

Queer Turks on the Move: Ambiguities of Home in Pan-European Cinema

Several films have addressed queer Turkishness in recent years, albeit in very different ways. Regardless of whether being produced and located in Turkey or across Europe, a common concern is the problematization of home and belonging. I want to look at two contrasting examples and discuss the ambiguities of home arising from queer – and specifically gay male – sexuality. *Zenne Dancer* (2011), a Turkish production, and *Beyto* (2020), a Swiss production, in strikingly different ways feature a trio of mixed-cultured protagonists who are forced to arrange their lives not according to their wishes. While *Zenne Dancer* ends with killing the gay and thus with a bleak outlook on the state of queerness in Turkey, *Beyto* envisions a utopic future for its queer protagonist far away from Turkish influences. What unites the films, however, is the notion that finding a home for queers requires involuntary mobility. I consider both films as part of a new queer pan-European cinema that foregrounds homesteading as (perhaps necessarily) linked to migration. The act of coming out all too often results in having to move out, although the wish for a steady home remains unbroken. Both films I want to discuss address the risks of homelessness and offer dreams of homefulness, a major topic of the new *Heimatfilm* at large. In what ways these films refresh, expand, and transgress a genre that grounds on a seemingly unchallenged claim to heteronormativity, will be asked by positioning them alongside theories of queer narration, queer futurity, and queer migration. Are such theories that stem from Euro-American social, political, and cultural contexts even adequate and valid when dealing with non-European contexts? Both films at stake take a different stance as to how Westernized their queer protagonists are meant to be perceived and in what ways their homes – as precarious as they turn out to be – are linked to the past, the present, and the future.

Ralph J. Poole is an American-German researcher who teaches as Professor of American Studies at the University of Salzburg, Austria. He taught at the University of Munich, Germany, at Fatih University in Istanbul, Turkey, and was a research scholar at CUNY's Center for Advanced Studies in Theater Arts in Manhattan. His publications include a study on the Avant-Garde tradition in American theatre, a book on satirical and autoethnographical "cannibal" texts, a collection of essays on "dangerous masculinities", and another collection on "queer Turkey". Having wrapped up a project funded by the Austrian Science Fund on "Gender and Comedy in the Age of the American Revolution", he is currently researching the Austrian *Heimatfilm* from a pan-European and genderqueer perspective. His research interests include gender and queer studies, popular culture, and transnational American studies.