

geneous not only in terms of place of origin and level of qualifications, but also in terms cultural characteristics.

In order to remedy the scarcity of research on historical migrations to and from Turkey as well as the lack of a multi-disciplinary approach in migration research, the author develops a well-defined methodology to assess the migration pressure and the labor migration of the Turkish migrants to Western Europe between 1960 and 1974. As is clearly reflected in the findings of the research based on comprehensive primary as well as secondary sources in four languages, the book draws on both the historiography of and the social scientific research on migration. Nevertheless, the author neglects theoretical debates in contemporary migration studies. In Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, Akgündüz could have elaborated more on current developments in migration theory, so that the reader may grasp his criticisms of the push and pull factors within the whole picture of theoretical debates in the field. Since the findings of the research highlight new aspects previously overlooked (such as a re-examination of push factors), Akgündüz could also have discussed possible policy recommendations based on the lessons to be learned from the labor migration history of Turkey between 1960 and 1974. Despite this gap, Akgündüz's book clearly contributes to studies of labor migration from Turkey a fresh perspective and new research questions that will hopefully lead to the deepening and widening of the migration research literature on Turkey.

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Asuman Suner. *New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, Identity and Memory*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010, xii + 209 pages.

Asuman Suner's book *New Turkish Cinema* is an important and comprehensive analysis of films made within the last 25 years in Turkey, a time during which the country witnessed major social, economic and cultural changes. While trying to cope with the globalization and neo-liberal economic policies, Turkey was also dealing with the conflict between the Turkish security forces and Kurdish militants. According to Suner, it was "in the context of these developments that new wave Turkish cinema was born" (p. 12).

It was during the mid 1990s that we saw the seeds of what is now called new Turkish cinema: not only the number of films produced rose dramatically during that time, but also a new generation of directors—such as Zeki Demirkubuz, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Yeşim Ustaoglu, and Derviş Zaim—with styles of their own emerged. The themes most often addressed in these films are related to issues and anxieties around the concepts of identity, memory and belonging, hence the title of the book: *New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, Identity and Memory*.

“To identify a national cinema is first of all to specify a coherence and a unity; it is to proclaim a unique identity and a stable set of meanings”—a process that is inevitably “hegemonizing” and “mythologizing,” as Andrew Higson says.¹ Suner’s book, at first glance, appears to be a national cinema project and, therefore, a book that provides the characteristics of the new Turkish cinema, along the way inevitably mythologizing certain aspects of its subject. However, although the book maps out the characteristics of this new wave of films, Suner successfully refrains from the pitfalls that any project on national cinema faces and manages to de-mythologize its subject while analyzing its aspects in detail. In other words, the accent is not on the “Turkishness” of these films, but rather on the films themselves and the context in which they have been created.

This publication is based on Suner’s earlier book, published in Turkish and entitled *Hayalet Ev* (Haunted House).² The earlier book was one of the—if not *the*—first comprehensive analysis of the new Turkish cinema and provided a much-needed fresh approach to the subject. The current book, however, is not simply a direct translation of the earlier project. The author omitted several sections and added others in order to make this English edition more suitable for readers who are not necessarily familiar with Turkey and/or Turkish cinema, as well as bringing the content up to date.

It is always a difficult task to write about a movement or a development while it is happening. To identify what binds these films together, what makes them part of a “movement” that came to be known as the new Turkish cinema, is not as easy a task as it may seem. Using the cultural and historical backdrop as a site through which these films are connected, Suner successfully makes such categorization appear self-evident.

The book opens with an introductory chapter that provides brief but necessary background information on Turkey and the history of cinema

1 Andrew Higson, “The Concept of National Cinema,” *Screen*, 30, no. 4 (1989): 37.

2 Asuman Suner, *Hayalet Ev* (Istanbul: Metis), 2006.

in Turkey, which helps readers contextualize the films. The chapters that follow this introduction—Popular Nostalgia Films, New Political Films, The Cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, The Cinema of Zeki Demirkubuz, New Istanbul Films, and The Absent Women of New Turkish Cinema—provide astute and engaging analyses of the films addressed.

Suner begins with a noteworthy observation on the figure of the haunted house in the new wave films in Turkey, suggesting that these films, “popular and art films alike, revolve around the figure of a ‘spectral home’” (p. 1). The figure of the ghost in literature and cinema is usually affiliated with an unresolved and/or unjust past. As ghosts defy spatial and temporal boundaries, they force themselves into areas where they are not welcome, haunting time and space. It seems that Suner prefers the term spectral home as it may also connote a nostalgic longing for an “idealized home,” along with the haunted spaces of an unresolved past. In conjunction with this observation, the first two chapters deal specifically with the nature of haunting and how the ghosts of the past find/force their way into the present. The first of these chapters looks at films the author calls “popular nostalgia films,” which are haunted “by nostalgic yearning for a long-lost childhood” (p. 25). Drawing upon Gaston Bachelard’s³ concept of “felicitous space” and Svetlana Boym’s⁴ understanding of the concept of nostalgia, Suner examines how this particular group of films deals with the recent history. In their non-critical approach, these films “arrest the past in an image of frozen childhood” (p. 17).

The particular issue of the unresolved past and how it haunts the present is dealt with in a more critical manner in the films examined in the second chapter, under the heading “New Political Films.” Looking at films by Yeşim Ustaoglu, Uğur Yücel and Derviş Zaim, Suner examines the ways in which a traumatic past finds its way into present-day stories, establishing connections between these films and what has come to be known as the “independent transnational cinema” because they challenge the concept of national cinema. What makes these films even more interesting in the context of Turkey is that the unresolved nature of the past creates its own visual and narrative language, which is very different from that of conventional historical films. In fact, as a general note, there were very few films made within the last twenty years which can be described as historical films in the traditional sense. Despite this, history is overwhelmingly present in the new Turkish cinema, and the

3 Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon), 1994.

4 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books), 2001.

first two chapters of the book provide a detailed analysis of those films into which the contested nature of memory finds its way.

The third and fourth chapters focus on two of the most prominent and critically acclaimed directors of the new Turkish cinema: Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Zeki Demirkubuz. These chapters contextualize and analyze the complete filmography of each director, with the exception of Ceylan's *Üç Maymun* (Three Monkeys) (2008) and Demirkubuz's *Kıskanmak* (Envy) (2009) since neither of them had been released at the time of writing. Forming two of the most interesting chapters of the book, Suner establishes the *auteur* status of both Ceylan and Demirkubuz, but provides more than a traditional *auteur* study. Although it may seem that these two chapters are breaking away from the general concern of the book, this, in fact, is not the case: both chapters seek to understand these films in conjunction with the social and political climate in Turkey, situating the directors and their films within the general trope of the book: belonging, identity and memory.

The last two chapters focus on two different aspects of the new Turkish cinema: İstanbul as an actor in these films, and women as absent "non-beings." Suner contends that İstanbul has traditionally occupied a space more than merely that of a city in Turkish cinema, specifically during the Yeşilçam era.⁵ These films situated İstanbul with its seductive beauty as one of the actors in their stories. However in the new Turkish cinema, İstanbul occupies a different space as its representation changed from a mesmerizing city to that of an oversized province. Thinking of the place that İstanbul occupies in these films from a historical perspective provides a very interesting read, especially when considered in relation to the image of İstanbul outside these films, as the city experienced an enormous transformation and has been marketed as one of the cultural capitals of Europe since the beginning of the 2000s.

While the book fills an important gap in its entirety, it also raises interesting questions, one of which has to do with the gender politics of these films, the subject of the sixth chapter. The issue of gender politics, and specifically the absence of woman as an agent in the new wave films, generally escapes scholarly attention.

Yeşilçam's gender politics typically allowed for the existence of two types of females: vicious and virtuous (p. 165). This, it should be said, is not specific to Yeşilçam cinema. Suner concludes that, although the films have begun to change and establish a more critical attitude towards

5 Originally the name of a street in İstanbul's Beyoğlu district, *Yeşilçam* refers to the heyday of Turkish cinema and the film industry in Turkey in general, which came to an end in the late 1970s.

their own representation of women, the new Turkish cinema remains, to a large extent, a male cinema. According to Suner, the absence of women in the new Turkish cinema could be defined as one of the characteristics of new wave films. The female characters in these films are usually portrayed as passive subjects and/or objects of male desire (p. 164). The figure of woman is usually absent from the story, while at the same time being the driving force, which makes her absence a "constitutive" one. "In a world populated by her own image," writes Suner, the woman in the new wave films "is present as a non-being" (p. 174). Nevertheless, the gender politics of the new wave films is ambivalent, she concludes, and the women directors of the younger generation seem to be more willing to tackle gender politics more directly in their films, something that might change the general attitude towards gender-related issues in the coming years. A similar conclusion can be drawn about Turkish cinema itself: it seems that the up-and-coming directors in Turkey are willing to confront issues related to identity and memory more directly than the previous generation (now that the ghost has been located), as well as to explore new possibilities and experiment with different genres.

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