



**THE DISCOURSE ON TURKISH IDENTITY
IN HISTORICAL FILMS:
THE CASE OF 'KARA MURAT'**

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Abstract:

The film industry that developed at the end of the 19th century played a role in improving the masses, first visually and then aurally. The nation-states that became aware of this situation, especially Germany, began to use films in creating a collective national identity. As for Turkey, it became involved in the film industry with the contributions of Enver Paşa, who was under intense German influence. However, only documentaries, feature films, and films based on the Turkish national struggle were made until the 1950s. In the 1950s, there was an evolution in the film industry, as in every other area of Turkish life. *Kostüme avantür* films, a genre specific to Turkey using real or fiction characters whose stories were adapted into a film from comic strips, were introduced. These films based on historical figures attracted a great deal of attention between 1970-1980 along with the effect of internal and external political developments. Among these films, the Kara Murat series was especially prominent. The present study aims to look into the discourse on Turkish identity in the Kara Murat series within the scope of collective identity. In this regard, the Kara Murat series shown between 1972-1978 were subject to a discourse analysis based on such categories as identity, conqueror and Conquest, the "other", and "us". As a result of the study, it was seen that the Turkish identity discourse in these films was based on Ottoman history.

Keywords: film, Kara Murat, identity, collective consciousness, *Kostüme Avantür*

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1. Introduction

The process of reaching the masses visually and aurally that started with the shooting of the first film in France was also undergone by the Ottoman Empire. Besides the first shooting, carried out by the Promio brothers in İstanbul during the reign of Abdulhamit II, the first film was shown by a French citizen named Bertrand (Onaran, 1994; Çomak, 1998). The films shot in this era were generally short films or documentaries.

Enver Paşa, who saw that these films could be used as a tool of propaganda during his observations in Germany in 1914, had the Central Army Movie Theater (*Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi -MOSD*) established. Thus, the path towards the first Turkish films was officially paved (Özön, 1970; Çomak, 1998). As for the first feature films, they were shot by MOSD, which had prioritized documentaries until that time. It can be said that Sigmund Weinberg and Fuat Uzkınay played a role in this change (Özön, 1970). Sedat Simavi also shot feature films on behalf of *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti (MMC)*.

In the years of the Turkish National Struggle, an organization named OFAD was established by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and assumed the duties of MOSD and MMC. However, OFAD generally shot documentaries. As in the first years of the Republic, the government could not give sufficient attention to the film industry both due to the lack of required technology and because there were more serious priorities. So, the films shot during this time were actually completed with foreign resources or theatrical productions adapted by Muhsin Ertuğrul (Şener, 1970). This situation continued until 1950 and changed drastically when the Democrat Party (DP) came to power. Turkish-Greek relations in particular became tense due to the Cyprus issue, and this situation, as well as the idea of eliminating the psychology of the defeated before the Western world were reflected in the film industry. Therefore, the films shot in this period gave place to the Ottoman Empire in general and to the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet and the conquest of Constantinople. This situation led to the rise of "*kostüme avantür*" films in Turkey, adapting characters from comic strips, and this type of film increased in number over time (Karadoğan, 2002).

In "*kostüme avantür*" films, regarded as a genre specific to Turkey in the film industry, it is seen that historical events are simplified and materialized with characters, giving perspectives on different cultures, religions, or races and thus reconstructing society based on marginalization (Tezcan, 1972; Scognamillo & Demirhan, 2010; Yıldırım, 2011). Thus, films with historical content gather masses of different ethnic origins and religions on a common ground in history, thereby creating a collective

consciousness. This situation is associated with periodically fictionalizing the process of national identity formation by using various tools.

Although it is thought that "*kostüme avantür*" films pursued political aims due to Democrat Party rule, these films continued to be made when the military junta (Regime of the Colonels) overthrew Democrat Party rule on 27 May 1960. Moreover, the concepts of "being a Turk" and "Muslimhood" continued to be cited as mutually indispensable elements in the films. It mainly resulted from the fact that the idea of Turkish-Islamic synthesis introduced by *Aydınlar Kulübü* in 1961 became a matter of discussion in the intellectual world.

On 12 March 1971, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) gave a memorandum to the ruling Government of Demirel, and thus the military took over the government one more time. This period, marked by political instability and short-term coalitions, came to an end on 12 September 1980 when the Turkish Armed Forces seized power. However, *kostüme avantür* films continued to be shot during this period, and *Fatih'in Fedaisi Kara Murat (Fatih's Guard Kara Murat)*, the first of the "Kara Murat" series, came out in 1972. Up until *Kara Murat: Titans Clash* (1978), the last of the series, a new Kara Murat film was shown every year uninterruptedly.

The composition of several elements besides the historical films putting a character in the center that started in 1950 were not limited to understanding based on the changes in political power, but became especially important in creating a collective consciousness. So, these films were shot within the existing structure and in parallel with Turkish-Islam understanding (Güvenç, 1996; Timuroğlu, 1991; Kıraç, 2008). The films shot during the period when the Turkish-Greek crisis that began in 1954 and continued increasingly in 1964 became successful in the struggle against the Byzantine Empire. However, the striking point was that the number of such films declined in the aftermath of the "Cyprus Peace Operation" that began in 1974 and ended in success, and they were not shot again afterwards (Güvenç, 1996; Yıldırım, 2011). This situation indirectly indicates that the government supported such films; hence, one or two films with historical content were released every year starting in 1965. In these films, the subject was generally related to Turkish identity and sometimes to Muslimhood or the history of the Ottoman Empire, especially bringing to the forefront the conquest of Constantinople and the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet. With characters such as Malkoçoğlu, Tarkan, Battal Gazi and Kara Murat, who were adapted generally from comic strips, it aimed to support the perception that "*One Turk is worth the whole world*". This trend started with the "Karaoğlan" series, which is considered to be the first example of this genre continuing until the beginning of the 1980s (Karadoğan, 2002; Scognamillo and Demirhan, 2010). Within this scope, the way Turkish identity was

reflected in the Kara Murat series and the discourses that came to the forefront in this process are the focus of the present study. Thus, it is hoped that the study will demonstrate the effect of historical *kostüme avantür* films, introduced as a genre special to Turkey, in creating a collective consciousness.

2. Method

In the study, a qualitative approach was adopted. According to this approach, social studies bear a political aspect and are presented based on specific discourses or ideologies (Punch, 2005; Karasar, 2015). In such studies, the current situation is handled in its entirety and depth, and sophisticated information is evaluated within its own context. The main aim is to bring out the hidden content or implications (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this regard, a discourse analysis was carried out. Discourse analysis aims to read between the lines beyond the most obvious meaning of a text. In discourse analysis, the meaning that comes from taking the context into account is more important than the text itself (Günay, 2013, Baş & Akturan, 2008). So, the study took direct examples of the lines in the films that were within the scope of the study and focused on the discourses they implied.

2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

At the data collection stage of the study, document analysis was carried out (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). In this regard, lines aimed at building Turkish identity were extracted from the films *Fatihin Fedaisi Kara Murat (Fatih's Guard Kara Murat)*, *Kara Murat Fatih'in Fermanı (The Order of Fatih the Conqueror)*, *Kara Murat Ölüm Emri (Kara Murat: Death Order)*, *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat vs. the Black Knight)*, *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Seyh Gaffar)*, *Kara Murat Denizler Hakimi (Kara Murat: Master of the Seas)*, and *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor (Kara Murat: Titans Clash)*, all of which were shown between 1972-1978. The main data in the study are the lines taken from the Kara Murat series that were shown at movie theaters during this span of time. The original lines were turned into a text. These lines were first coded thematically, and afterwards their discourse analyses were made using the categories of "identity", "conqueror and conquest", "others" and "us".

3. Findings

The findings of the study were grouped under sub-headings regarding the Kara Murat series that were shown between 1972 and 1978. Under these sub-headings, the lines used in the films were interpreted, remaining faithful to the original.

3.1 Identity

In the films, the concepts of Muslim, Ottoman and Turk were used interchangeably without any differentiation. Also, the inseparability of especially Turk and Muslim was a striking reflection of Turkish-Islamic synthesis. In some parts, the concept of "Ottoman" was used as well. In the films that were examined in the study, the "Turk" concept was used to refer to the nation and "Muslim/Islam" to the religion, while "Ottoman" was used to refer to the country. However, the films presented all these concepts as interwoven and inseparable parts.

With such expressions as "Heroic Turkish Army", "Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han - The Ottoman Eagle", "Honorable Commander Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han" and "Turks re-write the history with gold letters by changing the map of Europe" used in the film "Fatihin Fedaisi Kara Murat" (1972), the target audience was prepared for a discourse based on Turkish identity. Afterwards, upon what the Voivode of Wallachia said about Turkish slaves ("*Turks and Muslims, your punishment is death. Only if you change your nationality and cherish the idol, I will spare your life.*"), Turkish and Muslim slaves were forced to kiss the cross, which the female character refused to do, saying "*Eşhedü en la ilahe illallah*". The male character did the same. Here, the condition that the Voivode of Wallachia imposed is especially important. This is because one can change his religion, but nationality (in other words, one's race) is determined by birth, so the film holds the concepts of "Turkish identity" and "Muslimhood" to be equal. In such films, the emphasis on *shahada*, or confession of faith, as one of the main values in the construction of identity is worthy of attention. In other words, it aimed to create the perception that if one is a Turk, he is Muslim, or if one is Muslim, he is a Turk. This intertwined situation continues in the following films.

In the film *Kara Murat Fatihin Fermanı* (1973), the main character Kara Murat says, "*I'm a Turk. My name is Kara Murat.*" when asked who he was. That is, he offers his nationality before his name. Even though he was not asked about his ethnic origin, the line aims to create a sense of belonging by making the character tell his ethnic origin in the first place. Similarly, the sense of Turkish identity is created before the sense of self in the collective consciousness.

In another scene in the film, a Christian clergyman says the following to a Greek leader when the leader asks, "*Why don't we ask these Turks to convert to Christianity?*" while they were being slaughtered: "*Will you save their lives when you make them Christian? Do you think these stubborn Turks change their religion?*" and the clergyman responds as follows: "*If we forgave their lives, they would change their religion. The fear of death is stronger than any other feeling.*" Upon this, the Greek leader says: "*You, Turks! If you change your religion and convert to Christianity, I will spare your lives. Do you accept this*

condition?" The Turks who were buried in the ground up to their necks reply in unison: "We never change our religion. We were born as Muslims and will die as Muslims." So, the Greek leader gets angry and says "Stubborn beasts! I will kill you all!" upon which the Turks recited the *shahadah* ("Eşhedü en la ilahe illallah ve Eşhedü enne Muhammeden abduhu ve Resulühü"). Here, the emphasis on the equality of Turkish identity and Muslimhood continues, while Muslimhood is presented as a trait that is gained at birth. Thus, with the perception that "A Turk prefers to die rather than change his religion", Islam is considered to be the fundamental element of Turkish identity, and Muslimhood and Turkish identity are seen as complementary in such question-answer dialogues. In other words, it is underlined that "if one of them is gone, the other is gone".

In the film *Kara Murat: Death Order* (1974), this approach is sustained. In response to the Janissaries who say "You fight as good as a Turk", Kara Murat says: "I'm a Turk and a Muslim - I am Kara Murat", demonstrating once more that the concepts of Turkish identity and Muslimhood are perceived as a single inseparable concept. It is worth noting that the answer given reflects his identity, showing to what extent that person embraced the society to which he belongs. Thus, it is underlined in the film that good fighting or combat skills are associated with Turks. The main character's emphasis on "us" instead of "me" while introducing himself serves as a message to the audience, implying that "us" should come first when introducing one's identity.

A similar discourse appears in the film *Kara Murat vs. Black Knight* (1975). In this film, a group of men who have rescued the daughter of a grand vizier attacked by Byzantine soldiers says the following when the girl asks who they are: "We are Muslim Turks escaping from the tyranny of Carlos". Here, Muslimhood and Turkish identity are highlighted one more time. In the same film, the following dialogue is made between Kara Murat's mother and his twin brother Mehmet:

Mother: "You will perform five-time prayer and pray - prayer cleans out all the evils. Have they made a spell on you? You are Muslim, Kara Murat!"

Mehmet: "I am not Muslim, I am Christian."

Mother: "Christian? Are you out of your mind, Kara Murat?"

...

However, Kara Murat's brother Mehmet says: "I would like to die as a Muslim" before he gives his last breath, upon which Kara Murat recites the *shahadah* ("Eşhedü en la ilahe illallah ve Eşhedü enne Muhammeden abduhu ve resuluhu") and Mehmet gives his last breath with *shahadah* before his brother. Thus, the message that 'A Turk should die

as a Muslim by reciting *shahadah*' presents the concepts of Turkish identity and Muslimhood as complementary.

3.2 Conqueror and Conquest

The number of films based on Ottoman history that began to be made in the 1950s, especially the trend of films about the conquest of Constantinople, reached a peak in the 1970s when Kara Murat series was shown. This was partly because of the war-oriented Turkish foreign policy in the 1950s. This process began when Turkish soldiers were sent to Korea in 1950 and continued with the Turkish-Greek conflict starting in 1954, the increase of terror attacks against Turkish Cypriots, and lastly with the Cyprus Peace Operation launched in 1974.

The Kara Murat series was based on some incidents that happened before the conquest of Constantinople or afterwards. By using "*before the conquest*" and "*after the conquest*" when the films starts or ends, the conquest of Constantinople is portrayed as a turning point. Also, the importance of the conquest for Turkish history and world history, especially for the Islamic world, is supported with several arguments.

In these films, a hadith of Prophet Muhammad with regard to the conquest of Constantinople is given. To mark the conquest of Constantinople, a Friday prayer is held at Hagia Sophia. Thus, the conquest is attributed with religious meaning aimed to support the argument that this phenomenon is actually a result of fate. In the beginning of *Fatih's Guard Kara Murat* the following sentences bring the Islamic dimension of the conquest to the forefront: "*The Prophet Muhammad's prediction came true and a unique victory was gained. With the mercy of God and the help of the Prophet Muhammad, Istanbul was conquered and it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the heart of the Turkish nation. This sacred heart will never stop and will beat forever.*"

The conquest of Constantinople, when the Ottoman Empire reached its height and the country's turning into an empire is highlighted, especially in scenes that show the reign of Fatih the Conqueror, the sultan of the time. This is because the conquest was the end of the Byzantine Empire's thousand-year history. So, Constantinople is conquered several times by the Ottoman Empire; in other words, by Turks or Muslims through films. This situation is expressed with "*The outdated Byzantine Empire of 1000 years has been destroyed*". In the film *Fatih's Guard Kara Murat* this is expressed with "We will remove the corrupted country named Byzantine from the map of world." In *Kara Murat: Death Order*, the line is "*The Byzantine Empire was destroyed and Fatih Sultan Mehmet won a unique victory.*" in the film *Kara Murat: Master of the Seas* shown in 1977. The use of "outdated" for the Byzantine Empire is worth special attention because it means to be behind the times, implying that the Byzantine Empire completed its

historical mission and thus it is a result of fate that it was destroyed with the conquest of Constantinople.

The film aims to keep the time before and after the conquest of Constantinople alive in collective memory. Considering that this was a time when Turkish-Greek conflicts and the Cyprus dispute were on the agenda, opposition to Greeks is sustained through the conquest of Constantinople and Fatih Sultan Mehmet. The relevance of the results of the conquest is expressed by those who are not Turks but Byzantines or Greeks, and thus the size and significance of the conquest is highlighted.

In *Fatih's Guard Kara Murat*, a Byzantine princess says, "Has there remained a country named Byzantine on earth? Constantinople has become a Turkish city!" while another Byzantine princess says, "You are a Turk. You are Kara Murat. You are the guard of Fatih Sultan Mehmet and one of those who have destroyed us!" In *Kara Murat: Titans Clash* (1978), Greek leaders in the Morea says "We, the Greeks, have not forgotten the outrageous Ottoman storm - we felt as if the hell broke loose. The first one broke out in Constantinople and the second in the Morea." With these sentences, the Greeks express the size and significance of the conquest of Constantinople.

3.3 "The Other"

While nations are built, history is generally used as a tool. Based on the effect of the history in creating a collective consciousness, the transmission of the past to the present day is used for determining collective memory, social identity, and expectations about the future. Thus, ideologies are combined with the teaching of history. In parallel to the ideological dimension of the past, a formal approach to history tells how the present status of a mass to which an individual belongs is created and shaped.

Historiography became more important when nation-states first emerged, and was fictionalized with respect to several sensitive points. Thus, history was written in line with the needs of countries. As a result of an understanding that highlights the special characteristics of a nation, looks to the future with confidence based on history, and adopts a particular attitude towards "others" emphasizing unity and solidarity within itself, the nation is confronted with a matter of existence and non-existence. Nations rebuilt their existence through the "others" that they position in a certain place. Positioning oneself through "others" in historiography is also seen in the film industry, especially in *kostüme avantür* films. The image of the Greek that was fictionalized as the "other" in the writing of the history in the early republic period continued to be fictionalized as Byzantine/Greek in the Kara Murat series. The Ottoman attacks made were always based on legitimate cause throughout history. The scenarios of the films are always the same as in the writing of history—innocent Turks, blameless Muslims,

harmless peasants, defenseless old people, women and children always slaughtered by the Byzantines or Greeks. Thus, a legitimate ground for the Ottomans (Turks) to fight is created.

The scenarios are based on revenge for attacks against the Ottomans—in other words, the Turks. The Ottomans/Turks/Muslims who are attacked in the films are always the innocent party. For example, the sentence *“The Byzantine raided Çatalca villages and martyred hundreds of innocent Turks”* is used in the film *Fatih’s Guard Kara Murat*, which shows that Turks are fictionalized as the innocent while the others are the tyrants. Another dimension is the use of “martyrdom” to underline the Muslimhood of those who are killed. As for the other party, it is the Western world (the Byzantines/Greeks) and the Christians. So, an image is created of Westerners slaughtering Muslim Turks with several attacks, holding them captive and torturing them in jails, thus demonstrating savagery and violence. However, the Turks take revenge for this tyranny. Against the cruelty of the Voivode in the film *Fatih’s Guard Kara Murat*, Hamza Pasha says *“You, craven Voivode! The Turks would never let you get away with what you did”*, showing his assurance that Turks would take his revenge one day if he is killed. Thus, it is implied that Turks are innocent and will have revenge for the atrocities to which they are subject.

Also in this film, a Turkish family held captive by the Voivode of Wallachia refuses to convert to Christianity and they are threatened with death. The daughter, who sees her parents tortured and killed, is raised in the palace of the Voivode. However, this little girl, who remained conscious of her Turkish identity despite being raised in a Byzantine palace, hopes to revenge for the death of her parents. Thus, this girl, named Zeynep (later addressed as Angelica) says the following while killing the queen (the wife of the Voivode): *“This is for my mother and father’s life; this is for the innocent Turkish people you killed...”* Similarly, the Voivode holds Kara Murat captive and orders him to cut his elder brother’s arm and leg. When Kara Murat refuses to do it, his brother says: *“If we both die, who will take revenge?. He also reminds Kara Murat “not to forget about the revenge”* after his arm and leg are cut, which demonstrates the revenge-oriented approach in the film. Most importantly, the rightness of this approach is supported with *“He finally got the punishment he deserved.”* that a character named “Mihal”, who is not a Turk or Muslim, used for the Voivode.

In *Kara Murat: The Order of Fatih the Conqueror* (1973), the soldiers of the Byzantine Empire raid Turkish villages and slaughter innocent Turks. During these killings, Kara Murat’s mother also dies. After Kara Murat hears it, he buries his mother according to Islamic traditions and then begs God: *“God, I beg you not to take my life before I take revenge for the murder of my mother - I swear I will avenge for you, mother!”* As

expected, he shoots arrows in the end of the film while muttering these sentences: *"This arrow is for my mother; this one is for Kabasakal; this one is for Mihal and this one is for all the Muslims you killed..."* As for the revenge dimension on the part of the Byzantines, they say *"Whatever we do to these Muslims is never enough. Our grudge will never end and we will continue to take revenge until there is no Turk left on earth."* Thus, the film aims to create a sense of unity and solidarity among masses of people through its story.

In *Kara Murat vs. the Black Knight* (1975), a Byzantine prince named Carlos, whose arm is amputated by a Janissary in a war with the Ottoman Empire, says the following in order to take his revenge: *"I will cut a thousand arms in return for one. I will kill a thousand Muslims in return for a Christian. I will fight until no Ottoman is left on earth and will kill them all."* Here, it is seen that the concepts of Ottoman and Muslim are given as equal besides the idea of revenge. Similarly, a Byzantine prince has the Janissary who amputated his arm killed and kidnaps one of his sons. Also, he raises the twin brother of Kara Murat, named Mehmet, as a Christian named Mark and tells him: *"You are going to be a sword of revenge for Christianity and shed Muslim blood. You are our revenge sword for Christianity."* On the Turkish-Muslim side, Kara Murat is raised to take revenge for the murder of his mother using words like *"The flame of vengeance in you should never die, Kara Murat! You should be strong enough to take revenge for your parents when the time comes."*

In *Kara Murat: Master of the Seas* (1977), the person known as "Dark Pirate" says the following while torturing the Turks: *"Look Maria! I take revenge for the murder of your father whom the Turks slaughtered. I make them pay for my arm and this war will continue until no Turk is left on earth. I will bury all Turks in sand."* Here, the message is that Turks should stand in unity and solidarity, and that there have always been attempts to destroy the Turks throughout history.

3.4 "Us"

During the times when Turkish national identity was being built, the answer to the question *"How should an ideal Turk be?"* is sought in films. The answers imply that the characteristics attributed to Turks cannot be found in other nations. Thus, the image of an ideal Turk in the society, what a Turk should or should not do, are relayed through films.

In *Fatih's Guard Kara Murat* (1972), a character named "Mihal" who is not a Turk/Muslim asks Kara Murat who saves him from death: *"You look like a brave man, are you a Turk?"* Similarly, Papesku, the executioner of the Voivode of Wallachia, says *"I learned bravery and daring from you"* to Kara Murat in the same film, which demonstrates that the concepts of bravery and daredevilry are associated with Turks. Statements like

"If the enemy is as strong as a Turkish leader, everybody kneels before him" or *"A Turk would never break his promise"* used in the film by the then prime minister of the Byzantine Empire demonstrate the strength of Turks and show them as men of their word.

In *Kara Murat: Death Order* (1974), two Ottoman Janissaries say the following to Kara Murat after a combat between the Byzantine soldiers and Kara Murat: *"You fight as good as a Turk"*, which implies that *"being good at fighting"* is a characteristic associated with Turks in the film. In the same film, the following is said to two Janissaries who are being held captive: *"I give you one last chance. If you tell me who Kara Murat is, I spare your lives and let you go and also give you a thousand pieces of gold as a reward"*, to which the Janissaries respond: *"We don't care about the gold. We do not give anyone away. We prefer to die bravely rather than living like a dog."* This implies that Turks have a brave character and they never betray one another, whatever the circumstances. In *Kara Murat vs. the Black Knight* (1975), Kara Murat is accused of being a liar, to which he says *"I never lie, I am Kara Murat"*. So, it is underlined that a Turk never lies as shown by Kara Murat, an exemplary Turk.

In *Kara Murat: Master of the Seas* (1977), an Ottoman grand vizier says *"An Ottoman would never run away from war"* during a pirate attack on the Ottoman fleet. This underlines the martial identity associated with Turks, with the interchangeable use of the concepts of Ottoman/Muslim/Turk in the films. In *Kara Murat: Titans Clash*, the grand vizier is cast an aspersion. Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the Sultan of the time, believes in this aspersion and decides to punish the grand vizier. Upon this, Kara Murat, whose characteristics are well-known already due to previous films in the series and who is known to be a Turk and Muslim, tells Fatih Sultan Mehmet that he is making a mistake. The grand vizier intervenes in this situation so that no harm is done to Kara Murat, but Kara Murat says: *"Forgive me, but I cannot stand injustice and I object to it even if it is the Sultan who makes it."* Thus, standing against injustice is added to the characteristics of Turks as well as bravery, daredevilry, courage, being true to one's word, and not lying. In this opposition, the authority and position of the other party does not matter. What matters is to tell what you know to be true.

While the consciousness of 'us' is meant to be relayed by films, Ottoman anthems are also utilized. As is known, national anthems shaped according to the characteristics of a nation and written in order to symbolize the unity and solidarity of a nation, emerging as a culture of empire. However, they turned into a symbol of independence as used by nationalist movements that started in the following years, especially after the nineteenth century. National anthems help nations to remember their past and to protect their values to this day and transfer them to the future. Within this frame, national anthems are symbols that bring people who live on the same piece of land

together around common values and thus bring out a kind of emotional density (Kocaman, 1939).

As anthems are verbal and are sung in a certain tone, they are easy to memorize. The anthems used in Kara Murat series are the national anthems belonging to the era of the Ottoman Empire. One of them is "Old Army March" and another is "Mehter Marşı". These anthems that play at least once in each film arouse a feeling of enthusiasm and a national passion in the viewer with the support of the musical instruments used while the anthem is sung, as well as the visuals in the background. The effect of these anthems in films strengthens the collective consciousness even more when considered in terms of mass psychology.

4. Conclusion

Considering that, audio-visual materials are more effective in creating a collective consciousness than written materials, films with audiovisual elements become more important. After 1950, when a transformation was made in the film industry as in every area in Turkey, "*kostüme avantür*" films emerged as a new genre in Turkish cinema. In these films where the characters are adapted from comic strips (the reality of which is controversial), it is seen that there was a shift from a Turkish history "thesis" to a Turkish-Islamic "synthesis" in parallel to internal and external political developments in the 1970s. In this regard, the Kara Murat series is worth attention. This is because aimed to create an individual and collective consciousness in the audience through beginnings based on revenge, underlining the conquest in each film with "Before the Conquest of Constantinople" or "After the Conquest of Constantinople", keeping the memories of the conquest alive, playing different anthems full of emotional intensity, and bringing the Turkish sense of identity forward with such discourses relevant to Turkish, Muslim and Ottoman identities.

Based on the data obtained in the study, it can be said that this type of film is fictionalized with the aim of building a national identity. In this case, the desired reality is prioritized rather than the historical reality. Hence, the message that this film series shown between 1972-1978 aimed to give addresses the feelings of the society; however, this type of film is generally simplified so the society can better understand and perceive their message. The masses are in fact given an informal education without realizing it. Since the target audience does not have the academic competence to question the reality of the discourses used in the films, they take what is given as it is. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the government did not make any intervention in such

films through censorship. This situation demonstrates that the government directly or indirectly supported the building of an identity through historical *kostüme avantür* films.

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Eray Alaca
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