

CHANGING FAMILY, CHANGING MEDIA:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ADAPTATIONS OF *YAPRAK*  
*DÖKÜMÜ/FALLING LEAVES*

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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

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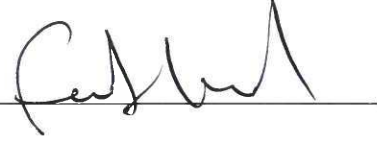
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nur Şeyda Koç', written in a cursive style.

## ABSTRACT

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As a genre that has pervaded popular culture across the years, melodrama offers remarkable material for sociological inquiry. It echoes developments in society and culture.

A classic in its genre, *Yaprak Dökümü* possesses all the structural and fictional characteristics of a family melodrama. The fact that it has been subject to a number of reproductions over the years, and in different media, makes this family melodrama a useful lens through which to view the transformation and transition in the discursive (re)formulations of social constructions. In this respect, this thesis seeks to trace and analyze the definitional transitions in the depictions of masculinity and femininity in the institution of the family across three different time periods, in the 1930s, late 1960s, and 2000s.

*Yaprak Dökümü*, with its narrative emphasis on integrity and disintegration, epitomizes the family-making processes in Turkish melodrama. Over the years, different presentations of the story have utilized different modes of narration, from novel to film and then to television serial, yet all have maintained similar discursive codes embedded in the representations. As a reflexive cultural product, *Yaprak Dökümü* presents how social constructions of masculinity and femininity in a family are modeled in fiction. It shows there has been a transformation in both presentation and representation from the 1930s till today. The practice of social norms and codes are reproduced in different ways, while preserving the core of social norms and codes. Slight differences in gendered iconography do not offer serious challenges to dominant gender paradigms, but could be regarded as initiatives for important changes in representations.

**Keywords:** family melodrama, adaptation, remake, masculinity, femininity.

**ÖZ**  
DEĞİŞEN AİLE, DEĞİŞEN MEDYA:  
*YAPRAK DÖKÜMÜ* UYARLAMALARININ KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ

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Yıllar boyu popüler kültüre nüfuz etmiş bir tür olarak melodrama, kayda değer sosyolojik malzemeler ihtiva eder. Toplumunu oluşturan temel öğeleri olduğu kadar, kültürel atmosferin temsilindeki geçişi de yansıtır.

*Yaprak Dökümü* kendi türünde bir klasik olarak, bir aile melodramının yapısal ve kurgusal tüm gerekliliklerini yerine getirir. Yıllardır farklı araçlarla yeniden üretilen bir aile melodramı olarak, sosyal inşaların söylemsel düzlemde (yeniden) formüle edilişlerindeki değişim ve geçişi görmemize yardımcı olur. Bu yüzden, bu tez bir ailenin kurum olarak temsili erkeklik ve kadınlık tanımlamalarındaki dönüşümünü 1930lar, geç 1960lar ve 2000lerdeki üretimi üzerinden, *Yaprak Dökümü* örneği ile takip ve analiz etmeyi amaçlar.

Birliktelikten çözülmeye doğru ilerleyen anlatısıyla *Yaprak Dökümü*, tüm zamanlara yayılmış konusuyla Türk melodramında aile kurma sürecini özetler. Anlatı modunu romandan filme, daha sonra da televizyon dizisine değiştirir, ama temsillerdeki söylemsel kodları benzer şekilde devam ettirir. Refleksif kültürel bir materyal olarak *Yaprak Dökümü*, bir aile içerisinde erkekliğin ve kadınlığın nasıl inşa edildiğinin modelliğini yapar. 1930lardan günümüze, temsili olandaki dönüşümü gösterir. Sosyal norm ve kodlar en temel özlerini muhafaza ederek, pratik ediliş hallerindeki değişim ile yeniden üretilir. Cinsiyetçi ikonografideki bu ufak farklılaşmalar çok büyük iddialar sunmazlar, ama temsillerdeki değişim için önayak olabilir niteliktedirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** melodrama, uyarlama, yeniden çevrim, erkeklik, kadınlık.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

“Melodrama is a chameleon,”<sup>1</sup> says Linda Williams, a remarkable film scholar. It changes its color according to expectations and conditions, but carries the same skeleton inside. This seems an appropriate and suitable description when I consider the nature of Turkish melodramas across time. Turkish melodramas stay the same in terms of their narration or basic structure across time and space, yet also undergo a number of changes.

I regard the genre of melodrama as being not only cinematic, but also “a pervasive mode across popular culture.”<sup>2</sup> Melodrama invites social contextualization on the part of its reader/viewer, as well as melodrama itself socially contextualizes, inspiring the sociologist to think. Thus, I have chosen to research novel, film, and television melodrama in Turkey, since it sparks off social, thus inspiring sociological, contextualization. Christine Gledhill, feminist film scholar, asserts, “the phenomena melodrama constructs range beyond art and entertainment to include religious and civic ceremony, politics and informational forms such as broadcast news or the popular press.”<sup>3</sup> And as a prominent, popular, and socially representative melodrama, *Yaprak Dökümü* (*Falling Leaves*) offers a useful window into Turkish society. Originally produced in the form of a novel, it has been reproduced in a number of different mediums over the years, including film and television. Written by Reşat Nuri Güntekin in the late 1920s, it offers a specific view into Turkish society during a period characterized by the social change and transition sparked by the Turkish modernization processes. Moreover, with its different adaptations into various mediums over the decades, its reformulations and reenactments offer insights into the various phases of modernization in Turkish society.

As a family melodrama, *Yaprak Dökümü* can be analyzed and interpreted sociologically. It touches upon the basic ingredients of the construction of “the social”

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Williams, "Melodrama," in *Oxford Bibliographies in Cinema and Media Studies*, accessed December 23, 2015, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0043.xml>.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Gledhill, introduction to *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

in its narration of a Turkish family's "being" and "failing," that is, its foundation and disintegration. It captures the details for representing a family in fiction with respect to the main dynamics of family formation and the possible disruptive fatalities for a family's destruction. In that sense it is a normatively built and rebuilt family melodrama narrative, which embodies the modernist expectations from a Turkish modern society in formation. Thus, it presents a rich source such a sociological analysis. Yet, despite the material's reflexivity, as both reflecting and contributing the social reality, my primary concern is not to deal with the relationship between the reality and representation. Rather, I trace the important constitutive patterns of a fictional, constructed family in melodramas. Through this, I aim to provide insight to the world of family melodrama with respect to the appeal and production of it across different time periods, specifically focusing on the very same storyline of a family. Therefore, I focus on the fictional family construction in three different time periods. Nevertheless I do not completely neglect it from reality, or the actual family construction processes in society, under certain limitations of the study. In doing so, I seek answers to the following questions: how is a family melodrama, *Yaprak Dökümü*, constructed and reconstructed with respect to the changing time period? How is the family defined in three different versions of the same story? How are masculinity and femininity defined and how are they represented in the family over different time periods?

Studying specific cultural material—such as a novel, a film, or a television serial—through a comparative analysis is useful in terms of tracing the specific social and cultural patterns of a society. Comparing different adaptations and remakes of the same subject matter across different time periods is also useful, allowing us to identify what has been preserved, transmitted, transformed, changed, or even completely demolished. Through adaptation and remake we can comparatively analyze changes to the way families are fictionalized in the genre of melodrama. In addition to this, as cultural product, melodrama is both the product of a society and a part of the constitutive and reproductive social mechanisms of that society. Exploring sociological questions, such as how and why social melodrama narratives are produced and expected to be part in the society, in which respects they are appealed to, needed, circulated, and consumed, or whom they serve, may reveal the underlying meaning of discourses that undergird the very formation of the social.

In this study, I use a comparative analysis of different reproductions of *Yaprak Dökümü* to trace the transformation in the representation of the family as an institution, a social entity, and a hub of personal relationships. With a special focus on the social construction of gender, I analyze the novel *Yaprak Dökümü* of the late 1920s, its adaptation to the cinema screen in 1967, and its most recent remake as a television series from 2006. *Yaprak Dökümü*, as a melodramatic narrative that has been popular among “ordinary” people is something of an exemplary case.<sup>4</sup> As a novel, it owed much of its popularity to the simplicity and clarity of its language. As a film, it is adapted and remade, presenting the continuing demand on such family stories on the screen. And lastly, as a television serial, it achieved high ratings, and ran a total of 174 episodes over five seasons.<sup>5</sup>

I have organized the thesis into four main chapters. I first give a theoretical background focusing on certain conceptualizations and relational explanations of melodrama, adaptation, and remake. Next, after the necessary selections of the concepts and definitions of melodrama as a genre, I discuss adaptation, remake and their correspondences in a Turkish context. In these two sections, I present and provide the necessary groundwork for a comparative analysis of *Yaprak Dökümü*.

In the third chapter, I focus on the narratives of the different productions of *Yaprak Dökümü*—as novel, film, and television serial—in the context of adaptation, remake, and re-adaptation. I present the three forms against their social and historical backdrops, as well as the adaptation and remake qualities of the film and television serial in relation to the “original” novel.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I present my comparative analysis of the three versions and give my findings focusing on their continuities and discontinuities in constructing the gender stereotypes of the family. I investigate how the family is respectively defined in the *Yaprak Dökümü* of the 1930s, the late 1960s, and the early 2000s, with a focus on family structure in relation to the father and mother. Then, I interpret essentialist inferences (transiting between different narrations) about human

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<sup>4</sup> Türkan Erdoğan, “Reşat Nuri Güntekin’in *Yaprak Dökümü* Adlı Romanında Değişmenin Sosyo-Kültürel Boyutları,” *İÜ İktisat Fak. Metodoloji ve Sosyoloji Araştırmaları Merkezi Sosyoloji Konferansları Dergisi* 2005, 181.

<sup>5</sup> Türkan Erdoğan, “Reşat Nuri Güntekin’in *Yaprak Dökümü* Adlı Romanında Değişmenin Sosyo-Kültürel Boyutları,” *İÜ İktisat Fak. Metodoloji ve Sosyoloji Araştırmaları Merkezi Sosyoloji Konferansları Dergisi* 2005, 181.

nature by analyzing the discursive definitional arguments on femininity and masculinity.

### 1.1. Methodology

In this study, I apply narrative analysis to trace gender construction in the family in the storyline and narration with of the novel, film, and television serial versions of *Yaprak Dökümü*. In applying narrative analysis, I consider several typologies, but mainly implement structural and performative analysis. I focus on the story telling as much as the story line, or plot, itself; that is to say, the “how” as much as the “what.”<sup>6</sup> Hence, the performativity of the story is examined with respect to these structural considerations, both the intra- and inter-textual relations of the subject matter.

Considering a large proportion of the material I consult has a visual, filmic structure, as Bulent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen argue, I utilize from the correspondence between the sociological analysis and film analysis that are reflexive in many respects. I do as they say:

... try to find a resonance between sociology and cinema, tracing the surface between them, oscillating between the sociological concepts and cinematographic images. What allows for this union in separation or separation in union between the two activities is creativity, sense-making. And ... to make sense in sociological style. That is ... we apply sociological knowledge *to* cinema; ... we do sociology by using cinema for sociological purposes.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, in this study I carry out sociological inquiry in accordance with the structural and performative narrative analysis—in a sense as a merged and conjunct method—in comparatively tracking the visual presentations. Therefore, I also take into consideration the connotation of the visual representations through images and symbolized constructions. This is important for the narrative analysis to make sense, for “verbal and cinematic signs share a common fate: that of being condemned to connotation.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the signification of the analysis of the visual “permits the elaboration of the fictional world.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Catherine Kohler Riessman, “Narrative Analysis,” in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods Volume 2 2004*, eds. M.S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman and T. Futing Liao (California: SAGE Publications, 2004), 705.

<sup>7</sup> Bulent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, *Sociology through the Projector* (London: Routledge, 2008), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, 104.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

## 1.2. Sociology and Melodrama

With respect to the concerns of sociology, a study on melodrama has the potential to contribute to discussions on social constructions and discourses. Hence, in this thesis I seek to interpret and analyze melodrama production in Turkish novel, cinema, and television culture in accordance with adaptation and remake theories.

Each and every concept—i.e. adaptation, remake, or even melodrama—could not be exactly and perfectly matched in the Turkish cinema and television context. The narrative construction, adaptation methods, remaking, or any other technical and contextual issues are peculiar and subjective in the Turkish context, as like it changes accordingly other cultural contexts. Hence, it should be acknowledged that each and every research preserves its singularity in terms of dependent conceptualization and theoretical framing.

In my attempt to study and observe the transition and transformation of the social, specifically the family, I have selected as my focus a Turkish classic novel that was adapted and remade three times, *Yaprak Dökümü*. The film adaptation of the novel was made first in 1958 and it remade (and readapted) in 1967, again as a film. After twenty years, it was remade in a short television serial format with seven episodes in 1987. For last “remaking,” it was readapted in 2006 again as a television serial, this time running for the much longer span of five years/seasons.

I chose the conceptualization of adaptation, remake, and re-adaptation separately despite the relevant discussions on the remake that includes the adaptation as a remaking of the textual category. This is because film and television serials stress the novel as the primary and original work and producers consider their own work as an adaptation. That is, while a remade *Yaprak Dökümü* film or television serial could be regarded as a remake, it should be also considered as an adaptation on its own. Hence, this leads us to conceptualize the latterly made productions as re-adaptations with respect to the conjuncture changes (that is provided in the related sections) and “adaptations”. Therefore, I prefer to regard the first film as an adaptation, the second movie and the following television serials as remakes of the previous one as well as re-adaptations. Hence, the *Yaprak Dökümü* made in 1958 is a film adaptation, and the others are both remakes and re-adaptations. Also, they will not be considered as contextualized in their own singular space and cultural, historical, and thus social, environment. The explanation of the categorical differences between them, in terms of



type of adaptation and remake, will be discussed following the general genre and format discussions, with respect to the peculiarity of Turkish melodrama. In the literature review below, I refine these conceptualizations with respect to my study's context. In sum, each and every related conceptualization to the melodrama as a genre, adaptation, and remake will be taken into consideration properly.

### 1.2.1 The Genre: Melodrama

The different forms that melodrama can take, whether literature, film, or any other performative artistic form (opera, musical, play, television serial, etc.), are not completely different from each other. For each of them, melodrama connotes, literally and universally, "play with the music."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the characteristics of a melodrama are almost identical in terms of having music and drama together. This commonality is found across the genre. Yet, "considered as an expressive form,"<sup>11</sup> the melodramatic mode could "be described as a particular form of dramatic *mise en scène*, characterized by a dynamic use of spatial and musical categories, as opposed to intellectual or literary ones."<sup>12</sup>

Apart from the literal explanations and definitions of the concept of melodrama, its specific emergence and celebration as a socio-cultural formation is also worth addressing. Melodrama first emerged out of the nineteenth century's Industrial Revolution, during which ordinary people were dealing with urbanization and industrialization.<sup>13</sup> In the serial novels of newspapers, melodrama continually occupied a place in literature, then theater, and eventually in cinema. Later still, television also had its share of melodramatic productions. Therefore, melodrama spans a trajectory in form from literature to visual and performative representations. This is crucial in the sense that the persistent reproduction of a genre in changing presentation forms through time opens up the sociological inquiry. In addition to the nineteenth-century forces operating to create the genre of melodrama, the continuing demand for it and its celebration by "a socially broadening audience"<sup>14</sup> deserves attention.

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<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Minelli and Melodrama," in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film 1987*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 70.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama," in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film 1987*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 51.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Serpil Kirel, *Yeşilçam Öykü Sineması* (İstanbul: Babil Yayınları, 2005), 218-219.

<sup>14</sup> Christine Gledhill, "The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation," in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film 1987*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 19.

Melodrama's long-lasting and overarching structure in different formulations as a genre makes it significant in terms of sociological research. Being "a site of generic transmutation and 'intertextuality,'"<sup>15</sup> as Gledhill describes it, melodrama is cross-class and cross-cultural form that render routes of transition, transformation, change, and comparison accessible to sociological analysis.

Gledhill argues that the emergence of melodrama at a specific point in history is related to the conditions of the period. The multivalence attributed to the melodrama in the nineteenth century could be explained with the modification of "the complacency of eighteenth century sentimental fiction"<sup>16</sup> and raveling out "the heroine/villain/hero triad to the pessimistic ironies of folk tradition."<sup>17</sup> This attribution is important, but it is also important for the insight it offers into social change. The reproduction of melodrama, which is a characteristically eclectic genre to other genres, may be coming from this same complacency. In other words, the necessity and causality behind the explanation of the emergence and then the celebration of the melodrama are important in terms of both the analysis of its "birth-day" and subsequent evolution through today. Hence, melodrama constitutes a significant field for sociology since it encapsulates both the transient and permanent characteristics of the social.

As a genre in literature, theater, cinema, and television, the emergence and development of melodrama is significant. Its forms in each of these different artistic fields are both similar and dissimilar from each other. The musical tonality within depiction of dramaturgy in emotional humanity and its crises to construct the story line are generalizable peculiarities for each different art form. But, the presentation and representation of the subject matter in this characteristic can be distorted and displaced or transmitted and transformed from one form to another. Also, the conjectural conditions of a period shape such requirements, for the melodramatic features with changing formulations. Hence, melodrama both transmits certain de facto peculiarities as a genre from the previous forms, and yet carries its own specialty with differing imported dimensions.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

The genre melodrama is important to elaborate both the breaks and transmitted peculiarities of the cultural affirmatives and pejoratives in terms of the codes, norms, and laws. Within the basic skeleton of genre construction, melodrama shows the changing medium of expression, medium of communication, and transmission, as well as the contextual demands and necessities in terms of “acknowledgement of how things are in a given historical conjuncture, and of the primary desires and resistance contained within it.”<sup>18</sup>

Regarding the characteristics of melodrama, the most frequently encountered ones are the exaggeration of events and their consequences, the constant clash of good and evil, appeal to emotions as “weeping the stones,” and failed relationships in families, in a romance, or a love story, but always within the musicality of human tragedy. While melodrama dramatically depicts strict class dimensions, it still addresses different social strata with the very same material. In other words, the texture and dramatic quality of its characteristics both resemble social reality and respond to it, although melodrama always plays with intrigue and excess in expression and representation.

### **1.2.2 The Family Melodrama**

Family in melodrama is generally associated with bourgeoisie ideology and the construction of the plot is in accordance with bourgeois dimensions. The family, home, heterosexual relations, emotions, and other subject matters are all wrapped up in the institutional considerations of the bourgeoisie and concerns that generally appeal to women.<sup>19</sup> That is, since women are the first and foremost audience for these productions, this convention often leads melodrama to be considered “women’s melodrama.” The sensational reflexes attributed by melodrama producers to women’s instinctual characteristics construct this linkage between the emotional exaggerations and the intrigues of a melodrama’s plot. Therefore, melodrama is considered and designed in accordance with the bourgeois conception of women, family, and drama, which is to “imply equivalence between the ‘feminine’ and bourgeoisie ideology.”<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, while melodrama as a genre is still considered as “women’s film,” later in the history of cinema it experienced a shift with the novel considerations

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

of patriarchal investigations.<sup>21</sup> In other words, this equivalence between the female audience and bourgeois ideology in melodrama led it originally to be considered as film genre for women only. However, with changing concerns, masculinity—generally mixed with misogyny—was brought to the surface. Hence, a distinction emerged between those melodramatic productions focusing on women and those focusing on the family. As Laura Mulvey puts it:

Roughly, there are two different initial standpoints for melodrama. One is colored by a female protagonist's dominating point of view which acts as a source of identification. The other examines tensions in the family, and between sex and generations; here, although women play a central part, their point of view is not analyzed and does not initiate the drama.<sup>22</sup>

Hence, this type of categorization explains distinct plot concentrations in melodrama. While women mostly form the central part in both views, the family-concentrated view, which is generally referred as “family melodrama,” constitutes of a few more different social dimensions. In other words, a family melodrama has a significant place in terms of sociological analysis compromising constructive formulations of the social more comprehensively and inclusively. Family melodrama touches upon social relations as well as social institutions, that is, it records and represents the social milieu. This also explains my research preference for family melodrama.

Family melodrama takes on a specific meaning in sociological terms. It assembles and constructs societal concerns and presents both a collective memory and a current social phenomenon. In other words, family melodrama, as Diken and Laustsen argue, “can be inscribed into a ‘network’ of a social determinants and can become an object for sociological research as such.”<sup>23</sup> Hence, family melodrama contains and contributes to sociological discussions in terms of its presentation of the various social dynamics that make a society a society, for my purposes here especially in terms of masculine constructions and definitions of cultural identity and the family.

Regarding film and television serials, the qualities of my material require some definition and discussion of the terms adaptation and remake. Therefore, in the following parts of this chapter, I present the necessary and related adaptation and remake discussions.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Laura Mulvey, “Notes on Sirk and Melodrama,” in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film 1987*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 76.

<sup>23</sup> Diken and Laustsen, *Sociology through the Projector*, 5.

### 1.3. Adaptation

Adaptation films have a generally significant place in cinema. Adaptation is a cross-national phenomenon, and the film adaptations are often based on novels, short stories, or even fables and poems. Thomas Leitch argues that there cannot be an equivalence between all adaptations.<sup>24</sup> An adaptation is marked by the transformation, remaking, and the relations in the transition of the narrative from the original source and form to the new. The discussion of an adaptation must consider the fidelity, improvement, and articulation of the subject matter, as well as the narration with respect to the changing forms of signifiers and signifieds.<sup>25</sup> In this respect, adaptation theories generally focus on text-to-screen adaptations as the reinterpretation and remaking of a certain storyline, the changing dynamics of a plot represented visually, and differences in narration. Hence, we need to take into consideration Dudley Andrew's proposition on adaptation in relation to sociology:

. . . the sociology of adaptation has rapidly taken us into the complex interchange between eras, styles, nations, and subjects. This is as it should be, for adaptation, while a tantalizing keyhole for theorists, nevertheless partakes of the universal situation of film practice, dependent as it is on the aesthetic system of the cinema in a particular era and on that era's cultural needs and pressures.<sup>26</sup>

Adaptation is applied and preferred in cinema for different reasons. In the beginning, it offered a convenient way of satisfying an audience's tastes. In the early cinema period, filmgoers were generally people who were already interested in literature and enjoyed the novel.<sup>27</sup> The literary originals on which film adaptations were based were already appreciated and in demand. These reproductions in a new medium were thought to be satisfying for both the audience and producer. The replication of the original was not questioned at all. "Instead the audience is expected to enjoy basking in a certain pre-established presence and to call up new or especially powerful aspects of a cherished work."<sup>28</sup> While this may have been the case for the early cinema adaptation practices, more recent adaptations of older literary works on the screen require some explanation. The more recent demand for films adapted from

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Leitch, "Twice-Told Tales: Disavowal and the Rhetoric of the Remake," in *Dead Ringers: The Remake in Theory and Practice 2007*, eds. Jennifer Forrest and Leonard R. Koos (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 93.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, 106.

<sup>27</sup> Kirel, *Yeşilçam Öykü Sineması*, 118-119.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, 98.

older literary works could be based on fantasizing the past. The dramatic adaptation of imaginary or other stories with a fictionalized historical contexture can serve to play to national sensitivities. Or, with the up-to-date adaptations, the audience again gets content with the classic narration. Thanks to the narration's trustworthiness and familiarity, the audience does not encounter any unexpected surprises and fears, which would disturb their viewing pleasure. This also enables the audience to identify with and respond to the narration in a more "comfortable" way, keeping viewers happy and thus satisfying both them and the producer. As Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn argue, appeals to adaptations come "simply from repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise. Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing the adaptation."<sup>29</sup>

A number of different aspects of film adaptations offer themselves up for discussion. These include the extent to which the adaptation copied the original work or the extent to which it offers a reinterpretation or transposition, as well as its prioritization of either the symbolic or the verbal, showing or telling.<sup>30</sup> What most adaptation theories agreed upon is that the subject matter of adaptations is generally appealing and that adaptations range in degree of reinterpretation from either being loyal to or only being inspired—partially or completely—by the original.<sup>31</sup> On this point, Dudley Andrew offers three main types that can be applied in a comparative analysis of adaptations. His structuring of modes on adaptations as "borrowing, intersecting and transforming" in relation to the original source are useful for contextually analyzing and comparing different adaptations over time.<sup>32</sup> This categorization is also applicable to comparative analysis for a novel's adaptation in different forms, regarding my study's topic of television serials and melodrama films, and their remakes over time. That is why adaptation in film-making as well as television productions constitutes a significant field for social inquiry. How and why are television adaptations from old novels produced so often in so many different places and met with such wide and cross-cultural appeal? How do their reception and consumption point to significant dimensions of social constructions and discourses?

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<sup>29</sup> Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2013), 4.

<sup>30</sup> Deborah Cartmell, introduction to "From Screen to Text: Multiple Adaptations," in *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, eds. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (London: Routledge, 2005), 144.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-145.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, 94.

In the adaptation process, what aspects of the original novel are preserved and which are transformed or excluded? How does the time and place an adaptation is made affect this process? Regarding these and related questions, adaptation touches upon many discussions in scholarly circles on intertextuality, but also the social dynamics of the visual, screened, and perceived as well as the interrelatedness between them. To put it simply, the abovementioned discussion constitutes a necessity for my research endeavors in this study. Also, it requires the following sub-discussions for more elaboration on the topic regarding film and television serial adaptations.

### **1.3.1. From Text to Screen: Melodramatic Adaptation**

Film adaptation has its own way of interpreting and representing the original source. First and foremost, its presentation of the storyline is realized in a very different medium, film. Yet, “no matter how we judge the process or success of the film, its ‘being’ owes something to the tale that was its inspiration and potentially its measure.”<sup>33</sup> Hence, regardless of the uniqueness of the reinterpretation and the extent to which it presents new values and contextual dimensions, adaptation does not completely cut the ties between itself and the original. This interrelatedness between text and screen could be analyzed according to the modes of relation, as mentioned above.

From text to screen, for the adaptation, interpretation is important since it constitutes the main rupture between the two. While adaptation changes with respect to borrowing from, intersecting with, or transforming the original source, the difference between the signification systems of written and visual material constitutes the most prominent difference. But, as Dudley Andrew puts it, this distinction does not mean they are incommensurable. They have different language systems in respect to the material they use. However, the transitivity of the signification systems for the articulation of the subject matter is not neglected, since the matching items between different systems is human practice and well accepted. Therefore:

Adaptation would then become a matter of searching two systems of communication for elements of equivalent position in the systems capable of eliciting a signified at a given level of pertinence, for example, the description of a narrative action.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 102.

This linkage is also important in terms of the genre. That is, the adaptation of a novel to a film needs to be considered in terms of its genre. The transition of the subject matter with respect to the characteristics of a genre may explain why and how a specific genre is preferred and reproduced within a different formulation. There are many different genre adaptations, not only from thrillers, romance, or melodrama of novels and stories, but also of plays or even poems. The signification systems of literary work vary with respect to the genre the work was created in. However, above-mentioned commensurability of the different signification systems could be analyzed with respect to the genre. That is, a melodramatic adaptation could both enable an elaboration on the subject matter comparatively as well as on the transmission of the elements and dynamics between the literary and textual script.

Analysis of a specific genre in terms of adaptation contains characteristics shared or differentiated from text to screen. Also, it allows the observation and examination of the social context and conjectural specificities in terms of discursive representations and reproductions in the changing forms within the same generic framework. As Thomas Elsaesser discusses, melodramatic adaptation was quite often applied and celebrated by famous directors of the 1940s and 1950s in Hollywood, and this shows how the genre melodrama is differently interpreted in two forms:

For example, when in ordinary language we call something melodramatic, what we often mean is an exaggerated rise-and-fall pattern in human actions and emotional responses, a form-the-sublime-to-the-ridiculous movement, a foreshortening of lived time in favor of intensity – all of which produces a graph of much greater fluctuation, a quicker swing from one extreme to the other than is considered natural, realistic or in conformity with literary standards of verisimilitude: in the novel we like to sip our pleasure, rather than gulp them.<sup>35</sup>

While this enables us to understand the satisfaction as the audience or reader of a same topic, it also explains the different characteristics in two types with extensions or compressions of the narratives. As well as the ways in which the material is “consumed” or appreciated, the cultural atmosphere in terms of the production period and context could be analyzed comparatively. Melodramatic adaptations are important to analyze and explore, since they embody the cultural context in which they were produced. Also, they provide a glimpse into the historical and social context and

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<sup>35</sup> Elsaesser, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, 52.



intellectual climate both at the time of their creation and at the time of their future “replications” or “repetitions” as novels and films.

### **1.3.2. Melodramatic Adaptation to Television**

The television industry has produced melodrama in a variety of forms, from soap opera to television serials. The types are categorized in accordance with the difference between the length, topic construction, and presentation time of the material. In this respect, melodrama as a popular genre is generally merged with soap operas and television serials in many countries. Hence, while the melodrama has been celebrated in the novel form, and then the film form, with the passing of years and the introduction of new mediums of expression—in this case televisual—it has persisted and retained its appeal. That is, melodrama is not only an important genre for sociological inquiry in literature and film studies, but also open to examination in other areas such as television.

What is also remarkable here about melodramatic television productions is their reconsideration of the adaptation. Television as adapted from text, generally novels, occupies an important place in the contemporary era. It is intriguing to examine how these adaptations deal with a “past” subject by either completely remaking it with respect to the expectations of the contemporary social atmosphere or else adapting it in a way that is loyal to the historical conjuncture of its creation. Such an investigation tells why the past is brought back and forward, and reveals the very contemporary dynamics at work in the process. Also, the creation of a melodramatic adaptation in either a soap opera or television serial format is important for the insight it offers on a social topic with respect to continuities and discontinuities. From text to the television screen the adaptation takes another dimension in its articulation of a social phenomenon, since it is reformulated with respect to such changing cultural practices as television leisure time activities, or reproducing certain discourses according to its own context. This also enables one to analyze and examine the social praxis involved in long-lasting television-watching activities within melodramatic appreciation and demands of the society.

As “retold new stories in new forms,”<sup>36</sup> adaptations can be differentiated in accordance with their relation to the original source. On the other hand, this difference can be seen between the film and television. That is, adapted films can be differentiated

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<sup>36</sup> Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2.

from adapted television serials, series, or soap operas. As well as the extension in the sense of inclusion or exclusion of certain dynamics of the subject regarding the form, artistic concerns also differ. Even the preference of the form of adaptation tells a lot about the cultural and social tastes. For instance, melodramatic television adaptations could be interpreted as serving the interests of different social groups at the same time. That is, they blurred the cultural stratification between moviegoers and television-viewers by being open to both groups' appreciation of melodramatic adaptation. Also, they could open up new discussions about the transition of the subject matter between the forms. The criticized compression of film adapted from multi-layered novels could be reflected in over-extension. A film adaptation is blamed by its audience as compressing and excluding certain parameters in the narration, in an hour of visual representation. But, a television serial is more reflective as lasting longer and able to contain more from the original work. Also as a new form, it "provides a helpful model of how adaptations work when they ignore their originals' narrative functions or invent their own in the absence of a preexisting narrative."<sup>37</sup> An adaptation of a literary work to the television screen could be explained as remembrance, or with nostalgia, linking the past to today. Its preference and application in television culture could be interpreted as a response to and an echo of contemporary concerns with respect to the historical. It also involves clues as to the how and why of reformulations of certain codes, norms, and discourses in protective social praxis with respect to time in terms of sociological inquiry.

#### **1.4. Remake: Why Remake?**

In cinema repetition of the same material, either the narrative or the genre, or the both, is plentiful. The same topic is covered over time more than once, twice, even a third time. Generally, the subject matter or the story is remade in accordance with the time period's expectations and conditions. The derivation of a script of a film has been continued remaking. Also, this remaking persists definitional discussions and categorization. As an important phenomenon in film studies literature, remake also reflects the sociological dynamics of the social constructions and their reproductive and discursive mechanisms. As Constantine Verevis discusses, there may be different questions and *problématiques* in defining what a remake is and in accordance with which criteria, as well as what a remake connotes:

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<sup>37</sup> Leitch, *Twice-Told Tales*, 259.

Although there may be sufficient cultural agreement on the existence and nature of film remakes to allow for a clear understanding – especially in the case of those remakes which carry a pre-sold title *and* repeat readily recognizable narrative units – when considered alongside the broader concept of intertextuality, film remaking can refer to “the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a [film] culture”.<sup>38</sup>

As well as the conceptual differentiations in film-remakes in terms of fidelity to the previous work, the incorporation of new technology, and any other novelty or difference, the bringing of a pre-told story to a new audience contains important dimensions. The story has already been told, but it is being re-told in a way designed to meet the expectations and to be in harmony with the all-encompassing cultural dynamics of the present time. That is, the remake not only enables a nostalgic comparison and contrast of today and the past, but also opens up discussions on the persistent habits, concerns, and social constructions in different formulations. In this respect, melodrama film remakes may provide a representative material of examination since it regenerates both genre fidelity and the narrative replication. That is, while a genre is characteristically more or less the same over time, its reproduction within the same context in different time periods makes us think on it in terms of the social transformation and transition. What is specific to melodrama is that it is reproduced over time and consistently embraced by the audience. As well as the importance of the melodrama in terms of sociological inquiry, its structural and narrative reproduction points out certain social *problématiques* embedded in the material. That is, to examine a film remake in relation to a melodrama enables us to ask different questions in relation to social change, transformation, and transition:

The more we think about the issue of remakes, the more we can see how many significant strands of narrative, cinema, culture, psychology, and textuality come together. Taking the largest possible view - that of human psychology and development – we can, for instance, make the following observation. Experience and development themselves depend upon recognizable patterns of repetition, novelty and resolution. ... That is, every moment of every day, we experience what is familiar, what seems “new”, and we learn somehow to resolve the difference so we can continue to focus. ... In one sense, remakes exemplify this process. They provoke a double pleasure in that they offer what we know previously,

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<sup>38</sup> Constantine Verevis, *Film Remakes* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 1.

but with novel or at least different interpretations, representations, twists, and developments, resolutions.<sup>39</sup>

All in all, film remakes, brings many different aspects of the social together. A film by itself does this, so when it is probed in the context of the remake, the palimpsest structure that is embodied in the film with retellings over time enables us to examine and evaluate the social dynamics comparatively.

On the other hand, the appeal of, or appreciation of, film remakes needs to be explained. As in case of the film adaptations from novels, this popularity may be explained as resulting from an audience's familiarity with the subject matter and the satisfaction of their expectations with no or few surprises. There are many institutional and industrial reasons to have remakes in film historicity. The commercial concerns of the producers, as well as the ease, practicality, and efficiency of making an already-told story, and the audience's comfort in terms of familiarity make it preferable. As Constantine Verevis discusses in his book *Film Remakes*, a number of different categorizations could be used to explain the popularity of film-remaking over time. In this respect, he proposes different categories that relate to commerce, the author, audience, texts, genres, and discourses, all of which address the "why" of film remaking. This reasoning also explains "how the *film remake* is maintained as a separated yet connected phenomenon."<sup>40</sup> Film remaking, how films are remade, their renewal in accordance with their period, and thus technology and social juncture can be important in terms of comprehending why "repetitions" or "replications" are often produced and remain popular both for the "producer" and "consumer." Also, the film remake is "the constant interplay between the desires of artists [*all of whom participate in film-making*] and the desires of audiences"<sup>41</sup> with respect to the changing medium, either transforming it or having the same tool (i.e. film remakes or remakes for television series, serials, or soap operas). Hence, remaking operate based on a number of factors touching on the economic, political, historical, social, and psychological dynamics in a society. It re-presents a pre-sold story either regarding financial concerns of reproducing, or the remembrance with nostalgia, familiarity and

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<sup>39</sup> Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal, introduction to *Play it Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*, eds. Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 5-6.

<sup>40</sup> Verevis, *Film Remakes*, vii.

<sup>41</sup> Leo Braudy, "Afterword: Rethinking Remakes", in *Play it Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*, eds. Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 333.

innovative, as well as necessities, desires and expectations in (re)configuring the social.

#### **1.4.1. Retake and Remake of Melodramatic Narratives: Old in New, New in Old?**

Film remakes are a fundamental phenomenon in terms of both cultural studies and sociological inquiries. This is so not only because they render the assemblage of social structures in a large container of genre, adaptation, and much other filmic and social material, but also because they enable a rereading of the past. Remakes also enable us to comparatively analyze the transition and transformation in the move from past to present. They also enable us to reexamine the past by offering reformulations of perspectives and ideologies that reveal how they have changed over time. Retaking a pre-told narration of a film, either in the form of a new film or in a television format, entails many discussions on repetition, replication, derivation, or reproduction. In general, film remake makes a lot of sense as a film studies phenomenon. On the other hand, when it is taken into consideration within a film genre, it may also enable us to trace certain significations. Thus, melodramatic films that are “exact” remakes of pre-told narratives as well as their generic reformulations in terms of its characteristics touch on many social factors as an often-applied, consumed, and desired genre. This in part explains how and why it persists as a genre and has been the scene of so many recreations throughout film history.

As Christine Gledhill discusses, with the socio-cultural formation of melodrama from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, “earlier folk and current ‘popular’ traditions overlaid, or coalesced with the ‘establishment’ dramaturgical and fictional structures.”<sup>42</sup> Melodrama, and perhaps melodramatic remakes especially, are a fertile ground for tracing these continuities in social patterns. Retaking a previously told or sold story may lead to a number of inquiries about the blurred distinction and linkage between them. In this respect, remade melodramas in cinema and television formats are important, since they unite and reunite significant social dynamics with respect to the sociological concerns. To reconsider the melodrama in terms of remake context is important since the remake:

. . . intensifies basic critical conflicts between the intertextuality of film meaning and its contextuality, between the uses of taxonomy in grouping films and the renewed look at the individual text, between artistic

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<sup>42</sup> Gledhill, *The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation*, 18.

intention as a gesture of originality and artistic intention as a gesture of mediation.<sup>43</sup>

It is important to sort out the residual story of the melodrama maintained through the process of re-owning and re-capturing that takes place in the framing of the same subject matter in different ways over time. Differing from other genres, melodrama involves a specific nostalgia, i.e. recreated tragic ruptures and reunions. Therefore, there is a connection between the old and new in melodrama. Also, melodrama appears in stories of other genres in a more or less prominent way, whether it be for ten minutes or ten seconds. In other words, melodramatic structural dynamics can be found in many generic formulations. Hence, there is general agreement on the connectedness of melodrama to every other type of genre.

The lineage of melodrama attributes to very early cinema. Melodrama continues to carry those very early characteristics with renewed peculiarities: the same genre, the previously told and very familiar story, told again in a new atmosphere. The old, familiar, and expected, is paired with novel frames and intermingled with the new. Hence, neither is the familiar left behind completely, nor does the novelty emerge “out of nowhere.” This juxtaposition of the new and old in melodrama could be analyzed comprehensively in the theoretical framework of the remake phenomenon.

#### **1.4.2. Remaking the Adapted: Re-adaptation**

Different argumentations based on the sources of newly created, or produced, films have led to discussions of the “taxonomy” of film remakes. Both the originality and the fidelity of the remade film matter. The reproduced, or replicated—even sometimes rebooted—creates its own originality. A remake film has its own way of narration, mise-en-scene yet preserving the same story. It reinvents the story, with a novel, original point of view. This discussion is not only about visual representation, the remaking of a film in a cinematic or television format. It is also about “remaking as a textual category,” or the adaptation as a remaking. In other words, in the remake classifications, in accordance with the relationship of the remade product to the source, adaptation also has a place.

The adaptation could be considered as a remake, that is, a pre-told story is reformulated into a new medium. In this respect, the differentiation comes with the change of medium. This is also in accordance with adaptation theories in terms what

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<sup>43</sup> Braudy, *Afterword: Rethinking Remakes*, 331.

it borrows from, what it intersects with, or how it is transformed in the process of becoming an adaptation.<sup>44</sup> This classification merge with remake categorizations. The taxonomy built with respect to the relationship to the source is similar for adaptations and remakes. Yet, there could be a difference in its conceptualization:

. . . remakes differ from other adaptations to a new medium and translations to a new language because of the triangular relationship they establish among themselves, the original film they remake, and the property on which both films are based. The nature of this triangle is most clearly indicated by the fact that the producers of a remake typically pay no adaptation fees to the makers of the original film, but rather purchase adaptation rights from the authors of the property on which that film was based, even though the remake is competing much more directly with the original film than with the story or play or novel on which both of them are based.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, the ontological separation between remakes and adaptations could not be based on financial considerations of the film remaking related to reserved copyrights and their payments. While this is an issue, the symbiotic relationship between the two cannot be neglected. That is, there is a distinction between what has been generally referred to as an adaptation and a remake. Adaptation links itself to the original source more directly. Whereas, remake also owes to the previous made film in terms of its basis.

As well as discussions of adaptations that treat them in the form of remake, there are also those who address remade adaptations. That is, “re-adaptation.” Remaking the already adapted story in a different context, or remaining loyal to the original source, there emerges a re-adaptation. This is remade adaptation. A remake film that is basically adaptation from a novel, is a re-adaptation, involving both adaptation and remake characteristics. As Thomas Leitch states, “re-adaptations can present themselves as just like their models only better because they pose as original translations of the models to a new medium rather than remakes of earlier movies.”<sup>46</sup> Hence, the complexity of relationship between the adaptation and the remake indicates context and referentiality of the producer or the artists:

. . . the intertextual referentiality between a film adaptation and its literary property (novel, play, poem) and a film remake and its “original” became increasingly *extratextual* – located in reviews, advertising, fiction tie-ins

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<sup>44</sup> Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, 94.

<sup>45</sup> Leitch, *Twice-Told Tales*, 39.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

and other promotional materials. The situation changes again with the introduction of television and (later) new information storage Technologies (VCR, laser disc, DVD), and an associated rise in film literacy through the abundance of television screens, publications and other visual media.<sup>47</sup>

That is, adaptations and the remakes are context-dependent, in terms of the changing technologies in the time they are made. The intertextual referentiality between them also shows how their relationship is defined accordingly. Therefore, “textual accounts of remaking need to be placed in a *contextual history*, in ‘a sociology [of remaking] that takes into account the commercial apparatus, the audience, and the . . . [broader] culture industry’.”<sup>48</sup>

In conclusion, adaptation, remake, and re-adaptation practices of melodrama signify important dynamics that bear on the process of fictional construction over time through the replication, reproduction or reinvention of stories. Keeping this theoretical framework in mind, I now turn to the particular subject of my study in order to evaluate its dynamics with respect to its own locality and subjectivity in terms of “Turkishness.” Hence, in the next chapter, I will discuss the Turkish melodrama novel, as well as its adaptations and remakes for the screen.

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<sup>47</sup> Verevis, *Film Remakes*, 100.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 101.



## CHAPTER 2

### MELODRAMA AS A SELF-CONTAINED GENRE IN THE TURKISH CONTEXT

Regarding the particularity of Turkish melodrama, even there emerged a Turkish idiom out of the clichés of the tragic or melodramatic occasions in films: “just like in a Turkish movie” (*aynı Türk filmlerindeki gibi*). So, when a person has an occasion similar to the happenings in a Turkish melodrama film plot in their life, it is referred to in this way. In this respect, melodramas are familiar in the Turkish context. This reflexive and representative structure of melodrama associates many different social dynamics within itself. Regarding “the commercialization and commodification of popular culture”<sup>49</sup> the audiences of melodrama cannot be regarded “as passive victims of manipulation but as active producers of meaning.”<sup>50</sup> Hence, popular culture in terms of Turkish melodrama prescribes how cultural material is produced with respect to the involvements and exclusions of the agents, as well as how the structure of meaning and discourses in various subjects is processed and constructed. How do people construct the meaning in a melodrama by reading, watching, and making it? How do they associate the reality and fiction? What does melodrama represent and thus how does it find an echo in the audience’s reality? How does melodrama permeate social life and create a consensual acceptance by most of the people? Why do people like melodramatic novels and films and celebrate them and completely indigenize them as “from us”? While “melodrama repeatedly returns to the ‘boy meets girl’ plot, they unite, they split, they reunite”<sup>51</sup>, why do people continue to watch the reproduced stories over the course of time? How is the self-referential quality constructed between the Turkish melodrama and culture?

Hence, melodrama creates a plentiful field in sociology for inquiry into different segments and constructions of the social. According to Nükhet Sirman and Zeynep Feyza Akınerdem, in discussing Turkish melodrama in a sociological context

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<sup>49</sup> Ulla Haselstein, Berndt Ostendorf and Peter Schneck, “Popular Culture: Introduction,” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 46, no. 3 (2001): 332, accessed April 5, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41157662>.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Nezih Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” *Screen* 39, no. 3 (1998): 265.

as to why and how it is adored and celebrated, two important dimensions could be stressed. The first one is the linear narrative of melodrama, which does not surprise but embraces familiar material. Second, it is the deconstruction of a moral norm in melodramas, through which the resolutions and recoding of this deconstruction are articulated.<sup>52</sup> In this respect, people call melodrama a genre, not because of the mere curiosity built upon conflicts and resolutions, but because of the familiarity of the occurrences. As Sirman and Akinerdem discuss, melodramas are celebrated because of their similarity and familiarity via creating an intersection between the realities in people's lives and reflections on the screen. Also, melodrama's treatment of a moral norm in narration is important, as already noted.<sup>53</sup> The social norms presented on the screen are not a complete abstraction from the practiced ones. They are the products of the very same codifying systems of the society. Hence, the deconstruction of a norm with respect to the morality, as an emphasis in the story line of a melodrama, attracts attention. This is because people want to see and comprehend how the resolution for a societal disruption is shown by a new norm's construction, even if it is only a film. Therefore, this connection implies many dynamics in the society both about production and consumption of melodrama, as well as interests and cultural codes and norms, that is, about the very "nature" of the social and its constituents, in terms of representation and reflection.

While melodrama as a genre is beyond belonging to a specific national culture, it is elaborated within a reformulation and conjunction of the traditions and localities of a national culture. By being faithful, the general characteristics of the melodrama, as presentations of non-classic and non-linear narrative structure, exaggerations of tragic occasions, moral polarization of the good and evil, failed romances, illnesses as well as the stereotyped characters built in Manichean conflicts, Turkish melodrama creates its own subjectivity in terms of local and traditional expression within the storyline of the novels, films, and television serials.

### **2.1. Turkish Novel: Melodrama Provoked**

Melodrama from theatre to novel, and then to cinema is a significant modern era phenomenon regarding its continuity and durability with respect to the changing

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<sup>52</sup> Nükhet Sirman and Feyza Akinerdem, "Diziler Nasıl Yapılıyor / Yazılıyor? Nasıl Okunuyor?," *Kumbara Sanat Araştırma Dizisi 2 İstanbul Amargi Feminizm Tartışmaları*, December 2012, 474-475.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

spatial and temporal context. Being part and parcel of popular culture, melodrama embodies “the ostentatious playfulness of entertainment culture and the dazzling display of much contemporary *kitsch* offered resources of enjoyment”<sup>54</sup> in accordance with the expectations and conditions of the geography it is created in and from. Melodrama, “as an organizing modality”<sup>55</sup> has a fluid form, which leaks “across a range of genres, across historical moments and across spatial geographies such as national cultures.”<sup>56</sup> With respect to every culture’s own subjectivity, as in many other cultural practices and materials, in the Turkish context melodrama could be found as a very convenient modality rearticulating the locality, in terms of representations and confrontations of social dynamics within its genre.

In relation to the lack of modernity and modern ideals in Turkish culture, the Turkish novel was always criticized as “lacking spontaneity and originality [*with*] characters who are prisoners of imitated desires, copied sensibilities, bookish aspirations, and belated torments.”<sup>57</sup> This belatedness produces two main opposing critical standpoints for the Turkish novel: it is either a copied from Western culture or it is a form blended with Turkish authenticity. Yet, the opposing critics share the same referential point in constructing their positions: The western, thus modern, model. The Turkish novel’s identity, originality, and authenticity are configured in such a dilemma, as Nurdan Gürbilek calls it, “double blind.”<sup>58</sup> Within such discussions, the novelists’ variety in writing progressed. And through this progress, the melodramatic modality has stayed significant in the Turkish modern novelists’ writing. As Nurdan Gürbilek discusses in the very beginning of the novel’s introduction to Turkish literature, in the Tanzimat period, the melodramatic construction of the storyline is remarkable.<sup>59</sup> This period’s affiliations and prescriptions are important in terms of melodramatic modality’s succession by the following waves in Early Republican Era literature, as leaked into realist and popular novelists’ styles.

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<sup>54</sup> Haselstein et al., *Popular Culture: Introduction*, 331.

<sup>55</sup> Jan Campbell, *Film and Cinema Spectatorship: Melodrama and Mimesis* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 201.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Nurdan Gürbilek, “Dandies and Originals: Authenticity, Belatedness, and the Turkish Novel,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (2003): 599.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 603

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 606.

Regarding the Turkish novel in the 1930s, precisely my research subject *Yaprak Dökümü*'s period, the main concern dealt with in novels was Westernization.<sup>60</sup> This concern actually, starting with the first attempts in novel writing, persisted until the 1950s. With respect to the social change and historical transformations in modern Turkish society, after the 1950s, Turkish literature turns to narratives on class conflicts and social problems stemming from inequality and discrimination embodied with the system.<sup>61</sup> While in the 1930s, realist and popular novels are common, the characteristics describing such Westernization concerns are rendered in melodrama. The popular novels of the late 1900s generally dealt with triangle love relationships, with respect to failure and strict definitions of good and evil, there were morality lessons with moralistic endings. Or, the classical realist narratives of the Early Republican Era in novels carried the similar moral guidelines, with the Manichean dualism of good and evil. The formation and structure in writing across the changing literary movements or waves, styles continue to regulate the melodrama. In the case of Reşat Nuri Güntekin and his novels, he is generally considered in the classical realist, as well as dramatic genres.<sup>62</sup> His novels also deal with love triangles, approaching his contemporaries who wrote popular novels. Yet, the classical and realist descriptiveness in his writing was always reflected in melodrama. He either gave the love triangles, impossible love or a family story, but always with failure and predicament, as the melodrama allowed. Not necessarily being a popular novelist, but certainly a melodrama writer, Reşat Nuri Güntekin has a distinctive place in Turkish melodrama.

## **2.2. Melodrama on the Screen: Yeşilçam Melodrama, Genre and Modality**

Following Nezih Erdoğan's analysis on identities of Turkish cinema, melodrama:

. . . is perfectly suited to Yeşilçam, which sticks to narrative traditions inspired by legends, fairy tales and epopees (rather than by, say, tragedy, which emphasizes the inner conflicts and transformations of its characters). While, in its beginnings, western melodrama recorded the "struggle of a morally and emotionally emancipated bourgeois consciousness against the remnants of feudalism". Yeşilçam exploits

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<sup>60</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Türk Edebiyatında Hikâye ve Roman II: Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyet'e Kadar 1911-1922* (İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1987), 340.

<sup>61</sup> Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış 2: Sabahattin Ali'den Yusuf Atılgan'a* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınlar, 2009), 7.

<sup>62</sup> Fethi Naci, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin'in Romancılığı* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 7-9.

melodrama in articulating the desires aroused not only by class conflict but also by rural/urban and eastern/western oppositions. Immigration from rural areas to big cities is still a social phenomenon with significant economic and cultural consequences. The possibilities of crossing from one class to another and from village to big city provide the ground upon which melodrama plays and activates its machinery of desire.<sup>63</sup>

Melodrama has an eclectic and hybrid structure in Turkish cinema, not only as a form of cinematic expression, but also a conjunct modality embracing the folk narratives, traditional theatre performances, and exhibitions, i.e. Karagöz shadow plays, popular local songs, as well as popular novels.<sup>64</sup> As in other country's film making processes, Turkish film culture has its own self-contained genre style for melodramatic production. Certain clichés, repetitions in mise-en-scene, characters, and roles, as much as the storyline, are met very often in films. Even the dialogues with the very same and specific words and sentences are applied and remade in different films of Yeşilçam. For instance, a recently made documentary on the history of Yeşilçam, by Cem Kaya *Remake, Remix, Rip-Off (Motör)*, presents scenes from many different melodramas consecutively in which the protagonist man miserably cries: "Oh, no! This is impossible, no way!" (*N'ayır! N'olamaz!*).<sup>65</sup> This is presented generally in case of an impasse regarding his love or health with the same mimics, acting, and maneuvers towards the camera, or in another series of scenes in which the happy ending with the reunion of the lovers with marriage, or of previously separated family members, etc. In this ensuing same scenes from different melodramas, depict the Yeşilçam directors and screenwriters' consensual definitions on how Turkish melodrama is meant be constructed: the clashes of the good and evil, rich man and poor woman love (or vice versa), the white lies to disguise misery and sorrow and avoiding hurting the loved ones, lots of cries and weeping, suffering, and then relief in the end, the impasse of a woman for choosing her honor and life of her beloved child, or sibling, or a parent, etc.

For Yeşilçam directors and screenwriters, the basic structure of stories in films display little variation. Regarding the structural dimensions in building the narration, as well as the mise-en-scene and characters, there is a basic model of constructing the

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<sup>63</sup> Erdoğan, *Narratives of Resistance*, 265.

<sup>64</sup> Hasan Akbulut, *Yeşilçam'dan Yeni Türk Sinemasına Melodramatik İmgelem*, (İstanbul: Hayalperest Yayınevi, 2012), 94.

<sup>65</sup> *Remake, Remix, Rip-Off: About Copy Culture and Turkish Pop Cinema*, directed by Cem Kaya (2014; Potsdam: UFA Fiction).

story. While the time and place may change, the structuring of the storytelling stays the same. This is not peculiar to the narration of the Yeşilçam films. In the case of melodrama, as a genre, it is not restricted to a national culture defined and constructed in accordance with certain subjective codes and norms. Neither is it special to the Hollywood, nor European cinema, nor to any other specific area's cinema. As Ben Singer discusses, melodrama could be regarded as a "cluster concept" that as a genre, its "meaning varies from case to case in relation to different configurations of a range of basic features or constitutive factors."<sup>66</sup> Following Singer's conceptualization, regarding the structure of melodrama in general carries basic constitutive characteristics, namely "pathos, overwrought emotion, moral polarization, non-classical narrative structure, and sensationalism"<sup>67</sup>, through which it builds itself as a genre beyond the cultural peculiarities. In this respect, while Yeşilçam directors and film makers assert the sameness and restricted number of the story-lines for Yeşilçam films, especially regarding melodrama, they actually propose this constitutive characteristics rather than a complete novelty to Turkish film making. Yet, these characteristics as structuring the genre melodrama are collated with respect to the national culture. Savaş Arslan notes:

Yeşilçam relies upon the articulation of a melodramatic modality that not has a particular history in the Western countries, but also has a variety of traditional occurrences in Turkey. In this respect, Yeşilçam combines melodramatic modality with the storytelling conventions of Turkey that rely upon oral narration ... Yeşilçam produced a combination of a two-dimensional way of seeing with a perspectival one by the way of its translation and adaptation of a Western medium into a domestic visual set of practices.<sup>68</sup>

Following the path of European transition of melodrama, Yeşilçam also builds on cinematic melodrama with inheritance from nineteenth-century theater and literature tradition, through transforming it and negotiating with modernity. Yeşilçam melodrama, maintained "the sentimental and spectacular aspect of entertainment"<sup>69</sup>, which carries traces of "a transformation from tradition to modernity."<sup>70</sup> Despite this

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<sup>66</sup> Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (Columbia University Press, 2001), 44.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Savaş Arslan, "Hollywood *Alla Turca*: A History of Popular Cinema in Turkey," (PhD diss, The Ohio State University, 2005), 18.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

similarity of transition of melodrama between Yeşilçam and Europe and Hollywood, they also differ from each other contextually with respect to the historical, social, and political transformations, as well as national culture, in Turkey. Regarding modernization and Westernization projects in the Early Republican Period in Turkey – which also coincides with the birth of Yeşilçam – the film making practices maintained certain national and cultural discourses in terms of signifying a similar agenda for the formation of the prescribed level of Turkishness through reformist state policies. That is, the republican national reform agenda was preserved and maintained in Yeşilçam’s melodramatic modality:

... denoting a single, true and path of modernization and westernization ... the melodramatic modality of Yeşilçam cinema with its aspects of *hayal* and Turkification became eloquent in its relation to the republican cultural project: it offered not only an ambivalent and alternative “Turkification” with all of its political and national disputes, it also belonged to that imaginary world of nationality that the republican establishment attempted to create through imposition from above. Integral to its melodramatic modality and its national and democratic myth, Yeşilçam cinema also presented a *hayal* (dream, imagination, mirror, specter and shadow) of Turkification which is simultaneously traditional and modern, Eastern and Western.<sup>71</sup>

While the effects of the social change and transition on Yeşilçam cinema are reflected as melodrama, the adaptations from other countries, copying, and repetitions were also applied contextually to Turkish culture. While making a film in Yeşilçam could not be thought as a self-creation regarding the copy culture over Hollywood, it has its own way of reforming the genre and adapting it to the conjuncture of Turkey. As Nezih Erdoğan observes:

Turkish popular cinema, Yeşilçam, whose death was announced in the early 1980s, had been frequently criticized for imitating other cinemas, and repeating other films. Back in 1968, the film magazine *Yeni Sinema* (*New Cinema*) noted that more than half of the 250 films made that year were adaptations - plagiarisms, to be more precise - of foreign box-office successes.<sup>72</sup>

In this respect, Yeşilçam owns and builds an identity over copying a different culture’s productions: it “borrows” the exact same story of a foreign film and converts it in a way in which it creates its own originality. So, for a film, a re-creation occurs out of a

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 112-113.

<sup>72</sup> Erdoğan, *Narratives of Resistance*, 260.

previously foreign film in relation to the Turkish cultural, social, political, and economic context as well as the possible sources in terms of technical and financial capabilities for production, which reveals “a hybrid cinema it produced a cinematic discourse blending Hollywood-style realism with an unintentional Brechtian alienation effect.”<sup>73</sup> That is, a cinema which is created “by “Turkifying”... by mirroring, mimicking, and by transforming”<sup>74</sup> as Turkish filmmakers translate.

As Savaş Arslan discusses in his work on Turkish popular cinema history, Yeşilçam embraces melodrama as a modality with respect to the translation of certain peculiarities of Hollywood and European film making: “Turkification of Western films, they present a melodramatic modality that enmeshes elements of a melodramatic narration with an authentic practice of realism.”<sup>75</sup> Regarding the technical inadequacies and poor quality in visual narration, in editing, shooting, or mise-en-scene construction, Yeşilçam continued its existence within the copy-culture and this melodramatic form, by creating an idiosyncratic gentrification and recycling. In this sense, Savaş Arslan’s conceptualization of “couch grass” for Yeşilçam’s peculiar stance in film making with respect to the melodrama is quite noteworthy. He proposes:

Yeşilçam offers a field of coexistence for different aspects of the culture through a series of combinations and contradictions embedded in itself. Various aggressions, violent practices and hierarchies could be found in Yeşilçam as well as perpetual change in such progresses. In such a flow, the West and the East coexist and contradict and as such Yeşilçam produces ambivalent responses. Thus instead of taking Yeşilçam as a unified and coherent entity, I argue that it is similar to couch grass which exists side by side with other plants, growing and expanding with or without them.<sup>76</sup>

Hence, this conceptualization remains remarkable in the sense it epitomizes the socialization processes Turkey has been going through from its very foundation. The presented coexistence and contradictions in Yeşilçam resemble the social reality of the Turkish modernization process. In the formation of the modern nation-state of Turkey, the conflicting institutional reforms with the previous practices as well as the maintenance of a novel moral and value system could be seen as symbolically presented in Yeşilçam.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 266.

<sup>74</sup> Arslan, *Hollywood Alla Turca*, 88.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 23.



Similar to the couch grass characteristic attributed to Yeşilçam cinema, melodrama, as a genre in general, could be regarded as a kind of a couch grass as well, in terms of its coexistence with other genres. Considering it as a phantom genre, it evolves in relation, association, and intermingling with the any other genre, that is, melodrama could not be merely conceptualized as:

. . . the genre of women's films, but rather as a "phantom" genre, as a modality . . . that presents a sphere for the coexistence of the modern and the traditional; that involves mechanisms of coexistence with and in other genres; that brings about a dialectic of pathos and action and a Manichean conflict of good and evil through a predictable storyline; and that resolves with the morality of the common man after a series of spectacular and dramatic confrontations.<sup>77</sup>

Therefore, melodrama within Yeşilçam, exists like a couch grass as a modality that seeps into other genres like a ghost. Also, it resembles and reflects the social with respect to the processes melodrama has been through in Turkey. Yeşilçam melodrama as a phantom genre, a modality, constitutes of a field of emblems, reflections, representations, correspondences, and coexistences in relation to the social reality of Turkey considering the audience impulses for the appeal and celebration. Yeşilçam as Arslan argues, exits as a couch grass in defining itself with respect to the contradictions of the East and West, in a continuous transformation and transition, like Turkish society is formed through within the negotiations and confrontations. Hence melodrama and the social build on each other, serve each other's sustenance, reciprocally, indicating the reflexivity. Melodrama in Yeşilçam, the popular cinema, epitomizes this ambivalent existence, through a domesticized formulation with Turkification as a modality. All in all, the melodrama as a modality is interlaced with Yeşilçam, which is part and parcel of the Turkish social. Melodramatic films of Yeşilçam could be interpreted as concentrated and compressed realizations of Turkish society exuberating the abstract materials with respect to the time period, like a miniature, creating a considerable unit for sociological analysis. Thus, this modality persists to exist as a couch grass, or a phantom genre to today, through dwelling in to the changing mediums, either with film remakes or maintenance just as modality.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 96-97.

### 2.3. Melodrama Remade for Television

Yeşilçam's heyday, in which the majority of films were melodramas, came to an end in the late 1970s, because of "the expansion of television (beginning in 1968) and increasing social chaos and political violence that culminated in a military coup in 1980, social unrest on the streets which caused an enormous reduction in movie attendance."<sup>78</sup> Yet, it retained its "significant place in Turkish social memory and cultural imagery"<sup>79</sup>, Yeşilçam melodrama was not completely abandoned as a genre of entertainment in Turkey. Therefore, it is succeeded in a different medium: television, as transforming the medium while preserving the material, with its "rhizomatic existence through its capacity to adapt into new forms such as television series and serials."<sup>80</sup> In this respect, a kind of remake and adaptation of melodrama is applied to television. It was changing the film into television formats such as serials, series, soap operas, or other shows.

Remake in film studies as retaking a film in film format is also referred to in here as in the sense of retaking the same material, but by changing the medium. Turkish television formats of melodrama either serials, series, soap operas, or other shows, are generally attributed as a succession of Yeşilçam melodrama films. In this respect, while Turkish cinema did not completely cease to produce melodrama films, the cinematic melodrama productions in more a "Yeşilçamian" sense gave their place to television serials, series, and soap operas. Television melodramas can be regarded as remake of Yeşilçam melodrama films, under different terms. While this remake can be regarded in terms of succession or inheritance from Yeşilçam film making practices, there are also exact remakes of the previous melodrama films as television serials, series, and soap operas. Of course, this is not peculiar to the Turkish context, there are also examples of remake melodramas as in television formats for Hollywood, or for any other national cinema productions. What is different in the Turkish context is the appeal of the very same material - in terms of the subject, story line, narration, characters, and mise-en-scene – is repeated over time. That is, a melodrama film is remade as films in Yeşilçam more than once or twice, but it is also remade for television for more than once, with the very same story. The remarkable point in here

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<sup>78</sup> Kaya Mutlu, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 417.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Arslan, *Hollywood Alla Turca*, 26.

is not primarily about the originality of the work in terms of comparisons the previous and remade ones, rather more about the appeal of the same material in the form of melodrama. Hence, remake over time opens up many different discussions regarding copy culture and originality, as well as the reproduction, transition, and succession. As Constantine Verevis discusses, the remakes are “less interested in recreating the detail of their originals than adapting the (previously market tested) source material to the conventions and expectations of the contemporary genre movie.”<sup>81</sup> In this respect, regarding originality concerns of the remakes in television are similar to the concerns in remaking a film. However, this does not happen as a rule in television remaking. In most of the cases – especially after the 2000s – remakes preserved their originality by creating a new narration in relation to the contemporary expectations and conditions, but still stays faithful the original source material to a noticeable extent, i.e. the same characters, transformed but same locations, similar way of constructing the conflicts, and clashes over the same conceptions and values. On the other hand, there are remakes, which are completely – at least they are meant to be – indigenous and characteristic to the original material, as reflecting the same period and definitions of the peculiarities on the screen, with little changes, additions, and extractions. The interesting issue here emerges as the appeal of the same material over the time, which is inevitably melodramatic. So, considering the similarity of the previously experienced and tested material as reasoning, how is it transformed? And how is the social related to the melodramatic construction re-articulated, reproduced, persisted, or eradicated though the transformation?

The change in the medium, for the melodrama is an important dimension. In the Turkish context, with the introduction of television, melodrama films are replaced with television serials, series, and soap operas. In this respect, television culture adapted in the late 1970s in Turkey, “presents us daily with a constantly up-dated version of social relations and cultural perceptions”<sup>82</sup> in relation to representation of melodrama. Hence, the intertextuality of melodrama with respect to modern culture could be examined through this transition in the medium. In his discussions on melodrama and modernity with respect to intertextuality relating to the medium and cultural representations, Ben Singer asserts:

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<sup>81</sup> Verevis, *Film Remakes*, 26.

<sup>82</sup> John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television* (Florence, KY, USA: Routledge, 1978), 18.

. . . one of the defining aspects of modern culture, one that sets it apart from earlier epochs, is the abundance and intricacy of textual intersections and interactions. Just as the rise of the metropolis involved an infinitely busier and more varied arena of human interaction, so too did the rise of modernity involve a much more active and complex network of interconnections among texts. This is not to suggest that intertextuality has not always informed the visual arts, theater, music, and literature. . . ., but there is something epochally extraordinary about the pervasiveness of textual interaction in modern capitalist society. The phenomenon is an outgrowth of, among other things, the expansion of media technology, communications networks, and the commercialization of amusement, and . . . the increased mobility and circulation of all “social things”.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, the change in medium asserts a change (as a result of mentioned expansion and outgrowth of media technology) of practicing the same material within different forms. This indicates change in melodrama consumption in terms of form. While Yeşilçam ended in the late 1970s, at the same time in Turkey television was introduced into homes. Then, television became a new medium for melodrama, while at the same time television was being a signal for the transformation of cultural practices regarding watching and the intertextuality of the material as a presumed consequence of modernity. The modern culture is active in adapting the past into the present (by referring the linkage from traditional into modern), with respect to the interconnection that Singer argues, as well as stretching the previously familiar and watched material to the commercialized amusement according to the conventions of the time. Also, this continuity of the melodrama in television succeeded from Yeşilçam indicates a cultural reality, as Elsaesser argues:

. . . the persistence of melodrama might indicate the ways in which popular culture has not only taken note of social crises and the fact that the losers are not always those who deserve it most, but has also resolutely refused to understand social change in other than private contexts and emotional terms.<sup>84</sup>

In this respect, as a new medium for melodrama, television was a compatible and practical medium to continue the previous tradition, in which it would be able to “put the finger on the texture of their social and human material”<sup>85</sup>, of Yeşilçam, according to the expectations of contemporary culture. That is, as a transformed medium for the

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<sup>83</sup> Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 263.

<sup>84</sup> Elsaesser, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, 48.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 50.

modality, melodrama generates considerable amount of material regarding popular culture, through the reproductive mechanisms in the construction of the social. It seeps into other genres, converges into the complex storylines to glimpse the familiar and intimate, renders changing time and space with unchanged subject matter. That is, melodrama as a modality fabricates the human and thus the social material in parallel to the present time. Therefore, it creates a field of expression as a modality, form transformable in accordance with the expectations and conventions of the time. In the case of television culture, which is itself transformed in Turkey from its very introduction in the 1970s until today, melodrama, adapted and regenerated from Yeşilçam, offered an abundant place to invest in both in terms of cultural practices and industries. As it will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter, television serials as well as any other television formats, sustain and counter the melodramatic production. Therefore, television serials enable us to trace the line of social transformation over the modality.

#### **2.4. Turkish Family (with)in the Melodrama Represented**

Literature, cinema, and television are different mediums presenting culture. Yet, their differences do not indicate a linear social change. Rather, they witness the combined structure of transformation and stability for social change. While the mediums change in terms of expression and representation, the discourse around certain phenomena persists around structural construction. Regarding the expectations and conventions of social context and time, the presentation of a phenomenon reflects the social realities when and where they are created. Therefore, melodrama as an important piece of modernity mixes similar ideological confrontations and presentations while transforming the place. Considering the sub-genre of family melodrama in this respect could enable us to examine a crucial sociological entity, the family, with respect to the representation and transformation of culture from the past to the present. The modern Turkish family could be traced sociologically and in historical comparison, within the representations on the screen: via the family melodramas of early Republican Era novels, of Yeşilçam, and its successor of television. With respect to the succession of Yeşilçam melodrama films made by Turkish television in formats of serials, series, and soap operas, in this study specifically the family will be concentrated with respect to this transformation regarding the relationship between the modernity and melodrama. Hence, as a precise

and explicit union with melodrama, either literary or visual, the family will be the unit of production. So, the questions could arise in this respect: what is family to melodrama? Or what is the family melodrama, with respect to the changing medium in Turkey?

Thomas Elsaesser defines family melodrama in as being:  
. . . iconographically fixed by the claustrophobic atmosphere of the bourgeois home and/or the small-town setting, its emotional pattern is that of a panic and latent hysteria, reinforced stylistically by a complex handling of space in interiors . . . to the point where the world seems totally predetermined and pervaded by ‘meaning’ and interpretable signs.<sup>86</sup>

The tone of societal configurations could be learned from a family melodrama within its juxtaposition with ideological symbolism. Therefore, the presentation of the social could be examined in terms of the codes of representation with respect to symbolism as well as of the imaginary or presumed attributions indicating how that social is meant to be. For the family, and in this study’s context the Turkish modern family, could be described with respect to the representations as in transition. The family melodrama as a unit of sociological analysis would facilitate the understanding of the attributed meanings to the social entity, the family, in terms of how it is meant to be constructed and how it is constructed, how it is represented as well as how it is reflected as social reality. Hence, as like Elsaesser points out for the American context, the Turkish family melodrama is also set in accordance with the decorations and expectations of the modernization projects on family, the attributions of how a family should be constructed, in short what family means to society and the individual from the mainstream Kemalist ideological perspective in Turkey. To put it more precisely, family melodrama constitutes a noticeable place, since in “a post-sacred modern society” of Turkey, it “fills a gap created by secularization, individualization and westernization efforts such as those demarcated by the positivist reforms of Turkish Republic, which attempted to produce an enlightenment-from-above.”<sup>87</sup>

As a sociological unit of analysis, melodrama could be traced with respect to the change, in order to examine the processes the family has been through regarding Turkish modernization and regarding the contextual material it compromises. The versatility of the social change, regarding the multi-layered structure of the social, and

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>87</sup> Arslan, *Hollywood Alla Turca*, 100.

the dispersed and complex state of the fields for research makes sociological observation difficult. Nonetheless, concentrating on a specific cultural indicator, in this case, family melodrama, enables us to trace the transformation from a micro-level while capturing a small-scale analysis, flashes on the macro-level of social constructions. It provides to look and examine the inhabited dynamics in the social constructions regarding the ideological and discursive formulations in their existence. Therefore, the interconnectedness between the cultural material and the social reality renders the analysis of the social with respect to representation of this relation through Turkish family melodrama. The modern Turkish family is an important entity to understand the social transformations of Turkey with respect to modernization. Thus, the examination of family melodrama in terms of its representativeness as a cultural practice and material could be regarded as a considerable part and parcel of an analysis for the transformation of a political and social entity, the modern Turkish family and its reflections on the gendered margins of masculinity and femininity depictions.

## CHAPTER 3

### A CLASSIC TURKISH FAMILY MELODRAMA NOVEL, ADAPTED AND REMADE: *YAPRAK DÖKÜMÜ*

#### 3.1. *Yaprak Dökümü* as a Case Study

In Turkish cinema and television, as well as novel melodrama history, the family melodrama has a noteworthy place. As mentioned before, it is “one of the most popular cultural forms being consumed as . . . entertainment and generating public discourse in Turkey.”<sup>88</sup> Hence, the production and consumption of cultural melodrama are highly prevalent in Turkish society. Consequently, regarding Yeşilçam movies and their successors in television, there is a huge number of melodramas either in film or television formats of series, serials, or soap operas. In order to trace the dynamics of a social phenomenon through cultural material and practice, a frame needs to be defined for measurability and convenience in my research. Hence, in this study on Turkish family melodrama, the unit of analysis is the family melodrama, which will be examined through a case study on Reşat Nuri Güntekin’s classic *Yaprak Dökümü* (*Falling Leaves*), which was written as a novel in 1930, adapted as a Yeşilçam melodrama in 1958 and remade in 1967, and readapted in 1987 for television as a serial, and most recently remade and readapted in 2006 again as a television serial.

This selection of one specific classic novel in Turkish family melodrama, its adaptations, and re-adaptations and remakes instead of a number of family melodrama productions, is closely related to research problems in Turkish film archives and the boom in Turkish television serials, series, and soap operas for last two decades. To put it more precisely, to do research on the transition of family melodramas with respect to the sociological phenomenon of the family, we should make an explicit, as well as particular selection of films and television series, and/or serials. The film archives in Turkey unfortunately have problematiqués of regimentation, i.e. lost films, non-permission for access to certain documents in the state archives, unknown copies of films, etc. Hence, this situation already constricts researchers in Turkish film and

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<sup>88</sup> Feyza Akınerdem, “Turkish Television Series: An Overview,” *Perspectives Turkey*, Heinrich Böll Foundation, no. 4 (2013): 41, [https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/Perspectives\\_Turkey\\_4\\_2013.pdf](https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/Perspectives_Turkey_4_2013.pdf).



cultural studies. Yet, there are many available films to study in terms of accessibility and primary academic and non-academic sources, but for the concerns regarding consistency and convenience for a sociological research with respect to a limited time and space, research also requires another narrowing of the framework. In addition to the constraints of accessibility and availability in Turkish film archives, as another part of this study, structural characteristics of Turkish television series or serials also play important role for the selection of the material. In addition, the conceptualization of television formats with respect to their narration is itself complicated<sup>89</sup> in Turkey. Regarding the number of television channels, which have increased with privatization and liberalization policies in the 1980s affecting broadcasting, the produced television materials in various formats are quite high in number. As well as the number of produced series, serials, and soap operas, the long-lasting structure of the episodes of a melodrama (in terms of duration and seasons when an episode is approximately ninety minutes and as a television serial may air for more than one hundred episodes) necessitates another limitation for the examination. Hence, for a comparative analysis of Turkish family melodrama, selection of a specific novel, its adaptation as a film, and its remake and re-adaptation to a television format promises convenient and precise analyses.

*Yaprak Dökümü*, as a very popular novel and film, as well as later as television serials, constitutes a remarkable source of reference to describe and examine the transition of Turkish family and gender making processes, with respect to time. Its celebration and appeal in different time periods, regarding the change in medium, points to many dynamics of cultural practices and discourses for social constructions in society. Hence, in the following sections of this chapter, I explain why and how the classic *Yaprak Dökümü* is selected as a case study. As well as this, I also provide the synopses of the novel, the film, and the television serial.

### **3.1.1. *Yaprak Dökümü* as a Novel in the 1930s**

As the name of novel *Yaprak Dökümü* literally means *Falling Leaves*, it symbolizes and summarizes the story of a Turkish family in transformation, which is stuck between traditional family morality and modernist social practices. Reşat Nuri Güntekin narrates the story of Ali Rıza Bey and his family with respect to the late

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<sup>89</sup> This complexity in conceptualization of Turkish television formats will be discussed in more detail in the section related to *Yaprak Dökümü*'s television formats.

1920s social atmosphere and experience of social change. Ali Rıza Bey, as the patriarch of the family, is a very concerned man about morality, on whose existence the unity of the family is dependent, as in the analogy of a tree and its (his) leaves (assets). Being the main actor, the patriarch of the family, Ali Rıza Bey is a hard-working, canonical, and self-disciplined public servant, who cares about work ethics, completes his shift meticulously, knows English and French, as well as Arabic and Persian, and reads books “intellectually”. While being from Istanbul, after death of his mother and sister, one after the other, he leaves Istanbul and works in different parts of Anatolia as a public servant for twenty-five years. He gets married when he is at his late 30s, in a way thanklessly, since he attributes a specific importance to setting up a family: “in his opinion was as momentous as an undertaking as setting up a nation.”<sup>90</sup> Eventually, he has five children, one son and four daughters, the last one being “a late comer” as being born in the time of his fifties. He continues to work in public service, until he interferes in an occasion of corruption, defending the righteous man against the powerful son of a landlord in Trabzon. His interference caused him to be removed from his position, as an early retirement. This occasion draws Ali Rıza Bey and his family to Istanbul where they have already a home as a patrimony and they settle in Istanbul. Regarding the number of his family members and with respect to the necessities, Ali Rıza Bey understands he needs to work for subsistence of his family. And he starts to work at a private company as translator. He finds this work by coincidence in meeting with an old student he helped in Anatolia. His work in this firm, called Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi (Goldleaf Limited), is important in giving the storyline and the name of story as *Yaprak Dökümü*. Between a dark, weasel, and young man (*sansar yüzlü, kara yağız*) and Ali Rıza Bey, discussions on money and morality are notable for the transition of what he and his family will be going through. This young man recently resigned his position in the firm because of the low salary and inability to fulfill the necessities of his family with that salary. And he works in a new job where he is more satisfied, working legally but also sustaining his luxurious needs over illicit profits of the broker’s clients he is working with. His speech towards the other workers in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi, with respect to the relief brought by this new job, makes Ali Rıza Bey involved in a discussion on morality. The

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<sup>90</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yaprak Dökümü [Falling Leaves]*, trans. W. D. Halsey (London: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 11.

specificity of the scene could be described by what that young man tells to Ali Rıza, which summarizes the whole subject matter of the novel:

The young man answered Master Ali Rıza with a bitter expression: “You are not completely wrong, for example take a man employed in religion or music. His one consolation is bringing up children, flowers, or vegetables. But, for this, you have to have at least a little money to live on. You worry about the flower; but if there is not the littlest bit of money? No matter how hard you try, it is obvious that you will not get the flower of the scent and color you want from dirt... There is your father, your children, and no money? At the end of your life, your descendants won't give you pleasure apart from a tragic sight of leaves falling.”<sup>91</sup>

This dialogue makes Ali Rıza Bey anxiously think of the future of his family. After a while, Ali Rıza Bey has to quit this job as well, after an occasion of immorality and dishonor, which does not accord with his principles. Meanwhile, his son, who is the eldest child and is in the very same line of his father in terms of moral sentiment, Şevket, finds a job at a bank, which relieves the house financially for a while. With Şevket's employment Ali Rıza Bey leaves his place to his son, and starts a retired life. Even, he starts to go to coffee houses, somehow escapes, as other retired men, where he was thinking of these places before as places which are in the service of the lazy and miserable people's shelter.

Ali Rıza Bey's unemployment annoys his wife, Hayriye, who was used to being loyal and rationale with respect to Ali Rıza's stance, since she is concerned with the expenses and expectations of their teenage daughters Leyla and Necla, as well as the young growing Ayşe. Money becomes Hayriye's big concern. Yet, their eldest daughter, Fikret, is strict in the line of her father. She is not attractive as her younger sisters and has a kind of problem with her eyes. She argues with her mother because of Hayriye's permissiveness towards the unacceptable and irrational demands of her sisters, Leyla and Necla. In this hub of relations, Şevket falls in love with a married woman who works at the same bank with him, Ferhunde. But, Ferhunde is not morally acceptable woman in terms of Ali Rıza's principles to be a member of their family. With Şevket's psychological fall after his father's rejection of his love and Hayriye's insists against Ali Rıza Bey's refusal for her beloved and only son, Ali Rıza Bey cannot resist this relationship. Hence, Şevket gets married with Ferhunde, and because of the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

financial difficulty in terms of affording the expenses of a new house, they start to live with the family. After Ferhunde's coming home as a bride, which is not an "approved" and "confirmed" one in Ali Rıza Bey's considerations, relationships start to dissolve between the family members: Şevket is stuck in between the expectations and desires of his wife, Ferhunde does not want to accept a life deprived of the luxury and cultural activities in a very modernist expectations, Leyla and Necla collaborate with Ferhunde in terms of desires as well as complaining about the restrictions, constrains and authority of their father and his principles, which sound traditional to them against the splendid and magnificent modern life, Fikret abhors the bringing of Ferhunde to their home and her sisters' incomprehensible flattery manners with Ferhunde and blames her father as not constituting a strong authority – patriarchy – over the family, Hayriye feels entrapped between her children who are fighting, not getting on well with each other, demanding but not helping, and his husband who is unemployed, doing nothing all day at home, not helping as well, and insisting on his moral principles to be depended on consistently and always tries to figure out a way of exit from any occurrence and conflict, Ayşe with all innocence, has trouble to accommodate the things around her, and Ali Rıza Bey in a very desperate and helpless position as he watches the "fall of his leaves", as the most trusted, strong, and indestructible tree.

Ali Rıza Bey struggles with all of the undesirable and unacceptable situations and occasions at the home, but in the end he unwillingly and desperately admits to reality and involuntarily bears the consequences. After Ferhunde's coming home, there starts a new life, the design of the house with respect to the new furniture changes and new social activities, parties are introduced. These novelties address Leyla and Necla's expectations of modern life standards, while Fikret is always annoyed and disturbed consistently with such a situation. Meanwhile, after realizing he will not change this flow, with respect to his principles, Ali Rıza Bey's only consideration turns out to find wealthy and decent grooms for himself, for his younger daughters. Fikret does not continue to bear such occasions after a while, and decides to leave the house, which is not different from hell. She hears a relative of their neighbor Neyyir Hanım in Adapazarı, who has recently lost his wife and stays lonely with three children in need of the care of a wife and mother. Fikret, suddenly decides to get married with this man about whom she has no idea, as a way to escape such an unbearable hell. With her leaving, the first fall of the leaves are realized for Ali Rıza Bey. Meanwhile, Şevket

does not reach the satisfaction and needs of his family in financial terms and feels obliged to be dragged into the corruption he was always avoiding. He defrauds the bank he works for and embezzles money from the accounts of the bank clients. For a while, this situation is not understood by the family, they just celebrate the money fulfilling the necessities and entertainment they were looking for, only Ali Rıza Bey suspects his dear son's depressed silence and gets worried. But, Şevket tries to find out an escape for the trouble he is in and gets into another trouble, gambling. He tries to solve this money issue with gambling, but unfortunately he ruins everything. The deficit in the bank accounts is noticed by the bank inspectors in the meantime, and Şevket is sued and he is sentenced to the imprisonment. Ali Rıza Bey gets the second occasion of sorrow. When Şevket is imprisoned, Ferhunde immediately abandons the house, as being already bored and depressed by poverty and tense relationships, leaving a farewell letter to Şevket.

Meanwhile, the teenagers of the home by being reticent about the poverty and depression touching upon everyone, want to continue on parties at home, but this time Ali Rıza Bey takes control back as a last ditch effort. Meanwhile, Leyla, one-year-older than Necla, meets with a Syrian man, Abdülvehhap Bey who seems wealthy and caring. And despite the age difference between them, and ignoring to consult and take her father's ideas and advice about this relationship, she gets engaged. Leyla is happy with the jewelry and the fancy clothes supplied by Abdülvehhap Bey, whereas Necla becomes jealous of her sister. The relationship between them turns into a rivalry in time, even one day Leyla throws a velvet coat towards Necla by pitying her in an arrogant way. This makes their relationship more tense, Ali Rıza Bey watches nervously. Later on, one day while Leyla and her fiancée visit a place together, they meet with an old friend from parties who causes Abdülvehhap Bey to see the past of Leyla, as a so called "party girl" and who would hang out with any kind of man. After this occasion, Abdülvehhap Bey decides to break up with Leyla, but he proposes a deal to Ali Rıza Bey. Instead of getting married with Leyla, he can "take" Necla. Necla being the sufferer until that day, opposing what her father thinks about this man's manner and desire, wants to make use of this opportunity and goes away with Abdülvehhap, while leaving the coat back to its first owner Leyla. However, Necla does not find what she expects in Syria, in fact she becomes the third wife of Abdülvehhap and is in a home very deprived of any luxury, under the oppression of a

more patriarchal (than her father) husband, starts to write letters to Ali Rıza Bey to get rescued from such a “hell”.

After Necla’s marriage to Abdülvehhap, Leyla has a nervous breakdown, and suffers from it for months without going out. Ali Rıza Bey with the economic stress in terms of the incapability and poverty at the home, gets more and more down, watching the view of falling leaves. After a while, Leyla gets over her depression and starts to go out and see other people. This situation makes everybody at home relieved. However, it is later realized that, in fact, Leyla started to see a married man. When Ali Rıza Bey hears this, he immediately and rigorously rejects Leyla’s such affair. But Leyla insists on her stance and feelings, and Ali Rıza Bey gets her out of the home, and forbids Hayriye from seeing her. Leyla starts to live in an apartment as the mistress of that man, Ali Rıza Bey erases any mark of her in the house, tears her from the family picture. Ali Rıza Bey with this occasion also gets a small stroke, stays all alone with little Ayşe and his wife. Despite Ali Rıza Bey’s prohibitions and objections about seeing Leyla, Hayriye secretly meets with her daughter, even gets some money from her, and always complains to Ali Rıza about the loneliness and isolated, cold atmosphere of the home. Ali Rıza Bey feels more suffocated with Hayriye’s complaints and the situation they are dragged into, and decides to live with Fikret in Adapazarı. However, when he arrives, Ali Rıza Bey understands he will not find peace here as well, where Fikret deals with a tough and rude husband, Tahsin, and three unbearable naughty children, and he returns to Istanbul. On the road back to home, Ali Rıza Bey deteriorates suddenly and he is taken to hospital. His left arm and left leg are completely paralyzed, and he has difficulties in talking. When he left for Adapazarı, Hayriye with Ayşe already began to live with Leyla. When they hear about Ali Rıza Bey’s situation in the hospital, they go and get him, and bring him to Leyla’s apartment. Eventually and inevitably, Ali Rıza Bey accepts in despair the situation he is in, and starts to live this before-opposed life, just trying to escape from people’s eyes.

### **3.1.2. Novelist Reşat Nuri Güntekin and His Melodramatic Novels**

Born in 1889, in Istanbul, Reşat Nuri Güntekin is one of the most important names of Early Republican Era Turkish literature. While he is famous with his novels, Güntekin is also known with his plays as well as stories. In order to attain a consistent and coherent comparative analysis of his classic book *Yaprak Dökümü*, it is important

to show a short and plain biography of Güntekin. Also, it is important for a better comprehension of his narration in accordance to his place in the genre of family melodrama with his popular novels, plays, and stories, as well as to his social background, ideological, and political stance.

Reşat Nuri Güntekin pursued a literature education at Istanbul University (*Darülfünun Edebiyat Şubesi*), after a graduation from a French high school, *Frères*.<sup>92</sup> He continued his career as a high school teacher in literature, he also gave lectures in French philosophy and literature. Later on, in 1939 he served as a deputy for the Turkish Parliament, but in 1943 he returned to the Minister of National Education as an inspector and worked until the 1950s when he moved to Paris as educational attaché. Concerning his education in a French school, it is clear he had remarkable knowledge of Western literature and culture. Also, with his participation in the politics, Turkish parliament, and ministries, his inclinations in writing become more dominant. When it is examined, Reşat Nuri's characters in his works carry certain customs closely linked to his personal life experiences and perspectives. Reşat Nuri's stance in literature is very in accordance with the reformist, thus statist, line of the Early Republican Era, considering the intense and perpetual modernization discussions in his novels and his attempts to publish a daily newspaper called "*Memleket*" (*Homeland*) in 1947, in which he advocates Mustafa Kemal's reformation policies and politics. Hence, it could be noted Reşat Nuri Güntekin as one of the most productive and significant authors of the Early Republican Era, whose works, especially novels, are:

. . . not indifferent to Westernization (modernization) movement and took its traces in the community with different extents and aspects. Both he drew a portrait of the changed community and also takes the matter of how "new person" should be as a subject by taking different human types who are trying to keep pace with the conditions brought by the changeovers becoming a government policy in the first years of Republic Period.<sup>93</sup>

The Turkish novel of the Early Republican Era, in general, regarding the intelligentsia's social and economic status, as well as the political stance, could not be thought, as Bülent Akkuş states, "being indifferent to Westernization which means

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<sup>92</sup> Türkan Poyraz and Muazzez Alpbek, "Reşat Nuri Güntekin Hayatı ve Eserleri," *Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği Bülteni* 6, no. 3 (1957): 1.

<sup>93</sup> Bülent Akkuş, "The Modernization Problem in Reşat Nuri Güntekin's 'Eski Hastalık-Old Sickness' Novel," *International Journal of Turcologia* 8, no. 16 (2013): 123.

passing from a civilization circle to another for Turkish Community”<sup>94</sup> in which it is blended and formed. Hence, when his work is taken into consideration, the duality and the conjunction of the tradition and modern – which is key to Turkish melodrama– in the Reşat Nuri’s work puts him a specific place in Turkish melodrama. Yet, his melodramas are not merely remarkable in the literature, but also in Turkish cinema regarding the adaptation culture during the heyday of Yeşilçam. As Dilek Kaya Mutlu points out the discourses articulated by Yeşilçam melodramas on modernization in terms of “how they construct modernity as a desired state, while at the same time criticizing modernization as cosmetic westernization and affirming traditional social and cultural traits”<sup>95</sup>, the adaptation of Reşat Nuri Güntekin’s novels to the screen were a remarkable material source for Yeşilçam directors and film makers. Especially, when the construction of the family and its narration with respect to the aforementioned duality and coexistence of modernity and tradition in his novels are taken into consideration, the reason why he was one of the novelists whose work is adapted to the Yeşilçam melodramas. Reşat Nuri Güntekin built his narration on the discussions of moral codes regarding the family as an institution, which could be understood from his works as both a social necessity and a political entity. Hence, he based his narration on the main structural disposition of the family melodrama, in which he put the emphasis on “the private feelings and interiorized codes of morality and conscience.”<sup>96</sup> And this coincides with the social and ideological propositions of the modernization projects held by the state, especially regarding the constitution processes of the family as an important institution for creating Turkish identity.

Among other novelists and playwrights, another aspect of Reşat Nuri is about the consistent adaptation and remake of his three most popular novels to cinema and later television. While he adapts some of his stories and novels to the stage, there are also adapted films and television serials from Reşat Nuri’s works in different periods of the cinema and television history of Turkey. Three novels, namely *Çalikuşu*, *Dudaktan Kalbe*, and *Yaprak Dökümü*, which were written in 1922, 1925, and 1930 respectively, are all adapted to the screen<sup>97</sup>, each of them, as films in Yeşilçam twice,

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Dilek Kaya Mutlu, “Between Tradition and Modernity: Yeşilçam Melodrama, Its Stars, and Their Audiences,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 3 (2010): 418.

<sup>96</sup> Elsaesser, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, 45.

<sup>97</sup> Before screen, Reşat Nuri Güntekin himself rewrote *Yaprak Dökümü* for stage in 1953 (Poyraz & Alpbeğ, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin*, 14).



and as television serials for television twice. This appeal to these specific melodramas in terms of adaptation and remake over time arouses curiosity. Also, it constitutes an important source of cultural material in order to trace social transformation via the sociology of melodrama. That is, it points out a repetition in terms of production and demand, which is important to analyze re-articulation of the certain social dynamics with respect to family through the historicity of modernization in Turkey.

To analyze and trace the sociological motives in these three novels, their adaptations, and remakes are crucial in terms of this dissertation. Yet, regarding the restrictions and limitations of this research, as well as to propose a more convenient and reliable analysis, I did not include all of them to my study. Rather, I chose *Yaprak Dökümü* as the case study to explore on the family in sociological terms. While the other two novels of *Çalikuşu* – which is the most popular work of Reşat Nuri Güntekin – and *Dudaktan Kalbe* are also worthy of study in terms of family and social change, *Yaprak Dökümü* is much richer regarding its structural narration as a family melodrama. Also, *Yaprak Dökümü* is a more prevalent material in terms of a specific family melodrama and being one of the most popular television serials of Turkish television history, lasting five years. In other words, considering these three melodramas of which many peculiarities are similar in terms of narration, character construction, as well as mise-en-scene for both novels, films, and serials, *Yaprak Dökümü* presents more detailed and extensive formulation of structuring the Turkish family, especially regarding social transformations and transitions. This is because it is the story of a Turkish family, which is stuck in between modernity and tradition, as representing the conflicts, negotiations, and uncertainty in defining the characteristics of a family.

### **3.1.3. Social and Cultural Milieu of the 1930s**

Reşat Nuri Güntekin in this novel fictionalizes a dramatic fragmentation of a middle-class family of the late 1920s. Although this is a fictional and imagined family, it should not be dissociated from the social and economic, as well as political and ideological conjuncture of 1930s. A large strata of Turkish society of this period had a similar comprehension on the tragedy and the cultural entertainments and pleasures

with respect to the family in *Yaprak Dökümü*, in the sufficiently “chaotic” atmosphere of the 1930s.<sup>98</sup>

To have a concise look at the period in which *Yaprak Dökümü* was created, the social and cultural background, that was effective for Reşat Nuri’s writing, as his reflecting the environment of this time, would be helpful in this analysis. Hence, *Yaprak Dökümü* represents a case of a modernization project both in terms of failure and success. While it discusses the conflicting of modernity and tradition over the contradictory relationship between Ali Rıza Bey and his family, especially his younger children, in accordance with the economic stability and efficiency of the family, the novel has a narration that is a kind of didactic structure. Hence the novel advises, for society to be in the most feasible and desired constitution, it should regard the moderateness in between the traditional and modernist life styles.

*Yaprak Dökümü*, being one of the products of the early republican period of Turkey, constitutes a source of reflection on the social atmosphere of the 1930s in which the change and adaptation of Westernization were being experienced and experimented. As Türkan Erdoğan discusses the Turkish novels of this period were generally concerned with the change and novels prescribes how this change should be realized.<sup>99</sup> Also, these novelists created their characters in accordance with the imagined modern individual out of modernization concerns. The modernization and Westernization projects beginning from the late Ottoman period, have more concrete examples of reforms and reformist attempts in the 1930s, regarding the imported Western articles to the constitution that brought and offered rights to the people. For instance, the adoption of the civil code in 1926, brings certain “emancipations” to individuals and reinstitutes the “characters” of modern Turkey according to the imagined and expected modern Turk. In this respect, while certain rights that were deprived were given to the people, i.e. permission of working to women, the equal joint of heir for children, and a state-directed and created people of Turks were the main purpose as among the inclinations of a new nation-state formation. This imagined nationality and society were being realized in a process with respect to changing certain codes and introducing new norms, by placing the Western modern country

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<sup>98</sup> Mehmet Arslantepe, “Türkiye’nin Toplumsal Değişim Sürecine Tanıklıkta Sinema ve Televizyon: Değişen Hayatlar ve Yaprak Dökümü Örneği” (presentation, II. International Communication Symposium, Bishkek, Kirghizstan, May 2-4, 2012), 2.

<sup>99</sup> Erdoğan, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin’in “Yaprak Dökümü”*, 178.

image as model for transformation projects. Hence, while these attempts were realized in respect to democratization, the modernist inclinations as well as impositions and indoctrinations were leading the emergence of such images that were conflicted and stuck in between the past and the present, as tradition and modernity respectively. As the 1930s being “the formative years of the Republic, the Turkish state promoted a state-led nationalism that signified the will to modernize and civilize society”<sup>100</sup>, which is distinctive to see remarks about the novel – as much as any other cultural material – and “for the process of drawing the boundaries of Turkish culture.”<sup>101</sup> Also, considering the state-led modernization of Turkey, especially regarding the phase of the 1930s, Turkish nationalism of the Republic, which is also referred as “Kemalist nationalism” with respect to its founder Mustafa Kemal in 1923, was in such formation of political culture:

. . . unlike the attempts of other non-Western and anti-colonial nationalists, who placed strong emphasis on traditional and local values in determining their very identity, Kemalists did not wish to make a synthesis of the material civilization of the West and indigenous cultural traits. In doing so, they refused the idea of culture as a protest against Modernity to preserve its own particular way, which meant a rejection of being the oriental and the antagonistic other of the West.<sup>102</sup>

Therefore, this construction of culture, they redefined the social with respect to their ideological stance and discourse. The reform movement as Yılmaz Çolak asserts, the association of the West with modernity, could be realized via cumulative transformation to the Westernized community as new and a mere Turkish society without any conjunction with “backwardness” or the past. However, this could not be the case, of course. Such a strict rupture from the past, or tradition, would not be possible. Hence, the encounters of tradition and modernity either clashing or negotiation created the Turk, somehow as in an expected and imagined form, but in most cases with maladjustment and disinformation, as the novel *Yaprak Dökümü* represents. Regarding this change and transfiguration under the mentioned Westernization and modernization projects formulating a new culture, the Turkish novelists, who are the first novelists as well, in the Turkish Republic were dealing with the issue of a contradictory conceptualization of tradition and modernity. They aimed

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<sup>100</sup> Yılmaz Çolak, “Nationalism and State in Turkey: Drawing the Boundaries of ‘Turkish Culture’ in the 1930s,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 3, no. 1, (2003): 2.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 4.

to contribute to the intellectual climate and propose the expectations and acceptances of the imagined community of Turkey:

Turkish novelists provide an insight into many different social problematiques of this period, by problematizing the issues including European outlook, conflicts of generations, monogamy, polygamy, flirt, prearranged marriage, sexuality, fashion and entertainment traits, socialization, crisis of values, immorality, education, poverty, identity, women rights, the institution of duanne, love, affinity, infidelity and fidelity; hence they aim to contribute to the intellectual atmosphere of their period as well as expressing their thoughts on how, in which fields and ways modernization should be realized.<sup>103</sup>

In this respect, Reşat Nuri Güntekin draws a path of modernization within the family of Ali Rıza Bey, symbolizing the social constructions of this period within the characters he created, and their experiences of problematic occasions. Therefore, as Türkan Erdoğan discusses, Reşat Nuri within a realistic perspective pursues to reflect the social parameters and problematiques of the 1930s' transition period. Also, in a melodramatic tone, he proposes “the middle way” of being moderate for the novelty and Western one, yet without a total rejection and departure from the past, which is tradition. So, for a family, Reşat Nuri Güntekin believes in a new formation of the family as an institution, by moving beyond the father as patriarchy, but also being transferred himself in accordance with the expectations of the era and consistent, reasonable engagement and maintenance of the local habits with a privileged Western image, which is analyzed in detail in the next chapter.

### **3.2. *Yaprak Dökümü* Adapted and Remade for the Screen**

#### **3.2.1. *Yaprak Dökümü* as Film**

Being one of the most appealing and celebrated family melodramas, *Yaprak Dökümü* is adapted to screen as film and television serials and before these to the theater, as noted earlier. It is rewritten by Reşat Nuri Güntekin in 1953 for the stage. However, the film adaptations, are shot after his death, and of course the television serials are much later, that is he does not have direct influence on the scripts of these adaptations. Regarding the period between the late 1950s and early 1970s, Yeşilçam has a dominant position which “has generally been read as having a commercial and popular cinematic appeal with an opiate effect on the masses.”<sup>104</sup> In the period of

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<sup>103</sup> Erdoğan, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin'in “Yaprak Dökümü”*, 181. (my translation)

<sup>104</sup> Arslan, *Hollywood Alla Turca*, 114.

Yeşilçam's introduction, these adaptations are created into a national cinema market in which re-articulations, via representation and reflection, of the previously held as well as on-going modernization projects and Westernization inclinations could be traced. Hence, in this section on the adaptations of *Yaprak Dökümü* to the cinema as film melodrama are discussed with respect to their mode of adaptation according to Dudley Andrew's classification of conceptualization as well as to the social conjuncture where they are made in.

### **3.2.1.1. A First Adaptation in 1958**

*Yaprak Dökümü* is adapted to Yeşilçam as a family melodrama first in 1958 by Suavi Tedü. Suavi Tedü directed and wrote the scenario of the film. However, I have not found any copy of the film in any Turkish film archives. Regarding the previously mentioned problematques in the archives, *Yaprak Dökümü* adapted in 1958 does not constitute any research material to this thesis because of the unavailability and inaccessibility to the film. Yet, there are given the list of full crew and cast of the film<sup>105</sup> in many Turkish cinema history books, and a short synopsis of the film. There is generally given the theme of the novel as a synopsis in these books, which is not quite adequate and helpful to analyze the adapted material in terms of examination in detail with respect to social transformation. Therefore, while it is taken full account of that there is a previous film adaptation of *Yaprak Dökümü* made in 1958, because of the inaccessibility to the material, the second adaptation, which is also a remake of this first one will be analyzed as Yeşilçam family melodrama film.

### **3.2.1.2. A Re-adaptation in 1967**

In 1967, Memduh Ün remade *Yaprak Dökümü* as a family melodrama. In his book, *Memduh Ün Talks about His Films (Memduh Ün Filmlerini Anlatıyor)*, he gives the production details and the reasons why he made such a film. He sincerely appreciates Reşat Nuri Güntekin and his work, and attaches significance in terms of the reflective structure in his narration to represent the complication of the moral values in the family with respect to the wrong inhabitation and internalization of the social norms in relation to what really meant by Westernization. Memduh Ün wrote the scenario with Halit Refiğ, and he indicated they added and removed certain occasions in and characteristics of the novel while they were adapting it. In this respect, the mode of adaptation of this film could be called, as borrowing from Dudley Andrew,

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<sup>105</sup> The list of full cast and crew of the films and television serials are given in the Appendix.

“intersecting” in which Ün and Refiğ were attentive about “the uniqueness of the original text is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation.”<sup>106</sup> And as it is presented in a different medium “the cinema, as a separate mechanism, records its confrontation with an ultimately intransigent text.”<sup>107</sup> Regarding the previous *Yaprak Dökümü* shot in 1958, this one made in 1967 could be also regarded as a remake as well. However, due to the absence of the material, it is not possible to evaluate this film in terms of a remake with respect to the previous one. Hence, this is an intersecting adaptation, which could be regarded as a re-adaptation considering the previous material’s production, yet it will not be considered as a remake only in this study, because of the mentioned unavailability of the first film.

While Memduh Ün does not discuss the fidelity and originality issues of the film in relation to the adapted text, the film recreates the text in accordance with the expectations and conditions of its conjuncture. That is, while film attempted to be loyal to the reflection of the late 1920s, it could not be separate from the atmosphere of the late 1960s in which it is made. In terms of the ideology of Kemalism, its direct influence in shaping social and cultural traits in the 1930s as well as its revival with the radical attempts and decisions taken after the 1960 coup d’état, compel the film makers to reconsider the film content they work on. Hence, while Memduh Ün intersects the story of the novel in adapting to screen, he also reconstructs the social reality of the late 1920s in accordance with the fantasies and imaginations of the state administration under the political pressure of the 1960s.

In the film<sup>108</sup>, as the story line in the novel, the process of Westernization of a Turkish family with conflicting traditional and conservative patriarch father Ali Rıza Bey is narrated. However, as noted above, certain changes regarding the political atmosphere of late 1960s and re-imagination of the late 1920s are applied which may be found contradicting as well as exaggerated in relation to the real occurrences of the time period referred. Regarding the compressed structure of film melodramas, which are mainly adapted from the novels, the compacted narration in *Yaprak Dökümü* is easily noticed. That is, each and every detailed characteristic presented in the novel in terms of mise-en-scene, protagonists, and antagonists, the process of the occurrences,

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<sup>106</sup> Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, 99.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> While in this part, I tried to give a brief summary of the film in relation to the novel, in the Chapter 4 I state the related phrases and peculiarities of the story regarding the analyses precisely and detailed.

etc. are skipped over or barely touched upon. In this respect, while it recreates a modernization case of Turkish modern family in the 1930s, it also presents a perception of the 1930s from the 1960s.

Ali Rıza Bey's representation in the film *Yaprak Dökümü*, as the tradition in opposition to his children's modernist propensities which in line with responding the expectations of social and political atmosphere of their era, remains same. However, narration starts in Istanbul, without giving the reason of movement from Trabzon, as if the family had always been residing in Istanbul. Ali Rıza Bey starts to narrate the film with a voice over, he tells the story from his point of view, thus the story of a family, and towards the end the voice-over is taken over by the other characters. But in the novel the narration is made by a third person, as observing the family, again regarded as an institution, which could not be separated and realized out of the authority of the father. In the film, Ali Rıza Bey's story of rejection and oppression on the family in the beginning dissolves in the end. Which he involuntarily and, as being different from the novel, unconsciously admits to the Western life style that is previously attributed moral corruption and unacceptable practices of traits. Ali Rıza Bey as a retired man from the public service, lives in his own house which is a family heritage to him, works in a firm called Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi. However, after a while Ali Rıza Bey quits the job because of a case of immorality and dishonor. So, in a way, all the burden and charge of home and family are left on the shoulders of Şevket. As in the novel, Şevket falls in love first a married woman Ferhunde who is a kind of femme-fatale contradicting the moral principles of Ali Rıza Bey as being a fallacious role model to Leyla and Necla at the home. Then he gets married, after his father's disapproval loses its influence. Şevket after his marriage, struggles in between the expectations of every family member, both financially and psychologically. Fikret is being suffocated and tired of the changing life style at home after Ferhunde's arrival, and with Leyla and Necla's stringing along with her standards and expectations, without questioning their unacceptability and contradictory, leaves the home by marrying with Tahsin in Adapazarı. Meanwhile, Şevket starts gambling and becomes indebted to the bank he works in, as stealing money from the customers' accounts. When this situation is noticed in the bank, Şevket is imprisoned, after which Ferhunde leaves, as in the novel.

Also similar to the novel, the tension between Leyla and Necla comes out due to a man. However, it is changed in the film, the man Leyla gets engaged with is the man who is a person from the firm Ali Rıza Bey worked in before. And Ali Rıza Bey does not have a positive impression about this man, because of this man's moral values. This man exists, in fact, in the novel but he does not come into the life of Ali Rıza Bey and his family, just remarkably presents the money-based relations of the period of Westernization with respect to the modernist inclinations. He is specific in the novel – the weasel and dark young man in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi. He talks to Ali Rıza Bey about his ideas of money and how family members could be sustained in accordance with wealth not with trials on the maintenance of pure conservative morality (and he gives the very same specific speech noted in the novel about the falling leaves to Ali Rıza Bey). He also warns Ali Rıza Bey, about falling leaves, with respect to this perception of modern life. However, in the film, this man, called Kenan, whom Ali Rıza Bey finds dangerous and unacceptable, enters their house, even first gets engaged with his daughter Leyla. Ali Rıza Bey, with Hayriye's and his daughter's insists, cannot resist this engagement, but later on with respect to the corrupted characteristics of Kenan, Necla is seduced by Kenan and they run away leaving Leyla behind, with full of indifference and arrogance (and again throwing the previous velvet coat to Leyla as in the novel). Then, as in the novel, Leyla suffers a nervous breakdown because of this incident. After a while, Leyla gets over from this situation and similar to the novel, starts seeing a married lawyer. When Ali Rıza Bey learns about this affair, he orders Leyla away the home, and stays with little Ayşe and his wife Hayriye as a small family. As in the novel, Ali Rıza Bey gets a light stroke after this occasion, and decides to live with Fikret in Adapazarı. When he arrives there, he understands the circumstance Fikret in which is barely tolerable already by Fikret herself, and goes back to Istanbul. While in the novel, Ali Rıza Bey gets worse on the road back to home, in the film a specific occasion makes him get hospitalized.

Necla who ran away with Kenan, rather than marrying with him, she ends up in a brothel. Ali Rıza Bey, sees her on the street and follows her, when he is returning from Adapazarı. He goes in the building where Necla enters, and sees her daughter as working as a prostitute. Here, he gets a heart attack and is taken to hospital. After a week, Hayriye who has already started to live with Leyla in her apartment in which living as the mistress of that lawyer, and Leyla come to hospital to take Ali Rıza Bey



to their new home. Ali Rıza Bey, half paralyzed and amnesiac man, nurses in the hospital advises Hayriye and Leyla to behave him like a child, as who is in need of such care. After a while, Şevket returns back from prison and he also comes this apartment, who was being the “project” of Ali Rıza Bey, has now ended up stumbling, in the way of growing up and taking the branch from his father. The film ends as Şevket cries the situation they are dragged into by looking at the empty eyes of his father who is repeating the word heard from the radio “economy, saving (*iktisat*)”, and plaintively complains he does not understand.

Regarding the time period that this film is made which is in-between two important military interventions of 1960 and 1971, the political and social atmosphere under which the film making procedure took place is quite readable. In this period of the late 1960s, the marks of military regime of 1960 was not clearly eradicated, even on the path to the 1971 coup d'état the social relations were tensed under a kind of chaotic ambiance of the newly emerging and conflicting political youth groups. As well as the intensification of the leftist and rightist youth groups within an awareness and opposition towards the political system, the industrialization was being experienced at its peak level with respect to the increase in the migration from rural areas to the cities where slums started to emerge.<sup>109</sup> Hence, with respect to the liberalization policies that were given start with the rise of second party of Turkey, the Democrat Party, were more internalized in the sense the consumption practices were adopted in the rapid transformation process. Also, the intermingled structure of the rural and urban bourgeoisie emerged with respect to these changing economic and political atmosphere. Regarding the time period *Yaprak Dökümü* was shot in, the national cinema, Yeşilçam, was being under the pressure and implications of that atmosphere. As Savaş Arslan discusses:

During the 1960s, Turkish political life was also faced with novel challenges with unions and other civil societal organizations demanding socioeconomic equality and with socialist parties represented in parliament. All of these found their way into filmic narratives by producing novel themes in the genre of social realism. Such films often took up issues of migration, yet also constructed a melodramatic fantasy of vertical class movement. Although Yeşilçam has generally been considered a cinema of escape, such films show that it was not at all irresponsible to the socioeconomic and political conditions of the country, nor did it disregard the hegemonic power relations of the state,

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<sup>109</sup> Arslantepe, *Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Değişim Süreci*, 6.

filmmakers or its audience. Even though it was limited, the political liberalization of the 1960s played an important role in the growth of Yeşilçam.<sup>110</sup>

Therefore, Memduh Ün behaves in making *Yaprak Dökümü*, in accordance with the expectations of the period he is in, as being cautious and complicated. He mentions the novel actually narrates the destruction Westernization projects brought. But in the film, as he stresses, his aim is not to find out a way to exit from such destruction or trouble. Yet, the way of presenting the contradiction in the film between the Ali Rıza Bey and his family in respect to the tradition and modernity is not what he tells. He presents Ali Rıza Bey as he lost his mind in the end, as rejecting his conservative morality as against the modernist inclinations and turns little Ayşe's face, who is the symbol of hope and the future, to the picture of Mustafa Kemal on the wall as admission and submission of the reformist projects led by the him and the state. Memduh Ün explains:

In the book, and in the film as well, the destructions brought by the Westernization are thematized, but I did not think of showing an exit way out of it while shooting the film. In the 1920s, whole reforms, new legal codes, and a different order are consecutively introduced. I am thinking whether our people cannot accept these. These people come from Ottoman Empire which lasted for ages. Ottomanism is imprinted on their genes. In religion, clothing habits, social life, the reform attempts could not be rooted properly, some things rebound after a while.<sup>111</sup>

Hence, his such hesitant thoughts are clearly reflected in the film with contradicting relations in the family like the case of internalization and rejection of the reforms in the field of clothes, religion, economics, etc. While Ün seems to reflect an occasion that presents the negotiation as well as the clash of the tradition and modernity, he actually reflects the ideological revival of Kemalism with the 1960 coup d'état's political atmosphere. He depicts the reconstruction, the imagined transformation of modernization, and Westernization projects on the family, vis a vis demonstrating the failures of conservative escapism of the proper application of the reforms in the social life.

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<sup>110</sup> Arslan, *Hollywood Alla Turca*, 118.

<sup>111</sup> Memduh Ün, *Memduh Ün Filmlerini Anlatıyor*, ed. Uğur Ün (İstanbul, Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2009), 239. (my translation)

### **3.2.2. *Yaprak Dökümü* as a Television Serial Melodrama**

*Yaprak Dökümü*, as noted, is adapted to television as serials twice in 1987 and 2006. The first *Yaprak Dökümü* is directed by Ayhan Önal and written by a famous Yeşilçam scriptwriter, Bülent Oran. It lasted seven episodes, on TRT, which is the only channel of its time as preserving “the fidelity” to the novel, depicting the same era of the 1930s. It presents the story line in accordance with the order of the occasions in the novel, yet borrowing and remaking the certain characters and scenes of Memduh Ün 1960-made film. While admitting the significance of this serial for this study, regarding the notes before, *Yaprak Dökümü* of 1987 was not be included to my discussion. Therefore, considering the continuing relationship between Yeşilçam melodrama and Turkish television melodrama serial, in the following part I provided the synopsis of *Yaprak Dökümü* television serial of 2006 with respect to its remake and re-adaptation peculiarities in the context of television melodrama, as well as to the conjuncture of the 2000s.

#### **3.2.2.1. The Story of *Yaprak Dökümü* of 2006**

The story starts with Ali Rıza Tekin and his family’s moving to Istanbul from Trabzon. Ali Rıza resigns from his position in public service, where he served for years as a district governor, because of his oldest daughter Fikret’s fiancée’s and his family’s involvement in a tender corruption related to Ali Rıza’s district’s governorship. This resignation is similar to the moral principles and canonical stance of Ali Rıza as depicted in the novel, but the reason behind the occasion is changed for television, whereas it is not even mentioned in film at all. Meanwhile, Necla who is the third child, passes the university entrance exam and is accepted by a university in Istanbul. Hence, Ali Rıza refigures their situation with respect to the latest events and decides to move Istanbul, where he was born and has already an old family mansion in which he grew up. This decision makes Hayriye nervous and anxious regarding the city of Istanbul. Her discontent hints at tragedies that will be experienced in the future.

When they come to Istanbul, Ali Rıza understands the expenses and expectations of the family members could not be afforded by only his pension in such a city. Therefore, he starts to work in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi, which is a firm of an old student he helped in the past somewhere in Anatolia, similar to the novel and film. And here, he meets Oğuz, who is a corresponding character of Kenan from the film, and the dark and weasel man of the novel, and engages in the very same dialogue

about falling leaves. Oğuz is an important character, because he is one of the leading roles in the serial, similar to the film, whom Ali Rıza strongly hates and despises his immoral and dishonest personality from the very beginning. However, later on Oğuz also gets in to his home, because of Leyla and Necla.

Ali Rıza resigns from the job in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi, because of the same immoral incident related to him. Meanwhile, Şevket passes the exam for the entrance to a bank, which brings a relief to Ali Rıza. However, he continues to search for a job, not imputing whole burden of the family on the shoulders of Şevket. In the bank, Şevket meets Ferhunde, who is a married woman and not happy with her marriage, and eventually they fall in love. Şevket decides to break up with her, when he learns she is married first, but later on Ferhunde's love and seduction make him change his mind. But, Ali Rıza assertively rejects such an occasion at the start, by noting such a woman's possible immoral influence on his daughters in the future. Meantime, Şevket's unhappiness and Hayriye's insistence lead Ali Rıza to change his mind involuntarily and in despair. The arrival of Ferhunde's to the home changes the atmosphere. Fikret cannot accept such a situation, where she had to break up her beloved fiancée because of his family's involvement of unacceptable occurrences as contradicting the principles of Ali Rıza, so the principles of the Tekin family. While Ferhunde's coming affects the family, Leyla and Necla are in the pursuit of the new excitements of Istanbul, which are not appropriate and convenient for them as members of the Tekin family and daughters of Ali Rıza.

Necla starts university, studies architecture, and Leyla starts to go preparatory courses for the university entrance exam. These new environments and friends draft them into new unexpected adventures. Oğuz enters their lives, via Sedef – who is a new character, as the daughter of neighbor Neyyir Hanım whose name is once mentioned in the book as the person matching Fikret and Tahsin up in the novel, but not as a visible character. Sedef has to get in the car of Oğuz one day and tells her name as Necla, while he drives her to home, he gives his phone number. Sedef tells this story to Necla, adding the handsomeness and richness of Oğuz as well. Necla, affected by these characteristics, takes the piece of paper on which Oğuz's phone number is written, secretly from the pocket of Sedef. She calls him and after a while, she falls in love with him. They start to date, and Necla hides this from her family, except Leyla. However, Oğuz also has an affair with his boss's wife. After a while,

Necla understands Oğuz is not an honest person and breaks up with him. Meanwhile, Oğuz notices Leyla, and they start to date. There emerges a triple relationship, in which Oğuz acts according to his desires towards either Leyla or Necla. After a while, Leyla gets pregnant unintentionally, and helplessly tells her situation to Ferhunde, who is more open-minded for “such cases” in the family. Ferhunde sends her to Oğuz and wants her to talk about this issue, while they are not together at that time. Meantime, Ali Rıza and Hayriye do not know anything and when they hear they are shocked, considering their daughters’ relationship with such an immoral and dishonest person Oğuz. However, they have to accept this deceit situation, only in the case of marriage. Oğuz, with the menace and blackmailing of Ferhunde about his affair with Ceyda, his boss’s wife, has to marry Leyla. However, this is an involuntarily marriage and brings unhappiness to Leyla because of Oğuz’s misdeeds and domestic violence. On the other hand, Leyla becomes financially in a better position and with her luxury assets and wealth, via which she tries to get over the trouble she is in. At the same time, she makes Necla jealous and upset about her, with the arrogance (the same velvet coat event happens – but it is transformed to a pink trench coat this time). Meantime, Şevket has difficulties to sustain the family financially and tries to find out a way out. Also, Necla meets Cem at the university, who is in love with her and very wealthy as well. Although she is not so sure about her feelings, she decides to marry him and they get engaged with respect to her family’s confirmation because of Cem’s admirable Ali Rıza-style-moral-stance. However, within the unhappiness of Oğuz and uncertainty about her feelings towards Cem, Oğuz seduces Necla to run away with him. This occasion sets the house afire, with Ali Rıza’s incomprehension of happenings all around him, behind his back and regardless of his authority and permission. He rejects Necla, eradicates every remark of her in the home, i.e. tears her part from the family picture (whereas this eradication is made towards Leyla, in the novel when her affair with a married lawyer after recovering her nervous break-down is learned, as well as in the film), while Leyla has a nervous breakdown.

Meanwhile, Ferhunde gets into different intrigues by consulting and interfering in others’ lives, blackmailing and acquiring money. Şevket begins to understand the distance between her and him, but in despair he struggles to find an exit from her luxury expectations and financial maintenance of the home. Fikret, cannot stand the concessions of Ali Rıza’s principles, and feels the hell in this home and decides to

leave. Her leaving, similar to the novel and film, happens by marrying Tahsin, via neighbor Neyyir Hanım. Tahsin is different than the novel, as not that much old, but more rural to compared Fikret's social status, yet romantic and loving, but having a "troublesome" mother and three more pleasant – compared to the novel and the film – children. Fikret's decision to marry Tahsin, brings Ali Rıza a downfall, which he does not expect from her at all, regarding the disappointments, and subversive occurrences brought to the home by other children. While Fikret goes to Adapazarı, she does not completely split herself from her family and tries to be with them in any case of trouble.

After a while, Necla realizes Oğuz is not a reliable person. He is arrested at the airport when they plan to flee to Germany together, for whom she turned back to her family without hesitation. And Necla regrets what she has already done, leaves Oğuz and goes her way alone. Leyla takes medical support after all the happenings, and gets better in a while. The Tekin family understands the Necla's loneliness and regret, and decides her to bring back home. Even Leyla forgives, after a process of struggle and complaint, Necla and accepts her at home. The family reunites, but the disasters do not end. Şevket is in trouble, starts gambling, in despair stealing from the customers' accounts in the bank and under an irreversible burden of debts of credit cards of the family. Soon, the bank notices what Şevket has been doing, and Şevket is sentenced for prison for two years. Ali Rıza endures another downfall. Meanwhile Necla continues to study at the university, and inevitably she meets her ex-fiancée, Cem, who seems as full of hatred towards her. But he cannot resist his love and turns back Necla. With respect to all oppositions of Cem's family and Ali Rıza's hesitant thoughts about this relationship, they decide to get married, while Leyla is always being the loser, as bearing all consequences, which drifted her to a desperation. After Şevket's imprisonment, Ferhunde decides to leave this house of hell with full of self-confidence and financially better off. She does not immediately leave, finds a job first in a very prestigious firm. This firm is attractive for Ferhunde not because of only the prestige, but also the owner, Levent Tuncel, who is handsome, seductive, and wealthy. Ferhunde does not visit Şevket on his visiting days, gradually becomes distant from Şevket, and starts a secret relationship with Levent. While the home is in this situation of full intrigues, tension, and disorder, Ali Rıza and Hayriye struggle to pay the debts of Şevket and sustain the financial necessities by extra work hours in different areas, i.e. Ali Rıza translates books, gives private lessons, Hayriye tailors at home with the

help of neighbor Neyyir. Ali Rıza pays the debt of Şevket with taking credit from another bank and Şevket is released after a year of imprisonment. During his imprisonment, Oğuz is also in the same prison with him. Oğuz tries to get on well with Şevket, while he is already acquainted as the enemy. Oğuz is released before Şevket, and he tries to figure out a new better life with a desire to be forgiven by Tekin family, yet not being completely emancipated from his greed and passion to be a wealthy man. Meanwhile, Ferhunde is kicked out of the home, when Hayriye reveals her secret affair, while Şevket desperately tries to overcome the issue. They get divorced after a long-running battle between Tekin family and Ferhunde. Ferhunde is now more emancipated in order to do whatever she wants, but she is aware of that she actually loved Şevket despite what she has done to him and his family.

After Şevket releases from the prison, he starts to work at a taxi. Also, Leyla starts to work at a tourism agent, which is secretly arranged by Oğuz. However, they cannot afford to pay the debt of credit, also regarding the expenses in the family and has to sell the heirloom, the family home. Meanwhile Necla tries to carry out her marriage with respect to the pressure of Cem's family on her, in the luxury and wealth, which satisfies her but does not give complete relief and peace. Leyla coincidentally comes across Oğuz a few times, but after a while she understands Oğuz has been following her in regret and love. Leyla does not resist the situation she is in, and wants to be in more prosperity and to be relieved from the chains of stress and depression exposed to her by the family she lives in, and elopes with Oğuz. Yet, Oğuz is a married man to Ceyda, with a son now – he was imprisoned because of deceiving his boss, Yaman, both financially by stealing from Yaman's firm's acquisition, as well as having a secret affair with Yaman's wife, Ceyda, who gets pregnant from him. Also, being engaged in racketeering in real estate market still, Oğuz is not a confident and totally reliable person for Leyla.

With Leyla's leaving, Ali Rıza gets more scattered again, living with Şevket, Hayriye, and little Ayşe on the second floor of the house, which is already sold to a man called Mithat and who let them to live on the second floor until they find a new apartment. Mithat is a businessman who was an immigrant in Germany and returned back to Turkey. One day, he coincidentally meets with Ferhunde with whom he falls in love. Ferhunde who has a relatively relaxed and comfortable life after her divorce, is not happy at all since she could not fulfill her expectations and desires for Levent.

Then, she, without any real passion and love towards him, and with that Mithat's persistent adoration to her, accepts his proposal for a new intrigue, to confront the Tekin family's misery and collapse, in the mood of greed and vengeance. When the Tekin family meet at the door of their home with Ferhunde, they get shocked and leave the house. They stay with Necla for a while and move to an apartment they just found without thinking thoroughly about the conditions and other options around, which is a little flat at the basement and has a little garden.

Meanwhile Şevket starts to set up her own business in construction with a friend from the prison. Also, he begins to think of Sedef, who has been in love of Şevket from the very beginning and desperately accepts her miserable and unrequited love. They start a relationship with respect to the changings in their lives. However, they could not manage it since Şevket has not overcome what Ferhunde did him, by having difficulty to trust Sedef. Thus, Sedef, considering Şevket's instability and doubt about her love, leaves him, goes Italy to pursue her career in fashion design. Şevket, by being failed in a relationship again, also fails in the construction business. Ali Rıza tries to support him but they could not recover. Leyla wanted to get back home by secretly seeing her mother Hayriye. However, Ali Rıza decided not to allow her into the home again. However, when she knocks the door with regret and heartbreak in the expectation of forgiveness, Ali Rıza accepts her back. While Leyla comes back home, Necla who could not bear the forgiveness allowed to Leyla, becomes more distant from her family. Yet, she is still not a fully accepted by Cem's family, either. Cem, with the stress put on him by being stuck in between his love and his family, gets a heart attack. Then, he passes away in a few days. This occasion shocks every one, Necla in ruins, burns remorsefully with thinking the disappointments she made Cem experience in the past. Also, Cem's family blames her for this death. After a while, she decides to stand up, as a strong woman and takes over her husband's job and goes on her career. In a few months, being a successful businesswomen, she meets Ali Sarper, who is a famous and wealthy businessman.

On the other hand, at Ali Rıza's house, Leyla understands the relations in the home will not be the same as in the past. In addition to this disquietude of the home brought by her, Oğuz does not leave her lovingly, and she realizes she is pregnant and understands her father will not bear this when he hears and leaves the home again. Hayriye also thinks this as a better option when she hears of the pregnancy. Regarding



this departure of Leyla, and Necla's decision to marry Ali Sarper, Ali Rıza feels the failure under his authority again, but feels a little hope with the birth of Umut, Fikret and Tahsin's son. But, while Fikret has a good marriage, despite the troublesome mother-in-law, with respect to the happenings at her father's home and the increasing duties with the baby at this home, the relationship with her husband gets problematic. She goes back and forward between two families. Tahsin, unconsciously, when he is drunk one night, with in the stress of Fikret and his mother, cheats on Fikret on with a club singer. When Fikret learns about this, decides to leave but of the children, she cannot. After a while she decides to divorce when she realizes that she will not be able to persist living under the shadow of this betrayal. She rents a small house for her and her baby son in Istanbul to live away from Tahsin, first. However, when she understands Tahsin's regret and mistake, forgives him, and returns back her home.

Meantime, Mithat understands what Ferhunde is really after with this marriage and divorces her, and does not want to live in this house. He sells the house to Oğuz via whom he bought it before. Leyla with the happiness of being the new owner of their family home again, is more hopeful to raise her child in this home and to be forgiven by her father. While Ali Rıza strictly opposes seeing Leyla, Şevket, and Hayriye secretly meet her. Even in some nights, Şevket stays at Leyla's, at their old family home. Oğuz, as a racketeer, gets in trouble with a mafia and accidentally while trying to protect himself, kills a man. When Leyla learns this, Şevket is with him at that place, trying to calm her down. In panic, Oğuz, Leyla, and Şevket do not know what to do. Then, Şevket as feeling useless and helpless regarding each failure experienced until now and the situation of Leyla as pregnant who is in need of a partner and a father of her child, takes the responsibility of the crime on himself. While these are happening, Ali Rıza reconsiders the occasions and the situation his family has drifted into and decides to reunite the family. With forgiveness as the head, like the strength of a tree, he goes to Leyla and Şevket. However, when he arrives there, Ferhunde who is, by no harm this time, tries to explain what happened. Ali Rıza could not understand, cannot accept that his son is a killer, and has a heart attack after which he immediately gets paralyzed. He cannot move and speak, and is in the need of care.

Leyla and Oğuz take the responsibility for Ali Rıza, Hayriye, and Ayşe, starting to live together in the old family home again. Ali Rıza helplessly tries to endure his life with the man who has been an enemy for him all the time, from him he could not

achieve to protect his family. After a while, Leyla as suffering from the conscience for her brother who is innocent, confesses to the police about the real murderer. Meanwhile, Oğuz runs away when he understands Leyla will explain the truth to the police. Şevket in despair, also understands Oğuz has trifled them. Also, Sedef whom Şevket is still in love with, decides to marry with someone met in Italy. Thereafter, Oğuz is found but arrested is wounded in his head, since the police shoot him when he is trying to escape. The family in tension waits for Oğuz's wakening in the hospital and the day, which will bring freedom to Şevket. In this distress, Leyla gives birth to her daughter, naming her Ahu. However, she cannot accept her child, cannot feel the motherhood because of the chaos and pain the whole family is in. Also, Ali Rıza makes a progress with respect to the treatments of physiotherapy, with pronouncing short words, slowly moving his hand. Oğuz wakes up, and confesses. The day of trial comes finally, Şevket is released, but meanwhile everybody is at the wedding of Sedef, Ali Rıza stays at the home with the nurse, in the garden talking to the flowers, which he loves to do. He also dreams about the reunion of the family by embracing his each child under a dead plain tree. Şevket leaves the prison all alone, since nobody expects him to be released early in that day. He calls the house, but learns that everybody is at the wedding ceremony of Sedef, and goes there. He watches Sedef's happiest day from a distance in sorrow. When the wedding ends and people start to go, Hayriye and his sisters notice him and in surprise, excitement, and embrace him. They go back to home within the hope of a new beginning all together. When they arrive at home, they find Ali Rıza all alone and silent in his wheelchair at the garden. They approach him and want to give the good news, but when Fikret touches his hand which is bleeding with the rose thorn he has just picked up among his beloved flowers, they face the death of Ali Rıza. Then, the new beginning for Tekin family starts with a return to the very beginning: they decide to go back Trabzon where they came from. The serial ends at the train station where it started, by remembering the dialogue between Hayriye and Ali Rıza, in which Hayriye silently cries with the fear of big city Istanbul and Ali Rıza smilingly encourages her with his brave existence.

### **3.2.2.2. As a Remake and a Re-adaptation to the 2000s**

The change and transformation of certain cultural traits in terms of leisure time activities in relation to consumerism in the 2000s, the material produced for television also was reformulated with respect to the expectations and practices of the time. In the

context of Turkish television serials, the adaptation as well as the remake has a significant place. As noted before, the novels of the Early Republican Era were frequently adapted to the cinema screen throughout Yeşilçam, and have been continued to remade and re-adapted for television frequency. Especially, after 2000 there has emerged a kind of “boom” in remaking previously film melodrama adaptations as television serials. Albert Moran and Justin Malbon argue:

Adapting already successful materials and content offers some chance of duplicating past and existing successes. Media producers, including those operating in the field of television, attempt to take out financial and cultural insurance by using material that is in some way familiar to the audience.<sup>112</sup>

While it is a matter of another discussion related to cultural audience habits with respect to the adaptation television melodramas, *Yaprak Dökümü* occupies an important place in terms of an instance of reflecting television watching traits, as well as the reconsideration of the family and identity in the 2000s.

*Yaprak Dökümü* started to broadcast in September, 2006 the usual “semester” for beginning of a new serial in Turkish television traditions. It lasted until December 2010, five seasons and in total one hundred and seventy-four episodes, each approximately ninety minutes. The episode number of each season changes, but the last one had the fewest number, as ending the story at the end of year, which coincided, in general, with the middle of a season. It was one of the most popular television serials of Turkish television history, because of the familiarity and popularity, as well as high ratings, as mentioned before. The storyline of the serial is similar to the novel and the film, but there are quite differences with the introduction of new characters, new plots and most importantly a new ending, with respect to the changed time period as not adapted by staying loyal to the 1930s. Yet, on the credits and titles of each episode, the name of Reşat Nuri Güntekin is given to indicate and remark on the adaptation. Hence in this *Yaprak Dökümü*, there is the story of Ali Rıza, who has a last name, Tekin, now – regarding the Surname Law is adopted in 1934 in Turkey and this is a story quite far away from first phases of law-making – and his family whom characteristics are transformed in accordance to the social and cultural environment of 2006.

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<sup>112</sup> Albert Moran and Justin Malbon, *Understanding the Global TV Format* (Bristol: Intellect Ltd., 2006), 11.

As mentioned before, *Yaprak Dökümü* was adapted to screen twice as well, first in 1987 and then in 2006. Regarding the changing time period with respect to the social changes meantime, the cultural traits and practices of Turkish society have been also altered in the direction of more global capitalist system. Savaş Arslan discusses the processes Yeşilçam experienced through as in periods, and he asserts about the “towards the end” part as:

. . . a third process started after the 1980 military intervention with a new constitution in 1982, which gave way to a more authoritarian power structure coupled with de-politicization, privatization of the economy, and the integration of Turkey into the global capitalist system, especially during the 1990s. All of these produced various consequences in mass culture and entertainment, as well as a nostalgia for the “happy,” “pure,” and “innocent” years of popular filmmaking in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>113</sup>

This is important to remark because the beginning of television culture in Turkey coincides – actually is realized by – with this end of Yeşilçam, which starts not to reflect the chaotic and complex structure of the social reality. However, the melodramatic modality, as noted before, is not completely abandoned, but transformed in accordance with the expectations and circumstances of the time.

As well as the reflection of the changing habits after the 1980s, with respect to the introduction of television, another important issue becomes the part of discussion. The transformation in the television culture traits from its very emergence to the increase in the number of broadcasting channels with privatization, constitutes a remarkable point to understand the melodrama’s pursuit in television formats. With the rise in private television channels, after the 1990s, the material produced for the television has been more easily and quickly consumed, as well as regarding the accessibility of the television at homes. Both in the sense of watching and finishing the screened, and wasting it so quickly, the television channels are drowning in competition in producing television serials, series, soap operas, as well as any other shows for the entertainment of the audience. This leads to mass production of long-lasting television series, serials, and soap operas as reflecting the leisure time activities are shaped in accordance with the consumer culture. As Moran and Malbon discuss television is “meanwhile, a transforming system also comes to provide additional

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<sup>113</sup> Arslan, *Hollywood Alla Turca*, 123.

services to viewers, increasingly now referred to as consumers.”<sup>114</sup> With respect to the multi-channel environment:

. . . “content” has ceased to be synonymous with the television program and programming. Instead, it has also come to include the creation of new sequences of image and sound, availing and engaging in interactive services and the accessing of dedicated data and information.<sup>115</sup>

Hence, eventually the structures of narration in making have been extended, which creates the different of conceptualization of television formats. This is also changed through time in Turkish context. There emerged a serial type (*dizi*), which involves soap opera peculiarities as well. The general similarity of daytime soap operas and prime time serials is they “share a narrative form consisting of multiple plot lines and continuing narrative”<sup>116</sup> as well as the construction of the narration with respect to the genre melodrama. *Yaprak Dökümü*’s genre as a television format is not series “in which the individual episodes are completely separate from one another from a narrative view of point”<sup>117</sup>, but the serial which has:

the continuous narrative... [*that*] the separate episodes of a serial cannot in principle be watched in any order, because the precise sequence of the episodes creates a notion of the continuance of time, a continuance which is linear and irreversible.<sup>118</sup>

Hence, the *dizi* of Turkish television is closer to conceptualization of the serial in terms of the screening and continuing episode formats. With respect to given story line of television serial of *Yaprak Dökümü*, the story is tried to be loyal to the story line in the novel. Yet, it also borrows from the film in 1967 for the maintenance of the intrigue, which a television melodrama necessitates to be consumed, and supplies the demand of curiosity in narrative construction. All in all, it could be said *Yaprak Dökümü* as a television serial beginning in 2006 and lasting until 2010, constitutes an important source of cultural material in terms of melodramatic reproduction, which reformulates Yeşilçamian social reality and discourses into the expectations and conditions of the time, and ties back to the very beginning of the modernization

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<sup>114</sup> Moran and Malbon, *Understanding the Global TV Format*, 10.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>116</sup> Jane Feuer, “Melodrama, Serial Form, and Television Today,” *Screen* 25, no. 1 (1984): 4.

<sup>117</sup> Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*, trans. Della Couling (London and New York: Routledge, 1985), 55.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*.

historicity of Turkey through re-adapting an already-known story, from a Republican Era novel.

Table 3. 1. Comparing plot constructions of Yaprak Dökümü versions.

<b>Novel (1930)</b>	<b>Film (1967)</b>	<b>Television Serial (2006 – 2010)</b>
Third person narrator.	First Ali Rıza Bey starts to narrate the story, then the voice-over is taken by Şevket, Fikret, Leyla, and Ayşe respectively.	Till the last season, Fikret narrates the story. At the last season, each member of the house narrates for each episode.
Time period is the late 1920s.	Time period is the late 1920s.	Time period is early 2000s.
The family comes from Trabzon to Istanbul.	The family resides in Istanbul.	The family comes from Trabzon to Istanbul.
They leave Trabzon after an occasion of corruption that Ali Rıza Bey interfered.	The leave is not mentioned.	They leave Trabzon after Necla is accepted by a university in Istanbul.
The patrimony house is in Bağlarbaşı.	The patrimony house is in Salacak.	The patrimony house is in Beylerbeyi.
Family members other than Ali Rıza Bey: A housewife, four daughters and one son. The son Şevket works at the bank. Leyla and Necla and Fikret are house girls. The youngest daughter Ayşe studies in elementary school.	Family members other than Ali Rıza Bey: A housewife, four daughters and one son. The son Şevket works at the bank. Leyla and Necla and Fikret are house girls. The youngest daughter Ayşe studies in elementary school.	Family members other than Ali Rıza Tekin: A housewife, four daughters and one son. The son Şevket works at the bank, and Necla studies in university, Leyla prepares for university entrance exam (goes to training center ( <i>dershane</i> )), Ayşe studies in elementary school, Fikret is a house girl.
Ali Rıza Bey is retired before coming Istanbul, starts to work in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi.	Ali Rıza Bey is already working in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi.	Ali Rıza Tekin is retired before coming Istanbul and starts to work in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi.
Şevket, the son, finds a job at the bank meantime Ali Rıza Bey quits his job.	Şevket, the son, finds a job at the bank meantime Ali Rıza Bey quits his job.	Şevket, the son, finds a job at the bank meantime Ali Rıza Bey quits his job.
Şevket falls in love with a married woman, Ferhunde.	Şevket falls in love with a married woman, Ferhunde.	Şevket falls in love with a married woman, Ferhunde.
A wedding is organized for Ferhunde and Şevket inside the home.	A wedding is organized for Ferhunde and Şevket inside the home.	A wedding is organized for Ferhunde and Şevket at the garden of home.

Table 3. 1. (continued)

Fikret does not approve this marriage as like Ali Rıza, does not involve in anything related.	Fikret does not approve this marriage, but cares the wedding and acts adjusted for some little changes.	Fikret strictly rejects this marriage, regarding her previous break up with her fiancée because of her father's and family's moral principles. Yet, helps the wedding, acts properly for the preparation and expectations of the family.
The children appeal the jazz band and dance. Ali Rıza Bey's taste and appeal is not mentioned.	The children appeal Charleston dance music. Ali Rıza Bey appreciates Ghazal.	The children appeal popular music. Ali Rıza Bey appreciates Turkish Classical Music and sometimes dances tango.
The home and furnishing are very old, battered and ragged to use.	The home and furnishing are very old, battered and ragged to use.	The home and furnishing are usable, strong but old-fashioned.
Old furnishings are replaced, before Ferhunde comes home.	Old furnishings are replaced, before Ferhunde comes home.	The most of the old furnishing stays, some of them are renewed, before Ferhunde comes home.
There is mention of the house parties that Leyla and Necla attend. They can go and give evening parties. Şevket is not mentioned as a guidance for these parties.	There is no home parties presented, except the wedding scene. Other than that, Leyla and Necla can go and see other men, attend invitations with or without guidance their brother Şevket.	Leyla and Necla can go out alone, go to school or <i>dershane</i> . For the nightlife, in the beginning they barely go out for clubs, birthday parties. They are accompanied by either Şevket, or a fiancée, or a man known and trusted in the family, or at least they (Leyla and Necla as sisters) should go a place together.
Fikret is bored of home. Leyla, Necla and Ferhunde's expectations for luxury and fun distresses.	Fikret is bored of home. Leyla, Necla and Ferhunde's expectations for luxury and fun distresses.	Fikret is disappointed and in sorrow at home. Leyla, Necla and Ferhunde's expectations for luxury and fun distresses. She struggles for the principles of the home.
Fikret decides to leave home.	Fikret decides to leave home.	Fikret starts to think about leaving home.
Neighbor Neyyir recommends a widow to Fikret for marriage, Tahsin Bey.	Neighbor Neveser recommends a widow to Fikret for marriage, Tahsin Bey.	Neighbor Neyyir mentions about her relative, widow Tahsin's wish to marry to Fikret, with no intention of suggesting him to her. Even Neyyir does not want her to marry Tahsin at first.

Table 3. 1. (continued)

<p>Tahsin Bey is fifty year old, retired man. He has three children. He lives in Adapazarı with his the widowed sister and mother. He also has vineyards and orchards in Adapazarı.</p>	<p>Tahsin Bey is fifty year old, retired man. He has two children. He lives in Adapazarı. He also has vineyards and orchards in Adapazarı.</p>	<p>Tahsin is at his late thirties, has his own house, works and makes money over his own land. He has three children. He lives in Adapazarı, with his children and mother.</p>
<p>Fikret does not see Tahsin Bey till he goes to Adapazarı. She just wants to get rid of the home, does not care who she is going to marry.</p>	<p>Fikret does not see Tahsin Bey till he goes to Adapazarı. She just wants to get rid of the home, does not care who she is going to marry.</p>	<p>Neyyir arranges a meeting for Fikret and Tahsin, where they meet and talk about their expectations. Fikret and Tahsin likes each other.</p>
<p>Fikret leaves house, Ali Rıza Bey is sad but does not say anything. He goes to train station with little Ayşe to bid farewell.</p>	<p>Fikret leaves house, Ali Rıza Bey is sad but does not say anything. He goes to train station with little Ayşe to bid farewell.</p>	<p>Fikret marries Tahsin in Istanbul, tells her news to Ali Rıza and Ali Rıza gets mad, and does not talk to her. After her leave, Ali Rıza regrets and goes to train station to say goodbye to Fikret.</p>
<p>There are some suitors for Leyla. Among them, a forty-year old Syrian man Abdülvehhap is recommended to Leyla by a family of scribes.</p>	<p>Leyla meets Kenan at the home wedding.</p>	<p>Necla knows about Oğuz through the neighbor Sedef before, but meets at the home wedding as Ferhunde's guest.</p>
<p>Leyla sees Abdülvehhap at Üsküdar steamboat and likes him.</p>	<p>Leyla starts to see Kenan.</p>	<p>Necla starts dating with Oğuz, meanwhile Leyla dates with Görkem.</p>
<p>Abdülvehhap is a Syrian man. He has no relation with Ali Rıza Bey, yet there is a mention for a weasel young man at the Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi.</p>	<p>Kenan is a weasel young man, who was used to work in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi and leaves this firm before Ali Rıza Bey to work for a broker. Ali Rıza does not find him trustworthy.</p>	<p>Oğuz is a weasel young man, who was used to work in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi and leaves this firm before Ali Rıza to work for a broker. Ali Rıza explicitly hates him.</p>
<p>Leyla gets engaged to Abdülvehhap.</p>	<p>Leyla gets engaged to Kenan.</p>	<p>Necla leaves Oğuz, Leyla starts to date with Oğuz. Necla is engaged to Cem, a friend from her university.</p>



Table 3. 1. (continued)

Abdülvehhap does not want to continue his relationship with Leyla, after learning about her previous nightlife in an occasion.	Kenan seduces Necla while he is engaged to Leyla at a home invitation when they three are all together.	Leyla gets pregnant by Oğuz, the family learns this after her miscarriage. She is forced to marry Oğuz.
Abdülvehhap proposes Ali Rıza Bey to take Necla instead of Leyla. Necla accepts without hesitation.	Kenan dumps Leyla, and Necla elopes with Kenan.	Leyla and Oğuz gets married. But Oğuz seduces Necla. Necla elopes with Oğuz.
There is no mention of Fikret.	There is no mention of Fikret.	Fikret comes and goes to home, very often. Tries to reconcile the family, to be with them in a supportive way.
Leyla has a nervous breakdown.	Leyla has a nervous breakdown.	Leyla has a nervous breakdown.
Necla goes to Syria with Abdülvehhap, becomes his third wife.	Necla is dumped by Kenan. Nobody knows where she is and how she is doing.	Necla regrets and leaves Oğuz.
Şevket starts stealing money from the bank he works in to afford the home expenses and luxury expectations.	Şevket starts stealing money from the bank he works in to afford the home expenses and luxury expectations.	Şevket is in distress to afford the home expenses and luxury expectations.
Şevket gambles with the money he stole from the bank.	Şevket gambles with the money he stole from the bank.	Şevket starts stealing money from the bank he works in.
Şevket does not come to home for two days, later a civil servant comes to home and notifies the family.	Şevket is arrested at the gambling table for the deficit at the bank accounts.	Şevket starts gambling for fun with his rich clients, nobody investigated anything about the stealing yet.
In Şevket absence, Ferhunde becomes unbearable, quarrelsome at home. She goes out so frequent and either comes late, or do not even come.	In Şevket absence, Ferhunde becomes unbearable, quarrelsome at home. She goes out so frequent and either comes late, or do not even come.	Ferhunde and Şevket get on well, with respect to Şevket's adjustment for the upper class entertaining for Ferhunde.
Ferhunde writes a farewell letter to Şevket, leaves him.	Ferhunde writes a farewell letter to Şevket, leaves him.	Şevket is in trouble, the bank investigators are about finding out the theft. He runs away.

Table 3. 1. (continued)

Necla writes letters to Ali Rıza Bey to be rescued. Ali Rıza cannot do anything.	Necla works in brothel. Ali Rıza Bey sees her by coincidence. Ali Rıza Bey gets a heart attack.	Necla writes a letter to Ali Rıza, starts to work, returns back to Cem (who is inescapably in love with her). Ali Rıza forgives her after she proves herself with her successes. She is back to home.
Şevket is imprisoned for more than one year. No more mention of Ferhunde.	Şevket is imprisoned for more than one year. No more mention of Ferhunde.	Şevket returns and surrenders, Ferhunde feels alone, pregnant but gets abortion.
-	-	Ferhunde cheats Şevket, while Şevket in prison they divorce. From that on, Ferhunde becomes the enemy of the family and is involved in any intrigue and trouble the family encounters.
Leyla sees a married lawyer.	Leyla sees a married lawyer.	Leyla has feelings about her divorce lawyer, whose wife is her psychotherapist as well.
Leyla becomes mistress of this lawyer. Ali Rıza Bey gets Leyla out of the home.	Leyla becomes mistress of this lawyer. Ali Rıza Bey gets Leyla out of the home.	Ali Rıza does not know the occasion. Leyla does not get involved in such a relationship and stops seeing the lawyer.
Ali Rıza Bey tears Leyla from the family picture.	Ali Rıza Bey tears Leyla from the family picture.	Ali Rıza Bey tears Necla from the family picture before, when she elopes with Leyla's husband.
Ali Rıza Bey suffers a light stroke.	Ali Rıza Bey suffers a light stroke.	Ali Rıza is in sorrow and disappointment.
Şevket is already in prison. No mention about Ferhunde.	Şevket is already prison. No mention about Ferhunde.	Şevket is sentenced to prison after his stealing money at the bank he was working in. Ali Rıza gets a heart attack.
Ali Rıza Bey decides to go and see Fikret in Adapazarı. Stays 15 days and returns.	Ali Rıza Bey decides to go and see Fikret in Adapazarı. Stays 2 days and returns.	Ali Rıza Bey decides to go and see Fikret in Adapazarı. Stays 1 night and returns.
Tahsin is rude and coarse, implies Ali Rıza Bey's incompetency against his daughters' immorality.	Tahsin is rude and coarse, implies Ali Rıza Bey's incompetency against his daughters' immorality.	Tahsin is very respectful to Ali Rıza and caring.
Ali Rıza Bey returns to Istanbul, more miserable, mobile in the streets.	Ali Rıza Bey returns to Istanbul, sees Necla in a brothel as a prostitute, gets a heart attack.	Ali Rıza is back to Istanbul, but Fikret comes and goes to home very often to support her family.

Table 3. 1. (continued)

<p>In winter, Ali Rıza Bey is taken to the hospital. Later, Leyla and Hayriye takes care of him, carrying him to Leyla's apartment in Dolapdere.</p>	<p>Ali Rıza Bey is at the hospital. Later, Leyla and Hayriye takes care of him, carrying him to Leyla's apartment in Dolapdere.</p>	<p>The occasions repeat like in a loop. In the last season, Şevket is again in prison, with the guilt of killing someone. Necla leaves with her second husband Ali, after death of Cem. Fikret struggles in her marriage while she is very happy with a son. After Şevket's second imprisonment, Ali Rıza gets paralyzed.</p>
<p>Ali Rıza Bey is disabled to speak and barely moves, lives with Leyla, Hayriye and Ayşe, with comfort and abundant food he is happy at the apartment provided by Leyla's affair.</p>	<p>Ali Rıza Bey is disabled to speak and barely moves, lives with Leyla, Hayriye and Ayşe, with comfort and abundant food he is happy at the apartment provided by Leyla's affair.</p>	<p>Leyla gets back to Oğuz, gets pregnant. They live together with Hayriye and Ayşe, with hopeless Ali Rıza.</p>
<p>No mention of other children.</p>	<p>Ali Rıza at Leyla's apartment, childish and lives helplessly.</p>	<p>Şevket is in prison because he take the guilt of Oğuz's killing someone. But, after a while, with the help of Ferhunde, Şevket's innocence is revealed.</p>
<p>-</p>	<p>Şevket comes to this apartment, his imprisonment ends. Leyla's affair arranges a job for him. Ali Rıza Bey holds his sons' hands, crying, complaining that he is not understanding anything.</p>	<p>On the day of Şevket's evacuation, whole family is reconciled in happiness. Ali Rıza waits at the garden. When they are all gathered in the garden finally, reunited, they found Ali Rıza as dead with a rose in his hand. Şevket, Hayriye, Leyla, Leyla's baby daughter and Ayşe returns Trabzon. Necla divorces her husband, stays in her business in Istanbul, Fikret stays with Tahsin as moving Istanbul from Adapazarı.</p>

## CHAPTER 4

### FROM INTEGRITY TO DISINTEGRATION: TRACING THE CHANGES IN THE TURKISH MODERN FAMILY

*Yaprak Dökümü* involves the examination of a considerable amount of social constructions, as well as the consequences they brought. It discusses socio-economic change and different encounters of modernist reflexes and traditional ties under the roof of a family: it is the story of a modern Turkish family in formation. In the novel, Reşat Nuri Güntekin writes about the time period of the late 1920s. This period is an important phase for society, which is drifted by a change in the formation of the administration. A new social life, economic and political systems are introduced. Later in the late 1960s, as a film, it adapts that period of Güntekin within the pictures of the late 1960s to the screen. Which, also confers another crucial shifting period. With the new atmosphere of the early multi-party political system, trials and failures of democracy, the question of military and the process of Turkish identity in formation are main preoccupations of the late 1960s. Then, after about four decades, *Yaprak Dökümü* is re-adapted and remade for the television in the 2000s. In a new period with neoliberal politics, the television serial readapts a new phase of the family melodrama in terms of recreation of the imagined community and Turkish identity of the late 1920s. Regarding the structural social changes in between these time periods, the family as a remarkable institution preserves its place in and for the society. That is, “in spite of secularization policies, socioeconomic development, and change in attitude towards political and economic life, the Turkish family, far from disintegrating, is surviving as a unit which is particularly resistant to external pressures.”<sup>119</sup> Although *Yaprak Dökümü* resembles a dissolution of a family with respect to the change and so-called “external pressures” in the social life, nonetheless it persists to encapsulate the main dynamics in the definition of a Turkish family. The dissolution presents the reasons beneath the failure of accomplishment of what is prefigured, imagined, and designed for a family. *Yaprak Dökümü* touches upon the problematics in the modern Turkish family in terms of how it is imagined and constructed. It presents a story of

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<sup>119</sup> Nur Vergin, “Social Change and the Family in Turkey,” *Current Anthropology* 26, no. 5 (1985): 573.

dissolution or destruction of the family, as epitomizing the ruptures and negotiations consolidated by the melodramatic narrative. This classic narrates the hybrid construction of the family: which is built in between modern and traditional. Which, also, presumes the clash and negotiations of the real and imaginary peculiarities of Turkish identity, therefore the Turkish modern society and ultimately for the modern nation state. Therefore, regarding the experience of the modernity with respect to the family and identity in Turkey, the family in *Yaprak Dökümü* pictures what Nükhet Sirman argues as “the production of an imaginary of the nuclear family took place in tandem with the creation of the nation-state as modern.”<sup>120</sup> Hence, the modern Turkish family presents a small-scaled epitome of the imagined modern Turkish nation, which is realized with both failures and success out of the negotiations and clashes between the modernist versus the traditionalist concerns and attachments of the community. In this respect, while we can see the imagination and recreation of a modern nation and its state, at the micro level, the family, we are also able to delineate this nation (state)’s identities rendered in familial discourse.<sup>121</sup>

#### **4.1. Masculinity of the Family**

*Yaprak Dökümü*, encapsulates a father and his family (since the father is the backbone for the family). It envisages the potentials and possible frailties of this family and constructs (and through adaptations and re-adaptations reconstructs) the institutional practices and existential anxiety through the dissolutions, disillusionments, and ambiguity of the social decision making mechanisms. That is, the material I use presents a story of the modern Turkish family in being within its dissolutions and destruction, as telling the story in reverse.

As mention, the family stays as a particular institution for the social formation of the identity, and at the macro-level expected and imagined community, the nation. However, it transforms as the time passes and the conjuncture changes. The bringing of a new period with social change transforms the family, or more precisely “metamorphoses” it. In this respect the identity, the process of its construction also alters with respect to the conditions and expectations of the time. The definition of the identity with respect to the family or the community, or the nation, is bound to

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<sup>120</sup> Nükhet Sirman, “The Making of the Familial Citizenship in Turkey,” in *Citizenship in a Global World: European Questions and Turkish Experiences 2005*, eds. E. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu (London: Routledge, 2005), 148.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

transformation. This will allow us to “link the operations of micro-power to the macro issues ... issues such as family practices, gender, culture and even emotions like love can be made to talk each other.”<sup>122</sup>

The family constitutes the place, environment, “home”, thus the exact sum of modelling mechanisms for the identity formation of an individual. The division of roles and responsibilities, expected behaviors and determination of the life style and perspectives are all included in “the family pack”, as much as the other basic learning phases like speaking, eating, and sleeping manners for the gendered identities. Regarding the reality of the connective and interactive structure of the relationships and ties between the identities and the family, *Yaprak Dökümü* presents us with the Turkish conventions of portraying praxis of the masculinity and femininity in a family melodrama. It has a quite typical story in this respect. The expected characteristics and peculiarities, designed within the masculine apprehension and depictions of the family construction, in the story are all present there. However, the transiting with remakes and re-adaptations of the same narration, we meet certain metamorphoses, which also may open the way up to some changes in the discursive gendered stereotypes’ reproduction.

The story of *Yaprak Dökümü*, is “falling leaves” metaphorically, as frequently noted before. The drift or the impasse the family is brought to is not a mere result of the modernism and tradition conflict, compensated with the economic incapability. Accepting the main consideration of such causalities as the basic dynamics for the storyline, the discussions are remarkably gender related. Before anything else, it is the story of falling leaves, the separation of a patriarch’s possessions from his rule as presenting the story of the failure of a patriarchic rule. All problems on the way to the end are constructed as conflicting or struggling with him. He represents the tradition, the past, the backwardness, the authority, with the incontestable presence of the masculinity as challenged by the modern, the present, the developed, the obedient, and the feminine. As the narration proceeds for all three versions, the definition of such associations are transmitted, transformed, and sometimes changed. The discourses are defined in relation to the expectations and conditions of the era of each version of *Yaprak Dökümü*. Which also affects the perception of gender as well as related constructions. In most of the cases the main ingredients, or the core presumptions, stay

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 154.

same as structuring the phenomena by reproduced discourses. Or in some other cases, they transform visually but remain same in the mentality, essentially.

In the narration of the novel, the descriptions about the gender of Reşat Nuri Güntekin in Ali Rıza's perspective, but with the third person narrator, are quite normative in the patriarchic sense. The gender roles and expectations with respect to the discourses are articulated in relation to the sex role theory: "action, (the role enactment is linked to a structure defined by biological difference, the dichotomy of male and female – not to a structure defined by social relations."<sup>123</sup> It is innate to woman as naturally in desire of being objectified, and the supreme position is reserved as subjects, gaze bearing, possessing (all over anything) to the man. For this presumed natural difference "being a man or a woman means enacting a general set of expectations which are attached to one's sex."<sup>124</sup> And it could be only sustained through control and surveillance. In other words, the subjugation is a requirement. Especially, regarding the way the woman is. Since she is prescribed in terms of such propensities of the objectification, thus the seduction, the hierarchical control mechanisms between the genders are for the society's good. In this respect, "the gender trouble" could be "resolved when the 'bad elements' are eliminated and the 'good values' reinstate"<sup>125</sup> with sustaining the presumed subject and object balance. Such sex role mentality is central to the relationship between Ali Rıza and his daughters and his wife. In the novel's narration there is an inner evil, defect, and incompetency of women. After Ali Rıza is not able to sustain the home financially and his authority is shattered, he has an inevitable despair and irremediableness (*çaresizlik*). He thinks in despair the nature of his daughters: "Whatever there was in the leaven of their lineage, at the moment of their birth, was becoming evident as time passed, nothing could have changed it."<sup>126</sup> And since the father is unable to sustain his rule, as sharing it with Şevket after losing his job, he is also not able to prevent, control or manage such inclinations of his daughters. Yet, he can watch, thus observe and analyze this woman nature: "Just as when in a serious illness, secret maladies of the body pop out into the open, this crisis had uncovered their defects and rotten spots."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), 26.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>125</sup> Gönül Dönmez-Colin, *Turkish Cinema: Identity, Distance and Belonging* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 151.

<sup>126</sup> Güntekin, *Falling Leaves*, trans. W. D. Halsey, 54.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

In contrast to such attributions to the daughters, and despite he also behaves inappropriately with respect to Ali Rıza's principles and morality, Şevket as a man is all extracted from that innate defect: "Yes, in his mind, the boy was a child who possessed a great deal of personal dignity."<sup>128</sup> When Şevket is arrested and imprisoned, without hesitation and with full of relief (since his mere existence is quite enough to be thankful)<sup>129</sup>, Ali Rıza visits him at the prison and tells him such things (corruption with the bribery) can happen. With full support after he listens to Şevket's regret and sorrow, Ali Rıza does not find any fragility in his son's morality: "Master Ali Rıza stroked his son's hand. "I knew, Şevket," he said, "Never for a moment did I suspect your morals."<sup>130</sup>

This mentality regarding the sex role attributions as defect nature of woman continues in the film version of *Yaprak Dökümü*, in the late 1960s. Since it is an "intersecting" adaptation of the novel as a film, the main dialogues and the main ideology of the prioritized masculinity versus despised femininity as natural



Figure 4. 1.

propensity are all persisted. The depiction of the woman and the man is in the same line of the novel's narration. Ali Rıza does not open his doors to her daughters after they are involved in immoral acts, but the situation of Şevket is considered as different, and not like as daughters' defective nature. Even, the

reason behind Şevket's drifting into that corruption is the women, his sisters and wife. In addition to defect nature argument, the self-objectification in the woman's propensity is more present in the filmic version. In the scene that shows afterwards of the wedding ceremony of Şevket and Ferhunde at the home, the dialogue between Leyla and Fikret clearly visualizes this notion (see fig. 4.1). Leyla, drunk, starts to brawl with Fikret, when Fikret criticizes Leyla and Necla's inappropriate and improper behaviors during the ceremony all night. Leyla arrogantly and gibingly defenses her and Necla's situation as telling to Fikret:

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 101.



Since you are the elder sister, we have not said anything to your arrogance till now. But, you have walked all over us as we kept quiet. It is enough! [by turning her mother, sounding childishly] Mom, look at her! We have just had fun a little, but she just put damper on it. [being more serious and sarcastic] We are only a lot of puppies in this home, we are bad, we are immoral! She is the instance of merit, instance of honor (*kendisi mücessemi fazilet, mücessemi namus*). But, she is right to some extent. Because the men look at me and Necla. Of course, they will. Because we are beautiful. We do not have glasses on our eyes, and a fleck on the pupil of our eyes.<sup>131</sup>

In this respect, the women, who are out of the control and are lost the necessary



Figure 4. 2.

subjugation, blatantly express their inner desires. Then, when they start to practice their desire more explicitly and openly they are immediately taken out of the family, as challenging the expectations and the limits of the prescribed woman image of the family. In opposition to Leyla and Necla who are most visible disobedient ones, Fikret and Ayşe

remain as the decent, as obedient to the rule, following the configured path of the patriarch Ali Rıza. By accepting Ali Rıza'a principles, they regard this as the righteous way of maintenance. On the other hand, Ali Rıza describes Şevket in the opening sequence (as being at the very same line of the novel) as: "My son Şevket. I raised him exactly in accordance with the perfect human model in my imagination (*onu tam hayalimde yaşayan mükemmel bir insan modeline göre işledim*). He is literate and educated. He is a piece of diamond that nothing in the world can foul him."<sup>132</sup> The doubtless trust and the morality of the son is present in the film as well (see fig. 4.2). In sum, the film presumes the sex role based deterministic gender definitions, being loyal to the novel. And this notion is not only in the man's prescription, as in the novel's only male voice-over. Regarding Leyla's above cited rebuke to Fikret about her self-characteristics as such, the women in the film are also aware of who they are

<sup>131</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Fatma Girik (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

<sup>132</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Cüneyt Gökçer (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

and what they serve for, as much as what they are capable of in relation to the men. Hence, they, in a way, compensate Ali Rıza's perspective of the sex roles, by explicitly announcing their desire for objectification.

However, this line of the gender construction shatters to some extent in television serial version of *Yaprak Dökümü*. It stretches the discussion of the nature-nurture dichotomy with respect to the introduction of an ambivalent woman imagery. The corruption and defect reveal out of the lacking control and subjugation constituted by the father in the family, as in the similar line of the previous versions. But, the women are not completely extracted and rejected from the focus although the men still have the primary position in the gaze and the position of the subject. Regarding the daughters' challenge and outrageous behaviors against their father, they are not completely lost in their lust and defect. There are references to women's nature as they ascribe to intrigue or seduction, yet such inclinations are not necessarily in duality of the decent versus corrupt women imagery. The ambition and passion could be ingrained not only in the femme fatales, but also in the expected, generally decent, women, with a questionable definitions of woman categories. That is, there is not the deterministic evil or good separation for the womanhood, which is analyzed in detailed following femininity discussion.

The cases, occasions and the characters' matter in the third, re-adapted version of *Yaprak Dökümü*. Although social constructions with respect to the sex roles continue, but the attributions as the defect nature of woman with the self-objectification propensity are not necessarily preserved as in the previous ones. The natural propensities are more questionably configured in the television serial version. The patriarchic mentality is present in the television serial as pointing out the disguised presumptions of the men in that respect, by their approaching and being the lead of the relationships. The women, on the other hand, are ambivalent in acceptance and denials of their roles with the confusion. Thus, they struggle in terms of negotiations and clashes with the family, the father and any other man. Their rebels to the authority of the father do not only involve regrets and wrongs. But, with their mistakes (which are mistakes in terms of the Ali Rıza's principles), they reevaluate their potential and capabilities as separate individuals from the father, as much as women. When Necla runs away with Leyla's husband, she is quite determinant to confront the family for what she believes true, for her love. After a while, when she realizes the man she ran

away with, Oğuz, is not worth her love, she decides to prove her own strength. She writes a letter to her father, who has just eliminated any reminders about her at home (see fig. 4.3 and 4.4). In the letter, she knows her fault, failure, and forfeit. However, she promises to get better by telling her father she will prove it and he will be also proud of her in the future with respect to her trials, efforts, and hard-work:

...this is not an apology letter, dad. In fact, I am on my knees in front of you. My head is down... I am like a drop of water in the mud, as defeated by the mud... Last night, I looked at all of you from a distance, to my family that I have dragged down and ruined... There is not a sentence to define my regret. But I am stayed out, you see. I can't forgive myself. Now, I will try to stand up without leaning on anyone else, dad. And I will make it. I am not sure whether the time will make us forget, but I will prove you that I am your daughter all over again.<sup>133</sup>



Figure 4. 3.



Figure 4. 4.

With this letter to the father, she also configures her own identity as potentially separate but not necessarily completely independent from her father, and capable to survive without any other man, no lover or father. She is generally as ambivalent in her determinacy. She comes and goes in between the lines of the family principles. She thinks both the necessity for togetherness and conjunction of a family, and such normative implementations forming restrictive and unnecessary intimate ties. As in the letter, she concentrates on her studies and becomes the successful and ambitious, thus the

strong, woman she prefigured and promised. She realizes herself, as well as proves it to the family and the father. The corrupt behavior she has once made is not completely

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<sup>133</sup> Kerem Çatay, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Fahriye Evcen (2007; İstanbul: Ay Yapım, 2010), YouTube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/yaprakdokumu>. (my translation)

eradicated from the memories, but it is reconsidered in terms of a general fallibility with respect to such proven capacities, by the father and family.

Also, the relationship between Ali Rıza and his daughters is different in the television serial. Although the love between the father and son is no doubt special, adapting from the previous versions. There is a remarkable mercy and love to the daughters differing from the previous versions. There is more same linkage for all of his children, lovingly. Ali Rıza names Leyla right after a special poem, recites the poem to her in the very stressful moments, romantically evolving his sincere feelings for his child. He immediately forgives their mistakes, the immoral actions, regardless of their countless mistakes and failures. He always mentions them innocent, blaming the environment, Istanbul, the nurture so to speak, the corrupting and seducing. He forgives each and every person who challenged him, after a quick anger. He behaves in full of hatred in a sudden, at the very moment of betrayal or rebel. However, in the end of each occasion, his home's, the family's, doors are all open to any of them with the acceptance of their imperfections and fallibilities. On the other hand, the women are hesitant, but, compared to the previous versions, they are brave enough to stand against the principles of Ali Rıza. They have the courage to come back and they are sure to be accepted. They rebel silently, regret silently, return, and beg for pardon from the father. Yet, in the end they realize their potentiality to stand alone on their own foote if they want, and see their separable identity from the omnipresence of the father. Thus, they have a hesitant, more ambivalent, characterization, which connotes the reproaches and indecisiveness for the women's self-realization and conscious.

As Janet Cosbey cites "gender structures the family at the same time that individuals create and re-create gender within family relationships."<sup>134</sup> Considering the main characters of *Yaprak Dökümü*'s three different versions, this family melodrama enables us to understand the stereotypes in a family in terms of gender construction. The roles and responsibilities, the codes and norms with respect to the traditional and modernist concerns apparent in the story line mainly consist the woman-man distinction and diversion. Since it is a family melodrama and a Turkish production, the conservativeness and protectiveness for the institution of the family matter a lot. The sexual preferences are strictly constructed in heterosexuality. The discussion of the homosexuality is not the case, and the main concentration is revolved

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<sup>134</sup> Cosbey, *Reel Families*, 195.

around the intrigues of the womanhood and manhood. The women and men of *Yaprak Dökümü* with respect to the three versions present the problematiqués of the masculinity and femininity as reciprocally constructed and construed in relation to the family.

#### 4.1.1. Expressed and Disguised Ones: “Hegemonic Masculinity”

The novel, the film and the television serial are all their own constructions of the identities, as based on the same storyline but configured in different contexts and conditions. The gendered atmosphere stays same. While I was tracing the definitional change from the novel to the television serial, I figured out that the masculinity has not been exposed to such change. Abovementioned discussion noted that the home and the family configured in masculine envisagement. And, the conventions and their practices related to masculine hegemony are reformulated in accordance with the time and space, but the very core stays same.

R. W. Connell’s conceptualize hegemonic masculinity, which:

. . . can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.<sup>135</sup>

Hegemonic masculinity here is to analyze gender relations, since it “embodies a ‘currently accepted’ strategy.”<sup>136</sup> Regarding one of the basic premises of *Yaprak Dökümü*, Ali Rıza and the family are intertwined in order to exist, as discussed previously. However, the finalization of the family’s story completely differed from the novel, to the film, and to the television serial. In the novel, Ali Rıza Bey silently accepts his situation with some physical inabilities, in the film he loses his mind, and in the television serial he dies. Yet, in all of them, his first and foremost goal in life is “to leave a clean name” after himself. In other words, he desires to be succeeded well afterwards, even in his absence. As Connell discusses, the hegemony in here has a mobility. That is: “When conditions for the defense of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony.”<sup>137</sup> Hence, Ali Rıza’s patriarch in all of three versions are challenged, (especially in the television serial) then it is overthrown, but

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<sup>135</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 77.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

not completely eroded, rather replaced by new constructs of hegemonic masculinity. This difference between the finalization of the *Yaprak Dökümü* versions glimpses about something else. The father dies in the very last version, the intention is here to present the complete break from the past associated with traditional backward affiliation but not the patriarchy. In the previous versions, with inabilities, he survives with suppressing his reality (his morality and principles). There, the past does not negotiate with the modern and contemporary one, but clings to it desperately and indispensably. And in the 2000s, that death symbolizes the achievement for the assumed emancipation for certain social practices. It is achieved through elimination of the father, but it does not denote the renouncement from the patriarchic order.

As mentioned before, every woman in Ali Rıza's family, even the ones who are not in the family but around, are all somehow dependent on Ali Rıza. The wife Hayriye, in all of the versions, defines herself as being his wife and his children's mother. The daughters, while feeling stuck and suffocated by his authoritarian backwardness and traditionalist expectations, need Ali Rıza to "become". They attempt to change the rule but not completely eradicate. In the novel, Necla and Leyla's passion and desire for marrying to the Syrian Abdülvehhap, and later for Kenan in the film, and then to Oğuz in television serial indicate a shift towards the new hegemonic constructions. The father as the authority seems outrageous and subordinating, yet the husband as in a more modern image presents prosperity for them. The subordination may seem to be overcome, but a new hegemony is constructed. The father's omnipresence is expressively open, and the husbands' are disguised in this sense. Because, the men other than the father is presentable enough in modernist expectations, but solidly patriarchic enough as well. The women escape from the old to the new which "the patriarchal dividend to men is defended and restored."<sup>138</sup> And from the late 1920s representation of the masculine order to the 2000s does not present a major change, rather we see in all of them: "Hegemonic masculinity is 'hegemonic' to the extent that it succeeds, at least temporarily, in serving as a symbolic nexus around which a significant level of public consent coalesces."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>139</sup> Michael A. Messner, "The Masculinity of the Governor: Muscle and Compassion in American Politics," in *Cinematic Sociology: Social Life in Film 2012*, eds. Jean-Anne Sutherland and Kathryn Feltey (California: SAGE, 2012), 135.

Ali Rıza and his family exists with his name and his authority, although there are challenges to it. And to the all versions, the father, patriarch Ali Rıza is always in trial of preparing the family for the winter, before the leaves falling. While his unable to do so, his presence is quite remarkable. In all versions, he is the one who decides and allows who can come in the home. When he is unable to do so, the control is taken over by other men. In the final of the novel and film, the family lives in Leyla's apartment, which is actually her present as being mistress to a married lawyer. In the television serial, they live in again Leyla's house, which was Ali Rıza's house at the very beginning, but bought by Oğuz in the end, and again Leyla is being the mistress of married Oğuz. Here, Ali Rıza's authority seems replaced by losing his house and control. However, being under the roof of his daughter does not necessarily change his presence as being the father. Yet, the roof is not completely belonging to the daughter, but another man, representing another masculine hegemony at the home.

#### **4.1.2. The Father: Being with and/or in the Family**

“The family as an institution is essential to prevent to destruction of social order by unbound men; and society must provide the economic and managerial roles for men.”<sup>140</sup> Therefore, on such grounds, the father matters a great deal for a family, he is the backbone of the family. After all, the role of being the pillar of the family for a man, is a result of the social consensus for the society's sake. In this respect, the construction of the family is realized in relation to his existence. And, in the case of *Yaprak Dökümü*, the reader is very aware of that: it is the story of a family, but a family made of the father. Ali Rıza Bey for the novel and film, and Ali Rıza Tekin (nonetheless he is also referred to as Ali Rıza Bey in most of the cases as well) in the television serial constitutes the most remarkable part of the family and its set up. Reşat Nuri Güntekin describes in the novel the foundation of the family is as harder as the foundation of a state for Ali Rıza. And this is not quietly renounced for the film and television serial. It is the duty of the man to build the family firstly, yet it is hard to constitute and presume, regarding the necessary control and responsibility left on his shoulders. Which requires the mechanisms of subjugation and/or surveillance. By analogy, as like a state, he has to establish the family in accordance with the expectations of the ruling idea of masculinity, more precisely the patriarchy, and

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<sup>140</sup> R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 38.

regulate it thoroughly. As the micro-level resemblance of the state, Ali Rıza constitutes his family accordingly the rules and regulations attempted at the nation-state level. However, his failure to maintain the family comes with the inability to adapt the outsider modernist concerns with his own personal morality. Yet, the family still structures itself with the father's existence, so does any family member.

The family members of *Yaprak Dökümü* exist and construct their identities accordingly the family, therefore, the father. In all of three versions that configure such familial relationships, they all compromise the dependency on the father in definition of the self. The family members evolve under the father's sovereignty and competency. Ali Rıza determines the roles and duties, provides the protection and security for every individual at home. Hence, when an occasion happens against his rule, the involved family member is bound to fail and lose both the family s/he belongs, and her/his own dignity. This dependency and existential definition over the father and family are all same to the novel, film and television serial. They are intrinsic to all of them, because they constitute the basic ingredients of modern Turkish family set up. Hence, in a way the novel, film and television serial reflect the familiar and normative cultural codes regarding the family and familial constructions which are already strongly ingrained in the society. Although the time period from the novel's publication until the 2000s involve various transitions and transformations in terms of societal implications of the culture and tradition, this indispensability between the family and father has existed. Yet, it changed in physical appearance. Ali Rıza sets up the family and the members in *Yaprak Dökümü* very attentively according to his own education system (*yetiştirme usulü*) and moral principles, in all three versions. The members in the family are sometimes tempted by the outsiders, but they all know the authority and security provided by the father, which are indispensable for their own survival.

Regarding the narration and descriptions in the novel, the narrator's depiction of each character's personality from the eyes of Ali Rıza, clearly shows such dependency and indispensability in forming selves. Ali Rıza describes his wife, his son and his daughters respectively, from the mouth of third person narrator, as almightily knowing the instinctual and innate peculiarities of each of them. Then, he writes the prescription for each one's perception and potential pursuit of the future as well as presence. When the struggle brought by poverty and luxury obsessions of the children to catch the modernist expectations of their era become more apparent in the home,



the narrator of the book presumes the future disasters with Ali Rıza's eyes: "There was no observable difference in Master Ali Rıza. But he saw and understood his children much better than in the old days."<sup>141</sup> Hence, Ali Rıza is always aware of what is inner to his family members. He is very certain about his influence and effect on each family member. Although his strength is open to be shattered, he always has the competency as a father for a family to be a family, and for the members to be that family's members.

For the film, which is more or less loyal to the general peculiarities of the novel, the narrator changes as being the voice-over by Ali Rıza, and towards the end by the other characters. And as being the voice over in the beginning, he describes his people,



Figure 4. 5.

under his rule. Towards the end, the voice-over is taken by Şevket, Fikret, or Ayşe, symbolizing the dissolution and crack in the family. However, this does not completely change the focus of the story, as being on the father and his rule of a family. The father of the film is more pathetic, helpless for sustaining his authority in the family compared to the

novel. It seems the members of the family could resist and challenge his patriarchy and oppression, but the necessity of his existence to family still stays as the case. That is, the father and his rule may not be favored in many cases by the children and wife. However, notwithstanding their intolerant and impatient reproaches for the sake of the change and modernist acclaims, which are strictly rejected and kept off by Ali Rıza, they necessitate his existence to be able to exist. They want him to be around, to rule them maybe not in his own (old) fashion but through reconfiguration of modernist concerns and expectations. The opening sequence of the film epitomizes this dichotomist necessity for a father. Ali Rıza starts to narrate the story and film starts with his mentioning the Hat Law of 1925 introduced by the state. The daughters, Leyla and Necla, in joy, come and take off their father's old fez, then enthusiastically put on him a modern felt hat (see fig. 4.5). Ali Rıza does not find it very suitable for himself,

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<sup>141</sup> Güntekin, *Falling Leaves*, trans. W. D. Halsey, 52.

but he says “law is law, we will obey (*kanun kanundur, uyacağız*).”<sup>142</sup> Leyla and Necla in a way try to sneak into the authority of the father with implementation of a novel thing, not as rejecting the already established rule but as trial to reshape the way it has been. However, Ali Rıza bases their joyful acts on their childishness and does not take them as seriously. Thus, he says to them “in fact, the things you are saying are the necessities of the contemporary era, but they are not according to my mindset (*gerçi söyledikleriniz asri çağın icaplarından, fakat benim kafama göre değil*).”<sup>143</sup> The daughters, in response, look at each other in silent and annoyed. In a way, the daughters do not have problem with having the father and the family, but the way of the rule as being the old-fashioned becomes their problem. They know their roles and accept the necessity of a father to exist, but they are in search for some change in the appearance driven by the surrounding reformist, thus Western, concerns, which they appreciate and adore self-orientalistically. Later on, their leavings and rebels do not necessarily constitute an outrageous resistance to the authority of Ali Rıza as a father neither. But, these constitute a challenging resistance to the old-fashioned mechanisms of the control. They do not find any trouble to have the rule of the father, but they would like to change the way it has been.

The 2000s version of *Yaprak Dökümü* is more explicit in this sense, regarding the stretched structure of a television serial is dispensed to five seasons and one hundred and seventy-four episodes. It is more explicit, because it involves many different dynamics of the societal considerations of certain discourses in more detail thanks to the extended time period. Ali Rıza is again in the very same line of the strictness and authoritarian patriarch, with his control mechanisms and being the only decision-maker of the family. The family members, especially the daughters Leyla and Necla, find the old-fashioned traditional mindset of their father as an impediment in front of their enjoyment and relief. On the other hand, they are both so certainly in love with their fathers. They wonder and frankly express whether they will be able to be part of such a family as wives as like their mother, with such an important and reliable, strong, protective and secure founder like their father (see fig. 4.6 and 4.7):

[by looking at her parents at the garden, from the window of their room]

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<sup>142</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Cüneyt Gökçer (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

*Necla sighs*: Look at them. They are married for how many years, they are still holding each other like lovers.

*Leyla [jokingly]*: Come on, what is the big deal? My mom's and dad's love? Most probably, they are cuddling because they're cold.

[laughs]

*Necla*: You, fool.<sup>144</sup>



Figure 4. 7.



Figure 4. 6.

Their problems come with the suppression of desires. Ali Rıza's strict regulations on education, discipline of daily life practices, their relationships, conservatism on the sexuality are problematic for them. They accept certain regulations and morality, but would love to experience some sort of flexibility and independence. However, they do not know the limitations, they never know where to stop. Therefore, whenever they are in an occasion that is generally a troublesome and against Ali Rıza-rules, they immediately regret what they do. Hence, always in the end of a trouble they realize again and

again the necessary existence of Ali Rıza for themselves. They take lessons what they did, they regret and in the end they harbor and shelter to Ali Rıza, with the full recognition of their malleability and deficiency to exist without his presence and protection.

Nükhet Sirman discusses society is "involved in a imagining in a new community, a process that leads them to re-invent existing discourses and practices

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<sup>144</sup> Kerem Çatay, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Fahriye Evcen and Gökçe Bahadır (2006; İstanbul: Ay Yapım, 2010), YouTube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/yaprakdokumu>. (my translation)

ranging from religion to literature, the family to science in relation to modernity.”<sup>145</sup> In this respect, these three different versions of *Yaprak Dökümü* present how the society goes through “a new realignment of the fragments of old cultural discourses and desires”<sup>146</sup> in the family making. Therefore, there is the consistent existence and presumption of the institution of family, as necessary for the social order. And this institution is indispensable from the father, regardless of his weaknesses and fallibility, which is presumed as such throughout different melodramatic adaptations, against differing expectations and physical appearance of the conjuncture.

#### **4.2. Class Crossing Femininity**

*Yaprak Dökümü* has also a remarkable focus on social status and class. The poverty and deprivation the family suffers from are main considerations for morality discussions, the fall and corruption of the family members. Corruption brought to the home is a consequence of the conflict between traditional ties to the past and the modernist concerns for the accomplishment of Westernization and contemporariness. Yet, for the family in between such clashes, especially for the women in the home, social class also matters in terms of financial sustainability for survival, in all versions. The 1930s economic instabilities and crises, the late 1960s’ new political and economic realignments and implementations, as well as another socio-economic phase’s introduction towards the 2000s, have reflections on the people’s experience and habits of consumption, production, and expectations. Thus, they also have on the institution of the family. *Yaprak Dökümü* presents this change in perception of the necessities as well as definitions of the social status throughout the years. Therefore, the transformation of the social practices within this family is emblematic to the large-scale societal changes in terms of economic status definitions.

The disasters or drifting to “the fall” of Ali Rıza’s family come with the outsider change to the home. That is, the desired mechanism for maintenance in the home, Ali Rıza’s competent and steady rule, is challenged by appreciation for and then implementation, as well as internalization, of certain societal norms. For instance, Ali Rıza does not understand his daughters’ expectations for fashionable clothes. They want to attend parties and have fun, and in this respect they need to adapt that social atmosphere’s outfit. However, while Ali Rıza expects them to stay with the things they

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<sup>145</sup> Sirman, *The Making of the Familial Citizenship*, 153.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

already have, the daughters' desire becomes for the unreachable, the parts of the upper classes, or the contemporary. Therefore, the financial incapability increases the tension between the traditional and modernist.

There is a continuing demand and expectation for the renovation that is the desire for modernist appearance and change for this respect. Such concerns are more or less the same in all three *Yaprak Dökümü* versions. Yet, the demand for this change differs in each other with respect to the real and exact necessity for it. That is to say, the young women's expectations to have new couches, or the clothes in terms of needing them are interpreted differently. In the novel, it is a necessity to renew the furniture, for instance. But, this necessity also involves the inferiority complexes the children have for the renewal of outlook. The film also articulates it in similar direction, reasoning the renewal and necessity together. However, in the case of television serial, it becomes the mere matter of the emulation to the upper class outlook. Nonetheless, in the television serial, the deprivation is also present, but it is not in the sense of the exact lack of basic needs, the poverty, as described in the novel, which is also similarly depicted in the film. In this necessity, the female characters in the family are presented more fragile to endure such situation and more unconcerned for how to manage next. Although the mother and Fikret, presents the decadency and are more likely to tolerate the economic incapability and lack, even they change in their behavior for renewal or necessity.

The women's ignorance and appeal for the luxury consumption carelessly and arrogantly in Ali Rıza's home also constitute an important trigger to "the fall" in economic terms. That is, there is the reality of the poverty coincides with the family members' self-centered and wasteful concerns. The family members suffer in between the poverty and the modernist and luxury expectations:

Mistress Hayriye began to scrimp on the most necessary expenses of the house for the sake of Leyla and Necla's toilette. At the end, little by little, her accounting began to collapse. This time Fikret criticized this weakness of her mother, and began by saying, "To make them happy you have no right to make us suffer from poverty and ruin the household, mother!" To defend herself, Mistress Hayriye was forced to defend Leyla and Necla as well; "They also are right...they want to dress like all the girls, they want elegance..."<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 51.



Figure 4. 10.

(see fig. 4.8 and 4.9). The children are all wrapped with the blankets and try to get



Figure 4. 9.



Figure 4. 8.

In the film of the late 1960s this incapability is depicted as in the novel. In one scene, the family members gather in a room, it is winter and there drains water drops from the roof since it is raining outside. They put buckets around for the water draining from the ceiling and everyone is gathered around the fireplace, which barely warms them

warm, and little Ayşe cries “I am cold, I am so cold.”<sup>148</sup> Then, Ali Rıza goes out to cut some woods from the garden to put into the fire. Leyla and Necla in despair decides to dance to warm up, which also cheers up Ayşe a little bit. They start to dance in silly manners, throwing the stuff and blankets on them, spilling the water from the buckets. When Ali Rıza enters the room, he is in despair, ironically starts to laugh at them with his tears in his eyes. He confesses out of the poverty his children are turned out to be “people like gipsy” (*çocuklarım çingene gibi bir şeye dönüştüler*).<sup>149</sup> This lack and its bringing could be interpreted as similar to the novel’s depiction of the exact poverty that is

compensated with the wasteful spending of the children, especially the daughter Leyla

<sup>148</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Reyhan Tuğsavul (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

<sup>149</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Cüneyt Gökçer (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

and Necla. Hayriye's scrimping for the most necessary expenses of the house, as depicted in the film, is also presented in the film as well. The following scene (see fig. 4.10) adapts the previously cited excerpt from the novel, as showing the conjunction of seek for contemporary social daily life practices and the poverty:

*[Leyla and Necla dances at the living room, Ali Rıza warns them and leaves. Then, Fikret warns them and they start to argue, Hayriye enters immediately after their noise]*

*Hayriye: Children! What's going on again?*

*Leyla: We just wanted to listen to some music [with Necla]. But our father and sister [Fikret] swooped down on us.*

*Necla: They don't let us go out, listen to music! We don't have any good clothes, outfits (üstte yok, başta yok).*

*[they start to cry]*

*Leyla: Sometimes starving, sometimes barely fed up (yarı aç, yarı tok).*

*[Hayriye approaches them with full of love and mercy]*

*Hayriye: Stop crying my children, stop it my dearies. Don't start it again. I'll go out shopping tomorrow, and buy some dress fabric for both of you.*

*[Leyla and Necla immediately stop to cry and gaily embraces their mother, while Fikret watches them in distant and annoyed]*

*Leyla and Necla: Mummy, pretty mummy!*

*Fikret: They always fly high! What about to see the ones who are below them? There is something. You need to cut your coat to suit your cloth! To make these little misses pleased, you are scrimping the most necessary expenses of the house.*

*Hayriye: Eh, Fikret, enough is enough! They also want to go out, dress like all the girls.<sup>150</sup>*



Figure 4. 11.

When it comes to the 2000s, in the changed socio-economic atmosphere the family's definitions of the lack, need, and luxury are also remade. In other words, the dramatic poverty the family members actually suffer from as depicted in the novel and film is not exactly adapted to the television

serial. There is, in general, discussion on deprivation of the luxury goods. This is the case in the previous ones as well, the girls complain about being deprived of the others' possessions, which they also deserve to have. However, in the novel and the film this

<sup>150</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Fatma Girik, Semiramis Pekkan, Güzin Özipek and Nurhan Nur (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

arrogance is not the only case. There is also an incapability to sustain even the basic needs with respect to the low salaries. On the other hand, in the television serial, the family is a middle-class family whose earnings seems quite adequate to cover expenses and basic needs. However, the women of the home, especially the daughters Leyla and Necla, there is a constant dissatisfaction about what they have and what they are deprived of. That is to say, the daughters' concerns on the luxury consumptions are more in the focus. The need to renew the furniture at home is not because they are quite ragged as in the novel and film. But they want to renew because of the consumerist practices and habits. It is not the matter of lack and poverty, but the matter of habitual desire and never-satisfied demands to acquire more as well as to have visually attractive image of upper class identity. For instance, Leyla and Necla, in a sense meaninglessly, adore shopping and despite they do not need to have certain clothes, they buy because of their brand qualities (see fig. 4.11). And buying and such consumerist-addictive-behaviors become the sign of approved and expected imagery of womanhood of their desired upper class. Or, although they live in a *konak*, which is a historical as well as prestigious heirloom mansion with gorgeous outlook indeed, the daughters Leyla and Necla, Ferhunde and Hayriye, do not find any comfort in it. Because of the old heritage embodied by the place, it evokes the past and the tradition as the backwardness to the lower class's praxes as well as habitus. Again such dissatisfaction is generally depicted and visualized by the women. There is differentiated interpretation towards the economic incapability for the family with respect to the survival needs and wasteful luxury consumerism from the 1930s to the 2000s.

As well as the change from the poverty to the deprivation, these three versions show how the “opportunity, mobility, and outcomes have been woven into cultural stories of social class across the years.”<sup>151</sup> In this respect, from the 1930s narration of this family melodrama to the 2000s, also in the 1960s, social class mobility can be noticed. In terms of a vanishing distinction, there emerges a hybrid ground especially for the upper and middle classes. The social atmosphere in relation to the economic change leads to new forms of social praxes by deconstructing and redefining the

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<sup>151</sup> Jean-Anne Sutherland and Kathryn Feltey, “Chapter 3: Social Class,” in *Cinematic Sociology: Social Life in Film 2012*, eds. Jean-Anne Sutherland and Kathryn Feltey (California: SAGE, 2012), 59.



borderlines of the class interests and pleasures. *Yaprak Dökümü* versions present us a change in terms of class-crossing tastes and practices. However, this change preserves the feminine side of the story till today. The appeal, desire for the more are always from the women of home. Either it is necessity, or it is a luxury, the women are depicted in the position of the desirers.

#### **4.2.1. Defining Femininity: Re-categorizing the Femme Fatal versus the Decent Woman**

The nature, the voice of woman, its peripheral allowance and reachability, limitations, clashes and negotiations between the femininity and the family progress in a transformative way. There is a change from the 1930s to 2000s, through the 1960s, which demonstrates some emancipatory progression path the women have been through, yet with a large amount of remaining patriarchic reminders of main gender discourses.

There are continuities and discontinuities as the essentialist gendered assumptions with respect to the sex role theory in the three different versions of *Yaprak Dökümü*. The representations of women with categorical distinctions in this family melodrama, as in any family melodrama structure, constitute more explicit imagery for transition in defining femininity. In comprehending the woman in terms of good versus evil, the femme fatal versus to the decent woman as normatively and contrastingly present the analysis of definitional characteristics of each feminine category. They correspond to societal reconfigurations and reproductions of related gender discourses, comparing the time periods of their creations. A gender nature with presumed sex roles, of *Yaprak Dökümü* novel is transformative in terms of reflection in the adaptations. Besides, this transformation could be detailed with respect to the inter-gender categorizations, as well. Therefore, I try to decipher femininity and its categorizations in this section. I will show the Manichean good and evil dichotomy constructed by the femme fatal and decent woman figures over the sex role essentialism on the female nature, which is in transformation from the novel until the television (re)adaptation.

There is an essence attributed to the femininity, which is articulated by gender norms that “operate by requiring the embodiment of certain ideals of femininity.”<sup>152</sup> And

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<sup>152</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 231.

with respect to the social and intimate relations at home, we can analyze this through two basic distinctions of woman imagery in different *Yaprak Dökümü* versions. The definition of these two imageries is transformative from the novel to the television serial, with a remarkable break redefinition, to the stereotypes of the femme fatal and the decent woman. Hence, the strict, black and white, framed and defined, evil perpetuated, seductive, morally corrupted, sexually attractive, and dangerous (mainly malfunctioning) woman versus subjugated, morally strained, dignified through constraints, domesticated, harmless, complementary, and decent (mainly functioning as expected) woman distinction shatter the continuity in definition. Such attributions and keen separation of the woman imageries change through time, from the 1930s imagery to the 2000s'. The imagery from the 1930s becomes a more ambivalent and complicated, thus confused, definitional ground. To be able to analyze this change, I will trace two main and remarkable characters, who are the most noticeable contradicting characters of the narration in these terms, of *Yaprak Dökümü* in three versions, Fikret and Ferhunde.

To begin with, the novel's depiction of Fikret is a character opposing to Ferhunde. Fikret is the first child and daughter of Ali Rıza. Her character is constructed by him, a completely presumed and imagined woman character for Ali Rıza and by Ali Rıza. The intensifying effect for this construction, is the availability and responsiveness to the education and expectations by Fikret, is her physical imperfectness and incompleteness in terms of the beauty and attractiveness. Ali Rıza's principles and morality fill the deficiency of such physical appearance. From Ali Rıza Bey's perspective Fikret is a mature, yet not attractive, or beautiful, but has a very unprecedented morality. He raised her similarly like Şevket, but not completely as like Şevket:

. . . had tried to educate Fikret with the same care he gave to his son. Only, since she was a girl and would not be thrown into life like her brother, she would not need practical knowledge. For this reason Master Ali Rıza taught her many more things of fancy and elegance."<sup>153</sup>

She is the bearer of her mother in terms of the cult of domesticity, subjugated to her father's rule by internalization of his principles, smart to deal with the trouble yet knowingly her limits with respect to her gender. Therefore, as the instance of decent

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<sup>153</sup> Güntekin, *Falling Leaves*, trans. W. D. Halsey, 36.

woman, she embraces purity and piety, the expectations and potentialities of a housewife and mother. Hence, Fikret as contrasting of the femme fatal Ferhunde is constructed by Reşat Nuri Güntekin as resembling the good and subjugated female imagery, that completes the necessary periphery in the family, as auxiliary but not necessarily equal. And when the time comes, she does not resist the disastrous and immoral occasions at home, she decides to leave by her own. Here, she does not actually rebel, but harbors another man's rule as accepting her dependency as a woman, since the ongoing rule is shattered and not dependable. While she is leaving, she points out the expected competency of her father, Şevket's goodness and uncontrolled two sisters. Which presents her mindset in terms of acceptance, approval and activation of the presumed gender roles by her with respect to the failed relationships' construction. She tells her father:

Let me speak openly, father. You know, I am not such a very thoughtless girl. At no time did it cross my mind to be angry with you like my mother and sisters that we became poor and without money. The weakness that you showed for them and against me, I pardoned although I wouldn't have done it. Şevket isn't a bad child. But, what use is it, when he has given his bridle to that worthless woman. Leyla and Necla are two madwomen who don't know what they have done... My mother is like a wretch who goes like a lamp wherever she's pulled.... if you had acted like a man, these things would have been impossible.<sup>154</sup>

Hence, from the mouth of Fikret, the overall picture of the home with desperation and critique has the reverse of the expectations of gender dispute.

On the other hand depiction of Ferhunde is outrageous enough to rebel that domain and seen as corrupt. Ali Rıza expects her to be thankful and ashamed, but rather he encounters with an insolent, slack, and unconventionally easy-going person. As embracing the basic characteristics of a femme fatal, "this young woman was as daring and tricky as she was intelligent. Within a few days, she took the control and began to govern the house as its one and only head."<sup>155</sup> She comes home as different and foreign, brings her sense of quality in terms of living standards, and expects any person at home to accomplish her demands and desires. She directs Şevket, as manipulating him with her sexual attractiveness, in accordance. And when the family fails, her "puppet" Şevket goes from the home as the constitutive and symbolic power

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 75-76.

<sup>155</sup> Güntekin, *Falling Leaves*, trans. W. D. Halsey, 67.

for her to manage the rule at home (that the rule scrutinized pejoratively and interpreted as corruptively), she leaves for other hunts and satisfactory, pleasant situations. Her being is purely evil, and Ali Rıza's daughters as imitating and following her also goes to the very same line with Ferhunde. Leyla and Necla admires Ferhunde when they first met her. And in the end they also leave the home. Because, they do not subjugate the necessary rule and they go for reveal of their evil natural instincts with seductiveness, desirableness, and self-objectification.

When it comes to the film in the late 1960s, the same perception continues. Yet, the visual presentation of the characters in terms of the femme fatal and decent woman distinction, there emerges a slight difference. While Fikret is the very project woman of Ali Rıza, the physical appearance of her in terms of beauty makes her as not desirable and "unidentifiable" (see fig. 4.12). As film goes, Fikret's hard, peevisish,



Figure 4. 13.



Figure 4. 12.

cold, and anti-social peculiarities do not necessarily resemble the idealism and expectedness of a decent woman in a family melodrama. She is a rather side character, Leyla and Necla (as also being played by famous actresses) are more prominent. On the other hand, Ferhunde with her sexually attractive and heavy gazes, and modern, fashionable as well as narcissistic outlook is also passive in terms of presentation (see fig. 4.13). While she is the leading character for corruption in the home, she is overpassed also by Leyla and Necla in terms of presence. Her characteristics and the way she seduces Şevket, manipulates him, are all conventional for a cinematic femme fatal.

Her danger is revealed and realized when she leaves the home. In terms such femininity distinction reflection on the screen as adaptation, the transformation comes in the more balanced and ambiguous approach towards the approval and rejection of the woman, in terms promotion of the characters. The sides of Fikret and Ferhunde are

clearly obvious in terms of decency and corruption. But, (most probably regarding the stars playing the characters of) Leyla and Necla compensate the dilemma and contradictions of this good and evil distinction, in terms of visibility.

From beginning towards end, the subjugated beautiful women drift to the corruption and predicament. And their characteristics in transformation under the rule and without the rule present a transitional structure. Yet, the distinction and separation of the evil and good are clear in terms of their presumed characteristics. The borders of the goodness and evil are so clear. Leyla and Necla are subjugated at the home, their propensity towards the corruption is already visible. Fikret internalizes the rule and necessary suppression, but Leyla and Necla would like to ignore the necessity. As opposed to the novel, after Necla runs away with her sister's fiancée, Kenan, the end for her becomes not with a poor, old, backward, highly crowded, and traditional house of the man (Abdülvehhap's as in the novel) she left the home for, but with a brothel. And in that building she meets her father, where she realizes that she crossed the line to the side of evil, by rejecting the father. The general narration as a family melodrama,



Figure 4. 14.

the film distinguish the places for the good and evil, when and where to put the characters in this respect. Just for the transformation compared to the novel, the characters of Fikret and Ferhunde are visually surpassed the good and evil representations of the femininity over the personal transitions experienced from the goodness to the evil by Leyla and Necla.

In the television serial, of the 2000s, this distinction has a more remarkable transformation. Rather than a distinctive definition of the good and evil, as attributed to the essence with the sex roles, is renounced. There emerges a more sophisticated and confused imagery of femme fatal and of decent woman in the mise-en-scenes. In the very beginning episodes the characters are introduced in accordance with the decency, morality and corruption as determining and drawing the line between the good and evil. However, for the following episodes, through the evolving path of the narration such distinction is complicated. Since the television serial has one hundred and seventy-four episodes, each is approximately ninety minutes, the stretching the subject

matter and handling each character (also adding new characters) more deeply as well as adding to the contend with respect to the television culture's bringing, the melodramatic narration transforms into a different dimension. The stretched contend enables to analyze and understand each character, more thoroughly, as providing any side of a character. Hence, Fikret and Ferhunde, as much as any other main character in the serial, seem quite different compared to the earlier versions. The good, decent versus the evil, femme fatal are distinctively noticeable in the very beginning.



Figure 4. 15.

Contrasting to the film, Fikret is also beautiful, not lacking or disabled as in the film and novel, piteous, hard-working, potentially inheriting the housewife and mother peculiarities, that is the cult of domesticity (see fig. 4.14). She is unable to pursue her education with a complete self-sacrifice to the home, yet clever, reads books, beloved by the father. She is the

most modest and reasonable of the home. Her principles are the principles of the father, completely internalized and then realized. Her decisions are conscious. Although her marriage to Tahsin is not approved by the father first, her marriage and her new family suits best for the family model (in Ali Rıza's family conception) among her siblings. Her mother in law constitutes sometimes problems, but in the end they can overcome it. Her decision to marry a man she has no idea about, is for instance an unexpected and unapproved manner. In the past, she left her beloved fiancée for the sake of her father's, thus family's, name when that fiancée's father is involved in some corrupted business. Therefore, the decisions or the reason behind her stance changes, as in this case of her marriage in this manner. However, she does not bring to a fatal end with such decision, rather she struggles and finds the love by husband as harboring him with hopelessly from her father's port. On the other hand, Ferhunde is quite representative in terms of the femme fatal with her sexually attractive outlook and mimicry, talks, seduction politics, dishonest sincerity, and dangerous calculations in relationships (see fig. 4.15). The evil in her is always present. But when she is closely examined, behind the lies she tell, the ambition for the money, and search for the

passion and love are inferred differently. She is being peevish, ambitious and greedy is related to her past, indeed. In her childhood, she is abused by her stepfather who is killed right after by her mother, and then she is raised in orphanage. And the difficult, oppressive and horrifying, abusive atmosphere of the orphanage makes her to flee from there at the age of fourteen. She becomes all alone in the streets, but learns to work hard and try to get what is deprived from her. The conditions she is in, or the way she became as her, are all relational. She is referred to as snake, devil, subversive and immoral by most of the family members. Even Şevket starts to hate her, while he is in love with her passionately. The secret plans she make, the ways she wants to get out for any impasse, tricks she always apply are indispensable characteristics for her. However, her loneliness and powerful imagery is not result of the mere evil she



Figure 4. 16.

embraces. She is also as good as other characters. Her evil does not completely surround her personality. She loves Şevket, for instance. She is jealous about him, cares him, as differing from the previous versions' representation of their relationship based on Ferhunde's self-interest. In the very ending, while they are at the very enemy sides, she is

still under Şevket's affection. After her divorce, she cries and is ruined. In previous narrations this divorce makes Şevket feel sorry for a very short while, but in this narration the divorce affects both. Ferhunde utters very often about how she feels different for Şevket, how he is innocent and a pure lover, and how she knows that she will never find that love afterwards. In the very last season, the encounter of Ali Rıza and Ferhunde, Ferhunde talks to the paralyzed but approving Ali Rıza after helping him for proving Şevket's innocence in the case of murder by Oğuz (see pic. 16). This conversation summarizes how the relationship between them is furthered until that day and how they consider each other different, yet not completely evil or good. Through trusting at the very desperate moment to each other, still respecting and attributing sincerity and regards to each other, Ferhunde tells to Ali Rıza:

...I know what you think about me. We have confronted to each other for many times. We offended, hurt each other, ruthlessly. You declared me as the enemy. So did I.... as you always say, you prioritized your

fatherhood over anything again. When Oğuz beat me, you took me in your arms, made me feel your place in my life. Despite all the unfairness I've faced in this family, you still stay a special place for me. While even your closest ones are betraying you, I considered to tell this to you as a debt of gratitude, since you trusted me.<sup>156</sup>

In the television serial, the women are not necessarily attributed evil nature, they are prone to fail as men, but necessity for the control brought by the family and father continues. The clear distinction between the evil character as femme fatal versus the good decent woman is blurry, as presenting the evil is not purely evil, the good is not purely good. The intertwining of two, as more resembling the social reality, is prominent to the narration. Fikret makes mistakes, as like Ferhunde, and Ferhunde is sensitive about the family as like Fikret. The way they are, the way they perceive the world, makes sense with their separate and individual surroundings. Their own personal backgrounds and realities are different and they need to be considered separately. They are both aware of the contrasting personality they have been under the same roof in the beginning, they claim each other as enemies. But sooner or later they realize the difference of the other is a mere result of differing in personal upbringing and life experiences. Ferhunde is not by default a femme fatal as it is in the previous versions. She does not simply come, destroy the family values, and ruin the institution with seduction and evil power. While she still presents the ambition, jealousy, seduction, and greediness, in the very end she reconciles with the family. It is obvious Ferhunde is not made up with pure evil.

In each version of *Yaprak Dökümü*, the difference between the woman identity construction with respect to this dichotomy of femme fatal and decent women is distinctive. Especially, when we regard the final attempt of Ferhunde, and its reception. For the novel, and a much copied adaptation of it, for the film, her leave of home after Şevket's imprisonment is presented as the expected femme fatal manner. That is, she does not have any proper and good characteristics, she just benefits from the conditions she is in and when the occasions begin to worsen, she unwaveringly leaves, even evades mischievously. However, in the last version, Ferhunde leaves the home at the very same time as in the novel and the film, with a sneaky calculations and cheating. Yet, she stays as loving Şevket all the time. In a way, she is forced to leave, and Şevket

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<sup>156</sup> Kerem Çatay, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Deniz Çakır (2010; İstanbul: Ay Yapım, 2010), YouTube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/yaprakdokumu>. (my translation)



is not simply confused and affected by her in terms of being corrupted. For instance, Ferhunde helps Ali Rıza to prove Şevket's second imprisonment in place of Oğuz, as helping them to reveal the truth. And at the very end of the television serial, finalization comes with Ferhunde's tears in the empty family house and holding the family picture. Although she is the enemy in the beginning, the narration does not leave her out as that much simple femme fatal. Rather, it presents a more multi-layered, or sophisticated, characteristics for her, resembling the ambivalence, wavering between the good and evil, as approaching more and more the realistic resemblance of the identity.

#### **4.2.2. The Mother, the Wife: “The Cult of Domesticity”**

Barbara Welter's describes the cult of domesticity, in relation to gender stereotypes of the nineteenth century, over the ascribed role for true woman:

The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues – piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife – woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power.<sup>157</sup>

In relation to this attributions, the place of a woman in the family, especially, for the mother in a family melodrama, the expectations presume in accordance with the cult of domesticity, which in general addresses “the breadwinner-homemaker model of family life.”<sup>158</sup> As historically known, a family functions in relation to the socially expected and arranged “division of labor”, of the specific roles. In this respect, “regardless of the sex of the partners, family life is structured by gender assumptions related to wage earning, career commitment, parenting and homemaking.”<sup>159</sup> As much as the father's being milestone for the foundation of the family, the role of mother is also important as an indispensable dynamic in its construction. Especially regarding the reproduction side of the family, the mother presents a key role. Yet, rather than being equally important for the foundation of the family as like father, she has an auxiliary role, as substantiating the father. While the cult of domesticity conceptualize

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<sup>157</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 152.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Janet Cosbey, “Reel Families: The Delicate Balance of Family and Work in Film,” in *Cinematic Sociology: Social Life in Film 2012*, eds. Jean-Anne Sutherland and Kathryn Feltey (California: SAGE, 2012), 195.

a value system related to the nineteenth century American middle- and upper-class homes and the women's virtue,<sup>160</sup> the prescriptions for the womanhood in this cult preserve their place in many respects today. And the represented womanhood in terms of the role for a mother of a family, in *Yaprak Dökümü*, for the late nineteenth and twenty first century does not differ from each other completely.

Apparently, “the” mother of the story in *Yaprak Dökümü* is Hayriye. But, there are other characters who are or become mothers. Especially, the television serial in addition to the character Hayriye, there are many other women as mothers, i.e. the daughters become mothers, meanwhile and some other women in co-starring. They all have one thing in common for explanation of their successes and failures of their lives: the cult of domesticity, in terms of expectations and consequences. The cult of domesticity with respect to the ingrained characteristics of a mother are presumed in relation to the change in the definition of space. Now, regarding Hayriye as the most visible and associated with motherhood in the novel, film and television serial, I will trace the characteristics of the mother over her comparatively.

Hayriye in the novel, as like presumed in the film, is a discreet, subjugated to the rule of the family, the rule of the patriarch Ali Rıza, hard-working in terms of handling the homemaking as well as “womanly” parenting, as the negotiator between the father and the children. Following the cardinal virtues of a true woman, Hayriye “was very dignified and clean”<sup>161</sup>, “virtuous and simple housewife”<sup>162</sup>, yet, “doubtless...was an ignorant (*cahil*) woman.”<sup>163</sup> However, her submissiveness is shattered in the lack of economic support by the father. As like malfunctioning (of her mechanism) to regulate the home and the expected responsibilities, she turns out to be someone greedy, less sympathetic, and querulous. In the portrayal by Ali Rıza, she is regarded as someone money-based, morally corrupted even not in action but in apprehension, becoming distant from him, from his rules and principles with respect to the poverty. In this respect, as a wife and mother she functions in accordance with the sustainability of the conditions. When the home's subsistence is regulated “normally”, in terms of expected configuration of the income and expenses with the

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<sup>160</sup> Lisa A. Keister and Darby E. Southgate, *Inequality: A Contemporary Approach to Race, Class and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 228.

<sup>161</sup> Güntekin, *Falling Leaves*, trans. W. D. Halsey, 11.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

father's omnipresence and power, she is not confused and functions in the way she is expected. The following excerpt sums the change in the manners of the mother from the expected to the malfunctioned:

His wife's peevishness and sourness of the first days had not passed away. . . Nothing grated on him as much as this behavior of Mistress Hayriye. One day he said to her: "Shame on you, Mistress...It's clear that you cared for me only because of my job, the money I earned. . . In life we were like two army buddies. Is it right to strike me in the back when they took my arms out of my hand?". . . He thought that when his wife heard it she would weep and throw her arms around him, and that the conflict between them would be finished. But this speech that was very touching in Master Ali Rıza's mind only made his own eyes water. Mistress Hayriye on the other hand looked at him expressionlessly, and shook her shoulders with a closed countenance: "What can we do... He who causes himself to fall shouldn't cry."<sup>164</sup>

In the dialogue, Ali Rıza depicts their relationship as equal fighters (while he meant it as supportive of his wife) for the survival of the family, as expecting his wife to be supportive enough to overcome the stress they have been facing. Also, it is an expectation from her as a mother, as much as a wife. However, as a parent and wife she is stuck in a very miserable situation. Since the father does not currently work and earn a wage, but only insists on the morality and his ethical principles, she is unable to



Figure 4. 17.

challenged, the breakdown is inevitable.

endure her own expectations. Her duties and missions as a woman, a wife as well as a mother are confused and complicated by putting her in an impasse. Therefore, the novel presents the role of the mother in the very expectations of the cult of domesticity, yet if the necessary conditions of her mechanism is

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 39-40.



Figure 4. 19.



Figure 4. 18.

This imagery for Hayriye is in the very same line for the film. In the opening sequence of the film, Ali Rıza describes each family member over the family picture on the wall. He starts with Hayriye: “My wife for thirty years, Hayriye... She is a devoted woman to her children and home, enduringly.”<sup>165</sup> As in the novel, “the true woman’s place was unquestionably by her own fireside - as daughter, sister, but most of all as wife and mother.”<sup>166</sup> She is dedicated to her home, she always deals with the housewife duties, cooking, cleaning, and arranging the expectations of the children, i.e. party snacks and drinks. She always wears apron, with a swab in her hands (see fig. 4.17 and 4.18). This is also a result of the concerns to intensification melodramatic effect. Yet,

it is her costume which is a quite open remark intensifying the domesticity for the womanhood as being wife and mother. And the malfunctioning with the changing economic and social conditions at the home, also occurs for Hayriye in the film, as very like in the novel. Submissiveness, as one of the cardinal virtues, do not completely pertain under the shattered authority of the father. Previously cited excerpt from the novel takes place in the film with the same dialogue and similar adaptation of the mise-en-scene (see fig. 4.19) – regarding the adaptation peculiarity of the film as the “intersecting adaptation”, with the intention of not assimilating the original work:

*[Ali Rıza comes behind Hayriye to their kitchen, where Hayriye indifferent to him cooks in a sullen expression]*

*Ali Rıza:* You have not told a word for days, not spoken to me. Shame on you. It’s clear that you cared for me only because of my job, the money

<sup>165</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Cüneyt Gökçer (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

<sup>166</sup> Welter, *The Cult of True Womanhood*, 162.

I earned. In life we were like two army buddies. Is it right to strike me in the back when they took my arms out of my hand?  
[not even turning to him, over her shoulder]  
Hayriye: What can we do... He who causes himself to fall shouldn't cry.  
[camera zooms on to Ali Rıza's teary eyes with.]<sup>167</sup>

All versions of *Yaprak Dökümü* go in the very same line in terms of the cult of domesticity in presenting the mother and wife, Hayriye. Yet, there comes some difference with the third narration. With the television serial adaptation, there is a reevaluation of the womanhood in a slight reflections of the change against the institution of family, which also reflects on the mother of the family. Also, in the television serial adaptation of *Yaprak Dökümü*, there is a romantic relationship between Ali Rıza and Hayriye. Although the way they got married is given in the very same line of the previous narrations, the loyalty, fidelity, and love are some sort of keys to their relationship. There may occur the conflicts and clashes between two of them regarding the ethical and moral considerations and principles of Ali Rıza's his own. But, they always present the ideal couple for their children and surrounding friends. Although the patriarchal descriptions and expected roles of gender in the family are preserved as like in the novel and the film, the mere pragmatism attributed to the existence of the woman in the family that is present in the novel and the film is not necessarily the case for the television serial. That is, in the narration of the television serial, this cult is presumed as well; but, the construction of the relationship between the father and the mother involves a certain amount of fondness and love-based-attachment. Regarding the changing atmosphere of the home with respect to the wage earning incapability of the father after a while, there occurs a different involvement. The mother, as supporting, starts to contribute to the home's subsistence, but involuntarily, yet by loving and caring his husband.

When the father is not able to work, loses his job to care of the family, the institution of family shatters. The mother is involved for survival, involuntarily, since it is not an expected responsibility and duty from her, deriving from the womanhood's capabilities in terms of both strength and abilities. Ali Rıza, first quits his job in Altın Yaprak Anonim Şirketi, but later he tries hard to find a job. He does not immediately seek help from his wife, meanwhile the other man of home, Şevket, is hired by a bank.

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<sup>167</sup> Memduh Ün, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Cüneyt Gökçer and Güzin Özipek (1967; İstanbul: Uğur Film, DVD. (my translation)

This brings a relief to home for a while, as in previous versions, but later on incapability to afford the luxury expectations of the family members as well as coverage of the needs Şevket's debts and bribery drift the family as a whole to a distress. In this respect, Ali Rıza invites everyone at home whom has the capability



Figure 4. 20.

and availability to work as helping for the survival. He does this to get over the trouble in solidarity as a family, in shame to some extent, whereas such an invitation by the father cannot be even the case of discussion in the previous versions. It is in a shame since the daughters' and wife's contribution to the subsistence are in general not

expected. The share in the role of a father is abject and a challenge as well as a threat to his rule, authority. However, as a mother, Hayriye does not necessarily go out of the home to work for this necessity. She endures her responsibilities of the home. And she contributes for the subsistence at the very home: she does tailoring. She earns enough to cover the bills and other similar expenses of the home. But, the involuntariness embedded in her manners is very apparent, though she enjoys her job sometimes. She explains the obligation to work, to her neighbor Neyyir while drinking coffee together (see fig. 4.20): “What can we do? We all need to take the responsibility (*hepimiz koyacağız elimizi taşın altına*)...”<sup>168</sup> All the troubles related to her children are quite enough to deal with plus to the housework and its expected burden on her shoulders. Her working is quite seemingly one of her interests that she enjoys to do so, the involvement of requirement and obligation to work constitutes such joy also as another burden, or trouble, contrasting to her “nature”. However, the television serial's Hayriye does not completely malfunction as the wife and mother under the changing economic circumstances as happened in the previous versions. Rather, she adapts the new conditions and submits the rule of Ali Rıza, with acceptance of the resolutions to the troubles they are in. She supports her husband, with her love and caring, as “not striking him in the back.”

<sup>168</sup> Kerem Çatay, *Yaprak Dökümü*, performed by Güven Hokna (2007; İstanbul: Ay Yapım, 2010), YouTube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/yaprakdokumu>. (my translation)

All in all, there is a slight transition of the definition of the relationship between the father and mother. The premise of “the true dignity and beauty of the female character seem to consist in a right understanding and faithful and cheerful performance of social and family duties”<sup>169</sup> is preserved for the mother Hayriye throughout the novel, the film and television. But, the mother’s place changes, when it comes to the 2000s. The mere pragmatist sense of need for the existence of the woman as a wife and mother is blended with the romantic and emotional involvement for the reinforcement of the foundation’s survival.

It is a widely known fact that gender is a structure of social practice:

In gender processes, the everyday conduct of life is organized in relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction. This arena includes sexual arousal and intercourse, childbirth and infant care, bodily sex difference and similarity.<sup>170</sup>

Within the frame of a family melodrama, this practice preserves the essentialist dichotomy between and within the gender stereotypes. From the late 1920s, until the 2000s many discourses circulate in the very same line. The roles arranged out of gender difference, continue in a transformative way. The characterization differs, there emerges a new formulation for the womanhood and its prescriptions, as from strict borderlines to evil and goodness, yet under the changing surface of hegemonic masculinity. And as a family melodrama, all versions of *Yaprak Dökümü* deal with the “oedipal themes of emotional and moral identity”<sup>171</sup> and each “records the failure of protagonist to act in a way that could shape the events and influence the emotional environment, let alone change the stifling social milieu.”<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Welter, *The Cult of True Womanhood*, 162.

<sup>170</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 71.

<sup>171</sup> Elsaesser, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, 55.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

*Yaprak Dökümü* across the years represents an excellent example of how family melodrama survives in transition. Even as it changes its mode of expression, it maintains the familiar discursive formulations embedded in its representation. As reflexive cultural material, *Yaprak Dökümü* in every version where I traced the change, tells us that our social constructions are modeled in fiction, because, “however sophisticated we have become, the appeal of the melodramatic remains a central fact of our culture.”<sup>173</sup> In this study, I traced the changes from the 1930s until the 2000s in discourse formulations in descriptions, restricting my focus mainly to family and gender.

The difference between the modes of the three materials I consulted would be the first example of change. The novel is a quite a short one, 144 pages, and while very descriptive it is not thorough in terms of characterization, instead tending to present one-sided simple descriptions. The adapted film is a compressed 90-minute version of the book. It is an intersecting adaptation, very certain about its fidelity to the novel’s characterization and narration, but still involving slight changes. Last, the television serial is a much extended version of the novel, with an unreserved interpretation of the novel’s narration: re-adapting a new time period, as well as involving remake qualities corresponding to the film. So, while in the novel and the film the linear storytelling goes on and ends in a predictable fashion, the television serial blends more intrigue into the narration to spread it across five years and 174 episodes, in which it repeats certain basic occasions in the storyline with different re-presentations. However, all in all, I was more concerned with content and narration in those cases where all three versions intersect. This particular focus did not detract from my research intentions of tracing family and gender representations. I preferred to show their linkage through their continuing melodramatic appeal to their societies and through the conceptualization of the adaptation and remake.

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<sup>173</sup> Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), ix.



The melodrama is fertile area for a sociological research in a number of ways. As I discussed in detail in the first and second chapters, it is a mode for articulating the ruptures and reassemblings in telling histories as well as reflecting society. Considering it as a modality, its persistence and coexistence with/in other genres and forms from its emergence corroborates its transmutable and intertextual continuity and cross-cultural long-lasting appeal. The themes and subgenres corresponding to the historical background are also remarkable in this sense. Regarding the adaptation tradition and remake practices for the screen, melodramatic production honors and recaptures the same and unchanging subject matter. In other words, it takes the achromatic structures and bodies of the society and colors them in different time periods in relation to that timing. Therefore, it builds a connection between the past and present, and even the future, as between the old and the new, through its adaptation and remake qualities. Hence, with this study on family melodrama, I was able to analyze the process of the construction of fiction across time, which appears to reproduce and reinvent previous discourses and discursive practices.

*Yaprak Dökümü* epitomizes the entertainment culture in relation to the melodrama and prepares a sociologically “observable” resource for us. As a novel of the 1930s, as a film adaptation of the late 1960s, and as a television serial re-adaptation of the 2000s, it embodies the Turkish melodrama’s subjectivity and locality in repetition and reconsideration. The narration, regardless of its plot reformulation, fabricates the human and the social into fiction. It depicts the ever-changing time and space via the very same subject matter, presenting us the fictional representations of our social reality through our historicity in constructions.

*Yaprak Dökümü*’s family reflects the ideal Turkish modern family in being in the novel. With respect to the adaptations in different time periods, it also shows the phases of modernization processes in two crucial time periods. The novel presents first trials of the family making with respect to the Early Republican era. Then, the film shows how this institution has tried to survive so far till 1960s and how a family of the late 1920s is perceived from the late 1960s. Later on, the television serial, with its motto “every family is a tree. Sometimes it blooms, sometimes it drops leaves” (*her aile bir ağaçtır. Bazen çiçekler açar, bazen yapraklar döker*), preserves the indispensability of the family as an institution for us to exist and survive. It is common to all versions that family as an important parameter for existence of an individual and

for the survival of the society in general. The novel and film are more didactic on presentation of the expectations from and possible fatalities for a family model from a modernist point of view. The television serial normalizes the wrongs and rights, opens out the possible fallibility, by approaching the reality. In a sense, the novel and the film pictures first encounters with the modern and adaptation trails for being modern. And the television serial presents the internalization of what is conceived as modern so far. Also, it shows how the society makes peace up with its own reality, via internalization and reviving its authenticity and belatedness in modernity.

In this thesis, I aimed to analyze the representation and fictionalization of family in a classic melodrama reproduced over time. I consulted three versions. *Yaprak Dökümü* is about a family dependent on its patriarch, Ali Rıza. The father stands as the most important agent in family making throughout the time. From the 1930s to the 2000s, he remains a strong and competent figure. The story is premised on the idea that the family matters as an indispensable institution despite all the disasters it might face. In the end of each version the father's patriarchy is shattered, yet family continues. As a slight difference in the 2000s, the family plays a more crucial role for the members' survival. The father dies in this version, but the family reassembles in peace despite all the intrigue and conflict, learning to live free of the protective patriarchal roof above them. And the family members' characterizations go hand in hand with the father's omnipresence, although he is challenged from time to time or finds himself unable to fix familial problems or relations. The women are expected to fulfill the canons of domesticity. Some succeed, while others fail and regret that failure. The storyline in all three versions follow this formulation. In a way, they all consolidate the Early Republican intentions and expectations of the family and familial bonds with respect to individuality. As Nükhet Sirman puts it:

The gender identities defined and developed in these novels did indeed become the norm after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The Civil Code that was promulgated in 1926 rules that the husband is the head of the family and is the breadwinner, while the wife is defined as the husband's helper and advisor. Thus women in the family were made subordinate to the husband... [*they*] were thus subordinated to a male representative.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Sirman, *The Making of the Familial Citizenship*, 158.

Thus the Turkish family has remained consistent over the past century, with the father in charge and the mother responsible for the house and familial duties expected from her. It is a masculine institution with feminine auxiliary and decorative particles. While this is a valid inference for all versions, there is another dimension introduced in the television version. While romance and love is an indispensable part of the melodramatic novels of the 1930s and the films of the late 1960s, this sincere love between father and mother is lacking in *Yaprak Dökümü*. The television serial attaches a romantic relationship between father and mother as a little more than a means of keeping the family together.

Since wealth and richness forms one of the basic discussions in “the falling leaves” for *Yaprak Dökümü*, I investigated the importance and perception of social class in relation to femininity in the family as well. Comparing the novel, the film, and the television serial, there is a continuity in the representation of class differences in terms of social practices and cultural appeals. In each version, upward mobility is one of the ultimate goals of the women of the family. However, with the 2000s, the television serial’s narration does not base the whole structural dissolution of the family on economic incapability and deprivation, but more on romantic intrigue. Therefore, class borders are not as strictly defined in the television serial as they were in the previous adaptation and the novel, but they are clearly evident.

I also traced constitutive properties in the fictionalization of gender stereotypes. Femininity and masculinity over the heterosexualized construction of the family are defined similarly in all versions, yet this phenomenon changes somewhat in the 2000s. The basic presumptions for the women and men were constructed in accordance with old fashioned sex role theory. The narrations base their stereotypes’ capabilities and characteristics biological difference, which brings up biased and discriminative assumptions on what men *do* and women *can do*. In all versions, the expectations on women and men for their roles and responsibilities are designed accordingly. However, the television serial emancipated the definitions a bit more, with proposing an ambivalent image for the women. Yet, men remain hegemonic, with their power ingrained in their masculinity. The melodramatic configuration of the women in a dichotomist perception as “femme fatal” versus “decent woman” has been changed for the television version. The episodic structure in narrative enables the characteristics of each family member to unfold over time. Therefore, the transitivity of the attributed

characteristics in terms of evil and good is present in the television serial. That is to say, the presentation of women changes from the distinctive and strict lines of defining, as femme fatal versus decent woman, to an ambiguous reconstruction of women.

All in all, the classic *Yaprak Dökümü* in its forms as a novel, film, and television serial presents itself as a cross-section of many cultural materials that deserve greater sociological scrutiny. This study has looked at the transition and change by tracing family and gender representation of the Turkish family in melodrama productions and reproductions in three important historical time periods. And it warrants a place among the fictional presentations in family melodrama studies by having gone through the processes of adaptation and remake. However, there remain many other questions regarding the relatedness and broadness of the area and the material I dealt with. Further studies, especially regarding the gender-oriented discussion I pursued, should be explored in accordance with the question posed by Judith Butler:

the question is no longer, how is gender constituted as and through a certain interpretation of sex? (a question that leaves the "matter" of sex untheorized), but rather through what regulatory norms is sex itself materialized? And how is it that treating the materiality of sex as a given presupposes and consolidates the normative conditions of its own emergence?<sup>175</sup>

My study, as a part of melodrama studies, has traced the transformation of “melodramatic techniques of presentation... [which] could put the finger on the texture of ... social and human material.”<sup>176</sup> It showed there is a transformation in both presentation and representation over the course of time. This transformation having slight differences in gendered iconography does not offer serious challenges to dominant gender paradigms. Because, when the material’s reflexivity is considered, the practice of social norms and codes is reproduced variously, preserving the core of those social norms and codes. On the other hand, such differences may be regarded as initiatives for important changes in representations, as more and more approaching to and resembling the social reality.

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<sup>175</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 10.

<sup>176</sup> Elsaesser, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, 49.

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## APPENDIX

The list of full cast and crew of the mentioned films and television serials.

### ***Yaprak Dökümü (1958)***

Feature Film, Black and White, 35 mm, Turkey, Turkish.

Producer: Fuat Rutkay

Director: Suavi Tedü

Writers: Suavi Tedü (screenplay), Reşat Nuri Güntekin (novel)

Cast: Hadi Hün, Şaziye Moral, Göksel Arsoy, Mualla Kaynak, Gül Gülgün, Muzaffer Nebioğlu, Suna Pekuysal, Necdet Mahfi Ayrıl, Selahattin Yazgan.

### ***Yaprak Dökümü (1967)***

Feature Film, Black and White, 35 mm, 91 min, Turkey, Turkish.

Producer: Memduh Ün

Director: Memduh Ün

Writers: Memduh Ün, Halit Refiğ (screenplay), Reşat Nuri Güntekin (novel)

Cast: Ediz Hun, Fatma Girik, Cüneyt Gökçer, Semiramis Pekkan, Gürel Ünlüsoy, Nurhan Nur, Esin Gülsoy, Güzin Özipek, Süha Doğan, Orhan Elmas, Zeki Alpan, Meriç Başaran, Faik Coşkun, Selahattin İçsel, Eşref Vural, Recep Şen, Memduh Alpar, Talia Satı, Hakkı Haktan, Nezihe Güler, Semiha Kocamemi, Müşerref Çapın, Mesut Sürmeli, Reyhan Tuğsavul, Funda Postacı, Sevinç Pekin.

### ***Yaprak Dökümü (1987)***

Television Serial, Color, 7 episodes, Turkey, Turkish.

Producer: Hilmi Akyalçın

Director: Ayhan Önal

Writers: Bülent Oran (screenplay), Reşat Nuri Güntekin (novel)

Cast: Serap Aksoy, Sevtap Parman, Yasemin Alkaya, Oktar Durukan, Ebru Oğuz, Merih Akalın, Kerim Afşar, Ayda Aksel, Tarık Tarcan, Özhan Carda, Arzu Atalay, Zafer Ergin, Efgan Efehan, İhsan Gedik, Semra Savaş, Dinçer Çekmez, Sevim Çalışgır, Muhip Arcıman, Zeynel Karaca, Dilaver Uyanık, Ali Erkazan, Jale Öz, Orhan Aydın, Ahmet Evitan, Tufan Bahadır, Çetin Akcan, Uluer Süer, Nihat İleri, Saltuk Kaplangı, Savaş Akova, Kaya Küçükönder, Melahat Özekit, Cavidan Akyol, Mehmet

Özekit, Ömer Köylü, Muzaffer Cıvan, Teoman Aksoy, Zeki Alpan, Nuri Tuğ, İsmet Merih, Cem Erman, Ali İnce.

***Yaprak Dökümü (2006-2010)***

Television Serial, Color, 174 episodes, Turkey, Turkish.

Producer: Kerem Çatay

Director: Mesude Erarslan

Writers: Ece Yörenç, Melek Gençoğlu (screenplay), Reşat Nuri Güntekin (novel)

Cast: Halil Ergün, Güven Hokna, Bennu Yıldırımlar, Tolga Karel, Caner Kurtaran, Bedia Ener, Deniz Çakır, Gökçe Bahadır, Fahriye Evcen, Güler Ökten, Ahmet Saraçoğlu, Perihan Savaş, Hasan Küçükçetin, Mustafa Avkıran, Seda Demir, Şebnem Ceceli, Ege Aydan, Türkan Kılıç, Kıvanç Kasabalı, Barış Bağcı, Nihat Alptuğ Altinkaya, Yusuf Atala, Başak Sayan, Bülent Fil, Nezih Tuncay, Sedef Avcı, Selma Özkanlı, Melina Özprodomos, Engin Hepileri, Caner Cindoruk, Uğur Kıvılcım, Eren Balkan, Selçuk Gürmeriç, Gülşah Ertuğrul, Burcu Günay, Yeliz Şar, Arda Esen, Necip Memili, Ayberk Pekcan, Burak Davutoğlu, Neslihan Atagül, Berk Boğaç Akgüneş, Mustafa Orbay Avcı.