



## From Past to Present: A Cognitive Work On "New Turkish Cinema"

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### Abstract

In recent years, "new" concept has become very consumable especially within the context of politics in our country. Generally, after certain periods in Turkey, "new", representative of political changes and emphasizing reconstruction process, has been a concept that frequently used in parallel with political, social, economic and cultural use, from past to present. Turkish cinema has had many periods from its constructive years to present; some of which have been in difficulties and crises. Having been overcome after every crisis, Turkish Cinema has always recovered itself. After this recovery, process to be rising or expected to be shown up, has wanted to be emphasized by the characterization of the "new" concept, needed to be created or created different structure.

The search of the young directors for an alternative cinema language, experiencing types, using various production and filming styles have revealed a richness in development of our cinema. In this essay, New Cinema concept will be introduced in terms of its usage and meanings attributed to it in Turkish cinema. Moreover, its place and importance in Turkish cinema history will be discussed.

**Keywords:** New Turkish Cinema, Yeşilçam, New Cinema.



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# **From Past to Present: A Cognitive Work On “New Turkish Cinema”**

**Arif Can Güngör**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, “new” concept has become a designation frequently used in daily life, especially in political and social field. From the beginning, new and old world are always in contrast but inseparable whole in a body. Though, nowadays, by identifying with consuming and wresting from the true meaning, the “new” concept, shaped with consumer society, the habits of consuming the new versus preserving the old is fetishized. Opposing to that, conservative traditionalism saving and copying the old has become anachronic. However, during capitalism process, human should be able to detach him/herself from cultural accumulation and explore him/herself once again, and should not be contented with the ancients brought by the past. New visions that new world reveal with new developments, should always be searched. Like conservatism, an approach, in the name of literalism, that turns a blind eye to the new, will sever all ties with both now and conservatism. “Real development is not sequential but cumulative. It is not events lining up one after another, but growth. Nevertheless, it does this as a bigger integral in new shapes and sufficiencies” (Bookchin, 2013: p.351).

So as to bring up the subject, the new concept essentially represents political and social changes. It is built upon political and social criticism of the old. Mehmet Aygün who ties up the political and social drivers of change to new fetishism in his country, associates the reason for using another dynamic with the forms and tendencies of international relations. He mentions that all “new” concepts in Turkey are related to that (2014, p.56). Concordantly, designed “new world order” after the destruction of Soviet Union and “New Turkey” emphasis

can be explained in the same manner. Yet, none of the concepts can be considered without social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. Hence, in order to evaluate new concept in terms of art, it is essential to do in the context of domestic and foreign political, cultural, economic, and social factors. Whether liked or not, American cinema is the most renowned and followed cinema in Turkey from past to present. Moreover, American cinema, not only in Turkey but also in the World, especially with Hollywood's effect, has been seen either as a rival or as an enemy to be passed over for the national cinematography or perceptions of different cinemas. Mainstream cinema to be represented has become the old itself for innovators and revolutionists. Therefore, the new cinema has been opposition to *Yeşilçam* and Hollywood.

## METHOD

“What is Turkish cinema? What kind of cinema is it? Is there a special cinema of us or are there any thoughts of us upon this cinema? Through which concepts do we consider these ideas? What representation have these concepts been?” In the act of not being able to give enough answers of these questions with one article, this article will discuss “new cinema” concept, a thoughtful tool upon Turkish cinema and its meaning to be represented in the frame of the periods by examining it. New Cinema, neither seen within the boundaries nor described as a genre, meaning not having a target of demarcation or turning into a template, will put forth what is “new” to be emphasized in Turkish cinema from past to present.

Turkish cinema history was periodized by many people. These periodization can be taken as the beginning of a period to be based on social, economic, political, cultural, or artistic event or events significantly. In this sense, while some periods are subjectively similar by historians, the

basis taken as beginning of some periods may differ among them. Within these subjective assessments, a synthesis is going to be reached by making use of one book called “The History of Turkish Cinema” coinciding to 1960 by Nijat Özön; another book called “Turkish Cinema History” by Giovanni Scognamillo covering the years of 1896-1998. However, a debate on periodization as it does not serve the purpose of the article, will not be used. The phases of the events in the periods will be passed fast and summarized. Because deeply discussion of political, social, economic events of every period and the effects of the “new cinema” phenomenon of these events can only be taken as one topic for a thesis or an article. The social and political events within the periods will be issued to clarify the description of the “new concept” frequently used in Turkish cinema. In this article, mostly the differences of the attributed meaning to the “new cinema” concept and paving the way for it, will be discussed. Literature search will be done for this topic.

## **VIEWING THE “NEW” CONCEPT**

In the dictionary of Turkish Linguistic Society, “new” is defined as unused or underused, the opposite of old, unsaid, unseen, unshown, unthought, undefined, unknown, different from the initials, displaced with the older one (TDK, 2011: p.1401).

The word meaning “new” is related to modernization, expressing the economic, social and intellectual changes that generate the modern world. The contraries and contradictions cause the modern to renew it. The more the contraries and contradictions intensify, the stronger evolution into “the new” becomes gradually.

According to these definitions, it is understood that modern, in other words new is the opposite of old, old criteria replaced with the new criteria and in this way a new world is tried to be formed. For instance, although there is a circular time consideration in the old world, there is a linear time consideration in modern world. There is a change instead of the new in the circular time. Hereby the concept to be insisted on is the renewal (Harrison& Wood, 2011: p.24). The new is expressed as breaking with tradition, improvement, and change.

“In other words, modern society means present society. As for that modernization is a change from the types of older times to the types of present society (Kongar, 1992: p.288). The concept of change has changed. When the time concept comes to present, change evolves from the progressive conscience to the modernist conscience (Göle, 2000: p.7). Consequently in all the countries that import the modernization the concepts of modernizations are seen to be reduced to absurdity. Terms got out of their lexical meanings. The apprehension of ideal individualism is replaced with the individualism, produced from the scattering of social controlling. Ultimately a continuous “new” society of consuming values, attributing different meanings to the concepts has come out.

Finally in the process leading from past to present, every society can be seen to carry the negativities of emphasis to the new as externalizing their past. In this part it is noticed that blessing the new politically includes the worries for future ironically. In a way to test my thoughts on unifying the old with the new together, carrying not the lineal but the circular alteration of thoughts, in present Turkey, the hypothesis on people using the adjective “new”, hasn’t got rid of their conservative values, cinema as an art to be evaluated, is going to be discussed depending on the reflections of the social, economic, cultural and political conditions; in certain periods of Turkish cinema within a chronological point of view.

If it is to look at the process of modernization, the contrast of the old-new seems to include the contrast of the east-west. Although the change with this meaning seems to have begun with the Republic, “new” started to be used in Turkish reform. It has a particular meaning of administration, including the demand of change. It suggests the initiative of Westernization. At the same period there is an argument about old-new had appeared in the literature society (circle) again. “The debate can be said to originate from the appearing parts of West-East, conservative- modern, progressivist-reactionist in the crystallized thoughts of Turks” (Aygün, 2014: p.58). The oppositions generated in the process of modernization have become clear in time; furthermore, turned into tradition of thoughts.

After Ottomans, Turkish Republic has been the representative of the new. As part of the westernization movements, the institutionalization of the modern republic had been a renovation movement. After the Second World War a political, economic and cultural case had appeared and this circumstance converted the decay and the conflict of old-new argument to the left-right and/or modernism-bigotry argument. After 1980 while the arguments based on these binary oppositions, developing around the neo-liberal thought and policy, this change had also affected to the theme of the new. Now these contraries have begun losing their priority within the new-old contradiction.

Discourse of the “new” was added to agenda as a reaction against the single party tradition by the liberal left discourse. After 1990, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics collapsed, and then China tried to integrate its system into the capitalism and also tended to have detente policy, which led the liberal right discourse climbed to the top. In 1990’s and 2000’s, similar to the 1980’s, outside capital and local partner cooperation continued its affect by emphasizing the content and its symbols. Consequently it is impossible to research the

relations of Turkish art and Turkish cinema between the adjective called new aside from this process.

## **'NEW' CONCEPT IN ART**

One of the most important perspectives in today's art is the effort of gathering all historical facts beyond old and new into to the life. Artists and theoreticians deal with the reality of society in terms of politics and culture, presenting their own individual desires, reflecting their culture to what they have studied and actualizing them into real life. Boris Groys, asking the most important question about this topic, answers the question himself again by inquiring why art wants to live rather than die and associates being alive with being new. Even in recent postmodern articles, commentators criticize by saying 'it does not go beyond to ask what and who is new enough so as to represent our period (2013: p.33). Zygmunt Bauman, criticizing today's postmodern world, alleges that alteration evolves from 'new' to 'repetition'. At this stage, both new and old are together; further more alteration is also being together (2000: p.140). Thus, work of art is convenient to read in different ways. Viewers are allowed to read the work in different ways endlessly. Situation happened in a social process makes the individual to be the object of life, not the subject of it by transforming all the substructure and superstructure systems. Without internalizing the innovation, wrapping it with different meanings up, breaking away the connection with reality of it, has become successive 'new'.

Being new, generally contains two characteristics; being different and/or being created recently. New is different because of not having been associated with a foreknown structural code. Ultimately, the frame to increase the object to art of work status, to make a difference between old and new, has changed in time. However; the difference makes sense solely in a

historical representation of order. In that case, not only evaluating the work of art as new and old, but also seeing value as a work of art, is related with historical time lived in. ‘Traditional art used to be produced at form level. As for modern art is produced at the context, frame, background or a new speculative commentary level’ (Groys, 2013: p. 46).

Vera Zolberg, having a sociologic perspective for the contrast of new and old in art, emphasizes that for understanding how the new styles are created and the connections, political tendency and socio-economic context between artists and others must be considered in a social process rather than mythologization and derealization of artists against to tradition (2013: p. 67). Within this situation, there is a constant tension between pro-authority and pro-innovation; which artists have some difficulties under pressure of authority. For being more specific, new world order makes criticism through the globalization against any kind of power struggle, indexed to cold war. Consequently, they draw a frame for how art should be according to new world order. Today’s art and artists are in a movement that supports globalization and optimism of new world order by insisting and one of them, Emre Zeytinoğlu asserts that defending the mental world’s optimistic designs are literally experience of the street and that makes it romanticized (2012: p. 209).

## **NEW CINEMA CONCEPT**

Solanas and Getino defined three different types of cinema within the framework of the revolutionary movement of 1960’s; first is all the national cinemas producing Hollywood-style films; substantially political, representing the ideology of the system. Second one is new wave, mostly with creative producer, European art cinema, unlike the new cinema, not opposing the system and provoking the society and the third one is the third cinema, shining out the national

values, absorbing the struggle of people, rebelling against capitalism and American imperialism (Erus, 2007:p.27-28-29). Politically, in the classification context of cinema based on ideology served, Ertan Yılmaz states that dominant cinema can be discussed in two styles; directly or indirectly. "Not wanting the politicization of dominant class addictions, cinema gives its ideology subconsciously and indirectly with a sophisticated method" (2009: p.9). Therefore, having been existed since 1895, new cinema against cinema, actually in general and real meaning, can be defined as an effort of disengagement from mainstream cinema, Hollywood. In world cinema, whole country cinema (cinemas) that includes Hollywood is meant as "mainstream". In the article, "Hollywood Cinema" or/and "Mainstream" is used in the sense of American commercial cinema, having been spread American ideology to all around the world, using specific templates, being popular, based on mass production and rapid consumption, transforming the film art to industry. According to definition of Scognamillo; "After 1911, Hollywood, founded near Los Angeles, has been global capital of the cinema by the time. Moreover, Los Angeles has been a symbol of politics, concept of production, style (1994:p.12). Although the years passed, images changed, likings expressed by masks that hide these images can be modernized but they never change. As an understanding of mainstream cinema, repeating itself, Hollywood with conservatism brought by national cinemas, has tried to be modernized by national cinemas. Having been a mentality, Yeşilçam is a mainstream school in Turkish cinema. However, the new conditions, new dynamics, new thought has given continuity to the creation of a new cinema. Since the creation of Yeşilçam, every different effort has brought a new effort for a new cinema and hence every time it has brought the concept of "New Turkish Cinema". According to Engin Ayça, " For Yeşilçam, having been the origin of New Turkish Cinema, the directors who want to make different films, when compared

to Yesilçam; are the audiences who quit watching Yesilçam Movies and Western cinema, adopting the new types of movies that has been made" (1992: p.130).

In this context Nijat Özön defines "New Cinema" to be a common name of different type cinema waves, reflecting efforts of young filmmaker, shown up despite old traditional cinema as a reaction in several countries after 1960. (2000:p.813) According to this definition, Giorgio Vincenti indicates Eisenstein to be within a group of new cinema directors, because he made an effort to overcome the past not only within his artistic expressions, but also in community life and people's personal thoughts to realize revolution as continuous manufacturing of information and freedom (1993:p.45), because art and politics are intertwined. Furthermore, both art and politics have to overcome the situation, they are in. Eisenstein was endeavoring to accomplish this. With the collapse of fascism, new cinema, human-centered, dealing with the relationship between people and the environment in Italy, has been the new realism. "In short, the Italian Cinema in the streets correlate with society and human reality, directly; choose the stories of people from all layers of society, even employee, peasantry and fishermen" (Vincenti, 1993: p.83). Hence, the only way to identify a new culture is to have time with people on the street. France has explored the nature of the cinematic art with an uncommonly seeking. According to Andre Bazin, people writing cinema history and French New Wave will have to compare the format of each film with past cinema and the consumption cinema that we have known, its types, meaning the style of the production (Vincenti, 1993: p.123). Despite the differences between them, they unite in a basic point. It is possible to see this as a main line of the cinema. This line is to think about the social structure and culture of the country and question the reality of them in a way that never examined before until that day.

Despite having been a decrease in the number of cinemagoers, especially and firstly European cinema tried to become modern by movements, mentioned above. Within the structure of being original and unique, new movement was damaged with free and small budget in 1980's. Hollywood has started to capture all the audiences. Both in Turkish and the world cinema, the reflections of it have been seen. Having been expressed the national and cultural problems realistically; movies regressed because of the popular movies of the main stream. In the present instance, 'art cinema' which cannot be explained in the frame of 'new cinema' against mainstream, has shown up. The cinema (art cinema), seen as an alternative against American cinema, "was actually the product of the main stream, getting a big success and becoming popular, before having been sold abroad in its own country. Partially, it is still the same. The same thing is valid for Japanese and Indian movies" (Smith, 2005: p.642). It will not be wrong to place Turkey into the given example countries. Especially, some of 1980's movies can be perceived in this way. But because of the socio-economic conditions in Turkey, neither could the art cinema in 60's and 70's and/or all new derivative cinemas be realized in international market, nor it was supported. On the contrary, it was hindered. So, regardless of the trials for different cinemas in 60's and 70's, none of them could be internationalized, because the government did not support them. Especially events in 1968, had affected the art cinema all around the world. In a political aspect, audience of radicalized society chased cinemas that can respond their demands. Movies having been made for crowded people partly have same characteristic of classic narrative cinema. In Turkish cinema there were plenty of examples for this case in 60's, such as Metin Erksan, Lütfi Akad, Duygu Sağıroğlu, Ertem Göreç, etc... But there were some, looking for alternative ways to express political thoughts. Metin Erksan tried this with "Sevmek Zamani", "Kadın Hamlet" etc. in Turkish cinema. Third

cinema concept was another new concept in the world, having an effect on Turkish cinema. “The origins of third cinema stand up to the third world’s anti-imperialist struggle after the Second World War” (Erus, 2007: p.19). Hereunder, especially Latin American cinematographers presented products to set people free and give a revolutionist struggle for militant cinema against commercial Hollywood cinema and extremely individualist European cinema. These are Fernando Solanas, Octavio Getino and Garcia Espinosa.

## **THE NOTION OF NEW CINEMA IN TURKEY**

As Groys also emphasizes, the new always becomes identical with the life. Then, how can we know whether the new is new enough? All of the ideologies and theories focus on the answer of questions of whom and what is new enough. There has been a manifest that the Turkish cinema, supposed to be “dead” in certain times, keeps maintaining its presence in one another “different” way. Hence the researches of Turkish cinema always show a tendency to the sequency of the “new”; in other words, the answer of problematic, from which a continuous innovation evolves, the “new”s categorization, in other words, not being new in the paradigm of “The New Turkish Cinema”. All in all, every period, when putting the notion of new Turkish cinema adopted, brought forward, become representative of a hope to life by everybody as ignoring the old one. Everybody including audiences, directors, reviewers, academicians have wanted “New Turkish Cinema”, but which ‘New Turkish Cinema have they wanted’?

The Notion of “New Turkish cinema refers to five different phenomena in Turkey. First one refers to the generation of new film-makers having built a new and true cinema language for Turkish cinema being dramatized with the impression of Muhsin Ertuğrul. Second one

refers to the national Turkish cinema, attracted the audience by using national value and motives. Third one intends to a Turkish cinema with the effect of art cinema developed under the impact of new reality, French new wave and other movements came out in the 1960's. Fourth one refers to the description of Turkish cinema staying away from the previous periods' technical, esthetical and production-related features, started in 1990's. Fifth one refers to a type of film production, including cinema argument, being free in terms of financial potentials and stronger to defeat and exceed Hollywood by imitating it (numerically).

The filmmakers in the definition of new cinema have made efforts to obtain a more modern and unique cinema to break and overcome to existing rules and commercial conditionings (Scognamillo, 1998: p.397). New film-makers meant by Scognamillo are "young film-makers in 1965s and film-makers shown up with the name of "new film-makers", especially Yılmaz Güney, Zeki Ökten, Yavuz Özkan, Ali Özgentürk, Şerif Gören, Erden Kiral, Korhan Yurtsever etc. According to Zahit Atam, new cinema is a cinema that can make "pure reality of the events with which it's dealing" the core point in the movie. It is a faithless cinema questioning everything rather than accepting any joint and common acknowledgment, value and norm" (2011: p.36). The new cinema shows the common features in the attempt to organize a new way in the world as well as in Turkey. This attempt is to recognize and explain.

In that context, cinema, getting in touch with audiences, is a socialization tool just as all mass media processes. The person's reaction to the message given by cinema changes depending on social, cultural impacts belonging to person's past. This change arose from communication process, occurs with a mutual interaction, of course. The tool delivering the message to community and its producers arise from social structure. And which codes they will use, how they will deliver the message and what type of styles are necessary to be created are

specified according to the social and cultural features. That is to say, the conditions of existence of new cinema depend on social, cultural, and economical features of process included.

The new cinema is a cinema that comes against the traditional cinema. However, it can be detected that the old cinema's features, in other words, the traditional cinema might be seen in the movies of the new cinema. In that context, Sergei Eisenstein, evaluating cinema as independent and advisor in the frame of new or old one rather than in a notion that cinema, belonging to only a nation or a folk, states that "Personally, I am always glad to cinema not being independent from its past and from the traditions of previous times and its culture line" (1985: p.308). It will be possible to show the role of new cinema in the creation of the unique language of traditional arts and Turkish cinema by embedding this statement to the context of Turkish cinema. In that case, the creation of a new cinema does not mean to the denial of the old one completely meanwhile it can be put forward to a radical disengagement from the old one. This engagement can be evaluated in the context of content, style and production conditions. The processes, from past the present followed a chorological line by Turkish cinema, in the terms of style, content and production conditions; briefly, possible effects of the periods' social, cultural, political and economic conditions on the creation of a new cinema should be presented. The most common method in the history of Turkish cinema is to take a syntagmatic section inside the paradigmatic part. This simplicity means that the periods mentioned above are entitled according to the dissimilarity of the periods. "A renewal exists inside the dissimilarities. Depending on the new determined, beginnings and endings are detected" (Okumuş, 2014: p.138).

In the context of periodization, movies, and directors, we will benefit from two subjective approaches. One of them is the book of “Turkish Cinema History” written by Nijat Özön in 1960. The other one is “The History of Turkish Cinema” including the years 1896-1986 written by Giovanni Scognamillo.

## **TURKISH CINEMA UNTIL 1950**

Halit Refiğ has stated that the word ‘cinema’ was not used for a communication art besides than a hall where movies were run until 1950 in the other words, until the establishment of Yeşilçam (Cinematographers Period). Until this time, the word ‘movie’ was used. Cinema was seen not as an art but as an anonymous craft not having even a theory. Film-making is a kind of a craft. What is intended for the word ‘movie maker’ is the owner of a movie house (1996: p.178-179).

Conceptualizing of the cinema in Turkey as an art in broad and general terms goes back to the beginning of movie maker period (the beginning of 1950s). In the process until 1950, the Turkish cinema carried on as a cinema that plays an important role in the public education depending on westernalization movement determined by Atatürk and benefits from aesthetics and pioneer research on a limited scale. This is primarily an establishment and presence period. This is the year of the creation of the “old” causing a reason to the following “new” processes.

Not having an exact date, until 1900, yarning and storytelling activities such as Karagöz (shadow puppetry), encomiast (public story teller), light comedy (eulogy show in Ottoman culture and entertainment life), fairytale and storytelling carried on for a certain time with the arrival of cinema to Turkey. Having been lost their importance of being popular culture’s

public art with the beginning of cinema's being effective on audiences, they continue their existence under the dominance of art cinema style both being impressed and impressing it. With the first Turkish movie, "The Destruction of Russian Martyrs in Ayestefanos"<sup>1</sup> (1914) by Fuat Uzkınay, the evolution of Turkish cinema started on few halls in few big cities during the first years. The cinema could not make necessary improvement and prevalence in the period when under the influence of theatre (until 1940) as well as it was seen as an efficient tool in the foundation of "new Turkey" for the reconstruction studies in western norms of the general social framework. The process between the years 1940-1950, when the cinema started to get rid of the influence of theatre and being a unique art is a transitional period and process, existing until the establishment of the mainstream popular Turkish cinema named as *Yeşilçam* since 1950's. A generation, attempting to create a Turkish cinema based on their experiences gained during abroad, got started to arise; furthermore, they laid the foundation of *Yeşilçam*, having been established despite facing with clumsiness and experiencing hardship. Having been evaluated as the first "new cinematographers" on behalf of Turkish cinema; Faruk Kenç, Şadan Kamil, Bahar Gelenbevi, Turgut Demirağ, Şakir Sırmalı, Çetin Karamanbey, Aydin Arakon, Orhan Arıburnu, (Scognamillo, 1998: p.108-128) are a group of film makers, maintaining the old structure. At the same time, having taken the initiatives in directoring, another group continued the features of Muhsin Ertuğrul (old cinema); Ferdi Tayfur, Talat Artemel, Kani Kıpçak, Sami Ayanoğlu, Süavi Tedü and so on are included in this group.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Yıkılışı"

## THE TURKISH CINEMA BETWEEN 1950 AND 1960

Turkish cinema made progress continually in the number of production depending on the ticket tax deduction especially after the World War II. However, the quality of movies didn't improve concordantly. A few directors (Lütfi Akad, Halit Refiğ, Metin Erksan so on.) found the possibility to work, based on "the *inflation of film entertainment*" to create the language of the new cinema, to establish Turkish cinema by saving it from the influence of theatre (Özön, 1964: p.121). The cinema in Turkey as being an art and its attempts to have a specific language and to create a specific style were succeeded with the efforts of these directors, talented and having a cultural background in that period. Of course, these renewals of Turkish cinema are the consequences of some sociological events in 1950's. It is related to these events and shaped according to these. Anatolian fund, reflected to general election and parliament after 1950's, is on the front burner. It means, feudal system has a say in the cinema fund. The CHP's <sup>2</sup> effect on transitional period in single party period is the same as the ruling of Democrat Party's effect on the process of Yeşilçam's establishment. This period is a period when Democrat Party was on the power and the electricity became common across the country and cinema halls in Anatolian increased although the censorship existed. This period is a period that cinema was seen as a mean to entertain people and in the content based so many comedies, vendetta themed village films, romance and virtue-themed films were shot (Kayalı, 1994: p.15).

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<sup>2</sup> Republican People's Party

“The art cinema”, emerged after 1930’s, is in the process of expansion and development. In that time, French and Italian with the political exposures, Neorealism movements were born. “Eventually, in the context of director, the art cinema has reached a climax from 1950s. In that context, the “auteur” concept arose indirectly from economic and political reasons between America and France, directly from endeavors of a group intellectualists, thinking and writing about American cinema, criticizing their own countries’ cinemas” (Kolker, 2011: p.168). The new American Cinema is originated from Italian Neorealism in Italy, New Wave in France, Free Cinema in England, young people’ denial of settlement values depends on the beginning of Vietnam War in America, movements originated from not becoming integrated with the system. Among these, one of the most important ones is French new wave (cinema). The impacts of 1968 events and French new wave (cinema) on Turkey did not happened as expected. According to Ertan Yilmaz, one of this situation’s reason depends on extinction of political opposition in the early times in Turkey (2009, p.11). However, a film-maker and spoilers, responsible for the consideration of escapist cinema, trying to disable Yeşilcam’s audiences to think differently and free, “underestimate and think the worst part of escapist cinema which is patrimonial cinema (*ciné de papa*) depending a necessity to take an attitude against to world problems” (Onaran, 2012: p.277). Turkish cinema tried to give the same reaction to cinema named Yeşilçam as the reaction of patrimonial cinema, a *stereotypical consideration of cinema*, making adaptations from the previous works generally literal works in French cinema.

## THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1960 AND 1975

The most productive period of Turkish cinema has started with the revolution of 27<sup>th</sup> May 1960. In the same period, the discussions about Turkish cinema, ‘Who are the Turkish audiences? What kind of audiences are they? What is Turkish cinema? What kind of cinema is it?’ were started to be discussed substantially for the first time by people interested in cinema and continued to be discussed in 1970’s. One of the most effective social changes in the creation of Turkish cinema is a violation in the sociopolitical field. The most productive period of Yeşilçam in terms of cinema started probably with the revolution of 27th May 1960. The political and social changes of period, having emerged with the revolution, coincide with the elections of 10th October 1965, the interim regime of 12th March 1971, the elections of 14th October 1973 come up to 12th September. Ünsal Oskay states to have put through his attempts by having an expression suitable for an interrogating and cerebral semantic structure, our cinema getting rid of a fantastic semantic structure of tales thanks to the environment provided by the Turkish constitution of 1961, and the revolution of 1960 (1991: p.14-31).

The important directors of the period stated by Oskay are Metin Erksan with the movies of *Gecelerin Ötesi* (1960), *Yılanların Öcü* (1962), *Susuz Yaz* (1963), *Açı Hayat* (1963), Halit Refiğ, with the movies of *Yasak Aşk* (1961) *Şehirdeki Yabancı* (1963), *Şafak Bekçileri* (1963), *Gurbet Kuşları* (1964) and Ertem Göreç with the movie handling the social subject such as strike and labour union for the first time *Karanlıkta Uyananlar* (1965), *Otobüs Yolcuları* (1961), and Duygu Sağıroğlu with the movie of *Bitmeyen Yol* (1965) Orhan Elmas and Memduh Ün were young directors, having new views to start being involved in Yeşilçam with their precious movies after the revolution of 27th May. The fact that television was introduced

to Turkey as a communication tool and started gradually to attract people's interest, should be kept in mind.

The colored cinematography comes to Turkey. After 1968, colored photographic film has been used. The official relations with foreign countries have been improved. Turkish films took place in the international contests. The films drew attractions of people and gained some awards. The festivals were organized. The films provided training for bourgeois and peasants in the field of being adapted to the modern life (Safa Önal, Personal Interview, 18<sup>th</sup>, May, 2000).

The institutions that will direct and support the cinema has been established. Some of the theories and movements were suggested, discussions upon these were started and after that, these discussions were forgotten. (Popular Cinema, Social Realism, Revolutionary Cinema, National Cinema etc.) Some of the many filmmakers, producers, actors, actresses, technicians produced their best works launched at cinema, whereas some of them complied with the terms and conditions. Turkish Cinematheque Association<sup>3</sup> one and only was established in 1965. Onat Kutlar and Adnan Berk shaped a sophisticated cinema environment where film-makers were involved in theoretical discussions, domestic, foreign film-makers' articles were included, journals of domestic cinema were published and mass film meetings were organized, world cinema classics were presented to Turkish audiences. Thus, as a result of the increasing attention to the western, improper development of *Yeşilçam* caused the beginning of the discussion between luminaries and filmmakers. According to Engin Ayça a political cinema

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<sup>3</sup> Türk Sinematek Derneği

was created. In 1960 the movement of ‘Young Cinema’ was born but it did not maintain its existence (1992: p.126).

Halit Refiğ attempted to apply the view of ‘National Cinema’ on “Bir Türk’e Gönül Verdim” in the context of transforming theory to practise. Metin Erksan issued the theme of “loving the appearance” encountered in Eastern tales on “Sevmek Zamanı” while he issued a theme related to *relationships between men and women associated with Surah An-Nisaa* (in the Koran) on “Kuyu”. Yücel Çakmaklı, defender of national (regional) cinema, was the one and only filmmaker who support the idea that morality associated with religion.

### **The 1970s, Yılmaz Güney and New Cinema**

The impact of Yılmaz Güney on the Turkish cinema in the period between 1960 and 1975 was named as “new cinema” with a schematic expression. Also, the directors, following him classified it in that way. Yılmaz Güney and his movie ‘Umut’ shot in 1970, has taken a place as a movie being a rebellious against the commercial patterns and telling about the facts, including the concern of a responsible artist in the history of Turkish cinema inside the traditional Yeşilçam cinema. ‘Umut’ is a work of art, brought the realism to the Turkish cinema being impressed by Italian neorealist cinema in 1970. The film was different from the previous commercial movies in terms of the film’s arrangement of the relationship between humans and the environment, plastic material and documentalist details, having been utilized randomly beforehand. The impact of Yılmaz Güney on Turkish cinema was named as “new cinema” with a schematic expression and the directors who followed him classified it in this way as well (Scognamillo, 1998: p.361). Afterwards Akad and Erksan’s neorealistic perception, the Turkish cinema became more objective and tried to be natural and creative thanks to Yılmaz Güney’s

cinema and his followers. Moreover, Ünsal Erkan declared that our cinema leaned to an expression suitable for an interrogating and cerebral semantic structure in 1970s moving away from a fantastic semantic structure of tales (1991: p.98). Consequently, the Notion of “new cinema” substantially took part in the Turkish Literature for the first time in this period. On the other hand, it is important to state that some movements and experiments acquired on abroad have an impact on the new cinema in Turkey.

The first cinema movement, named as a revolutionary cinema in 1968, became the young cinema movement, organized by a group of radical young people who left ‘Turkish Cinema one and only Association’ and journals published with the same name. They adopted the cinema concept having outside shooting like D. Vertov and French Film-maker Jean Luc Godard. They were in the search of a new independent, revolutionary cinema for the benefit of public. In their manifesto, they stated that they were against to all *Yeşilçam* cinemas of the Young Cinema (1968: p.1). According to this concept, universality and nationality are hand in hand, in other words, ‘the new tradition’ believes that a national work of art will acquire a universal qualification. Apart from narrow mindedness and dogma, it supports freedom. Young Cinema, not having shot so many movies, lost its function and organization in a short time especially depending on arrests.

Onat Kutlar, who states that young people’s world has some specific common features no matter in which countries or under which regimes they regards; sees free cinema in England, young cinema in German, new wave in France, new cinema in Brasil and third world countries’ cinemas equal to “new cinema” in Turkey (Görücü, 1998: p.94). What new cinema presents is against *Yeşilçam*. Kutlar, who stated that there were not a tradition from which new cinema (a

revolutionary cinema) could inherit until 1970's, emphasizes that new cinema created 'a new mood' but still it was insufficient to create concrete work of arts.

## **THE 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1980 TURKISH MILITARY REVOLUTION, NEW TURKEY AND NEW CINEMA**

1980s is a transitional period that social, economic, political and cultural changes happened in a fast and radical way. The radical situation in this context is that the alteration process undergoes a change. Free market economy matches social structure from past to present with market economy emphasizing "the present time". So, politicization of current problems took the place of politics, the revolutionary of 1970s, and wanted to exist in the future (Göle, 2000: p.7). The Turkish cinema in the framework of social changes from past to present began to have a different structure from its past and its root permanently. The law amendment enabling the inflow of capital, arrival of American Film Companies to Turkey and their effects on the Turkish cinema caused directors to search for new productions with the effects of widespread use of video, globalization, free market economy and attempts of the Motherland Party (ANAP). A new production style not relying upon an audience-driven economic structure was adopted in Turkish cinema thanks to incentive awards supplied by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and sponsorships. Independent from entertainment and escapist cinema, this transition means a process of change to artistic and personal cinema, and this might be evaluated as the beginning of "New cinema" and separating from *Yeşilçam*. "In these years, the two remarkable reforms of the new Turkish cinema probably have shown a special interest in women problems and making a beginning to think on the cinema itself" (Erdoğan, 2001: p.225).

As the beginning of a renewal and the ending of traditional *Yeşilçam* cinema, Yılmaz Güney and his movie ‘*Umut*’ shot in 1970, took a place as a movie being a rebellious against the commercial patterns and telling about the facts, including the concern of a responsible artist in the history of Turkish cinema. In the meantime, some directors tended to shoot different movies of a new period especially after 1980. The foundations of a new Turkey, quite different from the former began to be laid depending the 12th September 1980 Turkish coup d'état. In a period evaluated as transition and depression years, Yılmaz Güney and the new generation, including most of the old generation directors who still works, Zeki Ökten, Şerif Gören, Ömer Kavur, Erden Kıral, Ali Özgentürk, Yavuz Özkan, Sinan Çetin, Yusuf Kurçenli, İrfan Tözüm, so on, have started to shoot different kinds of movies of a new period. According to Burçak Evren, the most important renewal that brought by this generation (1978 generation) is a tendency and ambition to the renewal. This tendency motivated some people, making reform, having specific audiences with some specific awards (1990: p.7).

## 1990s WERE THE BEST

Turkish cinema differs from Western cinema and Western art in terms of director and audiences with an expression different from the sense of drama originated in Ancient Greek. Themes treated superficially with abstract and stereotype motives have highlighted alienation, and this led specifically to a reflection of the language of Turkish cinema, closer to an understanding of the epic melodrama. Being in a search for a new cinema, this structure is tried to be eliminated. It started to be used extensively especially in the beginning of the 1990s. As used herein, the "new" concept claims a radical disengagement from *Yeşilçam*; but certain bounds having been existed between two cinemas should be taken into consideration.

Melodrama, a most dominant narrative form of Yeşilçam used as a paradigm, was circulated into new Turkish Cinema (Akbulut, 2012: p.112). By the adaptation of traditional visual culture elements to contemporary cinema narratives, contributions have been made for the efforts of creating a new cinema, but unfortunately Yeşilçam has used the cultural form unconsciously, with a commercial instinct and gropingly. In this context, Meral Özçınar Eşli exemplifies the Taviani Brothers and emphasizes that by drawing inspirations from traditional art forms, the Taviani Brothers have created an intellectual perspective and a unique expression (2012: p.319). Similar experimental approaches can be seen in the cinema of Derviş Zaim, one of the directors, trying to establish a new Turkish cinema.

The 1990s were an important transitional period not only for Turkey but also for the history of the world. The targeted world order during this time was a concept to have been established an international USA-centered community. Therefore, alienated from old politics, movements based on neoliberalism, such as globalization, free market and protectionism have been widespread. Furthermore, Ideational systems, parallel to this content, are derived from this structure under the title of "critical". Zahit Atam asserts that the most important reason why Yeşilçam period in Turkish cinema ended in the 1990s is the declaration of the "New World Order" after 1990, is the most important reason; moreover, since 1994, he argues that a cinema described as new is born (2011, p.83). The ironic relationship between the new of the new world order and the new of New Turkish Cinema, can be considered as conceptualized as an understanding of cinema, criticizing the destructive impact on people and the problems of the new world order cinema understanding. "People should be informed about critical discourse does not provide audiences the necessary conceptual tools for the new pleasure forms of being and alternative reading formats" (Erdoğan, 2001: p.227).

1990s, by the intensified conditions of the 80s, the occurrence of certain differences, but above all, by the beginning of the broadcast of private television channels, Turkish Cinema has become integrated with television, irrevocably. After 1990, the Turkish cinema audiences have become active with the serial films in the private television channels. Between 1990 and 2000, television centered popular cinema understanding had been carried on. The directors versus TV-series directors, a small number of professional cinema actors versus actors from television business, used to be the situation. Directors, who continued their industrial relationships with the television business in the 2000s, but also tried to stay out of the popular Turkish cinema, assumed the productions of their own movies, made movies for a few audience group, made use of their commercial and artistic success by their awards, such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Semih Kaplanoğlu, Derviş Zaim, Zeki Demirkubuz, etc. have made movies that determine the course of the "new cinema".

In her article, Alin Taşçıyan describes "new cinema" concept –having been shaped like the earth movements jerkily- barely getting over the concussion, twenty years after 12<sup>th</sup> September, produced so many films, giving hope, and adds as having the features of the period, the stories used to be sincere, film scripts are rigorous with small budget, actor and actresses are anonymous but successful (2001: p.8-9). During these years directors like Serdar Akar, Ümit Ünal, Barış Pirhasan, Semir Arslanyürek are mentioned as new cinematographers. Movies, carrying the features of the traditional Turkish cinema, having been considered as "new", shows that there are cinemas, distanced from the mainstream cinema in a certain degree, on the other hand, strengthened by the traditional cinema. "Contemporary movies rise up from the supplies that bring us to one of the *Yeşilçam* films. Movies always show that Zeki Demirkubuz always wins" (Öztürk, 2001: p.4). Not having been in a good enough relationship

with the audiences statistically, "New Turkish Cinema" is personal, independent, and aesthetically different, far from old stereotype themes, revolutionist. While having innovation thoughts inside, the criticisms, that assert the way to be included in national cinema to reach the audiences, put through the cinema argument that "New Turkish Cinema" concept which tries to imitate Hollywood statistically and is more independent and powerful than it, can defeat Hollywood by giving a taste of its own medicine. The first example of it is the movie "Eşkiya". The number of audiences, watching Turkish films in the 1996 year was 2,975,623. Audiences of the film "Eşkiya" are 2,572,287. If it is emphasized that the number of audiences watching other Turkish films was only 403,336, in those years, "Eşkiya" had become the prototype of new Turkish cinema. This prototype has been successful in a certain extent because in recent years, the number of Turkish film audiences is equivalent to the number of foreign film audiences.

## CONCLUSION

In Turkey the concepts of "new" as an adjective or "New Turkish Cinema", began to be used especially in 1960s, were examined within the context of the reflection of social, political, economic, and cultural change. To provide answers to important questions about the Turkish cinema depends on the methodically search and the reasoning. In this case the concepts are the most important tools. Having been examined by the perspective of social, political and aesthetic; the new cinema, in the core of the new concepts, is involved in the alteration phenomenon, and it observed that these changes are political and social. The changes in every social and political era in Turkey have brought a reform in the Turkish cinema. And this has led to the "New Turkish Cinema" concept to be used especially by critics and academicians.

Sometimes positively, sometimes negatively evaluated, for the sake of the mainstream having political alterations in favor of the repressive, opponent and realistic cinema discourse accept the result leading to the period in which this structure that presents a consistent continuity in Turkey, 'Yeşilçam' has become the reflection of Hollywoodish cinema. Since the formation of the Yeşilçam's specific production, distribution and aesthetic style (since 1950), all different efforts bring forward the new cinema style, therefore "The New Turkish Cinema". The starting point and the difference of the "New Turkish Cinema" from Yeşilçam is that it has an endeavor to make a different kind of cinema. Many directors have continued this effort within the periods. While an audience, having been raised awareness and changed by social alterations is forming "new audience" profile (university student, art follower), the trials of New Turkish Cinema directors are supported and have been awarded by the world cinema intelligentsia, thinking the works done parallel to their aesthetic world, by the critics because of seeing the well-intentioned efforts of both small group of new cinema audiences and amateur spirit.

In short, New Turkish Cinema is based on the political, social, and aesthetic criticism of the old (Yeşilçam). That is a condition associated with identification of two opposite types of cinema. Two cinemas, differing from each other in terms of the reasons, the results and the conditions; what criteria will be allocated according to the old and new? How will the subcategories be renamed? How will the films and directors be positioned on the scale of the new? For example, where should Zeki Demirkubuz, interested in both categories; Derviş Zaim, benefiting from tradition (Yeşilçam, used the cultural form unconsciously, with a commercial instinct and gropingly); Nuri Bilge Ceylan, standing close to melodrama, be positioned? The responses to each of these questions can be an extended subject of another study.

If The New Cinema is seen as a revolutionary cinema against the mainstream, and if it is taken into consideration that there is no tradition revolutionary cinema to inherit until 1970, it is unavoidable for these new cinema films to reflect the features of traditional cinema (mainstream).

Cinema in the modernization of the Republic of Turkey has been an effective instrument to reconstruct the society according to Western standards. Serving a revolutionary power, "a new cinema" has been using theatrical aesthetic as language, though, with the directors' experiences abroad, emerges a generation trying to establish the original language of the cinema and have laid the foundations of *Yeşilçam*. Scognamillo describes these people as "the first new cinematographers" on behalf of the Turkish cinema. Thus, the efforts of the people serving for the mainstream cinema as an ideological formation today but going to be a tradition for the new cinemas in the future in terms of language, has been involved in the concept of "the new cinema". Films figured in the "new" concept, embracing the traditional cinema features within, indicate that there are films drifting apart from mainstream cinema noticeably and these films are exemplified as "new cinema", while still affected by the traditional cinema deeply. Although classified as mainstream, the cinema of the recent years that have been influenced from the TV serials technically, economically, socially and aesthetically, might also be called "new cinema" just because they have been increasing the number of national cinema audience to the highest level. Briefly, although critics and academicians have always tried to locate the entire effective social, political, economic and cultural alterations in the Turkish cinema within the concept of "new cinema", a new "new cinema" definition has become a necessity for Turkish cinematographers in order to create a new personal world for their work towards the changing period and relationships.

Filmmakers, constantly trying to overcome the tough conditions of the productions, have been working with the production concerns about their films which will be giving the possibility of a new, alternative, another world for the audiences in a despair of star actor/actress fetishism under the aesthetic admiration and effects of television, rather than being classified under the titles of this or that.

In many different meanings, periods, “New Turkish Cinema” concept has incorporated different ideologies under the general roof of communicating differently with the audiences, increasing the alternatives of individual cinematographers and optimism for the future Turkish cinematographers; furthermore, while presenting hope-inspiring view, as being existed in every field of Turkey, there should be criticisms in the cinema industry on the problems of the “new” fetishism and the concepts becoming worthless.

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