (Ahmed, 2014, p. 8). To her, it is 'the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such' and through their circulation, emotions assign an affective value (p. 11). This is what she named the 'affective economies' of emotions.

Ahmed's approach informs us about how emotions circulate and how they become 'sticky' (2014). Emotions stick to objects and bodies, aligning and/or sticking the bodies together (Ahmed, 2004; 2014). In an economic sense, working through signs, including language and images, emotions are materialized on bodies and collectivities. This stickiness does not always work through conscious acts; it is also mediated at an unconscious and

bodily level. They cannot be disengaged from the history of their inception or ‘they cannot be reduced to that history’ (2014, p. 60). Although they produce certain meanings in specific contexts and histories, they continue to stick to bodies beyond the original context and history they come into being. At this point ‘affects’ come into play. Ahmed emphasized that ‘some words stick because they become attached *through* particular affects’ as signs that are unique to particular emotions are being repeated (2014, p.60). Thus, emotions are performative and dynamic in terms that ‘they both generate their objects, and repeat past associations’ (p. 194). Viewing emotions as affective experiences of social relations offers us a more nuanced reading of everyday emotions and their discursive and material unfolding at macro levels.

Similar to Ahmed’s circulation of emotions, several prominent scholars have also focused on the intersubjective characteristics of emotion and affect. For instance, Anna Gibbs described circulation and transmission of affect metaphorically as a contagion: ‘The bodies can catch feelings as easily as catch fire, evoking tenderness, inciting shame, igniting rage, exciting fear’ (Gibbs, 2001). On the other hand, according to Theresa Brennan (2004), affect refers to a ‘concrete materiality of felt experience (what happens in/to the body) as well as the energetic dimension that it entails (what happens between bodies)’ (cited in Pais, 2015, p. 128). To clarify this statement, she gives an example of someone walking into a room and how s/he feels the ‘atmosphere’ whether it was grief or anger. Thus, according to Brennan, affect is the inexplicable sense that hits us when one enters a room (2004, p. 1). The atmosphere is a fertile conceptual tool for this study which aims to capture the collective emotions and affective sensations circulating in the present history, which will be explained further in the following section on affective atmospheres.

I hope to outline the key threads of the current knowledge on the affective turn with its central features in the humanities and social sciences. Before continuing with the implications of this paradigm shift in film studies, I want to touch briefly upon how affect

framework informs this study conceptually and methodologically and what novel insights it offers. My point of departure in this study is to accept a distinction between affects and emotions, but not in a strict sense of opposition. In my contention, a clear-cut conceptual demarcation between emotion and affect will be too precise and limiting for my study. Instead, I intend to build a relational and situational account of affect as 'heuristically *distinguished* but not sharply *separated* from emotion' (Röttger-Rössler & Slaby, 2018, p. 6). Such an assumption will provide an analytical perspective for grasping how emotions and affects are in 'a constructive interplay' with each other in terms of forming and transforming modern subjects, communities, and life-worlds (von Scheve & Slaby, 2019, p. 44). In doing so, I will try to approach anxiety and paranoia not as intra-psychic emotional states but as affective sensations that are situated, embodied, and relational, in addition to being interpersonal, cultural, and social feelings and experiences dynamically embedded in 'situational entanglement and the relational co-constitution of actors, situations and evaluative orientations' (von Scheve & Slaby, 2019, p. 43). Moreover, the study will also accentuate the performative dimension of affective sensations, drawing on the contention that emotions are not just something we have but also 'something we do' (Scheer, 2012, p. 194). As 'bodily act of experience and expression', emotions are how we practically engage with the world (p. 209).

Finally, the 'nonrepresentationalist ontology' (Leys, 2011, p. 442, endnote 22) that characterizes affect in a Spinozian understanding of 'becoming' and 'the capacity to affect and to be affected' offers a fertile theoretical venue for this study to reveal cultural anxieties and paranoias as 'lived, from moment to moment, at a level of sensuous bodily reality beyond codification, consolidation or "capture"' (Röttger-Rössler & Slaby, 2018, p. 1). This vision allows us to understand individual subjectivities and collectivities as a processual becoming (Blackman et al., 2008, p. 11), 'rather than "substantial social formations"' (von Scheve,

2019, p. 267). Thus, establishing becoming as a constituting condition will promote a more realistic and comprehensive view of how contemporary modes of collectivities, groups and organizations emerged and how they operate (von Scheve & Slaby, 2019).

II.2. AFFECT AND EMOTIONS IN FILM THEORY: CINEMA BEYOND REPRESENTATION

The issues of emotion and affect have not been paid adequate attention in classical and contemporary film theory until recently. As Plantinga and Smith (1999) argued, psychoanalytical film theory dominating film studies has been more interested in 'the filmic mechanisms of subject positioning and labeling the mechanisms of desire' and avoided cinematic emotions (p. 11). Thus, holding a 'symptomatic' approach towards pleasure and desire, psychoanalytical scholarship did not pay much attention to the 'specifics of emotional experience' such as 'how a particular film makes its emotional appeal at any given moment' (p. 11).

In recent decades, several film scholars turned away from the prevalent psychoanalytically inspired perspectives, searching for new critical tools to analyze cinematic emotions and affects. Cognitivist film theory is one of the key approaches in film studies concerned mostly with affective responses and emotional appraisals of cinematic images.[10] Motivated by challenging the reductive perspective of psychoanalytical scholarship, Cognitive film theorists raised alternative perspectives to theorize spectator emotions. They have mainly focused on three areas: the issues related to film interpretation and spectators' cognitive understanding of the film; the issues of identification which can be rephrased as the

[10] For more, see: Carroll, N. (1998). *Interpreting the moving image*. Cambridge University Press.; Carroll, N. (1990). *Philosophy of horror or paradoxes of the heart*. Routledge.; Grodal, T. (1997). *Moving pictures: A new theory of film genres, feelings and cognition*. Clarendon Press.; Plantinga, C., & Smith, G. M. (Eds.). (1999). *Passionate views: Film, cognition, and emotion*. Johns Hopkins University Press.; Smith, G. M. (2003). *Film structure and the emotion system*. Cambridge University Press.; Smith, G. M. (1995). *Engaging characters: Fiction, emotion and cinema*. Clarendon Press.; Tan, E.S. (1996). *Emotion and the structure of narrative film: Film as an emotion machine.* Routledge

'affective engagement'; and finally, 'the relationship between genre and the emotion-cueing structure of narrative' (Sinnerbrink, 2011, p. 67). Despite differences, cognitivist approaches commonly agree upon the assumption that emotions are composed of 'physiological changes, feelings and thinking' and, always having a cognitive side, the cinematic experience and emotions should be apprehended with the 'thinking part of an emotion' comprised of 'the emoter's evaluation or judgment about the object of the emotion' (Plantinga & Smith, 1999, p. 6). However, as Platinga and Smith (1999) warned, this object does not always refer to a material object of 'focus or target of an emotional state' (p. 6). The cognitivists conceptualized viewer emotions as 'part of the combined cycle of perception, cognition and action,' challenging the psychoanalytical scholarship's conceptualization of emotion as 'impulsive, unconscious and contrary to reason' (Zumalde-Arregi, 2011, p. 326).

Cognitivist theories provided significant explanations for various aspects of emotional and affective engagement with films, particularly with narrative cinema (Sinnerbrink, 2011). Cognitions are accepted to be significant constituents of emotions, but as Tarja Laine (2007) warned, there is no guarantee that they will induce the viewer's emotional engagement with the film. Furthermore, as she also criticized, the cognitive approach still positions the spectator in a 'passive' position, such as Ed Tan's (1996) invisible witness, assuming that they will be only observing an event or a situation as much as they are allowed to (Laine, 2007, p. 13–14). And finally, equalizing emotions with cognition compel us to disregard 'affect,' which is 'the element that puts the "motion" in emotion—and define emotions, of all things, as lacking emotionality' (p. 14).

Besides cognitivists, another group of scholars, including Linda Williams, Christine Gledhill, and Steve Neale, also rejected the understanding of 'disembodied gaze' and have shifted their focus towards understanding a 'corporealized spectator' (Duncan, 2016, p. 17). A third group takes this group's arguments further and seeks to ground corporealized

spectatorship on an ‘embodied conceptualization of vision and consciousness’ (p. 17). This group includes scholars such as Jennifer Barker, Vivian Sobchack, Laura U. Marks, Greg Singh, and Tarja Laine, mainly influenced by phenomenology (p. 17). And finally according to Duncan (2016), the most notable group of film scholars, namely Steven Shaviro, Marco Abel, Giuliana Bruno, Lisa Cartwright, and Patricia Pisters have raised a Deleuzean understanding of ‘affect’ focusing on conceptual tools of ‘“violence,” “force,” “pulsion,” “energy” and “movement”’ (p. 16). The listed scholars and approaches mainly driven by phenomenology and affect have shifted their focus on cinematic experience and emotions.

From this point, I will proceed with a brief look at the phenomenological film theories to chart a theoretical path for integrating emotion-affect theories in film analysis. There is no single or simple definition of film phenomenology, and there is not only one methodology (Chamarette, 2017, p. 311). The common philosophical premise of film phenomenology is extensively drawn from Edmund Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, which seeks to explore pure consciousness, and Merleau-Ponty’s existential phenomenology, which asserts that ‘the subject of consciousness and experience is embodied and situated in the life-world’ (Hanich, 2010, p. 40).

Film-phenomenology is not concerned with explaining ‘how specific viewers respond to specific scenes’ rather, it attempts to ‘capture *types* of experience’ when spectators are affected by particular scenes such as horror or shock (Hanich, 2010, p. 40). Julian Hanich’s explanation is highly helpful to understand the differences between the cognitivist and phenomenological approaches. As he clarified, ‘while the cognitivists try to explain *why* we feel certain emotions (and therefore focus on *explanation*), phenomenology is interested in *how* we feel them (and thus specializes on *description*)’ (Hanich, 2010, p. 13).

Film-phenomenology is an extensive field even if we try to categorize it with broad and narrow definitions. Thus, Chamarette’s definition seems to provide a comprehensive idea

of for definition as she suggests that 'film-phenomenology is a collection of embodied approaches to film experience, which try to account for phenomena, but which resist interpretation through one framework' (Chamarette, 2017, p. 318–319). Accordingly, I will try to concisely summarize the common concerns of film-phenomenology scholarship that are also important for this current study.

First, we should start with the phenomenological perspective's rejection of the 'ocularcentric paradigm', prioritizing vision in interpreting the films and understanding the audience's cinematic experience (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2010, p. 109). The ocularcentric paradigm presumes the 'body as a projection screen and as an object of the gaze' as essentially disembodied rather than as a 'perceiving, affective, sensual' subject (p. 119). There has been an increasing concern and critique about the dominance of vision, privileging sight over other senses, ignoring embodied and sensory modes of perception and film experience since the early 1990s. Vivian Sobchack's seminal work *The Address of the Eye* (1992), followed by her *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004), opened up a novel theoretical line of inquiry in film studies by arguing that the immediacy of the viewer's film experience was similar to the situatedness of the individual in the material world. For Sobchack, spectators do not identify with the characters or the camera, as prevalent approaches assume. Rather, they identify with 'the sense and sensibility of materiality' of the film (Sobchack, 2004, p. 65). Therefore, vision is not the only means by which we experience films. Films are experienced just like life is experienced with all senses of a lived body:

> We see and comprehend and feel films with our entire bodily being, informed by the full history and carnal knowledge of our acculturated sensorium. Normatively, however, the easy givenness of things for us to see at the movies and vision's overarching mastery and comprehension of its objects and its historically hierarchical

sway over our other senses tend to occlude our awareness of our body's other ways of taking up and making meaning of the world—and its representation. (Sobchack, 2004, p. 63–4)

Building on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Sobchack (1992) argued that by utilizing '*modes of embodied existence'* (p. 4) such as seeing, hearing, touching and movement, cinema is the most direct medium of art. The cinematic experience is a connected state of perceptive engagement and affective-emotional appraisal. Thus, '*the existential and embodied act of viewing'* is what constitutes the paradigm of perception and expression exchange (Sobchack, 1992, p. 21). In film experience, the 'intellectual understanding and cognitive skills are complemented by a strong bodily component' (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2010, p. 118). For Sobchack, film experience is a 'circular' process, reciprocation between 'the expression of perception' and 'the perception of expression', which consequently becomes 'an expression of experience by experience' (Sobchack, 1992, p. 3).

Furthermore, the phenomenological film approaches also dispute the 'conventional hierarchies of the subject who looks (the cinematic spectator) and the object that is looked at (the film)' (Chamarette, 2017, p. 312). This objection is a part of the general debates raised against the dualities: 'mind over body, sight over all the other senses, language above bodily experience, sensibility over sensation, depth over surface, and articulation over inarticulacy' (p. 312). Phenomenological perspectives are not concerned with 'uncovering the unconscious subject and object relations or power systems within a film' as psychoanalytic film theory does (pp. 312–313). For instance, Sobchack criticized classic film theories for conceptualizing 'the film as a static viewed object' and the spectators as 'viewing subjects' (1992, p. 15). In such an object-subject relationship, 'the exchange and reversibility of perception and expression (both in and as the film and spectator) are suppressed, as are the intrasubjective and intersubjective foundations of cinematic communication' (p. 15). On the

contrary, as Laine explained, the 'film unfolds on two levels: on the conscious level … and on the bodily level' (2004, p. 131). On the conscious level, the spectator is aware thet s/he is watching 'only fiction' and on the bodily level, s/he corporeally meets with the body of the film (p. 131-132). The two levels acting together transform spectatorship into an intersubjective experience, 'seen, heard, reflexively felt and understood', both intellectually and emotionally (Laine, 2004, p. 131).

In the *Address of the Eye* (1992), Sobchack posited a theory on the '*embodied* nature of vision' and 'the body's radical contribution to the constitution of the film experience' (p. 25). Aiming to restore the connection between the embodied senses and the film experience, Shobchack offered a novel ontology of the film: film as a 'lived body.' She conceptualized the 'film's body' as 'the material existence of the film as functionally embodied' without the filmmaker and the spectator's existence (Sobchack, 2004, p. 66, footnote, 48). A film's body, like living body, is 'capable of the perception of expression and the expression of perception' (Barker, 2009a, p. 9). According to Sobchack,

> the 'film's body' is not visible in the film except for its intentional agency and diacritical motion. It is not anthropomorphic, but it is also not reducible to the cinematic apparatus (in the same way that we are not reducible to our material physiognomy); it is a quasi-subjective and embodied 'eye' that has a discrete—if ordinarily prepersonal and anonymous—existence'. (2004, p. 66, footnote 48)

Viewing film experience as an embodied and 'sensuous contact' between two bodies (the body of the film and the body of the spectator) challenges the rigid distinction assumed between the film and the spectator, drawing our attention to both sides involved in an intimate relationship of 'reciprocity and reversibility, rather than as subject and object positioned on opposite sides of the screen' (Barker, 2009b). Sobchack conceptualized the film viewer (and the filmmaker) as the 'cinesthetic subject'. The film spectator is a lived

body who ‘through an embodied vision in-formed by the knowledge of the other senses, “makes sense” of what it is to “see” a movie–both “in the flesh” and as it “matters”’ (Sobchack, 2004, p. 70-71). The spectator or in terms of Sobchack, the cinesthetic subject ‘both touches and is touched by the screen … [and] able to experience the movie as both here and there rather than clearly locating the site of cinematic experience as onscreen or offscreen’ (p.71).

Following Sobchack, Jennifer Barker argued that a film’s body ‘performs its own perception (of the world)’ through ‘camera movements, fluctuations in sound, and degrees of intensity, attention, distraction, etc.’ and expresses its own perception (to the world) in embodied ways’ which are haptically, muscularly, kinaesthetically and viscerally (Barker, 2009b). In the same manner with Barker, Guiliano Bruno (2012) also pointed out that the films transform the screen into a ‘habitable geographic space’ experienced visually and haptically by the spectator (p. 250). Spectatorship becomes ‘an embodied and kinetic affair’ and even a ‘carnal one’ (p. 15, 18). The viewer is ‘not a static contemplator, a fixed gaze, a disembodied eye/I’ anymore, but rather a mobile subject who wanders and travels in an ‘imaginary path’ of the cinematic space (Bruno, 2012, p. 56).

Another film theorist inspiring this study is Laura Marks, whose perspective has a significant appeal for this current study. Marks advocated that films are apprehended not only cognitively but ‘by the complex perception of the body as a whole’ (2000, p. 145). According to her, ‘while much of sensory experience is presymbolic, it is still cultivated, that is, learned, at the level of the body’ (p. 145). Thus she argued that ‘the order of the sensible is the sum of what is accessible to sense perception at a given historical and cultural moment’ (p. 31). Partly drawing upon Bergson’s theory on the ‘carnality of memory’ (p. 73), Marks builds her multisensory account of spectatorship to argue that ‘perception is never a purely individual act but also an engagement with the social and with cultural memory’ (p. 62).

Laura Marks' book *The Skin of the Film* (2000) is devoted to studying 'sensory representation' in intercultural cinema (p. xiii). Marks argued that intercultural films and videos are some 'of the most important sites on non-mastering visuality' (p. 193), offering 'a variety of ways of knowing and representing the world' beyond the representational conventions of mainstream cinema (p. 1). For Marks, cinema allows the viewer to access memories and experiences stored in the sense-memories (touch, smell, taste) but 'do not find their way into audiovisual expression' (p. 129). These haptic images, bypassing 'the sensory-motor schema', trigger spectators' bodily sensorium and bring them to the 'direct experience of time *through* the body' (p. 163). Additionally, the embodied film experience through haptic visuality is equally significant in exploring the 'cultural experiences that are unavailable to vision' as Marks argued that the physical memories of touch, smell or taste as bearers of cultural experiences and memories (Marks, 2000, p. 22). Borrowing the term 'haptic visuality' from art historian Alois Riegel, Marks (2000) offers a haptic epistemology for film studies grounded on tactile or mimetic representation different than optic visuality:

> While optical perception privileges the representational power of the image, haptic perception privileges the material presence of the image. Drawing from other forms of sense experience, primarily touch and kinesthetics, haptic visuality involves the body more than is the case with optical visuality. Touch is a sense located on the surface of the body: thinking of cinema as haptic is only a step toward considering the ways cinema appeals to the body as a whole. (p. 163)

While optical visuality 'depends on a separation between the viewing subject and the object,' (Marks, 2000, p. 162), mimesis in haptic visuality allows the viewers to involve compassionately with the film (p.141). The spectator is immersed in the film's sensory environment through the 'intimate detailed images that invite a small, caressing gaze' (p. 169). Haptic visuality calls for an intersubjective and dialogical relationship that 'does not

require an initial separation between perceiver and object that is mediated by representation' (Marks, 2000, p. 164). Referring to Sobchack, Marks argued that 'rather than witnessing cinema as through a frame, window, or mirror,…the viewer shares and performs cinematic space dialogically' (2002, p. 150). Since film viewing is primarily an embodied experience, the act of viewing 'is both an intrasubjective and intersubjective performance equally performable by filmmaker, film, and spectator' (Sobchack, 1992, p. 21). The ontological differences between the self and the other turn film viewing into a new form of intersubjective experience in which the positions of 'seeing and being seen' are challenged (Laine, 2007, p. 23). A film utilizing strategies of intersubjectivity 'can look back at us', and this returned gaze can push 'us into an objective apprehension of ourselves' (p. 32).

Finally, I want to touch upon the relationship between affect and temporality in the phenomenological approach since it is also highly pertinent to this study. As Matilda Mroz noted in her book *Temporality and Film Analysis* (2012), the relationship of cinema and time is a complicated one 'only because of its temporal unfolding—of narrative, theme, pattern—but also because of the multiple temporalities of film viewing and attendant possibilities, where each screening for each individual is unique' (p. 10). Temporality can be captured both at the particular 'moments' and in the 'duration' of films. Film scholars mostly focused on several forms of 'moments' rather than duration (p. 34-41). These moments are crucially important in capturing affect and sensation in films, but this does not make duration any less significant.

Mroz drew attention to the reading of affect's 'multiple temporalities' in a film, mainly drawing on Massumi's (2000) argument that affect can be sometimes described in terms such as a 'shock', but it can also be 'continuous, like a background perception that accompanie[s] every event, however quotidian' (Mroz, 2012, p. 6). The embodied cinematic experience perspectives provide insights about such 'moments'. Sobchack, in her book

Carnal Thoughts defined these moments with a particular focus on tacticity and proposes to conceptualize the moments of 'immediate tactile shock' described as the immediate sensual reaction of the viewer's body as if being touched (Sobchack, 2004, p. 53). However, the moments of the spectator's immediate sensual reaction are not simply dependent on bodily mimesis. In other words, sense experience is 'prediscursive and, hence, as natural' bodily reactions (Marks, 2000, p. 144); it is shaped by 'the ways we have learned it is possible to feel' (p. 31). Consequently, they are sensuous engagements with the cinematic images involving evoked memories, either individual or cultural.

According to Chamarette (2012), apprehending such 'subjective moment[s] of engagement' is crucial to conceptualizations of subjectivity (p. 22). These moments are about our attentiveness towards our presence in different temporalities, essential for our 'sensation, experience, and knowledge' (p. 22). Therefore, it refers to the lived moment of the 'present':

> Presence, as a form of time, is not only in the present, but it invokes a relationship to our bodies and lived experience: it is the moment from which our process of sense-making takes on the legible qualities of cognitive thought. Presence is always presence in a body, presence to sensorial experience, and presence within and towards other bodies, objects, and the world. Presence to the cinematic moment is the constitutive moment of thinking film, both as film theory and film philosophy, but also the bodies of film, inter-subjective perceptions and pre-linguistic cognitions, and pre-cognitive reactions, such as affect. It is also the moment to which our notions of embodiment are most emphatically present: the present moment is the lived moment, in all its messy, mute, noisy, difficult, precognitive, emotional, affective sensory confusion. (pp. 22–23)

This current study is particularly concerned with the 'moments of sensations', or 'affective moments'. However, this does not mean that only the moments of sensations

qualify the analysed films as affective. While some moments concern pre-reflective bodily sensations, they are not far from the films' duration or narrative unfolding. As Chamarette (2012) pointed out, ‘while duration itself is the basic apprehension of time, this is an apprehension that is reconstructed via a series of subjective encounters—‘snapshots’—of time’ (p. 26). The sensual experiences of such moments are interwoven within the films' temporal flow, evoking the spectators’ emotional and intellectual apprehension of ‘the present’ (Mroz, 2012, p. 36). As embodied perception and sense experience are ‘informed by culture’ to a larger extent, these moments of ‘sensory awareness becomes expanded in memory’ (Mroz, 2012, p. 31). As Marks (2000) noted ‘perception takes place not simply in a phenomenological present but in engagement with individual and cultural memory’ (Marks, 2000, p. 147 cited in Mroz, 2012, p. 31).

In light of the abovementioned approaches, how can we study the sensuous-affective cinematic experience? While some film scholars prefer a distinction between affect and emotion, others, such as Del Rio (2008), have maintained that ‘the two notions remain rather fluidly connected’:

> Affect precedes, sets the conditions for, and outlasts a particular human expression of emotion. While emotion refers to habitual, culturally coded, and localized affects (such as a character’s sadness or happiness), affect proper coincides with the actor and the film’s openness to often anomalous, unexpected, and always expansive expressions of emotions. (p. 10)

As mentioned previously, I do not propose a clear-cut separation between affect and emotion. Instead, I contend that emotions and affects are in ‘a constructive interplay’ with each other in cinematic experience (von Scheve & Slaby, 2019, p. 44). We can include all ‘phenomena that range from hard-wired reflexes to complex emotional episodes’ to define the affective engagement with films (Eder, 2003, p. 271). Form and stylistic use of cinematic

technologies are generally assumed to be the primary causes of affective appraisal in the cinematic experience. There is no denial to this, but as Hanich (2010) pointed out, the difference in phenomenological perspective is its focus on the experience of these cinematic stylistic strategies used in films, in other words, on the 'aesthetic recipient (*Rezeptionsästhetik)* rather than the aesthetic product (*Produktionsästhetik*)' (p. 48).

Another point to emphasize is that this study is not approaching the affective power of films in terms of spectators' identification with the characters. Also, an audience's affective engagement with the films is not totally built on a film's aesthetic elements. Nevertheless, among the several approaches to studying affective engagement in films, the questions formulated by Tarja Laine seem to fit my study, methodologically clarifying the issue. Laine (2017) suggested that any analyst who intends to understand the sensuous engagement between film and spectator should ask the following questions: 'What is the affective quality that is embodied in the aesthetic system of the film?; What narrative meaning is embedded in that quality? And how is the spectator invited to participate in the sensuous event that is cinema?' (p. 10).

Adopting Laine's methodological questions to my research, I allege that anxiety and paranoia are the affective qualities of the films embodied in their aesthetic systems. Firstly, the 'moments of sensations,' or 'affective moments' such as a sudden fear of being followed or watched, suspicion, insecurity, helplessness, frustration and episodes of delusions of persecution affect the viewer 'instinctively and pre-reflectively, below the threshold of reflective consciousness' (Laine, 2011, p. 2). Such emotions elicited by the films can stimulate physical discomforts such as trembling, dizziness, heart palpitations or hyperventilation. Affective engagement of the viewer's body and the film's body acts as a visceral force beyond emotional judgment and conscious cognition and can drive the spectators 'toward movement, toward thought and extension' (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p.

1). While some moments are built on ‘pre-reflective’ bodily sensations, they are not far from the film’s general atmosphere and the narrative unfolding. Consequently, paranoia and anxiety as affective sensations circulating between the bodies and generating an affective atmosphere allow us to capture the vitalism of the collective experience in the historical present.

Secondly, the films’ paranoid storytelling fuels the viewers’ sensation of anxiety, invoking their desire to know what is real behind the visible (Del Rio, 2008, p. 210). Since paranoia in the films is not the representation of some pathological minds but rather a form of reflexive subjectivity, the viewers burdened by anxiety and powerlessness feel the urge to follow the characters’ sensations intuitions in their search and quest for knowledge. This does not refer to the audience's involvement via character identification, but rather to the spectator's emotional and corporeal engagement with the film’s body and the bodies on the screen (Christiansen, 2016).

II.3. SOME CONCEPTS AS METHODOLOGY

II.3.1. ANXIETY AND PARANOIA

Inspired by Ann Cvetkovich’s insightful arguments on public feelings, the initial question I came up with is ‘how do we feel together,’ which framed this study. Following her proposal that capturing public feelings necessitates developing ‘new conceptual categories and new modes of description,’ I propose to focus on anxiety and paranoia as two major affective sensations pervasively circulating in the present (Cvetkovich, 2012, p.13). I argue that anxiety and paranoia, with their affective intensities and capacities, have become a structure of feeling in Raymond Williams sense, powerfully shaping ordinary lives and guiding the historical consciousness of individuals and collectivities (Harper, 2008). What equally matters is understanding how the affective relationship between the films and the

spectators is innate to the historical-cultural context and how films actively participate in this transformation.

Why does this study include anxiety and paranoia together? The relationship between anxiety and paranoia is indeed a complicated one. While anxiety can lead to paranoia, paranoid thinking can cause high degrees of anxiety. Although they are accepted to be two separate conditions, it is vital to understand their interconnected nature. Both anxiety and paranoia are affective states embracing other psychological and emotional counterparts. These emotions can be negative, such as fear, despair, distress, anger, shame, hopelessness, alienation, or positive emotions like desire, fantasy, 'interest and excitement' (Izard & Tomkins, 1966). Even though those emotions are equally significant, I decided to focus primarily on the intertwined relationship between anxiety and paranoia in this study and interpret them as collectively experienced social conditions rather than individualized internal states and/or pathologies.

Before going further with the diverse approaches to anxiety and paranoia, I want to point out initially that this study aims to distance itself from the clinical and neuroscientific understandings of both concepts as much as possible. However, I am also aware that it is unavoidable to discuss the terms without referring to psychological and medical literature. Keeping this view in mind, I propose employing anxiety and paranoia in this study as analytic categories and exploring their social, historical, and cultural dimensions. This perspective includes viewing the notions both as causes and affects circulating at a particular time-space, interrupting and even reshaping 'the flow of everyday life' (Jackson & Everts, 2010, p. 2804).

Shifting the focus towards an existential stance on anxiety and reading of paranoia as a culturally and historically located condition means engaging with the concepts as reflexive states of mind, non-pathological responses to the 'social processes and cultural experiences'

invoking uncertainties perceived at times threats 'to our personal security and even our identity as a personality' (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 9). Furthermore, anxiety and paranoia as 'an affect of our knowledge of self and society' are also affective epistemologies of our contemporary era (p. 47).

In what follows, I will continue with a brief overview of recent cultural approaches to anxiety and paranoia. Psychoanalytic theories on anxiety and paranoia are too broad to be reviewed thoroughly within the limits of this study. Thus, giving more weight to cultural and social perspectives, I will selectively touch upon psychoanalytic accounts as relevant. Such an effort also calls for distinguishing between normal and neurotic-pathological anxiety, which will allow us to approach anxiety as an individual-level experience and as a cultural and social phenomenon encountered by collectivities and nations (Gustafsson & Krickel-Choi, 2020, p. 888). Secondly, I will argue for understanding how anxiety is related to but at the same time differs from fear, which is also another crucial emotion found in the genesis of paranoia.

II.3.1.1. ANXIETY

In the context of academic scholarship, anxiety and paranoia are predominantly studied as conditions within the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 8). The term 'anxiety' originates from the ancient Greek root *angh*, transformed later in Latin words such as 'angustus, ango, and anxietas, all of which carry connotations of narrowness, constriction, and discomfort' (Freeman & Freeman, 2012, pp. 2–3). *The Encyclopedia of Phobias, Fears, and Anxieties* (2008) defines anxiety as 'an unpleasant feeling of generalized fear and apprehension, often of unknown origin, accompanied by physiological symptoms' (p. 50). Although different definitions of the word frequently lead to confusion of interpretation, anxiety is extensively conceived as a personality characteristic

or as a psychosomatic disorder in the 'form of "neurosis," "abnormality," or "pathology"' (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 16).

Despite the ancientness of the term, anxiety was not employed in psychology and psychiatry until the late 19th century. The use of the term in the scholarship initially began with Sigmund Freud, who argued that anxiety is distinguished from other psychological disorders (Freeman & Freeman, 2012, p. 3). Freud's approach to anxiety has long been discredited, but his extensive influence in bringing anxiety to the attention of Western intellectual thinking and the social sciences cannot be denied (Wilkinson, 2002). Not only have the medical sciences paid more attention to the social and cultural components of anxiety and its overwhelming effects on everyday life, but the sociological discourse began to address the social and cultural dynamics and the effects of modernity on anxiety since the second half of the 20th century (p. 3).[11]

As Iain Wilkinson (2002) pointed out, the condition of anxiety is one of the significant constituents of the 'cultural consciousness of modern times' (p. 42). Global concerns drastically affect everyday lives, giving rise to sense of insecurity and uncertainty, and even posing a threat to the lived experience of being (Kirke, 2020). Climate change, massive migrations, inequalities within and between nations, the rise of terrorism and mass violence, and the resurgence of nationalism, militarism, and religious movements are contemporary issues that lead to feelings of existential and ontological insecurity. Reviewing the extensive literature produced since the second half of the twentieth century, it is not difficult to observe that anxiety is perceived as a mass social and cultural phenomenon, and its pervasiveness as an everyday social condition establishes it as a 'distinctively modern phenomenon' (Jackson & Everts, 2010, p. 2792). Thus, whether used in the individual or the

[11] For prominent studies on this direction see: Tillich, P. (1952). *The courage to be*. William Collins.; Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*, Sage Publications.; Anthony G. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Polity Press; Zygmunt B. (2000), *Liquid modernity.* Polity Press.

socio-political domain, anxiety commonly reveals uncertainty about the future and ‘a present discomfort caused by this uncertainty’ (Eklundh, Zevnik, & Guittet, 2017, p. 1).

As apparent from its various definitions and pervasive contemporary usage, anxiety is prone to contradicting interpretations of its meaning, causes, defining features, and effects on people (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 15). Therefore, in discussing anxiety, one should be aware of the different categorizations of anxiety: ‘existential anxiety, neurotic anxiety and normal anxiety’ (Brencio, 2014, p. 298). While the medical canon has been concerned mostly with neurotic anxiety, the phenomenological approach has preferred to take an existential approach to anxiety.[12]

Reviewing the literature on the existential lines of thought on anxiety and the recent approaches in ontological security scholarship reveals that such a distinction is imperative for approaching anxiety beyond a medical context. It is useful for understanding that not all anxieties are necessarily pathological but can also stimulate creativity and change. Normal anxiety is not experienced only by individuals but also by collectivities and societies ‘as a cultural and societal phenomenon’; even some eras in history are ‘characterized by grave anxiety’ (Gustafsson & Krickel-Choi, 2020, p. 888). This study also argues for a distinction between normal and pathological anxiety.

Another distinction that should be mentioned here is between the concepts of anxiety and fear. Freud was not the only one who emphasized the difference in terms of anxiety’s lack of an object. In the philosophical tradition, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, who wrote on anxiety, also underlined the difference between the two terms and took anxiety as an objectless emotion. For Freud, fear necessarily relates to an external object, whereas anxiety

[12] R.D. Laing originally built his understanding of ontological security on the distinction between normal and neurotic anxiety. Laing used the notion for defining a pathological condition. Later, Anthony Giddens rejected such a distinction. For him, all anxiety is “both normal and neurotic” (Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi, 2020, p. 882). For further evaluation see: Laing, R.D. (1990 [1960]). *The divided self: An existential study in sanity and madness*. Penguin Books.; Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age.* Stanford University Press

is an objectless emotional state (Freud, 1920). Freud further rephrased this as a condition of 'expectant fear' or 'anxious expectation' (p. 347). He described anxiety as 'a condition of free-floating fear … which is ready to attach itself to any appropriate idea, to influence judgment, to give rise to expectations, in fact to seize any opportunity to make itself felt' (p. 347). Unlike fear, anxiety arouses certain feelings of uneasiness that are not conceivable by knowledge, which can sometimes induce 'a primordial and pre-social reaction of the body that is beyond the subject's conscious control' (Zevnik, 2017, p. 239).

Although anxiety and fear are based on the feelings of 'tension and unpleasant anticipation', the relationship between the two concepts is complex (Rachman, 2004, p. 3). As Andreja Zevnik (2017) summarized, anxiety refers to an experience that is 'more porous, liquid, unidentifiable, unknown and perhaps even absent', when compared to fear, connoting an emotion or thought that is beyond comprehensible, knowable and yet manageable in reality (p. 236). Joanna Bourke (2003) explained the difference shared by many scholars as fear reveals 'an immediate, objective threat while anxiety refers to an anticipated, subjective threat' (p. 126). In a state of anxiety, anxiety is 'usually unpredictable and uncontrollable' as well as 'pervasive and persistent' since the individual cannot identify the reasons for the uneasiness and tension or anticipate the nature of danger (Rachman, 2004, p. 3).

Anxiety is also an epistemological matter beyond having consequences for ontological concerns (Burgess, 2017, p. 30). The lack of an empirical object and the incomprehensibility of the other's desire trap the individual in a state of uncertainty and a sense of powerlessness with no understanding of the reasons for this emotional distress (Wilkinson, 2002). According to Iain Wilkinson (2002), the main difference depends on the knowledge of the objective reasons for this condition. While fear is about being afraid of concrete objects or events, anxiety is associated with 'the threatening uncertainty of not knowing how we should be, or what we should do in anticipation of these awful events' (p.

20). Anxiety persists on the condition that we are downtrodden by 'the sense that we lack a sufficient means of knowing' to protect ourselves from danger (p. 17).

This is where Lacanian understanding of anxiety is more helpful. Unlike Freud, Lacan believes that anxiety is 'not without an object' (Lacan, 2014 cited in Hirvonen, 2017, p. 259). For him, anxiety has 'a different sort of object from the object whose perception is prepared and structured' (Lacan, 2014, p. 76. cited in Hirvonen, 2017, p. 259). The Lacanian object referred as 'objet petit a' is not an object in the common sense of the word. It is the object cause of desire; that is what 'lies behind desire' (Lacan, 2014, p. 101). As Sean Homer (2005) interpreted, Lacanian 'objet petit a' functions to mask the lack (p. 88). Since desire requires a lack, anxiety emerges when lack is no longer felt. In Lacan's words, anxiety starts when lack is not lacking anymore (Lacan, 2014, p. 42). Furthermore, Lacan also underlined another distinguishing source of anxiety as the 'desire of the Other' (p. 152). Anxiety is 'a specific manifestation of the desire of the Other' (p.152), meaning subject's not knowing what the Other wants from the subject and what the subject means for that desire (Evans, 2006, p. 12). According to Derek Hook (2015), this is how Lacan transforms the intra-subjective concept of anxiety into a fundamentally inter-subjective notion' by emphasizing the subject's relationship to the 'big Other' (p.115). In Lacanian theory, fantasy is created by a subject to 'prevent the emergence of anxiety' that acts like a 'scenario' (Salecl, 2004, p. 13–14). According to Hirvonen (2017), fantasy helps the subject to deal with 'anxiety-arousing question[s],' particularly related to the Other (p. 256).

As Peter Burgess (2017) wrote, one of the questions that should be asked is on 'the reality of danger' (p. 20). Given contemporary anxieties' reflexive character, Burgess proposed shifting from the Freudian understanding of danger as a kind of symptom toward a Lacanian perspective, that is, to focus on the 'affective experience of danger' (2017, pp. 20–21). The so-called new age of anxiety posed by empiric and imagined threats 'reflect[s] not

only the ubiquity of threat in the everyday but also its inseparability from who or what we are' (p. 20). The insecurities conceived both at the individual and state levels in response to several threats not only change the conventional understandings of danger and protection but further 'interrupt a deep understanding of the self as the subject of politics and reconfigure the ideas of security and insecurity in relation to the material borders of the body' (p. 18).

Therefore, as Burgess suggested, what matters is not to define or locate the danger but to understand the affective experience of danger and threat as having an essential role in constituting subjectivities (2017, p. 21). This calls for tracking down the logic of anxiety and the unique ways it works. According to Eklundh, Zevnik, & Guittet, (2017), anxiety functions in two different but interconnected logics. Anxiety both 'paralyse[s] the subject' by showing unpredictable threats and also functions as a 'mobilising force' to take action and explore new possibilities (pp. 6–9).

This paradoxical nature of anxiety was also underlined in philosophical thought long before being emphasized in the psychoanalytical canon. Kierkegaard defined anxiety '[as] a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathic sympathy' (1980, p. 42). The concept reveals an unpleasant condition, in that subjects paradoxically both enjoy and feel uneasiness and discomfort. For Kierkegaard, anxiety is identical to the 'possibility of freedom'. As he asserted in his famous book *The Concept of Anxiety* (2014), quite apart from fear, 'anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility' (cited in Obsieger, 2017, p. 190). Although anxiety can result in people's 'inaction and paralysis', it can also stimulate freedom, creativity, and responsibility if they dare to embrace the dizziness of freedom (Jackson & Everts, 2010, p. 2795). If anxiety describes being in fearful anticipation of danger, what makes us anxious is not the possibility of threat but 'the necessity of facing this situation and thus our responsibility for what will happen' (Obsieger, 2017, p. 179). In a state of anxiety, we have to confront and embrace that we are 'the owners of our existence and its

possibilities, that is, we experience our freedom' (p.179). In other words, what anxiety reveals to be the true danger is the 'responsibility for our existence' (p. 180).

Martin Heidegger, like Kierkegaard, also underlined the paradoxical feature of anxiety. For Heidegger, the primary reason for anxiety is the uncertainty of the future that 'generates the condition that prevents being from fully being itself" (cited in Berenskoetter, 2020, p. 286). For him, human beings are 'thrown' into this world, which limits our choices. Anxiety allows Dasein the 'the potential to transform and become what it chooses' (Kirke, 2017, p. 38). Foregrounding the temporal structure of anxiety, Heideggerian philosophy revealed the implicit consequences for ontological questions of the subject's being, not only in terms of survival, but also about broader questions of 'who we are and what we want to become' (Kirke, 2017, p. 14). Consequently, as Zevnik (2017) argued, drawing on Lacanian conceptualization, the structure of anxiety positions the subject as an authority, but at the same time, it also prohibits the subject's 'limitless enjoyment or obtaining the object of its desire' (p. 239). She described this as the 'birth of an anxious subject' (p. 239).

Keeping in mind the dual logic anxiety operates and the ambiguous yet powerful consequences it can lead up to, viewing anxiety as an affect will make more sense. Although theorized differently, Freud and Lacan viewed anxiety as an affect.[13] In his *Introductory Lectures*, Freud described anxiety as 'the subjective state into which we are put by perceiving the "generation of anxiety" and we call this an affect' (Freud, 1977, p. 443). As he also emphasized in his *Inhibitions, Symptoms, Anxiety* (1926, p. 132), 'anxiety, then, is in the first place something that is felt', revealing the character of anxiety as something that is sensed but not recognized through knowledge. Freud also mentioned anxiety as an affective state in being accompanied by particular physical sensations and symptoms (p. 132). As Roberto Harari (2001) pointed out, another significant text written by Freud is 'The Uncanny' (1919).

[13] Freud and Lacan approached the notion of 'affect' differently. For a more see: Evans, D. (2006). *An introductory dictionary of Lacanian psychoanalysis*. Routledge. Pp: 5-6.

Through his analysis of 'the feeling of the uncanny', Freud developed a more substantial theory of anxiety, particularly its affective quality (Harari, 2001, pp. 8–9). Freud's notion and theory of uncanny is what Lacan indeed located at the center of his theory of anxiety in his Seminar X (2014 [1962-1963]). Through his interpretation of 'the uncanny' or 'unheimlich' implicating familiarity and unfamiliarity simultaneously, Lacan rejects Freud's idea that anxiety lacks an object. Instead, he argued that it is not the absence of an object but the proximity of an object (object petit a) that causes anxiety (Harari, 2001, p. 61-64). Lacan also clearly emphasized that anxiety is not an emotion but an affect, and among all affects, it is the one that 'does not deceive' (Lacan, 2014, p. 114). Anxiety, unlike other affect, signals and leads to the 'real' (p.160).

In our contemporary world, anxiety is an affective state not because social-economic and political transformations give rise to new forms of uncertainties and insecurities. However, they also generate 'feelings of loss of control and loss of certainty about the future' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 72). This is how anxiety contributes to creating anxious subjectivities by affecting the perceptions of temporality (Eklundh, Zevnik, & Guittet, 2017, p. 7). Anxiety secures a subject in the present moment by diminishing existence 'to its bare form fighting for a survival', while simultaneously removing 'any dreams or illusions of a different/better future' (p. 6).

Furthermore, as much as the structural factors, the increasing 'risk consciousness' equally contributes to our so-called 'age of anxiety' (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 5). Frank Furedi (1997) pointed out that, the risk concerns debated in the public sphere is more a 'social construction which is more the result of the growth of individualism and breakdown of community' than a response to real dangers (cited in Wilkinson, 2002, p. 108). However, 'the cultural production of a new knowledge of the risks we face that our lives' significantly contributes to our sense of insecurity (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 5).

With control mechanisms over the subjects, late modernity sometimes institutionally sustains and manages anxiety; thus, it can be experienced intensely as 'an incapacitating state' of ontological insecurity (Mitzen 2006, p. 345, cited in Rumelili, 2020, p. 268). As many scholars have pointed out, anxiety operates as a generative mechanism of neoliberalism, keeping us 'attached to demand of free market and all forms of intensity, self-expression, emotional connection and immediacy and enjoyment' (Gutierrez, 2015, p. 37). Thus, adapting to the demands of today's neoliberalism generates what Jasbir Puar (2007) has called 'a paranoid temporality' characterized as comprehension of time as an urgency, uncertainty and insufficiency (p. xx). It is a 'temporality of negative exuberance' rooted in the risk economy, inducing a sense of insufficiency in every respect of our lives, such as health or safety (p. xx). With neoliberal globalization, many people and nations found themselves in a state of collective 'existential anxiety' and 'ontological insecurity' (Giddens, 1991). Finally, contemporary anxieties are experienced and felt like an emotional state of 'stuckness', or in the words of Ghassan Hage, as 'an inevitable pathological state which has to be endured' (2009, p. 97–98).

It is crucial to elaborate on anxiety through the lens of ontological security to better understand Turkey's deep-rooted cultural anxieties stemming from the country's geographical in-betweenness and sense of belatedness (Çapan & Zarakol, 2019, p. 3). As Bahar Rumelili (2015) pointed out, anxieties felt individually are 'socially and politically produced' through contruction of 'the objects of fear, systems of meaning, and standards of morality' (p. 13). Likewise, Akkoyunlu and Öktem (2016) emphasized that the ontological (in)securities of states are not only manifested outwardly but also reflected 'onto society' (p. 509). The existential insecurities merged with prevalent ontological insecurities inform not only the discourses of political actors but also affectively shape the collective imaginations and identifications (Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016). Catarina Kinnvall's argument stressing how

individuals and communities can be easily drawn into any collective imagination—particularly religion and nationalism—perceived as promising 'to reduce insecurity and existential anxiety' is highly relevant in this matter (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 741). Her reasoning is plausible in apprehending how Turkish nationalism and Islamic formations are driven frequently by the persisting siege paranoia dating back to the Sèvres Treaty, not only influencing the domestic and international politics at the state level but also shaping the social relations in ordinary life. The fear and paranoias feeding the ontological insecurities at the state level directly facilitate individuals and communities to attribute alternative meanings in dealing with their own ontological insecurities (Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016).

R. D. Laing, who introduced the term ontological security initially in psychoanalysis, defined it as experiencing oneself as 'real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person' (1990, p. 39, cited in Gustafsson & Krickel-Choi, 2020, p. 881). For Anthony Giddens (1991) who developed and applied the concept in social theory, 'to be ontologically secure is to possess … "answers" to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses' (p. 47). In an ontologically secure state, we tacitly accept the existential questions of self, other and objects, and time and space while continuing our everyday lives (Giddens, 1991). Securing 'faith' in everyday life's coherence has central importance in maintaining an ontologically secure 'self' primarily generated by 'emotional commitment' (p. 38). With 'practical consciousness,' ontological security is maintained by minimizing uncertainties by keeping our routines (p. 37). According to Jennifer Mitzen (2006), routines equip individuals with the 'ways of knowing the world and how to act, giving them a felt certainty that enables purposive choice' (p. 347). Apart from this cognitive function, routines emotionally guard them against the paralyzing fears of chaos. In other words, routines 'regularize social life, making it, and the self, knowable' (p. 346). However, it should be kept in mind, as Mitzen warns, that individuals and states do not always develop

‘safe routines’ (p. 347). They can also get attached to conflict since conflicts allow one to manage existential anxieties of ‘of death, meaninglessness, and condemnation’ by creating objects of fear, stabilizing systems of meaning and morality (Rumelili, 2020, p. 265).

As Mitzen (2006) additionally pointed out, physical security is not the only kind of security that nations seek. States also seek ontological security in terms of a ‘security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice’ (p. 344). However, Rumelili (2020) emphasized that although there is a conceptual distinction between physical and ontological security,[14] the quest for ontological security usually ‘triggers and amplifies physical security concerns, in the form of securitization of subjectivity, specification of dangers, and constructing the Other as a threat’ (Rumelili, 2020, p. 266). Looking from this perspective, it is not difficult to interpret Turkey’s anxieties as not only related to physical security concerns but also closely connected with sustaining relationships with ‘the significant others’ to secure a sense of identity, autonomy, and agency (Mitzen, 2006, p. 349).

II.3.1.2. PARANOIA

The term paranoia is also derived from ancient Greek. *Para* means beyond and *noos* means mind/thought. In the simplest terms, paranoia refers to a state of ‘mind that *goes beyond* usual field of thought’ (Zoja, 2017, p. 9). As individual psychopathology, paranoia is explained as a condition ‘in which the person reasons rightly from a wrong premise and develops a persistent, well-systematized, and logically constructed set of persecutory delusions, such as being conspired against, poisoned, or maligned. It is equivalent to persecutory-type delusional disorder’ (APA Dictionary of Psychology).

[14] According to Rumelili (2020), ‘The distinction between ontological and physical security is drawn on the basis of the referent object; ontological security is specified as the security of Self and as Being, whereas physical security is specified as the security of the ‘body’ and as survival.’ (Rumelili, 2020, p. 266)

Paranoia occupies a central place in both Freudian and Lacanian theories. The most well-known case of paranoia is Freud's Schreber Case, which is still extensively influential in studies of paranoia today. Lacan, who also had countless clinical publications based on paranoia and the Schreber case, envisioned several concepts related to paranoia beyond clinical conceptualization in his later works. Separating paranoia from psychosis, 'he linked the ego to paranoic knowledge, going so far as to define psychoanalysis as "an induction in the subject of a controlled paranoia"' (Julien, 1995, p. 16). For him, 'the ego has a paranoiac structure … because it is the site of a paranoiac alienation … Knowledge (connaissance) itself is paranoiac …' (Evans, 2006, p. 137). Lacan insisted that, 'certain paranoid knowledge informs and constitutes every subject"; thus, to him 'paranoia is not always a psychosis; it is also a mode of discovery' (Flieger, 2005, p. 84). As Bran Nicol summarized, paranoia is basically 'the projective dimension of knowledge' that engages with imagining 'alternative version to reality.' (Nicol, 1999, p. 46). The paranoiac seeks to see what is behind the apparent meaning given by language. Thus, what is at the center of paranoia is the struggle between understanding and imposing meaning (Nicol, 1999).

With recent cultural and political approaches, there has been a shift from the clinical categorization of paranoia as a pathology towards an understanding of the concept as an individual and/or a community experience, in which persecutory delusions sometimes can be rational and 'not unique to pathologies of the mind, but characterize many of our everyday beliefs' (Stringer, 2016, p. 14). Several scholars and cultural critics (O'Donnell, 2000; Melley, 2000; Harper, 2008; Polan, 1986) identified paranoia as the prevailing epistemology of our contemporary era and rejected clinical definitions of paranoia as a pathology. From their viewpoint, non-pathological reasoning can simply apply to anyone who projects individual anxieties and fears into minor objects and events in dealing with everyday problems. Many people are driven to generate paranoid responses to everyday events,

although not everyone necessarily displays paranoid behavior in a pathological way (Terzieva-Artemis, 2016). The new literature has commonly emphasized the need to consider the 'individual variability and the multidimensionality of the experience of paranoia, to better understand each dimension of the delusional experience' (Stringer, 2016, p. 15).

Relatedly, paranoia, as much as anxiety, manifests itself unavoidably within 'the conceptions of identity and history that are being lived out within the epistemic conditions' of the era in which the subjects or the communities are situated (O'Donnell, 2000, p. x). Addressing paranoia as a 'culturally specific, historically located activity' indeed discloses how cultural identities are negotiated in history (Fradley, 2013, p. 83). In order to understand the contemporary expressions of cultural paranoia, one needs to associate the global forces 'that include nationalism, global capitalism, and the formation of identity under postmodernity' with the local dynamics (O'Donnell, 2000, p. vii).

To capture an integrated view of paranoia that works both at the individual and community level, we need to understand why and how a paranoid cultural imagination is created and how individuals situate themselves and the 'others' within this imagination (Harper, 2008, p. 2). This raises questions about how paranoia is intrinsically tied to issues of power. As Dana Polan explained, 'a dominant power and a disturbing paranoia interweave and find each other to be a parodic mirror image of the other' (1986, p. 12). While the dominant power is comprehended as 'the power that narrative structure specifically possesses to write an image of life as coherent, ideological, univocal', paranoia is the 'fear of narrative, and the particular social representations it works to uphold, against all that threatens the unity of its logical framework' (p. 12).

In a similar manner, Patrick O'Donnell proposed approaching paranoia as 'a narrative process by means of which an individual constructs a historical or cultural identity' (2000, p. 20). As Eva Schwarz (2011) argued, paranoid thinking permeates everyday life and culture,

transforming them into a 'form of belief not only about socio-historical events but also about matters of daily life' (p. 22). Since various versions of truth do not merely coexist unrelatedly but are also interconnected, cultural paranoia is 'a method of seeing multiple, interconnected stratification of reality' (p. 22). Taken this way, it sometimes poses a difficulty to 'distinguish from 'the "normal" processes of forging logical connections among disparate phenomena or observations, or, more simply, negotiating one's way through daily existence from paranoia as pathology' (Markley, 1997, p. 78-9 cited in Fradley, 2013, p. 28). For instance, in guidelines published by the American Psychological Association (1990) for psychological service providers, it is acknowledged that ethnic minorities can develop a 'healthy paranoia' as a 'response to discrimination', and that it is important to determine whether such problems stem from actual racism or a person 'inappropriately personaliz[ing] problems.' Likewise, Peter Knight suggested—not only for particular minorities but for everyone—'a permanent, low-level and sceptical form of everyday paranoia now seems to be a necessary and understandable default approach to life in risk society' (Knight, 2000b, p. 24).

As mentioned earlier, the contemporary era, characterized by threats such as wars, terror and epidemics, is creating new forms of precarity, engendering pervasive feelings of fear, anxiety, uncertainty, insecurity, and even distrust towards governments. We live in a post-truth era in which politics and media manipulate the masses' emotions rather than provide objective truths. With new technologies and social media, people's opinions and beliefs are shaped and polarized based on false information. Ray Pratt's definition of paranoia as a 'crisis of interpretation' is highly relevant in this current context. For Pratt, paranoia emerges as an unavoidable response to this era in the form of a 'crisis of interpretation' (Pratt, 2001, p. 8). Since paranoia is the manifestation of the 'distrust of the visible' (Melley, 2000, p. 206, footnote 22), it is a counter-narration to replace the grand narrative, re-structuring the world so that one finds coherence, order, and sense of self-identity. In this

sense, paranoia is ‘a desire to make sense of what does not make sense’ (Pratt, 2001, p. 8). In an atmosphere of mistrust, and loss of faith towards media and authorities, paranoia, as Dana Polan argued, can be viewed as ‘a specifically social way of responding to new permutations in everyday perception and possibility’ (1986, p. 135).

Several scholars point out that we live in a ‘culture of paranoia’ (Timothy Melley, 2000) or in a ‘paranoid culture’ (Susan Harding and Kathleen Stewart, 2003), but this does not necessarily mean that societies are made up of pathologically paranoid subjects (Holm, 2009, p. 38)[15]. Instead, what they suggest is that in one way or another, ‘we participate in a culture in which conspiratorial and paranoid narratives’ freely circulate in popular cultural texts such as cinema, television, literature, and social media (pp. 38–9).

Recent studies of cultural paranoia included in this study are predominantly American in origin and based on the contemporary paranoid culture in the USA. These scholars have in common their conceptualization of paranoia as a new type of reflexive subjectivity that has emerged due to the social, economic and cultural transformations of late-capitalism and postmodernity (Fradley, 2013, p. 93-94). Examples of popular cultural texts dealing with paranoid and conspirational themes abound. In cinema, *The Conversation* (Coppola, 1974), *The Parallax View* (Pakula, 1974) and *Three Days of the Condor* (Pollack, 1975) reflect the post-Watergate paranoid era. Oliver Stone’s *JFK* (1991), *Sliver* (1993), *Conspiracy Theory* (1997), *Enemy of the State* (1998), *The Truman Show* (1998), *The Matrix* (1999), and *Minority Report* (2002) are among the many paranoid-conspirational films that were produced after the 1990s. Besides cinema, popular television series such as the *X-Files* (1993-2002) went beyond political paranoia, even further declaring that ‘social reality is

[15] For more see: Melley, T. (2000). *Empire of conspiracy: The culture of paranoia in postwar America*. Cornell University Press. And also: Harding, S. & Stewart, K. (2003). Anxieties of Influence: Conspiracy Theory and Therapeutic Culture in Millennial America. In H. West and T. Sanders (Eds.), *Transparency and Conspiracy: Ethnographies of Suspicion in the New World Order* (pp. 258–286). Duke University Press

an illusion, a hall of mirrors and smokescreens constructed to conceal the secret powers that *de facto* determine history' (Aupers, 2012, p. 24). Ray Pratt viewed this widespread 'visionary cultural paranoia' as a 'subjective reflection of the perceived powerlessness of the American public' (Pratt, 2001, p. 8).

As mentioned previously, paranoia and paranoid positioning are intrinsically tied to issues of power and powerlessness. Thus, feelings of powerlessness cause the belief in the subject that individual life is not shaped by one's choice but is under the control of external forces (Mirowsky & Ross, 1983, p. 228). If such a belief in external control is justified with objective conditions, this will lead to an 'awareness of powerlessness' that directly affect one's paranoid positioning (p. 229). When individuals start to feel that they are losing their agency, individuality, and autonomy, they develop a form of anxiety which Timothy Melley called 'agency panic' (2000, p. vii). The paranoid interpretations of the subject may be an indication of such agency panic and an attempt to protect his/her individual agency (p. 23). This may even include the idea that the self is in a constant struggle against society, which consequently can lead to paranoia.

Constructing an enemy 'other' is an efficient mechanism of paranoid thinking – indeed, it is even a pre-condition for paranoid narrative and identity formation and self-preservation. Like the individual self, a paranoid political system also creates an enemy who is 'evil and threatening and needs to be destroyed', grounding itself on the fears and anxieties of 'disintegration' of the nation or system (Glass, 2006, p. 732). The non-self or the enemy functions as the primary source in defining and preserving 'a unitary identity' (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 17). As Leo Bersani pointed out:

> in paranoia, the essential function of the enemy is to provide a definition of the real that makes paranoia necessary. We must, therefore, begin to suspect the paranoid structure itself as a device by which consciousness maintains the polarity of self and

non-self, thus preserving the concept of identity' (Bersani, 1989, p. 109. cited in O'Donnell, 2000, p. 17).

The creation of the enemy is a projection of the internal perceptions of persecution fears outwards. As Paradis (2012) argued, persecutory paranoia affords to the self a sense of agency 'by creating a clear distinction between the moral agent and the inhuman adversaries' who intend to destroy his/her autonomy claims, and yet such an interpretation inevitably 'has a way of inhibiting the complex insight it purports to provide' (Paradis, 2012, p. 6). As Ruth Stein (2010) pointed out, paranoia is ultimately about the invention of enemies, 'a process where inner tension, fear of humiliation, shame about weakness, and repressed self-doubt crystallize into the figure of a threatening Other', thus providing a 'sense, however truncated, of connection, a feeling of clarity and the relief that comes with certitude' (p. 231).

Today, cultural anxieties and skepticism are not grounded only on 'secure paranoias' based on us vs. them paradigms (Knight, 2000a, p. 175). Beyond creating a real or imagined enemy Other, contemporary paranoias are also 'about the human-made institutions of modern society itself' (Aupers, 2012, p. 24). Rather, new fears are about the enemies within, 'the unknown and malicious forces that operate within the machineries of scientific laboratories, modern corporations, politics and the state' (p. 24). Such a shift from a 'secure paranoia' to 'insecure paranoias' has created more generalized versions of 'conspiracy-infused anxiety which plunges everything into an infinite regress of suspicion' (Knight, 2000a, p. 4).

If we conceptualize politics as a 'symptomatic of broader pathologies in culture,' a paranoid political system can be described as 'symbolic reflection of emotional fears stated indirectly or projectively through conceptions that organize a culture's politics' (Glass, 2006, p. 730). Although this study is not interested in paranoia as a pathological psychosis, some simplified features of Freud's Schreber case are informative in analyzing different types of paranoid thinking that 'can be applied to individuals, social groups, institutions or even whole

nations' including an 'unfounded and exaggerated distrust and mistrust, suspiciousness, apprehension, fear and persecutory feelings' (Berke et al., 1998, p. 3). However, for James Glass (2006), the Schreber case provides a limited vision of paranoid thinking in understanding cultural and political paranoia; what works better is 'to acknowledge the dynamic of paranoia as central to the development of perception and affect' (p. 731). In other words, what we need to understand is how politics as a 'vital psychological space within culture' impersonates the 'language of the unconscious' and harbors our undesirable pathological desires, thoughts and beliefs (p. 730). A paranoid political style does not only reflect the unconscious desires or the internal psychological conflicts of a political leader or a party, since its existence is not possible 'without an audience' (p.730). Besides, culturally and politically, paranoia can 'become the weapon of choice in attacking as well as defending one's views; it has become an empty signifier to be filled with whatever meaning competing ideologies are seeking to defend, dispute, or destroy' (Bakola, 2007, p. 6).

In creating a paranoid cultural imagination, conspiratorial discourses and theories work as the key narratives to raise fear, suspicion, and mistrust in a community. As Timothy Melley (2000) argued, conspiracy theories act as the 'master narrative' offering explanations to several complex happenings and of proposing a 'highly adaptable vision of causality' (p. 8). In a way, they become a 'regime of truth' in the Foucauldian sense.[16] Thus, cultural paranoia functions as a public fantasy and a 'compensatory fiction that binds individual subjects to identificatory collective bodies' (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 16). It is the main ingredient of nationalism and fascism (Hofstander, 2012). According to Ghassan Hage (2003), 'paranoid nationalism' is one of the most prevalently manifested forms of such paranoia in our contemporary era. Distinct from countries that are nationalistic or moving toward extreme

[16] Michel Foucault argued that 'each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth' (Rabinow, 1984, p. 73). Regime of truth refers to dominant discourses determined by power mechanisms. For a thorough discussion see Rabinow, P. (1984). *The Foucault reader*. Pantheon. p. 72-73.

right ideologies that still ‘promise a good nation,’ paranoid nationalisms emerge due to the ‘shrinking’ capacities of modern societies that have lost their ability to produce and distribute hope (Hage, 2003, p. 20–21). As a result, attachment to one’s nation becomes an obsession with border politics, projection of the fear ‘onto everything classified as alien’ (p. 21) and generalized anxiety about the ‘fate of the nation’ expressed in terms of ‘worrying’ (p. 22).

A paranoid political system effectively controls its subjects by establishing a belief system based on the dynamics of fear and anxiety. Such a system will demand unquestioned obedience to the sovereign's will and authority from the subjects (Glass, 2006). Paranoid politics inevitably suppresses individual liberties, legitimizes oppression and ‘denies the free expression of will and defines specific political relations that are accorded legitimacy and those that are not’ (p. 741-2). Yet it threatens civil society, liberties, participatory democracy, which destroys the ‘implicit cultural rules of optimism and trust’ (Harper, 2008, p. 20).

Following Harper, one can talk about two kinds of paranoid positioning: ‘There can be interactive positioning in which what one person says positions another. And there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself’ (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48 cited in Harper, 2008, p. 9). Particularly, positioning the Other as ‘the paranoid’ is a way of illegitimazing the Other's views and suspicions while justifying one’s own. For instance, media framing of someone as paranoid and dangerous can be given as an example of such positioning. Furthermore, such paranoid positioning is indeed about showing 'how rational *we* are’ (Harper, 2008, p. 10). The other way is positioning oneself in a ‘paranoid’ position, which is indeed about seeing oneself as the knowing subject who believes he is the one who ‘not only ‘knows’ but who knows too much’ (Bakola, 2007, p. 35).

As John Mills (2003) placed attention, ‘paranoiac knowledge is not merely a fear of the unknown’, gaining (self)-knowledge might also be a frightening process as it involves a confrontation with the truth, which may be terrifying (p. 47). Drawing on Lacan’s assertion

that 'the object of human interest is the object of Other's desire', Mills argued that acquisition of knowledge is a paranoiac process based on an 'affirmation-negation' dialect, at times characterized by a desire 'not to know' (Mills, 2003, p. 47). Both in the desire to know or not to know, 'there is an apprehension to knowing because of the possibility of being subjected to a painful realization: in this case, the other's desire' (p. 46). In sum, knowledge is paranoiac and intrinsically connected with persecutory anxieties since

> the subject projects its imaginary ego-properties into objects which become distorted and perceived as fixed entitites that terrorize the subject with persecutory anxiety in the form of the other's desire …. Knowledge is saturated with paranoia because it threatens to invade the subject, and it is precisely this knowledge that must be defended against the desire not to know. (Mills, 2003, p. 43)

According to Jerry Aline Flieger (1997), paranoid knowledge in Lacanian approach can be viewed from two different perspectives. It may refer to the behavior of an '"errant" psychotic' who is hopelessly drawn from 'human symbolic interaction; or as the grounding of intersubjectivity' (p. 103). A significant point of Lacanian interpretation of paranoia is that paranoid knowledge is gained from 'relational situations', not from the actual truth. Thus, it is 'always an intersubjective duel, an encoded puzzle to be deciphered … wherein the subject receives his message from the other in an inverted form' (Flieger, 2005, p. 84). And this is how we all obtain 'intersubjective knowledge', by a particular paranoid modality (p. 84).

However, paranoia as a form of epistemology comes up with its inherent paradoxes, particularly when associated with postmodern condition. Greek literal meaning of paranoia also reveals a 'surplus of knowledge' (Bakola, 2007, p.9)[17], a form of 'overknowing' (Charnes, 1997, p. 29). If we conceive paranoia as 'a form of *re*-action to an officially

[17] According to Emily Bakola (2007), 'The notion of excessive knowledge should be read in terms of over-reading signs, over-interpreting events, and in general, of infusing surplus meaning to objects, characters, events, etc.' (p. 3).

sanctioned reality', then the paranoid person who thinks she/he is the sole holder of '*actual* knowledge' positions himself as the 'subject supposed to know' in a narcissistic manner (Bakola, 2007, p. 9). However, as Zizek points out, '"[a]s soon as the subject comes to 'know too much,' he pays for this excess, surplus knowledge 'in the flesh,' by the very substance of his being'" (cited in Bakola, 2007, p. 190-191). The subject who believes having the excess knowledge situates himself at the center of all activity and the heart of 'intense persecution and hostility' as a target (Bakola, 2007, p. 141).

Finally, I believe that with its epistemic force, paranoia indeed occupies a particular place for affect studies which this study draws upon. As mentioned before, affect theory has been disputing critical theory for not comprehending the social dynamics and the 'dimensions of experience' and 'the affective connection' of contemporary life. Though affect studies methodologically deploy methods that challenge the 'hermeneutics of suspicion and symptomatology' reaching totalizing and all-encompassing results (Duncan, 2014, p. 190) 'suspicion' in affective terms is a creative and 'living, dynamic form of attention' both for the individual living in the rhythms of contemporary life and for the scholar (Barnwell, 2014, p. 165). Suspicion provokes knowledge by associating events and discourses that seem to be unrelated. The prevalent 'sense of suspicion is a constant reminder that the foundational narratives of our lives are precariously positioned due to constant shifts in the agential arrangement of social authorship' (p. 181).

Therefore, with the interpretive drive that seeks to 'manifests itself as a mechanism that rearranges chaos into order' (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 11) and with the dedication of skepticism, paranoia is not simply a delusional psychosis but 'a social practice' and 'an integral aspect of the ways in which citizens mediate their relationship to political power' (Sturken, 1997, p.77). According to Barnwell, paranoia can be viewed 'as a social atmosphere' which builds 'constructive dialogue' with the affective turn (Barnwell, 2014, p.

184). For her, paranoia indeed is not a genre of scholarly reading but rather 'the real-time response to and stimulation of genre shifts, reading for the markers of recognizable forms in a live, differentiating act' (p. 189).

II.3.2. AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERES

As I have briefly touched upon at the beginning of this chapter, the atmosphere is one of the key terms raised by affect scholarship to highlight the intersubjective characteristics of emotions and affects (Gibbs, 2001; Brennan, 2004). The concept allows us to focus more on the dynamic interplay and the 'simultaneity' of the emotions and affects rather than their ontological distinctions (Bille et al., 2015, p. 5). Atmospheres allow us to capture the multi-dimensional quality of human experiences that are embodied and contingent on the material world and temporality (Bille et al., 2015). Experience of an atmosphere 'is never exclusively a psychological phenomenon…nor solely an objective thing "out there", as an environment or milieu' (p. 2).

According to Brian Ott (2017), the concept atmosphere, proposed by Gernot Böhme offers a solid understanding of 'affect as elemental state and intensive force', by disputing prevalent dualities of 'object/subject and affect/emotion' (p. 15). Atmospheres have a particular 'intermediary status', as Böhme explained:

> atmospheres are neither something objective, that is, qualities possessed by things, and yet they are something thinglike, belonging to the thing in that things articulate their presence through qualities-conceived as ecstasies. Nor are atmospheres something subjective, for example, determinations of a psychic state. And yet they are subjectlike, belong to subjects in that they are sensed in bodily presence by human beings and this sensing is at the same time a bodily state of being of subjects in space. (Böhme, 1993, p. 122 cited in Ott, 2017, p. 15)

According to Ben Anderson (2009), the indefinite quality makes atmospheres more inclusive, that is, 'they are impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal' (p. 80). To Anderson, atmospheres disclose the 'affective qualities' of human experiences, and this is why paying attention to 'affective atmospheres is to learn to be affected by the ambiguities of affect/emotion, by that which is determinate and indeterminate, present and absent, singular and vague' (p. 80).

On this account, integrating the notion of atmosphere helps our understanding of our affective encounters with the present history as a 'fluid and dynamic' structure of feeling. Atmosphere resonates with Jacques Ranciere's 'distribution of the sensible' explained by him as 'a sense of perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something common that is shared and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it' (Ranciere, 2009, p. 12, cited in Bille et al., 2015, p. 5). As Anderson emphasized, 'the very ambiguity of affective atmospheres—between presence and absence, between subject and object/subject and between the definite and indefinite—that enables us to reflect on affective experience as occurring beyond, around, and alongside the formation of subjectivity' (Anderson, 2009, p. 77). Despite the ambiguous fluidity and changeability over time, atmospheres are still recognizable because they are always 'shared' intersubjectively and communicably (Berlant, 2011a, p. 16). As Böhme summarized:

> …the quasi-objectivity of atmospheres is demonstrated by the fact that we can communicate about them in language. Of course, this communication has its preconditions: an audience which is to experience a stage set in roughly the same way must have a certain homogeneity, that is to say, a certain mode of perception must have been instilled in it through cultural socialization. (Böhme, 2013, p. 3)

Atmospheres are intense moods felt individually and collectively, whether we are talking about a room, a class, a historical period (age of anxiety), or a culture (culture of

fear). Atmospheres can sometimes be felt immediately, as when entering a room or watching a dark film, but sometimes interpreting an atmosphere requires a certain mode of perception, cultural socialization, and a certain degree of homogeneity (Anderson, 2009). Since the atmosphere becomes affective by permeating emotions ‘as emerging from bodily dispositions conditioned by a social context, which always has cultural and historical specificity' (Scheer, 2012, p. 193), their interpretation can vary with the different perceptions of the participants and spectators.

The atmosphere is also a fertile conceptual tool for this study from several perspectives. First of all, the atmosphere or the mood of the films communicates ‘the historical and cultural dimensions of memory, experience and time’ (Sinnerbrink, 2016). Films are one of the aesthetic mediums that affectively express ‘the cultural-historical sensibilities of their milieu’ (Sinnerbrink, 2016). Steven Shaviro (2010) proposed that one should be more concerned with the ways the recent films are ‘*expressive’*, meaning how they ‘give voice (or better, give sounds and images) to a kind of ambient, free-floating sensibility that permeates our society today’ (p. 2). In his view, films allow us to understand ‘what it feels like to live in the early twenty-first century’ (p. 2). The expressive potency of films does not simply refer to their capabilities of representing social processes but also their affectiveness in being involved in the production of these processes. Thus, for Shaviro they are both **‘***symptomatic* and *productive***’** (2010, p. 2).

Secondly, the atmosphere of films deserves special attention in order to capture the felt experience of the present history in Turkey. In understanding the phenomenology of cinematic experience, the atmosphere is one of the affective qualities which maintain the spectators’ emotional-affective engagement with the films (Plantinga, 2012, p. 455; Sinnerbrink, 2016). The affective atmosphere of the moving images offers an embodied experience, particularly how such an experience is significant for projecting ‘cultural

experiences that are unavailable to vision' (Marks, 2000, p. 22). The films, with their atmospheric qualities, convey a sense of verisimilitude for the Turkish spectators recall the current cultural-social and political realities they experience in their everyday lives. In this respect, the atmosphere of films plays a crucial role in invoking the audience's sensations of being situated in the same present history.

A film's atmosphere is vital for the sensory experience of the audience. All aspects of a film, from the narration, characters, mise en scène, cinematography, and sound, contribute to the film's atmosphere. Gernot Böhme's arguments on are particularly relevant to my study. Böhme distinguishes five main characteristics of atmospheres (Böhme, 2014 cited in Ott, 2017, p.16). The first one is about a general mood of a space, like being depressive, melancholic, or cheerful (p.16). Secondly, spaces can also operate synesthetically like warmness or coldness by stimulating 'a dynamic interplay of senses' (p. 16). Thirdly, the physical characteristics of space imply senses of motion, such as being claustrophobic or oppressive (p. 16). The fourth and fifth characteristics Böhme listed are highly relevant to this study. Böhme talked about the intersubjective quality and emergence of the atmospheres by 'culturally conditioned' objects and symbols (Böhme, 2014, p. 94). He believes atmospheres have an intersubjective quality that they 'both influence and are influenced by the bodies present' (Ott, 2017, p. 16). In a cinematic experience, intersubjectivity is a dynamic relationship between the image and the audience. The film's atmosphere is what generates this intersubjective relationship stimulating a bodily experience more than other qualities of film.

II.3.3. THE HISTORICAL PRESENT

This study is interested in understanding how anxiety and paranoia are expressed as felt sensations and affective experiences of living in the historical present. By converting anxiety and paranoia aesthetic expressions, the films mediate the 'affective presence' of the

present as a shared atmosphere that is 'sensed rather than known and enacted' (Berlant, 2015, p. 194). In this respect, Raymond Williams' notion of the structure of feeling allows us to define the present moment as 'a social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating' (1977, p. 132). However, as Williams emphasized, a new structure of feeling emerges 'in the true social present' that is experienced but not identified, framed, and analyzed yet (p. 132). Accordingly, this study contends that the films evoke the historical consciousness of the present, not only with their claims of representing an objective historical reality, they also demand the audience to feel being in the present through registering the 'affective residue that constitutes what is shared among strangers beneath the surface of manifested life' (Berlant, 2015, p. 191). To put this into Raymond Williams' terms, the films' structures of feeling communicate 'a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period' (1977, p. 131).

On these accounts, the analysis calls for reading anxiety and paranoia as affective categories and conceiving them as distinct social experiences in a certain milieu and also as driving forces of artistic creation in mediating the present history aesthetically. Therefore, following Lauren Berlant, this study intends to approach these films as images in which affect and history are intrinsically entwined and offer affective genres for engaging with this historical present.

At this point, I must explain what I have earlier referred to as 'affective genre' as borrowed from Lauren Berlant. A film genre analysis in the conventional sense is not one of the objectives of this study. However, as this study concentrates more on cultural analysis, Berlant's understanding of genre provides valuable insights. Berlant originally borrowed from the classical understanding of genre from film and literary theory but extended into a

broader conceptualization of subjectivity which is inseparable ‘from the popular modes of its formation’ (Stacey, 2015, p. 243). As Jackie Stacey notes, for Berlant, cinema always has an integral role in producing ‘affective subjects’ through forming the ‘fantasy landscapes’ that construct the everyday lives of modern subjects (Stacey, 2015, p. 243). However, Berlant’s definition ‘challenges any finite boundary we would like to draw between “real life” and “fiction”’ since we ‘live genres as much as we read them or watch them on the screen’ (Highmore, 2017, p. 51). Thus, Berlant proposes to redefine genre as an ‘aesthetic structure of affective expectation, an institution or formation that absorbs all kinds of small variations or modifications’ making promises of experiencing ‘the pleasure of encountering what they expected’ to whom discovers it (2008b, p. 4). Thus, genre for Berlant is rather:

> a form of aesthetic expectation *with* porous boundaries allowing complex audience identifications: it locates real life in the affective capacity to bracket many kinds of structural and historical antagonism on behalf of finding a way to connect with the feeling of belonging to a larger World, however aesthetically mediated. (Berlant, 2008b, p. 4)

For Berlant, genre matters to gain an ‘affective apprehension of a newly unstable present moment’ (Berlant, 2008a, p.847). The significance of genre is beyond documenting ‘a once-present moment’ but stems more from allowing the reader/viewer a sense of ‘you-are-thereness of any present,’ even a past one (p. 847). While genre can provide a more intimate apprehension of the past in terms of an affective experience, it also offers ‘an affective expectation of the experience of watching something unfold, whether that thing is in life or in art’ (Berlant, 2011a, p. 6). Further, she called attention to new aesthetic forms that are coming forth to replace the conventional genres by offering a more intimate and visceral apprehension of the emerging sensibilities in the present (Berlant, 2011a).

How can we read anxiety and paranoia as an affective genre of the historical present? First, I will briefly explain how this study approaches the historical present. Since the present is an unfolding historical moment, we are bodily positioned in and which we experience by 'touching, tasting, overhearing, and tracking how we are responding to it' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 849). It is a temporality of impasse, a moment of transition in which people try to make sense of it as they are experiencing it. According to Berlant, the present can be defined as 'a mediated affect' which is always 'under constant revision' (2011a, p. 4). Likewise, Harry Harootunian described the present history as 'a form of disquiet, a moment suspended; it is a new present, a 'historic situation' that violently interrupted tradition and suspended the line and movement of the past' (Harootunian, 2000, p. 21). It is a temporality configured mainly with a 'crisis ordinariness' in which many forces and histories circulate and become 'ready to hand' in the ordinary (Berlant, 2011a, p. 9).

A closer examination of the 'ordinary', 'ordinary affects' and 'ordinary crisis' will reveal how these concepts engage with the theoretical arguments and epistemological and methodological path this study follows. Kathleen Stewart's ground-breaking book *Ordinary Affects* (2007) and her other articles, such as *Atmospheric Attunements* (2011), pioneered the affective turn in anthropology and will provide a solid foundation for this research. For Stewart, ordinary affects 'are surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences' (Stewart, 2007, pp.1–2). While some of the ordinary affects are not even noticed in the banality of life or can be experienced positively, some affects have the impact of interrupting life as we know it (p. 2). The ordinary affects are also 'public feelings' that circulate at large-scale, but at the same time, 'they're also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of' (p. 2). Ordinary affects are 'transpersonal or prepersonal—not about one person's feelings becoming another's but about bodies literally affecting one another and

generating intensities: human bodies, discursive bodies, bodies of thought, bodies of water' (p. 128). Rejecting established dualisms, Stewart's concept of the 'ordinary' indeed invokes an intersection point of 'potentialities arriving from elsewhere' (Ashcraft, 2017, p. 45). Ordinary affects are 'felt forces that are living and non-organic, non-human and human, at once public, widely circulated, and intimately encountered' (p. 46).

Why does attending to ordinary stories matter? Since the crisis lived in the present becomes the 'new ordinariness' that people try to adjust and attune themselves to, everyday lives are the 'exemplary laboratories for sensing contemporary life in new idioms of affective realism' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 54). Examining the local stories or 'the lower-case drama[s]' of everyday life (Highmore, 2017, p. 50) can expose a collectively shared atmosphere of contingency in which several 'dramas of adjustment' coincide. As Stewart (2011) argued, the new ordinariness shaped by a crisis transforms the present into a temporality of adjustments and attunements to possibilities, even if they are not necessarily good. Adjusting to newly emerging atmospheres demands more than the knowledge that merely explains, represents, and offers solutions to the matter.

Making sense of the present implies anxiety about 'how to assess various knowledges and intuitions about what's happening and how to eke out a sense of what follows from those assessments' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 4). Possibilities for seeking better options can also accompany the sense of such threatening uncertainty of not knowing and anticipation of bad events (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 20). Creating or re-establishing a sense of certainty and stability necessitates a critical reflection on the knowledge possessed by the individual and collectivities. Anxiety stimulates the search for an 'epistemological peace', a sense of control and trust (Berenskoetter, 2020, p. 283). These ordinary affects sometimes require 'palpable and sensory yet imaginary and uncontained, material yet abstract' attunements (Stewart, 2011, p. 445). And sometimes, such anxiety can even 'become a mania or a scene; it can start

to take on the weight of a *life* from time invested, identities invented, or the *need* for something' (Stewart, 2011, p. 449).

Within this perspective, how can we generalize about the 'collective sense of the historical present' arising from local stories? Such an effort demands more than plain documentation of the everyday lives of ordinary people. For Berlant, this is where 'aesthetics' comes to the fore. The aesthetic productions have intensive affects, particularly in times of crisis, since 'when the terms of survival seem up for grabs, the aesthetic situation turns to the phenomena of affective disruption' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 846).

The aesthetic works not only mediate the affective narrative and imagery of the crisis but also contribute to producing the sensations of living in the present (Coates, 2013). The entrust in aesthetics does not stem from an assumption that aesthetics is the only place 'where we rehabituate our sensorium' but for it offers the 'metrics for understanding how we pace and space our encounters with things, how we manage the too closeness of the world and also the desire to have an impact on it that has some relation to its impact on us' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 12). Berlant's methodology is based on grasping the 'patterns of adjustment in specific aesthetic and social contexts to derive what's collective about specific modes of sensual activity toward and beyond survival' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 9). This methodology is explained as the 'generalization' of singular stories by Berlant (2008a):

> In it, all generality—what nations do, how power works—is derived from stories constituted by catching up to a crisis already happening in worlds that are being shaped by a collectivity that is also caught up in making and apprehending the present moment. (p. 846)

Nations and communities, just like individuals, may feel trapped between their attachments to the past and expectations of an unknown future. Unpacking the sensorium of

the diverse subjects and groups who are living through and feeling out the historical present can be articulated at the national level in terms of what Raymond Williams called 'structures of feeling' (1977) or Ben Highmore named 'cultural feelings' (2017).

Finally, in terms of cinema, the spectator 'who is the becoming-object' of history and viewing the 'lived experience of the same present temporality' cannot be conceived either as an invisible witness or a distant and 'objectifying' voyeuristic subject of prevalent spectatorship paradigms. The affective apprehension of being in the historical present is what prompts us to think of it as 'a densely corporeal, experientially felt thing, which also persuades us to think about 'the historicity of epistemologies immanent to living at a particular moment and feeling it becomes identical to the activity of being in history and in the aesthetic' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 849). Besides, the emotions that arise living through a particular history are not just random occurrences; rather, they are peculiar to 'our ways of being-in-the-world' (Laine, 2017, p. 5).

CHAPTER III

TURKISH MODERNIZATION AND QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY

As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, understanding Turkey's current anxieties requires recognizing the deep-seated tensions of Turkey's troubled modernization experience and its geographical and cultural liminality. Providing an overview of the history of Turkish modernization is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, in this chapter, I want to highlight some contextual and historical peculiarities relevant to understanding the embeddedness of the present-day cultural anxieties and draw attention to several global and local transformations that marked Turkey's social and political climate in the 2000s. I also want to clarify my critical stance toward the prevalent perceptions of Turkish modernization, national identity issues, and present-day cultural anxieties to outline how the current study intends to differentiate itself from the prevalent approaches.

This study intends to differentiate itself from the prevalent approaches associating the present-day crisis with the authoritarian and top-down nature of the Kemalist modernization project. Besides being aware of the embeddedness of the dilemmas of national identity and the collective anxieties in the modernization and westernization experience, this study proposes to shift its focus more onto the present history as the main temporality in which current cultural anxieties are shaped. This is not an effort to deny the troubled history of modernization but to draw attention to present-day anxieties and crises that are not marginalized by preserving the aliveness of the history and past traumas. In other words, this study proposes to capture the affective and visceral experience of the historical present without fetishizing the past in a way that will obscure noticing anxieties, crises, and traumas emerging in the present. This means comprehending the present as a continuously transforming temporality on its own terms, not as an isolated category but marked by affective pasts and shaped by future expectations. It is a dense temporality in which multiple

attachments to pasts circulate in forms of 'nostalgia, memory, or pain' (Ludmer, 2010, p. 77 cited in Schollhammer, 2020, p. 6). It is also the temporality of adjustments and attunements to the future's emerging uncertainties and promises, expectations, and fantasies. Therefore, in my opinion, some of the prevalent concepts and paradigms should be re-appropriated or totally abandoned, and novel conceptual tools and methodological paths should be introduced to capture the current anxieties with all the continuities, ruptures, and hybrid forms involved.

Therefore, focusing on the affective present history necessitates moving beyond the deterministic and essentializing approaches that are extensively employed in Turkish social science and humanities scholarship**.** First and foremost, following Şerif Mardin's (1997) criticism of the scholarly perspectives on Turkish modernization, I also contend that paying selective attention to peculiar conceptual categories such as 'ethnicity' or 'religion' obscures viewing Turkish modernization as a 'totality' and gradually reducing the project into 'a single dimension' (Ökem, 2006, p. 23). Rather, Turkish modernization as 'a project of post-sovereignty legitimation' should be analyzed as a totality (p. 8). This study also contends that one needs to evaluate Kemalism and its modernist, nationalist, and secularist political project in its historical context. One has to evaluate the requirements and circumstances of a particular historical era, considering both the domestic and international demands and conflicts that gave birth to Turkish nationalism and secularism. For instance, as Reza Azarian (2011) argued, 'Turkish nationalism arose out of a historical necessity … In a time when the very existence of the Ottoman state seemed most uncertain, nationalism managed to meet the need of holding together a society which was about to fall apart' (p. 72). As Ömer Taşpınar (2005) likewise points out concerning the criticism of the failure of Kemalism to establish a pluralist liberal democracy, putting the blame on Kemalism does not seem fair and objective. As he further explained, 'After all, liberalism was not on the global agenda of the 1930s. It is,

therefore, possible to argue that Kemalism, as a secularist-nationalist political project aimed at nation-building, modernization, and westernization, achieved its goal' (Taşpınar, 2005).

Furthermore, with respect to the debates concerning the interpretations of Kemalist modernity as Westernizm, following Nilüfer Göle (1997a), I also argue that to apprehend the conflicts surrounding the 'westernization' dimension of this project, one needs to 'consider the constructions of "Western Modernity" at the local, cultural and historical levels' (p. 83). Instead of viewing the 'West as an external and physical entity', one should be more attentive to the 'indigenous forms of modernity', revealing 'how the Western ideal of modernity is reconstructed and internalized locally' (p. 83). In accordance, I allege that one should cast a critical eye on the 'civilization discourse' of the Turkish modernization project to better understand how self-understanding of the Turkish identity has situated itself in relation to Europe (p. 82–84).

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's vision was to 'raise Turkey to the level of contemporary civilization.' (Döşemeci, 2013, p. 3) The civilization discourse will allow an understanding that the Kemalist project 'was not simply a local project of economic or political modernization. Nor was it based essentially on an attempt to create a national identity for Turkey' (Keyman & Gümüşçü, 2014, p.13). Although the concept of contemporary civilization refers to Europe and the West in general, as Nilüfer Göle (1997a) has emphasized, 'the Kemalist notion of Civilization implied more than a particular sociohistorical and thus concrete civilization' and for the Kemalist elite, the notion was closely connected with modernity that is universal as well as linked with the 'idea of progress' (cited in Döşemeci, 2013 p.3).

To sum up, although the atrocities of Turkish modernization explain the identity crisis experienced both at the national and international levels, I intend to refrain from the prevalent preoccupation with Kemalist ideology as the common target of blame, contending that such a

perspective will not provide a fair understanding of the contemporary identity crisis and political discontent in Turkey. Rather, I prefer to focus more on the changes and transformations taking place in Turkey through the dialectic interplay of global and local dynamics. Contrary to the prevalent scholarship which has promoted an 'image of an authoritarian and even fascist Kemalist regime' (Alaranta, 2015b) and blamed the Kemalist modernization project for Turkey's failure of democratization, I argue that responsibility is equally borne by the right-wing governments that came to power since the 1950s (Alaranta, 2017). As Toni Alaranta emphasized, I also reject the widespread assumption that

> the Kemalist project of enforced westernization and secularization in Turkey is a typical example of a 'false monolithic modernity,' whereas the 'conservative democracy' of moderate Islam represents a supposedly more mature, pluralistic approach to modernity that – crucially – has the potential to succeed where Kemalism failed, in making Turkey enduringly democratic. (Alaranta, 2017)

With this perspective, I propose to move beyond the perspectives in which history and experience of modernization are dominantly elaborated with identity dualities. Rather, I intend to approach current cultural anxieties with more explanatory concepts such as 'sense of belonging,' 'self-understanding' and 'self-perception,' instead of over-exhausted notions of 'identity.' My intention is not to reject the use of 'identity' or offer a new concept that will replace it. What I want to emphasize is that identity 'with essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers' and the manner it is pervasively utilized in the Turkish context as an ideologically laden concept will not work effectively with the theoretical and methodological premises of this study (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 2).

Identity is a widely used notion both in everyday and scientific contexts, and its usage is prone to exploitation. As Floya Anthias (2006) persuasively argued, in its contemporary usage, identity as disclosing 'a stable marker of sameness or difference' is frequently

deployed to explain ‘a possessive property of individuals rather than a process’ (p. 20). On the contrary, identity formation is not a self-definitive but an interactive and reflexive process that involves positioning the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other.’ It is a continuous negotiation process of self-understanding with the Other. Thus, understanding the complexities of identity formation processes necessitates moving beyond the ‘distinctively modern or Western understanding of the “self” as a homogeneous, bounded, unitary entity’ (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 17).

The trusted and unquestioned grounds of identities are deeply challenged and locating the self in the uncertain and fluid atmosphere of the contemporary era has become complicated issue (Benhabib, 1997, p. 8). Issues of national ‘self-generation’ and ‘self-determination’ are becoming highly problematic, manifesting themselves in ‘strange identity multiplicities’ which engender unconventional patterns of belonging and new definitions of inclusion-exclusion (p. 8). Engaging critically with new hybrid forms of identities and subjectivities shaped by emerging forms of otherness, patterns of exclusions and inclusions, there is a need to consider identity more than as a ‘category of analysis’ (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 2). Brubaker and Cooper maintained that, identity as a category of analysis does not serve the demands of social analysis. Yet, it is not a necessary concept always since identity is not something ‘all people have, seek, construct, and negotiate’ (p. 2).

As Elsbeth Probyn (2015) argued, the term ‘belonging’ having affective features, such as attachment, commitment and identification, reveals ‘a profoundly affective manner of being, always performed with the experience of being within and in-between sets of social relations’ (p. 13). Compared to identity, belonging better captures the ‘desire for some sort of attachment to other people, places, or modes of being’ and unravels how individuals or groups are ‘caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fueled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state’ (p. 19). Hence, as a constructive

process of becoming, belonging calls attention to the dynamics of performativity, in other words, the repetition of social practices.[18]

In my opinion, being attentive to the desires of belonging and emerging forms of attachments are key to grasping is 'self-understanding' in terms of 'one's sense of who one is, of one's social location and of how (given the first two) one is prepared to act' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 17). I believe self-understanding is highly pertinent for apprehending Turkey's 'self-perception' and 'self-presentation' dilemmas since modernity is profoundly experienced as a self-reflexive process entangled with cultural introspection. On these grounds, Turkey's self-perception of its identity and position in relation to Europe is crucial in understanding the experience of modernization. As Meltem Ahıska (2003) concisely summed up, the Turkish modernization process was 'a performance for the imagined Western audience' (p. 367). Turkey's relation to modernization and Europe has been dominantly characterized by the double anxiety of losing its authentic national character due to over-westernization coupled with the fear of inadequacy and incompleteness under the western gaze (Gürbilek, 2004). The anxieties 'raised by its progress and the fear of "being late" are accompanied by a feeling of inferiority' for not becoming part of Western civilization have become internalized as part of Turkish collective consciousness (Ahıska, 2003, p. 367).

Aslı Çırakman (2011), likewise, drawing upon Hans Blumenberg's distinction of self-foundation and self-assertion, argued that 'identity' refers to 'self-foundation,' which is indeed an epistemological project, as it refers to 'who we are' (Çırakman, 2011, p.1895). On the other hand, according to her, the notion of 'self-image' recalls Blumenberg's concept of self-assertion, revealing 'what it means to be Turkish or how Turks promote themselves as a

[18] For a more comprehensive coverage of performative dimensions of belonging see: Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. Routledge. Fortier, A.-M. (2000). *Migrant belongings: Memory, space, identities*. Berg; Bell, V. (1999). Performativity and belonging: An introduction. *Theory, Culture, Society*, *16*(2), 1-10. ; Yuval-Davis, N. (2011). *The politics of belonging— Intersectional contestations.* Sage Publications.

collectivity' (p. 1895). For Blumenberg (1985), 'self-assertion' is the defining and distinctive characteristic of the modern age. As an 'existential program,' self-assertion discloses how 'man posits his existence in a historical situation and indicates to himself how he is going to deal with the reality surrounding him and what use he will make of the possibilities that are open to him' (p. 138). It is, however, not simply how human beings perceive and interpret the facts of individual experience with the 'demonstrable presence of particular physical, economic, and social conditions,' but it is also intertwined with expectations and anticipation that are connected with the experience (p. 221).

The notion of self-image—which can be specified as self-perception or reflexive self-understanding—suggests a relationality since it is built and transformed vis-a-vis the Other. As Brubaker and Cooper explained, self-understanding compared to identity has a dispositional and an 'affectively charged' quality (2000, p. 19). Since the early days of the Republican period, the West and Europe, in particular, constituted the desired model for Turkish national self-image. Construction of the Turkish self-image was not only a macro-level political project but also heavily involved in creating and 'adopting a secular and modern way of life' (Çırakman, 2011, p. 1896). However, throughout the 2000s, Turkey's modern, secular, and westernized self-image has been challenged by a nationalist and İslamist one. I will return to Islamic self-understanding and self-image in the following paragraphs.

Turkey's self-understanding and self-positioning cannot be explained only by its paradoxical relationship to Europe. The country's relationship with the East has also been complicated and problematic. Turkey's geographical position as a bridge between East and West is a defining feature of the dilemmas of belonging. Turkey always acted as a bridge between two civilizations and continents; this has been frequently celebrated as a metaphorical vision. According to Ahıska (2003), this liminal position is not about being located between the East and the West but reveals a 'temporal signification: namely,

backwardness and progress' (p. 353). As she further explained, 'Turkey has been trying to cross the bridge between the East and the West for more than a hundred years now, with a self-conscious anxiety that it is arrested in time and space by the bridge itself' (p. 353)

So it would appear that the bridge metaphor does not always suggest a positive positioning. The bridge metaphor reinforces Turkey's '"liminality," placing Turkey in a less classifiable category than the regular "othering" practices' (Yanık, 2009, p. 531). This in-betweenness sometimes refers to a never-ending journey leading nowhere and a state of being stuck in a transitionary position. This double positioning recalls Michel de Certeau's metaphors of the bridge and the frontier and the occupancy of the double consciousness of both exteriority and interiority. Michel de Certeau's distinction between the bridge and the frontier helps to understand the liminality of Turkey. As Certeau maintained, 'stories are actuated by a contradiction that is represented in them by the relationship between the frontier and the bridge, that is, between a (legitimate) space and its (alien) exteriority' (de Certau, 1984, p. 126). His distinction reveals the double consciousness of the possibility of a future becoming and a present alienness or otherness. Both interiority and exteriority refer to non-liminal positions, situating the subject in a continuum of negotiating personal identity to escape the anxiety of being destined as a bridge, a condition of both crossing over, never reaching a destination.

Recently, this liminality of connecting two civilizations has transformed into a state of loneliness due to deteriorating relations with the European Union and the impact of wars taking place in the Middle East. However, this state of loneliness has been praised as a valuable stance by the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government. The failures in foreign policy illustrate the deteriorating relations with the European Union and neighboring countries of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Israel and Egypt, but has been legitimized as the 'precious loneliness' of a nation. The term 'precious loneliness' was defined as an 'honorable stance

for defending the truth and values' by the government's top foreign policy advisor, Ibrahim Kalın, in 2009.[19] The Western-oriented foreign policy has gradually changed towards the East increasingly with a pan-Islamist tone particularly indoctrinated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu (2007-2011). In 2012, the Arab Spring critically 'triggered a turn to radicalism and anti-Western revisionism in Turkey's foreign policy' (Edelman et al. 2015, p. 71). The Government apprehended the Arab spring events as an opportunity to resuscitate the Ottoman legacy and claimed Turkey's moral, religious and political leadership of Turkey in the Middle East and the Islamic world. However, the pan-Islamist foreign policy of Davutoğlu did not indeed yield anything but more disputes with the Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, as Nuray Mert convincingly points out, Turkish foreign policy fueled by the dreams of returning back to the glorious past and becoming a 'regional leader' in the Middle East turned the country into a 'lonely wolf' in its 'precious' existence' (Mert, 2013).

Apart from other problems, I specifically want to mention Islamism's resurgence, which I believe lies at the heart of the current crisis and anxieties. There have been Islamic challenges and threats to the modernization project from the Republic's early days. Furthermore, the seeds of present-day Islamism were planted in the 1950s with the Democrat Party's coming to power, and this has been augmented by other right-wing governments that followed. Re-Islamisation of Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy has implications for the identity crisis and self-understanding, both at the individual and national levels. As previously mentioned, the change in Turkey's self-image, from a secular westernized nation to an Islamic understanding with nationalist undertones, is directly shaping how the majority

[19] According to İbrahim Kalın, 'precious loneliness' stands for 'Turkey's "honorable stance" against coups and slaughters, as opposed to the world's ignorance of the conflicts in Egypt and Syria'. For Kalın sometimes one has to stand alone to defend values one finds right and if this stance were to be described as loneliness, it would be a 'precious loneliness'. For more see: Turkey not 'lonely' but dares to do so for its values and principles, says PM adviser (2013, August 26). *Hürriyet Daily News.* http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-not-lonely-but-dares-to-do-so-for-its-values-and-principles-says-pm-adviser--53244.

of the population perceives and asserts the position and role of the country among others (Çırakman, 2011). The official and the popular discourses that have been re-formulating this Islamic-national identity and self-understanding are at the same time fueling the existing polarisations and triggering new tensions.

The resurgence of Islamism in Turkey has been heavily debated in academic and non-academic circles. There is a common consensus among the majority of scholars to explain the revival of Islamism as the failure of the Kemalist modernization project. The rise of Islam as a political movement and as a lifestyle is interpreted by many in terms of the Freudian concept of 'the return of the repressed', referring to the reactionary masses discontented by the Republican project who have felt excluded and gradually gained political, economic and cultural power and visibility in the public sphere (Robins & Sayarı, 1996, p. 72). As Nilüfer Göle explained, 'Islamism is an attempt to provide Muslims from the periphery with a new guide of conduct for their daily lives and new forms of political expression' (Göle, 1997b, p. 52). The discontented masses who felt excluded from sharing the system's benefits created their own 'Islamic Bourgeoisie' or 'Elites' (Öniş, 1997, p. 748). However, the rise of an 'Islamic elite' cannot be explained only in economic terms. There has always been a 'cultural gap between the elites of the center and those at the periphery' shaping the 'asymmetrical realities of Turkish politics and society today' (Göle, 1997b, p. 52).[20] However, one cannot claim that the ruling party attracted only the people with an Islamist background but also the ones who felt 'marginalized by Kemalist order' (Yavuz & Öztürk, 2019, p. 5).

The peripheral economic and political forces that were previously marginalized, including the Islamic networks, not only established themselves as the main actors in the economic and political scenes but, more importantly, brought about their claims for

[20] Şerif Mardin is a well-known Turkish academician who first theorized about the centre-periphery cleavage in the analysis of Ottoman-Turkish modernization. See: Mardin, Ş. (1973). Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics? *Daedalus*, *102*(1), 169–190. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024114

‘alternative models of Turkish modernity’ (Öniş, 1997, p. 758; Keyman, 2005, p. 108). These new actors challenged the secularist and Westernizing premises of the Kemalist modernization project by constructing alternative modernity as an amalgam of Islam and liberal democracy. While Keyman and Koyuncu (2005) labeled this new formulation as ‘alternative modernities’, others have preferred other terms such as ‘non-western modernities’ (Göle, 2003). Besides, Islamism offers ‘a counter-cultural model of modernity, and a new paradigm for self-definition that has led to the formation of Islamist counter-elites’ (Göle, 1997b, p. 53).

The political, economic, and cultural transformations intervening in regulating and re-ordering the bodies, the public space, and the construction of national history inevitably affected the national subject positions, which Alev Çınar asserted are the sites where subject positions are constructed, displayed, contested, and negotiated (Çınar, 2005). Like the Kemalist Project, JDP is a social engineering project that ostensibly creates model citizens, ‘shaping and monitoring their lifestyles and their private affairs’ (Çınar, 2005, p. 34). Opposed to Kemalism’s model of secular and westernized modern citizens, JDP’s ideal citizen can be described as ‘a Sunni, Islamist, neo-Ottomanist, anti-Western, Turkish nationalist’ subject (Yılmaz, 2018, p. 57).

Experience and interpretation of the present can be highly problematic for non-western modernities like Turkey. As Meltem Ahıska (2003) pointed out, quoting from Nilüfer Göle, the subjects of these countries are always ‘alienated from their own present’ (p. 354). These countries have frequently ‘confronted the stigma of a time lag that signaled their “backwardness,” “late development,” or “underdevelopment”’ since they are always compared with a Western understanding of a singular and linear temporality (Harootunian, 2012, p. 21). Modernization projects conceive of time as ‘progress,’ and progress is defined in terms of a linear temporality in which ‘underdeveloped capital markets’ are assumed to

reach the level of 'fully 'integrated' and 'evolved' growth economies' (Kavanaugh, 2010, p. 93). This temporality of historical progress is not solely linear 'but also uni-directional, a time measured only in terms of its spatial distance to the present' (p. 93). In consequence, as Harry Harootunian argued, the temporal order of the western modernity project leads to comparisons with western modernity, and 'all "other" cultures/economies were "mapped onto [this] evolutionary trajectory"' (Harootunian, 2005, p. 30). Such a temporal order causes the configuration of 'the noncontemporaneous contemporary as a sign of retarded achievement exemplified as delay, arrest, and catch up' (Harootunian, 2007, p. 479). For such countries, history becomes 'mainly external and dead, without witness or being actually experienced' (p. 492).

The non-western countries which cannot catch up with European modernity and progress are consigned to a 'waiting room of history', as Chakrabarty pointed out (2008, p. 8), denoting the 'period that is needed for transition,' a duration in which countries face the ghosts of their pasts, wait for a promised future, and strive to catch the rhythm of universalized western historical time (Harootunian, 2007, p. 478). As such, the present is always framed as a temporality of a pre-modernity, irrationality and backwardness that needs to be changed and reconstructed for a better future. The expectation of progress that is directed towards the future requires the experience of the present also to be characterized by progress. However, the asymmetry between this expectation and what is experienced poses problems for envisioning past, present and future in the national imagination and sheds light upon understanding the collective anxieties and crises.

The Turkish novelist Peyami Safa once defined this East-West duality as 'the biggest torture for the Turkish soul' (1938, p. 7, cited in Gürbilek 2004, p. 9). His words reveal a psyche of frustration and melancholy for being stuck between the desire to westernize and the anxieties of influence (Akcan, 2005, p. 7). Nurdan Gürbilek interpreted these anxieties as a

constant sense of 'lack', a deficiency of 'not being able to become like the Other', that co-exist with suspicions of not being authentic (2003, p. 599). Similarly, Orhan Koçak re-phrases this duality as a 'conflicted fascination' (Koçak, 2010, p. 310 cited in Somay, 2014, p. 46) not only towards the West but also towards his own culture (Somay, 2014, p. 88). The result is an uncomfortable self-understanding of Turkey vis-a-vis European fantasy.

As Göle asserted, non-Western societies try to overcome this alienation from their present 'by projecting themselves either to the utopian future or to the golden age of the past' (cited in Ahıska, 2003, p. 354). The consciousness and frustration of the impossibility of becoming like the Ideal (here the West or Europe) are characterized by the melancholy of the 'imaginative loss of a never possible perfection' (Akcan, 2005, p. 7). Such melancholy is not about a loss of 'something previously possessed, but rather *exclusion* from or the *lack* of an ideal' (p. 7). Since modernization is accepted as a 'universal' process and an achievement in which the 'West is perceived as the subject of history', non-western countries are situated in an inferior position that lacks such a universal 'right of being part of this history' (p. 7). Therefore, as Achielle Mbembe (2001) argued, the present is experienced mainly as an absence:

> …the present as *experience of a time* is precisely the moment when different forms of absence become mixed together: absence of those presences that are no longer so and that one remembers (the past), and absence of those others that are yet to come and are anticipated (the future). (p. 16)

Such a nostalgic attachment does not exclusively reveal (re)narrativization or (re)construction of the past. Instead, it plays a crucial role in the ongoing present (Özyürek, 2006). The nostalgic discourses emphasizing the virtues of a golden period are taking shape 'in dialogue with (and as a critique of) the political situation' (p. 31). As Erkan Erçel (2014) observed, the Turkish-Islamic nationalist fantasy of 'Ottoman tolerance and peace' functions

not merely for reversing the European/Western image of the 'Ottoman despotism and the barbaric Turk' (p. 117) but to sustain the identities of the national subjects as the '"authentic natives" of the historical Turkish-Islamic state via the promise of a harmonious order in the future' (p. 9).

Besides, Ottoman nostalgia is not the only political and public fantasy. Contemporary Kemalists and Turkish modernists also raise the 'modernist nostalgia' or 'nostalgic Kemalism' depicting 'a 1930s utopian past in which all Turkish citizens were imagined as having fully internalised the goals and policies of the modernising Turkish state' (Özyürek, 2006, p. 16) As Edhem Eldem (2013) reminded:

> Ironically, there is hardly any difference between the nostalgia for Ataturk-era secularism and the JDP's glorification of the Ottoman imperial past. Both rest on the reinvention of an imagined golden age—the former with a secularist emphasis and the latter with a focus on Islamic identity. And both look back fondly on authoritarian regimes, which makes them all the less credible as political models for a democratic present and future. (Eldem, 2013)

Thus, both the Islamists and the secularists claim that 'their own interpretation of the past should determine the nature of legitimate politics in contemporary Turkey' (Özyürek, 2007, p.117). Both sides use their own representation of the past 'as a blueprint to transform the present' (p. 117).

What is less obvious yet important and relevant to this study is how these nostalgic narratives provide the basis for paranoid discourses. Conspirational thinking is a well-known trait of Turkish political culture. Besides the glorification of a nostalgic past, another mechanism that frequently works during periods of social crisis is conspirational thinking taking the stage. Particularly in times when societal crisis situations such as 'impactful and

rapid societal change that calls existing power structures, norms of conduct, or even the existence of specific people or groups into question' stimulates conspiracy theories (Van Prooijen and & Douglas, 2017, p.324).

Conspiracy theories reached new heights with JDP Government's exhaustive abuse of power exhaustively, drawing on prevalent internal and external fears blended with new ones. This period also witnessed an abundance of conspiracy theories in popular culture more than ever before. From non-fiction books to novels and from films to TV series, conspiracism became an extensive form of cultural entertainment, having severe implications for deepening the existing polarisation and infusing an atmosphere of suspicion, fear, and distrust in society.[21]

Framing domestic and international policy failures with the century-old 'internal and external enemies of the state' rhetoric has always been a convenient solution. Among several conspiracy discourses, Sèvres syndrome occupies a special place in the Turkish national imagination. The fear created by the Sèvres Treaty, symbolizing the partitioning and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, frequently haunts the country with the belief that some external forces are conspiring to weaken Turkey. According to Baskın Oran (2005), who introduced the notion of 'Sèvres syndrome', Sèvres fear is based on the basic idea that 'Turkey will disintegrate like 1920' and it is a 'defensive reflex' which has developed in 'periods of accelerated modernization' (cited in Schmid, 2015, p. 13).

The recent atmosphere of fear can be viewed as an intertwining of the 'deep historical fears and wide open anxieties' at play simultaneously. (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 26).

[21] Books such as: Mütercimler, E. (2005). *Komplo teorileri: Aynanın ardında kalan gerçekler (Conspiracy theories: The realities that remain behind the mirror*), Alfa Basım Yayın; Turna, B (2005). *Metal fırtına (Metal storm).* Timaş.; TV Series: Valley of Wolves: (2003-2005); Valley of Wolves (2007–2016); Films: *Valley of Wolves Iraq* (2006), *Gladio* (2009), *Palestine* (2011) and *Homeland* (2017).

According to Nikos Papastergiadis, today, fear has different sources that interact and come into the picture interconnectedly:

> As these 'vertical' and 'horizontal' emotions mutually reinforce one another, they are internalized as social 'facts' that provide the spatial and psychic markers for the 'ensemble of possibilities' through which we relate to others, affirm our own idealized self-images, and define a sense of place in the world. (2012, p. 26)

Although Papastergiadis referred particularly to the fears raised in the post-9/11 period in countries like the USA or Australia, his approach has a global and transnational scope. The anxieties of contemporary Turkey are not based on the similar imaginary threat of invasion by immigrants or refugees. However, besides the historical fear of dismemberment imposed by Sèvres Syndrome, long years of war with PKK terrorism that resulted in military and civilian casualties are other well-known factors characterizing the nation's pervasive sense of fear and anxiety. The rising Islamic terror and involvement in the Syrian war have recently added to social anxiety and paranoia 'buried inside and blurred by the figuration of fear' already entangled with various 'internal ideas and memories' (Papastergiadis, 2005, pp. 11–12).

The frequent deployment of conspiracy theories in politics became a standard operating procedure for the government, condensing the atmosphere of insecurity, fear, and suspicion domestically and deepening Turkey's isolation in the international arena. Conspiracism became an effective tool for the government to consolidate its power, legitimize its authoritarian rule, and subdue any opposition. However, it produced nothing but a deep polarization of the nation.

Although conspirational thinking is a well-known trait of Turkish political culture, I want to highlight a characteristic of the ruling party's promoted paranoia deeply rooted in the

Turkish-Islamist ideology: namely, the imagination of a strong sense of victimhood as the constitutive element of the Islamist identities and an underlying feature of the ‘reactionary mood’ of the Islamist ideologies (Yılmaz, 2017). It has been built upon an imagined ‘psychological trauma’ inflicted upon the society by Kemalism by imposing secularism and modernism (Cornell & Karaveli, 2008, p. 12). This victimhood rhetoric is promoted not merely by Islamist intellectuals or politicians but also embraced by ‘the masses who currently support the AKP’ (Yılmaz, 2017, p. 483).

Victimhood claims shaping ‘self-perception and self-presentation’ play a central role in constructing the reactionary mood of the Islamist ideology and subject formation mobilizing the frenzied will to power (Yılmaz, 2017, p. 486). Reinvention and glorification of a golden Ottoman past is a manifestation of such a reactionary mood, working hand in hand with political paranoia and conspiracy thinking. As Fethi Açıkel (1996) claimed, sacred victimhood is a characteristic of the Islamist-nationalist and conservative ideologies of the Turkish right. Sacred victimhood reveals an ‘oppressive-neurotic political ideology representing the power demands of the masses who felt rootless socially, culturally and imaginatively, and who have been financially and materially deprived due to late capitalism and rapid modernization’ (p. 155). According to Açıkel, sacred victimhood unveils the masses' submissive character to particular political and ideological discourses by articulating ordinary life discourses of suffering and ressentiment to the political apparatus (p. 163). However, as Zafer Yılmaz (2017) convincingly argued, the social and political imagination built on the fetishization of victimhood also involves ‘mobilization of feelings of impotency, non-responsibility, self-pity, and sublimation of power’ (p. 483). By diffusing this reactionary mood by its hegemonic imagination in the whole country, ‘resentful and unrestful subject full of rage, fear, pain, and an everlasting will to power’ subjectivities are created, which indeed

facilitates ‘identification of supporters of the party with the leader on the basis of reactionary feelings’ (p. 502).

Ultimately, disappointed with the westernization and modernization project as well as with the JDP government, which came to power with promises of democratization and progress but turned out to provide nothing but authoritarianism and polarising Islamic governance, the country’s atmosphere of anxiety, fear, and paranoia has condensed more than ever. Broken promises of ‘transforming Turkey into a First World country,’ consolidating Turkish democracy, solving the Kurdish question, and joining the European Union have utterly failed (Kınıklıoğlu, 2015). Instead of these optimistic expectations, what is experienced is rather like a nation being dragged into the ‘Middle East’s vortex of violence’ (Kınıklıoğlu, 2015).

According to widely held opinion, the ruling party’s coming to power in 2002, with the promises of a liberal democracy reconciling with Islam has opened a whole new era of a ‘New Turkey’ (Alaranta, 2015a, p. 93). As Alaranta (2015a) pointed out, New Turkey is a ‘catchword disseminated to the public in order to define the core elements of a particular national imaginary’ (p. 94). However, as the years have shown, none of the liberalist promises have been realized; rather, the experience lay the basis for ‘the increasing power of conservatism as a scepticism and closure of difference, pluralism and multi-culturalism, resulting in the widening and deepening of political, societal, and cultural polarization’ (Keyman, 2010, p. 324–25 qtd in Alaranta 2014, p. 137).

The rising conservatism, coupled with authoritarian rule, has transformed the pro-European and democratic stance of the JDP’s initial years into autocratic and Islamist governance. The increasing repression of civil and political liberties, the government’s aggressive rhetoric on women’s rights, alcohol, secular education, and lifestyles, reinforced with policies and legal sanctions, have increased social dissent, which finally manifested

itself as a nationwide protest in the Gezi Park movement. Facing countrywide resistance for the first time, the government framed the protests as a 'foreign conspiracy' and labeled the demonstrators as looters, vandals, and even terrorists and traitors. Furthermore, the recent coup attempts of 15 July 2016, organized by 'Fethullah Terror Organization', also provided the ultimate opportunity for the government to stoke their existing conspiracy theories to consolidate its power, carrying the country to the limits of paranoid segregation, not only from the international community but within the country itself.

Above all else, this atmosphere of fear has generated feelings of imprisonment, captivity, or incarceration at various levels: imprisoned identities, imprisoned homes and families, imprisoned cities, and finally, an imprisoned country. Besides, as Elif Şafak (2016) pointed out, the mental and emotional confinement experienced has generated 'invisible ghettoes – islands of anger, islands of indifference, islands of obedience to central authority.'

As a concluding remark, I want to emphasize that my intention in this study is not to discuss and unpack the parameters of whether Turkish modernization and the period of JDP to fit into the 'alternative modernity' or 'non-western multiple modernity' paradigms. I agree with the claims that Turkey's modernization history and the ongoing present cannot be apprehended fully in terms of a Eurocentric understanding. Nevertheless, this should not be understood as a rejection of the European influence on the local transformations during the process of modernization (Çınar, 2005, p. 3).

As Harry Harootunian (2007) alternately suggested, the discourse on modernity should be one that is 'centered principally on an understanding of our present as the unity of uneven temporalizations' that coexist with each other (p. 493). Therefore, I contend that Harootunian's notion of the 'noncontemporaneous contemporaneity' captures the present crisis more accurately, which I have tried to summarize. Stuck between the Kemalist imagination that seeks 'to reshape and rebrand *Turkey* as a progressive country that was

facing *West*' (Bein, 2017, p. 64) and the government's pledge for an Islamist 'new Turkey' extensively built upon Ottoman nostalgia, the country has been experiencing its 'own unique, internal time' that can be defined as the coexistence of multiple temporalities. The Golden Ottoman Past rhetoric or the modernist nostalgia of Kemalism simultaneously at play are noncontemporaneous oppositions held onto by different segments of society, mainly grounded on 'an unresolved relationship to the past and a belief in a fairytale of the 'good-old-days' (Kavanaugh, 2010, p. 98). This uncompleted past can indeed be characterized as 'multi-layered and interwoven heterogenous temporalities' that have persisted, as they have not been resolved or expressed (p. 98). On the other hand, the particular nostalgic pasts produced in the present are inevitably incorporated with their futurity which comes with their own 'contradictions and oppositions' (p. 95). The visible neo-Ottomanisation and Sunni Islamisation of the very country which has also been struggling for years to join the European Union engender what Harry Harootunian (2007) identified as 'noncontemporaneous contemporaneity':

> that has come back to haunt the present in the incarnate form of explosive fundamentalisms fusing the archaic and the modern, the past and the present, recalling for us a historical de´ja` vu and welding together different modes of existence aimed at overcoming the unevenness of lives endlessly reproduced. (p. 475)

Kemalism is not the sole authority in the constitution of the national subjects. Subject positions are contested by alternative ethnic and religious narratives and neo-liberal conservatist policies of the government (Çınar, 2005). However, scholars like Göle, Çınar, Keyman and Koyuncu have drawn attention to a crucial point: that the Islamism embodied by the JDP since the 2000s is not anti-modern or anti-western as presumed by other scholars or Westerners (Çınar, 2005, p. 10). Such reasoning challenges a simple dichotomous reading of the clashes between Islamic and secular identities. This study is interested in the creation of

subject positions more than identities. I want to grasp how these conflicting narratives and policies have affected the existing tension between identity and modernity. How are these interventions and policies rejected, appropriated, and negotiated through subject positions as well as individuals' and nations' self-positioning and self-perception? How do emerging anxieties blended with existing ones find particular social and cultural expression in the present?

Also, apart from the peculiarities of the social and political history of the country, the Turkish experience constitutes no exception to the radical changes and transformations taking place on the global scale. The challenges faced by nation-states since the late 1980s, the tensions raised by globalization, and emerging identity claims carried the world to 'the thresholds of yet another great transformation of the self-understanding of modern societies' (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.1). The conventional ways of self-understanding and self-perception have been challenged and sometimes transformed into tormenting questions both for individuals and societies, as in the Turkish case.

Apart from conflicting discourses of Kemalist modernism and Islamism, the neoliberal economic and social transformations in the post-1980 period have also had a radical impact on producing unconventional patterns of belonging and new definitions of inclusion-exclusion (Benhabib, 1997, p. 8). The coupling of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism by the late 2000s brought conflicting interventions in public and private lives. As a result, the 'distinction between public and the private or that between good and profitable' has been blurred for the subjects (Acar & Altunok, 2013, p. 15) and intensified the uncertainty of the transition, adding more to the feelings of stuckness in everyday life offering them anxious choices.

The creation of neoliberal selves contextualized in a deeply paternalistic and patriarchal society which is also blended with new Islamic identities produced with their own

commodities, education, lifestyles, and media has blurred 'the distinction between religious/traditional and secular/modern' (Özyeğin, 2015, p. 177). As Göle (2000) emphasizes, contrary to what is generally assumed, contemporary Islamism's 'mental strategies may be said to be modernity-oriented' (p. 95). Although challenging the secular state as a political movement, Islamism's cultural significance 'outweighs its political programs' (p. 94). By institutionalizing Islamic banking and communication systems and patterns of consumption, Islam has been reappropriated to modern life, creating 'new Muslim lifestyles and subjectivities' (p. 94), while challenging secular people's life-worlds (p. 110). What we have as a consequence are 'strange identity multiplicities'(Benhabib, 1997) which I believe to be a perfect example of 'noncontemporaneous contemporaneity' (Harootunian, 2007).

Given the troublesome context, my study does not intend to dwell on the over-emphasized cleavages (such as secular-religious, Kurdish-Turkish and Sunni-Alevi) foregrounded by the identity politics paradigm. The dualist logic of these paradigms frequently circulates both in the academic and political discourses overlooks new forms of identities and cleavages that are being formed and deliberately imposed by the ruling power. As in the case of JDP's victimhood rhetoric mentioned above, new forms of affective attachments, identifications, and unconventional patterns of belonging display themselves in new divisions and identities, leading to further polarizations to the existing ones.[22] Besides, identities cannot be reduced to a single category of ethnicity, religion, or religious sect without ignoring other significant categories like gender, sex, and class, all of which have a share in the construction of subject position and self-understanding. Following Kathleen

[22] For an interesting article on white Turk-black Turk dichotomy see: Arat-Koç, S. (2018). Culturalizing politics, hyper-politicizing 'culture': 'white' vs. 'black turks' and the making of authoritarian populism in Turkey. *Dialectical Anthropology*, *42*(4), 391–408. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-018-9500-2.

Stewart (2007), approaching ordinary lives as intersection points affected not only from large-scale events or 'high politics', but also by all 'potentialities arriving from elsewhere.' (Ashcraft, 2017, p. 45) demands locating this study within a broader comprehension of politics that assumes everyday lives as the main scene of politics and power (Çınar, 2005).

Gaining new insights entails an analysis more attuned to how the public and private and personal/individual and collective are integrated, through which crises and anxieties are unfolded. Moving beyond such dualisms is also necessary to understand how individuals intersubjectively negotiate their ways through the crisis in their ordinary lives. Intersubjectivity is a critically crucial notion for this study since the competing and conflicting narratives emerge as well as competing subject-positions emerge intersubjectively. Particularly intersubjective relations in ordinary lives are more effective than ideological structures and identities in shaping the social life experiences of individuals and communities. Thus, as Berlant asserted, ordinary lives are the 'exemplary laboratories' for understanding the unfolding anxieties and crisis of the modern subject as felt and experienced alongside the competing narratives of the 'modern' national self (Berlant 2011a, p. 54).

CHAPTER IV

TURKISH CINEMA AND ANXIOUS BELONGING

IV.1. A SHORT HISTORY OF TURKISH CINEMA (1890-1990)

Cinema arrived to the Ottoman Empire with the screening of the Lumiere Brother's film *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* in 1896. The first cinema theatres were opened in Istanbul, mostly by minorities and foreigners, starting in 1908. According to scholars, the first Turkish film was *The Demolition of the Russian Monument St. Stephen*, a documentary made by army officer Fuat Uzkınay in 1914 (Mutlu, 2007, p. 75). While other documentaries were shot before Uzkınay's film, most of them were not included within the history of Turkish Cinema since they were either made by non-Muslims or filmmakers whose identities were unknown (Mutlu, 2007, p. 80). Although the first film screening took place as early as 1896, filmmaking did not develop much until the end of the Second World War.

The years between 1922 and 1939 in Turkish Cinema are defined as the 'Theatre Artists' Period' or the 'Muhsin Ertuğrul Period.' Muhsin Ertuğrul, the founding father of Turkish Cinema, was the Istanbul City Theatres Director. Most of the films were made as adaptations of foreign and domestic plays in which 'a theatrical atmosphere was felt' (Hayır, 2014, p. 810). The Theatre Artists period has been criticized mainly for not reflecting the reality of people's lives and the social-political context. According to Celal Hayır (2014), 'Muhsin Ertuğrul tried to catch the atmosphere of the extensive modernization process in the political arena in Turkey and to transfer it to the level of cinema', but his theatrical background hindered his efforts in creating a cinematic language and narrative (p. 810). For many film scholars, cinema during Ertuğrul's tenure disclosed the authoritarian hegemony in terms of what was going to be filmed and what the audience would watch.

The years between 1939 and 1950 are defined as a transition period of Turkish Cinema since it was a developmental era for Yeşilçam (Green Pine) Cinema, the commercial Turkish film industry.[23] It is less known but is indeed a significant period of Turkish Cinema. The introduction of dubbing, reduced government taxes, and the screening of Egyptian films were significant developments that took place in this period and are still contributing to today's cinema.

Egyptian films had an overwhelming impact on Turkish Cinema, especially in the formation of melodramatic modality and genre. The government's cautious attitude towards European Cinema based on fears of encouraging fascist and/or communist propaganda in the country urged the film companies to import American and Egyptian films (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 22). Due to their socio-cultural, religious and historical commonalities, Turkish audiences showed an incredible interest in the Egyptian films. However, at this time, the widespread attraction to Arabic movies concerned the single party government. As a result, in parts of the country that are geographically close to Arabic countries, such as East and Southeastern Anatolia, the Egyptian films were banned. The censorship continued until 1957. During these years Turkish filmmakers started to produce 'vernacularized versions of the Egyptian movies' (Berktaş, 2013, p. 386). For some film scholars, Egyptian cinema was one of the factors that obstructed Turkish Cinema from developing its own authentic style and cinematic language. However, for others such as Savaş Arslan (2011), the Egyptian films made it possible to produce 'economically viable homegrown popular films' (p. 10).

The 1950s witnessed a radical change with a new generation of directors and filmmakers. Some new young generation filmmakers—such as Ömer Lutfi Akad, Metin Erksan and Memduh ün, Halit Refiğ, Ertem Göreç, Feyzi Tuna, Erdoğan Tokatlı, and Duygu Sağıroğlu—started a national film movement following the model of Italian neo-realism.

[23] Yeşilçam (green pine) cinema takes its name from a street of Beyoğlu Istanbul, in which various film companies were opened.

However, those filmmakers had to postpone their projects until the end of the oppressive Democrat party era, which imposed extreme censorship (Daldal, 2013, p. 184). Nevertheless, their films were the first steps taken towards the birth of Yeşilçam Cinema.

Yeşilçam Cinema started to grow economically and artistically in the 1950s, producing mostly commercial ‘genre’ films until the late 1980s (Daldal, 2013). According to Engin Ayça, the evolution of the popular cinema of Yeşilçam shows parallels with the Democrat Party’s coming to power in 1946. Democrat Party and Yeşilçam cinema were born in the same socio-political era, as a reaction to the single party and the hegemony of the Muhsin Ertuğrul period of cinema (Atam & Görücü, 1994, p. 45). According to Ayça, cinema followed the line of populism in a similar vein to DP’s populist politics (Atam & Görücü, 1994).

During the period starting in the 1950s and ending in the 1970s, the quality of the films developed significantly. Turkish Cinema transformed into a viable commercial sector by finding the economic means to reach audiences in rural Anatolian cities. The production mode overwhelmingly relied on a regional distribution system. The regional distributors, who guarantee the screenings of films, gave filmmakers orders about what to film. Although this system created great economic opportunities for filmmakers to increase film production, it also negatively affected the development of Turkish Cinema. The films produced were mostly cliché popular films. However, the 1960s are still qualitatively and quantitatively considered the golden years of Turkish Cinema (Erkılıç, 2003, pp. 90–97).

Besides the economic developments of the 1960s, the so-called progressive Constitution introduced after the 1960 coup d’état provided more freedoms for filmmakers to focus on societal problems. This has led to a movement of social realism in cinema. Filmmakers reflected upon societal problems and ‘the relationship of intellectuals to and alienation from society, the decadent lifestyle of the bourgeoisie, and everyday problems of

society' (Hayır, 2014, p. 813). As Aslı Daldal (2013) suggested, the social realist cinema in Turkey was 'deeply embedded in politics' (p. 183). As Daldal explained, 'leftward oriented politics and realist-minimalist aesthetics' well suited the new Turkish filmmakers' concerns who were passionate about creating a national cinematic language (p. 183). However, social realism was a short lived movement (1960-1965) which gradually lost its influence (Hayır, 2014, p. 813).

The Turkish Cinema which enjoyed its golden years during the years of 1960-1970, entered a new era with the military coup of 12 March 1971 (Kalemci & Özen, 2011).[24] As an industry, cinema faced a crisis during the second half of the 1970s due to socio-political and economic conditions. Besides the coup, other factors, such as the political upheavals characterized as right and left-wing clashes in society, oppressive state rule, economic problems, and the advent of TV, contributed to the downfall of Yeşilçam. With the introduction of television, the number of cinema theatres decreased sharply, since TV provided a cheaper source of entertainment for people. But the political turbulence of the era was the dominant factor that kept people in their homes (Kalemci & Özen, 2011, p. 89). The government favors the introduction of TVs since TV kept people busy with entertainment and away from the political street clashes of the 1970s. To cope with the economic crisis, Yeşilçam directors headed towards pornography, arabesque and karate films to attract 'the unemployed, the uneducated, sexually unfulfilled younger generation of men' living in the cities (Atakav, 2013, p. 44). The 1970s cannot be explained by arabesque and sex-comedy films only; films dealing with social issues were also significant in this period. But these films were censored more than sex films. The 1970s witnessed another turning point for cinema with the films of Yılmaz Güney (Hayır, 2014).

[24] Since the film production has increased significantly throughout the 1960s, the decade is referred to as the golden Ages of Turkish cinema. The annual number of films produced increased from 80 (1960s) to 300 in 1970 (Kalemci and Özen, 2011, p. 64).

The 1980s started with the September 12 military coup, followed by a three-year military regime. The military intervention was a turning point for Turkish society, bringing drastic changes in all aspects of life. The September 12 coup is widely accepted as the most violent of the several consecutive military interventions (1960, 1971 and 1980). Thousands were arrested, tortured, or disappeared; many died under custody.[25] Defined as the 'biggest catastrophe of Turkish Republic' by Murat Belge, the 1980 military coup not only traumatized and repressed the individuals but also moved the country towards isolation from the rest of the world. Like all authoritarian systems, the military regime that followed the coup aimed primarily creating a submissive society (Belge, 2000, p. 7 cited in Örmeci, 2010). An atmosphere of apathy, fueled by desperation against the military's violent suppression, caused a moral degradation in society in the post-coup era that dominates to this day. The political and economic crisis experienced in this period also contributed to feelings of disappointment towards state-led modernization promises. 'The strict identification of modernization with westernization' was seen as the main reason behind the era's crisis and pessimism (Keyder, 1997, p. 37).

In the liberal context created by the transition to civilian government brought about by the 1983 elections, the social, political, and economic crisis of the country was responded to by political and economic liberalism promising democratization, civil rights, more freedoms for individual and political identities, as well as economic growth and development (Keyder, 1997). However, this brought society face with the new paradox of rapid economic liberalization coupled with uncompromising and contradicting cultural discourses and identity claims (Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005). Therefore, the 1980s was a period marked not only by the oppression of the military coup but also by an era of contradictions brought about

[25] According to official reports, 650.000 have been detained, 171 died during torture, 49 people were executed; 14.000 people expatriated and 30.000 escaped the country. 12 Eylül darbesinin korkunç bilançosu (2015, May 10). *Birgün.* https://www.birgun.net/haber/12-eylul-darbesinin-korkunc-bilancosu-78576.

by social, economic and political transformations (Suner, 2006; Gürbilek, 1992). New economic actors emerged and became the culture-leading actors of alternative Turkish modernity. The alternate models of modernity that emerged through an articulation of capital with 'the liberal, the Islamic and the conservative' culture substantially challenged the prevalent, mutually exclusive duality of modernity and tradition (Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005, p. 110).

The cinematic discourse of the 1970s, reflecting the social problems of rural people and the urban working class, had evolved towards a more individualistic stance. Alienation, lack of communication, and individual psychological problems became more visible in the films of this period (Ertem, 2014). The depoliticized period of the 1980s witnessed the rise of arabesque films on one side and "female films" on the other. In this era, there were also numerous films narrating stories of the pre-80s terror and the oppressive years of the post-coup era. Hilmi Maktav (2000) described these films as 'intellectual films', since they frequently narrate stories of intellectuals who were disappointed by the military intervention or had given up their ties with left-wing ideology (Maktav, 2000)[26]. However, as he also pointed out, none of these so-called September 12 films dealt directly with the military coup of 1980 (Maktav, 2000). These films were unsuccessful examples of political cinema affected by a melodramatic modality, portraying characters as subjects who are destined to lose: individuals either excluded from society, who have committed suicide, or who take refuge in a self-imposed exile. The films narrate lives in defeat confronted with a deep fatalism, rather than motivating the audience for public opposition to oppression (Maktav, 2000). There is no hope nor incentive for struggle, but an acceptance and apathy since the social concerns of the 1970s, such as solidarity, collectivism and optimism, have given way to individualism,

[26] Some of the films that can be named as coup films are: *Sis* (Zülfü Livaneli/1988), *Prenses* (Sinan Çetin/1986), *Sen Türkülerini Söyle* (Şerif Gören/1986), *Çözülmeler*'in (Yusuf Kurçenli/ 1994), *Ses* (Zeki Ökten/1986), *Bütün Kapılar Kapalıydı* (Memduh Ün/1989), *Bekle Dedim Gölgeye* (Atıf Yılmaz/1990), *Gülün Bittiği Yer* (İsmail Güneş/1999), *Eylül Fırtınası* (Atıf Yılmaz/2000). (Maktav, 2000)

competitiveness, political pessimism, and cynicism (Ertem, 2014, p. 132). Thus, the protagonists of such coup films closely resembled the characters of post-1980s arabesque films whose pains and traumas have been condemned but also sacralized (Maktav 2000).

IV.2. New Turkish Cinema (1990-)

After a long period of crisis, there was a resurgence in Turkish Cinema in the mid-1990s, both in film production and audience's interest in cinema. This revival triggered a major debate on the possibility of a New Turkish Cinema among scholars and critics. However, several concerns were raised over the national aspects, as well as over the features of new filmmaking, would qualify as 'new' to cinema in Turkey.[27] Particularly, the issue of Turkishness was debated extensively which some scholars even proposed to use the term 'New Cinema of Turkey' instead of 'New Turkish Cinema' to refrain from the ethnic and nationalist connotations (Arslan, 2011, p. 19).

The concept of national cinema is inherently problematic for discussing New Turkish Cinema in a current era characterized by tremendous global circulation of people, commodities, and cultures. Parallel with the country's integration into global markets, Turkish Cinema has also entered a 'global cinematic dynamic' in production, distribution and exhibition since the 1990s (Arslan, 2011, p. 246). Within this context, several debates have been raised on defining and situating the new cinema: How can we situate the new directors and their films: as a national cinema, a European cinema or World Cinema?

One of the controversial topics is Eurimages' financial support, which contributed significantly to the revival of cinema in gaining 'familiarity with coproductions, technical aspects, marketing affairs and extended budgets' (Yılmazok, 2010, p. 104). However,

[27] For a detailed discussion see Daldal, A. (2014). The concept of national cinema and the "New Turkish Cinema". In M. Akser & D. Bayrakdar (Eds.), *New cinema, new media: Reinventing Turkish cinema* (pp. 92–111). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Eurimages' support and co-productions raised concerns as to what extent the films could be defined as 'indigenous or national and to what extent they are transnational, universal or non-domestic' (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 89). Although these films gained international recognition and were awarded prizes in international film festivals across the world, some critics were skeptical of the intentions of Eurimages and the international festivals. Some of these films were criticized for representing negative stereotypes of Turkish people and reproducing Orientalist fantasies of the European imagination about the country (p. 93); Eurimages was accused of giving priority to projects which were 'concerned with the infringement of human rights, political tremors and Southeastern [Kurdish] problem' (p. 93). In his arguments on World Cinema, Elsaesser talked about several potential risks, stating that there is always a possibility that the films: by 'conducting a form of auto-ethnography, and promoting a sort of self-exoticization, in which the ethnic, the local or the regional expose themselves, under the guise of self-expression, to the gaze of the benevolent other, with all the consequences that this entails' (Elsaesser, 2005, p. 510).

But as Elsaesser also drew attention to the fact that the co-funded film productions have not been exceptional since the 1990s, and that the present-day auteurs are not evaluated within the limits of national cinema anymore but with how they can successfully communicate the local or national stories to global audiences (2005, p. 491). Asian cinemas of the 1990s serve as a good example by being 'quite self-referentially Asian, while also being quite unselfconsciously part of "world cinema"' (p. 496).

In a similar manner, Levent Yılmazok alleged that although the majority of Eurimages funded films are 'profoundly national in that the stories, the images, the signs, the characters and the context clearly belong to Turkey', they are indeed universal in terms of their stories and cinematic language (2012, p. 91). Deniz Göktürk as well confuted such criticisms by asserting that 'increasing demand to address an audience beyond Turkey, have

strengthened budding discourses of difference, diversity and minority rights in Turkey' which are reflected in New Cinema's 'mission to project a more multicultural and multiethnic picture of Turkish society' (Göktürk, 2002, p.206).

As Elsaesser also emphasized, 'contemporary auteurs feel neither called upon to be "artists" nor to play the role of nationally representative figureheads' (Elsaesser, 2005, p. 491). Likewise, film directors of the new cinema have diverging opinions about their films and how they define themselves. While some directors, such as Barış Pirhasan argued for situating the Turkish films of the 2000s within the framework of European cinema, others reject this idea: Semir Aslanyürek, for example, has stated that: 'None of the films I made belong to a specific nation; they are all human stories' (Yılmazok, 2012, p. 90–91). Likewise, Nuri Bilge Ceylan opposed the idea of a national identity of cinema:

> I don't think it relevant to argue according to the nationality of films. For me, the personality of an artist is more determinative than his native country. In fact, all is a matter of sensibility. So I find it difficult for me to speak of the Turkish Cinema as national cinematography. (cited in Deslandes &, 2012, p. 89, note 6)

The Europeanness of New Turkish Cinema is a long-standing debate informed by deeper complexities due to Turkey's problematic positioning of its identity vis-à-vis Europe. Besides the impact of Hollywood films and Egyptian melodramas on Turkish Cinema, filmmakers have always been interested in European art cinema since the mid-1960s (Behlil, 2012, p. 509). Directors such as Metin Erksan, Ömer Kavur and Ali Özgentürk were prominent directors inspired by European filmmaking and defined themselves as European filmmakers (p. 510). The impact of Russian and Hungarian cinematic style on post-1990s art-house Turkish Cinema is also a factor widely accepted by film scholars. For instance, Andrei Tarkovsky is a well-known inspiration for directors such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Semih Kaptanoğlu, Yeşim Ustaoğlu, and Tayfun Pirselimoğlu, whereas Béla Tarr has obvious

influence on some the films of Nuri Bilge, Ceylan, Zeki Demirkubuz, and Ümit Ünal (p. 509-514).

The emergence of diasporic directors such as Fatih Akın and Ferzan Özpetek has been another hotly debated topic in film scholarship. As Ayça Tunç's study on the Turkish-German directors revealed, the reception of their films in Turkey is shaped dominantly by the country's concerns, such as 'negotiations with the EU' and 'Turkish national identity and pride', both of which reveal self-perceptions of inferiority to Europe (Cox, 2012, p. 170-1). While German media praised Turkish-German directors with expressions like 'the new German cinema is Turkish', (p. 161) Turkish media has persistently emphasized their Turkishness and refused their hyphenated identity (p. 166). However, as Cox's analysis also demonstrated, these directors are seen as representatives of the Turkish nation and 'cultural ambassadors' of their country of origin by international media (Cox, 2012, pp 165), imposing a burden of representation on the directors as mentioned in the introduction chapter of this study.

Situating the new cinema within national, European, or transnational frames of reference is an ongoing debate that cannot be covered comprehensively within the limits of this study. Therefore, I tried to briefly shed light on the different viewpoints on the identity and position of the New Turkish Cinema. Also, as mentioned previously, defining the identity of Turkish Cinema, particularly concerning how to locate the new cinema is intimately associated with the questions of the country's identity and its position via Europe.

After this brief overview of the debates on the identity of New Turkish Cinema, I want to proceed with the transformation Turkish Cinema has undergone during the past three decades. In this period, cinema developed in two different but parallel ways: popular cinema

and auteur (art/independent) cinema (Suner, 2006, p. 33)[28]. While a group of directors followed 'earlier filmmaking habits, themes and styles,' others introduced 'new visions, aesthetic concerns, and a critical treatment of Yeşilçam (Dadak, 2011, p. 6). Popular films adapted from Yeşilçam genres (melodrama, comedy) contributed to the revival of Turkish Cinema by attracting the audience back to the cinema halls.[29] Auteur films did not have box office success like the popular films, but they gained national and international acclaim with their directors' experiments of novel visions, aesthetics and self-reflexivity.

According Zeynep Tül Akbal Süalp, the post-1980's atmosphere of fear and anxiety has restored the forms and aesthetics of representation, and new film directors have introduced alternative tracks and genres of filmmaking (Süalp, 2014). The films made, particularly after the mid-90s, show not only diverse but also conflicting qualities. While some of these films 'seem to be significantly apolitical, individualistic, self oriented', others were searching for 'answers to the silent tension of a loosened societal and themounting of nationalistic, fascistic "post-" times' (Süalp, 2009a, p. 222). Süalp defined this first group as 'outsider' cinema which stems not from the character's 'origin of geography, nationality, region and/ or their ethnic and even religious identities or boundaries' (Süalp, 2009a, p. 223) but originated in the directors' attempt to detach him/herself from the traumatic past (Süalp, 2014, p. 239). These directors explicitly 'distanced themselves from conflicts centered around class, society and gender issues and reproduced a kind of "philosophizing" of the culture of the glorification of the lumpen attitudes toward life and of sensations of pure "nothingness"' (Süalp, 2009a, p. 228). In order to understand this glorification of wounded male sensitivity

[28] The film directors of 1990s are not the first auteur directors of Turkish cinema. There have been various auteurs directors such as Halit Refiğ, Metin Erksan, Memduh Ün, Lütfü Akad, Duygu Sağıroğlu, Yılmaz Güney, Ömer Kavur and Ali Özgentürk who made films before the 1990s. However, this period is preferred to be called as auteur cinema by many scholars (Suner, 2006, p. 43).

[29] Bandit (Eşkiya-Yavuz Turgul, 1996) is followed by several examples such as *Vizontele* (Yılmaz Erdoğan, 2000), *Vizontele Tuuba* (Yılmaz Erdoğan, 2004), *Babam ve Oğlum* (Çağan Irmak, 2005), *Gönül Yarası* (Yavuz Turgul, 2005), *Beynelminel* (Süreyya Önder, 2006) and *Beyaz Melek* (Mahsun Kırmızıgül, 2007) which increased the number of Turkish cinema audience (Suner, 2006).

in new cinema, Süalp pointed out to the 'male silent majorities' created by radical changes in the economic conditions and social-cultural structure after coups (Süalp, 2009a, p. 228). It is vital to realize how the coup and the military regime that followed have wounded and silenced any kind of opposition, particularly the leftist resistance, including the intellectuals and the artists in the country (Kaftan, 2000).

According to Süalp, this repressive and traumatic atmosphere of the post-1980s made way for two different styles in filmmaking: 'rural escape films' and 'arabesque-noir' films (Süalp 2014, p. 242).[30] In this period, rural Anatolian towns where characters find refuge became the preferred locations for new directors. Some of these productions, such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan's films can be interpreted as the director's self-reflections on his/her 'homesickness,' which 'goes together with a feeling of displacement or being uprooted with a sense of belonging somewhere else' (Kaim, 2011, p. 100). On the other hand, however, the countryside breathes its own boredom, slowness, and sense of confinement for the characters who try to escape from the suffocating urban conditions (Özselçuk, 2015). Indeed as Ayşe Kaim pointed out, the countryside exists as more than a cinematic space location but rather embodies a 'mode of feeling' (Kaim 2011, p. 101), a condition of uncertainty, vagueness, and confinement.

The characters in these films frequently carry an internal sense of boredom and provinciality wherever they go. They are even gripped with a 'provincial gloominess,' revealing an existential experience of a outsiderness, a confinement, an internal entrapment and being stuck in a labyrinth in which everything, even time, repeats itself (Gürbilek, 1994). Thus, escaping to the countryside does not yield a solution to the characters' issues of belonging or rootlessness. As Suner acknowledged, these films do not attempt to solve the

[30] Several examples of arabesque-noir films can be named as: Zeki Demirkubuz's Yazgı (Destiny, 2001), Itiraf (Confession, 2001), Bekleme Odası, (Waiting room, 2003) and Nuri Bilge Ceylan's İklimler (Climates, 2006) and Üç Maymun (Three Monkeys, 2008). The rural melancholy films are: Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Bir Zamanlar Anadolu'da* (*Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, 2011) and *Kış Uykusu* (*Winter Sleep*, 2014) (Süalp, 2014).

paradox of belonging; instead, they invite us to ‘face, to live with and accept the paradox’ (Suner, 2006, p. 165).

By comparison, popular cinema of the same period glorified provincial life. Going back to childhood times and home/lands was a way of coping with the conflicts of modernization, post-traumatic subjecthood, and issues of a semi-paralyzed society. The countryside is not portrayed as a space of total deprivation or despair anymore but possesses ‘its own richness, opportunities, and life culture’ (Suner, 2006, p. 55-56). Thus, according to Suner, these ‘popular nostalgic films’ reflect the paradoxical characteristics of the province not just in terms of deprivation and melancholy, but also sincerity, enthusiasm and cheerfulness (Suner, 2006, p. 58-60). For her, the nostalgic imagination pervading these films reflects the ‘societal childhood period’ (p. 73), allegorizing ‘a pre-traumatized past, a national childhood, or a prehistory of innocence’ (Başçı, 2017, p. 54).

Childhood is a pervasively used metaphor in Turkish Cinema and Turkish cultural and political thought that reveals the victimhood psyche of ‘the collective anxieties and desires initiated by modernization’ (Arslan, 2005, p. 44). Since Turkish audiences empathized mostly with the ‘incapacitated, debilitated, victimized characters who becomes an object of other’s decisions and practically behaves like a child in grown up’s world’ (Pehlivan, 2007, p. 55), the ‘victimized child’ became a well-known cliché figure in Turkish melodramatic tradition with which the Turkish audience mostly identify themselves. According to Gürbilek (2001), the trope of being ‘locked up in childhood forever’ conveys the feelings of victimhood, destitution, lack, and being subjected to injustice (cited in Arslan, 2005, p.44). The image of an innocent and downtrodden child image discloses how society not only observes the prints of its powerlessness but also tries to ‘create its Eastern honor and transfer this powerlessness into a virtue in terms of pride and dignity’ (Arslan, 2005, p. 44). Likewise, in Yeşilçam melodramas, ‘being thrown into the cruel world, feeling like an orphan who does not know

where to go, what to do in this world' has been a dominant theme (Arslan, 2005, p. 42, cited in Pehlivan, 2007, p. 32). In these melodramas, the language of victimhood was the only language of expression.

Although Yeşilçam cinema declined by the end of the 1980s, tropes of childhood resurrected in new cinema were accompanied by conventional melodramatic formats (Başçı, 2017). Especially in popular films dealing with the traumas of the 1980 coup, the child figure 'expresses a constellation of ideas about the nation and its citizenry—the nation's complicated, trauma-ridden history in contrast with its future capacity' (Başçı, 2017, p. 23). Thus, following the same tradition, the use of childhood themes, this time coupled with pathos constructed by a nostalgic desire, became a 'defense mechanism of the melodramatic imagination' of the new cinema (Pehlivan, 2007, p. 80), showing parallelism with the nostalgia culture that has been growing since the 1990s (Suner, 2006).

This 'victimhood' psyche is also crucial for understanding the 'negatively constructed subject' in Yeşilçam and post-Yeşilçam melodramas (Pehlivan, 2007, p.76). Drawing upon Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto (1993), Suner pointed out the negatively constructed subject as an extensively used character in Yeşilçam melodramas of the 1950s and 1960s. She also emphasized that melodrama continues its existence as a 'cinematic modality' or imagination of the post-1980s Turkish Cinema. A negatively constructed subject can also be found in several films of the New Turkish Cinema. Besides the popular films of the 1990s, arthouse directors such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Zeki Demirkubuz reproduced the negatively constructed subject in their films (Suner, 2006). Suner defined the negatively constructed subject as an individual rendered passive and powerless by the radical changes brought about by modernity in non-western countries:

> In contrast to an active subject who can make choices, take decisions, take action and orient the events, the negatively constructed subject refers to a passive position of

individuals who are manipulated by the events. In Asian cinemas, through a negative subject position, films dramatize the collective anxieties caused by the rapid societal transformation of modernization (Suner, 2006, p. 187).

Her argument finds its reflection in ‘male melodramas’ of the new cinema, defined alternately as ‘weepy male’ films by Süalp, (2009a, p. 228) and as ‘masculine melodramas’ by Arslan (2011, p. 254). As opposed to Yeşilçam melodramas, which mostly centered on the victimization and suffering of women, new cinema turned its gaze towards the crisis of male characters who represent the marginalized and unnoticed male population living in urban areas. The films frequently narrate the stories of ‘depotentiated and passive male characters’ in an obvious melodramatic modality (Akbulut, 2011, p. 162). Demirkubuz’s films, for instance, feature a male protagonist who is not capable of solving problems or even staying apathetic to them (Akbulut, 2011). In his films, however, male suffering is not only caused by external reasons, but also is embedded in inner dilemmas like ‘existential anxieties, faithlessness and even sensations of nothingness’ (p. 162).

Süalp defined such films as ‘arabesque-noir films’ as they are frequently characterized by ‘a self-pitying, arabesque atmosphere, and it mainly employs expressionist poetics to allegorize social conditions and survival strategies’ (2014, p. 240). For her, these films blended film noir and melodrama with an arabesque sentimentality (Süalp, 2009b). The melodramatic stories of ordinary crimes such as domestic violence or crimes of passion are portrayed with ‘an extrinsic and distant cinematic narrative’ characterized by an arabesque atmosphere (Erkılıç & Erkılıç, 2011, p. 330). The New Turkish Cinema mirroring the ‘banality of everyday life’ not only pictured ‘the new faces of poverty through harsh realism, but they also combine melodramatic stories of the poor world with an arabesque atmosphere that almost absorbs the viewer into a whirlpool’ (p. 329).

It should also be mentioned that some scholars classify some films of New Turkish Cinema such as Demirkubuz's films as Turkish neo-noir cinema portraying 'a universe of desperation, violence and revenge, of hatred without motivation and unremitting fear of the future' (Özdüzen, 2014, p. 78). Although Demirbuz does not deal directly with known social crisis in his films, the social critique in his films is mostly raised by 'the nihilistic and dark atmosphere created in these films and their engagement with crime and alienation' (p. 79). Frequently, the noir reflections of tension, fear and crime are not inherently connected only with urban space: the interior spaces are also treated as characters of equal importance in these films, in which violence, crime and chaos are manifested. The excessive use of constricted and suffocating interiors like 'gloomy apartments or hotel rooms' are the main spaces of his films that breathe a sense of claustrophobia to the viewer (Suner, 2006, p. 175).

As obvious from the examples above, both popular and auteur cinema's continuation of melodrama begs the question of the newness of Turkish Cinema. Melodrama discloses the bare anxieties 'of a modern life in which people found themselves "helpless and unfriended" in a postsacred, postfeudal, "disenchanted" world of moral ambiguity and material vulnerability' (Singer, 2001, p. 132). As Brooks commented, melodrama is not only a 'moralistic drama' but 'the drama of morality', offering people a redeeming faith in coping with the anxieties of modern life (Brooks 1995, 20). Yeşilçam cinema likewise reflected the anxieties about westernization and modernization mostly in a melodramatic modality. However, as Pehlivan (2007) argued, the melodramatic imagination of Yeşilçam cinema established a 'more paradoxical and more hysterical' relationship with modernization (p. 2). These melodramas present two faces, one praising westernization, the other revealing the anxiety of losing the authenticity of culture. Melodramatic imagination in Yeşilçam conveyed 'modernity as a desirable state' but paradoxically highlighted its dangers in terms of social degeneration and losing the 'traditional virtues and spirituality' (Mutlu, 2010, p. 420).

Melodrama in Yeşilçam and resurrected forms in the new cinema has diverging apprehension and reflection on the anxieties and desires prompted by the experience of modernization. Melodrama is suited for expressing the effects of the radical transformations that occurred in the country since the 1980s (Akbulut, 2011), but the melodramatic imagination functioned as an uncanny and terrorizing factor rather than promising 'happy endings' (Pehlivan, 2007, p.68). Optimism and belief in the happiness offered by melodramatic fantasy in Yeşilçam are completely lost and replaced by a deep melancholy and excess of nostalgia in the new cinema. Thus as Savaş Arslan argued, melodrama that has resurrected after 1990 can be seen as 'a 'revivalist' genre, offering the melodramatic search for a lost authenticity' (2011, p. 253-4).

CHAPTER V

BEYOND THE HILL: PARANOIA AS AN IMAGINARY SOLUTION

Beyond the Hill (2012) is Emin Alper's first feature film. The film received various awards, such as the Caligari Film Prize from the Berlin International Film Festival and Best Film in the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. The film takes place in a rural Anatolian town and presents the story of a family reunion that turns into chaos. Alper devotes critical attention to how a community is engulfed by collective fear and paranoia when unfortunate events take place, including a murder. The film tackles several issues of masculinity, militarism, and enemy construction, putting the community and family relations at the center (Konuşlu, 2013). Before focusing on these matters, I will briefly introduce the characters to offer insights into the emotional trajectory of the story, which terminates in a collective frenzy.

Faik, one of the lead characters, is a retired forester who lives in a farmhouse inherited from his father. He is an authoritarian man who is most of the time aggressive and oppressive towards others. As the head of the family and owner of the land, he acts as the sole patriarchal power. Faik is visited by his son Nusret and two grandsons, Zafer and Caner for the holidays. Nusret is a teacher and a widower who lives with his two sons in the city. He is a middle-aged man who could not realize his father's ideals and could not become a strong father to his sons. We can observe the ongoing conflict between Nusret and his father throughout the film. He does not have the courage to face his problems, nor can he stand against his father's dominant manipulative power. He avoids confronting Faik and prefers to witness his cruelties silently. However, he also abuses power just like his father, especially towards Meryem, going as far as raping her.

The older grandson, Zafer, is a traumatized ex-soldier. He is suffering from post-traumatic stress accompanied by hallucinations. His delusions bespeak his military service

experience in a combat role in the ongoing war in southeastern Turkey. He is the only one who seems unconcerned with the conflict with Yörüks. However, the physical characteristics of the landscape and the others' talks about people hiding behind the hills trigger his war memories and induce hallucinations. 'Zafer' ironically means 'Victory,' although he is a victim. Apart from being traumatized in the civil war, he is killed at the end.

Mehmet is a farmworker who has been living with his family on Faik's land for years. He resents Faik for his patronizing and humiliating attitude. However, he keeps silent about Faik's oppressive behavior without any power and choice, even though he is suspicious of Faik's interest in his wife. He also keeps silent as Faik has promised him that his family would inherit the land after his death. Although Mehmet seems to comply with his authority, he takes his revenge on the land and the trees—by hitting them with a stick—as if the land represents Faik's body for Mehmet (Konuşlu, 2013).

Meryem is a silent female character who is not seen much around the group of men. She is the only one who objects to Faik's paranoid thoughts about Yörüks, but she is not taken seriously by anyone. She is abused both by Faik and Nusret. Even when Nusret rapes her, she does not tell anyone and continues the next day as nothing has happened. Mehmet and Meryem have a son, Süleyman, who prefers to stay alone with his dog on the hills. He acts like a nomad, spending time alone on the hills rather than socializing with others. He is well aware of how Faik abuses and oppresses his father. Nevertheless, he resents Mehmet's passivity and does not respect him since he witnesses Mehmet's insincerity towards Faik.

V.I. FREE-FLOATING ANXIETIES

The film starts with Faik's tumbling out of bed with the sound of a gunshot. The scene immediately portrays Faik's obsessive worry about the presence of Yörüks at the plateau. We see him constantly complaining that Yörüks have been trespassing on his land

and that their goats are harming the young trees and crops. He blames Yörüks for everything. Finally, his arbitrary use of power as a landowner reaches the point of slaughtering one of the Yörük's goats grazing on his land to feast with his family despite everyone's rejection. As the film unfolds, Caner shoots Süleyman's dog, but Faik blames Yörüks. When Süleyman shoots Nusret, having caught him raping his mother Meryem, Faik again accuses them. Bizzare and shocking events happen one after another, but nobody expects the ultimate shock: Zafer's murder.

Apart from the events that drifted the community into chaos, the tense relations between the characters are noticeable from the beginning. Several early scenes featuring the existing conflicts and tensions masterfully set the tense and anxious atmosphere that will give way to growing paranoia. Events taking place one after another and finalizing in a tragedy transform the ordinary for the community 'into something they can no longer presume' (Berlant, 2008c, p. 5). The 'ordinary' becomes the space where several 'forces and histories circulate and become "ready to hand"' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 9). Not knowing how to deal with the emerging events and refusing to take responsibility for their actions, the men form solidarity around paranoia for adjusting 'to the pressures of the emergent new ordinariness' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 202).

Yörüks are physically invisible throughout the film, but they significantly affect the story. Even their absence is what intensifies the progress of the plot (Mahfouz, 2012). Yörüks as the 'unseen' or 'absent' characters serve as the 'proximate cause,' in other words, as 'driving forces' of the dramatic structure just like 'the absent figures in our individual and collective lives often have similar causative functions' (Mahfouz, 2012, p. 407). Although Alper maintains the suspense till the end, his primary concern is not to evoke suspicion in the spectator as to whether a crisis exists with the Yörüks or not. In my opinion, he instead draws attention to how clinging to the crisis becomes a solution for the characters who cannot deal

with their internal conflicts. Declaring a crisis, as in this story, is not simply making 'something out of nothing', but is based on 'real events, facts, or figures' like the shooting of the dog, Nusret, and finally, the murder of Zafer (Ahmed, 2004, p. 132). An announcement of a security crisis justifies 'new forms of security, border policing, and surveillance' within the community (p. 132). The chain of events transformed Yörüks into a 'fetish object' forming 'the grounds for declarations of war against' them (p. 132–133).

V.II. PARANOIA: SURROUNDED BY IMAGINARY ENEMIES

The film presents how nurturing paranoia by authority offers an appealing solution for responding to the new ordinariness and even becomes a public fantasy shared by the community. It uncovers how mounting anxieties give birth to paranoia and turn into a structure of feeling that shapes the collective consciousness. *Beyond the Hill* is a critical commentary on how paranoid narratives instrumentalized by authority can become a convenient answer, an alternative scenario to cope with the emerging uncertainties and the internal conflicts of a community. It highlights how paranoid thinking offers a coherent explanation to events when the subjects are overwhelmed by a crisis and adjusting to the emergent is beyond their knowledge or skills. A story of a family gathering like a micro-cosmos discloses the myriad ways of paranoid rationality. When fueled with conspiracy, paranoia can easily construct a shield to cover undesirable pathological desires, thoughts, and beliefs of the authority figure and the participants in this fantasy (Glass, 2006).

Faik's constant concern with the Yörüks, obsessively blaming them for everything, positions them as the enemy in the coming frenzy of paranoia. In fact, Yörüks are fictionalized 'objects of fear' to avoid the free-floating anxieties stemming from insecurities, antagonisms, disagreements, and the masculinity crisis. Reminding Rene Girard's (1979) well-known theory, when 'internal tensions, feuds, and rivalries pent up within the community' reach a point of crisis, the community in the films needs a scapegoat (p. 8). The

conflict within the community necessitates finding a ‘sacrificeable victim’ to direct the collective aggression to prevent the violence to ‘vented on its own members’ (p. 8). The scapegoating mechanism ensures the protection of ‘the entire community from its own violence, it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itsef’ (p. 8). In the same spirit, the dysfunctional community in *Beyond the Hill* scapegoats the Yörüks to cover up the inner conflicts, but as it turns out, in the end, the members of the community are sacrificed.

No Yörük is seen approaching or trespassing the land during the film. Recalling Sara Ahmed’s argument, the group’s fear is not stimulated by the ‘an object’s approach’; rather, the mounting anxiety generates its own object of fear, in this case, the Yörüks (Ahmed, 2014, p. 66). The anxiety of the community is what ‘create[s] the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries’, allowing them to ‘distinguish an inside and an outside’ (Ahmed, 2014, p. 10). As Ahmed argued, ‘fear and anxiety create the very effect of “that which I am not,” through the very affect of turning away from an object, which nevertheless threatens as it passes by or is displaced’ (2004, p. 127–128). The fear in *Beyond the Hill* is not actually about defending the existing borders. On the contrary, fear produces borders and creates the objects of fear that the subjects distinguish themselves from. As Ahmed pointed out, fear, particularly hate ‘align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments’ (p. 119). For instance, the mounting hatred toward the ‘collective object of hate’ builds and strengthens feelings of togetherness and fellowship. Such negative feelings like fear and hate not only stick to particular bodies, but they become the emotions that align and stick the bodies together (Ahmed, 2004). Likewise, at the end of the film, Faik’s paranoia becomes a common imagination shared by the others as the ‘truth’ as they believe, as ‘a matter of life and death’ bonding six men into a small army to fight back against the Yörüks (Ahmed, 2004, p. 133).

So, what does the land beyond the borders of Faik's property represent to him and the others? Who is beyond the hills and why did Alper choose Yörüks as an imaginary enemy? According to Hüseyin Köse, beyond these hills is a space of 'void fantasized as the space of the Other', whose existence is also fictionalized (Köse, 2016, p. 131). Yörüks are the primary source of 'ontological insecurity for the community and the nation', as they are nomads who continuously change places (p. 133). Since nomads have no feelings of belonging to any place and no sense of attachment to any social order or established social structure, they are viewed as threatening (p. 133).

Alper's choice of nomads resonates with Nikos Papastergiadis' concept of 'ambient fear', which powerfully underpins the apparent mounting of paranoia in the film's microcosm. His concept of 'ambient fear' points out how a conventional understanding of fear has broadened and transformed into 'a kind of dread that has become so widespread that its sources appear to be both unlocatable and ubiquitous' (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 22). Rather than being triggered by a definable source of threat, ambient fear emanates from the idea that indiscernible threats and invisible enemies surround us. Fear is experienced as an 'anticipation of the unimaginable', which is uncomprehensible within the boundaries of common reasoning (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 35). Consequently, creating a generalized state of anxiety, ambient fears float freely among the infinite possibilities seeking an object to stick to, as Ahmed commented (2004, p. 125). In other words, the community attempts to resolve the diffused sense of fear and uncertainty by 'figurative construction of the enemy' (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 33). However, as apparent in Alper's film, the Yörüks are not visible outsiders. Rather, they embody a 'more intimate and less predictable figure, such as the invisible "sleeper"', since this faceless and unpredictable enemy transformed into 'a vague monstrous figure who is void of any human agency' with whom a negotiable subject (p. 28).

The fantasy created by Faik transformed into a reality for this community; even in a way, it provided them an answer to the questions of 'who we are' (Hirvonen, 2017, 257). Indeed, the fantasy of an enemy eliminates the existing conflicts within the group, re-invented the community by distributing 'positions and forms of participation at the same time as it produces self-evident facts' (p. 257). In psychoanalytical terms, this correlates to Lacan's idea of anxiety: when the individual is entrapped in an ambivalent state 'also discovering the paralysing and dreaded sense of lack' creates a fantasy, 'a new found preparedness to act against the danger of the other' (Papastergiadis, 2006, p. 432). As we also see in the film, the dread of the lack drives these men towards 'self-righteous acts of violence' (p. 432). However, since Yörüks are not locatable and predictable to the community, as objects of fantasy they will never fill the 'ontological void' but continuously trigger the desire to overcome these anxieties (Gündoğdu, 2014).

Faik, as the paranoid subject, 'identifies with the rigid formation of the nation' (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 19). Paradoxically, however, such an identification can only come into being through the subjects' 'voluntary confinement within boundaries that depend on the projection and exclusion of the other, the enemy'; something which is apparent in Faik's behavior (p. 19). With the urge to protect the land and control the community, he attempts to construct an environment where he thinks he can regulate everything and everyone, but this only adds to his paranoia. Since it is not always possible to maintain such control one's environment in reality, even with the 'process of pacifying the other,' the vicious cycle of paranoia generates and perpetuates a 'the fear of retaliation, hence anxiety, and hence more aggressiveness' (Polan, 1986, p. 75 cited in Fradley, 2013, p. 76). Faik's paranoid imagination about the Yörüks, at one point, gets out of his control and transforms into a self-destructive frenzy for the community.

Paranoia of the group does not develop as a response to an expected event; rather, their anxieties are directed onto the Yörüks, in the sense of 'an outward propulsion or displacement' (Ngai, 2005, p. 210). The construction of an enemy essentially functions for defining and preserving 'a unitary identity (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 17). However, as the film also questions, reproducing dichotomies 'between self and other, or nonself, or enemy' becomes a vicious cycle between paranoia and identity formation (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 17). As Bersani explained, 'subjective being and a world of monolithic otherness' confront one another in paranoid thinking (1989, p. 109). The self establishes its superior qualities comparatively against the wrong or criminal qualities projected on the Other, as in the case of Faik's paranoid imagination projecting all the qualities of barbarity, inhumanity and criminality onto the Yörüks. The creation of us vs. them dualism based on the imagined opposition between the self and an enemy is a common thread in the paranoid mechanism, which manifests itself in Alper's film.

In these terms, *Beyond the Hill* also problematizes Papastergiadis' argument on the paradoxical nature of enemy construction. Although the offenses attributed to the Yörüks remain invisible throughout the film, the figure of the enemy in terms of what they can be capable of is exaggerated with each tragic event. They are villainized in a manner that strips them of their humanity, legitimizing taking violent action against them. The community views the violence exercised against them necessary for self-defence, as a 'justified response towards the bestial and placeless state of the other' (Papastergiadis, 2005, p. 14). Faik legitimizes his unlawful, self-righteous aggression towards the Yörüks by saying: 'you can't have Yörüks do anything if you don't intimidate them'. Thus, through exaggeration and trivialization of the enemy simultaneously, the group legitimizes their 'right to aggressivity' and does not much perceive the extent of the violence exercised by them (Papastergiadis, 2005, p. 12). Such an imagination underpins and informs the 'denial of the possibility that the

enemy is more similar to us than we could bear to consider' (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 28). The film forcefully demands such recognition of the monstrous qualities and capacity for cruelty and wrongdoing that we all share. As Alper stated, 'the film deals mainly with a collective evil that is finely woven by characters grounded in their hypocrisy and weakness in confronting their fears' (Bora, 2012). Nevertheless, the film is not a shallow criticism of the universality of good and evil. Alper questions evil-doing that stems from a state of paranoia grounded on 'collective feelings of insecurity and the role inertia played in this end' (Büte, 2013).

Apart from the exploitation of paranoid thinking by the authority figure, Alper's film also raises questions about why individuals are moved by such rationality. Following Sara Ahmed, we should be asking 'what do emotions do' and how do they 'produce affective responses' (20014, p. 4)? As we witness in the film, the other male members of the group paradoxically feel both admiration and inferiority towards Faik. Their fearful powerlessness in the face of his authority seems to incite them to comply with his fantasy. However, such an explanation offers a limited perspective to fully understand the affective intensities of particular emotions that shape our 'cultural politics or world making' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 12). We need to apprehend how paranoia functions not only through coercion but also with other mechanisms of consent and voluntary participation. We need to grasp the affective investments of individuals in the reproduction of this fantasy and what kind of promises are expected in return (Ahmed, 2014). In each incident following one another, all the men (except Zafer) start to share Faik's suspicions, though they had been critical of them initially. The insincerity within the community and family, as we observe, underlies the emotional context for creating an enemy as the best solution to 'cover the real problems inside and stay silent about the real wrongdoers within the group itself' (Susam, 2013, p. 41).

The other members' participation in Faik's conspiracies and paranoia 'assembles them under the same roof, homogenizing the ideals that define the community' (Gön, 2014, p. 60). This resonates with Sam Keen's (1986) concept of 'consensual paranoia', which is not an individual pathology but defined by him as a 'common human condition' (p. 17). Through his study of the logic of paranoia, Keen concluded that whatever the historical circumstances are, individuals are appealed by paranoid thinking as it offers them 'righteousness and purity' by ascribing all the 'hostility and evil to the enemy' (p. 19). As Keen pointed out, 'paranoia reduces anxiety and guilt by transferring to the other all the characteristics one does not want to recognize in oneself' (p. 19). As an affective investment, paranoia not only offers a relief from anxiety but frequently involves positive commitments like 'loyalty, patriotism,' what can be considered 'normal and admirable' (p. 17). As Alper explained in an interview, the film portrays 'a militarist, hateful and exclusivist community that builds coping with their internal conflicts' (Aytaç & Göl, 2013).

V. III. ATMOSPHERE: CLAUSTROPHOBIA AND ISOLATION IN THE VASTNESS

The spectatorial paranoia in *Beyond the Hill* is mainly cultivated by the material and aesthetic properties of the film's space. The provincial landscape chosen by Alper is of particular significance for producing such a claustrophobic atmosphere. It is a green valley surrounded by sharp rocks and hills. The vastness of the land paradoxically turns into a claustrophobic, insecure and threatening area as the story unfolds. The increasing tension with each event intensifies feelings of being trapped in this vast open space for the viewer. While the audience watches the hills through the camera, they can feel the anxiety and fear that anyone (Yörüks) can attack from anywhere. The desolate area provokes a chilling sensation, a suspicion and nervousness of being observed by someone invisible. The bodily tension climbs more in several scenes when rocks fall from a hill or when trees move with the wind, giving the impression that there is someone behind them.

Alper’s use of the camera shifting between the subjective and the objective contributes to creating the ‘quasi-objective’ quality of this claustrophobic and paranoid atmosphere (Böhme, 2013; 2014). The audience can follow a character with the camera and believe that they are witnessing the story from a particular character’s subjective point of view. However, in some scenes, the story is projected from an uncanny and uncertain point of view. For instance, each time someone is shot (The dog, Nusret and Zafer), the audience never sees but can only hear the shooting. One can guess who the shooter was, but not witnessing the events magnifies the audience's sense of uncertainty, suspicion, and uncanniness.

The invisibility of the Yörüks significantly contributes to the experience of dread for the audience. Dread is one of the affective sensations of Alper’s film that absorbs the viewer deeply, reducing ‘the phenomenological distance’ (Hanich, 2010, p. 160). As Hanich emphasized, dread functions differently than shock. Dread does not ‘approach’ the spectator, but rather, the viewers ‘“advance” towards the filmic world’ (p. 160). Scenes of dread urge the viewer to more closely watch and feel ‘the temporal horizon for potential ruptures’ with an anxious anticipation. In his words, such dread scenes refer to a ‘thickening inner-time experience’ for the viewer (p. 160). Likewise in Alper’s film, the invisibility and the unpredictable mobility of the Yörüks in the vast landscape saturates the film’s atmosphere with dread, initiating an anticipatory uneasiness and anxiety in the audience. This is not a exactly the same with ‘cinematic dread’ which Hanich explains through horror films, in which spectators are aware of the threats for the ‘vulnerable character’ and enters into an anxious anticipation for the shocking or the horrorful moment of confrontation to arrive (p. 156). The film does not directly invite the viewers to fear and feel for the characters. The spectators have an idea of the threat only through what is told by Faik which does not always sound real since no figure of a threat is visible on the screen. There is always a sense of

ambiguity as the events claimed to be caused by the Yörüks are not witnessed by the viewer. The sense of dread and anxiety of uncertainty is deepened by Alper's use of camera movements immersing the viewers into a paranoid temporality. Particularly the shots of and from the hills plunge the viewer into mixed feelings seeing that the characters are being watched but not clear enough to decide by whom, the Yörüks or Süleyman who always walks around the top of the hills. As Alper explained, he used the camera 'manipulatively on several occasions, sometimes in the director's view, sometimes to trick the audience, and sometimes to prompt them to wonder 'what if?' (Aytaç & Göl, 2013). The intention is not to create particular emotions such as fear or horror, but rather to keep the audience in a state of limbo, between what they perceive from the images and the possibilities that evoke in their imaginations.

It is not only the physical characteristics of the space and special camera movements that contribute to the certain mood of the film. As Alper explained, cultural features that are totally provincial—such as feudal notions of property ownership, violent masculinity, hypocrisy, insincerity and subalternity—influence how the audience will perceive the dynamic interplay of structures of feeling and affective encounters with the present history in a given cultural setting (Bora, 2012). *Beyond the Hill* is another example of the New Turkish Cinema films that specially set in and focus on provinciality. However, *Beyond the Hill* distinguishes itself both from the new wave and popular films. The film is far from aestheticization and romanticization of the province like the 'popular nostalgia films' (Suner, 2006). Alper shares a common view of provinciality in terms of its power structures and traditional social relations with new generation film directors. However, it is not the suffocating melancholy of the periphery or a state of belatedness of the provinces that comes to the fore. As Alper explained, the characters do not have an existential problem with fitting in; they are already provincial (Aytaç & Göl, 2013). Although there are a few scenes where

Nusret criticizes the provincial mentality, as Alper commented, he also does not look down on the place. Compared to other films, his film does not reflect the director's problems with the periphery. Instead, as he explained, Alper wants to mediate the people's perspectives who are already living in these places. In his film, the periphery is rather 'an atmosphere and a location (Aytaç & Göl, 2013), used more like a 'laboratory to tell a universal story' (Bora, 2012).

Like many notable examples, *Beyond the Hill* also problematizes 'home' and 'family'. Family is not a safe heaven as praised previously in Greenpine Cinema but transformed into a space of trauma and dirty secrets (Yaşartürk, 2014, p. 1). Like many other films, Alper's film criticizes the contemporary state ideology through the topos of the family by correlating family and family home with 'violence, cruelty and horror' (Çakırlar & Güçlü, 2013, p. 167). The crises that transform into paranoia at the end are rooted initially in the family as manifested through insecurities, identity and masculinity conflicts, and lack of trust and sincerity among the members. Alper explained the reasons for new cinema's obsession with 'family' as: 'cinema might not be that much interested in displaying the family as a structure that covers up cruelties, functions through oppression and builds on deceit and hypocrisy if the conservative rhetoric does not praise and idealize it' (Bora, 2012).

Beyond the Hill is also one of the outstanding films of New Turkish Cinema, which questions the current cultural context through the lens of masculinity crisis. Since the second half of the 1990s, a 'perception of threat' to masculinity has been a recurring theme in new cinema (Oktan, 2008, p. 165). The films of new cinema frequently problematize and criticize masculinity as problematic, depressed, fragile, diseased, and inclined to extreme violence as well as continuously humiliating women and gays (p. 164). Beyond the Hill, like several other films, directly question the hegemonic masculinity in crisis, criticizing militarist and patriarchal authoritarianism in constructing gender roles, national identity, and citizenship

(Gürbüz, 2016, p. 137). Deconstructing the issues of masculinity is a crucial key to comprehending the manifestations of otherisation and the changing definitions of inclusion-exclusion within the community. Alper's film reflects how hegemonic masculinity articulated with militaristic sentiments imposes particular masculine roles and values in the current cultural context. As observed in the film, such a hegemonic masculinity is produced, constructed and exercised not only through oppression or coercion, but also with other mechanisms of participation, consent and persuasion (Donaldson, 1993). Besides, masculinity, as manifested by the characters in the film, is highly 'crisis prone' and 'anxiety-provoking' (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645).

Faik's abuse of power and arbitrary actions are not questioned or criticized seriously by other male characters, revealing that others have internalized his masculine power as 'pseudo-natural' and as 'socially sustained' (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645). It also unveils how such masculinity is also 'internally and hierarchically differentiated' among the men in the group and reproduced by imitation. Such as in the case of Süleyman and Caner, they both look up to Faik as the hyper-masculine model, rather than to their fathers whose masculinities are emasculated by Faik (p. 645). Caner's shooting the dog is an example of how he tries to prove his courage and manhood by imitating his grandfather, who also grabs his rifle whenever he feels a threat.

Another criticism raised by Alper in this film is the feudal understanding of property ownership, which necessitates special attention in analysis. According to Konuşlu (2013), the land has a particular meaning beyond being a social space. Being the owner of the land, this piece of property has a representational significance for Faik, embodying his masculinity, sovereignty and power. His relations with the other characters, especially those living on the farm, are defined by the power derived from owning the land. It gives him a reckless attitude that he can patronize, humiliate and interfere with the private lives of others. This is also

obvious from his relationship with people working on his land. He is called as Faik 'Ağa' by them (Mehmet and Meryem). Ağa (agha) is a kind of feudal landlord who rules and even owns the villages and the inhabitants. The villagers who are landless peasants, like Mehmet, work in the land owned by an ağa. They act as the sole authority in maintaining the social order and have all the power to intervene in any public or private relations in the villages. As obvious throughout the film, Faik is not only called an 'ağa,' but also acts as one, oppressing and humiliating others with his power as the landowner, even going further to interfere in their private lives. As Alper pointed out in an interview, such a violent defense of property, the feudal relationship between the landlord and the sharecropper, barbarity to nature, and negotiating manhood can take place this severely only in provincial areas (Bora, 2012). The land is the space that demarcates the borders of Faik's identity and masculinity that have to be protected (Gön, 2014, p. 62). Therefore, for Faik, no one among the group of men is worthy of inheriting the land after him, as what matters is to transfer it to a man who carries the type of masculine characteristics he has, who should not only protect the land as much as he did but also carry on the same masculine behavior patterns (Gön, 2014, p. 62).

These socio-cultural features contributing to the film's mood certainly enhance the sense of immediacy and verisimilitude for the Turkish spectator. Even if the family and the characters may not seem familiar to many, the life-world of the film that is grounded on habitual cultural knowledge and experiences is recognizable to the majority of Turkish audience. The immediacy conveys a sense of reality about the current cultural-social and political realities that Turkish spectators experience in their everyday lives. Although the stories told in the films do not necessarily correlate with the spectators' exact life-experiences, the cinematic experience of the images stimulates their sensations of being situated in the same present history.

For instance, Zafer's story communicates to the Turkish spectator how it feels to be inhabiting a 'shared historical time' reminding them of the war ongoing for years (Berlant, 2008a, p. 845). Therefore, *Beyond the Hill* captures the 'affective atmosphere' of anxiety and paranoia shared collectively by the Turkish audience. By creating an affective atmosphere, including the spectator as a partaker of 'being there' in the film, *Beyond the Hill* functions as a cinematic medium that reflects and produces an intersubjective 'mnemonic landscape' in cultural memory (Bruno, 2007, p. 4). However, I am not arguing that the film is a national allegory because of its cultural and historical specificity. I totally agree with Emin Alper, who argued that the story is a universal one, '…a recurring story that can be set in any geography and historical period.' However, as he also pointed out, 'there is a particular importance that it is written now in Turkey…Turkish politics suffers from creating 'Others', blaming others and ignoring its own problems for years' (Aytaç & Göl, 2013).

In *Beyond the Hill,* Alper experiments with narrative and aesthetic styles, sampling from diverse genre conventions and performance traditions. The film features a mix of genres—family drama and thriller— utilizing western film iconography and aesthetics. With outstanding features, *Beyond the Hill* is a character-centered film, marked by an affective realism that engages 'life as it is lived in historically and geographically specific contexts' (Newman, 2011, p. 94). The characters are of central importance for building an affective experience of the film. However, the film does not depend upon creating audience identification with its characters. Rather, the viewer is encouraged to have a more complex engagement with the film. Alper deliberately discourages the audience from identifying and overtly empathizing with the characters. The characters are both familiar and unfamiliar. Compared to mainstream cinema's clichés, the characters in *Beyond the Hill* are ordinary people with conflicting beliefs, traits and complicated mental states just like people in the real world. They are characters who exhibit unstable personalities with hidden aspirations. Thus,

characters do not suit the audience's expectation of stereotypes or essentialized clichés of identities. As Alper commented in an interview, 'the film does not invite the audience to identify anyway. The film always leaves distance between the reality of the characters and the reality of the audience' (Aytaç & Göl, 2013). He creates such distancing by adapting several elements of Brechtian techniques that refuse mimesis, catharsis and character identification, placing a distinct demand on the performance of the actors. The disconnected and haunting performances of the actors create an outstanding Brechtian alienation affect, but at the same time, this powerful performance expressivity, conveying an affective and visceral realism in terms of embodying these characters enhances the film's verisimilitude. The sensorial aesthetics and the affective realism of performances invite the spectator to visualize the films beyond the boundaries of 'identity' with their clichéd understandings of class or ethnicity.

Instead of a continuous narration from a particular character's point of view, Alper distances the audience from any of the characters with interrupted and episodic narration. For example, the scene in which Zafer arises from the water and watches some soldiers passing is confusing for the audience. The visit of two soldiers later that night makes the audience question whether the previous river scene actually took place. Also, the scenes in which characters watch the hills suspiciously, waiting for a potential attack from the Yörüks, evoke a mood of an anxious waiting for the audience which synchronises the 'present of the image' with the present of the audience (Marks, 2000, p. 84). Even the cinematic experience becomes a realisation of the multiple presents that exist within the same ongoing present history that the spectator lives. Such moments are experienced subjectively as 'coexistence of a multiplicity of durations' which are both inside and outside, creating 'a 'convenient' rhythm or coincidence' that demands waiting (Grosz, 2004, p. 197, quoted in Mroz, 2012, p. 77).

Finally, the film does not allow the audience any catharsis, and even drives them to anxiety and paranoia by creating a floating feeling between different points of reality.

Alex Lykidis's comments on crisis cinema in terms of aesthetics of crisis provide insights into reading Alper's film. According to Lykidis, art films dealing with the present historical crisis strategically redefine the relationship between the film and the spectator by inducing 'a crisis of spectatorship' through challenging narrative and aesthetic conventions (2020, p. 31). Such an aesthetic of crisis is invoked mainly by employing defamiliarisation and/or Brechtian estrangement principles to invite an affective apprehension of the crisis that unfolds as an 'impasse' in the present (p. 29). Accordingly, the viewer's habitual perceptions and existing thinking patterns are aimed to be distracted to elicit their critical reflection by the images. Likewise, the narrative structure, visual style and actor performances uniquely coordinate with the representational strategies of distancing effects and 'enabling contemplation through a suspension of narrative development' that invites more critical and reflexive viewership (Lykidis, 2020, p. 30–31). The audience is drifted more with the plot rather than the story and confronted with 'social, psychological or philosophical questions that cannot be easily resolved through narrative development or closure' (p. 31).

V.IV. CONCLUSION

Beyond the Hill constructs an outstanding analogy between a family crisis and the current state of oblivion and paranoia sweeping the country. At the backdrop of a family crisis, the film discloses how the sovereign authority uses paranoia as a political style and governmentality. Moreover, by problematizing scapegoating and demonizing the enemy, the film offers critical insights into how conspiracy theories function as affective investments in Turkish political culture. But beyond problematizing the affective power of paranoid thinking and conspiracism at the national level, Alper's film is noteworthy by shedding light on how paranoia becomes a salient emotion in everyday life. In these terms, *Beyond the Hill* attends

to the sensual expressions of a nation's mass crisis in the present underlining paranoia as emotional-affective lived experiences of a community in the historical present (Berlant, 2011a).

The community's paranoia in the film justifies Sara Ahmed's argument on the embeddedness of emotions in particular histories and contexts and their dynamic performativity by repeating 'past associations' and generating new objects (2014, p. 45). As she emphasized, emotions cannot be disengaged from the history of the inception or 'cannot be reduced to that history' (p. 60). However, they continue to operate beyond the original context and history they come into being, 'through the very intensity of their attachments' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 119). They can 'produce affective responses' as in Alper's film, by 'keep[ing] open a history which is already open insofar as it is affective' (2014, p. 59). Paranoia projected in the film further points out the unique ways conspiracism functions in Turkey. In times of crisis, conspiracy theories are frequently brought to the stage by the ruling power, cultivating the long-term fears of the country's disintegration and persistent feelings of being surrounded by enemies. This national siege mentality, prone to paranoid reasoning, is kept alive by all political sides, from left to right-wing, by designating visible or invisible enemies. In these terms, Alper's film draws attention to how conspiracism in Turkey does not function to give voice to popular reactions against 'the inaccessible and secretive modus operandi of the state', unlike in Western democracies (Tatar, 2018, p. 10). Instead, conspiracism is instrumentalized by the ruling power 'with the aim of and manufacturing consent by grasping the masses' imagination and having them identify with states/sovereigns' (p. 11).

As Ghassan Hage reminded us, this is how 'paranoid nationalisms' emerge when the capacities of governments to produce hope shrink and ruling power loses grounds in terms of realizing their promises (Hage, 2003). Attachment to one's nation becomes an obsession with

border politics, projecting the fear 'onto everything classified as alien', and generalized anxiety about the 'fate of the nation' is frequently expressed (Hage, 2003, p. 22-30). On these grounds, exploiting the nationalist-militarist feelings and engraining xenophobia become convenient tools for the ruling power to legitimize its authority and control its subjects.

In Alper's film, the paranoid thinking that gripped the community recalls Peter Knight's distinction of 'secure form of paranoia' based on the simple us vs. them dichotomy (2000a, p. 175). Secure paranoia is based mostly on a 'clear geopolitical division between self and other' (p. 175), and sustains 'a sense of individual or collective identity' (p. 179). Paranoid narratives, like in the case of *Beyond the Hill,* can be operated as a public fantasy that 'binds individual subjects to identificatory collective bodies' (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 16). Although Faik's paranoid thinking is 'distruptive', transforming an ordinary family gathering into a nightmare and adversely affecting the trust, sincerity and intimacy among the members, it paradoxically offered 'a particular form of comfort' for the community (Sturken, 1997, p. 78). Blaming a single source of evil simplified the complex anxieties, insecurities and tensions and provided a 'comforting solidity' for the group to cover up their faults and refrain from taking responsibility for their acts (Knight, 2000a, p. 229). However, as the film also shows, a system—whether a family or a nation—based on authoritarian governmentality supported by paranoid thinking and conspiracy is destined to live in fear, suspicion and mistrust, with all kinds of autonomy and agency being denied.

The father figure in *Beyond the Hill* calls for critical analysis, mirroring the recent autocratic and Islamist governance of Erdoğan. Faik, as an authoritarian father figure, acts as the patriarch and the sovereign with sole authority, suppressing all forms of opposition. As the land owner, he assumes himself to be the sole power over everything, thus acting as the embodiment of justice and even representing the state. Rather than solving problems by peaceful or legal means, he believes that justice can only be carried out within his personal

jurisdiction (Susam, 2013, p. 42). Faik's authoritarian control over the community and his management of the crisis by nurturing paranoia recalls, President Erdoğan's 'gradual transformation from a soft-Islamic, Western-approved politician to an omnipotent father' (Somay, 2014, p.2). Consequently, the film masterfully invites the audience to recognize the emotional dynamics underlying the current state of citizenship and how the ruling power can easily manipulate particular emotions of the subjects and turn them into affective intensities.

As the story discloses, the paranoia that gripped the group of men is not 'an eternally abstract condition but a specifically social way of responding to new permutations in everyday perception and possibility' (Polan, 1986, p. 15, cited in Fradley, 2013, p. 83). The paranoid mood that gripped the group cannot be explained only through an individual pathology but rather as a 'positioning' of a group in a particular context and time (Harper, 2008, p. 9-10). Paranoia offered an 'imaginary way … to live with the contingencies of the moment', which allowed six men to deal with their internal conflicts and anxieties and cope with external events (Polan, 1986, p. 13). The paranoid manifestations of the group of men, conscious or not, resonates Pratt's arguments of 'interpretation crisis' urged by the 'desire to make sense of what does not make sense' (Pratt, 2001, p. 8). In Dana Polan's sense, paranoia enabled 'a mediation between the externalities of social existence–the impositions and prescriptions of a culture–and their internalization in the form of a particular ideology and psychic economy' (Polan, 1986, cited in Fradley, 2013, p. 83). Nevertheless, as the story unfolds, we witness how the vicious cycle of paranoid thinking is 'made up of an endless pattern of aggressing and being aggressed against' (cited in Fradley, 2013, p. 74).

Zafer's story, in particular, gives a hint of the historical and cultural roots of paranoia embedded deep within the fabric of national consciousness. Thus, as portrayed in the film, paranoid thinking should not be simply dismissed as delusional fantasy in a pathological

sense, but should be viewed as a social phenomenon verified by evidence of real events. With filmic visions drawing from public consciousness reflective of the events taking place in the present such as PKK terror, Alper aims to 'stimulate and perhaps even empower the political imaginations of those who view them' (Pratt, p. 253). By bringing the unknown individual experiences, which can sometimes be clinical pathologies as in Zafer's case, the film demands the viewer to see the bigger picture and reflect on the historical present they inhabit.

Besides embracing a universalistic story, *Beyond the Hill*, with its unique affective qualities and atmosphere, demands a more specific emotional engagement and affective appraisals from the Turkish audience. The film creates an intersubjective connection between the spectator and the film by stimulating memories, emotions and sensations from the Turkish collective memory and history. At this point, Zafer's halucinations are worth analyzing from several points. The hallucination scenes give the audience a glimpse of Zafer's traumatic past in military service. However, his hallucinations do not exclusively refer to the past but also the present. Alper's intention of using hallucination scenes is not simply to offer an examination of Zafer's subjectivity and his troubled mental condition that is apparent to the viewer. His hallucinations resemble forms of flashbacks, but they function differently. According to Clodagh Brook (2004), flashbacks and hallucinations function diversely in a film in terms of 'simultaneity that characterizes its temporality' (p. 73). Zafer's delusions do not necessarily refer to 'an abrupt break or juncture between past and present,' but rather, they exhibit 'past and present as simultaneous or co-present, with no fracturing of temporal or narrative continuity' (p. 73). Furthermore, hallucination scenes are not displayed as ruptures from the materiality of the film. Alper, uses these scenes purposefully as 'a rhetorical device' to create ambiguity for the spectator (p. 74). The scenes are intense moments blurring the boundaries between fact and fantasy, leaving the spectator questioning whether what Zafer is seeing is real or if he's just delusional. By integrating the delusions within the film's

continuity, the spectators are invited to actively apprehend the images that blur the boundaries between fact and fantasy. The brief, surreal scenes do not simply refer to Zafer's psychotic symptoms but are moments glimpsing the continuing war with the PKK, suggestive of the anxiety surfacing in the community. The scenes of his delusions shed light on the nation's inability to differentiate between past traumas and their potential harm in the present. Thus, the mounting paranoia about the Yörüks 'overlaps with the residual sediments of archaic fears, as well as inserting itself into the as yet undefined fears of the future' (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 25). The viewers must piece together the specific traumas, and paranoias buried inside entangled with various 'internal ideas and memories' to make sense of the film (Papastergiadis, 2005, p. 12). Although Zafer's anxious delusions reveal that he is stuck at a particular moment in the past – his traumatic time in military service– the other characters have also been stranded in an uncertain and threatening present.

From Sara Ahmed's perspective of anxiety circulating and sticking freely in an affective economic sense, we can conclude that the Yörüks in the film stand for all 'Others' imagined as a threat to any repressive, conservative and nationalist political system. From that point of view, Alper's choice of Yörüks and the invisibility on the screen allows the film to convoke the universality of particular emotions and experiences, as in this case: the neccessity of creating imaginary enemies. Thus, it can be suggested that *Beyond the Hill* is a critical allegory of evil-doing, enmity, othering and scapegoating rather than a plain national allegory.

In these terms, *Beyond the Hill* not only represents the present crisis experienced collectively, but further to that, the film intentionally demands a self-reflexive and affective spectator engagement (Laine, 2011). In other words, the film invokes the spectator's own ethical introspection in the current context of anxiety and paranoia. The affective quality of the film is not mediated only through what is visible on the screen but also through directing

the audience’s attention towards ‘what cannot be seen, that which can only be detected by means of intersubjective sharing of experience’ (Laine, 2011, p. 4). For instance, by intentionally avoiding the audience's sympathetic engagement or character identification, Alper intends to prompt an aesthetical engagement of the spectator ‘that [is] less character bound’ (p.5). Except Zafer, most of the characters are obviously difficult to sympathize with. Their relations within the family or the community (on the land) are devoid of sympathy, intimacy, trust, understanding or love. The lack of such features towards each other are already conveyed to the spectator.

Beyond the Hill offers an intersubjective cinematic experience as ‘seen, heard, reflectively felt and understood’ intellectually and emotionally (Laine, 2004, p. 131). The films create a multi-sensory and intersubjective cultural experience by stimulating the spectators' sense-memories. The film’s affective realism projected on different levels of narration, atmosphere, and hapticality provides an intersubjective cinematic experience for the viewer. Anxiety and paranoia are sensed both as a background atmosphere and a mood created by the bodies encountered within that space. This is what Böhme referred to as the intersubjectivity dimension of ‘atmosphere generators’ (Böhme, 2014, p. 94). ‘A shared affective atmosphere’ of intersubjectivity is not only produced by the film: it also depends on how the audience experiences the stage with ‘a certain mode of perception’ infused ‘through cultural socialisation’ (Böhme, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, in Böhme’s words, ‘atmosphere is the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived’ (1993, p. 122); thus, as an embodied experience, the perception of the spectator is an integration of ‘the affective impact of the observed, the reality of images and corporeality’ (p. 125).

At this point, I must underline that this study is aware that not all spectators will experience the same emotional appraisal intended by the film, particularly with Zafer’s story. However, the film ‘look[s]back at us...and throw[s] us into an objective apprehension of

ourselves', by confronting the audience with the experience of the present history shaped by particular cultural memories (Laine, 2007, p. 23). The embodied and intersubjective cinematic experience created by Alper demands the audience to be more than passive witnesses but rather active participants who respond (Laine, 2007). Following Sobchack's argument that cinematic experience is an intersubjective experience, we can interpret *Beyond the Hill* as an invitation to a more affective encounter with the present history for the audience while simultaneously reflecting 'the universality of specific scopes of experience' (1992, p. 6).

Additionally, the invisibility of the Yörüks, in the same manner, prohibits a sympathetic engagement with the 'Other' as the 'villain' created in the story. By refusing to give recognizable facial features or identity traits to the Yörüks, who are constructed as the villains by the group, the experience of viewing becomes frustrating and disturbing for the spectator. In a way, paranoia as a 'crisis of interpretation' is not only an emotional reaction of the characters in the story, but also an affective response intended for the audience. Alper is not passing any judgments on both sides. The spectator is left with inhabiting an affective atmosphere of collective anxiety and paranoia. Alper does not allow any catharsis, instead keeps the audience in the sense of anxiety throughout the film. The ambiguity formed via the invisibility of the Other, situates the spectator in a state of confusion, bewilderment and insecurity. The objectless, pervasive and uncomfortable sense of dread and anxiety is kept alive till the end.

In conclusion, *Beyond the Hill* projects a microcosm of a nation becoming more anxious with an increasing collective sense of insecurity and uncertainty. The film gives voice to the deep fears of those who belong within the borders and the anxious relationship with the Other within or beyond the borders. The film reflects upon the current cultural and political atmosphere of the nation by making references to actual events suggestive of deep

rooted fears; to the current atmosphere of suspicion, fear and distrust in society stemming from deepening political polarization; to anxieties over the loss of individual autonomy and agency in the face of repressive autocratic governance and surveillance; and finally to the kind of conspiracy thinking that has become an ordinary and widespread response in their everyday lives to make sense of the changing world around them. In conclusion, *Beyond the Hill* puts forward a statement about 'the loneliness of collective singularity', praised as a 'precious loneliness' by JDP government (Berlant, 2011a, p. 201).

CHAPTER VI

FRENZY: AGENCY PANIC

Frenzy is Emin Alper's second film after *Beyond the Hill. Frenzy* which was co-produced by Turkey, France and Qatar, won several prizes, including the Special Jury Prize in the Venice Film Festival (2015), the APSA Jury Grand Prize (2015), and the Best Balkan Film Award in Sofia International Film Festival (2016). Frenzy is 'a psycho-social drama-thriller', blending film noir aesthetics (Ottone, 2017, p. 54). Although there are stylistic differences between his two films, Alper commented that they share a thematic similarity: 'the hidden enemy and social paranoia which emanate from or direct to political conflict' (Işık & Kara, 2016, p. 165).

VI.I. ANXIETY OF ISOLATION AND POWERLESSNESS

Like Beyond the Hill, Frenzy tells the story of a family, torn apart by internal and external conflicts. The story mainly centers on two brothers, Kadir and Ahmet. Kadir is an ex-convict who is recently released from prison on the condition that he will report terrorist activities to the police. He works undercover as a garbage collector, looking for bomb-making equipment. He rents a flat from a young couple, Ali and his wife Meral, who live in the same building. They seem very friendly and helpful at first, but gradually the couple starts to behave suspiciously. The neighborhood Kadir settled in is a slum area in Istanbul where his younger brother Ahmet also lives. Two brothers have not seen each other for years since Kadir was in prison. Kadir is excited and optimistic about seeing his brother, fantasizing about rebuilding broken family ties during the prison years. Feeling guilt as the oldest brother for not taking care of the family throughout the years, he is eager to connect with his family. However, Ahmet is not so thrilled to see him again.

Ahmet, abandoned by his wife and children, works for the municipality shooting stray dogs. He seems to lead two different lives. During the day, he kills dogs without any mercy, but he is fragile and vulnerable at night, secluding from everyone. Ironically, he befriends a dog, Coni, to whom he can show all his affection, love and empathy. He tries to prove and heal his wounded manliness with the use of a rifle, while at night he becomes childish and innocent playing with the dog. Ahmet feels disturbed by Kadir, who tries to insert himself into his isolated life. He is dazed and disoriented at a depth of paranoia and terror, dragged into destruction faster with Kadir's frequent visits to his home, yelling: 'I know you are there'. His visits, accompanied by the jarring sounds of knocking on the metal door and the loud doorbell, increase Ahmet' feelings of persecution and fear. He wants to avoid the streets and the outside world. 'He is aware that there is nothing he can do to resist this system', so he isolates himself, even attempting to build a safe room (Kalır, 2017). With increasing paranoia towards the state, and his growing affection towards the dog, Ahmet becomes no longer able to kill dogs as he used to. Some days, he pretends to his coworkers that he has not seen any dogs or collects the poisoned meat after work. As the story unfolds, Ahmet starts to seclude himself in his house, not answering the door, even avoiding Kadir. With increasing fear and paranoia, he tries to build a safe room inside the house to hide himself and the dog. Towards the end of the film, police surround the house, believing it is a terrorist safe house and kill Ahmet and the dog.

There is a third brother, Veli, who is invisible throughout the film. As we learn later, after Kadir was arrested, two brothers were put into an orphanage. As much as Kadir feels guilty for not being able to take care of his family, he also accuses Veli of disappearing ten years ago. Kadir also feels jealous of him. One night he asks Meral if Ahmet has ever told them any childhood memories about him. However, he realizes with envy that the memories

of Ahmet were actually about Veli, not Kadir. He recognizes that he did not even exist in his family's memories.

Kadir also develops a shameful desire for Meral, the first woman who shows intimacy after 20 years of loneliness in prison. Tormented with his guilty desires toward a married woman, he creates a story in his mind that Ahmet is having an affair with Meral. Trying to restrain his own desire for Meral, he keeps warning Ahmet about the faultiness of getting into a relationship with a married woman (Değirmen, 2015). He lies on the floor every night, listening to Meral's moanings. However, besides all his suspicions about Meral, he fantasizes about rescuing her, after the couple disappears from the neighborhood. In one of his dreams, Kadir finds out that Meral did not leave the neighborhood but she is hiding in the chicken coop. He receives a call from her husband Ali, asking him to take Meral out of the neighborhood. He hides Meral in his garbage cart and sneaks her out. However, the dream finalizes with disappointment: when he opens the garbage cart he finds out that Meral was not there.

The claustrophobic and insecure political atmosphere grips Ahmet and Kadir, triggering emotional disturbances. The pressures from the authorities make them feel trapped and desperate, pushing them towards a state of paranoia with delusions of persecution. Consequently, enemies and friends change place for both brothers. Kadir, who had been optimistic about his new life, gradually feels suspicious and paranoid about everyone, including his friends and even Ahmet. He reached a paranoid state suspecting that everyone might be potential terrorists. Ahmet's suspicious behavior, secluding from everyone, particularly his brother, intensifies Kadir's paranoias. Everyone seems like a potential threat. Kadir's paranoia towards everyone peaks when his dreams and optimism about reuniting with his family are turned down with Ahmet's cold, distant and suspicious behavior.

VI.II. PARANOIA: FEAR OF PERSECUTION

As Emin Alper explained, Ahmet and Kadir are 'little men', who are both 'the tools and the victims of a systematic violence' (Acaroğlu & Günerbüyük, 2015). Kadir as an informant and Ahmet as a dog exterminator, are both hunters of something, either terrorists or dogs. Although they have different reasons, they are both following orders. However, as Alper also commented, they are not simply used by the system and victimized by it: 'The characters are vulnerable, they have weaknesses that lead them to the tragic ends' (European Film Awards, 2012). The film does not offer much information about the family's past or explain why Kadir was convicted or why Ahmet's wife abandoned him. But it is evident that the brothers who belong to the urban poor of Istanbul leading a precarious existence. Apart from their social-economic disadvantaged status, they are also emotionally insecure and vulnerable as there seems to be no evidence of solid family bonds or attachments for them since childhood. This is apparent in the brothers' relationship, characterized more by doubt than trust and sincerity. However, providing causal explanations does not seem much relevant for film's main concern. Rather than keeping the interest on the details of their traumatic past, Alper intends to turn the main attention on the traumas that are emerging with 'the shock, of destabilization, of discomfort of/for the present' without being stuck in the exceptionality of the past (Nikolaidou, 2014, p. 32). It is clear from the limited background information provided why they make some choices that lead them to a tragedy at the end. The film demands to turn attention to here and now of the present without suffocating the audience with the causal logic of their choices and actions.

The film attends to the impasse the characters find themselves. Ordinary life becomes 'a porous zone that absorbs lots of incoherence and contradiction' in which characters try to adapt (Berlant, 2011a, p. 53). The brothers are denied any power to produce change or control over their lives. They 'experience simultaneously at an extreme and in a zone of

ordinariness, where life building and the attrition of human life are indistinguishable, and where it is hard to distinguish modes of incoherence, distractedness, and habituation from deliberate and deliberative activity, as they are all involved in the reproduction of predictable life' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 96)

They are frustrated to observe how their optimism and future expectations — like Kadir's thriving for bonding back with his family, and receiving appreciation for doing his job —are overwhelmed by the newly emerging atmosphere of uncertainty and stuckness. In Berlant's words, their expectation of reciprocity, having 'trust in the world's ongoingness and our competence at being humans' have failed (Berlant, 2011a, p. 52). They try to adapt to the crisis-shaped habitat with their 'visceral responses and intuitive intelligence' (p. 53), but the anxiety of adjusting to the emerging crisis can sometimes 'become a mania or a scene' (Stewart, 2011, p. 449). Finally, Kadir's decisions to save his brother and perform his duty as an informant properly end in vain and caused both brothers' destruction and even death.

When efforts of adjusting to threatening uncertainties even transform into a fight for bare survival, they have no choice but to seek shelter in paranoia. In this respect, the brothers' paranoid thoughts manifest 'a crisis of interpretation' with the 'desire to make sense of what does not make sense' (Pratt, 2001, p. 8). When the 'threatening aspects of life seem greater than is justified' for them, when they cannot bring rational explanations to their real experiences, their sense of persecution intensifies and paranoid delusions become more frequent (p. 8). The characters' delusions transform indeed form 'alternative beliefs to replace those elements seen as threatening' (p. 8).

The paranoid thoughts of Kadir and Ahmet is better illuminated by Timothy Melley's 'agency panic' (2002). The brothers deal with an overwhelming sense of powerlessness which Timothy Melley names as 'agency panic.' According to Melley (2002), agency panic is 'an intense anxiety about an apparent loss of autonomy or self-control — the conviction

that one's actions are being controlled by someone else' (p. 62). However, the paranoia of the brothers should not be simply defined as a 'misguided or irrational response' (p. 66), since their paranoias originate from 'a sense of diminished human agency, a feeling that individuals cannot effect meaningful social action and, in extreme cases, may not be able to control their own behavior' (p. 62).

It is sometimes not easy to determine if feelings of persecution are just delusions, as in the cases of pathological paranoia, or based on well-founded and actual reasons, since 'paranoia is in fact an interpretive disorder' (Melley, 2000, p. 16). As Berke et al. (1998) warned, one should distinguish between a real external threat of persecution and 'exaggerated feelings, inner persecution,' recalling Freud's emphasis that patients suffering from paranoia could really have been persecuted in the past (p. 4). There are several factors such as the terrorism threat or Kadir's prisonment in the past that both brothers' fears of persecution are not completely imaginary.

Losing trust in the authorities, particularly the municipality he works for, Ahmet develops paranoid thoughts based on his belief that his 'motive, agency and individuality' are being controlled and drained from himself (Melley, 2002, p. 63) In the scene when Ahmet is bitten by a dog he tries to kill, his boss calls him to his office, but as he confuses Ahmet with someone else. He starts yelling and accusing Ahmet of hiding what he is doing. Ahmet panics and thinks his boss knows all about the dog he is hiding at home. As the boss later realizes that he was wrongly accusing Ahmet of selling the dead dogs to butchers, he starts treating him well, even offering to send him to a doctor. Shattered by this confusion, Ahmet tells his friends that 'they are testing us.' The hypocrisy of the authorities becomes more visible for Ahmet, while he watches his boss on TV one night telling the audience that reports of the extermination of stray dogs by the municipality was a total lie and that the dogs were being kept in the shelters and treated with medications. This is one of the scenes where Ahmet's

trust in the state authority is shattered by realizing that the news is totally manipulated and does not reflect the truth (Şensöz, 2015).

Kadir was not hopeful only about the reunion of his family, but also determined about the jobs given to him as an informant. It is a second chance offered to him in life to gain back the sense of control and gain his individuality and agency. He is even optimistic about becoming somebody important if he successfully fulfills the duties given to him. After being locked up in prison, deprived of any sense of power and control over life, now he has a purposive choice to gain back his agency and individuality. He works dedicatedly. While digging through the garbage looking for evidence, he takes notes in a notebook. Later, he starts typing them up with a typewriter he bought from the night bazaar where people sell stuff they found in the garbage. He writes long reports for the police. He attributes such great importance to this job that he starts acting like a police officer or a detective. Indeed, his attachment to this work reveals how he wants to see himself as 'someone important': this is the only way he can be 'someone'. Obsessed with his work, he starts seeing everyone as a suspect (Kalır, 2017). His suspicions and dedication to work even takes him to the point of sharing his concerns about Ahmet's suspicious acts with the police officer Hamza. However, his attachment to this job and his expectations are failed by the police. Hamza frequently teases him about the information he brings back. His unquestioned compliance to authority is never returned with a reciprocated recognition. His subjugation to authority as a hardworking and obedient informant did not make him 'a good subject of the promise' in the eyes the authority (Berlant, 2011a, p. 184). Yet, Kadir's fantasies fluctuating in-between an elevated sense of agency through becoming an informant and a sense of downtrodden agency as an unsuccessful big brother and being humiliated by the police chief, reveal his fragmented subjectivity.

Kadir's paranoia can also be interpreted as what Holm called 'the paranoia-of-the watcher'. According to Nicholas Holm (2009), paranoia in connection with surveillance can be examined in two related modalities: paranoia-of-the-watched and the paranoia-of-the-watcher. These two modalities of the watched and the watcher co-exist together due to 'interrogation of their environment that the paranoid comes to believe that they are being watched' (p. 44). Kadir, with his intention to successfully fulfill the task given to him, surveiling terrorist activities, transforms into a generalized 'desire for close and sustained observation of the everyday and the banal in order to uncover hidden threats, even in the absence of any evidence to indicate the presence' (p. 44). According to Holm, this compulsive desire of the watcher recalls Ulrich Beck's concept of 'risk society' (1992), where the watcher becomes paranoid of his own surroundings and everyone–even his family members, as in Kadir's case. He rationalizes his paranoia as a watcher a suspicion 'within reason' since he sincerely believes that he has to comply with the narrative of the dominant ideology (p. 44). He has full compliance and trust in the state's desire to watch over its citizens, which, according to Holm, can be counted as paranoia. However, as seen in *Frenzy,* this drags Kadir into a vortex of a a compulsively looking for evidence to confirm his suspicions, which ultimately causes his tragic end.

Each character finds himself in an emotional paralysis, 'trapped between the perception and action' (Keathley, 2004, p. 297). Ahmet's paranoia presents as 'a paralysis' without any ability to take action (Patzig, 2007, p. 38). Although Kadir tries to keep things in control, 'his sense of control is progressively revealed as illusory' and towards the end he finds himself 'trapped in a course of events that culminate in disaster' (Keathley, 2004, p. 297). After realizing that he has been 'manipulated, exploited and left paralysed by the realisation of their powerlessness in the face of a corrupt system' (p. 296). We watch him walking in the streets in a catatonic and traumatized state resulting from his paranoias. He

visits the police chief, carrying a big knife–probably planning to kill him and take revenge for his brother–but instead he is brutally beaten by him. He is once more 'literally trapped in a reaction shot that shows not only his devastation at what he has perceived, but also his paralysis as he is unable to respond to it' (Keathley, 2004, p. 297).

The paranoia that grips the brothers in *Frenzy* radically differs from the community's paranoia in *Beyond the Hill.* Alper shifts the tone of paranoia in *Frenzy* towards what Peter Knight has called an 'insecure' form of paranoia. Knight in his book *Conspiracy Culture: From the Kennedy Assassination to the X-Files (2000)* introduces a distinction between two types of paranoia, arguing that contemporary cultural anxieties and skepticism are not anymore grounded only on 'secure paranoias' based on us vs. them paradigms (Knight, 2000a, p. 175). Although exclusively writing on American culture, Knight's argument is universally applicable, particularly in understanding the paranoid thinking and culture of conspiracy in contemporary Turkey. According to Knight there has been shift after Cold War from a secure form of paranoia towards 'unstable' insecure type paranoia. (2000a, p. 234). Insecure paranoias do not serve to sustain 'a sense of individual or collective identity' anymore since they are about 'recognizable threats' from outside, but much more about 'internal, unconscious or diffuse threats which escalate out of control' (p. 179). Contemporary paranoias are not about real or imagined enemy Others, but rather, anxieties 'about the human-made institutions of modern society itself' (Aupers, 2012, p. 24). New fears are about the enemies within, 'the unknown and malicious forces that operate within the machineries of scientific laboratories, modern corporations, politics and the state' (p. 24). It is a kind of 'conspiracy-infused anxiety which plunges everything into an infinite regress of suspicion' (Knight, 2000a, p. 4). In Knight's words, it manifests a state of 'a permanent uncertainty about fundamental issues of causality, agency, responsibility and identity' that puts any sense of individual or national destiny is under a constant doubt (2000a, p. 4).

The brother's fears and suspicions are not totally embedded in an 'irrational, unjustifiable and delusional sense of reality' (Bakola, 2007, p. 29). As the story unfolds, their paranoid reactions become justified, and some of them even realized. Their delusions are not built on distorted knowledge but developed intuitively from personal experiences and are affected by the shared atmosphere. However, both were powerless to escape or prevent these fears from coming true. The brothers' delusions are essentially realistic due to the events that have transpired.

VI.III. ATMOSPHERE: FEAR AND TERROR IN THE BIG CITY

In his second feature film, Alper moves the filmic space from the province to a slum area on the outskirts of Istanbul. The neighborhood is a poor and desolated area encircled by the new skyscrapers of Istanbul. This shantytown is in the grips of violence and terror both by an unnamed terrorist organization and close police surveillance. The neighborhood breathes an atmosphere of fear and terror with ground-shaking trucks passing in the streets and not-so-distant explosions. The area is believed to harbor terrorists, so it is blockaded and isolated by police with barriers and check-points.

Fear and chaos do not pervade only the neighbourhood, but all Istanbul is in the grip of increasing fear of terror and paranoia. Bombs are exploding everywhere. The use of urban space is particularly obvious in Alper's vision of Istanbul. Alper's Istanbul is a dark, claustrophic and a restless city that contradicts the outstanding beauty of the cityscape extensively screened in Yeşilçam films. Alper creates a nightmarish image of Istanbul, shooting most scenes at night. Darkness surrounds not only the spaces but also the characters. As in many noir films, lighting in Frenzy 'is noticeable more by its absence than its presence' (Wheeler, 2009, p. 11). The use of light and darkness is a key stylistic feature that defines Frenzy's noir qualities of the atmosphere. Dimly lit and confined interiors and the dark claustrophobic streets of Istanbul convey the feelings of confinement and insecurity. The

scenes from the nighttime garbage bazaar and the coffee houses and illegal pubs underneath the neighborhood with their dark, dirty and smoke-filled atmospheres, contribute to the dystopic expression of the filmic space (Gediz, 2015).

Especially in the second part of the film, the scenes become darker in which Kadir and Ahmet fall into frightening delusions. The second part of the film is set totally at night. We can see people or events either by the fires burning in the garbage bins, or by the dimly lit street lamps penetrating through curtains and windows. The light leaking from the street seems like an intrusion or an invasion into Ahmet's self-isolated, safe world. The images of penetrating light from the curtains are mostly seen from the eyes of Kadir, trying to see what is going on inside Ahmet's house (Gediz, 2015). Some characters totally belong in the dark, such as the police officer Hamza who is frequently sitting behind a table lamp in a dark room (Gediz, 2015). The dark, ambiguous, and chaotic atmosphere visually communicates how the two brothers lose their sense of reality within circumstances that trap them within an oppressive siege, transforming into a mental and psychological one as the story unfolds (Irmak, 2015).

As the film gets darker, the audience is also absorbed in the vortex of paranoia like the brothers. Compared to his first film, Alper constructed a more intense atmosphere of paranoia through cinematography in *Frenzy.* He uses the audio-visual aesthetics of the noir genre to create an affective atmosphere of a paranoid psychogeography (Bruno, 2012). The chaotic and oppressive atmosphere of the film invokes a pervasive dread that absorbs the audience intensely in this lifeworld and leads them to an anxious anticipation like the protagonists. The audience is mentally and physically immersed in the film through affective visuality and audio effects. Disturbing sounds of nearby explosions, police and ambulance sirens and shaking of the ground by passing army tanks affect the audience physically by raising their heart rates and breathing, causing discomfort and the experience of a similar fear

of being trapped in these dangerous spaces of the neighborhood. The audience's corporeal immersion in the film is established kinaesthetically through Alper's unique camerawork. The spectator is invited to make sense of the film's space like the characters 'by moving through it muscularly in similar ways and with similar attitudes' (Barker, 2009a, p. 75). For instance, the tracking shots of Kadir, wandering in the streets, looking for garbage bins and suspiciously gazing the neigboorhood, makes the viewer experience and engage with his physical and emotional journey.

These haptic and aural aesthetics of *Frenzy* contribute to a spectatorial paranoia for the audience. Especially, the delusions and paranoid mind-games of Ahmet and Kadir evoke uncertainties and suspicion in the audience. These scenes shot from Kadir's and Ahmet's point of view are not always reliable for the audience. But on the other hand, the scenes so masterfully integrated in the materiality and temporality of the film that they offer a visceral, first-hand experience of the brother's delusions.

For example, when Kadir thinks that he has hidden Meral inside his garbage cart, only to find out that she was not there from the beginning. We see and hear Kadir banging on Ahmet's door and when Ahmet approaches the window to see who it is, Kadir catches Ahmet with his hand and does not let him go, upon which he realizes that Vahap (Ahmet's boss) is inside the house, feeding the dog with poisoned food. Another night, Ahmet looks from the window and sees the shadow of a man standing on his roof, but when he goes up to the roof, he finds out that it was his own shadow.

In sum, the audio-visual elements and the texture of the images used in the film to create a suffocating atmosphere and landscape surround the audience, making them feel the claustrophobia, fear, suspicion and even paranoia with their primary engagement of 'the sense and sensibility of materiality itself' (Sobchack, 2004, p. 65). Thus, the film offers an intersubjective communication for the audience in which they experience the film through a

shared embodied existence and 'similar modes of being-in-the-world' (Sobchack, 1992, p. 5). Therefore, *Frenzy* stimulates 'not only intrasubjectively dialectical, but also intersubjectively dialogical film experience' where the film and the audience 'meet in the sharing of a world' (Sobchack, 1992, p. 24). To put it differently, the audience makes sense of the narration 'without entirely collapsing the boundaries between "here" and "there," and between "us" (the viewers), "them" (the characters), and "it" (the film)' (Barker, 2009a, p. 7).

Following Tarja Laine (2007), I also want to argue that with the affection image—like the close-up of Kadir's face is at a peculiar moment—the film looks back at the spectators, 'disrupting their illusion of imaginary unity and sense of "control" over the image' (p. 33). As Keathley (2004) pointed out, examining American paranoia films of the 1960s, the affection-image finds its purest expression in the face. He explained how 'these films end on a close-up of the protagonist as he registers the full horror of what he is perceiving and of the realisation of his own inability to act in response' (p. 297). Likewise, *Frenzy* ends on a close up of Kadir is kneeled, facing down, waiting to be executed by the terrorist organization. This is when he also finds out that Veli is the one who ordered his execution. The scene communicates the bewilderment and horror of realizing how his paranoid thoughts have dragged him and Ahmet to destruction. This is the awkward moment, when the spectators are 'forced to think of themselves in an unsatisfying and unpleasant relation to the Other by being exposed to the look of the Other' (Laine, 2007, p. 34). With the returned look, the film viewing turns into a reciprocal and intersubjective experience in which the prevalent dualities of subject-object and the viewer and the seen are no more valid. Therefore as Laine argued, cinema 'can function as the look of the Other', disclosing to the audience that 'the foundation of their look lies elsewhere, in their engagement with the Other' (p. 35).

As in his first film, Alper again uses a Brechtian aesthetics in *Frenzy*—denying a subjective identification, mimesis or catharsis to the spectator — with the dramatic structure

and characters. Not offering much logical and causal explanation for characters’ emotional states, Alper neither builds a spectatorial identification with the characters nor totally marginalizes them. The spectators are not invited to presume that characters are like us, or portrayed them as absolute misfits, criminals or outsiders whom we wouldn’t have felt any sympathy for in real life. Avoiding any moralizing or pedagogical persuasion, the film at no point encourages the spectators to pass judgements.

However, the insecure and tense atmosphere created by Alper’s audio-visual styles and his ‘unreliable narrator’ technique (Acaroğlu & Günerbüyük, 2015) causes confusion for the audience about what is real and what is delusional (Gediz, 2015). The spectators are denied to any objectifying voyeuristic position. Thus, the film ‘simultaneously constituting and transforming the discourses (the mediations of 'reality') that define the ontological distinction between 'the self' and 'the Other', engages the audience in a new kinds of intersubjective relationship’ (Laine, 2007, p. 10). Like Alper’s first film, *Frenzy* also has some particular characteristics to convey a ‘universalistic’ story by deliberately setting the story in an indefinite time and space. In an interview, Alper mentioned that he wants the film to refer ‘to any space or any time where political violence can take place’ (Özdemir, 2015).

VI.IV. CONCLUSION

Frenzy successfully registers the historical sensorium of contemporary Turkey by exposing a collectively shared atmosphere through the story of two brothers. The affective emotional engagement of the audience is not maintained by familiar and identifiable characters or story. The story of the brothers is set out as a laboratory where both macro events and the ordinary intersect and intimately felt (Ashcraft, 2017). The affective realism of the film is built not by the familiarity of the characters, their experiences or the story, but by conveying the audience the felt ‘quality of the experience’, a familiar sensation which is not understood or named yet, but affectively felt (Massumi, 2009, p. 5). As previously

mentioned, the characters may be viewed as outsiders who wouldn't easily evoke sympathy. However, Alper's intention is also beyond offering a window onto the marginality of the characters and the story. Rather, the distance created invites us to question our cliched 'perceptions of reality' by evoking a 'different experience of it by making reality itself appear more intensely *sensible*.' (Abel, 2013, p. 16). This sensibility confronts us with something ''real' enough…but that usually remains outside of our day-to-day purview' (p. 16). An identitarian or representational logic does not invoke the historical consciousness of the present, but rather, through registering the 'affective residue that constitutes what is shared among strangers beneath the surface of manifested life' (Berlant, 2015, p. 191). Film elicits the common feelings of living in the same atmosphere for the audience.

Several scenes on open TV screens at the background, broadcasting news about the terror attacks and explosions taking place in Istanbul, remind what the Turkish audience is accustomed to watching on their own TVs every day. The film conveys what it feels like to live 'in proximity' to a pervasive violence that is 'so systemic and intensity-magnetizing' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 73). The audience never learns what kind of terrorist organisation is being referred to and what they want. However, it is not so hard for the Turkish audience to recollect memories of past and present crisis. The terror attacks communicated through TV screens, the dark streets with garbage bins and cars burning and police trucks passing would remind the Turkish audience of the street fights and blockades that took place in Gazi Mahallesi (Istanbul), or anywhere else that has been kept under curfew and blockaded since the Suruç explosion (July 2015) where more than 30 people died. Consequently, although not everyone has the same proximity to or experience of the events, the affective atmosphere of the story communicates to the Turkish spectator the 'you-are-thereness' of this ongoing present, recalling 'what it means to feel and to be historical at a particular moment' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 847; 845).

In the final analysis, *Frenzy* not only represents the present crisis in Turkey, but is a cinematic affective response mediating a shared historical time in which the Turkish audience is not positioned as passive witnesses but rather as active participants. As Berlant underlined, the story of two brothers 'becomes delaminated from its location in someone's story or some locale's irreducibly local history' and transforms into the 'evidence of something shared' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 12). Although Frenzy ends with a tragedy as the characters' fears and paranoias are justified, and none of them could have survived, in my contention, the film still projects the sense of a 'collective desire to survive' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 87).

CHAPTER VII

IVY: INFANTILIZED CITIZENS

Ivy is the second feature film of Director Tolga Karaçelik. The film has been screened at many international film festivals and won several awards, including the Cineuropa Prize at the Lecce European Film Festival in 2016 (Caruso, 2016). The film tells the story of six men stranded on a large ship, off the Egyptian coast because the ship owner has gone bankrupt. They have spent days on the ship since the company was not allowed to pull it into a port. Their passports have been seized. Most of the crew left the ship, six volunteers staying behind to wait for a legal resolution. One of them was the captain, 'Beybaba', the mechanic Ismail, the cook Nadir, and three newcomers Cenk, Alper and Kurd. After days of being stuck on the ship, with scarce food supplies and no news from the agency, the ship turns into a claustrophobic prison in the middle of nowhere. The captain, who tries to maintain his authority and power through a divide and rule policy, only seeds suspicion and mistrust among the crew. The increasing tension, hopelessness and paranoia turn the six men against each other, culminating in a crisis of total insanity, sometimes manifesting as violence against each other. Especially after the disappearance of Kurd, with the suspicions that Cenk might have thrown him from the ship, everything turns into a common nightmare, as the ghost of Kurd haunts the ship.

The film starts with a prologue section introducing the characters to familiarize the audience with their lives before joining the crew. Nadir, the cook, is lying on a sofa watching the news on TV. Cenk is lying on the street, with bruises on his face, beaten up by someone. Then we see Ismail, who is performing his prayers in the mosque. When all praying men turn their heads in the opposite direction, he looks surprised at the camera. Next, we see Alper, a taxi driver, who looks frightened when a customer gets in the taxi. He stares at the audience from the rear-view mirror. Kurd, a bodyguard at a night club, also looks at the camera with

frozen looks. Finally, the captain Beybaba is drinking Raki at a Turkish bar (Meyhane) who also stares at the camera. At the end of the prologue section, the Ivy is introduced like a character, wrapping around some old tombstone (Serter, 2016). Such a prologue in which characters look directly at the audience creates a Brechtian alienation effect (Akmeşe & Parsa, 2016, p. 542).

The name 'Beybaba'— 'bey' (Mr.) and 'baba' (father) — has a special meaning in Turkish, referring to an authoritarian father figure. The captain is likewise an authoritarian man by using all means of fear and oppression. Ismail, the first officer, is the only person Beybaba trusts the most. He even treats Ismail differently from the others, telling him that he is his right hand and should keep an eye on the others. İsmail is a religious and conservative figure and the social type that always complies with authority. However, having been given such responsibility and position, Ismail imitates Beybaba and occasionally exercises oppressive authority on the others. His increasing authoritarian manner causes problems with the other crew, especially with Cenk, who is a junkie and a rebellious person. But Ismail always legitimizes his acts as if they were ordered by Beybaba. Although he trusts Beybaba so much, he is sometimes disappointed by Beybaba's insulting reactions toward him. Moreover, when Kurd is lost, Ismail is the one who is accused of his disappearance by Beybaba. Losing his trust and feeling of security, he is disappointed but never revolts against his captain. Ismail portrays the hypocrisy of a character, the downtrodden who can transform from the victim to the oppressor when he is given power; as Cenk talks about Ismail: 'If you want to know them, you should give power to them'.

Nadir is the young cook. We understand from his dialogue with Beybaba that he is a member of the Roma community. As he watches the news, he learns that the houses in the Sulukule district — inhabited mainly by Roma people — are to be destroyed by the government for an urban renewal project. He is very worried about his family and asks

Beybaba if he can leave the ship to be with his family, but Beybaba does not allow him. The answer Beybaba gives to Nadir is interesting to quote here: 'the state would never leave anyone on the streets.' He convinces Nadir that he should continue working and sending money to his family. Nadir does not have the willpower to resist authority. He usually complies with orders and authority without any question.

Alper made friends with Cenk quickly and they both drink and use drugs. However, he is more compromising and not so much rebellious as compared to Cenk. He prefers to solve the problems more rationally. According to Akmeşe and Parsa (2016), Alper is a character 'representing the great majority of Turkish society, preferring a midway, who leads his life without causing any problems, the representative of the urban population whose only reactions are confined to short flare-ups' (p. 550). He is not a risk-taking type, but rather likes to go with the flow. Alper is also the only crew member who did not have any hallucinations during the final scene; indeed, he is the only solid person who intervenes in the crisis by helping Ismail, who is beaten up, and Nadir, who has cut his wrists on that final horrific night. Furthermore, he is the one who calls for Beybaba, who locked himself up in his room, to intervene in the crisis. With these features, Alper recalls the 'voice of the Turkish youth', having common sense but lacking any experience to solve problems (Akmeşe & Parsa, 2016, p. 550).

As we first see Cenk beaten and lying on the street, we understand that he came to the ship to escape some big trouble. He is a typical junkie, a misfit, and an impostor. He tells Alper why and how he was beaten up on the first night. He was visiting houses pretending to be coming from the state electricity authority. Mostly cheating housewives, he collected money by accusing them of using electricity illegally. During his last visit, the house was owned by a man who works for the electricity authority. Cenk was beaten up badly. When Alper accuses him that what he is doing is stealing, Cenk legitimizes his actions by saying

‘but they are also stealing electricity, too’. He tries to avoid working as much as possible; however, with Ismail’s orders to keep him busy, he becomes more aggressive and rebellious. As the days pass, Cenk runs out of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, and he asks for the key to the medicine cabinet which Ismail keeps. The tension between Ismail and Cenk resembles the clash of lifestyles between the Islamist and the secular-liberal groups.

Kurd was working in a nightclub as a bodyguard, as seen in the first scene. It is not clear why he left his job and decided to come on to the ship. He is a huge figure with scary facial features. He never speaks, only saying his name —‘I am Kurd’— when he first arrives to the ship. In contrast to his scary physical features, he is silent and peaceful and complies with authority. He never gets into a fight or answers back Cenk’s and Alper’s verbal abuses. He also acts as a balancing figure, silently helping Ismail to keep order. However, his disappearance one night makes the crisis worse in the ship, mainly for Ismail.

VII.I. ANXIETIES OF BARE SURVIVAL

Shortly after embarking from Istanbul, close to the Egyptian shore, the ship’s owner goes bankrupt and disappears. As the owner did not pay the port fee, the Egyptian port authority seizes the ship. The majority of the crew departs the ship, leaving six men behind. The optimistic atmosphere for the new voyage at the beginning of the film transforms into a mood of stuckness, uncertainty and pessimism as the days pass. The optimism dissipates over days, then months, leading to growing tension, depression and aggression among the crew. With no news from the ship company and diminishing supplies–of the food, alcohol and cigarettes–coupled with the boredom of watching the same videos or the Egyptian TV, the feelings of stuckness deepen, with no hope of a solution. Especially when Cenk runs out of weed, he becomes more hostile to everyone. The situation worsens as Beybaba prefers to lock himself in his room. Rather than sharing any information or news with the crew, he becomes meaner and more oppressive towards them.

The men's physical confinement on the ship transforms into an 'existential immobility', a condition that they cannot escape from but is 'experienced, ambivalently, as an inevitable pathological state which has to be endured' (Hage, 2009, p. 97–98). Without any choices or power over the situation, the crew can do nothing but has to endure the situation by waiting. It becomes 'an ambivalent' process for the crew that 'involves both a subjection to the elements or to certain social conditions and at the same time a braving of these conditions' (p. 102)

Ivy is also a film about the loss of a sense of time. As the ship is stuck in the middle of the sea, the films gives the sensation that time was not flowing on the ship anymore; even, time was wrapping them as 'an oppressive blanket' (Caruso, 2016). Karaçelik explained in an interview, how he tried to create this loss of the sense time only through the rhythm of the characters and the rhythm of the film:

> For me the biggest issue in filmmaking is about rhythm. The rhythm of the characters starts with the dialogues, and also the rhythm of the film. After deciding each character's rhythm and the film's rhythm, there comes this issue of time. I believe that the concept of time, through its uniqueness and unity, is something that you can make sincere or insincere in a movie. At times, I tried to combine this concept of time and deal with it as a single unit. (Caruso, 2016)

As the days pass by, the ship has turned into a prison, driving the characters to the verge of insanity. Like in Samuel Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the ship in Ivy also becomes a phantom ship, 'trapped between realms, even as the crew themselves are trapped alive-in-death' (Alder, 2016, p. 12). The crew stuck physically in the ship as well as in their own internal chaos, becoming more hostile and violent to each other. Paranoia and delusions grip everyone particularly after the disappearance of Kurd.

The fight between Cenk and Kurd on the deck one night before his disappearance gives the impression that Cenk has thrown him from the ship. Following that day, some of the crew start to see Kurd's ghost wandering in different parts of the ship. Although nobody was scared of Kurd when he was around, despite his huge and scary appearance, all men became fearful and anxious after his disappearance (Akmeşe & Parsa, 2016).

The disappearance of Kurd invokes the curse reminiscent of Coleridge's poem, in which the ancient mariner's ship and the crew are cursed after the Mariner kills an albatross. Karaçelik's choice of inserting Coleridge's poem is significant for connecting the film's theme and particular visual images. The evocative presence of the poem functions like 'a visual medium' (Deren, 1953, p. 172), contributing to the flow of the story. Besides, as the story extends into a fantasy-oriented realm as the film proceeds, blurring the boundaries between fact and fantasy for the audience, recalling Maya Deren's comment on film and poetry, Coleridge's poem 'creates visible … forms for something that is invisible, which is the feeling, or the emotion, or the metaphysical content of the movement' (Deren, 1953, p. 174). Therefore, the combination of the visual imagery and the poetic verse connects the audience more intimately to the scenes and the film by engaging them viscerally and intellectually.

The prologue section that gives hints from these six men's lives, followed by these verses from Coleridge's poem, communicates how some of them come together in the ship, as if running away from an enemy:

> With sloping masts and dipping prow,
> As who pursued with yell and blow
> Still treads the shadow of his foe,
> And forward bends his head,
> The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
> And southward aye we fled (Coleridge, 1834)

The second part of the films starts with the scene where the six men watching the rest of the crew leaving the ship. The verses of the poem before the scene is a poetic reminder of the tension that is about to build soon, describing the eerie silence before the storm. After the mariner kills the albatross, a dreadful stillness grips the sea and the ship as a sign of the curse cast upon them for killing the albatross:

> Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
> 'Twas sad as sad could be;
> And we did speak only to break
> The silence of the sea! (Coleridge, 1834)

The verses used before *Ivy*'s third section is the messenger of a similar trajectory of fear and paranoia that will soon wrap up the crew, like in the old mariner's ship. As the mariner has been left alive but alone after all the sailors were killed, the crew in *Ivy* will soon be in constant fear and suspicion, even afraid of turning around to see what is chasing them:

> Like one, that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And having once turned round walks on,
> And turns no more his head;
> Because he knows, a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread. (Coleridge, 1834)

The psychological thriller drifts into the fantastical and supernatural with the final part. The tension among the crew reaches its peak one night. All the crew–except Alper–drawn into a state of delirium. Ismail wakes up to find out that he has wet his bed. On his way to the bathroom, he sees the shadows and the wet footprints of Kurd. With a sense of uncontrollable panic, he screams to Nadir. Nadir runs out of his room to find Ismail lying on the floor, bleeding from the head. At this point, things become more delusional both for the crew and the audience. Nadir witnesses with frustration and fear that ivy instead of blood grows out of Ismail's wound, spreading to the ship's corridors. With an insane panic, he goes

back to his room and cuts his wrists. What comes out from Nadir's cut wrists is not blood but again the ivy sprouts. As Serhat Serter (2016) pointed out, it is interesting to notice that the only two persons who hallucinate about the ghost of Kurd and the ivy were Ismail and Nadir, both of them the characters who comply with authority without questioning, they were the ones who were drawn into the vortex of governing power and thus it is they who feel guilty about Kurd's disappearance (p. 124).

While Ismail and Nadir are having such hallucinations inside the ship, Cenk is outside on the deck, apparently feeling high on the medications he has stolen from the medicine cabinet. This is also another confusing scene for the viewer. The deck is covered with countless snails and Cenk is crying, jumping, shouting and even dancing among them. After a final night filled with hallucinations and horror, the film ends the following day when everything has cooled down. Even Kurd is seen sitting on the deck under the Turkish flag. They all gather at the deck and Cenk asks Ismail, 'Do you have the keys to Beybaba's cabin?' Ismail's look without saying anything gives the impression that this time he will collaborate with the whole group and resist Beybaba. While the crew is talking to each other, we watch Beybaba talking on the phone, crying for help.

VII.II. ATMOSPHERE: A SHIP IN THE PURGATORY

The huge ship set as the only location of the film does not simply constitute a background for the story. Instead, it has an outstanding role in developing the major plot, characterizing the film's atmosphere and informing the characters' psychological and emotional experiences. The choice of a ship as a filmic space, in my contention, contributed significantly to convincing the audience 'of credibility of the world represented' and building a 'dramatic meaning, by the way characters are placed in relation to both setting and each other' (Blandford et. All, 2001, p. 220, qtd in Wood, 2002, p. 372).

The ship–with its unique architecture, based on divisions of functionality like the deck, machine room, cabins, the watchtower, and narrow corridors–is a dreary and claustrophobic space in which the atmosphere of control and hierarchy can be easily visualized and sensed (Şener, 2016, p. 155). In *Ivy*, the ship's claustrophic atmosphere is skillfully projected on the screen by cinematographer Gökhan Tiryaki's 'long, drawn-out shots of the ship itself, allowing the audience to feel its weight, its creaky deck, and the general atmosphere of a place that can at once be so comfortable and so sinister' (Hobbins, 2016). The dimly lit corridors resemble a labyrinth, with no view of the outside world, and particularly the scenes of the huge vast dark area in which the crew searched for Kurd with flashlights mediate the feelings of growing anxiety and hopelessness.

The claustrophobic cabins, where the crew spends their free time, are shot at low angles combined with close-ups, portraying the narrowness of their living spaces and their alienation and loneliness (Şener, 2016, p. 156). Even at daytime and in open spaces like the deck, the atmosphere of incarceration can still be sensed. Each time the shoreline is viewed from the deck of the ship, it stands still like an unreachable expanse of freedom, a reminder of their imprisonment for the crew (p. 156–157). It is the space of certainty, optimism, and resolution, where time flows with the clock. However, as the film proceeds, each day the spectacle of the shoreline turns into a ghostly presence with its stillness haunting them, like a reminder of their hopelessness.

Ships are liminal spaces and due to their unique existence they are frequently imagined as gothic spaces. Michel Foucault (1986) described this state of liminality by referring the ship as the 'heterotopia par excellence': it is 'a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea' (p. 27). Like a bridge, a ship also 'connects to and yet separates itself from the rest of the world' (Johnson, 2016, p. 12). They paradoxically invoke both a

sense of freedom and incarceration. As Foucault (1961/2006) wrote in his *History of Madness*,

> Locked in the ship from which he had no escape, the madman was handed over to the thousand-armed river, to the sea where all paths cross, and the great uncertainty that surrounds all things. A prisoner in the midst of the ultimate freedom, on the most open road of all, chained solidly to the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger par excellence, the prisoner of the passage. (cited in Johnson, 2016, p. 12)

The fantastical scenes when ivy leaves cover the ship's walls and the snails crawl on the deck intensify the liminal existence of the ship. Finally the wandering of Kurd’s ghost even expands the impression that the ship has become a ‘phantom ship’. The liminality transforms into a state of being not alive but also not dead, real but unreal at the same time. Not voyaging, the ship's existence has transformed into the perpetual liminality of a ghost ship, haunting its crew.

VII.III. PARANOIA: CRISIS OF INTERPRETATION

Days of waiting with diminishing supplies and not being entitled to any information lead these men towards a paranoid mood, which can be defined as ‘a sense of loss both in the material sense of the waste and dilapidation as well as in the sense of existential deprivation and disorientation’ (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995, p. 339). The paranoid hallucinations do not stem from ‘an irrational, unjustifiable and delusional sense of reality’ but emerge as a coping mechanism of a crew forced to live in a hellish zone of non-being and whose subjectivities are destroyed both with having to stay alive and not being entitled to knowing (Bakola, 2007, p. 29). The crew’s mental deterioration and hallucinatory episodes, as mutual products of their internal and external anxieties reveal symptoms of a slowly growing massive anxiety

and a defense mechanism to cope with a chaotic and uncertain reality that they have no power to control.

While the crew is pushed into a 'crisis of knowledge', Beybaba 'narcissistically situates himself at the center', assuming the position of 'the subject supposed to know', who has the sole power to control which information is shareable or not (Bakola, 2007, p. 9). Naturally, the crew demands to know when this stuckness and impasse of uncertainty will be over, but as they are not given any answer or information, their suspicious and paranoid imagination overtake them as a psychic reaction to a crisis in their present reality.

At the simplest explanation, paranoia in *Ivy*, like in *Frenzy*, becomes something affectively sensed and experienced against the 'officially sanctioned reality' (Bakola, 2007, p. 9). Thus, the paranoia experienced in *Ivy* embraces both a crisis of interpretation as well as agency panic. As Bakola (2007) reminded, paranoid thinking is an epistemological force 'provides the comforting sense of being able to know and understand as well as showing one's ability to create a sense of order out of states of disorder' (p. 20).

All through the film, these six men experience what Lauren Berlant defined as a 'slow death'. Slow death reveals 'the physical wearing out of a population in a way that point[s] out to its deterioration as a defining condition of its experience and historical existence' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 95). In this respect, *Ivy*, narrates how a 'structural subordination and governmentality' weakens the subjects physically and psychologically (p. 95). The whole duration on the ship is a passive 'waiting out' for a solution to resolve the ongoing crisis. However, since no information about a future solution is shared with them, the ordinariness of life or of a crisis is transformed into a distraction and incoherence diffused over endless temporality. The deterioration of life on the boat as the days pass is portrayed as a physical and mental slow death, wearing out the subjects' 'affective sense of autonomy' and

sovereignty against the increased authority and uncompromising governmentality of the main sovereign power, Beybaba (Berlant, 2011a, p. 96).

In an interview, Karaçelik declared that he wanted to show 'what would a hierarchy that has lost its grounds would do to maintain its power' (Güvercin, 2015). The uncompromising rule of Beybaba also reveal a form of citizenship—what Lauren Berlant calls as 'infantile citizenship' (1993). Lauren Berlant's notion of 'infantile citizenship' offers crucial insights for reflection at this point. Since in my contention, Karaçelik's film offers an exceptional portrait of how citizenship is experienced in Turkey currently and how this sense of citizenship is closely entangled with paranoia, other than the 'affectionate feelings and bonds' assumed by diverse theories of citizenship (Weikle-Mills, 2008, p. 43). Notwithstanding differences in their emphasis, all citizenship models attribute importance to several feelings such as a sense of belonging, sharing a common fate, patriotism, loyalty and such. In addition to the duties and rights as members of a nation, citizenship requires some affectionate bonds that will give the sense of a genuine membership to the community they belong to and keep them together. Furthermore, sense of citizenship is closely connected with 'the terms on which they participate in collective life and the forms of agency they are able to exercise' (Isin and Wood 1999, p. 22 qtd in McGee, 2014, p. 38). Thus, a crisis or a loss of sense of agency directly affects on how 'citizens mediate their relationship to political power' (Sturken, 1997, p. 77).

Although exclusively evolving her theory on American culture and understanding of citizenship, Berlant's concept of 'infantile citizenship', is universally applicable, particularly in understanding Turkey's current anxieties and rising paranoia. Berlant's analysis draws attention to the 'affective context in which the citizen is not only disempowered but also situated within the subjectivity of the child, with childlike emotional responses and childlike naivete' (Sturken, 2012, p.360). As Sturken (2012) commented on Berlant's analysis, she

underlined that ‘it is this unknowing and naivete that allows the infantile citizen to “unsettle, expose, and reframe the machinery of national life” yet also to then be paternalistically contained within it’ (p. 360).

As Berlant and Sturken reminded us, infantilization is exercised not only through citizens’ political agency but on a daily basis in our everyday lives as a part of this imagined citizenship (Sturken, 1997) Creating citizens as infants means expecting them to behave as one, such as demanding a blind embracement of the decisions and the rules–in short, consenting to authority, without asking questioning or criticizing. But most importantly, it manifests itself in citizens’ capacities to generate agency for change.

Beybaba’s continuous infantilization of the crew to maintain his paternal and patriarchal authority is visible throughout the film. In particular, when one night Nadir, Cenk and Alper enter Beybaba’s room to tell him that they are concerned about what is happening, his outrage clearly conveys that these men are cut off from their basic right to information about what is going on or what will happen. They are seen by Beybaba as totally dependent on the sole authority’s freedom to reward or to punish them. He answers furiously, ‘Don’t you worry and go back to your rooms. I do the worrying!’ When they insist, he accused them by shouting: ‘Are you rioting?’ In another scene, when Nadir talks about his worries that the state will demolish his family’s house, Beybaba’s dismissal of the discussion, saying that the ‘state would never leave anyone on the streets’, is also another example of his infantilization.

Cenk and Alper are more easily assumed to be childish due to their deviant behaviors and visible drug addiction. Beybaba sees them as children who need to be watched and kept busy. Kurd is already politically infantile for him. This is one of the significant points where Karaçelik draws an analogy between the infantilized crew to the whole Turkish society, through ‘attribution to normal-style citizens of zero-sum mnemonic, a default consciousness of the nation with no imagination of agency’ (Berlant, 1997, p. 50).

Beybaba, maintaining his authority and power through "divide and rule" policy, only seeds suspicion and mistrust among the men. Besides, letting them face their bare existence alone with his infantilizing attitude towards the crew destroys their sense of basic security and trust and leads these men to ultimately regress to an infantile state longing for a parental protection (Berlant, 2011a). Sentenced to enduring a 'slow death,' their trust in the world that 'keeps people attached to optimism of a particular kind' is totally destroyed (Berlant, 2011a, p. 42).

The film questions the issue of sovereignty beyond the interruption of a sense of agency. Instead, it is a matter of life and death, recalling Achille Mbembe's concept of 'necropolitics' (2003). Mbembe proposed viewing sovereignty in our contemporary age as residing in 'the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who may die' (2003, p. 11). To him, 'to exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power' (Mbembe, 2003, p. 12 cited in Berlant, 2011a, p. 96). Through necropolitics, as an ultimate expression of sovereignty, 'a new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*' (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40).

Similar to Mbembe's exceptional approach towards sovereignty, Berlant underlines that Michel Foucault's notion of biopower is not a substitution for sovereignty but what reshapes it through 'the power to *make* something live or to let it die, the power to regularize life, the authority to *force* living not just to happen but to endure and appear in particular ways' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 97). Therefore, Beybaba as the sovereign authority is not only condemining these men to death, but forcing them to lead a life as something to endure. In words of Berlant, as sovereign agency, he exercises his power through condemning the crew to a 'life to endure or not' (p. 96).

The condition of crisis, as promised by Beybaba to be solved in the near future, transforms into a permanent crisis which has been ‘normalized and institutionalized itself.’ (Sithole, 2014, p. 172). Referring to African context, Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman (1995) argued that crisis is a ‘constitutive site of particular forms of subjectivity’ that affects subjects both materially and imaginatively (p. 323). To them, this also suggests that everyday life becomes the space in which the crisis is felt and lives ‘as a limitless experience… los[ing] its exceptional character and in the end, [appears] as a “normal”, ordinary and banal phenomenon’ (p. 325). Equally crucial is to recognize the role of ‘the sovereign power in the affective dynamic of subjection’ and crisis of the subject (Duschinsky et. all., 2015, p. 223). By normalizing the lived experiences of a crisis, 'the sovereign power deprives the subjects’ sense of agency and coping skills, pushing them deeper into an ‘existential crisis’, which they cannot actually make sense of (Sithole, 2014, p. 202).

It is also significant to notice that despite their differences in background or relationship to authority, the crew are all pacified and reduced from being subjects to objects of Beybaba’s non-compromising authority. This stance disappoints Ismail and Nadir more than the others since they have always complied with and respected authority. Their expectations of reciprocity between obeying the rules are not realized. Their subjugation to authority as hardworking and obedient workers did not make then ‘a good subject of the promise’ in the eyes of Beybaba, who promised to care for them (Berlant, 2011a, p. 184). As apparent in several scenes, Beybaba’s reactions toward Ismail and Nadir are more aggressive than other crew members. Both are punished more severely than Cenk or Alper, who were disobedient from the beginning. İsmail and Nadir’s situation demonstrates that not all subjection operates with obvious oppression or aggression, but through creating an attachment to power and privilege like an ‘infantile dependency’, ‘where the subject negotiates an overdetermined set of promises and potentials for recognition and even

thriving' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 184). Unlike Cenk and Alper, Ismail and Nadir's obedience, in the manner of a child's dependency and attachment also explains their patience with the injustice at their own expense (p. 184). Approached from such a perspective, especially in Ismail's case, 'the scene of attachment appears less as the site for the negotiation of basic needs for protection with a concrete figure of power and more as the site where an affirmative impulse towards existence seeks recognition, acknowledgment, reciprocity'(Duschinsky et. all., 2015, p. 233) .

VII. IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the film *Ivy* constructs an outstanding analogy between the story of six men on a ship leading nowhere and the current crisis of a nation plagued with anxiety and uncertainty. *Ivy*, narrating the slow death of a group of men, infantilized by authority, reflects on the *wearing out of* the Turkish nation. The ship acts as a silent character, through which Karaçelik exposes the country's state of being stuck in time and space. In the words of Gün (2016), drawing on Foucault's 'free slaves of the Ship of Fools', the crew's gradual sink into a delirium in the face of uncertainty indeed reflects upon the state of a similar oblivion in Turkey (p. 111). As Karaçelik stated:

> This story presented me with the opportunity to consider many things in terms of the authority and individual relations. I came to realize that certain things that apply to the trapped sailors would also apply to all of us. Our captains are becoming more and more conservative, even fascist, but are they aware that the oceans end. The ocean ended; a ship that does not sail is not a ship. If it isn't the time to ask what the sailors in the story do, will it be the right time tomorrow: 'What should we do with the captain now?'[31]

[31] Sarmaşık. *Ankara Sinema Derneği.* https://ankarasinemadernegi.org/en/listings/sarmasik/

It should be also mentioned that, like the bridge analogy, a nation as a ship is another commonly used political metaphor in Turkish, such as the saying: ‘we are all in the same boat’. Karaçelik in an interview, refered to this saying and asks: ‘this is an idiom frequently used by the rulers when things go wrong…but how long an authority can maintain its legitimacy with this idiom?’ (Gönülşen, 2015). Another Turkish film, *On Board,* directed by Serdar Akar (1998), similarly allegorized the ship as a nation. A few lines from this film emphasize this thought:

> A nation is like a ship. Everything should be in order and under control’, tells the captain of the boat to the crew: ‘I am like the prime minister, for example (...) when you start sailing, this small ship turn into a country (…) You are both the citizens as well as the officers. That’s why (…) we must watch ourselves and each other.[32]

As previously mentioned, the self-praised bridge metaphor used for Turkey does not always suggest positive connotations. Being destined as a bridge–like a ship going nowhere—unveils the double consciousness of the subjects, swinging in between the sense of otherness and the possibility of a future becoming, stucked in a continuum of negotiation. In consequence, not being destined to reach any destination, the nation embraces this isolation by praising it as a ‘precious loneliness’. As Karaçelik pointed out: ‘A ship that doesn’t sail is not a ship’ (Güvercin, 2015).

I suggest that Berlant’s argument on how infantile citizenship has formed the basis of the right-wing politics of the Reagan era, as a pattern, can similarly traced to the JDP’s understanding of the ideal citizen that is currently in effect. As a social engineering project, The JDP extensively demands absolute submission to authority from citizens, similar to a child’s obedience to parental authority. The autocratic and Islamist governance of Erdoğan,

[32] Altuntaş, Y. E. (2020, September 19). *Bir memleket gibidir gemi/Gemide (On Board-1998).* [Blog Post]. https://tuvayrek.wordpress.com/2020/09/19/bir-memleket-gibidir-gemi-gemide-on-board-1998/

with his aggressive rhetoric on women's rights, alcohol, secular education and lifestyles reinforced with policies and legal sanctions, apparently shows how infantilization of JDP targets not only political agency but exercised daily as a part of this imagined citizenship.

Besides Karaçelik's apparent intention to resonate with the current crisis in Turkey, *Ivy* is a successful film in terms of appealing to a diverse global audience by projecting a universalistic story. The affective aesthetics of the film offers an 'intimate realism' that involves any viewer affectively in the narrative (Facchin, 2015, p. 95). Without demanding character identification, the film invokes a visceral immediacy and intimate experience by foregrounding human vulnerability and 'summoning universality of possible questions to any human being' at the center of narration and aesthetics (Facchin, 2015, p. 99).

With their physical structures and universal symbolic meanings, ships have always been unique symbols and metaphors utilized in literature and cinema. As the film's sensuous space with its material and imaginative features, the ship calls for sensorial awareness and engagement of the audience. The physicality of the ship invokes a haptic experience, drawn either from the spectators' real-life experiences, memories or even from our imagination of places 'which we have never actually experienced, such as the evocation of tactile experiences in dreams or when reading' (Rodaway, 1994, p. 54).

As Foucault noted, since the 16th Century the ships have been 'not only the greatest instrument of economic development but also the greatest reservoir of imagination' (cited in Johnson, 2016, p. 1). The ship and other elements of nautical imaginary have generated rich metaphors that survived throughout the ages, with countless and diverse manifestations from ancient legends and mythology tales through contemporary art is both 'connecting and unravelling' for the spectator (Johnson, 2016, p. 12). In this respect, citations of Coleridge's poem and integration of the fantastical elements, by Karaçelik, derived from wide and diverse

nautical imaginary, geniously adds rich intertextual layers to the story, familiarizing the global audience to the viewing experience.

In terms of spectatorship, the sensory and emotional dynamics of the space of the film, which is claustrophobically set in a single location, are what dominantly guide our experience of the story. The incarcerating quality of the ship's space, with its confined inner spaces being surrounded by the vast open space of the sea, reinforcing feelings of isolation from any land, immerses its audience more in the flow of the story. Already viewing the film in the dark cinema theatre, sitting immobile, the spectators' gaze is left to focus on the visceral world of the ship and engage more emotionally and physically in the incarcerating atmosphere. Blended with fantastic elements and delusions, the spectator waiting for a narrative cohesion or even a catharsis focuses instead on the haptic qualities of the scenes to make sense.

CHAPTER VIII

INFLAME: CREATIVE PARANOIA

Inflame is the first feature film of Ceylan Özgün Özçelik. It is also the only film in this study directed by a female director and featuring a female protagonist. The film tells the story of a young woman, Hasret, who works as a documentary editor for a news channel. Her parents were killed in a car accident years ago, but she suspects something else happened to them. She keeps searching for information about the day her parents died, but she cannot find anything and descends into paranoia. She continuously thinks that something else happened the day her parents died, and the government erased its memory.

The news agency where Hasret works is ironically 'The Only TV' (TEK TV), whose motto is 'What you see is the truth, what you hear is the truth.' When she is transferred to the news editing department, she is disturbed to witness how the news is being manipulated and censored according to the government's demands. She tries to object to how the stories are edited, but she gets nothing more than threats from her boss. Particularly, when she is editing a story about some censored and oppressed Turkish artists, she becomes more obsessed with the death of her parents, who were Anatolian folk musicians.

VIII.I. ANXIETY: TRAUMATIC MEMORY

Hasret's suspicions about her parents' death are transformed into paranoia with frequent delusions as she witnesses the censorship in her job and watches the news every night on TV. The deserted apartment and neighborhood, gripped by the disturbing sounds of construction all day and night, contribute more to her nightmares and delusions. Hasret's suspicions and paranoia lead her to lock herself in her house, not go to work and not return any of her friends' calls. She spends days going through old photographs and cassettes she finds at the house. She keeps saying, 'The walls are too hot'; as the audience witnesses at the

end, she tears down the wallpaper to find a wall-size painting portraying people looking from the windows of a burning building. This is how she remembers that her parents were two of the victims killed in the Sivas massacre in 1993.

The Sivas massacre is one of the most traumatic events in recent Turkish history. On July 2nd, 1993, artists and intellectuals gathered for a commemoration of the 16th Century Ottoman folk poet Pir Sultan Abdal in the Madımak Hotel in Sivas, and were attacked by a mob made up of Sunni Islamists and nationalists. The mob set the hotel on fire killing 35 people. It could have been prevented if officials could have intervened in time and justice could have been served if all the suspects could be prosecuted (Tanyeri-Erdemir, 2012).

Although *Inflame* deals with a past traumatic event, Hasret is not a melodramatically traumatized character. She is not heroic either. Rather, her dullness, states of frustration and paranoia provoke a critical reflection from the audience on the issues raised by the film. Özçelik intentionally refrains from any affective sentimentality to be built with Hasret and the spectator in a melodramatic way. Unlike other Turkish films dealing with trauma, Hasret does not belong to any familiar victim-perpetrator dichotomies established with melodramatic excess. The film detaching the character from familiar forms of particular political, ethnic and social identities, expands the limits of spectatorial engagement to invite the audience to perceive the characters in a realm of vulnerability and precariousness of bare life. Hasret has something of the 'real', psychological person, ‘regardless of the level of abstraction and generalization in its presentation’ (Baker, 2020, p. 47). Not bringing any essentialized features of Hasret to the forefront, Özçelik lets the spectator use their senses and think intuitively before forming any opinions. Rather, she invites us to engage with Hasret’s intuitive intelligence following the signs such as the dog, the Tv screens, construction noises, and newspaper titles.

Fragmented visual and sensual images slowly coming to the surface, such as shadowy figures of men carrying brick, torches and the vague sounds of a mob chanting slogans, finally unveiled to Hasret the suppressed memory of the Sivas massacre. The obscure images and sensations which seem like delusions of Hasret's deteriorating mind, turn out to be flashbacks based on a real trauma–Sivas massacre–toward the end of the film, both for Hasret and the spectator.

Brief scenes of men with bricks in their hands walking in a smoky street, or the dog following Hasret, compel the spectator to search their knowledge and memories. These scenes constitute Özçelik's 'refusal to "explain" and neutralise the virtual image', and leave the audience in a state of doubt, suspicion and paranoia, forcing both Hasret and the audience to search the memory of 'other virtual images that might make sense of' them (Marks, 2000, p. 47).

Inflame is not one of those political films based solely on fetishization of a past trauma. The Sivas massacre is framed as a past traumatic event by Özçelik more as a window to comment on the present crisis. The film reflects the political climate and the ongoing crisis of Turkey, focusing on three interconnected domains. Firstly, the film mediates how the memory of a past trauma–Sivas massacre–is erased, haunting the 'present' like a nightmare. Secondly, the film explicates how media and govenment manipulate the past and the present in an Orwellian manner. Finally, the film also raises questions about the rapid urban transformation and the renewal of Istanbul, which is currently a highly debated and contested issue. The destruction of green spaces and historic landmarks, replacing them with ugly skyscrapers and shopping centers under the name of urban renewal not only destroys the city's texture. The government also uses urban renewal to erode the collective memory of the city and the people. Taken together, the film questions memory and forgetting at the

individual and collective levels, situating its story at the intersection of these three current crises.

As previously mentioned, Hasret is not a traumatized character in the conventional sense. She does not suit the traumatized subject, presumed by contemporary trauma scholarship to be overwhelmed by the repetition and belatedness of trauma. On the contrary, the trauma in Inflame does not prevent Hasret from experiencing 'the historical present impossible but possible' (Berlant, 2011a, p.81). As Berlant criticized, in trauma studies, repetition of trauma is generally accepted to hinder subject's 'capacity to imagine a beyond to the scene or the event that dominates the present' (Berlant, 2001, p. 43). Apart from repetition, the temporal belatedness of trauma, popularized mostly by Cathy Caruth's (1996) theory, essentializes trauma as an epistemological unknowability and denies self-mastery to the traumatized subject, who is accepted to be possessed by trauma (Berlant, 2011a, p. 80). As commonly assumed, the traumatized subject is restrained from making sense of the present or the future as s/he is deeply drowned by the past trauma. Instead, Berlant argued that Freud's concept of *Nachtraglichkeit,* –the après-coup or afterwardness– as an affective concept, connects the past trauma with the historical present by bridging,

> a sense of belatedness from having to catch up to the event; a sense of the double–take in relation to what happened in the event (…); a sense of being saturated by it in the present, even as a structure of dissociation; a sense of being hollowed out by the pressures of overdetermination; a sense of being frozen out of the future (now defined by the past). (Berlant, 2011a, pp. 80–81)

VIII.II. PARANOIA: CONTROL OF MEMORY

The paranoia in *Inflame* is triggered by Hasret's individual experiences, as she witnesses how the present memory is controlled and manipulated by the government.

However, since attempts to integrate multiple 'social, public and cultural narratives' (government, media, friends etc.) in order to make sense of her experience of what is happening in the ongoing present and what has happened during her parent's death have failed, all she is left with is the sensory modes of knowing and her intuitions (Somers, 1994, p. 614).

Hasret's paranoia, at the simplest sense, is based on the belief that 'the truth is being hidden from the view'; it is also about 'understanding the world in terms of connectedness, indeed perceiving it to be organized beneath the surface' (Sturken, 1997, p. 77). Paranoia in Inflame extends itself as a social practice, 'a specifically social way of responding' to political power. As Dana Polan explained:

> paranoia is not a force that comes in to disturb an already stable conjunction of power and knowledge; quite the contrary, paranoia may be a condition to which power and knowledge are responses—fearful retreats to a hoped-for position of security and reestablished authority. (1986, p. 15. cited in Sturken, 1997, p. 77)

However, compared to the other three films, paranoia in Inflame is mediated more as 'a positive state of mind', as an 'intelligent and fruitful form of suspicion,' since at the end she remembers and finds the truth about her family (Melley, 2002, p. 68). Hasret's conviction that there are things forced to be forgotten recalls Melley's 'operational paranoia', a condition characterized by an intense 'self-critical suspicion of the world' (Melley, 2000, p. 18). However, suspicion of the world is not a false sense of a pathological fear of persecution. Her intuitive discovery that 'everything is connected' (Bersani, 1989, p. 149) is not an unjustified, irrational delusion but, on the contrary, is a 'hermeneutical desire' manifested in the form of suspiciousness, to discover the 'emancipating tingle of madness' that is required to understand the 'corrupt nature of …her society' (Paradis, 2007, p. 44). Thus, it is a 'creative paranoia', as once described by Thomas Pynchon as a way of thinking about an individual

who is ‘isolated by his or her intuitive rejection of the invisibly totalitarian and (…) invisibly authoritarian substructure’ of the society s/he is currently living in (Paradis, 2007, p. 44). Hasret’s self isolation in the apartment does not originate from a fear of the outside world, but rather it is an act of ‘resistance to the iron cage’, which she finally manages to break through (p. 44). Ultimately, different than Alper’s films, Inflame allows a sense of optimism for the spectator: Hasret at the end decides to leave the house by breaking the window — as if running away from a burning building resembling the Madımak Hotel in Sivas — with the relief of solving the enigma and re-discovering the truth by remembering.

VIII.III. ATMOSPHERE: ENTRAPPED IN AN AMNESIAC CITY

Özçelik’s narration and the film’s claustrophobic atmosphere keep the audience in constant doubt, contributing equally to the experience of paranoia for the spectator. A dense claustrophobic atmosphere is created both indoors and outdoors. The film is one of the representatives of new cinema in which Istanbul is transformed into a city of nightmares, contrary to Yeşilçam cinema. Instead of its nature, historical places or any breathtaking view of Bosporus, Istanbul is framed more with its transformation of the city into a mega-city with endless construction. Hasret frequently wanders around construction sites, piled with steel and rubble and fenced old buildings waiting to be demolished. It is not Istanbul with its recognizable characteristics but any anonymous city. Istanbul even looks like a futuristic dystopian urban landscape, except the film uses ‘the real footage of today’s Istanbul’, not a futuristic one (Sharpe, 2017). The scenes reflect ‘all these true-to-life images’ compels us to realize the dystopic city in which millions live in (Sharpe, 2017).

Besides the claustrophobia felt in the cityscape, Hasret’s apartment is the other claustrophobic space, revealing her psychical entrapment. The apartment, which can be viewed as an analogy to a psychological prison created by Hasret herself, reflects her stuckness in a particular psyche. Hasret secludes herself inside this dark house filled with

boxes of letters, drawings, documents and cassettes left from her family. Through the end, the air inside the apartment becomes thicker and smokier and she keeps feeling hot, constantly complaining that 'the walls are very hot'. It gives the feeling as if something is burning in the building.

The 'cinematic claustrophobia as a feeling constituting closeness, entrapment and threat' is not only created through narrative but equally with a tangible visuality of Özçelik's aesthetic choices (Goodall, 2020). The perception of the increasing heat in the apartment mediates a haptic experience to the audience, reflected audio-visually with smoky air, the change of lighting and the sounds of something burning within the house. Besides these audio-visual elements of atmosphere, a sense of burning and suffocation is implied by haptic visuality, conveying Hasret's bodily senses of smell, her sweating and breathing hard, stimulating similar bodily sensations in the audience. Especially, the embodied sounds of her breathing viscerally convey the acute sense of anxiety and suffocation she is experiencing. Furthermore, her heavy breathing, and camera close-ups on her face and body gives a 'sharp sense of intimate exposure' (Goodall, 2020).

As Philippa Lovatt (2016) proposed, sounds of breathing express the private subjectivity of the character intensely and create a space for an 'intersubjective connection with others based on an epistemology of embodied memory and experience' (p. 169). Breathing contributes equally to the sensory intimacy between the viewer and the subjects of the film, as much as haptic elements. According to Davina Quinlivan (2012), sounds of breath within a film diegesis create a 'breathing encounter' between the body of the spectator and the body of the film, reproducing and enhancing the intimacy of the film's experience (p. 21).

Hasret's heavy breathing sounds, revealing both her state of mind and physical being, intensify the audience's proximity to the presence of the character. Her breathing body,

becoming haptic, builds an acute and a universal bodily identification with the character (Quinlivan, 2012). Inviting a bodily perception of the film, Hasret's breathing body engages viewers with her mental and bodily tension and suffering and sharpens the awareness of their breathing while watching the film (Quinlivan, 2012). In sum, Özçelik's framing, informed through haptic implications, invites the spectator to respond 'in an intimate, embodied way, and thus facilitate the experience of other sensory impressions as well' (Marks, 2000, p. 2).

Furthermore, Hasret's bodily reactions are not just physical symptoms of her deteriorating psychology. They unveil memories stored 'in the memory of the body', reminding of the experience of the massacre with feelings of suffocating, and burning, as her 'verbal and visual archives' are not available for her (Marks, 2000, p. 129). Although these are the individual sense memories of Hasret, they are also shared culturally. They are 'contagious,' meaning they are 'commonsense patterns of sense experience' affecting the audience (p. 195). Even if the audience does not have any knowledge or memory of the event, still the haptic visuality of senses 'informs each person's sensorium, the bodily organization of sense experience' (p. 2). Consequently, as Laura Marks suggested about films, *Inflame* activates 'inert presences, such as historical archives and fetish objects, and make them volatile so that they intervene in the present' (2000, p. 201). Bodily senses are not the only sources for Hasret in recovering her memories. When her efforts to recall her memory by going through the news about that day by talking to people were in vain, the sense memories she traced from photographs and cassettes became the only source of knowledge, recalling Marks' argument:

> When language cannot record memories, we often look to images. When images fail to revive memory, we may look to the well-kept secrets of objects. Unpacking the secrets encoded in images and objects, we find the memory of the senses. (2000, p. 195)

The more she dug through the pile of boxes full of letters, drawings and audio-cassettes left by her family, the more she remembered. Her parents' voices and the song performed by a little girl help her bring back various memories of the massacre.

VIII. IV. CONCLUSION

As mentioned previously, the main temporality of the film is the 'present', though it opens up to 'a past historical moment' through Hasret's delusions and episodes of remembrances, mobilizing anachronism to explore its affective life before it is coded into fixed meaning (Berlant, 2008a, p. 847). The trauma of the Sivas massacre is reflected as moments of painstaking engagement with the complex negotiation between past and present with 'a view of its own process of mediating the past from the position of the present' (Martin, 2011, p. 98). This is not to say simply that the events are narrated from a subjective point of view looking back from 2015. Rather, I argue that the film mediates the traumatic past historical moment of Sivas aesthetically: the massacre is embedded in 'the intensities of affective life' of the present history of the plot, 'whose activity provides a relay through which the historical can be said to be a space of time not yet overcoded with meaning, and that can be experienced before it is redacted' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 66). Government censorship, media manipulation, and urban transformation characterize the present history in Inflame as a state of uncertainty. The present is a temporality in which affective responses are produced both the crisis of ordinary life and the historical trajectories. Therefore, it can only be affectively experienced and comprehended by the senses (Berlant, 2011a). The history–the Sivas massacre itself– recorded in sense memories allows us to capture 'the affective apprehension of the historical present that might break the inert abstraction of official history' (Chen, 2015, p. 33).

Described as 'a psychological thriller based on a true Turkish nightmare,' in the press release, *Inflame* does not intend solely to reflect a past nightmare, but also one in the ongoing

present history[33]. The title of the film in Turkish, Kaygı (which means 'anxiety'), indeed suggests the political and social atmosphere of Turkey affected by neoliberalist politics, urban renewal, social hypocrisy, anxiety, and an authoritarian regime manipulating the truth and freedom of speech.

The Sivas massacre, set as the locus of collective memory in the film, is also the unifying element, through which Özçelik comments on the present crisis. Looking through a window of a past trauma onto the present crisis, she insistently reminds us how memories belonging to the ongoing present are being erased through media censorship and urban renewal as we are watching the film. The 'collective sense of historical present' as a shared atmosphere provokes the audience to feel 'what it felt like to live on in proximity to a suffused violence so systemic and intensity-magnetizing' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 73) by recalling the 'past-present' of the Sivas massacre. Capturing a 'history of an experience and experience of a history' to the audience, *Inflame* communicates to the spectator 'you-are-thereness' aesthetically: 'Sivas massacre' made present through 'making the past apprehensible as affective experience' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 847).

As Özçelik explained in an interview, her film 'intends to probe collective memory through the details of media and the individual circling a case of communal suffering' and she invites the audience to question memory and social guilt (Montpeller, 2017). Özçelik decided to focus on the Sivas massacre to question the politics of memory in Turkey, drawing from her childhood memories, watching the event on the TV witnessing people burning. Thus, she decided to make a film about 'memory and forgetting, but also about the oblivion generated by collaboration of the government with mass media (Vivarelli, 2017).

On the other hand, Özçelik's intention is not simply to draw attention to the manipulation and censorship of media, in line with the government's memory politics, but

[33] www.ceylanozcelik.com.

rather to demand a self-reflexive audience engagement with the film. Creating tension, doubt and paranoia as a locus of perception, *Inflame* demands that the audience question not the officially sanctioned reality, but their participation in its creation. For instance, Hasret's friends who are concerned but only witness the events without taking any action resemble the majority of society. They embody the silent masses, occupying a gray area between the victim and the villain. Hasret's friends are concerned with Hasret's psychological collapse, but it becomes clear that they are leaving her alone, watching her falling apart–just like people watched the Sivas Madımak Hotel burn down to ashes, and did nothing to intervene. Through them, Özçelik attempts to indict the film's audience, since they also passively watched and witnessed the events and history just like cinema spectators.

Furthermore, the dialogue in the beginning of the film among this group of friends warns the audience about social media activism, which Hasret criticizes as nothing more than an imaginary heroism we want to believe in. As she comments, through participating in social media activism, we just sleep with a clear conscience, without challenging or changing anything in reality. As Ulus Baker (2020) righteously argued, we are turning into a 'society of opinions', and lose our ability to 'create (what we may call) the 'life of affects' —an affective life...' (p. 5). The society of opinions has been problematized by Baker, in his several writings, as 'a social condition in which everybody has an opinion that is established through low-cost prefabricated signs about everything, but no one really has the knowledge of anything' (p. 169). In this society of spectacle, images not only deceive the audience but establish 'a new kind of relation to reality' (p. 169). For Baker, television is 'a society of opinions in itself, interpreting everything that passes through it—photographs, films, paintings, speeches, dialogues, and all kinds of documents… which they become clichés of themselves' (p. 163). Besides television, cinema, with its illusionary world, is 'an inherently

unconscious operation of opinion,' another element effective in creating a society of opinions (p. 135).

Inflame uses details in nearly every scene to refer to such issues, such as when Hasret looks at a newsstand and sees that different newspapers have exactly the same headline with exactly the same wording. Particularly, the TV speeches of a politician named Furkan Muzaffer, shown in the background frequently, give the audience a glimpse of the authoritarian and conservative governance of the country. Furkan Muzaffer, like many Islamist politicians, gives controversial speeches on present day political matters with an uncompromising manner. The content of his speeches is significant for the current political situation and the Sivas massacre. In one of his scenes on the TV screen, he justifies a violent event that took place in a provincial city, saying that 'people are provoked by the ones who try to create a chaotic environment' and 'our people are very sensitive about their religion there.' This sentence has a direct reference to the Sivas massacre. One of the reasons given for people having provoked was the participation of writer Aziz Nesin, who translated Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Legitimizing such violence by the government was already clear since the police and other armed forces did not interfere with the mob. Secondly, Furkan's speech also refers to the Gezi movement, when Erdoğan explicitly threatened the protestors saying that 'they were 50 percent of the population he was struggling to 'retain home,' defying the protesters in Gezi Park' ("Patience has its limits," 2013). Muzaffer also adds that 'our people gave the verdict' is the exact sentence Hasret sees on all the newspapers. Another scene of the same politician is also worth mentioning. In another speech on TV, Muzaffer says that 'not everyone can write anything that comes to mind in this country,' reminding us of the repression of freedom of speech and how Turkey has turned into a prison for journalists today.

Inflame comments on how the politics of memory also shapes the urban space, as in the case of Istanbul, where demolitions and reconstructions are systematically erasing urban memory and history. Urban renewal projects, especially as implemented in Istanbul, have been highly contested issues, even one of the main reasons for the Taksim Square/Gezi park protests that took place in 2013. Gezi protests mainly came into being to resist the commodification of Istanbul and interventionist politics of JDP in Istanbul.

Urban planning projects are used as a market disciplinary tool with Islamist governance, producing uneven and unjust urban spatial outcomes while creating new spatial lifestyles demanding new modes of behavior and subjectivities. Recently, neighborhoods like Sulukule – a historical Roman settlement – and Tarlabasi where sex workers and foreign immigrants reside were evacuated and destroyed to build new luxury apartments. The residents, who were urban poor, were forced to evacuate their home with brutal police force and resettle in places miles away from the city center where most of these people work.

Urban transformation of Istanbul can also be interpreted as JDP's neo-Ottomanist strategy, as part of Erdogan's project of recreation of Islamist national memory through urban planning and architecture. These urban interventions with Islamic and Ottoman features are autocratic controls by monumentalizing his power in urban space (Akçalı & Korkut, 2015). Ottomanization of public spaces indeed reflects Erdogan's spatial and symbolic attempt to re-conquer Istanbul. According to Ömür Harmanşah, 'this Ottoman legacy in the official discourse of Erdoğan's government marks an important reversal of the long-term nationalist discourse of the secular state in Turkey, which had distanced itself from the Ottoman past for the construction of a Turkish identity fully entangled with European modernism' (Harmanşah, 2013). The relentless transformation of the urban space is a means of erasing a collective memory and a spatial history, thus a means of forced amnesia, not to mention its effects on the lived experience of the city.

Consequently, Özçelik's film successfully generates an affective 'image of thinking' for the audience, in Ulus Baker's sense (Baker, 2016, p. 29). The film critically comments on the manipulating images of the media in generating 'opinions' and demands the viewer to think over the possibility of visualizing a historical experience as 'concrete life experiences' as affects rather than opinions (Baker, 2020, p. 12). Challenging spectatorial sensation beyond any established ideological judgment or opinion, *Inflame* stimulates a politically and ethically concerned thinking and sensing of the history —past and present—for the audience.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

During the process of writing this thesis, I came across a booklet titled *The Lonely and Anxious Country Turkey* (Yalnız ve Endişeli Ülke Türkiye) published by Open Society Institute (2013), which notably supported my intuitive writing journey, on current cultural anxieties. Several global surveys cited in this book, ranking Turkey as one of the countries with the most negative and anxious outlook towards current world issues, provide evidence to the recent debates over 'the loneliness of Turkey'. It is prevalent among scholars to explain this anxious mood with the legacy of Sèvres Syndrome (Oran, 2005). As a reminder of the partitioning and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Sèvres Treaty created a deep fear in the national imagination based on the basic idea that 'Turkey will disintegrate like 1920' and that external forces are conspiring to weaken Turkey (Schmid, 2015, p. 13). Although the Treaty of Sèvres was never implemented, the widespread fear caused by its trauma has been haunting the national psyche for generations since it is reproduced systematically by the education system and the political culture (Erdoğan, 2014). However, as is pointed out by this booklet and emphasized in this study, looking through the lens of historical traumas like the Sèvres Syndrome or the country's troubled experience of modernization would be a limiting perspective to explain the country's lonely, insecure and anxious climate today. The historical sentiments abiding in the national subconscious cannot be denied, but it is also the case that the emerging and the unexpected too often go unnoticed under the shadow of past traumas. Alternatively, this study has attempted to comprehend the historical present as a continuously transforming temporality on its own terms without ahistorisizing it. Thus, taking an unorthodox approach, I suggest capturing the current anxieties with all the continuities, ruptures and hybrid forms involved.

The main objective of this study is to explore how cinematic representations seize the current period in terms of cultural anxieties and paranoia experienced both as an ordinary crisis as well as projected in terms nation's imagination and negotiation of its identity. Following affect theories and film scholarship I proposed to grasp the affective apprehension and sensory experience of the present history, as reflected in Turkish Cinema. Mainly inspired by Laurent Berlant's methodology, I have tried to conceive 'a contemporary moment from within that moment', and track the sensations of a shared historical experience in all its vitality by focusing on the New Turkish Cinema films (Berlant, 2011a, p. 4). With this perspective, I chose four films that engage with the present experience through a unique affective realism. Apart from conveying a sense of verisimilitude for the Turkish spectator by recalling the current cultural-social and political realities, the films appeal to global spectatorship with their immediate and sensory aesthetics 'beyond their representational content and local context' (Naiboğlu, 2018, p. 100).

I narrowed my critical focus to anxiety and paranoia as affective experiences and felt sensations embedded in the historical present with cultural overtones apart from the clinical and neuroscientific understanding. Inspired by Ann Cvetkovich's insightful arguments on public feelings, the initial question I came up with is 'how do we feel together,' which framed this study. I contend that anxiety and paranoia have become two major affective sensations pervasively circulating in the present history. I also argue that both emotional states transformed into a structure of feeling in Raymond Williams' sense, powerfully shaping ordinary lives and guiding the historical consciousness of individuals and collectivities in contemporary Turkey (Harper, 2008). With this in mind, I have intended to read these films in the context of anxiety and paranoia, with their affective intensities and capacities to understand the shared 'public feelings' in Turkey (Cvetkovich, 2012, p. 13). The analysis also suggested that the films engage with the present history with unique aesthetic

expressions which correspond with the felt sense of this particular historical and cultural experience. The directors' experimentation with diverse genre conventions and performance traditions announce how affective intensities of crisis in the present history as a structure of feeling (Williams, 1977) inform not only the film narratives but also the representational strategies and aesthetic expressions of the images that consequently shape the affective perception of the viewers.

Writing about the present in the same present moment involved some limitations and complexities that I have tried to minimize by developing a conceptual and methodological framework unique to the subject matter. This included developing a 'concept-based methodology' which offers the interdisciplinary framework better understand the object of this study 'on its own terms' (Bal, 2002, p. 5, 8). I employed concepts of anxiety and paranoia as key conceptual and methodological tools indispensable for cultural analysis. Integrating the notion of atmosphere as another core conceptual category has also contributed considerably to understanding anxiety and paranoia as fluid and dynamic structures of feeling and as affective encounters with the present history.

Further to that, I have suggested interpreting the films without reducing them to representational assumptions about their context and sought to adopt a methodology that will approach the object as a 'subject participating in the construction of theoretical views' (Peeren, 2008, p. 3). Hence, the methodology developed in connection with the theoretical framework and the subject matter problematizes representation 'both in terms of the limits of the representational, and in terms of the nature of representation itself' (Moyano, 2020, p. 4).

Inspired by insights offered by recent affect studies redefining cinematic ontology, I tried to capture and interpret the affective intensities of the films without prioritizing their representational significance (Del Rio, 2008). In my contention, approaching the films in

terms of their autonomous capacities ‘to affect and to be affected’ allows us to uncover their potential for participating in new forms of knowledge.

With this perspective, this study has sought to differentiate itself from prevalent studies on Turkish Cinema, focusing on the affective capacities of films without reducing them to mere representations of the current social context. In that connection, at the core of this endeavor lies treating the films as the partakers in this ongoing present and acknowledging their significance, not in their commitment to mirroring an empirical reality of the social and cultural context of these senses coming into existence, but rather, by immersing the viewer into a ‘more intensely sensible’ experience of the reality (Abel, 2013, p. 16). I further claimed that the discussed films directly contribute to the production of this present history as aesthetical renditions of how we respond to this historical moment as an emerging temporality. Therefore, in lieu of an allegorical reading, I proposed to capture how films affectively engage the viewer, offering a different experience of reality beyond their habitual perceptions. The emotional and affective intensities of films not only (re)connect the viewer with the present history through stories that remain outside of vision but also challenge their engagement with accustomed perceptions of the world.

Configuring an affective cinematic ontology entails adjusting consistent epistemological sensibilities, which is another significant contribution of this study in the field. These can be briefly summarized as: approaching the films from an integrated lens of cinematic corporeality, and prioritizing an epistemology of ‘becoming’ instead of ‘being’. In terms of cinematic corporeality, this study is concerned with the sensuous and haptic qualities of cinematic bodies and the spectators’ embodied experience of the films. Since affective cinematic experiences are evoked primarily through the films’ aesthetic strategies apart from their narration, this study has attempted to understand how the films' materiality engages viscerally with the viewer's body. The sensations aroused in the viewer’s body are not simply

reducible to a pre-reflective, mimetic and physical response to the images, as frequently assumed for particular genres. In my opinion, the films discussed immerse any viewer in the 'non-representational affective experiences' of the images (Moyano, 2020, p. 15). However, they also offer the Turkish spectator a sense of immediacy and verisimilitude by invoking several culturally informed embodied sensations and memories.

Accordingly the notions of liminality and becoming are significant for this study from two aspects. First of all, liminality is an indispensable concept in contextualizing the films in contemporary Turkey, a country in which the sense of geographical and historical in-betwenness underlies deep-rooted cultural anxieties. Acting as a bridge between two civilizations and continents has been a celebrated metaphorical vision. However, the bridge metaphor holds several dilemmas for the nation and its subjects. Whether celebrated or condemned, this liminality is often experienced traumatically, as a state of wavering between two poles. The sadness of such an existence is disclosed frequently in terms of stuckness in limbo.

Liminality makes further sense at another level when we shift our attention away from the context to the films themselves. As unique examples of a cinema of crisis, these four films reflect on what it means and how it feels to 'exist in a moment of threshold', which may or not lead to a resolution or catharsis (Rogers, 2015, p. 1). Furthermore, with challenging narrative and aesthetic conventions, the films strategically redefine the relationship between the film and the viewer by inducing 'a crisis of spectatorship' (Lykidis, 2020, p. 31). I will explain more on how liminality informs 'aesthetics of crisis' transforming the film experience into a process of becoming further along in this chapter. But before that, I want to discuss how films comment on the inherent insecurities of living in a liminal state, reflected as anxious subjectivities on the screen.

The country's ontological (in)securities are not only manifested outwardly but also reflected 'onto society' (Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016, p. 509). The existential insecurities merged with prevalent ontological insecurities inform the discourses of political actors and affectively shape the collective imaginations and identifications (Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016). Anxieties felt individually are 'socially and politically produced' through the construction of 'the objects of fear, systems of meaning, and standards of morality' (Rumelili, 2015, p. 13). Like in *Beyond the Hill*, individuals and communities can be easily drawn into collective imaginations perceived as promising 'to reduce insecurity and existential anxiety' (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 741). The film critically comments on how individuals can be easily manipulated and moved by paranoid nationalist narratives. State level paranoias lead subjects to attribute alternative meanings to their ontological insecurities (Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016). The film confronts us with the country's dilemmas of belonging and inherent insecurities manifested in anxious subjectivities.

Alper and the other directors' choice of putting forward issues of belonging instead of clichéd identities mediates the affective forms of being and experience of living in the contemporary era, where conventional understanding of identities and belonging have been challenged with emerging forms of inclusions and exclusions (Benhabib, 1997, p. 8). In the modern age, a subject positions his/her 'existence in a historical situation and indicates to himself how he is going to deal with the reality surrounding him and what use he will make of the possibilities that are open to him' (Blumenberg, 1985, p. 138). Belonging offers more affective modes of being such as reflexive self-understanding or self-positioning, rather than disclosing 'stable marker[s] of sameness or difference' (Anthias, 2006, p. 20). Accordingly, the films engage us with characters with conflicting beliefs, traits and complicated mental states just like people in the real world. They are characters who exhibit unstable

personalities with hidden aspirations, who do not suit the audience's expectation of stereotypes or essentialized clichés of identities.

Furthermore, some characters' inability to act, resist or break the cycle can be interpreted as an impact of living in a state of liminality on subjectivities and self-understanding. Alper and Karaçelik's films accentuate paranoia as a crisis of agency, and shed light on the masculinity crisis. As mentioned in the Turkish Cinema chapter (Chapter IX), crisis of masculinity is a persistent theme in New Turkish Cinema after the 1990s, where films frequently narrate the stories of emasculated and passive male characters (Akbulut, 2011, p. 162). Likewise, Alper and Karaçelik's films problematize and criticize this masculinity crisis, but not in a melodramatic tone like other new cinema films. In both films, Alper brilliantly displays how the masculinity crisis manifested either with acts of hyper-masculinity or contradictorily as a state of fragility and powerlessness. According to Alper, the male problem in this country can be interpreted as a state of liminality: 'not being able to mature, but being trapped in adolescence' (Oğuz, 2015). The male characters in his films are emasculated and sometimes become childish. However, paradoxically they feel the need to prove their manhood through violence' (Oğuz, 2015).

Alper's comment reminds what Nurdan Gürbilek described as the sense of belatedness and the state of being 'locked up in childhood forever' (Gürbilek, 2001; 2004). Several literary critics like Gürbilek have underlined this state of liminality manifested with a loss of manhood in Turkish literature. Referring to the well-known Turkish novel *Losers* (*Tutunamayanlar) by* Oğuz Atay, Gürbilek concluded that one of the common characteristics of male characters in novels is their lack of 'omnipotence' (Gürbilek, 2001, p. 53). With the acceptance of Western ideals, men have lost the omnipotence of the father figure and their ideals. These men had to grow up ahead of time, but they always stayed like a child since they were alienated from their fatherhood ideal (p. 61). As Gürbilek emphasized,

being locked up in childhood is not a distinguishing feature of Oğuz Atay's characters but a unique characteristic of what Atay calls the 'Turkish soul' (p. 53).

The father-son conflict strongly resonates with Turkey's historical dilemma of being eastern/traditional or western/modern. The crisis of being in such a liminal state has been allegorized through a father-son conflict in Turkish literature and cinema, reflecting the clash between the East/tradition (the father) and West/modernity (the son) (Oktan and Akyol, 2016, p. 96). Before cinema, the father and son dichotomy was a recurring theme in literature since Tanzimat (Reorganization period of 1839–1876). Father-son conflict indeed reveals a paradox and a double crisis: the desire to liberate the self from the oppressing authority of the father and the anxiety of freedom caused by living without a father's protection. Kaan Kurt's (2019) analysis of novelist Oğuz Atay's male characters brilliantly summarized the crisis: 'as a dilemma of freedom and the need for a guiding father…a psyche that embraces simultaneously the desire for Westernization and the anxiety of being separated from a father' (p. 88). A similar restless state of mind in Turkish literature is also observable in Turkish Cinema. The father-son dilemma has been discussed extensively in Yeşilçam and New Turkish Cinema. Umut Tümay Arslan, examining Yeşilçam films, has concluded that this tension between fathers and sons was mostly resolved in 'guilty feelings and a desire to be punished by and in the name of the father' (Arslan, 2005, p. 213 cited in Oktan and Akyol, 2016, p. 98).

The father is a powerful figure in Turkish society and often a key concept for understanding the nature of power relations, from family to Turkish politics and even the history of Turkish Cinema. As a well-known fact, the state in Turkey has attributed a paternalistic status of a 'father state' (Öktem, 2020, p. 53). As Kemal Öktem pointed out, during the republican period, 'the control and instrumentalization of state apparatus' was a common objective and means of maintaining power for all ruling power groups, despite their

ideological differences (Öktem, 2020, p. 53). Turkish state always contained the dual nature of acting both as an authoritarian and an 'all-embracing' protective father role (p. 53).

All four films problematized this conflict by shedding light on omnipotent father figures[34]: Faik in *Beyond the Hill*, the police officer Hamza in *Frenzy*, Beybaba in *Ivy*, and the President in *Inflame*. The father figures establishing authoritarian control over the community and managing crisis through nurturing paranoia call into mind Tayyip Erdoğan's 'gradual transformation from a soft-Islamic, Western-approved politician to an omnipotent Father' (Somay, 2014, p. 2). With his aggressive rhetoric on women's rights, alcohol, secular education and lifestyles, he has transformed into a father who claims to know the best for people (p. 187). Erdoğan, who started his rule in his first years as a protective elder brother figure, apparently mimics Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in terms of taking over his place as the Father of the nation who is accepted uncritically in national and international arenas (Somay, 2014, p. 187).

The use of authoritarian father figures in the films also remarks infantilizing stance of Erdoğan's governance that expects absolute submission from the citizens. The authority figures in films reveal a form of 'infantile citizenship' that demands citizens' blind embrace of the ruling power (Berlant, 1993). Infantilizing the citizens always suggests the removal of any agency and collective criticism from citizenship, as in the case of the governance of Erdoğan, not only seeking to deprive citizens of their political agency but aims to exercise authority and intervene in all spheres of life and thinking.

However, contrary to mainstream cinema, the analyzed films do not build the tension on the lack of a protective father figure. Rather, the films apparently criticize the issue of obedience to omnipotent father figures. The characters' relationship with these father figures

[34] For a comprehensive coverage of the omnipotent father figurein Turkish political culture, see: Somay, B. (2014). *The psychopolitics of the oriental father: Between omnipotence and emasculation*. Palgrave Macmillan.

skillfully comments on how the emotional-affective dynamics of the ‘father figure’ is deeply embedded in the national psyche, shaping the subjects’ relation to the authority figures and with the state. In my opinion, unfolding the emotional-affective dimension of this father-child paradox is a remarkable feature of these films in terms of confronting the spectator to become ethically conscious of this emotionally-loaded power relationship and question the affective realism of the images in their own lives. The father figures mostly analogize with the paradoxical understanding of fatherhood in the culture in which paternal sentiments of protection and care can quickly transform into oppression and punishment. Consequently, these films, masterfully commenting on the opposite emotional components of the father figure, demand the audience to come to the recognition of the power dynamics underlying the current state of citizenship in the country and also how this power can easily manipulate several emotions of the subjects and communities with this affective relationship.

Based on different stories, all of the films discussed in his study explore a shared sense of paranoia resonating with the cultural anxieties unique to Turkey in the 2000s. The films portray lived experiences of ordinary people whose lives are shaped by a crisis, in which anxiety and paranoia operate divergently. The characters in these films are frustrated by observing how their future expectations are overwhelmed by the newly emerging atmosphere of uncertainty and stuckness. They find themselves in a temporality of adjustments and attunements, even fighting for their bare survival. Without having the necessary knowledge, skills, or material means, the characters’ attunements with the new ordinariness depend solely on their intuitions. Since making sense of the emerging present implies anxiety of assessing ‘various knowledges and intuitions’ about the crisis they face, adjusting to new ordinariness can lead them to tragic ends (Berlant, 2011a, p. 4).

In *Beyond the Hill* and *Frenzy*, director Alper sets family dramas against the backdrop of a nation in crisis. The family as the site of broader social crisis echoes the current cultural

and political atmosphere characterized by alienation, polarization and paranoia. While *Beyond the Hill* focuses on the story of an extended family set in a rural area, in *Frenzy,* the family is composed of two brothers living in the big city. Paranoia lies at the heart of both dramas, drifting the characters into the vortex of chaos and destruction despite the differences in family structures and histories. Paranoia takes the lead in both films when external constraints fuel emotional turmoils and internal conflicts. The family imagined as a circle of trust and commitment transforms into a sphere of insincerity, mistrust and deceit.

However, paranoia in each story operates differently. In *Beyond the Hill*, paranoia is displayed as a collective imagination offering imaginary solutions for responding to the emerging conflicts and anxieties. The film discloses how paranoia is put into use by the sovereign authority to maintain the social order, deal with the internal conflicts, bonding the subjects under a single collective identity (O'Donnell, 2000). Apart from problematizing the coercive power of paranoid thinking, the film offers critical insights into consensual participation and affective investments of the subjects in reproducing paranoid fantasies (Ahmed, 2014). Finally, the film questions the paradoxical nature of constructing enemies essential for the logic of paranoia and how producing dichotomies 'between self and other, or nonself, or enemy' becomes a vicious cycle between paranoia and identity formation (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 17).

In contrast with the secure paranoia based on us vs. them paradigm apparent in *Beyond the Hill*, the insecure paranoia of the brothers instead 'plunges everything into an infinite regress of suspicion', dragging them into 'a permanent uncertainty about fundamental issues of causality, agency, responsibility and identity' (Knight, 2000a, p. 4). Paranoia in *Frenzy* can be understood better in terms of an 'agency panic', caused by an intense sense of powerlessness (Melley, 2002). Agency panic in *Frenzy* inevitably connects to a 'crisis of interpretation' (Pratt, 2001). When their expectations of reciprocity from affective

investments fail (Berlant, 2011a), the brothers desperately try 'to make sense of what does not make sense' (Pratt, 2001, p. 8). Another look at the film suggests another modality of paranoia: paranoia-of-the-watched and the paranoia-of-the-watcher (Holm, 2009). These two modalities of the watched and the watcher are always connected and co-exist together, especially with surveillance-induced paranoia. Kadir's compulsive desire for surveilling terrorist activities transforms into paranoia, where he becomes paranoid of his surroundings and everyone else, even his family (Holm, 2009). His paranoia as a watcher is also self-rationalized as a suspicion 'within reason' since he is fully compliant with the orders of the state authorities to watch over its citizens (p. 44). Finally, his paranoia that becomes out of control finally traps him into a blockade, metaphorically transforming him from a hunter into prey.

Tolga Karaçelik's *Ivy* is another outstanding portrayal of paranoia in terms of agency panic. Ivy narrates the story of six sailors who are stranded on a large ship off the Egyptian coast that is not allowed to sail or pull to a port. After days of being stuck on the ship without access to any information, the ship transforms into a claustrophobic prison for the crew. Besides, the captain's infantilizing attitude towards them destroys their sense of basic security and trust, regressing these men to an infantile state yearning for protection. The increasing tension, hopelessness and paranoia inevitably transform the crisis into a total insanity. The crew gradually starts showing symptoms of a slowly growing massive anxiety and delusional defense mechanism to cope with a chaotic and uncertain reality that they have no power or control. Karaçelik portrays a more intense and captivating atmosphere of paranoia for the viewer by setting the story inside a ship. The claustrophobic and isolating physicality of the ship adds layers to the range of senses invoked, allowing the film to project a deeper reflection of the contemporary anxieties for the viewer. With its liminal features, the ship resembles Turkey's in-betweenness allegorized as a bridge and resonates with the

country's state of being stuck in time and space. *Ivy* succesfully comments on the state of liminality by setting the ship as the filmic space. Ivy is also a unique film in terms of the supernatural elements inserted by Karaçelik. The fantastical features do not estrange the audience from the story's plausibility. On the contrary, they contribute in building an affective realism that is felt beyond the limits of the visible. Karaçelik's playing with genre conventions immerses the spectators more intensely in the experience and demands that they view the film beyond their habitual ways of understanding and thinking of visual representations and even perceptions of the world. The crisis that metamorphosed into supernatural re-connects the viewer to a shared 'quotidian reality' in which they are bodily situated in and participating in its production (Rogers, 2015, p. 59).

Director Özçelik tackles the dynamics of paranoia quite differently in *Inflame*. The origins of Hasret's anxieties and paranoia stem originally from her traumatic past, which she cannot recall clearly. Not being able to remember what really happened to her family bothers her deeply, paralyzing her ability to continue with her life as usual. Her suspicions about her parents' death lead to paranoia. She believes that the government has deliberately erased all the information and memory of events that led to her parent's death. Paranoia offers Hasret a realization that everything is connected. What is being erased is not only the memories of the past. Media constantly distorts our sense of reality and knowledge of the present. The film brilliantly connects the relentless transformation of the urban spaces with manipulation of reality through media. Therefore, paranoia is a productive force for Hasret, giving back her sense of agency under siege. Hasret's paranoia provided her an 'understanding [of] the world in terms of connectedness, indeed perceiving it to be organized beneath the surface' (Sturken, 1997, p. 77).

The films demonstrate how historical fears penetrated into the shared subconscious are intertwined with 'wide open anxieties' of the future, producing country's current anxious

climate (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 26). Through brief references to the actual events, *Beyond the Hill* in particular, mirrors how past fears combined with future anxieties lead to a 'more intimate sense of threat', whereas each emerging fear 'quickly overlaps with the residual sediments of archaic fears, as well as inserting itself into the as yet undefined fears of the future' (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 25). The collective paranoia that gripped the family is reminiscent of the common expression: Turkey is a country surrounded by sea on three sides and by enemies on four sides. The proverb reveals a national siege mentality, often instrumentalized as a political narrative in crisis periods, to restore the country's ontological insecurities and consolidate the ruling elites' authoritarian regime. This mentality, prone to paranoid reasoning, is kept alive by all political sides from left to right-wing, through a vicious cycle of designating enemies, visible or invisible, like the Yörüks in *Beyond the Hill*. In this film, Alper questions the cultivated militaristic and nationalistic emotions built on praising war and dying for the country. At the end of the film, the group of men forming an army recalls the popular slogan that 'Every Turk is born a soldier'. Such patriotic and militaristic socialization is expected from the citizens in return, as to fight and even unhesitantly sacrifice one's own life for the country also functions as a requirement for gaining a sense of belonging in the community. Indeed, militaristic and nationalistic sentiments dominantly contribute to the construction of self-perception as well as we-feelings, as Emin Alper criticizes in his film *Beyond the Hill*.

At the backdrop of individual or family crises, the films also problematize how sovereign authority utilizes paranoia as a political style. Paranoid narratives created by authority at times, like in the case of *Beyond the Hill,* become a public fantasy that 'binds individual subjects to identificatory collective bodies' (O'Donnell, 2000, p. 16). *Beyond the Hill* and *Frenzy* strongly explicate how the ruling power can manipulate the long-term fears of disintegration of the country and persistent feelings of being under the threat of enemies to

consolidate the shaken authority and regain the lost trust. The films remind us how paranoid nationalist narratives gain impetus in Turkey, at times when governments lose their capacity to produce hope and keep their promises (Hage, 2003). On these grounds, exploiting the nationalist-militarist feelings and engraining xenophobia become convenient tools for the ruling power to legitimize its authority and control its subjects. However, as all four films deliberately show, a system–whether a family, community or nation–based on authoritarian governmentality supported by paranoid thinking and conspiracy is destined to result in fear, suspicion and mistrust of the community as well as denial and oppression of all kinds of autonomy and agency.

Thereby, the films probe deeply into the country's increasingly authoritarian, patriarchal and paternalist atmosphere, where subjects feel more confined and entrapped in every sense. The characters are like captives of a neighborhood (*Frenzy*), a ship (*Ivy*) and even of Istanbul (*Inflame*). *Frenzy*'s Turkish title, '*Abluka*', literally meaning 'blockade', comments on the contemporary experience of confinement, entrapment and isolation of living in a besieged country. As Alper commented in an interview: 'the blockade in the film reveals not only a physical siege of a neighborhood, but also the psychological siege of the people…the stories of the brothers are the micro reflection of an experience lived and felt nationwide…The blockade reveals the paranoid security policies of the state' (Acaroğlu & Günerbüyük, 2015).

The atmosphere of the films successfully conveys feelings of confinement or incarceration that materially and physically immerses the audience. The anxious and paranoid atmosphere of films provokes immediate bodily appraisals and physical discomfort such as trembling, dizziness, heart palpitations or hyperventilation, which generally happen 'instinctively and pre-reflectively, below the threshold of reflective consciousness' (Laine, 2011, p. 4). The bodily appraisals at moments of sudden fear of–being followed or watched,

moments of frustration or irritation, or episodes of delusions of persecution–trigger emotional responses in the audience. The affective engagement of the viewer and the film's body acts as a visceral force beyond emotional judgment or conscious cognition that can drive the spectator 'toward movement, toward thought and extension' (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. 1). Consequently, paranoia and anxiety are not communicated as intra-psychic emotional states but as affective sensations circulating between the bodies and generating an affective atmosphere, allowing us to capture the collective experience with its vitality. The perceptual and sensual cinematic experience conveyed by these films makes visible the pathologies of living in the present history for the audience who is actively participating in this 'mass production of senses' (Hansen, 2009). In Berlant's terms, the films masterfully put ordinary local histories into circulation 'as evidence of something shared' (Berlant 2011a, p. 12).

In the light of these unique features of these four films, I want to briefly discuss the arguments I put forward earlier that these four films can be approached as examples of a 'crisis cinema' by engaging us with 'what it means to live in crisis' (Allbritton, 2014, p. 3). Without necessarily belonging to any peculiar historical and geographical context, the films attend to universal aspects of a crisis experience with unique aesthetic and cinematic expressions. The films confront us with states of vulnerability and precarity beyond conventional understandings: states of precarity which have transformed into 'a way of life; or an affective atmosphere; or an existential truth about contingencies of living' in the historical present (Berlant, 2011a, p. 192). The films address affective intensities and capacities of precarity which is felt like a structure of feeling impacting anyone indiscriminately beyond any particular economic or social class (Berlant, 2011a). Overall, conveying a felt quality of precarity, the films engage us with the intensive encounters with the experience and sentiments of living in the current historical moment.

Crises are liminal states–periods of transformation and rites of passage – experienced as intense uncertainty and agony. In Berlant's view, ‘crisis is an emergency in the reproduction of life, a transition that has not found its genres for moving on’ (Berlant, 2011b, p. 2). The aesthetical reflections evoked by crisis reveal a state of liminality enclosing both the liberating and the repressive possibilities (p. 2). Thus, projected crises overwhelmed by stasis, ambiguity and oblivion are not only representations of emergencies but also images of transformation and becoming.

In crisis cinema, such states of liminality transform into a driving force in terms of ‘becoming’, not only for the characters but also for the spectators. While this becoming is mirrored as ‘the metamorphosis of the characters and diegetic world’, it also involves the viewer, stimulating them to think through the film images (Rogers, 2015, p. 150). The cinematic experience establishes itself as a condition of liminality, in that the spectator is engulfed in another process of ‘metamorphosis and becoming-other’ by ‘abandoning him/herself to the intensities of the cinematic affects’ (Rogers, 2013, p. 39). Accordingly, the films discussed in this study do not expect the spectator to identify with the characters but impel them to ‘identify with the rhythm of becoming and begin to experience the dissolution of boundaries between self, other and world’ (Rogers, 2013, p. 39). The affective realism, based on sensorial aesthetics, urges the spectator to visualize the images beyond the boundaries and hierarchies of identity or clichéd understandings of gender, class or ethnicity. The films derive a great deal of their impact by foregrounding human vulnerability and ‘summoning universality of possible questions to any human being’ through sensorial affects of reality (Facchin, 2015, p. 99). The viewer engages not with characters but with bodies in crisis who can at times ‘halt, falter, freeze and become-surface, or evolve, mutate, dissolve and merge’ (Rogers, 2015, p. 1). Consequently, film viewing as a liminal experience itself

absorbs the spectator in the process of *become-the-other*, not creating an 'immediacy with the reality, but with the reality of the image' (Abel, 2013, p. 19).

This study shares Marco Abel's view that cinema's most significant power is not in its faithfulness to represent actuality as it is, but in 'its capacity to image a not-yet-actualized world, or a world in the process of becoming-actual' (2013, p. 107). At this point, I want to refer to Simon O'Sullivan's (2006) argument that, artworks connect us with the world not always with their representational qualities but also through operating 'as a fissure in representation' (cited in Moyano, 2020, p.15).[35] O'Sullivan's arguments make sense, particularly in understanding these films as examples of crisis cinema. Since states of crisis are frequently mediated with disruptive elements of presentation, this also involves rupture in the viewer's habitual understanding of visual representations, patterns of thinking and even in their habitual perceptions of the world. As he further emphasized, the affectivity of a work of art is sometimes generated from its problematization of the power and function of 'connectivity' of art in conventional understanding. Thus, art is not always a transporter of connectivity that imperatively engages the viewer through opening up to the 'world outside' (O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 18): it even sometimes employs a reverse strategy that disrupts dominant conventions, reconnecting the spectator more intensely with the world that s/he is 'part of but typically estranged from' (p. 50. cited in Moyano, 2020, p.15).

The films discussed in this study deviate from mainstream cinematic conventions, either for their fragmented narratives, visual style, or their experimentation with genres. The unsympathetic and distant features of characters, powerfully emphasized by disconnected and haunting actor performances, discourage the audience from identifying or overly empathizing with the characters. The stories at times unfold into delusions and hallucinations to challenge

[35] O'Sullivan explains 'fissures of representation' as the 'difference between what art says its doing (what is represented) and what it actually does (the affects it produces)' (2006, p.174. endnote: 32)

the viewer's expectations and habitual perceptions. Moreover, some of the films do not fully resolve ambiguities, even finalizing in a state of stasis. With these features, the images emerge as 'fissures of representation', challenging spectators' habitual ways of thinking and engaging with the films and the world itself (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 174). Drawing upon O'Sullivan, I maintain that these four films perform a form of cinematic thinking, which is 'involved in exploring the possibilities of being, of becoming, in the world' more than making sense of the world (2006, p. 52). Borrowing from Jean-Luc Nancy (2001), I also contend that these films do not propose a point of view or a vision of reality, but rather aim at the 'setting up of a look' upon a world of which they are 'part and parcel' (p. 17) while also reconfiguring novel forms of experience (p. 20).

As a concluding remark, I tried to reveal how films aesthetically reflect and comment upon the affective apprehension of being situated in this historical present in terms of anxiety and paranoia. The analysis is not based on a symptomatic reading of anxiety and paranoia as essentialized emotions in society. It is equally important to capture how these films conveyed an affective cinematic experience for the audience for this study. Without making any general claims on classical genre understandings of the New Turkish Cinema as a whole; but more focusing on the individual films, I aimed to view films as moving images documenting the present moment and communicating 'the affective apprehension of a newly unstable present moment' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 847).

I also proposed in the introduction that these films are pioneering examples of sensuous filmmaking in New Turkish Cinema. By sensuous cinema, I am not suggesting that the films are overly emotional or sentimental like melodrama, but they promote a sensuous viewing experience for the audience. The film analysis reveals how these four films intentionally refrain from any melodramatic sentimentality but instead offer an emotional-affective experience through the materiality of the images 'as richly captured and enhanced

by the film medium' (De Luca, 2013, p. 10). Compared to other Turkish Cinema films dealing with the present history, refraining from a melodramatic modality is not the only difference, but a very important one, from the perspective this dissertation. The films are open to questions about how to reference them to conventional genre and narration systems and mainly how to situate them in Turkish Cinema. I tried to set forth the differences of these films from both Yeşilçam and the New Turkish Cinema films; however, the issues of the cinematic genre are not one of the main objectives of the study at hand.

As this study concentrates more on cultural analysis, Berlant's understanding of genre provides valuable insights. Following Berlant, this study approached the films as images in which affect and history are intrinsically entwined and offer affective genres for engaging with this historical present. In Berlant's approach, genre matters for 'the affective apprehension of a newly unstable present moment', and it is significant not in terms of documenting 'a once-present moment but because its aesthetic conventions for communicating the you-are-thereness of any present requires making the past apprehensible as affective experience' (Berlant, 2008a, p. 847). Particularly in connection with making sense of the present, 'genres provide an affective expectation of the experience of watching something unfold, whether that thing is in life or in art' (Berlant, 2011a, p. 6). Therefore, genre in Berlant's understanding 'challenges any finite boundary we would like to draw between 'real life' and 'fiction'' since we 'live genres as much as we read them or watch them on the screen' (Highmore, 2017, p. 51).

Cinema is historically, socially and politically significant since capturing these shifting genres, one can follow the paths through which 'their current charge builds upon (as it also reinvents) previous affective conventionalities that have organized the social categories we inhabit' (Stacey, 2015, p. 244). More importantly, as Berlant pointed out, 'certain "genres" are no longer sustainable' in capturing the various forms of the impasse we

are living through in the present and that new aesthetic forms are emerging to replace the conventional ones (Williams, 2014). Looking from Berlant's view, I propose that the films offer a novel aesthetic and cinematic mode tracking the experience of living in the historical present—not in the classical genre understanding—but more as a more mediated apprehension of subjectivity which can't be distinguished and analyzed separately from 'the popular modes of its formation' (Stacey, 2015, p. 243).

The films analyzed in this study are pioneering examples sharing similar thematic preoccupations and aesthetic styles with films of New Turkish Cinema, but distinguish themselves from the melodramatic tradition of Yeşilçam cinema and its resurrected forms in the New Turkish Cinema. The anxieties of the present history are not reflected in a melodramatic mode. They neither offer a redeeming faith in coping with the anxieties of modern life (Brooks 1995, 20) like Yeşilçam films; nor do they invite the audience to a melodramatic excess of nostalgia and melancholy as New Turkish Cinema.

The characters do not suit the stereotypes or identity clichés of mainstream cinema. Most of the characters-particularly male characters- are marginal subjects excluded from society, orphaned, victimized, experiencing masculinity crises resembling the New Turkish Cinema characters. They are emasculated and depotentiated, but they do not confront their powerlessness, defeat, or even tragic ends with fatalism. Unlike post-1980s coup films or 'arabesque-noir films,' the characters' traumas are not glorified or sacralized (Maktav, 2000). The films radically diverge from male melodramas of new cinema- defined alternately by Süalp as 'weepy male' films by (Süalp, 2009a, p. 228). They do not belong to 'arabesque-noir' style marked by 'a self-pitying, arabesque atmosphere' which dominantly applies an 'expressionist poetics to allegorize social conditions and survival strategies' (Süalp, 2014, p. 240). They neither philosophize nor glorify 'the lumpen attitudes toward life and of sensations of pure "nothingness"', like Demirkubuz or Ceylan's films (Süalp, 2009a, p. 228).

From this perspective, the films intentionally distance themselves from Turkish Cinema's fatalistic imagination and victimhood narratives-which are deeply embedded in the national and cultural psyche-significantly appealing to the mass audience. The films do not embrace the victimhood psyche of ‘the collective anxieties and desires’ caused by belated modernization or the traumatic loss of a golden past (Arslan, 2005, p. 44). They refrain from exploiting the Turkish audience’ well-known trait of empathizing with the ‘incapacitated, debilitated, victimized characters who become an object of other’s decisions’ (Pehlivan, 2007, p. 55). In Berlant’s sense, the films resist fatalistic imagination and victimhood as a genre, both as in fiction or real life. They question the ‘fantasy landscapes’ created by melodramatic imagination, producing subjects who lead their lives through those genres (Stacey, 2015, p. 243)—which are no longer plausible in apprehending the present experience (Berlant, 2008a; 2008b).

The four films engage with the present history by introducing new aesthetic and political sensibilities. They engage with the present history with unique aesthetic expressions and representations which overlap with the felt sense of this particular historical and cultural experience. The films present an immediate and intimate experience of the bare anxieties, avoiding a resolution or a moralizing pedagogy. They do not tackle cultural anxieties through the ‘paradoxical and hysterical’ relationship with modernization as in Yeşilçam cinema (Pehlivan, 2007, p. 2). Neither, they invite the audience ‘to face, to live with and accept the paradox’ like the prominent examples of New Turkish Cinema (Suner, 2006, p. 165). I am not claiming that the films intended to resolve the paradoxes of belonging, identity or liminality. Instead, by activating a thinking-feeling in Massumi's sense, the films open up infinite possibilities of future becoming, whether repressive or liberating (Massumi, 2009).

As I have previously asserted, liminality significantly informs the experience of the historical present and cultural anxieties mirrored in the discussed films. However, liminality

is also a transitionary state embracing the negative and the positive connotations concurrently. If we follow Victor Turner’s conceptualization of liminality as a state of being in-between and betwixt, we can engage with the concept as an ambiguous and paradoxical state congenital to periods of transformation and encounter. It will not be wrong to apprehend it as a ‘process of a becoming, and even transformation’ (Turner, 1982, p. 94). The state of liminality is also a process that can lead to several possibilities of future becoming.

In the final analysis, all these films reflect upon different implications of paranoia as an affective sense of living in the ongoing present, foregrounding it in the broader context of cultural and political imagination. These films are indeed cinematic efforts to challenge the clichéd images of the present history ‘manufactured by the mainstream industry’, via raising critical questions of the contemporary culture (Abel, 2013, p. 23). Therefore, by engaging us with the intensities and affective encounters with the present history, the films are promising aesthetical expressions to imagine the possibilities of the future.

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