



*Cypriot Cinemas: Memory, Conflict, and Identity in the Margins of Europe* edited by Costas Constandinides and Yiannis Papadakis, (New York/London: Bloomsbury, 2015). 264 pages. 18 illustrations.

*Reviewed by Vicki James Yiannias*

Judging by the limited showing of Cypriot films in Greek American film festivals the production of Cypriot films is infrequent. Nevertheless, four Cypriot features were screened in Cyprus's official fiction feature film festival, Cyprus Film Days, in 2015, the first in the history of Cypriot cinema. This upswing in Cypriot film production deserves to be reflected in Greek American film festivals in 2016.

An advantage of a modest film industry is that it can be subjected to fairly exhaustive analysis. *Cypriot Cinemas: Memory, Conflict, and Identity in the Margins of Europe*, indicates how Cypriot cinema is reflective of Cyprus's troubled history and the particular nature of Cypriot life, with its lingering problems and multicultural colorations. The book is wide-ranging. Perhaps most interesting is its ability to apply to a manageable number of films, produced in a small country with a troubled history, methods of analysis that are familiar to the audiences of literary and other forms of artistic criticism.

The introduction by the volume's editors, Costas Constandinides and Yiannis Papadakis, sets the stage for the book's analysis of Cypriot films by describing the book's scope, which is expansive despite the relatively small number of films that Cyprus has produced. Social, political, economic, and other factors are examined as setting the cinematic parameters.

The major films discussed in the book are placed within the historical periods in which they were made and that period's major political trends. Beginning with the cinema of the 1960s when the island became a republic, the collection of writings (by seven contributors) focuses on recent decades and on filmmakers exploring issues of

conflict, memory, identity, nationalism, migration and gender, and the work of filmmakers cooperating across the ethnic divide.

In the first chapter, "Archive, Memory, Dream: Documentary Films on Cyprus," Elizabeth Anne Davis discusses Cypriot documentary films and their function as historical codifiers and preservers. Davis holds that contemporary documentary film is in itself an archive in the making: a medium for transmitting a common heritage, but also for collecting, preserving, and questioning evidence of the violent past.

Chapter Two, "Aesthetics, Narratives, and Politics in Greek Cypriot Film:1960-1974," by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert and Nicos Philippou deals with the search for an "ethnonational" identity on screen and by Cypriot photographers, Cypriot cinematography having taken its first steps alongside those of the new Republic of Cyprus, in the 1960s and 70s. They examine the struggle to define "Cypriotness" in four key early Greek Cypriot films by Giorgios Filis, Vangelis Oikonomides, and Orestis Laskos and the work of photographers Takis Demetriades, Jack Iakovides and John Hinde.

Lawrence Raw's chapter, "Cyprus Past, Present, and Future: The Dervis Zaim Trilogy," examines the work of the Turkish Cypriot Dervis Zaim, whose films *Mud*, *Parallel Trips*, and *Shadows and Faces* aim to remind the viewer of the sometimes neglected human aspect of the country's historical convulsions, especially the events of 1974, and examine the themes of displacement and identity.

The fourth chapter, "Tormenting History: The Cinemas of the Cyprus Problem," by Constandinides and Papadakis is a critique of the influence of the Cyprus problem, the political tragedy which preoccupies the majority of Cypriot films. This "excess of the political," the overwhelming desire to express a political position and establish blame works to the detriment of other aspects of the films. Part of this discussion brings into play a comparison with Israeli cinema, whether informed by nationalism, or by notions of reconciliation.

Constandinides's "Transnational Views from the Margins of Europe: Globalization, Migration and Post-1974 Cypriot Cinemas" discusses the exploitation films of the 1970s and 80s, influenced by neighboring or global low-budget exploitation films, which are revealing despite their marginal nature. Constandinides discusses a group of state-supported "art house" films by a number of key Cypriot filmmakers, which present ambiguous notions of journeying and homecoming. By bringing together these two different types of film practices Constandinides maps Cypriot cinemas' various transnationalisms, both before and after the establishment of film policies by the

Republic of Cyprus.

Nadia Kamenou's "Women and Gender in Cypriot Films" addresses Cypriot films from the feminist point of view, bringing into play that genre's hermeneutics. This is followed by a postscript by Constandinides that summarizes some of the problems of generalization and definition that Cypriot films present.

*Cypriot Cinemas* is an excellent introduction to Cypriot cinema.

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