

A Study of I Saw the Sun Directed by Mahsun Kirmizigül. To Be at Home or Not to Be at Home!

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Received: April 16, 2014 Accepted: May 8, 2014 Online Published: June 24, 2014

doi:10.5539/ass.v10n14p114

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n14p114>

Abstract

Uprooted from their homelands, Kurds are in the predicament of living in an unhomely world which doesn't offer any reflection of their subjectivity and identity. This study tries to examine the movie, I Saw the Sun, directed by Mahsun Kirmizigül which tells the story of a Kurdish family forced to leave its homeland. The main purpose is to represent the psychological and social effects of unhomeliness on movie's characters and to delve into uncanny nature of movie's characterization, Kadri. It has been tried to challenge the fixed notion of identity and undervalue the binary oppositions which are the basis of the cultural thinking. In this gender-biased Kurdish community, people like Kadri are doomed to violence and death and the study's main focus is on this character's evolution from a naïve outcast into a mature outcast. The study based on Homi K. Bhabha's concepts, uncanny and unhomely offers a new reading of a post-colonial situation in which physically and psychologically unhomed characters live in an incredulous terror and are denied any sense of individuality and identity.

Keywords: I Saw the Sun, uncanny, unhomely, binary opposition, Homi K. Bhabha

1. Introduction

William Safire in his essay "Remember the Kurds" states that one person in six in Turkey is a Kurd; that's almost ten million people. They are called "Mountain Turks" and over years Turkish government has tried to melt them into Turkish pot. Diaspora, or the involuntary or forcible movement of Kurds from their homelands into new regions in Turkey is a central fact in their history. The descendants of this massive exodus have developed their own distinctive culture and sense of identity different from their indigenous culture and identity.

I Saw the Sun is an epic drama written and directed by Mahsun Kirmizigül. The movie retells the story of a close-knit Kurdish family who are evacuated from their village due to the conflicts between Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish government forces. This family's dispersed members who accommodate in Istanbul and Norway after the evacuation run into cultural and psychological problems. In this paper, all attempts have been made to elaborate on the concepts of unhomely and uncanny, both proposed by the post-structuralist theorist, Homi K. Bhabha.

Homi Bhabha was born in Bombay, India, into a Parsi family which has a long-lasting effect on his literary work. "The diasporic history of the Parsis is matched by their modern-day dispersal throughout the world, while still maintaining an important core community within India" (Lane, 2006). Due largely to his Parsi background "Bhabha articulates some recurring themes and questions about identity, which he also applies to the literatures that emerge from complex intersections of people and place" (ibid.). Among his prominent influences are Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon and Toni Morrison. In his 1986's foreword to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, instead of regarding the configuration of race/gender and race/sexuality as "petty bourgeois deviations", sees them vital to understanding of colonialism's impact on humanity (ibid.). The rejection of binary thinking and binary oppositions is crystal clear in his criticism: not black/white, colonizer/colonized, male/female, heterosexual/homosexual but in-betweenness is of importance. The critical discourse in his *The Location of Culture* engages with heterogeneous communities and voices: "women, the colonized, minority groups, and the bearers of policed sexualities" (ibid.).

The idea of home and unhomeliness is central to Bhabha's theory and I Saw the Sun movie, and this sense of home is quintessential in movie characters' sense of identity. Bhabha explains that unhomely cannot be easily