

Anesthetic Memory Loss: Military Coups as a Visual Commodity

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Abstract

The 1980 military coup in Turkey was the manifestation of physical coercion of the military-state, repressing and subjugating the members of society through violence, arrests, tortures and death penalties. The effects of this traumatic event led to a silenced society and forms of collective avoidance of expressing the memories of the coup, creating 'secrecy' for the post-1980 period. In the year 2004, however, a series of 'coup films' emerged, for the first time, giving a visual expression to this key event. My thesis investigates the mechanisms which determined the after-coup period, and examines its current mnemonic representation within the films. The study, based on content analysis of five films 'Vizontele Tuuba' (2004), 'Babam ve Oglum' (My Father and Son, 2006), 'Beynelmilel' (International, 2006), 'Eve Donus' (Return to Home, 2007) and 'Zincirbozan' (2007), inquires into the representations of mechanisms of silence/secrecy, repression and ideology which have also negatively affected the expression and formation of collective memory. While the films as significantly different narratives do not merge into a uniform collective memory scheme, this study also opens up further questions of commerciality of the coup films within the present Turkish context, which in the end turns the visualization of traumatic memory into commodities of enjoyment for wider audiences.

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Introduction

The September 12, 1980 *coup d'Etat* of Turkey was the manifestation of vertical state dominance through physical coercion of the militia. The coup created huge spectacles of death penalties, surveillance, imprisonment and torture that accelerated the fear, subjugation and silence. After the 1980 military attack in Turkey, the collective meanings of the conceptions of the coup, violence, torture, trauma and repression became a 'secrecy' at the individual level, and led to forms of collective avoidance of expression through any kind of visual or written media. By the year 2004, however, twenty four years later, a series of films about the coup were finally giving the expression to the trauma of the event and attempting to explicate the catastrophic experience. Thus, the recent history of Turkey has remained unexpressed until a sudden visual outflow of the coup movies, generating the question of the relationship between the repression of the military-state, formation of the collective memory and the representational accounts of this traumatic experience.

This paper will explore how it becomes possible to represent the 1980 military coup in Turkish cinema and media after twenty four years of silence. Although few movies criticizing the junta government and the coup were being produced during the 1980s and 1990s, they were either censored or appealed to a very small community of intellectuals. Yet, films about the 1980 coup now appear as popular, mass products which have been watched by millions of people. And, they appear as the first historical occurrence of a consistent and visible expression about this key event, interrupting the dominance of silence. While the emergence of coup films could be explained with the relative decrease in the visibility of the symbolic/physical violence

of the authoritarian state, the investigation will rather be focused on the contents of the films which will give the accounts of the relationship between the ‘secrecy’ of the past and its ‘revelation’ in the present.

In the first chapter, to inquire into the accounts of silencing mechanisms of the power, I will use the Simmelian (1906) theory of ‘secrecy’ which gives the relationship between repression and ideology. It will also depict how the ‘secrecy’ operates as a medium leading Turkish society to isolation through the concealment of a traumatic memory. The following section of social memory debate focuses on the difference between collective and collected memory that has been affected by the mechanisms of secrecy/silence and repression. This path will enable the inquiry to discuss the mnemonic accounts of the coup films which appear as prominently different representations of the trauma. In order to understand this divergence, and sequential occurrence of the films, the examination of ‘culture industry’ theory (Adorno and Horkheimer: 1992) will provide this study, also to pursue the commercial strategies that have turned these mnemonic films into mass commodities, rather than ultimate forms of collective memory.

Regarding this puzzle, throughout the analysis chapter, the examination of the films will be predicated upon the divergences and commonalities within which this key event is addressed and expressed. While accounting for the same traumatic event, each visual product appears to have dramatically different narratives, stylistic approaches and genres, that is, different visualization strategies. Although not being very dominant, some similarities, such as intrusion of dreams; and common patterns, such as nostalgia, are also disseminated within the visuals of the films. Thus,

methodologically, I will use the content analysis not only to explore but also to deconstruct and interpret the mnemonic visuals, divergent representations and common motifs that give accounts of the trauma, repression and silence of the past and audience-attracting cues of the present.

By examining the military coup as an object of remembrance and as a symbol of repression, this study of coup films proposes to investigate the relationship between visual products and mechanisms of silence/secrecy, repression and ideology of the post-1980s period. In this thesis, these visual items will be inquired in connection with the symbolization of social, political and economic mechanisms, which in the end do not trigger any commemorative reactions or discussions at this moment. While this current problematic of the silence, which is significantly different from the silence that of the 1980s and 1990s, generates the question of the commoditization of the ‘art’, this process will also be explored in relation to the discussion of how the social memory fails to form a ‘collectiveness’ in contemporary Turkish context.

Chapter 1- Theoretical Framework

The 1980 military coup through the violence that gave it its catastrophic character was a key moment in contemporary Turkish history. Following the coup, there has been no remarkable expression either in visual or written form, because of the authoritarian power's silencing effect on society. The series of films studied in this thesis were the first significant instance in which a wide audience was exposed to public representations of the traumatic memory. The unique event of the emergence of this sequence of the coup films presents a very good phenomenon for the investigation of the mechanisms which have been ignored in recent Turkish history.

After a brief presentation of these historical aspects, this chapter presents three theoretical approaches which I later use to understand and explain the mechanisms within which those visual representations emerge and relate to each other. I use the Simmelian theory of secrecy/power to apprehend how the silence takes place as a dominant motive in setting up the relationship between authority and repressed society after the 1980s. To give the accounts of silence in terms of its effects on social memory, I draw upon the collective memory debate in the recent subfield of memory studies. Besides, to construe the relationship between the silence/memory and the current visualization of it in commodity form, I refer to the Frankfurt School's 'culture industry' theory. In this thesis, these three main conceptual sources complement each other very well since they provide the critical grounds to the linked patterns of power and society, repression and ideology occupying the past and giving a form to the present accounts of Turkish context.

1. I 1980 Attack: The Art of Silence

1. I a) Isolation

The uniqueness of Turkish experience of the military interventions is not only because of its sequential occurrences¹, but also because of its effect of leading the society towards isolation. If “the history of Turkey is an isolation history” (Belge: 2002, p.21), the September 12, 1980 military attack appears as the most effective incident of this insulation process which further isolated, not only the members of the society from each other, but also from their own history² and social memory. There has been a high pressure from political power hitherto, generally through censorship and legal punishments, limiting the possibility of expressing, and creating the grounds for ‘common’ memory. Hence, within this process, the very phenomenon of isolation not only from recent historical/political accounts but also the isolation in between ‘attacked’ and non-communicated individuals was an inevitable consequence.

When the outcome of the coup is taken into consideration, the ‘picture of isolation’ can be illustrated as: 650.000 detainees had been tortured severely and 183 of them had died during the torture, 48 people were given death penalty, hundreds of people were killed during the clashes between the police and people, 30.000 workers were laid off, 14.000 people were expatriated and another 30.000 people had escaped

¹ If we do not take the foundation of the Turkish Republic as a military attack, in modern Turkish history three coups took place consecutively in three decades: first in 1960, second in 1971, and last in 1980 which has been accepted as the most violent military attack throughout Turkish history (Kongar:1993). This series of the coups also crystallized the notion of a very low level of civil societal integration with horizontal ties, resulting in the centrality of the military power and culture (Heper: 1988, Karpat: 1988).

² Official Turkish history taught in the schools in Turkey only concerns the history of Ottoman Empire and ends around the foundation of Turkish Republic, that is, the 1920s. No articulation is made about the coups, specifically about the 1980 coup and after, although some references to general historical events until the 1980s can be found.

abroad as refugees. At the same time all political parties and the parliament were closed, the political leaders were exiled and all associations and labor unions were banned³.

In this context, the process of ‘isolation’ stemming from the power, not only threatened, repressed and traumatized individuals but also mutilated their faculties of expression, disrupted democratic means of communication and suppressed the transference of experience to the coming generation (Kongar: 1993). I argue that this situation either engenders a silent society isolated in its silence, retaining specifically the happenings of the catastrophic 1980 coup as ‘secrecy’; or through this process, this secret negatively affects the means for forming a collective memory and remembrance.

1. I b) Simmel’s Theory of Secrecy

Under these circumstances, I argue that the 1980 military attack and after, has turned out to be a ‘secrecy’ which has been imbued with violence/trauma, and constructed with repression mechanisms stemming either from state or individuals. The Simmelian theory of ‘secrecy’ (1906) provides the accounts to apprehend how the silence was achieved through the relationship between authoritarian power and the society subordinated to it. Simmel discusses the effects of secrecy on community formation and transformation. He shows how the forms of repression can lead the social groups and societies to isolation and into the formation of secret communities. Therefore, I utilize and delineate the Simmel’s concept of secrecy/power, to elaborate

³ I have taken the information from the website of mine workers union:
http://www.devmadensen.org/duyuru/2004_09_10.html

on the issue of silence after the 1980 coup. This theory is also very useful in terms of explicating the patterns of this communal silence which has been achieved by the lack of expression and communication, mainly through political, social and psychological repression. This examination further depicts that, the ‘secrecy’ is not only a short-term process but is a powerful factor which effects and alters the formation and expression of the society’s collective memory as a constant process.

The ‘secrecy’ is defined as “the ultimate sociological form for the regulation of the flow and distribution of information... It can control the very essence of social relations through manipulations of the ratio of knowledge to ignorance.” (Hazelrigg: 1969, p.324). Although Simmel (1906) stated that the secrecy is more about the protection of ideas, knowledge or objects which people attach positive meanings, I propose that in the Turkish case, the secrecy related to the (repressed) knowledge and memory which do involve negative and traumatic significance. My argument is that, the silencing effect of the state through political repression leads to the very socio-psychological repression of the memory of the individuals. Thus the regulation of the flow and distribution of information -here, specifically first by the state then by the society- operates at the traumatic level. And, the immediacy of silence brings about the idea of secrecy, that of keeping the traumatic experience enclosed, and constructing the social relations on the basis of the ‘secrecy’; ‘acting’ in everyday life as if the event had not ever happened with the help of forgetting, and repressing and not transferring it to the coming generations.

The relationship between the authoritarian regime and secrecy is also well articulated in Simmel’s work of secret and secret societies. He proposes that if the political

oppression and totalitarian rule in the society is greater, then in turn, the secrecy turns out to be greater as well. While this process leads to centralization of authority, the secrecy itself becomes a regulatory mechanism. Simmel also states that, the commitment to the secrecy is peculiar to the societies which have tendency towards isolation and are in the stage of transition. While the attack of the military is discussed as an isolation case above, and the period after the 1980 military coup is also accepted as a “transition period” from military state to some extend civilian governance (Kongar:1993). Herein, Simmelian suggestion seems to be pretty much parallel with the Turkish case. Yet, this formulation brings about the investigation on the issue of the relationship between control and ideology.

If the ‘secrecy’ is intentional and planned, as in the Turkish case, it asserts power and is related to the very idea of control (Hazelrigg: 1969). In this case, the repressive military-state ideology appears as the primary locus for the intentional control of the society and its mnemonic knowledge together. This is achieved either by the secret society of the Turkish army which is a powerful, isolated and mysterious organization, or by the secret society of Turkey which ‘forgets’, keep silent in amnesia and subordinate to the power. Thus the relationship between silence and ideology also might help in understanding the condition of secrecy within the late history of Turkey, constituted either by the military-state or society simultaneously.

Ideology, as Althusser defines is the "system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (1994, p.120). Following this path, I argue that, the condition of ideology is the dominance of the repression, and repressed ideas and representations in the late history of Turkey. And the repressed which has

been silenced and controlled at the same time, is the fundamental vein of the secrecy. While secrecy is constituted through the silence of forgetting, not reproducing and not communicating about the catastrophic experience, the ‘real’ condition becomes the secret, the process of concealment of the trauma, and thus the silence itself.

1. I c) Marxist and Psychoanalytic Contributions to the Question of Repression

In the Turkish context, the repression either is achieved through repressive state apparatuses –for example, the army- which functions by violence, or is completed by the subjects’ subordination to it. While this process is constitutive of the continuation of this silence, it is also about the internalization of repressive ideology. If “Althusser’s ideology is analogous to ‘lived experience’”, then, “insofar as its inversion of personal and material causes through (self-)representations is what constitutes individuals as (obedient, freely subjected) subjects” (Bellamy:1993, p.28). Here, I suggest that the secrecy which has been made possible, on the one hand, by the control/repression of the military-state through the attacks, arrests, deadly-tortures, interrogations and censorship and so on, is also manifested through self-representations. For, Turkish society has internalized the oppression as forgetting, and repressed their “lived” past experiences in order to provide the continuation of the silence, through the silence of obedient, subjected subjects.

On the other hand, this following suggestion can be useful to deepen the issue of repression in relation to the idea of ‘lived experience’. The phenomenon of non-speakability of the coup period thus far, can also be taken into consideration as the concealment of the ‘lived experience’ by forgetting and repressing. Thus, the living

experience becomes an imaginary world, for the ‘real’ –lived experience, the memory- has already been repressed. We can argue that, twofold repression at the state and societal level functions as the ideology, which is “the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” (Althusser:1994, p.123). While the imaginary becomes the real, the condition of existence has already been determined by the repression of the real, either by the state or society. Therefore, the forgetting in Turkish case becomes the real, that is, the ultimate semblance and experience of repression.

Lastly, the notion of ‘lived experience’ also necessitates the examination of repression within the psychoanalytical grounds. For, it appears that there is a strong relationship between the political and psychic repression. The repression is defined by the psychoanalytic school as a necessary condition to avoid unpleasures for the instinct’s attainments of pleasure (Freud: 1995). Freud stated that, “Repression is not a defense mechanism which is present from the beginning, and that it cannot arise until a sharp cleavage has occurred between conscious and unconscious mental activity –the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious” (p.560). Therefore I state that repressive mechanism operates also at the very individual level, and pushes the lived experience of trauma to the unconscious, and what remains becomes the ‘real’ and the new ‘living experience’: the experience which ‘forgets’ the unpleasure, that is, the trauma.

Following these arguments, I propose that the recent visual productions of the coup period, are the reified entities of repression that of traumatic experience of individuals. Since, they came up after a relatively long period of time; as the ‘return

of the repressed', indicating that there is a certain level of avoidance of the unpleasure and its current appearance in visual domains. And they are the products of repression, because this avoidance-silence period kept the painful memory away. By keeping it away, and keeping in silence, the form of knowledge/memory could be regulated through ideology, that is, by the occupancy of the symbolic culture itself (Tura: 1995:1996, Lacan: 1998), which is inefficient in terms of the material and conceptual spaces of collective memory, in the Turkish context.

Consequently, it can be stated that, the individual repression from psychoanalytical point of view, operates in a similar way as ideology does, -which is the sum of repressive and ideological apparatuses of state including physical (i.e. army) or non-physical means of violence (i.e. censorship) (Althusser:1994)-. Therefore, this theoretical framework enables us to state for the Turkish case that -the return of the repressed coup films- are the products of twofold repression; and are the visualities which display different individual memories, since the ideology's oppressive apparatus does not lead to form collective and common means of expression.

1. II Coup Films: The Art of Memory

The very first movies in the late Ottoman period were produced by one of the institution of the army, named Central Army Cinema Department⁴ in 1915 (Maktav: 2006). This institution was the pioneer in terms of the film production and encouragement of it. Furthermore it had been the location where the future cinema professionals were being educated. However, paradoxically enough, the same military

⁴ Hilmi Maktav (2006) stated that although the CACD was founded to shoot propaganda films for the army in 1915, it provided the basic facilities for the improvement of Turkish cinema.

organization, in the 1980s not only censored 197 films which were the majority of the number of films produced within the small film industry but also banned the projection of them. While some of the movies⁵ included the issue of the coup directly or indirectly, regardless of the plot, the censorship appeared as one of the main coercive mechanisms over the control of knowledge/memory production. Either in Simmel's (1906) or Althusser's (1994) work, censorship appears as one of the preventive media peculiar to the centralized authority in a given country, since the center is responsible for the determination of what can be expressed in political, social, cultural or artistic domains.

Following these framework, the query in this chapter, is on how the social memory and the visualization of traumatic memory through films has been affected within the given accounts of silence, secrecy and repression. To find out the relationship between the recent pasts' 'secrecy' and today's visual representation of traumatic memory, I specifically examine the difference between collective and collected memory (Halbwachs: 1992, Kansteiner: 2002, Kirmayer: 1996, Nora: 1989) to grasp this very structure within which the sudden emergence of the coup movies can be understood. The Turkish case appears to be much closer to the 'collected memory' theory, since the historical and political mechanism of 'secrecy' and social and psychological repressive mechanisms of ideology inhibits the possibility of common, collective memory formation. This situation also manifests itself recently with the different representations of the coup, diverging dramatically within each movie. It is

⁵ According to Murat Belge (2002), 1980 coup films produced during the 1980s can be listed as: 1) *Öç* (Revenge, Mesut Uçakan, 1984), 2) *Ses* (The Sound, Zeki Ökten, 1986), 3) *Sen Türkülerini Söyle* (You Sing Your Ballads, Şerif Gören, 1986), 4) *Prinses* (Princess, Sinan Çetin, 1986), 5) *Sis* (The Fog, Zülfü Livaneli 1989), 6) *Uçurtmayı Vurmasınlar* (Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite, Tunç Başaran, 1989), 7) *Baharın Bittiği Yer* (The End of the Spring, Ziya Öztan, 1989).

also pretty much linked to repression and ideology, since the movies emerge for the first time as a series after a long period, and in divergence of representations.

This investigation is also important in the sense that it will examine the notorious characteristics of Turkish society which have been known as its lack of memory, amnesic and forgetful makeup and weak collective memory. This can be well exemplified with the very poor presence of mnemonic material culture in Turkey, namely the *lieux de mémoires* (Nora: 1989), in the forms of museums, monuments, libraries, archives or festivals which are the mandatory spaces to form the collective memory. This ‘lack’ also influences the conceptual formation of collective memory. Besides, if “Turkish society has always been criticized due to the fact that it forgets not only its general but traumatic past” (Dogruoz: 2007, p.68), this is also valid for the visual culture of Turkey within which the social memory has been disregarded by the visual-culture industry players, although recently very few films⁶ have been released including traumatic events of Turkish history.

The examination of the social memory unfolds how ‘art of memory’ operates, and how the ‘collective’ and ‘collected’ social remembrance happens at the theoretical grounds. Concurrently, I scrutinize the Turkish case, either to look at the effect of the silence to the collective memory hitherto, or to find out the accounts of the collectiveness and the collectedness of the present visualization of a traumatic past. Before the decipherment of the coup movies, namely ‘Vizontele Tuuba’ (2004, Yılmaz Erdogan), ‘Babam ve Oglum’ (My Father and Son, 2006, Cagan Irmak), Eve Donus (Return to Home, 2006, Omer Ugur), ‘Beynelmilel’ (International, 2007, Sirri

⁶ For example Gunese Yolculuk (Journey to the Sun, Yesim Ustaoglu, 1999) focuses on the current “Kurdish issue”, and Salkim Hanimin Taneleri (Mrs. Salkim’s Diamonds, Tomris Giritlioglu, 1999) is based on the story of the disappropriated Armenian people of the 1940s.

Sureyya Onder and Muharrem Gulmez) and ‘Zincirbozan’ (2007, Atıl Inanç); it is very important to investigate the characteristics of the social memory in the Turkish context, in order to grasp the very structure of what the movies represent, in what conditions they emerge and how this phenomenon happens as the outcome and persisting effects of the 1980 military coup on individual and social memory.

1. II a) Collective Memory

Collective memory, for Halbwachs (1992) is shared representations of the past and is different from individual memory in the sense that it is passed through the generations and re-constructed within common frames as a continuous process. He says “there exist a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that is capable of the act of recollection”(p.38). Following this suggestion, it can be said that the possibility of the collective remembrance after twenty four years of silence in Turkish case, lies on those movies’ extent to the creation and negotiation of a common, collective and shared mnemonic representations.

Halbwachs (1992) also suggests that individual memories gradually merge into stereotypical images that give form to collective memory. He contends that this process occurs mainly through repetition. In each repetition the differences do eventually disappear. Thus with repetition, the past experience evolves into an idealized imago which is reduction of particular individual memories to form an overarching common memory. He calls this as the ‘*cadres sociaux*’, the social frameworks. With these conceptual schemes, the individual memories conform and

form a collective memory through the social and cultural frames, molding a well structured and stable memory (Gedi and Elam: 1996). Although Halbwachs does not explain how collective memories are formed, he always refers to the important role of social processes and groups.

Halbwachs' suggestion appears to be against Freudian understanding of memory which is located within the unconscious of the individual rather than the 'conscious' of the community. For Freud (1995), remembering is a way of resurrecting, reimagining, reconstructing the past individually. However, Halbwachs contended that the individual memories are volatile, for they are elusive in nature and cannot be documented (Hutton: 1993). Herein, Halbwachsian understanding of individual memory and social frameworks seems not to correspond to the Turkish context. Firstly, it is because the coup movies appear to be the individual representations – having visuals of unconscious, for example, in the forms of dreams-. Secondly, the transition of the common memory through generations has not been achieved (Kongar: 1993). Thus, Freudian accounts of reconstructing the past, which leads us to discussion of 'collected memory' at individual level, -not necessarily as a process apart from the influence of society- do fit better to the Turkish context.

Following the notion of the *cadres sociaux*, within social memory literature, similarly, the collective memory is explained in its characteristic of common and shared structure. For example Pierre Nora (1989) introduced the idea of the *lieux de mémoires* as the ultimate embodiments of memorial consciousness. According to his suggestions, the society becomes deeply absorbed in its memory, through “producing, manifesting, establishing, constructing, decreeing and maintaining” (p.12) its

commemorative past. These *lieux de mémoires* are constituted for example with museums, archives, festivals, and monuments, as it can also be constituted with symbolic and imaginary works, such as films. And I argue that, including the similar notion of the *cadres sociaux* of Halwachs', it is very unlikely that, the *lieux de mémoires* theory is valid for the Turkish society. Since the Turkish society is highly inefficient in material mnemonics which delineates its character of amnesia. For example, poor presence of monuments in public space, absence of official archives (Ahiska: 2005), and scant amount of museums and festivals (Klaic: 2006), also determines the visualization and possibility of collective memory in Turkey, which also shows the ignored and repressed accounts of the past.

In parallel with the point of lack of material/symbolic sites and frames of collective memory, the query of Turkish case might be on the possibility of collectiveness of 'traumatic memory'. Pursuing Halwachs' (1992) and Nora's (1989) formulations, Kirmayer (1996) represents the notion of '*landscapes of memory*' which is the collectivization in memory that applies to the common frames of sharing the patterns of a traumatic past. In this suggestion, "trauma shared by a whole community creates a potential public space for retelling. If a community agrees events occurred... then collective memory survives and individual memory can find a place within that landscape" (Kirmayer, p. 190). For instance, according to Kirmayer, holocaust survivors' narratives of their traumatic memory could be seen as a *landscape*, for, the coherence, presentation and the retelling of the event can dwell within the same ground that is agreed among the members of society. Yet, since this notion appropriates Halwachs' conceptualization and applies it to the trauma, it seems very

unlikely to be the case for Turkey. For it requires the same processes and frameworks to develop a common collectivity, even at traumatic grounds.

As the trauma, in psychoanalytic accounts, is a type of an intense event which might have long-lasting negative effects that a person can not respond adequately to it (Laplanche: 1967), Kirmayer also suggests that sometimes trauma can be so intensely painful that they may be “warded off over long periods of time” (p.79). He says that the fear of looking at traumatic memories keeps them repressed and ignored. Besides, they can also be repressed since they “constitute a threat to current social and political arrangements”(p.192). Therefore, the traumatic memories can also be repressed and escape from creating *landscapes*. Here, I argue that in Turkish case, as *cadres sociaux* and *lieux de mémoires* are highly inefficient, *landscapes of memory* have also not been formed, though the films might initiate a process of remembering. Here, it can be helpful to decipher the notion of ‘collected memory’ in order to understand how collectivity has not been achieved, although there is an intrusion of the visualization of trauma to a certain extent.

1. II b) Collected Memory

James Young (1993) introduces the notion of ‘collected memory’ that differentiates itself from ‘collective memory’ in the sense that memory can be fragmented, experienced and expressed individually, not necessarily creating a common social negotiation over the mnemonic structure of remembrance. For Kansteiner, “a collected memory is an aggregate of individual memories” (2002, p.186). Following this path, it can also be proposed that the coup films happen to be the aggregate of

individual memories, since the films do not share common and concentrated representations, genres and symbolic structures. Yet, it can never be purely individual, for the individual memory is shaped and influenced by the experience of community. The expression and manifestation of memory differs, for the common collective memory has not yet been achieved. Kansteiner's statement that of "the individual memory cannot be conceptualized and studied without recourse to its social context"(p.185) depicts that individual memories exist but their reference to social context always appears as the main building structure, not necessarily cohering but rather accumulating.

In Halbwachs' accounts, as 'individual memory' does not exist, the only real memory appears to be the 'collective memory'. If collective memory means "collecting various blurred impressions /pictures from various resources and molding them into a well structured and stable memory" (Gedi and Elam: 1996, p.37), for Kansteiner this pattern of collective memory absorbing individual memories reduces the quality of their real experience. He says, "the memory does not retain that quality if they become successful collective memories"(p.187). While this collectivization process involves the repression of individual distinctions, for Kansteiner, it is not very helpful to refer to psychoanalysis, but it is more useful to think repression in social and political terms. Thence, collected memories, as being the individual representations of historically and socially determined remembrances or forgetting (Connerton:1989), can still be seen as having the clues of real traumatic events which have not been fully recruited through the dominance of collective, stable and 'standardizing' memory. However, I would propose that to look at the coup films as aggregates and individual representations of social memory, namely as collected memories, might help in

understanding the phenomenon both in social/political and psychoanalytic terms of trauma and repression.

Aggregation of individual memories which forms a 'collected memory' rather than 'collective memory' is also about the distinct way of restructuration and articulation of the experiences. Kirmayer (1996) shows how the mnemonic expression can be a matter of arbitrary and individual choice. He says, "Memories may be actively suppressed by efforts to concentrate on alternatives, refusal to speak about them and flat denials (to self or others) that they occurred." (p.180). Hence, it can be said that the recalling process of the events depends on how the trauma is represented. Thus "the form of narrative may also influence what can or can not be recalled" (Kirmayer, p.181). Therefore, it is very likely that the different representations within different movies of the coup refer to different remembering schemes, moving away from the possibility of common 'collectivity' of memory.

Following this path, it can also be said that, "what is remembered about the past depends on the way it is represented, which has more to do with the present power of groups to fashion its image" (Foucault, quoted in Hutton: 1993, p.6). Thus it can first be said that, the relationship between the repressed society and repressed memory appears to be determined by the 'power' -which reminds Althusserian notion of ideology- that designates the scope and limits of articulation and representation of the past. For the authoritarian power has been able to break the possibility of the transmission and expression of the common knowledge and memory among the traumatized individuals. Second, this process has been furthered with the different strategies of the culture industry whose power narrates the past in different

representations which diverges from constructing a commonality and breaking the silence in visual commodity form.

Lastly, since the ‘collective memory’ of silence and secrecy can be a bizarre hypothesis, because of its absence symbolically or materially; and, since there are more or less individual representations of the past, the theory of ‘collected memory’ with the aggregated memories, does fit well to the Turkish case. However, since this process is not apart from *ideology*, I also propose that those different representations and the failure of constructing a commonality, is about the commodification process of the ‘culture industry’, within which the ‘aura’ and the meaning of the artwork are taken away and exchanged with commercial strategies for making profits. Thus, in this process, the remembering is also exchanged with entertainment, while the meaning of the ‘secrecy’ of the 1980s and 1990s is exchanged with the ‘secrecy’ of the commodity/fetish of the 2000s.

1. III The Coup within the Culture Industry

To explore how the visualization of the ‘secrecy’ after the 1980s has become possible in the very conditions of the 2000s, the theoretical approach of ‘culture industry’ (Adorno & Horkheimer: 1992, Adorno:1993) provides me with the analytic grounds to scrutinize how the memory of the coup emerged as a ‘lucrative subject’, since coup movies still continue to be produced. Herein, I argue that, not only the continuity of the production of films each year after 2004, but also the differences of the representations of the coup –diverging from the formation of common memory-, are very much tied to the commercial strategies within the culture industry which

standardizes content of the art work to entertain a mass audience. Moreover, I suggest that, the ‘secret’ of the past, has been superseded by the ‘secret’ of the commodity which makes it attractive to be consumed. Thus, this basic problematic eradicates the possibility of the formation of ‘collective memory’ through visual expressions.

I propose that the different strategies, like the use of love stories and conspiracy, are very much tied to consumption idea which can not trigger the remembering and encountering process of the past but promise ephemeral enjoyment of consumption (the analysis of the movies will illustrate this picture in detail). Thus, in this process, these visualities emerge as the ‘fetish’ which both offers the past’s ‘secrecy’ in different semblances and conveys its own fascinating ‘secrecy’ attracting millions of people to the theaters. Here, the creation of common grounds of mnemonics, collective discussion or a reconsideration of the violence of the past seems to be far from recent Turkish agenda. Therefore, I suggest that these divergence of representations of the coup times and lack of commemoration after the movies both do reflect the ‘collectedness of memory’ and continuation of *ideology* –which silences the society and then commercializes the traumatic past-.

1. III a) The Promises and Commodities

The investigation on the ‘collectedness’ of visual/cultural products seeks for the mechanisms which can not create accounts of a shared mnemonic collectivity, that is ‘collective memory’. Herein, I argue that the ‘massification’ of the coup films as

culture industry items, appears as the other main factor which encloses the possibility of ‘collectivization’ (additionally, the lack of the *lieux de mémoires*, *cadres sociaux* and *landscapes of memory* appear to be the determining factors, as indicated previously). The difference between massification and collectivization lies in their peculiar characteristics, that is, whilst the former is about ‘collective’ consumption, instant and temporary satisfaction through taking/purchasing the fetish, the latter is more about collective meanings, historically determined understandings and “deep structures” as Olick (1999) calls.

The conceptualization of the ‘culture industry’ provided by the critique of Frankfurt School opens up the limits of analysis of collected memory through the cultural products. According to Adorno and Horkheimer (1992), the culture industry had created the mass culture within which the standardization of the relationship between production, distribution and consumption of commodities, the promise of art is dissolved. Thus, mass culture becomes the very domain where the *needs* are created and promised to be satisfied, in the name of ‘entertainment’. And this entertainment culture produces its standards –like the genres of ‘love stories or conspiracies’, thus, within this process to treat the mnemonic art work as a piece for enjoyment becomes possible.

Adorno also claims that “The more the industry exhausts what has already been perverted into commodities in the name of culture, the more the omnipresence of culture proclaims itself”(1993, p. 79). While this omnipotence generates the thinkability of pervasive ‘ideology’ of culture industry, Gunster argues that “Mass culture is no longer ideological in the traditional sense of the word: its products do not

misrepresent or distort the ‘truth’ about reality. This destroys the capacity of individuals to imagine anything different: the speculative dimension of aesthetics, fantasy and utopia is crushed” (2000, p.44). Since the capacity ‘to think’ makes individuals subjects, even the subjects of ideology; the culture industry, with its standardized products and desires replaces imagination by “mechanically relentless control mechanism” (1993, p.55) as Adorno put. This also turns them into objects of control. And I suggest that the ideological ‘control’ also controls the scope of memory –that is, the coup and after- and the scope of expression –that is, now-.

I examine and analyze the films of 1980 military coup in relation to the suggestions of culture industry thesis, for this framework shows how the traumatic, repressed memory can become the ‘commodity’ in the market, perpetuating the operation of *ideology* in commerciality context. From Benjamin’s accounts, “the very mechanism of film production is inherently progressive, though this effect is thwarted by the subordination of cinema in capitalist society to the interests of the movie makers’ capital” (Lunn: 1984: 153), I argue that these ‘traumatic memory’ films and series have become the ‘goods’ within the market where the directors and producers gain enormous profits either by the sale and distribution or by the financial contribution of millions of spectators. For example the film ‘Babam ve Oglum’ had been watched by 4 million people when it was projected at the theaters. It can be said that, this whole process is generated by the ‘secret’ of the commodity which promises to enjoy the spectators and conceal the ‘input’ in itself.

1. III b) To Revisit ‘Secrecy’

The conception of ‘secret’ within the fetish can be explained, according to Žižek (1994), as the mechanism which makes the commodity more attractive than the commodity form itself. This creates the commodities’ fascinating power. As his decipherment of Marx follows: “Classical political economy is interested in only in contents concealed behind the commodity form, *which is why it cannot explain the true secret* ⁷, not the secret behind the form but the secret of this form itself.”(p.300). Therefore, it can be stated that both following Marx (1967) and Freud (1995), the fetish appears as something which conceals the ‘social relations’ for the former, and conceals the ‘lack’ for the latter. I propose that, while the commodity itself, here the movies, emerge as something fascinating and mysterious, its content which is already a ‘secret’, that is, the 1980 coup and after, makes it more attractive and thus more desirable for consumption. So to say, it doubles its attractive *secrecy*. When the consumption itself is satisfied –which is, in fact, never a finished process according to Adorno (1993)- the secrecy is being consumed as well. It is because consumption process is more oriented towards provisional satisfactions rather than contemplation of the content –that is, the traumatic memory of the coup-.

Following this argument, the attractiveness of secrecy, in this context, can be exemplified by the continuous production of the films from 2004 till now, which shows that this business is progressive and very profitable. Furthermore, the box-office results for the most of the movies seem very reasonable which pinpoints to its ‘popular’ dimension. Here, popularity, pursuing Žižek’s analysis, appears as a

⁷ My emphasis.

phenomenon of mass which offers massification of enjoyment. Yet, while the enjoyment for a traumatic event seems to be paradoxical, the reverse situation cannot be verified, since an individual or public reaction, resurrection, or mourning after remembering has not taken place (Freud: 1995).

This condition can be a good example for commodity fetishism, which continues to repress the *real* rather than to scrutinize and reveal it. As Simmel says, “secrecy involves a tension which, at the moment of revelation, finds its release. This constitutes the climax in the development of the secret; in it, the whole charm of secrecy concentrates and rises to its highest pitch.” (p.465). Thus I suggest that the impenetrability of the very ‘secret’ in memory and commodity form can be seen as the manifestations of repression which can be found in between the fascination and consumption phenomena.

To conclude, if “there remains the distinct possibility that the monuments, books, and films whose history has been carefully reconstructed can quickly pass into oblivion without shaping the historical imagination of any individuals or social groups”(Kansteiner:2002, p.192), then the massification/standardization and the ‘value’ of the art product has to be considered. While the enjoyment drives become emphasized both for the product and for the individual, it is possible to claim that repression –here for memory- displays itself more profoundly, since the remembering can not begin to be expressed in the end. Thus, “Forgetting, rather than remembering, is what takes work in the form of repression” (Olick: 1999, p.335), since the ‘pleasure’ is highlighted rather than the disturbing mnemonics within the movies themselves. Therefore, now it becomes more significant to approach those visual

products as collected memory/culture industry items, since “the media culture of late twentieth century spews out representations of the past which have little relation to past, or shared culture, life-worlds other than the frantic pace of media consumption itself” (Kansteiner, p.183). That also explains the process within which the movies have emerged as distinct stories, not sharing common discourses, perspectives, visual displays or even mnemonics which needs the attentive analyses.

Chapter 2- Methodology

The analysis in this paper is based on the visual representations/narratives of the 1980 coup films which have been produced particularly after the year 2004. It is because these films either emerge as a cluster based on coup times including before and after, or constitute the first example in recent Turkish history to reflect the coup visually for a wide audience. As the materials to be analyzed, I take all five films produced so far: ‘Vizontele Tuuba’ (2004, Yilmaz Erdogan), ‘Babam ve Oglum’ (My Father and Son, 2006, Cagan Irmak), ‘Eve Donus’ (Return to Home, 2006, Omer Ugur), ‘Beynelmilel’ (International, 2007, Sirri Sureyya Onder and Muharrem Gulmez) and ‘Zincirbozan’ (2007, Atıl Inac).

I use the qualitative method of ‘content analysis’ (Ambert, Adler: 1995) to examine the visual articulations, symbolic motifs and stylistic features of the coup films which are claimed to be connected with the social traumatic memory of the coup period. The examination is based on interpretative and subjective approach which enables this study to bring about convergence of viewpoints in analyzing the (visual) narratives of the films (Kracauer: 1952-1953). Thus this specific approach facilitates the analysis of the visual representations in their own textures and styles which are meaningful in their contexts. This also provides me with the examination of the temporality of the coup period as reflected in each specific film. My interpretations are mainly inspired by the post-structuralist approach, which deconstructs specific significations of the visual-text and searches for connections between the individual choice of reflecting a key event within its very narrative and its consequent existence in a broader social/historical context.

In the following chapter, by taking particular visual displays, linguistic tricks and the specific genres as the units of analysis (Chanfrault-Duchet: 1991), I examine the translation of memory into a visual form and unravel the semiotic structures that are significantly different in each film. As the depiction of a mnemonic event is not a passive holder of facts but an active process of creation of meanings, as Portelli (1991) suggested; I analyze the coup films one by one, since each film stands for a divergent but meaningfully organized sign system (Brockmeier: 2007). However, the analysis also inquires into the commonalities that each film reflect within their specific contents, which leads this study not only to relate the visual reflections of the coup films together, but also to reconsider and develop the theoretical statements.

This particular cluster of films constitutes a very good example in order to understand the mechanisms of silence and repression throughout the temporality of before and after the coup. That is, by depicting the coup memories from divergent points, the whole structure of trauma, secrecy, lack of expression, non-communication and political, social and psychological repression is opening up within the texts themselves, giving the theoretical orientations of this study. Yet, the analysis of divergences and commonalities within these visual products also shows that these mnemonic visualities constitute an aggregation of memories, being far from an active remembrance, although the majority of them could reach a wide audience. Here, the analysis also includes an examination of commerciality/commoditization factor, since

the commemoration and post-discussion of a past trauma is superseded by collective enjoyment of successive ‘trauma’ films in comic, melodramatic and thriller genres⁸.

Also, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the directors to have a broader grasp of this particular phenomenon. The related narrative units stemming from their answers and explanations will be integrated and examined in parallel with their visual works. Although not being the focal point of analysis, their partial contribution to the study consolidates the theoretical statements and the interpretations within the following chapter.

Lastly, if “a traumatic historical event tends first to be repressed and then to return in forms of compulsive repetition” (Berger: 1997, p.188), then the investigation on the emergence and continuity (which can be considered as a repetition in terms of the subject of the movies rather than the content) of the movie production constitutes an important study in terms of drawing attention to the relationship between the traumatic memory, silence, repression and its different representations after a relatively long period of time in contemporary Turkish history.

⁸ Since I use the qualitative method of content analysis, mainly I search for the significations of commercial aspects, for example the use of nostalgic motifs for attracting a wider audience, within the visual narratives of the films themselves. Although giving basic information, I do not examine the reaction of the audience which would be another topic of study.

Chapter 3-Analysis

3.1 A Brief Historical Background

Although the films on military coups of the 1970s and 1980s were produced during the following two decades, they were either censored by the state or failed to have access to the large audience. This situation can be explained firstly, with the dominant cinema sector's populist inclinations which disregarded those visual/political articulations. The focal production had been on the films with standardized melodramatic plots, specifically on love stories (Scognamillo: 2003, Teksoy: 2007).

On the other hand, the censorship as a mechanism of political repression was applied strictly throughout the 1980s and 1990s in Turkish cinema by the collaboration of the state and the cinema business (Esen: 2000). Besides, by the arrests of the military coup, the majority of the detainees were specifically the 'intellectuals' of the country who might have produced films, books or other mediums of expression that might reach the spectators and readers. Stemming from this very condition, small number of films produced during the 1970s and 1980s did not illustrate the military attack as the main plot; but rather focused on autobiographies –especially, the directors' leftist past-. Thus, the films produced after the coup(s) can be seen as not being effective as the players of mnemonics and of cinema business (Belge: 1993). Therefore, the instant emergence of the coup as a subject within the movies after the 2000s requires a thorough examination.

3. II Towards Analysis

If the period after the 1980s until the release of the first coup film ‘Vizontele Tuuba’ in 2004 has been the era of silence, as it was suggested previously, this silenced period, engendering ‘secrecy’, was designed basically by the regulation and manipulation of information and expression by the control of the authoritarian regime. However, the coup films, as being the units of examination of this chapter, seemed to create a visual, mnemonic ‘rupture’ after a long period of silence. Yet, the failure in forming common and coherent narratives within this cluster of films decays the possibility of this rupture. Thus, the initiation of remembering, and evocation of the uniform conceptual social frameworks of collective memory could not be achieved.

I suggest that the films imbued with distinctively different narratives, emerge as the continuum of repression and silence. This process is also very likely to be bound to the system of the culture industry which appropriates the ‘value’ of the artwork, and exchange the meaning with the commodity interest. Thus, I contend that the persistence of this *ideology* seems to order either the creation of collective memory, or the visualization of mnemonic knowledge.

To go deep into this issue, it is very important to analyze each film in its own content. Within those five films I mentioned, I seek for the visual/verbal expressions that are dominant within their own narrative structures. I focus on the themes, yet it comes out that each film has its specifically different narrative, constituting a distinct theme for a film. However, each film shows dispersed signs of secrecy, repression, traumatic memory and commerciality that the examination seeks for. Although the films exist

within their particular different narratives, it is possible to find these common motifs which are disseminated throughout their visual structures. And this path gives the main temporality thread which represents the coup times and afterwards.

By deciphering the divergences and disseminated commonalities, I show that their distinct narrations and visualities can only approve the existence of ‘collected memory’. It is because, either they can not merge at a common discourse, or they are differently orientated towards the commercial interests. For example, the motif of ‘nostalgia’ does attract the audience, and provides the spectators with satisfying images of selfhood which creates an idealized *imago* –as *ideology* does- (Althusser: 1994). But, paradoxically, the display of ‘torture’ operates as the reverse, distracts the audience and makes them recall and re-experience the pain of the traumatic event (Freud: 1995). Therefore, I propose that, these divergences delineate the condition within which the repression is still active, pushing the society away from the commemoration, re-consideration or post-discussion of the event and its effects which has been the most determinant instance of recent Turkish history.

3. III Countryside

The preference of the countryside to narrate the coup and post-coup, as trauma and post-trauma, provides very important and significant decipherments. The basic quest on what countryside represents, opens up the whole main temporality thread of this study. Firstly, the countryside is the place where is far away from the center, and from the state. I contend that, this remoteness is the very desire to avoid of the source of unpleasures, that is, either the state or the trauma, which can be inter-changeably used

in the Turkish context. Thus, it can be said that the countryside represents the wish to avoid the pain, desire to move away from the state repression and the will to dwell on the 'secure' place of isolation.

Second, it is a far-away place, where the audience can idealize (because in Turkey, the theaters are in cities and the audience is more or less from the urban population). Thus, the countryside appears to be the place of innocence, and a paradise where the audience can find it worth to watch. While this is created by the nostalgic motifs, it appears that 'nostalgia' is either relevant to repression –by keeping the pain away-, and also to commerciality –by attracting audience with the ideal (lost) paradise of countryside-.

3. III a) Love, Innocence, Nostalgia

The story of the film 'Vizontele Tuuba' (2004) is put in its own official website as the following:

"A beauty comes to town! The story takes place in the Southeast of Turkey in a small fairy-tale town "far away" from everything. It's the first summer months of 1980...The whole country is in political chaos. Political violence is ruling the country. A lot of political groups appear on the Left and Right. This incomprehensible, ridiculous, tragic and funny "anarchic" atmosphere is being reflected on the city of "Vizontele" in a very different and unique way.

Guner Sernikli is a government official (a librarian) who has been banished to this far away city. Everything starts taking an absurd route and the Sernikli family arrives exactly during these days in the city of "Vizontele after a long and exhausting trip.

The daughter Tuba is probably the most beautiful "thing" that has ever come to the city from "outside"... Another "thing" that all strange things come across when coming to the city is of course crazy Emin....The Sernikli family comes to the city like a gift package in the summer. Guner brings wisdom; Tuba brings beauty, innocence and personally loves... Mayor Nazmi Dogan and crazy Emin are of course on the side of those who value these "beautiful" things. But they are in the minority. It's a confusing period.”⁹

In this shortened synopsis of the movie, obviously there is no direct reference to the coup. Even in the film, the only remembrance appears at the very last moments of the film when a van of soldiers comes to the town and suddenly and arbitrarily begins arresting people. Otherwise, the movie runs following a comic genre, including the tragicomic motifs such as, the coming of a librarian to the countryside where there is no library, and no sign for anyone who might be having any books. The focus is on the love story between beautiful Tuuba, who came from the city with her librarian father, and the dweller of the rural countryside with a slight mental deficiency, ‘crazy’ Emin. Yet, the love is depicted as the means for making the countryside a ‘better’ place such as painting the walls of the newly founded library as a couple; and as an modest friendship which generates the notion of ‘good old days’, innocence and naivety of the people and the past. Thence, what this movie tells distinctly about the ‘coup’ is very obscure and is far behind the ‘catastrophic’ experience of the military attack.

⁹ www.vizonteletuuba.com

Not only the general story of the movie, but the preference of lighting, colors, place and the surrounding objects appear to be neatly organized as depicting the period after the 1970s. The visual narration is based on the goodness of the times, which ends – being lost- with the military attack towards the end of the movie. Thus, the idea of the loss of innocence and the dispersion of the family (the librarian's) becomes the dominant narration which leads to the notion of nostalgia (Suner: 2006). The director, in our interview, also supported this idea: “The places where you have suffered a lot can not be remembered as a beautiful place any more. Yet, I say, this film differs from the other –countryside- films because it shows that far and desolate places can also be entertaining”. Thus, it can be stated that, being far away and desolate, can also be taken as the representation of repression- avoidance of pain- and relative happiness of isolation (from the state) at the same time. As being far away from the trauma, and coming close to the pleasure, one can find the opportunity for entertainment. And this entertainment also serves for the audience, because this entertainment also entertains the audience.

As it is also depicted in the synopsis, the pattern of nostalgia establishes the atmosphere before the 1980 coup as a caricaturized leftist-rightist existence –even not a clash- where funny things can occur between infantilized, innocent locals (Turker:2004, Suner:2006, Dogruoz:2007): “A lot of political groups appear on the Left and Right. This incomprehensible, ridiculous, tragic and funny ‘anarchic’ atmosphere...” Yet, what the function of nostalgia in mnemonic terms does still remain to be illuminated. Here, it can be argued that the collective memory can be a nostalgic memory, but its problematic stems from its over-sentimentalism which distorts the relation with the facts or truth (Margalit: 2004). Yet, if there is a

divergence from the very ‘fact’, that is the *real*, with the over-investment of emotions in the form of nostalgia; then Althusser’s suggestion on ideology which is an illusion of idealized imageries, not corresponding to the reality, can explain this statement. I would argue that, if there is a collective nostalgic memory, then its reference to reality would be just an allusion (Althusser: 1994). Yet, to speak of the possibility of collective nostalgic memory in the Turkish case is far from the current condition, since the ‘sentimentalism’ does not only occur through the medium of nostalgia in these coup films. Yet, *ideological* illusion may still remain valid, but in different strategies as they change with each movie.

As Žižek explained, nostalgia has the features of mythic naivety and the capacity for fascination, since “we can no longer identify with it” (2002, p.112). For Žižek, nostalgic procedure “in which the fragment of the past that serves as the object of nostalgia is extracted from its historical context, from its continuity and inserted into a kind of mythic, eternal, timeless present”. Therefore, I argue that, nostalgia, although having the probability of forming a collective memory in some cases, appear as the strategy which brings about the naivety and distorts historical contextuality where the association/identification with the events are being broken. Therefore, the movie’s motivation can be seen as the search for a ‘lost object’ rather than the facing up with the traumatic past.

From Žižek’s perspective, “the function of the nostalgic fascination is to conceal”(p.115). While this concealment can be the concealment of memories, it can also be the avoidance of the capacity of the art to deal with social and political problems which delays the relation to the real world. As Adorno (1993) pointed out,

the world of the movie with the images, gestures and words, absorbs the spectator and makes them unable to apprehend what makes a real world, for the culture industry teaches how to react, what to expect automatically. If we remember the pleasure principle, which can be seen as parallel with the objectives of entertainment business as promising enjoyment, we can also grasp how nostalgic fascination works without offering any painful remembering of the trauma.

If three million people watched ‘Vizontele Tuuba’ when it was at theaters in Turkey where one individual goes to see a movie with an average of 0,4 times a year¹⁰, then the lost object can also be equal to loss of ‘aura’ (Benjamin:1999). That is, since the movie does not touch the heart of the issue, but revolve around the beautiful depictions of the countryside with a ‘cheesy’ love story; it loses the political and social significance, but perhaps getting esthetically and also psychologically easy to see and deal with. This also indicates there is a certain level of continuation of silence, but also the transference of the silence/trauma of the recent past to the current enjoyment of seeing it at the theaters.

3. III b) Family Split and the Children: The Loss

The film ‘Babam ve Oglum’ (My father and Son, 2005), opens up with a scene of a woman giving birth in the street (urban area) where nobody is around, in the morning of the coup day, that is, 12th of September, 1980. Since the country is under the state of siege, the husband –Sadik- (protagonist) can not find any help, and the woman dies after gives birth. Then the movie jump-cuts to a farmyard in the Aegean countryside,

¹⁰ Information is taken from: Vahapoglu, Ece. 2006. Aksam Gazetesi. Also, see: <http://www.aksam.com.tr/yazar.asp?a=29748,10,115>

Sadik with his son goes to Sadik's family house where Sadik had left a decade ago because of either studying at a university (specifically at the department of journalism which Sadik's father did not want) or being politically active towards the end of 1970s. Yet, Sadik –although not being depicted- is arrested after the coup, severely tortured and contracts a lethal disease. But the 'big' father of the house still feels offended -because of Sadik's choices of leaving the country, university and political engagements- and refuses to communicate with both the son and the grandson.

Although the story of the movie begins with a direct reference to the coup, this reference ends within some seconds when a soldier approaches Sadik and says "Military attack has happened" (Kocabiyik: 2007). As in this case, the narrative of the movie reminds of the coup, only with these discrete motifs: giving birth, bad news from a soldier and additionally the nightmares and delusions of torture Sadik is having throughout the movie. But, the film generally does not include the mnemonic scenes that tell anything about the 1980 coup. That is to say, the film proposes nothing but the death due to the declaration of the state of siege, short sequences of torture popping up arbitrarily, and lastly the breakup of a family.

Furthermore, it is stated that, in this movie "the reason behind the attack and the information about the perpetrators of the coup are left in the air." (Dogruoz: 2007, p. 75). Although I would agree with this statement in terms of not explicating the 'real' events and players in relation to political context, for me, here to think of the trauma's dissemination and *transference* into the other locations, existences and presentations becomes much more meaningful. That is to say, from a Freudian aspect, the intensity of trauma as well as repression reaches an unbearable extent that the investment on

other ‘upsetting’ stories reveals the catastrophic patterns of the event: split of the family in countryside (with Sadik’s departure), split of family (Sadik’s) in urban area, death of the mother, and in the end death of Sadik because of the torture and disease caught in prison. And the salvage is found in the countryside, where one can be far away from the painful memories, and shelter within the naïve world of the countryside. Thus, to keep silence at a distant place with returning to family –to the ideal order- tells a story of an indefinable trauma, a secrecy and repression, although does not exactly picture the coup itself. Therefore, the trauma can be remembered, but in an inappreciable way.

As Berger articulates following the Freudian framework, “Transference in psychoanalysis is itself a return of the repressed, or rather a more conscious summoning of the repressed; transference repeats or acts out a past event or relationship in a new, therapeutic setting [...] Transference is the occasion for working through the traumatic symptom [...] to acknowledge that the trauma still is active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects.” (1997, p.576). In this movie, therapeutic setting appears as ‘other stories’ initiated by and related to coup, but excluding it. Indeed, by confronting with other dramatic stories, the very problem of the trauma has not been solved. Yet, it has the alleviating effects, since the spectators unavoidably burst into tears during the film. In his work ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, Freud (1995) points to the significance of loss which is mourned for and felt pain over. Yet the loss appears to be unknown, as in the case of this film. The spectators cry and feel healed but they do not know why they cried and become relieved (Maktav: 2006).

On the other hand, this notion of loss can be deciphered in two more aspects. First, since the movie focuses on the ‘father and son’ story, the Lacanian concept of frustration that of the loss of the *phallus* appears as something conspicuously to be mourned for. While the protagonist Sadik can not achieve his authentic (phallic) existence apart from the main castrator *the father*, he turns back to the *cultural symbolic order* –the family- and admits that he has *lost* the contention. And the death of Sadik, also consolidates the death of the *subject* which can also be read as the death of memory, through forgetting (Tura: 1997). Besides, at the moment, it is useful to refer to Althusserian notion of *ideology* which idealizes a self imagery that belongs and fits to social order without any contradiction. That is, while the deviant figure – Sadik- has been annihilated, the satisfactory social order -which offers the ‘peaceful’ family scheme with the *name of the father*-, is achieved when Sadik’s son is warranted to be cared for by the family at the countryside. This situation can also be deciphered as the triumph of the biggest *father*, that is, the state (ideology), whose power either violates (i.e. Sadik’s death because of the coup and the memories) or embraces (Sadik’s uninformed son and silence) the individuals concurrently.

Second, the loss in the movie is presented as the loss of the good old times -as a nostalgic pattern- which longs for naïve and innocent lives of countryside people, as in the case of ‘Vizontele Tuuba’. The story in this movie is usually narrated from Sadik’s son’s perspective. If a certain nostalgic pattern is a lost object as Žižek (2002) said, the perspective of a little boy displays the fascination of naivety, the innocent eye which is not with us anymore. The story is not the erupting, disharmonious or traumatic one, but is told from a “domesticated, gentrified” (p.114) gaze. Here, as Žižek explained, “we have the illusion of seeing ourselves”, -also Althusserian

ideology functions in the same way-. This, in fact, has the Lacanian mirroring effect, in the sense that, the subject realizes him/herself by distinguishing him/herself from the others and the objects. But this appears to be illusive and traumatic because the gaze of the little child is something never to be caught and be identified again by the (adult) audience; it is a loss.

Yet, what is the function of the movie in terms of remembering the coup? It appears as its functionality lies more on the subject of the coup's novelty both for the producers and the audience. Since it has been an un-used topic and is 'interesting', to embellish it with another latent traumatic topic –father and son- would draw attention. The results show that they have been very successful in drawing attention since the movie is one of the most seen movies throughout Turkish cinema history, watched by four million people at theaters. This situation can also be explained by Berger's (1997) analysis concerning culture industry. He suggests that popular culture and mass media, first, become obsessed by violent disasters, here it can be exemplified by the topic of the military coup. And second, popular topic appears to be the family splits, as being the case in this movie.

On the other hand, in our interview, the director Cagan Irmak said that he wanted to touch this deep wound –which is one of the key words for trauma (Caruth: 1993)- that has always been covered up by the state. He said that the people have been forced to forget this issue –the coup-, and tried to remind them of this catastrophic event through a family story. But he also indicated that these current movies of the coup could not create “enlightenment” since the society is ignorant to its own past. His articulations either in the interview or in the film show that there is a tendency in the

society to avoid remembering, encountering the painful event. Also, the transference and investment in different tragic stories rather than the exact event depict that there is a search for commemoration and mourning to some extent, but through ‘attractive’ strategies which does not open up the ‘wound’ itself.

3. III c) Humor and Anti-militarism

The story in ‘Beynelmilel’ is about a group of local musicians’ struggle to make a living in the 1980s, at the times of the state of siege, when the people were not allowed to wander around the streets. The commander of the time sees those musicians outside and arrests them; yet he comes up with an idea of turning those local musicians into a modern orchestra, in order to present a concert for the coming military council. At the same time, the political activist youngsters wait for the council to make a protest. Meanwhile, the ‘local orchestra’ prepares a piece –without knowing that it is ‘International’, the communist anthem- with western instruments, still being under surveillance and control of military. The council comes, the highest military official realizes the song’s significance unlike the others, and the bloody collision begins. The young activists are killed; the musicians are arrested and then tortured.

The absurd narrative of ‘Beynelmilel’ follows a tragicomic genre, yet is officially categorized as comedy/drama. Indeed, the absurdity of the film lies in here; for, the film has numerous scenes that make the spectator laugh at and enjoy what they see, although the movie itself is woven with a tragic plot. Besides, “the film represents the relationship between idiocy and militarism in a funny way through depicting the militaristic will to transform the locals into a stereotypic image” (Dogruoz: 78).

However, unlike the other two films which are visualized in countryside, ‘Beynelmilel’ does not promise us nostalgia, in terms of a loss of innocence or a lost paradise, although the naivety continues to be depicted for the local people. By showing the idiocy of military and naivety of the locals, the film reverses the idea of nostalgic motivation. It stimulates to remember not through mourning, but through humor and laughter.

Adorno and Horkheimer’s approach to laughter can be useful to understand relationship between repression and ideology. They stated, “There is laughter because there is nothing to laugh at. Laughter, whether conciliatory or terrible, always occurs when some fear passes. It indicates liberation either from physical danger or from the grip of logic. Conciliatory laughter is heard as the echo of an escape from power; the wrong kind overcomes fear by capitulating to the forces which are to be feared. It is the echo of power as something inescapable. Fun is a medicinal bath.”(1992: p. 140). As it is indicated here, the laughter is one of the indication of the fear and the liberation from “the physical danger or a grip of logic”. While physical danger and grip of logic can be seen as generated from the military, the laughter can be taken as a reaction of memory where the fearful forces or power threatens but the memory finds how to deal with it, with having fun and a therapeutic bath.

The Zizekian analysis also furthers the accounts on laughter which articulates the relationship between laughter and power/ideology. He says “in contemporary societies, democratic or totalitarian, that cynical distance, laughter, irony, are, so to speak, parts of the game. The ruling ideology is not meant to be taken seriously or literally. Perhaps the greatest danger for totalitarianism is people who take its

ideology literally... the incarnation of dogmatic belief who does not laugh, is rather a tragic figure: outdated, a kind of living dead, a remnant of the past, certainly not a person representing the existing social and political powers” (1994: p.311). Here, Žizek articulates on the subject – a living dead of the past- who is in fact killed by totalitarianism. While in his accounts the subject becomes in a way resistant to ideology by making fun of it, ironically, the subject can not fulfill its subjectivity if it exists outside of it as a tragic figure. Thus, the ideology also rules the laughter by making it a part of the game, so to say, of the *illusion*. As in the case of ‘Beynelmilel’, the military transforms the local musicians, makes them play the musical piece ‘International’, the concert is performed, and people are arrested. But the life will go on without being stuck into the deep and “serious” injuries of the past, the trauma. Thence, the life, that is, the game, will continue; reproduce itself.

As the director Sirri Sureyya Onder, stated in our interview that the social memory in Turkey always tried to be obliterated by the state intentionally. And this process within which the people forced to become ignorant to their past, could not be broken because of high level of censorship. He argued that, today, the only difference appears to be at the level of pre-censorship mechanism. The films are not censored, but after the release, the directors are getting death threats, and they have the risk to be sued because of ‘article 301’¹¹ in penal code. However, in this film, he said that he sought for telling what happened in the atrocious coup period, not only to the people who experienced it, but also to the young generations. But, since he thinks that the society is still escaping from its past, he wanted to use the tactic of implementing a ‘love story’ and comic motifs, so that he could reach a wider audience.

¹¹ It is the article which mostly intellectuals are being litigated because of their speeches against nationalist ideology of the state, i.e Nobel Prize winner author Orhan Pamuk was sued because of his ideas about the Armenian banishment in the midst of the 1910s, since he called it as ‘genocide’.

Furthermore, the director also stated that his film is the first antimilitaristic instance of the Turkish cinema history. By making fun of the junta state, he thinks that he unfolds its narrow, antidemocratic logic. However, in my opinion, although the film has antimilitaristic remarks -such as displaying their ‘uncultured’ and awkward style of entertainment, turning locals into a western-style orchestra, making them wear French soldier uniforms and dancing waltz in tango music-, what the film reminds about the trauma is superseded by the ‘comic’ motifs, leaving the impression of a ‘strange enjoyment’ rather than a critical recall for those times. Since “the form of narrative may also influence what can or can not be recalled” (Kirmayer: 1996, p.181), I think, one should make a great effort to realize the in-depth decipherments of the film to make sense of its critical approach, since the laughter is more dominant than the recall.

Also, in our interview the director stated that he intentionally used the medium of ‘laughter’, for, he thought that the film would attract the younger audience “who are not aware of recent historical facts”, and tell at least something to them by the visual media. However, paradoxically, he also mentioned that the function of the art is limited in terms of effecting society in one way or another. This speech is also parallel with ‘Babam ve Oglum’s director, Cagan Irmak, who stated that the younger or older, generally the audience, congratulated him after shooting a coup film, but they would also be applauding the generals of the army who destroyed their lives. Herein, it is also possible to claim that the directors’ belief for creating the *lieux, cadres* or *landscapes* of collective memory is not at the highest levels; as members of the ‘forgetful’ society, it can be said that, they are also under the effect of trauma and

repression –political/individual- and not very optimistic about the conditions within which persisting effects of the coup still determine the culture of amnesia.

3. IV *Victimization*

The film ‘Eve Donus’ is based on a dramatic plot. It is about a story of a married couple having a daughter. The man of the house (Mustafa) is an employee working at a factory, though not engaged in politics unlike his workfellows right at the time of the 1980 coup. Yet, economic difficulties squeeze the family; they can not pay neither the rent of their house which is located in a shanty town, nor the installments for the newly bought television. After some months, the -unpaid- landlord commits ‘espionage’ and conduces to a situation where an innocent man, Mustafa, finds himself arrested, being interrogated and terribly tortured. Later his innocence is discovered, but he is –as being in the state of misery- only released by the state officials even without an excuse. Towards the end of the movie, the same plot reiterates; the innocent people unexpectedly are being taken to the police stations. As nobody can oppose the junta rule, they helplessly subordinate and go through the same process.

The distinguishing feature of the movie lies in its overt depiction of torture scenes, detailed display of the ‘vulgar’ police organization and the illustration of people as being the victims of a powerful authority using physical force. This specific style of the movie involves the notion of ‘shock’ which Benjamin (1999) had introduced as an effect of change in the minds of people when they are watching moving images. In this movie, idea of shock is developed by further use of ‘torture’ scenes in such a way

that, the scenes do not apply to sadomasochistic drives of the audience, but with the help of artless frames and realistic directing of photography, it generates the feeling of anger. While the anger emerges because of over and arbitrary use of physical force by the military-state officials in terms of surveillance, arrests and tortures; it emerges also because of the helpless, miserable victim as the ‘tortured’ who does not have anything but his body to be abused.

Also, the intense dimension of physical/mental trauma has been depicted with the repetitive nightmares that the ‘victim’ is seeing either when he is in prison or after his release in the form of flashbacks. As a common point, this feature of nightmares, dream-like scenes, flashbacks and hazy hallucinations also takes place in the film, ‘Babam ve Oglum’ although less intensively. From Freudian (1995) perspective, those repetitions are the indicators of the effect of traumatic event through which the ‘victim’ re-experiences the destructive force of the violent event, and develops the emotion ‘fright’. Therefore, I suggest that, the effect of trauma coming back in the form of repetitive dreams conduce extensive repression; and thus ‘forgetting’ in the form of staying silent. The silence generated by the feeling of ‘fright’ –both from the re-experience of trauma and from the notion of the junta- either leads to victimize oneself as a speechless and powerless subject, or provides the continuation of violence by sheer subordination.

On the other hand, Kirmayer stated that a public trauma provides collective memory and a consensual reality within which the individual traumatic memory can have validity through its display and reconstruction. He said “a private space of trauma places the victim in a predicament, since the validation of suffering depends on

recovering enough memory to make it real for others, but this memory can be retrieved only by reliving or representing the victimization.”(1996:190). It seems that, in this case, when the visual display is much more closer to the experience in terms of depicting the sheer violence, the less audience becomes interested in the ‘suffering’. For, ‘Eve Donus’ is the only movie in this ‘trend’ which had been projected in fewer theatres with fewer weeks, which had been watched only by 70.000¹² people. The film’s relative closeness -without referring to nostalgia or love stories- to the representation of trauma can also be ironically delineated with Kansteiner’s suggestion. He says, “In fact, one faces a veritable paradox: the more "collective" the medium (that is, the larger its potential or actual audience), the less likely it is that its representation will reflect the collective memory of that audience.” (2002: p.193). Thus, the main paradox emerges here: more depiction of ‘trauma’ and violence means less audience; and more love story/nostalgia/drama/comedy means millions of spectators within the scope of culture industry.

However, the victimization is not only depicted as misery. The ‘shocking anger’ of the movie is also turned to the victims. As the director stated in our conversation; he blamed the society of being forgetful, ignorant and submissive. For him, the reason of the coups is because of the tradition of soldiering society which has got used to be governed and instructed throughout its history. This, for him, created an easily-manipulated mass of people obeying the authority. For instance, in the film the protagonist Mustafa is told: “If you, and the people like you, could have a head for thinking, neither you nor me would be in this place (at prison, suffering because of torture)”. If it is remembered, almost a million people had a ‘traumatic’ relation with

¹² The information is taken from: <http://sinemam.net/gelecek-program.html>

coercive apparatuses of the state being arrested, sued or tortured in the period of the 1980s. Yet, it seems that either the society as a collective entity seems to live in oblivion, or the society as spectators, is the ‘absent-minded one’, as Benjamin (1999) uttered.

3. V Conspiracy

The approach of the film ‘Zincirbozan’¹³ to the 1980 coup is significantly different from the other films in terms of the genre, montage and characters. For, this movie’s claim is to document the historical reality rather than to ‘tell the story’ of the period. Therefore, the narrative strategies, unlike those feature films, change quite dramatically. While the editing becomes much more important because of the sequence of the film in order to go parallel with the chronological order of the events, the melodramatic/dramatic/tragic motifs are also avoided. Yet, this ‘documentary’ as it is called by the director and scriptwriter, is much more closer to Hollywood style political thrillers (Dogruoz: 2007), in the sense that it either involves the national and international political players, mainly the United States as the main reason for the coup, or the tension within the movie is constantly supported by typical thriller soundtrack.

The movie begins with the assassination of the journalist Abdi Ipekci, and continues with depicting the period’s terrorist acts until the 1980 coup. Then the focus is headed towards the clash between the army and political personas of the period, including the president, ministers and high state officials. The process of the exile of the political

¹³ It is the name of the place in the city Canakkale where the political leaders of the 1980’s were exiled.

leaders is displayed in detail. Yet, the scenes including CIA spies and American political agencies dominate the movie with the political characters talking in English and giving decisions about the future of Turkey. The movie presents the ‘real’ people of the time with surrogate characters, looking like the real ones, using real names. Yet, the main plot and dialogues overtly revolves around the first and foremost reason of the turmoil in Turkey, that is, the United States of America which delineates its theory of conspiracy. For, it is stated that the only reason behind military attack is the ‘secret’ desires of America over Turkey, imposing its political and economic system through specific institutions, such as IMF and World Bank. However, the movie lacks the insight on what happened at the societal level. For, the conspiracy idea focuses on the secret power politics, paranoid networks and terrorist attacks (Orr: 2000), rather than how community experiences a specific event.

By emphasizing and unfolding the web of spying parties, and the motif of espionage, the Simmelian theory of ‘secret society’ should be revisited. For, Simmel states that “the secret society, purely on the ground of its secrecy, appears dangerously related to conspiracy against existing powers” (1906: p.498). While in this movie, the hostility of the USA towards Turkey is the main argument; the most important portion of the political activities are depicted as they are intentionally concealed from the public, giving its conspiracy pattern. Additionally, this dominance of secrecy brings about the conceptions of betrayal and espionage which appears to be the link connecting the secret agencies with the betrayers who provide information taken from the politically segregated/silenced society. The existence of non-identifiable characters and their espionage activities either with the US or Turkish army/police can be good examples for the illustration of relationship between secrecy and conspiracy.

Also, in the films ‘Eve Donus’ and ‘Beynelmilel’, despite not getting the essential attention, the activities of spying and espionage take place among the society members in order to collaborate with the authority. For Simmel, this situation, peculiar to the societies with authoritarian regime, occurs when the members seek for self-preservation who are under political oppression. Therefore, either conspiracy or espionage can be deciphered as the constituents of ‘secrecy’ since they do not unravel the real problems but contribute to further mystification of the situation.

On the other hand, since the film’s engagement with the historical facts has been stressed by the directors in our interview, it is also important to look at the form of editing which can be taken as an ‘objective’ visual historicity of the film genre. Zizek’s suggestion about montage states that manipulation power of editing can elevate an ordinary, trivial object to a sublime entity. Thus, “it succeeds in bestowing on an ordinary object the aura of anxiety and uneasiness.” (2002: p.117). In ‘Zincirbozan’, the scenes are shot and juxtaposed in such a way that, throughout the movie the point of view is an anonymous ‘voyeur’ who watches the depictions from a distance with the help of the distance between camera and the things –achieved by excess use of establishing shots-. While this style of filming does not come closer to the historical ‘facts’ –though, no close up-, by keeping the distance between the gaze and things, the secrecy enlarges, and thus the narration becomes much more uneasy and conspiratorial. That is, by the specific style of montage which juxtaposes the images that show the things from a long distance, either the events/persons get more obscure or the ‘facts’ become less clear. Thus, the secret network of conspiratorial

powers becomes more sublime, unreachable and mysterious. Since the identification with the events, characters and remembering becomes almost impossible.

Here, it is also of importance to mention the role of the ‘sound editing’, that is the specific choice of music. For, the uneasiness, that is to say, the tension of the ‘thriller effect’ increases dramatically with the Hollywood style thrilling soundtrack, which contributes to the whole conspiratorial aura of the movie. By this strategy, the audience feels as following a thriller movie, rather than a mnemonic visuality of a catastrophic event.

Yet the query on what ‘Zincirbozan’ reminds the audience preserves its ‘secrecy’ ironically, although the film’s claim is to reveal the secrecy, that is, the political-unknown. If it has been an attempt to retell the history, and show the ‘secret’ networks behind the coup, then its specific choice of depicting only some political leaders from left wing and excluding the right wing leaders seem to be conflicting and biased. Moreover, since it does not situate its problematic within the society but envisions the military strike from within a specific perspective, that is, the political players, its scope of sharing a common memory or remembering the event at individual or social level seems to be hardly possible. It is because as Halbwachs (1992) explained, the past can only be remembered when the images of the past are located within the conceptual structures that are defined by the communities at large. Following this suggestion, the film’s speculative proposal of the USA being the perpetrator of the coup as the sole reason is far from fitting the social conceptual structures, since it retains as a personal or a specific group’s claim. Therefore, it can be argued that, ‘Zincirbozan’ illustrates a different representation of the traumatic

past, which moves away from the idea of ‘collective memory’, but gets closer rather to the notion of ‘collected memory’.

3. VI Summing up: Five Coup Films

In this analysis, my purpose was to illustrate the different narratives, genres, contents and strategies that these five films are dominantly using. Yet, despite the fact that they do not share common discourses and characteristics which would lead us to grasp a shared depiction of collective memory, some similar motifs can be found within the visual schemes of the movies. I have categorized the films while taking this situation of differences and commonalities into consideration. The first motif appearing to be mutual has been the use of countryside in ‘Vizontele Tuuba’, ‘Babam ve Oğlum’ and ‘Eve Donus’. I suggested that, countryside either constitutes the distance from the repression of military-state or manifests the repression of individual/social trauma, since the countryside is a far place, a (lost) paradise without the risk of intrusions of unpleasurable return of the traumatic memory (Caruth: 1993, Freud: 1995, Berger: 1997). Thus, countryside’s representation appears to depict an escape both from the power and repression, which in fact, perpetuates the silencing effect of the trauma.

Although second commonality emerges as the use of nostalgia, this is only valid for two movies, namely ‘Vizontele Tuuba’ and ‘Babam ve Oglum’. The nostalgia functions in the way the representation of the countryside does, -as the desire for the naivety, for old beautiful ‘lost’ days-. On the other hand, the film ‘Eve Donus’ emerges as the exact opposite exemplification of the nostalgia. For, its discourse over the past is based on the severe conditions of living under oppression, unjust treatment

and arbitrary violence of the junta and the *repressive state apparatus*' (Althusser: 1994) power of engineering a victimized society.

The other commonalities which are less dominant but rather take place as dispersed motifs can be listed as the presence of 'espionage', and intrusions of bad dreams or dreamlike scenes. Within the films 'Beynelmilel', 'Eve Donus' and 'Zincirbozan', there appears to be some unknown-men who collaborates with the military-state and do the spying activities. This motif has been explained by the Simmelian accounts. His suggestions on espionage as a characteristic of secret societies were used to explicate the desire of the power center's to get information from repressed/silenced community. It was stated that the preservation of the self (society) from the violence of the power, either created the agents of betrayers or the silenced community. This example has been a good illustration of the 'secrecy' that I used to explain the period of the 1980s of Turkey.

The dream-like scenes, hallucinations and dreams have been present in 'Babam ve Oglum' and 'Eve Donus'. Since they all include the traumatic memories of imprisonment, torture and associated fears stemming from violent state practices, in Freudian terms, this can be a good example of the 'return of the repressed' which indicates that there has been a great extend of repression. The repression sent to unconscious appears to lead either mourning for something else (Babam ve Oglum) or being victimized (Eve Donus) which stand for the rationale for keeping the silence after the 1980s.

Lastly, as being a unique example, ‘Zincirbozan’s representation of the coup, predicates on the conspiratorial grounds, where the society has no voice, but the international political players and the secret intelligence organizations of the time are being the main actors. The genre of the movie is peculiarly in between the political thriller and documentary. Yet, the dimension of ‘secret society’ which is “dangerously related to conspiracy against existing powers” (Simmel: 1906, p.498) has been the dominant motif in the movie. This representation also seems parallel with the ‘secrecy’ of recent Turkish past, but here it is narrated from within conspiratorial and political perspectives.

Following this analytic/interpretative approach, my exploration is that the visual representations of the traumatic memory of the 1980 coup do not negotiate at a common and shared commemorative knowledge, although they represent the temporality of the coup period in a dispersed way. Therefore, it is very unlikely that ‘collective memory’ in Turkish context does exist. Yet, this does not necessarily allude to a ‘lack’, but rather it is the loss, the anesthesia and the ignorance of forming a collective memory. However, the visualization of the coup seems to open up some expressive grounds where the telling has become possible although could not create a ‘rupture’.

Since the dominant themes appear to be peculiar to each movie, it is more likely to talk about the existence of ‘collected memory’, which also manifests itself with the commoditization factor. That is, for example, the spectators’ varying interests of the movies change dramatically when the articulation of the trauma and violence of the time becomes more close to the experience as in the case of ‘Eve Donus’. For, the

melodrama, the comedy and the nostalgia attract more people; and after all, no visual product seems to have created the common grounds of discussion, remembrance or commemoration. While this situation can be explained with the persistence of the rule of the 'secrecy' which still represses the access to past knowledge and memory, the repressive ideological derivatives, such as silence, does reproduce itself with the further amnesia, and ignorance as in the case of consuming movies as entertainment commodities of culture industry.

Conclusion

In this study, I aimed to investigate how the temporality that of before and after the 1980 military coup, which has been the most catastrophic experience in Turkish history, is represented through the cluster of movies produced after the year 2004. I examined this phenomenon of visualization of traumatic memory, since either the movies of the coup having an access to a large audience emerged for the first time in recent Turkish history, or they open up the main gates to search for the mechanisms of secrecy, repression and ideology which have lead Turkish society to keep in silence hitherto.

I used the theory of ‘secrecy’ to examine how the ‘silence’ after the military attack has lead the society to form a community surrounded by concealment of experience, information and memory. This theory provided me with the main ground to explicate the period after the 1980s within which the Turkish society has retained its silence in isolation through keeping its trauma as secret. I argued that through this process of regulation of information and memory, either the expression of the most traumatic event has been prevented by the authoritarian regime of the military-state, or the communication between the generations has been broken by repressed and traumatized members of society. Therefore, the 1980 coup could remain as ‘secrecy’ forming a secret community which has been detached from its very experience through forgetting and ignoring.

The theory of secrecy also opened up the path for the discussion of political repression which is peculiar to authoritarian regimes, as in the case of Turkey after the

1980s. I contended that the formation of secret society has been very much related to political repression which dramatically derogated the links between the individuals and their memories. To deepen the issue, I looked at the theory repression at the individual level from psychoanalytical point of view. And this has given the basic accounts of the temporal thread after the 1980s, explicating the relationship between silence, repression of trauma and the low mnemonic ties between the individuals, which can be seen as the main mechanisms of none of expression of the coup experience in recent Turkish history.

To understand how the visualization of the coup is actualized, it has been very important to investigate these conditions determining the post-coup period. These main discussions of secrecy, twofold repression and ideology have provided the fundamental accounts of how the instant cluster of coup films emerged as individual memory representations. Since my investigation predicated upon to find out how the 1980 coup has been represented and what it represents from the current point of view, I searched for these conceptions within the films and looked if these memory visuals could merge at a common narrative, argument or conceptualization. I asked if these films could present a ‘collective memory’ despite the facts of secrecy, silence, and repressive power.

My findings showed that although the common points could be found within the films, each film constitutes and represents its own mnemonic narrative, specific genre and motifs. Therefore, I argued that the instant cluster of films do not reflect an example for ‘collective memory’ but rather constitute a ‘collected memory’ which have been more of socially structured representations of individual memories. I

argued that, for forming a collective memory, there should have been repetitive articulations of memory that can create common conceptual structures that can be shared by the entire society. And, there should have been material and abstract frames, spaces and landscapes of social memory, which in Turkish context it has appeared as a very inefficient case.

To have a deeper examination of the mechanisms within which these visual products has not been very successful in reminding amnesic Turkish society of their traumatic memory, keeping the conditions of silence and repression in consideration, I searched for the ‘ideological’ tools within the films themselves. Therefore, from today’s point of view I looked at the strategies within which the films themselves have appeared as the commodities of ‘culture industry’. I contended that, the divergence of the genres and motifs of the movies is also related to strategy which concerns the ‘taste’ of the audience who has been attracted by more standardized melodramas, dramas, comics and conspiracies.

Consequently, the instant cluster of the 1980 coup films after the year 2004, constitutes a very important example in Turkish history, illustrating that there has been a ‘mnemonic visual trend’ persisting up to now, rather than a real memory ‘rupture’ in terms of commemorating, discussing or confronting with the past, trauma and the violence of the military-state. Although the films do reflect the coup times, they either transfer it to different stories or do not go deep into the issue. And since one example ‘Eve Donus’ reflects the reverse, that is, showing the violence and the ‘catastrophe’ of the period, it has been prominently ignored by the audience in comparison to other movies. Thus, lastly, it can be said that the dominant ideological

atmosphere of the silence, 'amnesia', 'secrecy' and 'repression' do still continue in Turkey although some expressive grounds are being opened. Yet, within this condition, these visual products stand for 'collected memory' items, that is, manifesting the essential historical, social, political and psychological mechanisms - constituting it in this particular way- in recent history of Turkey.

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