

## **A Review of Educational Philosophy From Different Perspectives Through an Analysis of Period Movies During the Era of the War of Independence and the Early Republic of Turkey (1920-1940)**

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### **Abstract**

Movies, especially period movies, have the potential to convey information, ideas and experiences from previous era, are able to depict in a truthful manner fashion trends and the style of furniture that people used as furniture in their houses, can make the audience think and can even teach at times. This study examines the educational concepts and trends of the era spanning the War of Independence and the early years of the Republic through an analysis of the movies, Çalıkuşu, Vurun Kahpeye and Öğretmen Kemal. It involves the use of the document review and descriptive analysis method, which are qualitative research methods. The research data was collected using film observation forms developed uniquely by the authors. During the analysis process, firstly, the observation forms were decoded before identifying scenes in the specified movies pertaining to education and related themes. The results were underpinned by direct quotes from the movies, movie frames and direct references to the scenes themselves to improve reliability. According to the conclusions reached with the findings of the study, Re-constructionism was identified as the dominant educational philosophy of the time. The study also found that in the movies, teachers were shown to be expected to take up additional social duties, such as being community leaders, doctors or nurses, as well as their roles in teaching and education. Furthermore, according to the films, teachers perceive education as a tool for social development while it can be said that society sees education as a loss of labor and as culture poisoning. In this context, the conflict between teachers and society as a whole is included in the conclusions of the study.

**Keywords:** Educational Philosophy, Movies in Education

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## INTRODUCTION

The interaction between society and the individual sometimes takes place directly and at other times indirectly. It is an apt example of direct interaction where a woman who dyes her hair blonde decides to keep the color or reverts to her old hair color depending on the reactions she gets. On the other hand, it is referred to as indirect interaction if one imagines in their mind's eye, for instance, Australia, without having been there before, through information from people who have been to Australia, pictures, books etc. Likewise, movies that appeal to a large audience can influence certain themes and images in the minds of individuals. This is due to the fact that they can reflect, through the codes they contain, ideas or information which can have a much stronger impact than written documents or visual images.(Akcan & Polat, 2016) Movies are not only works of art, but also serve as tools of mass communication. The codes in movies are able to come to represent concepts(Yüksel, 2015). This helps conjure up an image in the viewer's mind.

Movies have the power to influence the viewers' understanding of events and their reactions to those events. Movies not only influence behavior, but they also influence our aspirations, beliefs, and perspectives with regards to a given concept. Depending on the society, profession, culture, perceptions or attitudes of the individual, this power of influence can be either intense or superficial. Since films are tools of the media powered by sound and images, they can evoke intense emotions and thoughts.(Demirtaş, 2013; Kavan & Burne, 2009; Lippmann, 2017; Tofur, 2017; Wolfrom, 2011) Psychologists have found that the persuasiveness of films is based on their ability to create images in the minds of the viewers. Faced with the formidable power of movies, some researchers have expressed concern that films are changing the social reality of young people in society. However, some authors take a positive view of the power of movies. They describe films as a new way of thinking about life, and not as a detrimental force that undermines the fabric of society, and they note that a paradigm shift has taken place in mass communication. Previously, this form of communication was based exclusively on written texts, printed images or radio broadcasts. At that time, critics of popular culture saw this revolution as the introduction of a new method of information exchange that would ultimately change the nature of knowledge. By the middle of the 20th century, tools such as cinema and television had become the most important means of recognizing and understanding the world. Regardless of the source of the information obtained from these tools, they were seen to be able to change people's way of thinking about things rapidly and radically. What underlay this success was undoubtedly the public enjoying the audiovisual elements in the movies as a collective experience. It has also been suggested that films could have the power to redefine, rearrange or subvert mainstream culture and social institutions. (Munsterberg, 1970; Ansen, 1984; Gabler, 1998, Akt: Nederhouser, 2000).

Although movies have emerged as entertainment tools, the fact that, since their arrival, they have become a tool for cultural change cannot be ignored. In today's world, we are experiencing a co-existence of different cultures on a scale as never seen before. In these modern times when fixed identities and borders have lost their meaning and everything flows, so to speak, popular culture especially in the film world creates areas of learning from the foreign to the familiar. Films continue to be the perfect tool for anyone who wants to enjoy "cross-border" experiences through the prism of diversity. In this context, movies have recently played an educational role for many people. During the execution of film projects, producers and directors may not have the intention "to teach" the audience, but that does not mean that the audience learns nothing from the films (Hooks, 2009). The educational potential of movies benefits educational institutions, the advertising sector, religion and politics (Levy, 1999; Akt: Nederhouser, 2000). As Healy (1990) explains, films can be very convincing and effective at conveying and changing ideas (Akt: Nederhouser, 2000). For example, watching a war scene may leave the viewer with a more emotional impression than by simply reading about it in a history book. On the other hand, some movie scenes can encourage further reading and research and can offer new perspectives to achieve the intended goals. Furthermore, educational films about the past can help uncover the thoughts, perceptions, understanding and attitudes of social institutions and organizations towards education and educational concepts. In particular, they can provide insights into perspectives reflecting the educational philosophy of a specific time. In short, the philosophy of education refers to the corpus of work to address the problems of education, offering new interpretations in connection

with other social spheres by taking into account factors such as reality, truthfulness, utilitarianism and functionality, and throwing light on areas that fail or lag behind (Ünal & Ada, 2011). In other words, it is the search for solutions relative to the educational program, the method, the goal and the problems.(Ergün, 2018) In this context, the question of “What kind of citizens are we trying to produce” is the starting point of the philosophy of education. Different answers have been given to this question which have led to various philosophical movements within the field of education. Basically there are four major philosophies of education: perennialism, essentialism, progressivism and constructivism.

Perennialism defends absolutely immutable principles in education, attaches great importance to universal rules and traditions, and is the most conservative educational philosophy. In brief, it advocates the design of education according to fixed rules that have universal validity. According to perennialism, education should be based on unchanging facts, should impart intellectual knowledge and should develop the human mind.(Sönmez, 2011) Essentialism emphasizes that the overriding purpose of education is to convey to the next generation the collective experience, knowledge and cultural heritage of humanity. It is a conservative philosophical movement, and has been the most accepted and longest practiced philosophy in the world. Essentialists accept only educated individuals who know and adopt the principles that they believe all people should have. It is only in this way that conflicts between generations can be prevented and that the next generation can socialize (Tozlu and Yayla, 2006). Progressivism emerged as a reaction to essentialism. According to this philosophical movement, the essence of truth is change, and education can only progress through change. According to progressives, rules, ethics, culture and experiences change and must change according to time and circumstances. In education there is no room for fixed, definite and constant ideas. In addition, philosophies of education should take into account the needs of tomorrow as much as the needs of today.(Şişman, 2011) Finally, reconstructivism is a follow-up theory to progressivism which shares almost all its views. Education must shape the future of society and the world. This philosophy takes exception to the entire education system instead advocating reconstruction and radical change. In other words, it defies the system promoted by the establishment. In this respect, there are idealists who hold these opinions in every society, but since they are in the minority, they cannot bring their lofty ideas to bear upon society. According to reconstructivism, education is an instrument for restructuring, changing and pushing society forward while advancing social reforms. The teacher is as the representative and leader of change and reform. They enable others to become aware of problems. (Çelikkaya, 2010; Şişman, 2011)

Movies, especially period movies, have the potential to convey information, ideas and experiences from previous era, are able to depict in a truthful manner fashion trends and the style of furniture that people used as furniture in their houses, can make the audience think and can even teach at times. At the same time, movies provide information to the audience and researchers through the roles played by the characters. In this respect, the analysis of educational movies helps to shed light on public reactions to knowledge, notions, sensibilities and events that had shaped the era. It can also help researchers to identify problems that occur, or are likely to occur, in education and to help them find solutions.

In view of what has been discussed above, it is clear that the manner in which movies convey topics or phenomena to the public can be of great importance. This important aspect is worth exploring, both in terms of demonstrating society's view of education, teachers and the teaching profession as a whole, and in terms of the new cultural environment that the state was attempting to create through education. From this point of view, films that impart insights into a certain period of time, the cultural and social trends which shape that time should be considered especially important. To help arrive at a better understanding of this situation, this study also seeks answers to questions about the specific periods covered by the movies included in the study.

### **Purpose of the Research**

This study examines the educational concepts and trends of the era spanning the early years of the Republic through an analysis of the movies, Çalığışu, Vurun Kahpeye and Öğretmen Kemal.

### **Sub-objectives:**

Based on the analyzed movies:

1. What educational philosophy shaped the era?
2. What duties were given to teachers?
3. What was the perspective of the teachers and society on education?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

For this study, the qualitative analysis method was chosen as the study is more about discovery and interpretation than about proving an hypothesis. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), a document review involves the analysis of textual, visual and/or audio materials containing comprehensive information regarding the events or phenomena to be examined. Documents are important sources of information that can be used effectively in qualitative research studies. Documents, works and archives are a rich source of information for researchers (Hill, 1993). In undertaking such research, the researcher can retrieve the data needed without conducting interviews.

There are several ways to benefit from a document review. A document review may be a stand-alone method of data collection where observation or interviewing is not possible. It also offers the opportunity to collect additional data in order to improve the reliability and validity of the observations or interviews that have been carried out for the research purposes. This means that document analysis can act as a stand-alone investigative method or it can provide additional sources of information if other qualitative methods are being used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016: 189). According to Bailey (2008), the document review method has its strengths. Firstly, document review provides an important source of data in cases where the researcher cannot reach the relevant institutions or individuals directly to consult with them about the subject of the research. In comparison with other qualitative data acquisition techniques, this technique removes the immediacy of the medium through which research subjects would be able to vent their personal reactions. In addition, it provides wider opportunities in terms of time. For example, it is able to supply the research study with data going back many years. It allows a larger study sample than other qualitative methods such as interview and observation. Moreover, a document review contributes to authenticity as it is based on the analysis of concepts or phenomena as they were when they first appeared. The fact that the documents are duly ordered and registered makes it easier for the researcher to go through them to locate the information sought. As a final note, it saves the researcher time and money compared to many other research methods.

Determining what documents to use for the research study hinges on the study purpose. Within the framework of this research, the content analysis of movies, the primary sources of data for the study, were expected to yield the desired results.

### **Study Group (Study Materials)**

The study population is Turkish movies relating to education. The films included in the sample are Çalıkuşu (1 and 2), Vurun Kahpeye and Öğretmen Kemal. Taking into account the criterion sampling method, a purposeful method of sampling, this research study examines all aspects according to predefined criteria. The purpose of the criterion sampling method is to analyze situations that meet these criteria on the basis of the criterion or criteria defined by the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). More precisely, it refers to the selection of cases directly related to the issue postulated by the researcher. In addition, this technique helps the researcher maintain within the same group all aspects that are considered important for the research (Böke, 2014). To make up the study sample, the

study selected movies from the early years of the Republic (the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the early beginnings of the Republic of Turkey). The table below provides information about the films selected as the study material.

**Table 1. Movies included in the sample.**

Name of the movie	The teacher character	Character played by
Çalığışu (1 and 2)	Feride	Türkan ŞORAY
Vurun Kahpeye	Aliye	Sezer SEZİN
Öğretmen Kemal	Kemal	Cüneyt ARKIN

### **Data Collection Tools**

In this study, a film observation form developed specifically for the research study was used for data collection. To this end, the films included in the sample were viewed once by the two researchers in different locations and at different times before the data collection tools were established. Afterwards, it was decided to analyze the films under four main categories in accordance with the study purposes: the philosophy of education, the duties given to teachers and the teachers' and society's perspectives on education. And sub-categories such as dialogue, movie frames, the minutes and seconds of the scenes were then added to the observation form to provide more detailed information based on these aspects. In order to improve the validity of the form, the observation form took final shape in accordance with the recommendations of experts who were consulted for their opinions. Afterwards, in order to determine the conformity of the observation form with the purposes of the research, it was tested on another movie not included in the research and it was concluded that the observation form fitted the purposes of the research. In the final stage, the movies were analyzed frame by frame by the two researchers at different times and in different places, to seek answers to the research questions and to draw inferences.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The study data was collected using the document review method, which is a qualitative research method. A document review includes a range of recorded materials such as written, printed texts and images, audio recordings and films, etc., that may contain vital information about the events or phenomena which form the focus of the research. A document review follows five steps: Finding the document to be examined, verifying its correctness and authenticity, understanding the document, analyzing and using the data (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). The collected data was analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. In this method, data patterns obtained from a research study are analyzed according to predetermined parameters or themes. A descriptive analysis often entails direct quotes to explicate the research results in a lucid and clear manner. The aim is to present the results to the reader in an informed manner. In short, the data obtained is first systematically organized, clearly described and interpreted within the context of cause and effect. This basically takes place in four stages (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). These are: establishing a framework for the descriptive analysis, processing data according to previously defined parameters or themes, analyzing and interpreting the results obtained.

When analyzing research data, the observation forms were firstly decoded. In this context, behavior patterns identified in the movies were set out in detail according to the parameters established in the observation forms. Then, the scenes found to match the purposes of the study were associated with the parameters in the form and made meaningful. The results were then substantiated by direct quotes and screenshots. The coherence and relevance of the results were continuously checked by the researchers. In order to enhance the validity of the research, the studies carried out from the first to the last step were explained in detail and substantiated through references to other studies. The results were compared with those propounded by other studies and illustrated in a clear manner from diverse perspectives. To improve the reliability of the research, both researchers watched the subject movies at different locations and at different times, completed the observation forms and

made detailed notes as needed. Then, after studying each film, both researchers came together and watched them together and compared their findings. In this way, it was ensured that the impressions from the review of the movies were assessed on a common ground and basis. The rate of concordance was calculated by analyzing the extent to which both researchers' findings concurred with each other. It was so established that the rate of concordance concerning the findings was >80%, indicating the reliability of the results. While the agreed results were taken 'as is', the incongruent aspects were resolved through consultation with an expert. The aim in so doing was to improve the reliability of the study..

## FINDINGS

This section contains 3 main chapters according to pre-defined parameters. In this context, the first chapter contains the results regarding the educational philosophy of the time; the second chapter contains findings relating to the duties/roles assigned to teachers during the subject period; and the third chapter includes findings regarding the perspectives of the teachers and society on education

### 1. Results on the educational philosophy of the time

It should be assumed that teachers, who are representatives of the education system, should be examined primarily in order to determine the dominant educational philosophy of the time. An analysis of the movies included in the study sample indicates that teachers are often depicted as guiding lights that show the way forward for a backward society. The teacher is a revolutionary who tries to overthrow the established order, an intellectual who wages war on ignorance, or may even be a doctor or a mother/father.. As mentioned in the introduction, there are four main philosophies of education: perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, and reconstructivism. A general review of the movies revealed the teachers depicted to be proponents of reconstructivism. All three teachers in the films are presented to the audience as a reaction to the outdated social structures and norms of Anatolia. During the first encounter of Teacher Kemal with the villagers, newly assigned to teach at a village school, the villagers mistake him for a debt collector, which elicits positive reactions from the crowd, and which is then immediately reversed when it is finally understood that he is a teacher. The scene lays before our eyes how villagers look upon education and teachers, resisting them in all their forms. In this scene of the movie, the following exchange takes place between the villagers and the teacher:

- *Welcome...*

- *Thank you*

- *I got held up at work, I just found out, please forgive me dear Mr Debt Collector.*

- *Oh, right, but no, I'm not a debt collector, I'm actually a teacher.*

Leaving all aghast with surprise at the discovery, the scene shows how a table diligently laid out for a debt collector is begrudged to a teacher:

- *Dad, would you like to take your meal now?*

- *Oh no, it can wait, because apparently the teacher will be on his way back soon, as this village has no school, nor any pupils to attend it. So, this is it then.*

- *No, it's not, I'll stay here and teach children how to read and write!*

- *I said, there's no school!*

- *We are going to build one then!*

- *No we won't, as we have no manpower to spare!*

- *I represent the state!*

- *Either way, you cannot take from us what does not exist, no way.*
- *You shut up! I am not here to take from you, I'm here to give you...*

The following scene, that comes right after these words were spoken, depicts the children in the village who are of school age to illustrate how education and school were viewed back then by the society. This scene indicates that the character, who is representative of backwardness, sees children as laborers to be put to work in the fields.



**Picture 1:** A scene from the movie, *Öğretmen Kemal* (00:06:32)

Furthermore, the words uttered by Teacher Kemal as he takes down the tree of offering, which he sees as representing superstition and backwardness, are intended to demonstrate the civilized mentality of the teacher:

-Down with you, blind bigotry! Down with you, superstitious nonsense that has left my people ignorant! Down with you, down! Down with your outdated beliefs that belong in the dark ages, down with you!



**Picture 2:** The scene where Teacher Kemal takes down the tree of offering (00:15:38)

Similarly, the dialogue in the movie, *Çalığışu*, (Section 1) between Teacher Feride and Hatice Ana who regards with curiosity the world map that she has brought from Istanbul, lays bare the gap between the mentality of the status quo and an educated individual:

- *What is this?*
- *A world map.*

- *Oh, goodness gracious me! Why is it round in shape?*

- *Well because the world is round.*

- *Did you come all this way to put forward such new-fangled nonsense, such heathenish thoughts into our children's minds? What business have you here, Miss Teacher? Home is where you belong. Don't you have a home to go to?*

- *I do, but what you said about home being my proper place, it is exactly that kind of thinking which makes you believe the world stands on a bull's horns. Just imagine where we would be if women were allowed to be part of the community, to do their bit, to help men with the work they do, to take up roles that match their skills.*



**Picture 3:** A scene from the dialogue between Teacher Feride and Hatice Ana (01:07:30)

In the same movie, we see the teacher teaching a class with no desks.

- *Where do the kids sit?*

- *On the floor, obviously.*

- *No desks then?*

- *Desks? Oh my dear, what could you teach children sitting on desks as if riding a horse?*



**Picture 4:** How the classroom in the movie, *Çalılıkusu*, looks prior to Teacher Feride's arrival (01:02:40)



**Picture 5:** How the classroom in the movie, *Çalığışu*, looks prior to Teacher Feride's arrival (01:03:48)

A few scenes later, the classroom has desks.



**Picture 6.** How the classroom in the movie, *Çalığışu*, looks after Teacher Feride's arrival (01:06:45)

Another area where the teachers defy convention is in relation to the subjects that are taught to the students. The scenes depicting Hatice Ana, who represents an outdated mentality, and Teacher Feride, who represents science, come in succession. While Hatice Ana makes the children memorize the Arabic alphabet (scene - 1:05:20), Teacher Feride teaches mathematics by encouraging active student participation (scene - 1:06:45).

On the other hand, the movie, *Vurun Kahpeye*, depicts an oppressive social structure with no trace of democracy where law and justice are passed on from father to son. Trying to subvert that structure, Teacher Aliye throws a highly reputable man's son for misconduct out of the class; another school member seeing the incident tries to intervene saying, "*Oh but I think you should reconsider, he is the son of a highly noble dignitary...*" to which Aliye responds, "*I do not care who he may be, just do as I say!*" This scene is important for demonstrating that everyone is equal. At the beginning of the film, there are hints at the same idea:

*- Are they always so unruly and disorganized?*

*- It is not our place to try to teach manners to the offspring of the gentry; they are free to act as they like.*

In response, Teacher Aliye expostulates by saying, "*Well, something has to be done about it*", suggesting that she will not tolerate it. In this context, Teacher Aliye can be considered an open-minded teacher who does not take an unfair system for granted.



**Picture 7:** Teacher Aliye's reaction against unruly students (00:05:28)

## 2. Findings about the duties/roles given to teachers

The movies examined within the framework of this study portray teachers not only as teachers, but also as doctors, nurses, human rights defenders and even heroes saving the country from the enemy. Teacher Aliye in the movie, *Vurun Kahpeye*, describes her role at the outset of the movie by saying, *"Your land is my land, your house is my house...I will be a mother figure, a guiding light for the children of these lands and I shall have no fear, so help me god..."* (Scene – 0:01:50) The character playing the fool in the movie, Öğretmen Kemal, says, *"Oh dear, just look at the sun, it literally sets the sky on fire to keep the night at bay..."* while pointing at Teacher Kemal and the sun. A metaphor for teachers stamping out ignorance and bigotry. As a reaction to the powerful agha figure, Teacher Kemal expostulates by saying, *"Tyrants must be put in their place, women should be warned, they should know they have rights too, it is time they learnt that they cannot be bought and sold like commodities, or cattle"*. In so saying, he both demonstrates the value he places on human rights and women's rights, and also tries to raise social awareness. In the same movie, he fulminates against the bigot, Hodja, who claims to heal sick children with amulets but causes the death of four and Teacher Kemal manages to heal the remaining seven children. In another scene (Scene – 0:44:25), Teacher Kemal interposes himself when a highwayman tries to take a shepherd's cattle by force and says, almost like a hero, *"No highwayman can wreak havoc freely so long as I am here!"*. The scene brings to the fore justice, the superiority of the law and the need to fight injustice.



**Picture 8:** The scene where Teacher Kemal tends to the sick children (00:26:24)

In the movie, *Çalıkuşu*, Teacher Feride is also depicted as a nurse, taking care of a wounded soldier on the front line.



**Picture 9:** The scene where Teacher Feride takes care of a wounded soldier on the front line (01:13:55)

In the movie, *Vurun Kahpeye*, Teacher Aliye is depicted as assisting members of the National Forces against enemy forces occupying the homeland, and is portrayed in a sense as a secret soldier. When a person tasked with destroying the enemy arsenal, says, *“I swear with all my heart that I know of no soldier who is braver, or more heroic than you are”*, it shows the viewer the gravity of the task and the responsibilities that Teacher Aliye undertook. From this perspective, the teacher is not just someone who teaches in class but also a community leader.



**Picture 10.** The scene depicting Teacher Aliye’s activities against the enemy (01:27:52)

### **3. Findings about the perspective of teachers and the society on education**

The films show that education is viewed differently by teachers and by society. On the one hand, there are teachers who believe that education and school are the only means to enlighten a backward society, and on the other hand, there are people who embrace the status quo as a way of life, and regard education and teachers as a social threat. All three movies examined here meet on common ground in this regard. Accordingly, the movies focus on three issues, teachers representing enlightenment and science, education as a means to protect the society from backwardness, and a society that resists change. In *Çalığışu*, Hatice Ana reveals how she feels about teachers and education as a whole when she says when discussing the world map, *“Did you come all this way to put such new-fangled nonsense, such heathenish thoughts into our children’s minds?”*. A hint at the same sentiment is provided in the words of the bigot Hodja when he says *“Stop now, stop, the devil’s wind blows, it blows from there, from Adaktepe... the sheep and the cattle will be decimated, the crops will wither away, there is an ill omen in the air..”* pointing towards the school and the teacher. The following is a section of dialogue from *Vurun Kahpeye*.

- *One cannot really trust those dandy types from Istanbul who call themselves teachers. We have them brought here to educate our kids, and what do they in return? Undo all the good manners that we have taught them. So what do we do? Shall we let our sons marry these wayward women brought up like heathens and bring discord to our families when we have our own good young girls raised with our own values? They are no different than heathens...*

- *All female teachers from Istanbul set a bad example for our wives.*

- *I forbade my wife to have any sort of interaction with them.*



**Picture 11:** Society's reaction to education and teachers in Vurun Kahpeye (00:15:07)

Likewise, in the film, *Öğretmen Kemal*, the dialogue between a character called Leon Giaour and the Agha of the village is remarkable in terms of highlighting society's view of the school:

- *Oh right, I was not expecting you yet Mr. Leon! To what do I owe your sudden appearance?*

- *I am here about a rumor that I have heard, Dayı Bey. And it made our gorge rise.*

- *What rumor? Come have a seat, Mr. Leon.*

- *It is about the school.*

- *Yes, so I hear. Just a fly in the ointment.*

- *You know Ankara.*

- *I do, what about it then?*

- *They are really digging in their heels about this school issue.*

- *Well, we are not essentially against schools. I mean, these are fine things, going to school and getting an education.*

- *You must be out of your mind, Dayı Bey. Who will collect your resins in the fields if children go to school? Leon Sason is bankrupt then.*

- *I am not suggesting that the resins should not be collected. This is trade. Never mind, Leon Giaour, we have filled the school with sheep.*

Another aspect of education to which the movies draw attention is how teachers work under harsh conditions and are constantly subjected to pressure from society. So much so that the teachers,

Kemal and Aliye, were lynched by the community as a result of the slander they suffered and Teacher Feride's school was closed.



**Picture 12:** The scene where Teacher Kemal is lynched (01:10:07)



**Picture 13:** The scene where Teacher Aliye is lynched (01:42:42)

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The ability of the visual and print media, especially through movies, to treat all topics that relate to life and so influence social life led to the production of movies about education and school life. Movies that are about school life reflect a society's cultural values, their outlook on schools and education, teachers, administrators, etc. In this context, many factors can contribute to the portrayal of characters in movies (Gilbert, 2014). It is also possible to learn a lot about education through films. This proposition is supported by other studies. According to Dalton (2007), movies about schools often depict the social patriarchy and explain the administrative roles and power structures within institutions. Lotz (2006) argues that a vast majority of movies about school are poorly presented and cast teaching professionals, especially female teachers, in a negative light. According to Lotz (2006), female teachers in movies are portrayed as being unprepared for their roles, deficient in their teaching methods and incompetent in their relationships with students and parents. This gives us clues about the culture of the society. Tong (2009) explains this attitude by arguing that certain professions are considered as being within the preserve of the male sex, i.e., that women should primarily be mothers and wives, and should only pursue jobs inferior to those undertaken by men. Weber and Mitchell (1995) also argue that movies contain a lot of stereotypes concerning teachers and teaching, and how they are perceived. From this perspective, it can be said that films are a good source of information about education and its stakeholders.

Education is something that has been with us since the beginning of human history. Throughout history, education has had different meanings and purposes. In the early 1900s, education was more about learning, transferring and using knowledge, while in the 1930s, the goal of education was to promote human society.(Ada & Baysal, 2013; Güneş, 1996). Education is broadly a process in which the people who make up a society are educated according to specific goals.(Fidan, 1996)

Human education is the subject of research within many scientific fields, in particular the philosophical and educational sciences. This has given rise to the philosophy of education as a specialty field. The human perspective affects almost every component of the education system. In particular, what we wish to teach people and what our educational goals should be based on a philosophical perspective. This is because it is the philosophy of education that determines the content of the curriculum, the goals, teaching programs, methods, etc. In short, philosophy guides the entire educational process. (Erişen, 2017). Each philosophical movement determines and applies its own educational goals (Ünal & Ada, 2011).

The study's aim was to provide insights into the philosophy of education that prevailed during the National Struggle and the early days of the Republic through an analysis of period movies concerned with that era. On the basis of the findings of the study, it can be argued that reconstructivism was the dominant educational philosophy of the time. This movement completely disregards the current educational system and takes steps to make drastic changes to it. In a sense, it refutes what is imposed by the system and revolts against it. Since the circles that embrace this philosophy are only a minority, they often have difficulty in transferring their ideals to actual teaching situations, and often fail in implementing those ideals. (Çelikkaya, 2006) These explications would appear to be supported by the behavior of the teachers in the sample movies. The teachers depicted in the movies reject the education system and methods that they come across in the schools to which they are assigned and try, despite all adverse reactions, to instead introduce a new order. The scene in which Teacher Kemal tries to take down the Tree of Offering which he sees as symbolizing backwardness (Picture 2), the scene where Teacher Feride protests against the absence of desks in the classroom and creates a new classroom system (Pictures 4, 5 and 6), and finally Teacher Aliye's persistent rejection of the privileges afforded to the children of the gentry can be cited as examples of the efforts made by teachers to change or subvert the current order and instead to introduce a new one. Furthermore, the dialogues in the movies can be cited as examples. The philosophy of reconstructivism uses education as a means to achieve its goal of reengineering the society and encouraging people to embrace true democracy. Education sits at the center of the process of social reform and the teacher is the active hero in the process (Erişen, 2017; Şişman, 2007; Yayla, 2017). On the basis of the research results, it can be concluded that the movies of the era are informed by a strong advocacy for Reconstructivism as an educational philosophy.

It is well known that teachers are among the most important people shaping the future of societies. (Akcan & Polat, 2016) The teaching profession is one of the most critical professions that shape the lives of the individuals in a society. (Alkan, 2000) Today, teachers are considered the most important elements (students, parents, administrators, physical and financial aspects, etc.) of the education system. (Şişman, 2007) However, since teaching is considered a sacred duty (Titrek, 2006) in Turkey, teachers are not just people that teach classes but they also take on a range of social roles such as representatives, leaders, mediators and parents (Şişman, 2007) The findings obtained from the study conform with results reported by other studies. For instance, the scene where Teacher Feride shows motherly compassion for Muhlis cast aside by his peers, or the scene where Teacher Kemal becomes a defender of women's rights, or the scene where Teacher Aliye engages in patriotic acts to liberate the country from the enemy are all a testimony to teachers undertaking social roles other than those prescribed to them as teachers. Also, the teachers assume additional critical roles such as doctors or care-takers. At the same time, teachers who are often depicted as fighting ignorance and bigotry to provide a guiding light for the society can also be considered social leaders. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that teachers are often preoccupied with things other than teaching. According to Bursalıoğlu (1987), teachers should be the leaders of society and should introduce new concepts and modern values to society. One of a teacher's most important tasks should be to ensure social progress. (Sünbül, 2001) From this standpoint, teachers in the movies are expected to become saviors as inferred by the roles given to them. As a matter of fact, in the Turkish National Education Basic Law no. 1739, teaching is defined as a specialized profession 'which includes the education, training and related administrative duties of the state'. However, as can be inferred from the definition, even though teachers are not given specific official duties other than teaching and related administrative duties, teachers are still expected to take on a range of social roles that go beyond their usual duties. This can be interpreted as a sign of trust in the teaching profession and in the teachers themselves.

Since education has been with us since human history began, it has been defined in various contexts. Generally accepted definitions are: a process of causing positive behavioral changes in an individual,(Ertürk, 2013) a part of the acculturation process in society(Demirel, Kaya, & Bayrak, 2002), and the process of influencing. In this context, education cannot be solely described as a process that only has the function of transferring information. Education is a multi-faceted concept that enables integration, change and progress within a society. However, it is a process that cuts both ways. In other words, society may influence society just as much as education influences it. Considering the history of societies, it can be seen that some important events (changes in political authority, technological, economic and cultural changes) can have a significant impact on education systems. The effects of the movements of change that began in the last years of the Ottoman state were also felt during the early years of the Republic, and also impacted on educational institutions. In particular, the conflict between the old and new order witnessed during the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the first years of the Republic was reflected in many works of literature. In fact, in addition to the movies, *Çalığışu* and *Vurun Kahpeye*, which have been analyzed in this study, the conflict between the teacher and the society or between enlightened individuals and ignorant individuals have also been dealt with in works such as *Araba Sevdası* and *Yeşil Gece*.(Şişman, 2007) This conflict is clearly seen in the movies which have been included in this study. In all the movies examined, teachers are confronted with mean-spirited persons exploiting and abusing religion for their own ends. These movies offer bifurcations or juxtapositions with enlightened teachers representing progress and welfare on the one hand, pitted against defenders of the status quo who oppose and resist teachers in their efforts on the other hand. In broad terms, teachers see education as a means of social progress and the fight against ignorance. It can be argued that their sole purpose is to banish outdated, backward ways of thinking. The characters in the selected movies position themselves against women by adopting a dismissive attitude towards teachers and education as a whole, on the grounds that they spread heathenish ideas, take away the manpower required in the fields, and establish a bad example for Anatolian women. From this point of view, it can be argued that although teachers see education as being for the benefit of the society, society sees education as a loss to the workforce and cultural poisoning.

On the basis of the research results, the scope of the research can be expanded to include additional movies concerning this particular period and the results can be compared with those reported by the present study. Moreover, teachers working in rural areas of Turkey under harsh conditions can be encouraged to watch these movies as a means of motivation. Similarly, teacher candidates at teacher training faculties can be made to watch similar movies to instill in them the idea that teaching is not just a profession but a way of life with a broad range of social duties and responsibilities. Finally, more current movies about education can be analyzed and compared to these movies, which inform us about circumstances from nearly a century ago, in order to observe how the discourse relating to education and teachers has evolved over time.

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