

CHALLENGING HOLLYWOOD HEGEMONY: THE RISE OF TURKISH FILMS


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1960s-2000

The Turkish cinema has for long years been associated in Greece with light melodrama films, that focus on unfulfilled love affairs or doomed family relationships.



The era has significantly changed with the work of Yılmaz Güney, who introduced the Turkish cinema to the West.



After 2000, Greece has welcomed the cinema of its neighbouring country by embracing the work of Fatih Atin, a director that clearly belongs to the favourite ones of the Greek cinema fans.

The presentation of the Turkish cinema in the Greek press

A case study under the lens of TR-GR relations

The framework

- Since 2004, the Turkish cinema has started to attract the attention of the Greek press...
 - ▣ and consequently, of the Greek film audience.
- The coverage and the publicity of Turkish films in the Greek press holds a modest but a constant presence...
 - ▣ following the rise and the development of the modern Turkish cinema industry.

Cinema as ‘peace-offering’

- The relations between Greece and Turkey always constitute a matter of great interest and importance due to the long and disputed history of the two countries.
- Although the news stories that appear in the press of both countries clearly demonstrate a strong tendency towards the framing of the other country as “the Other”, “the Enemy”...
- ...Stories related to the culture of both countries incorporate traces of peace journalism techniques and practices.

The case study

The newspapers

- four Greek newspapers that enjoy the highest circulation figures
- *Kathimerini, To Vima, Ta Nea, Eleftherotypia*

The methodology

- Keyword search in online archives regarding the Turkish cinema & specific Turkish films that were screened in GR
- Qualitative content analysis

The sample

- We coded all relevant news stories
- 51 news items: November 2004 -October 2009
- Though the number may seem limited, we should bear in mind that the section about culture is limited in comparison to e.g. the national and international politics and secondly, that news stories about the Turkish cinema appeared when Turkish films were distributed for screening in the Greek cinemas.

Turkish films screened in GR



“Head-On”



“The edge of heaven”



“Soul Kitchen”



“The sound of Istanbul”



“Issiz adam”



“Three monkeys”

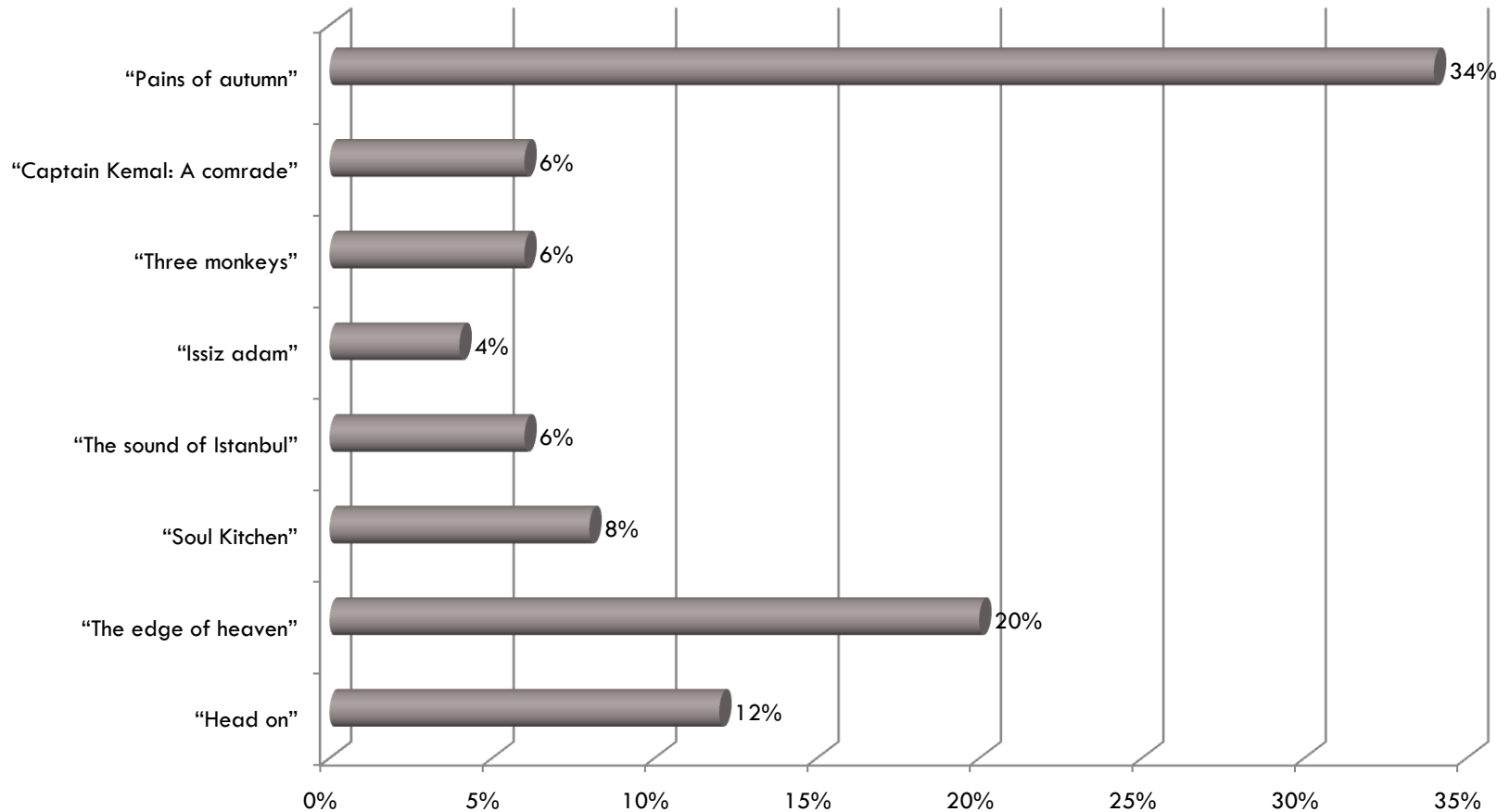


“Captain Kemal: A Comrade”



“Pains of autumn”

The presence in the Greek press



Filming Turkey, “a country of contrasts between Europe and Islam”

directors

“Turkish cinema creates a chain of creators who confront their country through *contradictory* sentiments: love-skepticism, awe-distance, melancholy-sarcasm”

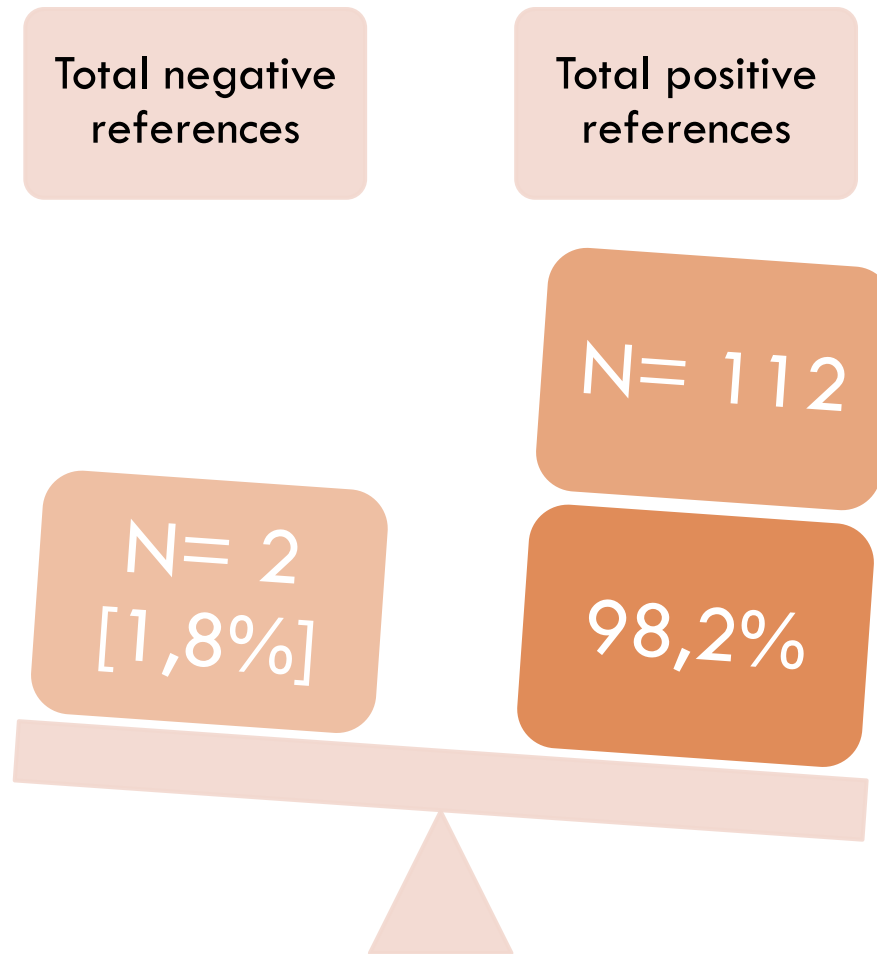
topics

“Most films try to narrate the *metamorphosis* of the Turkish society, the dynamics and its wealth together with its obsessions and its conservatism”

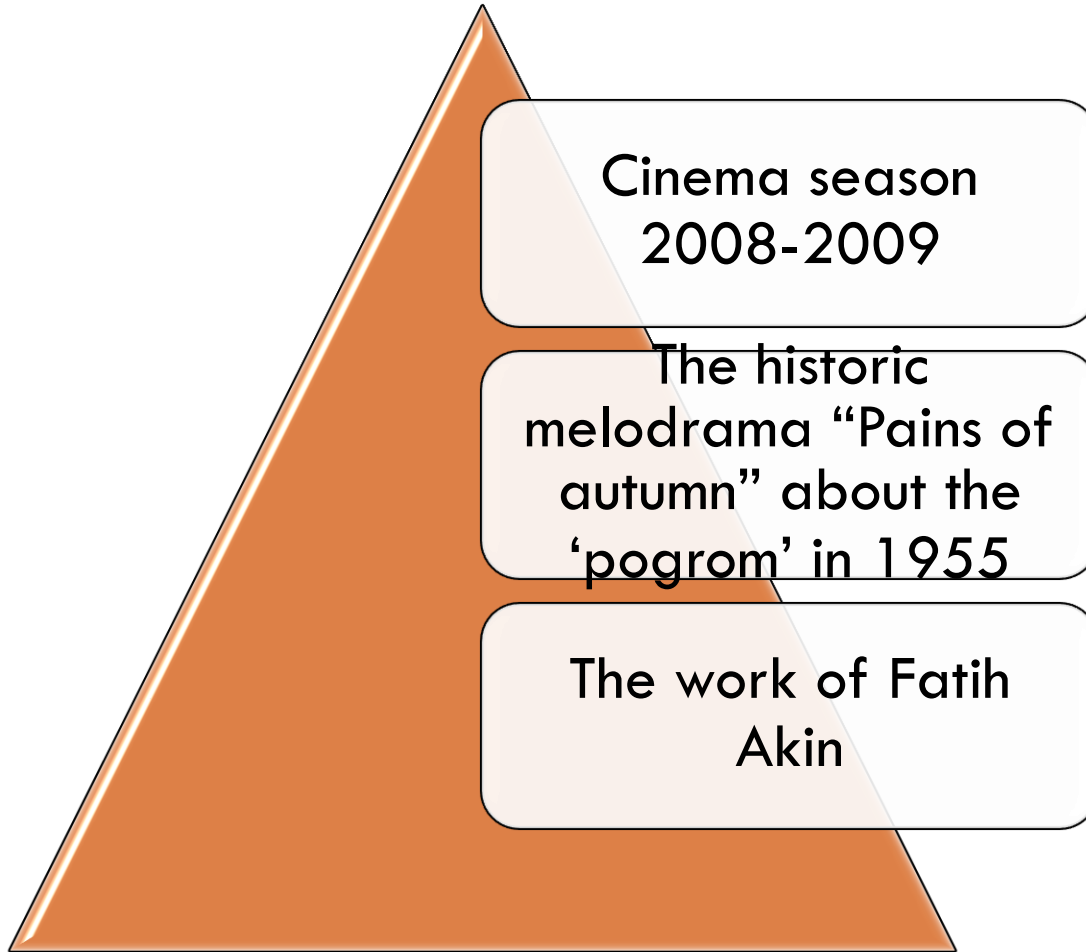
aesthetics

“The Turkish cinema balances between a proposed authentic and original realism and an experimental quest of new forms in narration or montage”

Film reviews in the Greek press



Peak moments of the Turkish cinema in the Greek press



Fatih Akin: Greece's favourite



The director

- “Akin has a remarkable technique to sweep us off our feet”
- “He is one of the most interesting European directors”
- “The committee in Cannes should already order the Golden Palm with Akin’s name engraved in it”



“The edge of heaven”

- “bitter lesson for life from Fatih Akin”
- “the absolute script, the absolute acting, the most slippery politically correct movie...the absolute chaos theory”
- “when the end titles fall, we look each other stone-still”



“Soul Kitchen”

- “Fatih Akin made Venice more tasty”
- “A three-star Greek-Turkish cuisine”

“Pains of autumn”: Turkey is whipping itself

A love story between a Turkish nationalist and a Greek prostitute during September 1955, in a violent political instability in both countries. Angry, and as it was proved later, manipulated Turkish nationalists destroyed the Greek properties in a black piece in the history of the two nations that marked the beginning of the end for the Greek population in Istanbul.

The film, although it did not attract excellent reviews, moved the Greek audience due to the touchy subject that it tackles with.

The boldness of the Turkish director was admired, while the portrayal of the Greek girl as a prostitute caused extensive negative reactions.

The coverage of the film in the Greek press was extensive and stimulated the debate around Greek-Turkish relations and the burden of the past.

2008-2009: Greece gets fascinated by the Turkish cinema

“a revealing year for the unprecedented liveliness of Turkish cinema”

“existential dramas, political wounds, historical memories and guilt in a blooming Turkish cinema”

“Turkey is looking for its European face though variations of melodrama”

“the modern Turkish cinema is bolder and more critical with its modern history than its Greek counterpart”

Self-criticism & admiration

In reference to “The edge of heaven”

- “I am divided and yet desperate, thrilled with *“The edge of heaven”* by Fatih Akin. Desperate with the Greek passivity. Can someone in charge tell us, why they, the “enemies”, can and not we, the Europeans and the democrats?”

In reference to “Three monkeys”

- “The dressed in rags Turkey is flying with the global avant-garde [...] Who said that today there is no film avant-garde? The one who claims it is clueless and also illiterate [...] The Turkish director is a magician. A unique creator”.

In reference to “Pains of autumn”

- “I would like to shake the hand of the lady. With true joy and unselfish friendship. The direction of Tomris Giritlioglou may not apply to my aesthetic criteria, but *“Pains of autumn”* is one of the boldest and most honest things that I have seen in the big screen [...] It’s time to digest it. The elite of the Turkish hut is way ahead the European luxury villa in Greece. The only obstacle that divides us from any other nation, especially Turkey, are the war industries, the games of the strong forces and the local fanatics. Fanatic nations mean humiliated citizens!”

Thank you for your attention!

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