

RECONSTRUCTION OF TURKISH NATIONAL SPACE: HOW TO CIVILIZE PEASANTS?

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Abstract

National identity building is a project to rebuild the cultural heritage, history, and vision of the nation-states. States embark on cultural initiations such as rewriting the history, exemplifying a certain type of family life, and spatial conditioning of the nation to strengthen the adherence of national identity. These attempts come into being in language policies, regulation of public spaces, shaping lifestyles, and cultural policies in modernization processes. As such, after the World War One, young Turkey starts a cultural transformation after the pioneering of the elites. This change has a vision of "Westernization" and nation-building. The State Theater of Turkey is an institution founded on the premises of modernization, during the period of transition to democracy and met the purpose of representing the Turkish nation in the global gaze. The foundation of the institution is concurrent with the repeal of the one-party government in 1949. Therefore, it is possible to see the vision of nation-building and the eagerness of Westernization in the repertory of the State Theater as well as the political shift. Also, the institution worked as the nation's showcase during the convergence to the West block after the Second World War.

The space is a significant unit for nationalism, which aims at responding to the questions of where the nation is located and what the borders of nations are. However, the image of the space of a nation does not only include the borders of a nation-state to signify the international others of the nation. It also signifies the space where the people of the nation live, make a livelihood, practice their religion and solidify their identities with the feeling of "us" and "them" within the borders. Based on the historicity of the 1950s, this study argues that the Turkish national identity is complemented spatially with the image of "civilized Turkish urban dwellers" sharing "a nostalgia of village". The main objective of the study is to show that the sameness of Turkish identity relies on the emotion of nostalgia for the village, while Turkishness is imagined in a civilized life in the cities.

The research applies critical discourse analysis on the theater screenplays, focusing on the "sameness" and "otherness" in the dialogues of the characters. The analysis highly benefits from the method of description and analysis developed by Wodak, Cillia, and Reisigl on the discursive construction of national identities. The study covers the repertory of the State Theater from the foundation of the institution in 1949 until the cease of the democratic function by the military coup in 1960, where the dramaturgical preferences have changed dramatically in the aftermath.

Findings demonstrate that the nation-building process in Turkey pays attention to the reconstruction of the national space in the 1950s with various dimensions such as religion, state, narrative, and national identity. The image of Turkish national space is pictured in the cities, with a nation yearning for its hometown villages. Results contribute to the literature by escalating the debates on the cultural geographies by pulling the focus on the feelings of "sameness" within the national borders.

Keywords: nationalism, nation-state, state theater, national identity, Turkey, space.

Preamble

Eugene Weber, in his important book "Peasants into Frenchmen" looks at the history, agencies, and the outlook of the change and the assimilation strategies of the making of French nationals out of peasants. There he remarks on the engagement of the local with the center through modernization of the rural. As Benedict Anderson suggests that the nationalism relates the local to an abstract time and space and constructs imagined political communities through maps, museums, print capitalism, and other cultural makings (Anderson 2009). In this context, it is of great importance that nationalism keeps the dream of the feeling that individuals who are unlikely to see each other but form a nation-wide community alive in a certain territory and reproduces it. Culture constitutes the center of this reproduction. Therefore, cultural policies for nation-states have been important tools for the official expression of nationalism and its production in daily life.

Nation-building and integration policies of the national-scale community differ for each case. This makes it necessary to explain the nation-building processes of non-Western examples that differ from the Western understanding of nationalism with their own experiences (Mylonas 2020). Non-Western modernities have initiated nation-building processes that emphasize cultural subjectivity in the locomotive of nation-states. While nation-building expresses a process that interlocks around national identity, it highlights the ideology of nationalism with cultural tools. In this respect, the ideologies of nationalism ideally define the time the nation was born, what and who the nation was made of, and what its borders are. Non-Western modernities come into contact with the "other" by creating a "we" in terms of time, space, and identity, and are often regarded as non-civilized, progressive, non-contemporary, unable to keep up with this "us" (Göle 2000). In terms of spatial imagery, public buildings, institutions, squares, museums, statues, memorials, busts not only work for marking the city as a social space but also serves to symbolize the common space of the nationhood, contributes to the sense of "us". Thus, enables the construction of an image of civilized modern life. Non-Western modernities contain nationalism, to begin with, they have the potential to transform, represent, reflect the non-civilized part of the nation; namely the rural locales. As a part of non-Western modernities, Turkish case eventually gave a place to such a top-down Westernization program inscribed in national identity building process. Concurrently, modernizers have been criticized for the fear of excessive Westernization and the loss of self-identity (Mardin 1992; as cited in Göle 2020).

The literature predominantly deals with education, music, literary arts, cinema to figure out the state-based nationalism in the early Republican era. These works centralized the critical analysis of ideological perspectives of Kemalism, ethnosecular feature of the Turkish national identity, the place of Islam in Turkish nationalism, or the civic boundaries of Turkish national identity. However, the significance of this paper comes from its focus on 1950s Turkey, unlike many studies that mainly focus on the early Republican era encompassing the years between 1923-1938. There are two levels of studies regarding the construction of Turkish national space. The first level tackles the modernization movement in a wide range of topics including Turkish architectural culture and the planning of the modern cities as a part of national identity building (Bozdoğan 2010, Kasaba 2010, Tekeli 2010, Bozdoğan 2012). On the other hand, the secularization of the public space (Çınar 2005), contestations with Islam, the cultural change in the cities, and the role of the nation-state in remaking the public through symbols in the public sphere stood up for

another level (Roy 2006, Çınar 2013, Çınar 2007). However, how the narratives reflected the 1950s Turkish national space has remained a significant topic to be discussed upon. Thus, the State Theater and their plays are evaluated due to their representative and reflexive power in creating and distributing the narratives.

Inspired by the questions Weber poses in his work that traces the history of making French nationals out of peasants, this study aims at taking a step further. And the study evaluates "how", by centralizing the Turkish case through narratives while minding the symbolism behind the making of the Turkish nation. This paper argues that Turkish national identity is imagined in the cities with a fear of excessive modernization with based on the loss of the essence of Turkishness that lied in the village life. Based on this argument, the study aims to explore the spatiality of Turkish national identity building in the 1950s through the State Theater's Turkish screenplays. The main argument of the research is the Turkish national identity building encompasses the spatial modernization moves; namely civilizing the peasants in the rural areas; but paradoxically the civilized modern Turkish nation develops a feeling of nostalgia for the purity of the village life. The representation of the national space through the performances of the State Theater allows the construction of the "sameness" for Turkish identity domestically. Furthermore, this imagery also opens up a place to the representation of the "otherness".

This paper pays attention to the discursive construction of national identities in the given locus. Based on this problem, the following questions are posed to the Turkish screenplays: where is the nation located? How is the nation imagined in that specific locus? The way to get the answers sought is to try to see those who are imagined as part of the "we" speaking for the nation and those who are portrayed as the "other" of the nation within the national space. This study makes use of the "discourse-historical approach", which uncovers the discursive strategies of dissimulation and assimilation in national identity narratives, developed by Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak. The problem of the study underscores the picture of the identification of the Turkish nation in the imagined space in the 1950s in the division of city-village life.

The Making of a Modern Turkish Theater

Right after the announcement of Ankara as the capital, the town was built as a modern space, surrounded by public institutions, squares, museums, memorials, educational and artistic buildings. These investments contributed to the designation of the nationhood in line with the Kemalist, ethnosecular principles in the public space. Also worked for a transformation of rural life turning into modern civilized city life, which then spread nationwide. City centers with main streets, public buildings, and educational buildings were proliferated and became the new look of the young civilized Turkish nation. These changes were supported by cultural policies as well. Until 1938, cultural policies have largely established Turkish national identity on an ethno-secular ground (Yıldız 2004). Kemalism used all kinds of tools for a rapid integration of modernism into a new society, especially in the 1930s (Ahmad 2014: 89).

With the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1938, the Single Party regime and the primary role of Kemalism were interrupted (Zürcher 2020).). When İsmet İnönü became the President of the Republic, a different period was entered. Although the institutional foundations of cultural policies were laid before this date, it was through İnönü's efforts that it was put into practice. In addition to the institutionalization of the cultural policies, many German professors, who either resided in Turkey before World War 2 or exiled from Nazi Regime, had great contributions in the cultural reformation. After 1938, it is assumed that this point of view was reinforced by statism in the İnönü Period. State-party integration can be given as an example (Ahmad 2014). At the end of World War II, when the war ended, the conditions of democratization

and Westernization were drawn to a different frame. Thereby, the 1940s became the decade to kick off the institutionalization of cultural investments. Thereby, the cultural initiations, including the projections of founding a State Theater, would be maintained and sprawled.

In the 1930s, the Single Party ideology came into life in theater plays in the Public Houses (Başbuğ 2013). The idealist plays written between 1933 and 1935 aimed to make the people adopt Atatürk's revolutions. (Mutluay 1973: 660). On the other hand, the 1940s and the 1950s are the years of institutionalization of cultural policies. The framing, the content, and the outlook started changing along with the political climate. These years have become decades for the institutional realization of what's been promised by the 1935 Republican People's Party program while facing the end of World War Two, transition to the multiparty regime, and the Democrat Party winning the elections in 1950.

The history of the State Theater dates back to the establishment of the State Conservatory in 1936. The conservatory was located in the capital Ankara, despite the well-developed artistic sector in İstanbul. German scholar Carl Ebert shaped the educational system in Conservatory under the Ministry of Education and has made great contributions to the training of many stage artists and directors. Also, Muhsin Ertugrul treasured his experiences and the repertory from Darülbedayi to the Conservatory. The Conservatory trained the required staff for a future State Theater in Ankara. The State Theater was founded in 1949 with the support of the President İsmet İnönü. In addition to the institutional support, he also provided moral support personally by attending the performances. With the academic touches of Carl Ebert in the education of drama professionals, the State Theater stands out as a significant artistic institution during the transition to multi-party life and nation-building during the Democratic Party Period. Besides, the State Theater sees itself as the fortress of the Republic reforms (Yazgan 2012).

In managerial practice, the State Theater is organized as an autonomous art institution, has a literary board and its actors work as public servants (Karslı 2013). Although autonomy is granted to the institution by the founding law, there is an organic link with the state in budget and administrative matters. In the institution, where the choices of the dramaturgy team are autonomous, this organic bond inevitably has an ideological impact. According to law number 5441, which established the State Theater in 1949, the members of the literary delegation, who are authorized in forming the repertory were appointed by the Minister of National Education.

The State Theater was established in the capital, Ankara, *Ulus* ["nation" in Turkish], and soon became one of the most important public spaces in the city. In the 1950s, it is seen that the target audience of the State Theater was the bureaucrats, students and faculty members of the medical, political, and military schools and the children of these people. The institution served as a visual and auditory mass communication tool in the 1950s when visual communication technologies were not common. The State Theater uses a language that helps developing a sense of participation, general will, belonging, common hopes and a standard language (Akar 2017).

It is understood from the transformation in the political and socio-cultural conditions of the period that there were differences in the perspective of nation-building after the military coup of May 27, 1960. This transformation was reflected in the staff of the State Theater, Muhsin Ertuğrul, the head of the State Theater, was replaced by Cüneyt Gökçer, after this separation, the chief director Mahir Canova and many artists left the State Theater and established the private Meydan Theater (Kavas 2015). In Ankara, where private initiatives such as Ankara Art Theater were revived, the State Theater lost its function as a pioneering public space in the field of theater in the capital. Institutional practices differed with the opening of private theaters

and the acceleration of socialist movements in the 1960s. The State Theater, which continues to produce content at different moments of nation-building and whose plays are followed with interest, continues to show their performances to art consumers by diversifying their target audience nation-wide.

Methods

The theater is one of the most powerful venues for socialization (Toprak 2017). It creates public space and can function as media. The importance of theater in nation-building processes also stems from its performative power and the inevitability of the relationship between theater and politics. In non-Western modernization movements, the narrative relationship of culture and art with nationalism and the nation-state makes it important to present "how" the national identity is presented. The performative metaphorical power of theater provides a functional space for the reproduction of modernization and nationalism (Schuler 2009). The relationship with the nation's intellectual theater, Turkey is discussed from different perspectives in the context of theater history and theater criticism. In general, it has been assumed that each nation has a theatrical tradition that "naturally" arises from its own culture. Undoubtedly, the State Theater can perform the culture and art contents of the period with narratives. The repertoire has the power to repeat a certain point of view within the framework of nation-building, based on literary accumulation, through common themes. These narratives allow the ideology of nationalism to disseminate, reproduce, reify and make national identity a part of the *habitus*.

Data of the study is the repertory of the State Theater between the seasons 1949-1950 and 1959-1960. The plays were selected by the Literary Board. The State Theater performed almost 180 plays and 156 of them were found and taken out from the archives by permission. Representative plays are drawn upon their reach to the audience and the frequency of the codings.

There are certain limitations to this paper. First of all, based on the argument this study focuses on the space theme. Secondly, this study does not operate a numerical content analysis due to the semantic shifts caused by the metonymies. Counting words related to the "nation and nationalism" was misleading. Nevertheless, the codings were counted and the frequency of the codes was articulated while drawing the representative plays for the "space". Finally, this paper centralizes the topics/content level of explanation. Hereby, strategies and linguistic means, and forms of realization as Wodak et al offers in their methods will not be evaluated due to the demarcation of this report.

This paper applies the discourse historical approach, whose departure point is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), on textual dialogues. CDA aims to give an insight into the discreet agenda of what's been written and conveyed through texts (Fairclough 2003). These texts are taken as social practices that produce, reproduce and make the power relations real. Power relations inscribed into meanings shall be evaluated in their historicity with their intertextual and interdiscursive relations (Wodak et al. 2009). Reaching what is behind the ordinary phrases, requires a peculiar understanding of the focused culture.

Generally speaking of CDA, Norman Fairclough suggests that there are three steps of producing meanings: production of the text, the text itself, and reception. Production is made by the authors. When applied to the State Theater in the Turkish case, the production has become real in three aspects: organic link to the State, the preferences of the literary board, the author of the screenplay. Thereby, how the outside of the text is brought into the text becomes significant (intertextuality). For the Turkish case, the narratives come from the State Theater. These narratives reinforce the collective remembrance, official power of recreating, and distribution of the national identity discourse.

Although Norman Fairclough is the one who gave CDA its theoretical and practical shape as a model, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak develops strategies to lighten up the discursive construction of national identities. The discourse historical approach assumes that national identities are not completely consistent, stable, and immutable. That makes the national identity-building processes dynamic and incoherent, although they assert the contrary. Numerous channels play an active role in offering the images of identities in everyday discourses. Then a nation is taken as a symbolic community constructed discursively (Cillia et al. 1999), reproduces, reified, and realized through nationalism.

There are three levels of analysis. The first one is the topics/contents, the second one is strategies and the final one is the linguistic means and forms of realization.

The level of topics and contents are derived from the idea of Turkishness with emotional identification of the self and the other. Emotions that speak for the emotions of Turkishness bring about the discursive construction of narrative and national identities. Also, the narrative of collective political history is another complementary unit of the national identity, for its power to cohere the present with an interpretation of a common past. The discursive construction of a common culture based on language, religion, arts, science and technology, everyday culture is another aspect, whereas the discursive construction of a collective present and future holds another with its references to the national emblems, state emblems, bureaucracy, educational institutions and symbols used in common in the contents. Finally, the discursive construction of the national body (space) fixates the narrative identity in the space, defines the territory and the landscape of the nation. The preliminary reading of the playscript provides four topics that coincide with the abovementioned scope: religion, state, narrative and national identity, narrative of a collective history.

Religion has never lost its room in the people's lives (Mitchell, 2006) while defining themselves and establishing solidarity. This solidarity is often conceived as kinship, tribal bonds, or ethnicity (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996). Religion is capable of defining the good values to be attributed to the sense of "us" and the bad values generally attributed to the "other" (Akar 2017). Therefore religion enables communities to develop a sense of belonging, reinforces the sense of "us" on the national scale. Besides, the political tension between secularism and the politicization of Islam makes religion a significant determinant in understanding how non-Western nationalisms are constructed and why the nation-state is perceived as a vital unit in nationalism (Özdalga, 2014). The way Islam is experienced in national space is a good indicator of how the practices and the belief system relate themselves with nationalism.

National identity-building projects encompass a process of building loyalty to the state as well as the nation (Connor 1978). Therefore, the state is not only an administrative apparatus but also the power to mobilize the national body in the given territory. State's knowledge points out how the state builds the national identity and how it is perceived by the intellectuals (Safran, 1991). For Bourdieu, the contribution of the state to the nation-building process is through its political agents and representatives (from Cillia et al. 1999). These political agents either can be the mass communication channels such as schooling, opera, theater, or the political figures such as teachers, bureaucrats, governors etc. to represent the state in the narrative within the public space.

Narrative and national identity rely on the direct definitions of the sameness and the differences (Wodak et al. 2009) one can speak for oneself or a nation. The units that constitute the sense of "us" are sameness, solidarity, victimhood, and mainly the positive manners and gestures that are only attributed to "us" on the national scale. On the other hand, "them" is constructed upon hostility, dominance/cruelty, and negative

manners. Inversely, "us" are the dominants who speak for the nation whereas "them" are the controlled, oppressed, and silenced (Cillia et al. 1999 from Akar 2017).

Finally, the narrative of a collective history helps reproducing the nationalistic elements in history in a selective way, builds a collective memory in a perceived national space. These elements help constructing the myths of the nation, by the help of historical events, historical political figures, social traumas etc. Elements of the narrative of a collective political history speak for the emotions of the members of the nation. Besides, each national identity building moment interprets these elements the way the political unit aims to disseminate.

Findings: How to Civilize Peasants?

The Discursive Construction of a National Body: The Space of the Nation in the Division of the City and the Village

Narratives of Turkish playwrights with regards to the space of the Turkish nation will indicate where and how the space of the Turkish nation is imagined through local eyes. Thematically space-oriented plays were conditioned either in cities or in the villages. Both sides articulate images of where and how the Turkish nation lives in cities and villages. The spaces of these plays do not tackle the national and international borders; rather they let the audience anticipate a given territory, centralize the problem of the modern and the "civilized" life. There are representative playscripts in the repertory of the State Theater between 1949 and 1960: Cevat Fehmi Başkut's *Küçük Şehir* (The Small City), Ahmet Kutsi Tecer's *Köşebaşı* (The Neighbourhood), Nazım Kurşunlu's *Çiğ* (The Snowslip), Turgut Özakman's *Güneşte On Kişi* (Ten People on the Sun) and children's play *Kara Boncuk* (The Black Bead), written by Mümtaz Zeki Taşkın. The space of the nation in *Küçük Şehir* and *Çiğ* is a small Anatolian town and a secluded village, whereas the space in *Köşebaşı*, *Güneşte On Kişi*, and *Kara Boncuk* is the city.

Küçük Şehir (The Little City) (Başkut 1969) is about the little ordinary lives of people in a small town in Anatolia called *Çiftkayalar*, after the proclamation of the Republic. It is not a play that worships the reforms, instead, it demonstrates the antagonism between the central and the peripheral lifestyles, sarcastically. A group of people stops by in the town for few days, and they bring evil from the city life, and stains both the pureness and the peace of the life in the town. The visitors from the city are greeted by the mayor of the town who makes everyone feel that he is the representative of the state there. The State Theater staged *Küçük Şehir* in the very first season.

Köşebaşı (The Neighbourhood) (Tecer n.d.) The play whose space is a neighborhood in İstanbul. The characters intersect in the same corner in the neighborhood, where Macit Bey, the main character, lived and passed, his son faces his past while the play takes pictures of residents' daily lives. The play was put onto the stage in *Darülbeydi* (İstanbul City Theater) and then *Tatbikat* (Practice) Theater before the State Theater took this play into the repertory. The State Theater put the play onto the stage during the 1951-1952 season. Ahmet Kutsi Tecer's works overlap with the period of seeking a national identity.

Çiğ's (The Snowslip) by (Kurşunlu n.d.) space of is a secluded village, in which the dwellers are aware of the differences between a villagers life and a city dweller's life. The author draws the adaptation failure of the villagers' lives in a city through their look while referring to their good intention. *Çiğ* was staged during the 1952-1953 season by the State Theater.

Güneşte On Kişi (Özakman n.d.) was launched by Turgut Özakman during 1955-1956 season. Turgut Özakman worked as a dramaturg once and the Head of the State Theater. The play tells the story of a group of journalists who are tired of the dirty system, the sovereignty of the money that they are dealing with as well as the difficulties of the city life. The first space of the play is the administrative office of the journal which is pictured untidy. The second space is the apartment of Kenan. The playscript reflects the lack of inner peace of the characters, who mainly feel Anatolian, while they are trying to hold on to the city life and make a livelihood. Yet they feel like they are selling their souls to the system. The playscript is a good example in the repertory to get an understanding of the author's view on the transformation of the values in Turkey by the time. These changing values are caused by being caught between embracing a Western lifestyle which brings about a push forward to make a livelihood in the market as a graduate and the possibility to take shelter in an Anatolian village where their essence resides.

Kara Boncuk (The Black Bead) was performed in 1950-51 season. It is a children's musical theater. Taşkın is a children's poet and playscript author who has an important place in Turkish children's literature. Many works of his were accepted and performed by the State Theater. The story of *Kara Boncuk* takes place in a house in a city. The main theme is the spatial division between the village and the city.

Discursive Construction of a Common Culture: Religion

This section urges upon how religion is represented in the national space and how religion contributes to the national identity building process in the 1950s through the local playwright's lenses.

Even though the public sphere is modernized and secularized after the proclamation of the republic, religion never loses its place in either city dwellers' or villagers' lives. The innate behaviors and cues in the context of religion provide implicit solidarity among the characters, especially when they struggle with the narratives of the modern city lifestyle, although some enjoy Westernization. In this context, the study examines the city-village-neighborhood theme through religion codes.

First, Cevat Fehmi Başkut's *Küçük Şehir* is on the little lives in a small town in Anatolia called *Çiftkayalar*, after the proclamation of the Republic. The visitors from the city are greeted by the mayor of the town who makes everyone feel that he is the representative of the state there. He thinks the visitors coming from İstanbul would bring virtuous values of the era such as science and knowledge and teach villagers how to earn money. They'd help to transform the town into a small city (Başkut 1969,8). However, the visitors don't even know geographically where the town is and don't seem to care. Undoubtedly religion is one of the most important parts of daily life in the town, therefore the religious phrases are very often in daily language. "Narrative others" of the play are the visitors and among them the "non-muslim" citizen who helps the thief to trick the pure villagers. The non-muslim, beautiful, singer woman character called *Eleni* (Başkut 1969,22), who also uses Islamic phrases just like the way the Muslims and the villagers do: "*Hamdüsena olsun. Çok şükür Allah'a.*" [Prays to be said. Thanks to Allah] (Başkut 1969, 21). Insider difference is used as a point to demonstrate that non-Muslim entities might be tricky. However the villager woman Setaret (Bacı) thinks that Eleni is evil and a "non-believer dame" (Başkut 1969,15). The villager perceives that the city dwellers abuse the villagers. The purity is attributed to the religious villagers, who represent the essence of the Turkish nation if one searches for the essence to hold on to as a characteristic feature of the Turkish nation.

Çığ (Kurşunlu n.d.) has a space on a mountain road during the winter; it is inside of a lodging. We understand that it is inner Anatolia and it is not a luxurious place to stay in at all. The characters of the play are Muslim, as they use Muslimhood referenced many phrases while talking. There is an unmarried couple that runs away from their families to get together. And the villagers around are looking for them, as well as the gendermary officer. Since what the couple did was a sin, the villagers also use the term chastity in terms of religiosity. However, the main characters Mevlut and Dursun feel pity for the couple at the same time: "May *Allah* protect them, hope they can find a nook to take shelter in..." (Kurşunlu, nd). The author criticizes the religiosity that's reflected in traditional practices, here to force the young couple to run away, even though they know that it was going to be perceived as sin to be punished. While defining the nation as Muslim, he can't help criticizing the place of Islam in defining the moral values and traditions in the society such as chastity.

The daily use of the Islamic phrases in *Güneşte On Kişi* is a subtle indicator of self-definition. There are no foreign characters or non-muslim characters, in that sense, or there is no particular emphasis on a counter feeling towards a specific character. The characters all use these phrases with or without aiming at emphasizing Muslimhood. But on the other hand, the Western lifestyles of the characters are portrayed as people who drink wine. *Güneşte On Kişi* has several codings for religion on a daily language basis. The characters are city dwellers however they question their existence and their values or use Islamic words such as "*Allah kahretsin!*", "*Allah belasını versin!*" [*Allah damn it!*]. City dwellers are the representatives of a new, modern nation and citizenship. They are Muslim, without a doubt because their language often refers to Muslimhood. On the other hand, they also drink wine and the author makes wine a symbol of Westernized lifestyle with their conflicts in their minds with regards to changing and degenerated values of their society while they miss villagers' purity.

Local playwrights turn their faces to the villages for their being carriers of traditional, religious, specifically Islamic values. Therefore it is possible to deduce that the feeling of sameness is based on Muslimhood, in terms of national identity building. However, there are no practices of Islam. Even though words work for the sameness, there are no physical clues to make it visible in the space of the nation.

Discursive Construction of a Collective Present and Future: State

Nations are bounded by some of the state's features such as the virtue of legal rights and duties of the nation's members, namely the citizens of the nation-state or the power of bureaucracy, public institutions, emblems, symbols of the nation. The cities have become the main intervening public space of the modernization, where the state defines the modern members of the state as the city dwellers. The coming across of citizens and the state, the meaning of these gatherings, and the self-positionings of both state and the members of nation indicate the imagined Picture of the nation.

In *Küçük Şehir*, representatives of the state in the rural are the mayor and the teacher. The teacher gathers all the important and good features of the well-educated Republican elite. The character is trustworthy, care about getting together for the common good, compromising. On the other hand, the teacher is doubtful about a potential contact between city-village culture. He expects evil from the "other"; namely the modern city dwellers. The character wants a compromise between two different cultures but ends up with a sharper gap: "...People are divided into different types. Don't bring a city-dweller to the village, he cannot survive. Don't take the villager to the city, he cannot feel content. Therefore, I don't interpret favorably, a delegation coming by from a big city like İstanbul and joining us, although they are coming for a certain time..."

(Başkut 1969,9). This perception and the cultural tension is reinforced and regenerated by Ramazan Pasha: “Mercy! How could you think that a Pasha’s daughter would marry a dirty-poor peasant?”. However the answer by Adem is more inclusive: “Just like the way a Pasha’s son marries a villager girl...” (Başkut 1969, 37). The teacher is the state's smiling, illuminating face shown to the villagers. Interestingly, this cue also draws attention to the social strata as well as the gender bias inscribed in. The representative of the collective present: the teacher, acknowledges the shortcomings of the modernization project, he is in the village to modernize the peasants so he would do the betterments minding beautiful features of the villagers.

Cevat Fehmi Başkut criticizes the bureaucracy and the bureaucratic procedures as well as elites discreetly in *Küçük Şehir*. These procedures involve the ceremony for the visitors organized by the mayor, people who fly the flags reluctantly, the copy-paste speech, and getting prepared in neat outfits. The author perceives these details as unnecessary actions of the bureaucratic apparatus. We can also pursue the clues of populism embedded in bureaucracy and political life in a small town. The ones who feel that they are representatives of the state, make populist promises, even though they are aware that it is impossible to make them real: “...we will build an ice factory this summer. We will found a 500 beds hospital. A book palace, an art gallery. However, sir, these are all intentions... all dreams...” (Başkut 1969, 5). And the former deputy who is among the visitors has no idea where they are located: "I was *Kayseri* deputy for some time. But I have never heard of the name of *Çiftkayalar* Town until now." This way, Başkut wants to call attention to the rising populism and degenerated political life. Politicians forget they are serving the people, however have no idea who those people are, what their expectations and wills are; they don't even know their place on the map. What these people want to speak up for their needs is to develop socioeconomically and become "modern" just like the bigger cities which are perceived as the cradle of the Turkish nation. They want to be a part of that cradle, as putting their pure Turkish essence in it.

The Idea of Turkishness: Narrative and National Identity

The narrative and national identity section focus on how Turkish playwrights imagine collective sameness and difference in national terms in the construction of national space. The examination of the narrative and national identity discourse under the village-city division provides an arbitrary assessment for individual and collective identities in the public space. This study examines whether the member of the Turkish nation is perceived as a city dweller or a village dweller, how those are affected by the modernization process.

The tension between the villager's life and the city dweller's life emerges from different use of daily language in *Küçük Şehir*. Although sameness is constructed on "us" as a whole, city dwellers represent a certain type of lifestyle where the village represents perceive them as the opponent identity, while they represent purity and virtue. The visitors speak Turkish with foreign words and the locals don't feel it genuine: "Learn Turkish first and then come by!..." (Başkut 1969, 15). Therefore villagers claim that they are the real Turkish because what they are speaking is real Turkish. For example, Adem asks visitor Eleni: “...do you not know any Turkish fairy tales? Only the French, English or German tell them? Do you think Turkish don't?” and sets the play’s sameness on being Turkish, where he puts French, English and German to the forth as national “others”. Posing this question to Eleni is meaningful because of her identity. Eleni is a non-Muslim, probably of Greek origin, modern woman who embraced Western culture. Although she is an insider, she is captiously taken into the dialogue.

The artistic features and cultural developments in terms of Westernization are perceived as rubbish by the ordinary people in *Köşebaşı*; "Look around, everywhere is full of theater! Did you get it *gavur* boy!" (Tecer n.d., 10). However, for the new generation, they are fun and worth learning and following academically or socially. However, none of the characters deny that they are Easterns who are living in a big city. Even the ones who go to the West to get educated in arts and sciences, construct their sameness on Eastern identity and dissimilates themselves from the positive manners of Western cultural identity. The narrative others are *ecnebler* (foreigners) and *gavurlar* (non-believers) throughout the text (Tecer n.d., 10, 40). The characters are not willing to meet new people, especially foreigners by stepping out of the neighborhood. The community culture in a big city like İstanbul is based on the perceptions of "the others" of the residents. So they try to rebuild their nostalgic life in a big city, fed by dissimulation.

Even though the local neighborhood culture is based on being Muslim, Eastern and traditions, the residents, especially the new generation city dwellers prefer compromising native culture and the Western cultural elements such as going out to listen to both *fasıl* (Turkish classical music) and jazz music at the same entertainment. The musician character is one of those, who are aware of the conflicting coexistence of the trendy Western style of living and the local cultural elements "I am a violinist, but I also play *cümbüş*, clarinet, or another. Whenever I need to, I also play accordion, saxophone... You know, world for a living, we fit the trend." (Tecer n.d., 57). One can observe the enthusiasm for knowing, applying, synthesizing the Western and Turkish cultures at a time.

The author wants to reflect the gap between the ones who are educated in the West and the people who are living in the neighborhood and point out the miscomprehension of modernization. The young girl and the son of the Pasha represent the younger generation, having educated in the West, using French words, and referring European artists while talking. They feel they are Westernized while reinforcing their Eastern identities with a constitutive other, which is again Europe (Tecer n.d., 42).

The space of Nazım Kurşunlu's *Çığ* (Kurşunlu n.d.) is settled in a secluded village, in which the dwellers are aware of the difference between a villagers life and a city dweller's life. The author shows the failure of adaptation of the villagers' living in a bigger city through their look while referring to their good intention: "*Dursun appears, around twenty-five years, although he resides in a city, he couldn't get rid of his villager look yet, a pure-minded young man.*" (Kurşunlu n.d., 2). The city dwellers are the roots for the bad intention because they represent the degenerated lifestyle: "Would it be a favor from a girl who was born and raised in a city? We were told, however, it goes in one ear and out the other." (Kurşunlu n.d., 4). However, the ones who move to the village can't help enjoying city life too; "We couldn't do in the village, sergeant. City is a whole new ball game." (Kurşunlu n.d., 5). Neighborhood culture, for the latecomers to the big cities are the follow-ups of smaller lives that they had back in their villages.

In *Güneşte On Kişi* the characters romanticize the village as their hometown after experiencing the profaning lifestyle in the city. The village is where the virtue stands and it is still pure in terms of social values. Although the village represents safety for them, the character Yıldız, doesn't want to have dinner with provincial journalists within her dialogue with the character *Foto*. When they chase the events, they disengage themselves from the rest of society. For them, society is the actor and they are the audience of what bad has done by society. It is to deduce that characters have roots in villages they feel that they are Muslim, their daily language refers to the prophet and Allah often, however, they feel that they are not embraced by the new social values that were brought about by modernization. Their lifestyles turn out to

be Westernized, more specifically *Foto*, uses some French words sarcastically in dialogues, both to refer to Yıldız and Cemal's constraining Westernized lifestyle and degenerated social values. *Foto's* mock demonstrates the tension between the synchronization and dissimilation of Western values and the essence of being Turkish: "Would you like to have some more *sucuk*, *sinyor*?" (Özakman n.d., 23). *Sucuk* is Turkish sausage. *Foto* is a character to represent the correct way of synthesizing Western values and the essence of the possessed culture by the Turkish nation. As he is aware of many European literary works as well as the philosophical roots. He gives references to the Ancient Greek philosophers and European authors in his dialogues. These sources were popular those days by means of the correct way of understanding modernization and Westernization. He salutes European culture, but he also salutes the Amon-Ra, the Ancient Egyptian God of Sun. So he is not turning his back to the other civilizations. The character *Foto* uses Western- European authors' works like *Faust*, but refers to Tarık bin Ziyad who conquered Andalusia as an Emevi commander, in the same sentence, without a clue for what he exactly means. Similarly, Cemal asks *Foto*, "Has the war started? What a noble outfit, *üstad* (master)? Are you going to act Hamlet?" (Özakman n.d., 8). *Foto* is a sarcastic character who always mocks the other coworkers.

This section demonstrates that narrative and national identity are stuck between being a villager and a city dweller, as it is stuck between being Eastern and Western, having the dilemma of being either carrier of the essence of the national identity or the presenter of modernization. The authors criticize the elitist way of doing politics tacitly and recommend Turkish national identity to refer and synthesize both Eastern and Western civilizations in the national space.

Narrative of a Collective Political History

The mayor in *Küçük Şehir* is a character who thinks he holds a position that makes him defend the common good and future automatically. The common good and future is something symbolic in his mind with Turkish flags and a common memory of "working under bullets" (Başkut 1969, 3). He sees himself as hierarchically superior to everyone but the visitors from a big city. So he gives orders to the residents of the town and the caretaker Ali to greet the visitors as well as they can (Başkut 1969, 3). The narrative "other" of the play is the strangers that are coming from İstanbul, in general. The narrative carries almost all bad features such as craftiness and fraud. The sameness of the play is constructed on common history, and Sultan Mehmet II is used symbolically: "...**Our** lineage has raised numerous heroes who were in the forefront of Fatih.", "And our lineage goes until the (Ottoman) golden age (*devr-i saadet*)."(Başkut 1969,7). Therefore it is obvious that memories are working to build a common history, sameness while making peace with the golden ages of the Ottoman Empire, on the contrary to the official Kemalist ideology of the 1930s.

The main character Macit Bey in *Köşebaşı*, used to be a member of the Union and Progress Party and he is one of the founders of the new regime, yet he didn't have much to legate. While the author emphasized the virtue of the character with him not getting involved in materialism, he also makes the audience comprehend that the young generation has started to forget about the difficult times that the country and the previous generations got through: The Grocery Man: "... Once upon a time there were *İttihatçı* (unifier) and *İtilafçı* (disunified)... You don't know them. This is one of those *İttihatçı*. You know, of the Young Turks. Well, you don't know them either... To know the old things are good though. Those Young Turks deployed Abdulhamit from the throne..."(Tecer n.d., 8). One can easily see that this old man is offended by being forgotten, depending on the changing lifestyles, caused by modernization in cities. What he tries to do is to

congregate the memories and the new space to legate what has been done for the common good of this country.

The characters' emotions of being trapped are related to the swing between the virtue of the village and the degenerated principles of the modern city life in *Güneşte On Kişi*. In the second scene, the character *Baba* (Father) sits and talks to Cemal while drinking some wine. *Baba* feels upset with the people he lives amongst. He refers to the memory of the peoples and says, “(by yelling) People? What is that said to be people? The people have no memory... I was the beloved of the people, once. What happened then? Look at here, the struggle with the eight-strand octopus”. (Özakman n.d.) This quote seems significant for its indication of lack of trust in the masses in an elitist and implicit way.

Conclusion

In short, this paper highlighted the division between the village and the city in the spatial construction of Turkish national identity through the agency of the State Theater. The national identity is imagined in the cities with a fear of excessive modernization with losing the essence of Turkishness. Our analysis of the discursive construction of the space of the Turkish national identity also presented the strategies of assimilation and dissimulation. The sameness of Turkishness is built on imagined village life. Good values such as being pure and honest are attributed to the villagers. Inversely, the plays take on the sense of sameness on the city dwellers since the crowd whose lifestyle is yearned for lives in the modern Turkish city centers. However, the essence of Turkishness resides in the villages. The critical tone towards modernization through the state, religion, and national identity gives this contradiction. The contradiction indicates a division between the village and the city which is a consequence of the construction of Turkish national identity within the modernization process. The nationalism is directed to the West and non-Muslim communities, who were silenced in dialogues, with bad values are attributed to them. These are not done openly but with discreet elements inscribed in the cues, e.g. the name of a character. Findings underscore the underlying objective of discursive national identity building; first the fulfillment of the modernization of the peasants and the second, engaging them with the civilized life. However, the spatial image of the modernized national bodies ended up with a fear of losing the essence, a critical outlook towards the modern city-dwellers, and the romanticization of the village life. Turkish national identity is constructed on the image of "civilized Turkish urban dwellers" who has a common feeling of "the nostalgia of a village life". Yet, the role given to the state is to civilize and rescue the peasants. As a result, the design of the Turkish nation's space includes a division of city life- and villagers' lives. The nation is imagined with its new face in the cities as a part of modernization process of the peasants however without the virtuous essence of the nation.

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