

Female characters in Turkish German cinematic space: an analysis with examples of three recent films

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Abstract

This thesis shows how the female characters of recent ‘Turkish-German’ films are situated in transnational, frequently transcultural space, in which they have greater self-determination and individuation compared to characters in earlier films. These cinematic developments reflect changing discourses around integration and multiculturalism in Germany. Three films have been chosen for close analysis. They exemplify the development of a Turkish German cinematic space, and add new migratory patterns to the history of Turkish-German interaction.

By the late 20th Century, discourses of multiculturalism had found their way into mainstream media and politics in Germany, in spite of successive governments’ statements that Germany was not a country of immigration. In the early 21st Century, changes were made to the historically restrictive German citizenship and immigration laws. The concept of integration remains a highly contested one, and as in many other countries, there has been something of a ‘crisis of multiculturalism’ in Germany. The internal diversity of nation-states, and the external forces of globalisation and transnational ties, constantly draw attention to the difficulty of national identity as a category.

Gender plays a central role in nation-building, and in how the state interacts both with its existing population and with immigrants. In cinema, too, anxieties around social change, or of promoting or reinstating certain values, were frequently expressed through gender roles. Relational gender constructions are also employed to uphold relational cultural identities and perceptions of the ethnic other. Turkish immigrants to Germany were frequently constructed as being from a ‘backward’ tradition, and patriarchal norms viewed as evidence of a resistance to integration in German society. This centrality of gender to the ‘othering’ of immigrant minorities has been seen in many films portraying Turkish immigrants, or their descendants, in Germany.

The three films analysed here illustrate the heterogeneity of Germany’s Turkish minority, and the impossibility of speaking of a monolithic ‘Turkish culture’. In their content and their reception, these films are embedded in multiple ways in transnational Turkish German networks of connectivity, mobility and belonging.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Female characters in Turkish German cinematic space: an analysis with examples of three recent films” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Michelle Leigh Robertson 16th July 2013

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1. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the portrayal of Turkish-German female identities in German cinema, with a focus on the characters in three recent films. The changing faces of Turkish-German women in film bear witness to the transformation of German political and public discourse on immigration, integration and multiculturalism, and the lived reality of a significant minority within the German population. It is argued that the current reality is best reflected through the increased range of characters, the greater complexity and agency of some key figures, and the depiction of transnationally-linked and internally-diverse urban spaces. Tendentially, and in particular in the case of the three films analysed in depth in this thesis, German cinema is reflecting the shift from notions of ‘life between two cultures’ towards the construction of personal identities incorporating two or more cultural spheres as a matter of course, and the ready negotiation of this cultural mix.

At the same time, the journeys of characters back and forth can be viewed as a restlessness expressing a search for belonging and for a homeplace. In the three films analysed in depth, this restlessness is embodied by the protagonists, and countered by the experiences of other characters around them. These dramatic narratives, by their nature, rely on people in conflict with each other, themselves, and the world around them. In these films there is an evident tension between the portrayal of long-established Turkish communities within Germany, and main characters whose outsider status has to do with more than an ethnocultural identity. In order to fully elaborate on this argument, the three film case studies are preceded in this thesis by German socio-historical context and German cinematic context, as well as a discussion of the terminological and methodological framework for the analyses.

The argument opens in Chapter 2 with an overview of the history of immigration in Germany and the attendant changes in discourse and terminology around migration and national identity. This is followed by an account of how formalised belonging, in the form of citizenship laws has changed. Chapter 2 closes with an exploration of the informal and less tangible elements of belonging and cultural identities, and a discussion of the ongoing anxieties about multiculturalism and integration in Germany. Although Germany’s role as a destination for immigrants has become widely acknowledged and accepted, and immigration and citizenship laws reflect this, there is

still rigorous debate about what the responsibilities of immigrants and their new home country should be with respect to social cohesion — debate that frequently focuses on the treatment and status of women, and the beliefs and behaviour of men.

Further context is provided in Chapter 3 with an historical overview of German cinema, with particular attention given to the role of gendered representations. The chapter begins with a discussion of the long-recognised relationship between cinema and national identity. The argument continues with a history of German cinema and its nation-building implications — in parallel with the vicissitudes of Germany's history, German cinema has experienced varied and quite distinct chapters with clear implications with respect to national identity — albeit sometimes at the risk of essentialising and over-generalising. At various junctures, cinema has also been a site for expressing and processing anxieties about social change and shifting gender roles as they pertain to the stability of the nation. This discussion is divided broadly into two sections: Chapter 3.1 deals with the early decades of German cinema up to and including the films of the Weimar and Nazi eras and Chapter 3.2 explores the post-war decades of great social change, including the assertion of 'women's cinema' and cinema's reaction to Germany's great waves of 20th Century immigration.

Chapter 3.3 offers an account of the late-1990s emergence and development of the so-called 'Turkish-German cinema'. It will be argued that this very category has now been, or is in the process of being, incorporated fully into the notion of a German national cinema, albeit with permeable and malleable borders. The term 'Turkish-German cinema' was useful as a means of drawing attention to a number of filmmakers at a time when many of their films dealt with similar themes or milieus. From the beginning, it was clear that directors as stylistically diverse as Fatih Akın¹ and Kutluğ Ataman could not readily be regarded as belonging to a common tradition of filmmaking. Furthermore, the motivation of helping to bring more stories of Turks to German screens was given varying priority and was politicised to varying degrees. Much like the New German Cinema of the 1970s, 'Turkish-German cinema' can be understood as describing a chapter in the history of cinema, rather than as a category that continues to the present day. It is suggested that rather than being a marginal or

¹ Due to transliteration, Akın's surname variously appears with a dotted i, or with the undotted i of the original Turkish spelling (Turkish distinguishes between the vowels i and ı). Throughout this thesis, I will retain spelling as it appears in the source texts (including publication details), and use the Akın spelling myself. The latter appears to have become more common in recent literature, presumably as the director's profile has continued to grow, and perhaps also as a sign of increased familiarity with Turkish language within German studies.

sub-national component of German cinema, ‘Turkish-German cinema’ has evolved into a cinema of transnationalism: a cinema that reflects the slow decline of the nation as a primary category of identification, but which, in doing so, places the experiences of its Turkish-background characters very much at the centre, as typical of the German national experience. In particular, Chapter 3.3 highlights the differentiation along gender lines that is found in Turkish and Turkish-German characters in German cinema. This discussion draws on examples from a number of films from the years since the first Turkish *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) arrived in Germany.

Chapter 4 establishes the conceptual and theoretical framework of the detailed film analyses that follow. Analytical approaches to German cinema are surveyed and the terminology of the ‘national’ and ‘transnational’ defined. The three films for closer analysis are briefly introduced, their respective directors discussed, and the reasons for the selection of these films are explained.

Chapter 5 consists of detailed analysis of three key films from the past decade: *Head-On* (*Gegen die Wand*, dir. Fatih Akin, 2004), *The Edge of Heaven* (*Auf der anderen Seite*, dir. Fatih Akin, 2008) and *When We Leave* (*Die Fremde*, dir. Feo Aladağ, 2010). The analyses are primarily textual in nature, with a formalist approach. The analyses, and subsequent comparative and concluding discussion in Chapter 6, will show that the integration of Turkish-German female identities into the German cinematic landscape is being achieved through more fully-realised characters, located in increasingly transnational urban settings. Moreover, a focus on relationships between female characters, in many cases from the same family, enables a breaking down of simplistic assumptions and a diversification of Turkish-German womanhood in cinema. At the same time, the figures in these films take on an outsider position through specific circumstances; they are not outsiders to Germany or because of their Turkish background — though some complicating factors that arise are connected to the beliefs of other Turkish characters — but primarily because of a desire to change their lives.

This thesis concludes that these films evince a growing acknowledgement of transnationalism as a natural part of, rather than an impediment to, the integration of immigrants in German society, and that the variety and complexity of Turkish and Turkish-German female characters in these films redresses the narrow and generalising view that has been dominant in German cinema and across other media. At the same time, in dealing with the matters of domestic violence and family honour as they pertain to women, the films avoid an idealisation of multicultural Germany. Moreover, the

strong female protagonists speak and act for themselves in addressing the problems that affect them.

As an Australian, I am conscious of comparisons that can be drawn between the experiences of post-war immigration in Australia and Germany. A classical immigration country on the one hand, and a Western European nation-state on the other, have both witnessed a tension between the myth of national commonality and the reality of ethnocultural pluralism. That this tension is evident in the discourses of both countries shows the extent to which multiculturalism forces a re-evaluation of long-held notions of national identity. My reflection on the state of multiculturalism and the integration discourse in my own country has proved useful in highlighting — through differences or similarities — the particularities of the situation in Germany. Thus, particularly in Chapter 2, reference is made to Australia as a way of sharing these thoughts, and to acknowledge some of the cultural experiences I bring to my role as a researcher and author.

2. Immigration and multiculturalism in Germany

2.1 From “kein Einwanderungsland” to the ‘Multi-Kulti-Gesellschaft’

Transportation, media and communication technologies, politics, economics and migration all are combining to make the world seem smaller and its residents ever more in contact with each other. As Honold and Scherpe write

Die Rückzugsgebiete des Fremden haben sich dramatisch verringert. Keine Weißen Flecken mehr weist die Weltkarte auf, von dunklen Kontinenten keine Rede. Und dennoch gab es noch nie so viel an imaginiert und auch tatsächlich erfahrbare Fremdheit wie ausgerechnet im Zeitalter einer scheinbar grenzenlosen, uniformen Verwestlichung.² (2004, p. 2)

The other seems close at hand but not necessarily more familiar for the sense of proximity. Where familiarity exists, otherness can still be discursively constructed and maintained.

Germany in the 21st Century is a state with a history tied to the extremes of nationalist sentiment and to the redrawing of borders, but also to a strong drive for democracy and renewal. It is a nation that at various times — and not uniquely — has driven people away and persecuted minorities, actively recruited from abroad, and offered refuge; its population now represents a great number of varied ethnocultural backgrounds. Over the course of the 20th Century, successive migratory movements have altered the face of a nation-state that, in its origins as a collection of duchies, kingdoms and cities, already belied the homogenising forces of nation-building mythology. Germany lies at the heart of the European Union and shares with many of its neighbours a near-constant concern with the politics of national identity — how it is being redefined from within by immigration and social change and how it will intersect

² “The areas of retreat for the other have shrunk dramatically. The world map reveals no more blank spots, there is no more talk of dark continents. And yet there has never been so much imagined and actually experienced otherness as in the age of a seemingly borderless, uniform Westernisation.”

with a pan-European or transnational European identity, if such an identity really is emerging.

For all the changes the German state has undergone in its relatively brief history since 1871, the sense of German nationhood has remained quite stable, for a long time secure in its ethnic definition of German identity, to which German citizenship and formal membership of the German nation were tied.

Successive German governments from across the political spectrum had denied that Germany was a country of immigration. In 1982, for example, it was written into the coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and the FDP that Germany was ‘kein Einwanderungsland’ (not a country of immigration) — but this had also been the view of the previous SPD/FDP coalition (Bade 2009). This “widely held but brittle fiction of cultural homogeneity” (Pautz 2005, p. 40) helps to explain that until recent years, measures aimed at assisting integration, had been minimal. The ‘kein Einwanderungsland’ formulation has been invoked as recently as 2006 by Wolfgang Schäuble from the CDU (Dernbach 2010) and in 2010 by the CSU General Secretary Alexander Dobrindt (Gaugele and Kammholz 2010). While it is true that Germany cannot be compared to the New World countries, whose national identities are built on a narrative of colonisation (to the disadvantage of indigenous populations) and subsequent immigration, there clearly has developed a *de facto* multiculturalism. The term *Multikulturalismus* entered German discourse long before the federal government really confronted it as a reality, but multiculturalism in Germany, like its variants elsewhere, suffers from a lack of definition and policy. The exact nature of multiculturalism and integration is open to discussion, and in Germany as in many other countries, the appropriateness of multiculturalism as a concept and an approach to immigration is being reviewed at a political level at a time when the cultural pluralism of everyday life is more apparent than ever before (see Chapter 4.2 for further discussion of concepts of multiculturalism and other terminology).

Germany has plainly not been a ‘country of immigration’ in the sense in which that term is applied to countries such as Australia and the United States — countries in which the self-image of the nation attributes a socio-historically central role to immigration (see Lutz 1995, p. 81). In Australia this has involved, in recent decades, absorbing the idea of multiculturalism into common discourses of national self-understanding. The Australian notion of multiculturalism owes much to Canadian multiculturalism and has been government-led — perhaps, in fact, less as a way of

negotiating the effects of immigration and more as a means of creating a national identity separate from the established British Imperial one (Stratton and Ang 1998). In the years after World War II, great numbers of European immigrants changed the demographics of the Australian population (although it remained predominantly British in origin): in 1948, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) was founded to provide state-funded language classes for immigrants from non-Anglophone countries. The Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme relied on a great number of workers recruited from over 30 other countries, to complete its 25-year construction beginning in 1949.

At the same time, the effects of the White Australia Policy of ‘racially’³ restrictive immigration lingered into the 1960s and 1970s. Post-World War II immigrants, particularly from southern and eastern Europe, were viewed with some suspicion and confronted with racism. Vietnamese people granted refuge in the late 1970s constituted the first large intake of immigrants from Asia since the end of the White Australia Policy, and also since the introduction of multiculturalism as government policy in 1973 (with the release of a paper authored by Al Grassby, Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Government). In spite of the humanitarian gesture of granting asylum, the Australian authorities of the time offered the Vietnamese arrivals relatively little integrative support beyond basic physical and language needs.

Some public reaction to immigration from Asia since the 1980s — and more recently, from Middle Eastern and some African countries — suggests that the gap between official policy and commonly-held views of Australian identity has not closed. One example is the taunt “We grew here, you flew here” which gained notoriety during, but has outlived, the ‘Cronulla riots’ in early December 2005 (so named after the beachside suburb where they took place). Even in this self-proclaimed ‘country of immigration’ there are people for whom an Australian is most obviously someone of white, western European ancestry. This view underpins the rise of ‘Aussie’ in some contexts as a descriptor of ethnicity, rather than simply of nationality; used in this way, it emphasises difference from other Australians who, in this construction, are implicitly not Australian or less Australian. Apart from ignoring the place of Indigenous Australians as the only non-immigrant section of the population, the use of ‘Aussie’ in

³ It is acknowledged in this context that the idea of ‘race’ is a social construction, while also acknowledging that prejudices around race rely on perceptions of physical differences as much as cultural ones.

this pointed way also conflates national and cultural identities with notions of ethnicity or even race (see Chapter 2.3 for a more detailed discussion of multiculturalism in its different contexts, and Chapter 4.2 for further terminological considerations).

In Germany, the stance that Germany was not a country of immigration was strictly speaking true, but represented a denial of the *de facto* immigration that had taken place under work migration and asylum programs. As Joppke (1999, p. 63) argues, it was precisely a wariness of this real situation that suggested a need to deny the growing fact of a multicultural Germany. Even in spite of Germany's long-time lack of immigration law, many self-identified Germans have, for instance, French, Polish, Russian or Dutch ancestry, reflecting migratory experiences sometimes several generations prior. Taking into account various paths of migration (including 'ethnic Germans' from Central and Eastern Europe), the Federal Republic of Germany received around 24 million immigrants between 1945 and 1992 (Fassmann and Münz 1994, p.11). Currently, the immigrant population of Germany is one that "routinely surpasses efforts to document and represent it" and includes asylum seekers and refugees from Asia and Africa, Jews from the former USSR, repatriated 'ethnic Germans', other European nationals, Indian technology worker recruits, former 'guest workers' and by estimates some 1.4 million undocumented migrants (Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, p. xvii).

Globally, Germany is one of the main receiving countries for immigration, third after the United States and the Russian Federation (United Nations 2009, p. 2). In 2009, Germany was projected to have received 10,758,000 international migrants in the years 2005-2010, representing 5 percent of migrants worldwide and 13.1 percent of the country's total population (United Nations 2009, p. 170). The 2005 German *Mikrozensus* (micro census) revealed that of Germany's population of 82 million, some 15.3 million people — around 19 percent of the population — come from a migration background. This 19 percent was comprised of 9 percent foreign nationals and 10 percent German citizens (Eryilmaz 2007, pp. 129-130). Due to the historically restrictive citizenship laws, statistical categories in Germany tended to focus on nationality rather than place of birth or heritage. As will be discussed in Chapter 2.2, these laws have changed and there is continued discussion about the processes through which citizenship should be granted.

Immigration to Germany has a long history pre-dating even the existence of a single German nation-state. As Panayi (2000, p.12-15) notes, the ethnocultural

minorities present in Germany in the 19th and 20th Centuries fall into the following three groups. First, Jews and Roma have been dispersed across Germany (and frequently suffered persecution) since long before the foundation of the German state and rise of German national consciousness, and are groups represented across Europe. Second, there have been minorities such as the Sorbs, Alsatians and Danes generally concentrated in a particular border region and sometimes having attained minority status through annexation into the German national borders. Third, there are the migrant groups.

These migratory movements date back at least to the time of the Roman Empire, when Jews migrated to states in the area of modern Germany. In the 15th Century, Roma sought refuge in German areas. During the Reformation in the 16th Century, French Protestant Huguenots fled Catholic-ruled France and made Germany their home, to the extent that in the years between 1550 and 1750, almost a third of the combined populations of Leipzig, Berlin and Halle claimed French origins or descent (Lutz 1995, pp. 81-82; Panayi 2000, p. 6). For the period since the 18th Century there is more precise documentation, and earlier waves of migration can be recognised: after the Thirty Years War, hundreds of thousands of people fled to Germany from countries including Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden and France (Chapin 1997, p. 3).

El Masrar (2010, p.36) notes that Muslims, too, have been living in Germany since as long ago as the 18th Century. In 1739, twenty-two Turkish prisoners of war were given to the Prussian King Friedrich-Wilhelm I by Herzog von Curland. In 1763 the first Turkish embassy was founded in Berlin to support relations between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire. Germany's first mosque, the Ahmadiyya Mosque, was founded in 1928 in Berlin-Wilmersdorf (El Masrar 2010, pp. 36-37). However, widespread recognition and discussion of Islam's presence in Germany (and Europe) has followed late 20th and 21st Century migration from Turkey and other predominantly Muslim countries (see Chapter 2.3).

In the 19th Century, the population of Europe was growing rapidly — due to improvements in agriculture and medicine — and undergoing major changes as great numbers of people migrated to the USA, Australia and Canada, and to the expanding and crowded cities of Europe; the Industrial Revolution brought changes that meant the economy survived the huge demographic changes (Schulze 1987, pp. 6-7). Added to the great increases in population and production were improved communication — the invention of the telegraph, the consumption of print media by masses who were now

better-educated through the growing number of schools and universities — and transportation — railroads and steamships (Schulze 1987, p. 8). National identity, as Fulbrook writes, is not something pre-existing, but rather “a human construct, evident only when sufficient people believe in some version of collective identity for it to be a social reality, embodied in and transmitted through institutions, laws, customs, beliefs and practices” (1999, p. 1). The creation of ‘national cultures’ within a nation-state emerge when “certain cultural forms are selected, evaluated in a positive way and claimed for national projects” (Erel 2009, pp. 34-35). In his oft-cited *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson has shown how such conditions of “print-capitalism” facilitated the transition from village-sized to perceived national-scale cohorts; print-capitalism “gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation” (Anderson 1991, p. 44). A more detailed discussion of theories of nationalism can be found in Chapter 4, while Chapter 3 explores the centrality of cinema to nation-building and gendered constructions of citizens.

The creation of the nation-state of Germany in 1871 was founded on, and required the consolidation of, a belief in a German people. Even before the eventual formation of the German nation-state, attention was being paid by some writers and intellectuals to the notion of German identity, but “until the political elite begins the process of nation building, the ethnic nation is a fiction to a large extent” (Wright 2004, p. 34). The path to the founding of a German nation-state in 1871, bringing together numerous German-speaking sovereign lands, was part of the wave of nationalist sentiment sweeping across 19th Century Europe. In 1848 there were uprisings in German areas as elsewhere in Europe (notably France), but in the German case this ultimately led to a confirmation of Prussian power — which would ultimately be pivotal in establishing modern Germany, on a path spanning the next two decades and culminating in the inauguration of the German Empire on 18th January 1871 in Versailles. Romantic nationalism in Germany was inspired by the French writer-philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the ferment of the French Revolution, and particularly by the German Johann Gottfried von Herder (see also Chapter 4.2). Herder wrote about the importance of language and culture to group identification (Wright 2000 in Möllering 2010, p. 156). Herder’s writings were, in turn, an influence on Goethe (see May 2009, pp. 93-94), and on the Brothers Grimm in their efforts to collect and valorise German-language folk tales (on the nationalisation of the German language

see also Stevenson 2002, pp. 17-24; on the standardisation of German, see Barbour and Stevenson 1990, pp. 45-53).

Language did indeed appear to be the main uniting element between the many small territories in the area of modern-day Germany — but this presented its own problems, given the broad range of German dialects, and the question of where to draw the geographic limits of the new nation-state along linguistic lines that were anything but clear. There is a paradox that Germans “have little in common other than the German language but that it is also the language, as much as anything else, that divides them” (Stevenson 2002, p. 1). Germans are perhaps Europe’s clearest example of a *Sprachvolk* — a people defined by their language — and the word *deutsch* was applied to a number of spoken languages before it became the name of the speakers themselves (Stevenson 2002, p. 16; see also Townson 1992, pp. 77-80). Ultimately, territories belonging to the modern-day Netherlands, Switzerland and the Alsace in France were ruled out for inclusion in the German nation, for political rather than linguistic reasons (Wright 2004, p. 33). Regional variations in culture, including an array of dialects, were conceptually sublimated to the cause of nationalism. A standardised form of German, overriding regional variations and dialects, was enforced as the institutional language of the newly formed German Empire (James 1994, pp. 89-90). Not only in Germany, the 19th Century saw a momentous shift from language(s) as simply a means of communication, to a means of national identification (Wingfield 2003, p. 6; see also Dann 2006, for an overview of the 'invention' of national languages). This emerging, partly language-based German identity was important not just to Germany, but also to growing Czech nationalism as a point of differentiation (see Agnew 2003).

The centrality of language to concepts of German national identity was to continue even into the second half of the 20th Century, and has been shared by others outside Germany who consider themselves to have a stake in the nature of German nationhood (Fulbrook 1999, pp. 1-5). During the arch-nationalistic Nazi regime, the German language was portrayed as a vital part of national belonging; a linguistic purism was also evident in the general population, for instance in a predilection for giving babies old Germanic names (Wright 2004, p. 59). After World War II, the question of national language “was not ‘is there a common language around which we can unite?’ but ‘who owns the common language with which we may salvage our identity as a nation?’” (Stevenson 2002, pp. 24-25). The experience of (re-)unification, beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, was partly one of discovering that

the *Sprachvolk* had developed, not only geopolitically but also linguistically-culturally, into two different peoples (Stevenson 2002). Language in Germany continues to play a large role in discussions of citizenship and integration (see remaining sections of Chapter 2) and is frequently used knowingly in cinematic constructions of cultural identities (see Chapters 3.3, 5 and 6).

In the 19th Century, Bismarck attacked Polish nationalism in Prussia in the east, including through measures to sublimate Catholicism and Polish language; the anti-Polish sentiment and policies continued under later Chancellors into the early 20th Century (see Panayi 2000, pp. 53-77). James also explores this exclusionary line of nation-building, while noting that “the German quest for identity also required the absorption of foreign models into German life” (1994, p.11). Germany, like other nation-states, sought to define itself as one separate nation among many (see also Anderson 1983), but was far from isolated in its nation-building process — an awareness of French, Greek and English political life informed the German search for nationhood (James 1994, pp. 11-25). This awareness of Germany’s neighbour states continues to be evident in current discourse about national identity and immigration (see Chapter 2.2 for a discussion of this). Introducing the context of Turkish nationalism — which had its origins in the 19th Century but underwent a modernisation period in the early 20th Century under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk — Üngör (2011, pp. 1-2) observes that nation-states began with a core group of territories in Europe, before spreading first to other parts of Europe and then slowly across the rest of the world. To the fundamental aspects of the birth of German nationhood, comparisons can be found in numerous other territories.

Not all nations are defined identically. While certain assumptions are necessary, linguistic, cultural and ethnic homogeneity are not always central to concepts of nation: Fulbrook (1999, pp. 6-8) makes this point using the examples of the USA (ethnic diversity) and Switzerland (linguistic diversity) while also acknowledging the complexities of British national identity. A sense of nationhood represents a continual effort of imagining and construction in which the most important assumed commonalities are a shared legacy and destiny — a past that is recognised by current members of the nation and encompasses history and traditions, and a common future, reliant on a belief in shared aspirations for the nation and its members (Fulbrook 1999, pp. 14-18).

In one sense, nationalism and racism, Panayi argues, share a similarity, because “like all ideologies, both are essentially exclusionary” (2000, p. 4). While this is strongly expressed, it is true that both attitudes lie at different points along a continuum of exclusion and inclusion. Nationalism as the builder of nations, though, can perhaps be seen in a positive light: the sense of belonging to a nation can be an important feeling for individuals (Anderson 1991, pp. 141-142). Panayi acknowledges that while “potent racism is likely to make another appearance similar to the one of the early 1990s, it is unlikely that Germany will ever return to the ethnic hell of wartime Nazism. Nevertheless, in common with all of its neighbours, a multicultural paradise Germany certainly is not” (2000, p. 264).

For most of the 19th Century, Germany was largely a country of emigration (Panayi 2000, p. 6). Particularly large groups of Germans resettled in the United States, as well as smaller groups elsewhere and a significant minority in Australia (Harmstorf and Cigler 1985; Vondra 1981). For the rest of Europe, the migration history until 1945 was likewise mostly one of emigration; this changed rapidly after World War II (Fassmann and Münz 1994, p. 4). The combination of two world wars is conservatively estimated to have caused some 70 million people in Europe to leave their home countries (Franz 1975, p. 46). This trend towards emigration was to shift decisively in later decades. The imagined boundaries of the German nation would be, as is the nature of nationalism, almost constantly reaffirmed, even as their fluidity and permeability became ever more apparent.

Within two decades of unification in 1871, the young German nation-state began acquiring the African colonies of Togo, Cameroon, German Southwest Africa and German East Africa, and the Africans who had been something of a novelty in Germanic areas — present in small numbers mostly as slaves and servants — now were the subject of debates about mixed marriages in the colonies; Germany lost its colonies at the end of World War I, but the French occupation of the Rhineland by French colonial African soldiers resulted in several hundred children born to German mothers and African fathers — a group of children dubbed the ‘Rhineland bastards’ and during the Weimar Republic placed on a list later used by the Nazis to target them for sterilisation (Mazón and Steingröver 2005, pp. 1-3).

The rapid industrialisation of the Ruhr area from the mid-19th Century attracted workers from the southern Netherlands, Italy, and elsewhere in Germany including the Polish-speaking areas of Prussia: Posen, Upper Silesia, and East and West Prussia

(Lucassen 2006, p.28). In 1880, measures were put in place to recruit workers from neighbouring countries, beginning a history of drawing on the ‘foreigner’ as a labourer to meet the needs of German industries while not affording the foreign labourer the same legal and civil rights as a German counterpart (Rudolph 1994, p.113-114). For almost one hundred years following, foreign workers were recruited on short-term contracts, with the expectation that workers would return to their home countries after the period of employment. In most cases, this was the outcome: the majority of foreign workers in the years 1880 to 1945 did not remain in Germany for the long-term (Panayi 2000, p. 6).

By 1907, around 950,000 ‘foreigners’ lived in Germany; until the outbreak of the First World War, almost 500,000 foreigners worked as seasonal labour and 700,000 in industry (see Chapin 1997, pp. 4-6). During this time, millions of Jewish refugees arrived in Germany from Eastern Europe; many continued to the USA, but some did remain and make their home in Germany (Fetzer 2000, p. 64).

Around the end of the 19th Century and into the 20th Century, the industrial Ruhr area of Germany relied to a considerable extent on Polish and Belarusian workers; in Saxony, many Poles were employed as temporary labour for the turnip harvest, and ‘going to Saxony’ became the Polish expression for seasonal work (Becker 2010, p. 13). Before World War I, 4.1 percent of all workers in Germany were foreigners; in parts of the Ruhr area, Polish workers made up 40 percent of the population in 1914 (Lutz 1995, pp. 81-82). This period of migration led to a debate on the social and economic effects of immigration, resulting in the introduction by the German Empire of a control system designed to ensure the temporary status of the foreign workers (Chapin 1997, p. 5).

In Hamburg, the busy harbourside areas of St Pauli and Altona — which until 1937 was a separate city controlled variously by Denmark and Prussia — were home to a small Chinese quarter in the early 20th Century until World War II (Amenda 2006). From the late 19th Century, Chinese seamen were recruited to work for shipping companies; these Chinese workers were viewed somewhat as exotic outsiders in Germany, and the districts they occupied garnered a reputation — not entirely without justification — as centres for opium and gambling. In addition to a degree of hostility they encountered in earlier years, the Chinese were not spared from the discriminatory stance of the Nazi regime in the 1930s and early 1940s (Leung 2004, pp. 40-47).

Foreign labour was likewise significant after the outbreak of World War I. Hundreds of thousands of Russian Poles remained in Germany and many Belgians were

forcefully recruited during the occupation of their home country. By the end of the war, more than 2 million prisoners of war, civilian volunteers and foreigners had been employed for the German wartime economy. After World War I, these numbers dropped due to the poor economic situation and the desire of workers to return to their homelands; such recruitment was at any rate made unlikely by the high unemployment of the 1920s and 30s. In the mid 1930s, with reduced unemployment and a stronger economy, Germany again needed foreign labour forces; after the *Anschluss* workers came from Austria, contracts were signed with Polish workers, and further numbers came from Czechoslovakia and Italy (see Chapin 1997, pp. 6-7).

During World War II, millions of German workers were summoned to army duty: more than 4 million men in the first eight months, and another 7 million between May 1940 and September 1944. The “ideological reluctance to draft women, the lack of government coordination, and a general unwillingness of the Nazi party to demand heavier sacrifices [of the population]” (Chapin 1997, p. 7) meant that Germany again, and increasingly throughout the war, looked to foreign labourers to make up the resulting shortfall in the workforce at home. By the end of May 1940, more than one million foreigners and prisoners of war worked in Germany and constituted more than 3 percent of its entire workforce; one year later, 3 million foreigners comprised 8 percent of the workforce. By the end of September 1944 more than 5 million foreign workers and almost 2 million prisoners of war were labouring in Germany — nearly 21 percent of the entire workforce — and essential to the increased military production of that period (see Chapin 1997, pp. 7-8).

From the 1950s to early 1990s, Western European countries experienced a clear increase in the numbers of foreign nationals in their respective populations. In 1991 to 1992, the small states Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, had comparatively small numbers of resident foreign nationals but these equated to more than 20 and 30 percent of the overall populations, respectively; for Germany at the same time the percentage was significantly lower, but still higher than for France and the United Kingdom (Fassmann and Münz 1994, pp.5-7). These numbers do not account for differences in citizenship and categorisation — in some countries, for instance, immigrants from former colonies were not classed as foreigners — yet they show that not only did Germany in the late 20th Century experience a great wave of immigration along with other European countries but also that, in this European context, Germany was a significant immigration country.

From 1955, in need of more workers, the Federal Republic of Germany signed recruitment contracts with the governments of, chronologically, Italy in 1955, Spain and Greece in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Morocco in 1963, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia in 1965, and Yugoslavia in 1968. Similar foreign labour recruitment schemes were undertaken by other countries including the Netherlands. It was a time in Western Europe when “[i]nstead of taking industry to people, the European countries [chose] to bring people to industry” (Franz 1975, p. 47). These contracts would result in the greatest change to the face of Germany, and it is from this time that the majority of Germany’s large Turkish-background population can be directly or indirectly traced. In accordance with the so-called *Rotationsprinzip* (principle of rotation), foreign workers in Germany were to be ‘rotated’ after a stay of usually five years, and exchanged for new foreign applicants; such was the demand for labour in Germany that a majority of work migrants stayed in employment in Germany beyond the five years (Galanis 1989, pp. 12-13). The *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of rapid infrastructural and financial improvement that West Germany experienced in the post-war years is, in its reliance on foreign labour, “ein Märchen, an dem auch die Gastarbeiter der ersten Generation mitgeschrieben haben”⁴ (Şenocak 2011, p. 111).

Apart from migrating to Germany, large numbers of Turkish workers have also migrated to Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands since 1964, to France from 1967, and to Australia from 1968 (Aliefendioğlu 2004, p. 59). The Turkish government planned budgets based on the remittances that workers abroad could bring to the Turkish economy; by the early 1970s, remittances accounted for some 70 percent of foreign money earned in Turkey (up from 14 percent in 1964). Given that 80 percent or an even higher percentage of Turkish labour emigrants went to Germany (estimates vary), it had real economic effects on Turkey’s economy when the German government brought an official end to foreign recruitment (the *Anwerbestopp*) in 1973, due in part to the oil crisis (Kadioğlu 1997, p. 538).

The German Democratic Republic became home to some 60,000 Vietnamese contract work migrants and apprentices in the 1970s; some of their compatriots, around 12,000 people, fled Vietnam after the Communist victory and had been granted permanent residence as refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany (see the edited volume by Weiss and Dennis 2005). The first Hungarian contract workers arrived in

⁴ “a fairytale, that the guest workers of the first generation also helped to write.”

1967; workers from Poland in 1971; Algerians from 1974, Cubans from 1978, Mozambicans from 1979 and Angolans from 1985 (Uladh 2005). In 1989, some 190,000 or more foreign nationals were living in the GDR; many of them have since returned to their countries of origin. More recently, migrants from the former Soviet countries have settled in the eastern parts of Germany. Some of the most widely-reported acts of violence against immigrants have taken place in the eastern part of Germany, but it has been suggested that integration debates as they are played out in German media in many cases describe situations in the western parts of the country that do not reflect the particular circumstances of immigration and integration in the former GDR (Fekete 2009; see also the website of EmPa (Empowerment und Partizipationsförderung für Drittstaatenangehörige in den neuen Bundesländern)).

All told, Germany (the two separate states and the post-Wall Federal Republic) can be said to have experienced seven different waves or processes of (im)migration since World War II (Bade and Oltmer in Eryilmaz 2007, p. 127): the early post-war period of German expellees returning to West Germany from elsewhere in Europe; the labour migration from the mid-1950s; asylum seekers and refugees in the West, including those fleeing the military juntas of Spain and Portugal, the Greek civil war, and the military coup in Turkey in 1980; the ‘ethnic German’ *Aussiedler* — the Eastern European descendants of pre-20th Century emigrants — who were entitled to German citizenship but nonetheless perceived as foreign (and had to confront language barriers and so forth, upon return to their ‘homeland’); Soviet Jews entitled to seek asylum in the former GDR according to a ruling of 1990; the estimated 250,000 Roma refugees from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania in the early 1990s; and finally, the significant number of undocumented residents (Eryilmaz 2007, pp. 127-129).

Around 2.4 percent of Germany’s population are Turkish nationals; they, along with German nationals of Turkish background, constitute the largest ethnocultural minority in Germany, and mostly belong to the 4.3 million people in Germany who identify as Muslim — 45 percent of them have German citizenship (Deutsche Welle 2009). The Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) reports that in the years 1991 to 2010, the Federal Republic had around 18 million migration arrivals, with net immigration of around 4.3 million (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, p. 17). In 2010, just under 7.2 million residents in Germany, or 8.8 percent of the total population, were foreign nationals — the percentage has hovered around this level since the late 1990s (Bundesamt für Migration

und Flüchtlinge 2011, p. 175). Turkish nationals accounted for 24.1 percent of all foreign nationals in Germany in 2010, making them the single biggest group; even people from the ‘EU-14’ states combined, made up a slightly smaller portion (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, p. 177).

The high number of foreign nationals in Germany, and the fact that this population could continue to increase even after the end of foreign recruitment in 1973, are due in large part to citizenship laws of the time, according to which the German-born children of resident foreigners acquired the same foreign citizenship as their parents. This inheritance aspect, and family reunion policy, changed the demographics of the immigrant population, increasing the proportion of women and children where previously there had been a majority of men. The restricted immigration opportunities also brought an increase in illegal migration, with some people working under the guise of being tourists (Fassmann and Münz 1994, pp.8-9). Foreign resident populations also grew through successful asylum applicants. In 1992, West Germany received more than 60 percent of the applications for asylum in Western Europe, but granted fewer than 5 percent of these; the more restrictive Asylum Law of 1993 saw the number of applications decline (Fassmann and Münz 1994, p.10).

There is an evident distinction between a ‘migrant’ (someone who undertakes a migratory journey, with the implicit possibility of a return migration) and an ‘immigrant’ (a person who migrates *into* an area with the intention of staying longer-term); but there is some slippage between the two categories (Panayi 2000, p. 6). Work migration to Germany has continued in different forms, such as seasonal workers from other EU member states, and other temporary work permit schemes such as those predominantly filled by Poles and nationals of other European Union states (see also Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, pp. 40-49); the work stay for the latter had been limited to four months in the year, but was raised to six (Becker 2010, pp. 74-75).

Even such cases of genuinely temporary migration — where the workers do not stay on to make Germany their home — must contribute to the sense of a German population that is greatly more complex in its makeup than had previously been maintained; if such short-term foreign residents do not carry the weight of expectation with regard to integration, they do provide a clear example of the permeability of national borders.

In the German word for foreigner, *Ausländer*, the limitations are immediately apparent: an ‘out-lander’, someone from land outside the borders. It seems an uncompromising view of someone who immigrated thirty years ago, and is especially problematic as a description for a person born and raised in Germany, even though according to citizenship law — certainly as it was in the past — there was a high likelihood that person would be a foreign national. The term *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker/s) indicates the two important beliefs about the group of people to which it has been applied: namely, that they are ‘guests’ only, short-term residents in Germany, and that the purpose of this short stay, the reason for their ‘invitation’ (contract), is to work (Kastoryano 2002, p. 16). On the sides of both the Germans and the foreign workers, there was an expectation that the ‘guests’ would one day return to their home countries (Joppke 1999, p. 65). *Gastarbeiter* has gradually been replaced by *Einwanderer* or *Immigranten* (both: immigrants), reflecting the fact that for a variety of reasons, the ‘guests’ have stayed and become long-term residents of Germany; that the work migrants have become immigrants (Kastoryano 2002, pp. 16-17, 27). The long-used *Migranten*, like the English ‘migrants’ in contrast to ‘immigrants’, indicates the journey undertaken but avoids reference to the arrival in the host country; the technically precise but oxymoronic term *ausländische Mitbürger* (foreign co-citizens) had a period of common use; the term *Zuwanderer* (like *Einwanderer* it means immigrant/s, but the *Zu*-prefix downplays the arrival *in* the new country, allowing merely that one is coming *to*) has mostly disappeared. Even since the changes to citizenship laws were introduced in 2000, the term *eingebürgerte Ausländer* (naturalised foreigners) has been used, suggesting that citizenship does not remove the perception, especially by others, of ‘foreignness’ (Yildiz 2012, p. 251, note 3).

Even third-generation immigrants, the grandchildren of the original guest workers, are not infrequently referred to by the grandparents’ nationality, rather than as Germans. The term *Ausländer* is on occasion applied beyond its strictly accurate meaning of ‘foreigner’ (e.g. a foreign national); Erel (2009, pp. 27-28) argues that this “racialization” of the term *Ausländer* in Germany, as with ‘foreigner’ in Britain, has not been addressed fully by attempts to improve “friendliness”, and that there is more to be done in changing the image of German identity as white. Describing the aftermath that ‘immigrants’ of the second- and subsequent generations experience, some observers have used the term ‘postmigrants’ — a description that could apply to many national

contexts, but seems particular apt in the case of a country such as Germany, historically without a view of itself as a country of immigration (Yildiz 2012, pp. 170-171).

Acknowledgement of immigrants as a permanent and welcome fixture in German society came from other institutions many years before the government took such a position. In the 1970s, immigration reform was promoted by groups including the Deutsche Städtetag (German Association of Cities and Towns) and the German Caritas Alliance, funding statistical research into migrants in Germany and calling for a view of immigrants as fellow citizens (Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, p. 243). In 1978, a new position was created at federal level to oversee the matter of integration of foreigners: the Office of the Federal Commissioner for the Promotion of Integration among Foreign Workers and Their Family Members had two staff and was part of the Ministry of Health and Social Order (Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, p.243). The first person appointed to the office was Heinz Kühn, the former premier of North Rhine-Westphalia. In 1979 he released the so-called Kühn Memorandum, opposing attempts to pressure foreign workers into returning to their homeland, and urging acceptance and integration. Kühn predicted that to the problems of the time, further problems would “most certainly arise in the near future if rapid and radical change is not undertaken” (in Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, p. 247). Documents released by the Ecumenical Planning Committee in 1980 argued that guest workers had already done much to integrate, and it was now up to the rest of the German population to take their turn in adapting; Barbara John, the Berlin Senate’s Commissioner of Foreigner Affairs, made a similar argument with the leaflet “With Each Other, Not against Each Other” circulated in 1982 in two versions: one for immigrant residents and one for non-immigrants (see Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, pp. 243-244).

When a Red-Green coalition (SPD and Green parties) was elected to local government in Frankfurt in 1989, it established an Office of Multicultural Affairs under the directorship of Daniel Cohn-Bendit; his voice was one of a number in the later 1980s and 1990s (especially people engaged in politics or political science) addressing the need for Germany to recognise and react appropriately to its increasingly undeniable position as a country of immigration (others include Cohn-Bendit’s sometime co-author Thomas Schmid, Dieter Oberndörfer, Klaus Bade, Heiner Geissler, and Claus Leggewie; see some of their contributions in translation in Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, pp. 285-299). In 1990, the Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany (DOMiT) was founded by a group of people who were themselves Turkish

immigrants, intended to “present migration as a part of German history, to preserve the heritage of the immigrants, and to make it publicly accessible for research and for self-assertion of migrants and their offspring as well as for German society as a whole” (Eryilmaz 2007, p. 133).

In the 1980s and 1990s, art and entertainment were promoted as measures for recognition and promoting intercultural understanding: for example, a *Werkstatt der Kulturen* (Workshop of Cultures) was founded in Berlin-Neukölln in 1993 (Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, p. 244) and Radio Multikulti was founded in 1994 (on Radio Multikulti and migrant media, see Kosnick 2007, and Chapter 2.3). In 1996, the Workshop of Cultures began hosting an annual *Karneval der Kulturen* (Carnival of Cultures), in the tradition of the Notting Hill Carnival and other multicultural celebrations in European cities, but uniquely suited to Berlin (Werkstatt der Kulturen web page a.; see also Tes Howell's abridged translation in Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, pp. 257-259). From the estimated 50,000 visitors at its inaugural parade attendance grew rapidly to over one million visitors annually (Werkstatt der Kulturen web page b.). At the same time the socioeconomic realities — levels of higher education and employment of immigrants, for instance — needed to be addressed, along with an occasional tension between the good intentions of German institutions and what the immigrant groups being addressed actually felt or found appealing (Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007, pp.244-245; also 285-288).

The change in stance of German officialdom was at least partly a pragmatic reaction to a reality that could no longer be denied; if immigration could be neither prevented nor simply ignored, it became clear it needed to be regulated — as noted by Barbara John, the former Berlin Senate Commissioner for Foreigners' Affairs:

If a country like Germany, which already has in place a rigid program to avoid permanent immigration, turns out to be the largest immigrant nation in the European Union, something must be done to indicate that the government is in control of the situation. To put it quite pointedly: either you change your mentality or you change your immigration flow drastically. (2001, p. 46)

Recognition that the German population — encompassing not simply residents of Germany, but those who readily identify themselves as German in the sense of belonging — is in fact ethnoculturally heterogeneous has led to serious debate on

citizenship, about the identity of Germany and the German people, and about the terminology employed in such discourse.

There is plentiful evidence of a population that embraces the ‘foreign’ in daily German life, even beyond the ever-present influence of English language and Anglophone cultural products. The pizza and döner kebab have taken their places as ubiquitous takeaway foods alongside the *Currywurst* and *Pommes*; radio station playlists include select songs in French or Turkish alongside English or German — in contrast to the largely monolingual music choices of mainstream radio in the USA or Australia, for instance — and advertising frequently borrows from other languages for the sake of wordplay; arts festivals offer Indian music, Thai dance and Vietnamese marionettes; subject choices such as Japanese Studies and Spanish language are commonly found on university campuses across the country.

Even with sufficiently large numbers of consumers to prove their popularity, all these examples do almost nothing to suggest that German identity itself has changed; food and music and study options are matters of taste and interest and can be appreciated while being considered ‘foreign’ — indeed, the lure of the exotic is often part of their appeal. A certain cosmopolitanism on the part of many Germans does not necessarily evince an internalised sense of the German nation as culturally or ethnically pluralistic. Indeed, the matter of multiculturalism often runs parallel to, but separate from, the notion of cosmopolitanism as central to German and European (EU) identity. It has been argued that the very concept of the ‘foreign’ is outdated in light of transnationalism (see for instance Welsch and others as discussed in Chapter 4). Some sections of German discourse — like many found in other countries — at times seem more like a discussion of how the German ‘we’ are being confronted by a foreign ‘them’, on whom the burden of integration rests almost exclusively, rather than how all parties within the nation can build a functional and harmonious co-existence.

Many signs of a new German identity that encompasses different immigrant backgrounds certainly can be found. Fatih Akın’s win with *Head-On* at the 2004 Berlinale and celebration of it as the first German film in eighteen years to take the prize (see Chapter 5.1); the crowning of Iranian-born German Shermine Shahrivar as Miss Europe 2005; the careers of Indian-background singers Xavier Naidoo and Sabrina Setlur; the recruitment of Ghanaian-born footballer Gerald Asamoah to the German national team; the popularity of the TV series *Türkisch für Anfänger* (*Turkish for Beginners*), aired on Das Erste, 2006-2009; produced by Hoffmann & Voges Ent); these

and many other people and moments in German popular culture seem to suggest a clear self-image of Germany as a multicultural state. It does not follow automatically that such diversity sits comfortably alongside a sense of German identity; as in many countries, there is anxiety about divided allegiances, about whether some people ‘belong’ more than others, about whether or not people are sincere in their willingness to ‘integrate’, whether the diversity amounts to an erosion of pre-existing cultural norms, and about what all these factors mean for social cohesion.

In referring to Gerald Asamoah, it is interesting to note that at the time of his inclusion in the German national football team he was much-discussed as the first black player on the team, though two players before him — Erwin Kostedde and Jimmy Hatwig, both in the 1970s — had African-American fathers; moreover, Asamoah’s identity in media reports at the time was rarely given as ‘German’, but as ‘black’, ‘African’, or a ‘German passport holder’. By contrast, the foreign origins of Asamoah’s contemporaries Oliver Neuville (Swiss-raised with a German father) and Miroslav Klose (an Eastern European ‘ethnic German’ with the corresponding entitlement to citizenship) received markedly less attention (El-Tayeb 2005, pp. 27-28). Fatima El-Tayeb — who co-wrote the film *Everything Will Be Fine* (*Alles wird gut*, 1998, dir. Angelina Maccarone) — suggests that this may reflect an attitude to nationality “that “real blacks” cannot be Germans and Germans cannot be real blacks” (2005, p. 28) — an idea that encapsulates the tenacity of certain views of national identity, in Germany and elsewhere. According to this reading, the mere acknowledgement or even a ready acceptance of foreign neighbours within the state does not necessarily prove their inclusion in the self-image of the nation; in this view, references to immigration background or to the official channels of citizenship draw attention to the lingering belief in the German nation as an ethnically defined one.

The remaining sections of this chapter will show how the formal framework of belonging has changed and continues to be adapted to suit changing requirements for Germany, and offer a detailed view of the discourse of German immigration and integration in the context of a growing European awareness.

2.2 Reassessing immigration and the nation: the path to citizenship in Germany

Successive German governments' denials that Germany was a land of immigration were underpinned and legitimised by its citizenship laws, which ensured most resident foreigners remained as such rather than officially becoming German citizens with immigrant background. Formal inclusion in the German nation was dependent upon descent; a person born in Germany to foreign national parents assumed their nationality.

Compared to Canada and Australia with their formalised and quite restrictive immigration pathways but relative ease of access to full citizenship, Germany's immigration has been quite indiscriminate because of its *de facto* nature, and the path to German citizenship was not open even to many immigrants who were long-term residents of Germany.

Historically, there has been a strong concept of German ethnicity, thus including people who don't live within the borders of Germany, and withstanding the regional variations that have continued from before the creation of the nation-state in 1871 (see previous sub-chapter). The principle of citizenship — and by extension, the understanding of German nationality and identity — as 'belonging by blood' (*ius sanguinis*) was confirmed and reiterated at three key points in Germany's history. Just as circumstances of more recent years have led to a reassessment of German citizenship laws, there have previously been significant motivators for the historically narrow definition of German nationality. The very founding of Germany in the form of the German Empire was a project that offers itself as a case study in nation-building; since that time, the borders have been shifted, leading to "the movement of borders across people" (Bade and Weiner 1997, p. 2); German territory has expanded and contracted, and particular conceptualisations of German nationhood and identity have been reaffirmed or challenged at various historical junctures, often illuminating the tension between *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis* (Lemke 1997, pp. 85-86).

When the new German nation-state was founded in 1871, membership in its corresponding nation was defined on the principle of *ius sanguinis*. Klaus Bade (2001) argues that this was primarily a pragmatic decision in light of the multiple territories out of which Germany was created; a principle of citizenship by territory — *ius soli* — would have lead to "a juridical chaos that would have worsened with the growing

mobility that accompanied the process of industrialization” (Bade 2001, p. 32). Thus in the young Germany, ‘belonging’ was based on a concept of ethnicity. The image of a ‘German nation’ was fostered, to be understood as the nation for which the state had been constructed and to which it now belonged (Lemke 1997).

The *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* (Law of Empire and State Citizenship) of 1913 set this principle in place. In 1949, in spite of a new constitution, German citizenship in the Federal Republic of Germany remained unchanged from before the war: a conceptualisation of Germanness as a belonging by blood, by birthright. This can be seen as a necessary response to the need to include the ‘ethnically German’ populations expelled from Eastern Europe and migrating to Germany in the wake of the war (Lemke 1997, p. 89) even though such a principle had been illegitimated by its “racist aberrations under the Nazi regime” (Joppke 1999, p. 63). In many cases, these *Aussiedler* spoke little German, or only a form not mutually intelligible with the standardised form of German.

At the time of (re-)unification in 1990, the ethnocultural definition of German citizenship again came to the fore, helping explain the desire for and the necessity of uniting the two German states; the oft-repeated “Wir sind ein Volk” (We are a/one people) (Lemke 1997, pp. 92-93). This was the second move to a unified German state, the first having taken place in 1871, but the two movements had different driving forces (Panayi 2000, p. 247). The formal accession of the eastern parts of Germany into the western *Bundesrepublik* in November 1990 was “der Auslöser eines deutschen Selbstfindungsprozesses, der den Blick auf die deutsche Geschichte wenn auch nicht grundlegend verändert, so doch erweitert hat”⁵ (Şenocak 2011, p. 111). The revision of the Foreigners Law in 1990 followed a protracted debate on the matter, but it was ill-suited for the challenges that followed; its stated aims were to prevent further immigration of non-EU nationals, assist repatriation of foreign nationals, and to promote the integration of immigrants already living in Germany — to make their rights more secure. The collapse of communism across Eastern Europe including the fall of the Berlin Wall, resulted in an influx of East Germans, of ethnic Germans from further east, and (mainly European) asylum seekers (Cyrus and Vogel 2007, p.128).

When the Red-Green coalition of the SPD and Green parties formed federal government in 1998, it was with, among other policies, an intention of ‘modernising’

⁵ “the trigger for a German self-discovery process, that, even if it didn’t fundamentally change the view of German history, certainly broadened it.”

German migration law. They began with a new naturalisation act that would allow for *ius soli* and dual citizenship (see Cyrus and Vogel 2007, p.129). The latter was reduced, under protestations from the CDU, so that it applied only to German-born children of resident foreign nationals, and then only until the age of 23, at which point German citizenship would be lost if the citizenship of their parents' homeland was not renounced. One initial effect of this new act was that around 10,000 dual citizens suddenly lost their German citizenship — these were Turkish nationals who had given up Turkish citizenship in order to be naturalised as Germans, but then reacquired it later as a second citizenship.

The Süßmuth Commission, named for its chairperson Rita Süßmuth, was appointed in July 2000 with the task of drafting new laws on immigration and integration. Objections from the CDU and CSU, with CDU parliamentarian Friedrich Merz identifying so-called *Ausländerpolitik* (foreigner policy) as an important issue in the lead-up to the next federal elections, paved the way for a debate about the question of a German mainstream or guiding culture: a *Leitkultur* (guiding culture; see also later in this chapter). The *Leitkulturdebatte*, Pautz argues, was based on a redefinition of exclusion and belonging along perceived differences in 'culture', avoiding discussion of 'race'; membership in the (German) nation was constructed as dependent upon what Pautz terms *ius cultus*, in parallel with *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis* (2005, pp. 40-41).

In 2000, as a response to calls from the IT industry, a system of work permits for computer experts was introduced. The widespread acceptance of this scheme was a positive sign, and the Red-Green coalition looked to completely reform the Foreigners' Law, appointing an Independent Commission on Immigration (Kommission Zuwanderung). After its report was released in summer 2001, the Ministry of the Interior submitted a new immigration bill (Cyrus and Vogel 2007, pp.129-130).

Changes to the long-standing citizenship laws were introduced in 2000 — the new (and current) *Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* was effective from 1st January of that year; this was followed by the introduction of the *Zuwanderungsgesetz* (Immigration Act), effective 1st January 2005. Under current law, children of foreign national parents now have both German and another citizenship from birth, but, apart from some exceptional cases, must choose one or the other by their 23rd birthday. By the end of 2006, this ruling had led to German citizenship (along with the citizenship of their heritage country) for 270,352 children of non-German national parents (Federal

Ministry of the Interior: Migration and Integration, April 2008 in Möllering 2010, p. 147).

Under the new Immigration Act in effect since 2005, immigrants can apply for naturalisation after eight years of residence in Germany in place of the previous requirement of fifteen years of residence; they must declare their commitment to Germany, demonstrate their means of financial support and have a clear criminal record. Additionally, applicants for German citizenship must show familiarity with Germany's legal system, society and lifestyle, and language. After the introduction of the new citizenship law in 2000, the number of naturalisations of resident foreign nationals in the following five years increased markedly — by hundreds of thousands over the five years compared to the five years prior to the law's introduction (Anil 2007, p. 1366), but this level has declined from the earlier peak (see also Möllering 2010, p. 149).

Fieldwork undertaken by Merih Anil (2007) suggests a number of reasons for the relatively low level of German naturalisation of Turkish nationals. Anil's findings suggest that the first generation may have little interest in officially 'becoming German', as this was never their intention in coming to Germany. Other respondents, many of them born in Germany but excluded from automatic German citizenship, felt that citizenship would make no material improvement to their (in some cases quite bleak) circumstances or prospects — some cited ethnicity as something that can't be altered or avoided. Others still expressed resentment at their seemingly unavoidable 'foreigner' status (on this line of discussion, see also Chapter 2.3). It has also been observed that Germany has set its language expectation for applicants to the high end of the spectrum compared to other countries (Möllering 2010, pp. 149-151): the required attainment of German language proficiency is at the B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference, to be demonstrated through completion of a test such as the *Zertifikat Deutsch* or through certain histories of education or enrolment in the German schooling system; in the case of illness, disability or old age, the requirement may be waived.

Anil (2007) found that people who had acquired citizenship were likely to have spent their formal education in Germany (rather than in Turkey), and more women than men had become naturalised. Dual citizenship seemed to play little role in their decision, perhaps because in practice it has existed for some foreigners in Germany since the 1990s. It may also be because the *pembe kart* (pink card) introduced by the

Turkish government gives residence and employment rights to former Turkish citizens, thus removing some of the drawbacks in acquiring German citizenship; when the pink card was introduced in 1995 and Turks abroad were encouraged to apply for German citizenship, over 40,000 people were naturalised (Anil 2007, p. 1366).

As Fassman and Münz (1994, pp.11-12) note, the migration of ‘elites’ raises little concern and accounts for only a small proportion of foreign residents. Such ‘privileged’ or ‘lifestyle migration’ can take many different forms, and has attracted academic study mostly in a splintered way under various other conceptual names (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, p. 2). In Germany today, much of the discussion of immigration implicitly — sometimes explicitly — excludes nationals of other EU member states and particularly Western Europe, who as citizens of the EU not only benefit from certain privileges of access, but also from assumptions made about the shared European values and cultural commonalities. Anxieties about the presence of foreigners in Germany hardly seem to apply to a university-educated Belgian working in a marketing office, or the British-born staff of an English language school; such migrant workers can readily be absorbed into a view of Germany as a cosmopolitan society at the heart of Europe.

Following on the acknowledgement of Germany as a nation including immigrants and their descendents, public discourse has turned to matters of how this nation should best be balanced and managed. The importance placed on integration clearly differs from the project of nation-building; in its aims of social inclusion, integration is primarily economic in orientation and does not have the homogenising efforts of the nation-building tradition. Yet integrative measures seek to perfect cohesion, and above all to achieve social order (Joppke 2007, p.17). Various integrative measures have been proposed or introduced with the aim of facilitating integration into German society. In May 2006, Germany’s interior ministers made it mandatory to attend courses on civic integration and pass a language test in order to become a naturalised German citizen. These are, Joppke argues, essentially an extension of tests offered to ethnic German immigration applicants from Russia and Eastern Europe since the 1990s; these comprised preparatory language instruction and a “status test” to allow immigration, and a six-month program of language and civics education after arrival in Germany (2007, p. 12). In this sense, then, the new *Integrationskurse* are not novel in their offer of language instruction, but rather, “that ethnic and non-ethnic migrants are now enrolled in the same programme of 600 hours of German language instruction and

30 hours of civics instruction”⁶ (Joppke 2007, p.12). As an example of integration measures that in effect target one particular group, Joppke (Joppke 2007, p. 15) cites the *Gesprächsleitfaden* (interview guide) for examining citizenship applicants, as introduced in Baden-Württemberg in 2006 (since superseded by the federal-level testing). The guidelines were designed for citizenship applicants from 57 Muslim states, and attempt to assess whether the applicant’s *acceptance* of liberal democratic values, as is required by German nationality law, corresponds to their own convictions. Questions “are formulated in terms of a binary opposition between liberal democracy and a certain idea of Islam, as prescribing or condoning arranged marriage, patriarchy, homophobia, veiling and terrorism” (Joppke 2007, p. 15). Arguing that they must preserve their own traditions of liberalism, the leaderships of countries such as Germany and the Netherlands suggest that immigrants must be screened for, and perhaps schooled in, liberal values.

Since the new Immigration Act came into effect on 1st January 2005, most of the requirements for obtaining German citizenship are set out in one law: the Nationality Act, which was last amended to meet the Act to Implement Residence- and Asylum-Related Directives of the European Union of 19th August 2007, which came into force on 28th August 2008 (Möllering 2010, p. 147). According to Section 10 (1) of the Nationality Act, immigrants can be naturalised after eight years of residence in Germany — reduced from the previous fifteen years — if they have permanent residence status and meet other conditions. Applicants must declare their commitment to the German democratic constitutional system, and that they do not undertake any activities that run counter to it; they must be able to support themselves and their family financially and have no criminal convictions; finally, a person applying for German citizenship must have an “adequate knowledge of German” and the legal system, society and living conditions in Germany (Möllering 2010, p. 147).

In 2008, the German *Bundesregierung* (federal government) introduced formal citizenship testing at the national level, effective from 1st September 2008 (Möllering 2010, p. 152) — thus emphasising that integration was to be viewed as a condition of formal ‘belonging’ and not only as an ideal. The citizenship test (added to the pre-existing language requirement, and previous testing administered by the *Länder*) revolves around 33 multiple-choice questions from a bank of 300 (available to view on

⁶ The civics instruction has since been extended to 45 hours.

the website of the Ministry of the Interior); tests are administered through registered testing centres, and if applicants pass (answer at least 17 of the 33 correctly) they receive a certificate (see Möllering 2010, pp. 153-155).

The question of dual citizenship continues to cause vehement debate in German political discourse. One argument strongly supporting the case for dual citizenship is that it formalises and facilitates full political participation in the country of residence while allowing a formal attachment to the country of origin to remain intact. In this way, dual citizenship is thought to recognise the transnationalism that has naturally developed — socially, culturally and economically — for immigrant communities, in Germany as elsewhere. Civic participation in the country of residence can be facilitated through groups such as community representative organisations, but full integration, it is argued, can come only with the complete political participation afforded to a citizen. In the case of Turkish nationals resident in Germany, the Turkish state has even voiced its support of dual citizenship as a desirable outcome (Kastoryano 2002, pp. 163-164). The acquisition of German citizenship requires that applicants renounce their prior existing citizenships, except in particular circumstances in which this requirement may be waived; these include cases where renouncing the other citizenship would be legally impossible, politically dangerous, or create serious disadvantages with respect to finances or property; elderly people may also be excluded, and the rules have been eased for citizens of many European Union countries (Möllering 2010, p. 148). The requirement to renounce any existing citizenship proved to be an obstacle leading to a relatively low uptake when naturalisation processes changed (subsiding after an initial peak). Dual citizenship would be one more expression of the inadequacy, for many people, of identifying solely with one nation-state.

The image and self-image of Germans has gradually broadened to incorporate these various ethnocultural backgrounds into the picture of modern German society. Nonetheless, there remains an interest in the idea of a *Leitkultur* (leading culture), giving cohesion to the German populace and into which immigrants, it is held, should make an effort to integrate. Political science academic Bassam Tibi introduced the term *Leitkultur* to describe what he views as an essential core set of values and norms (Tibi 1998). It is essential, he argues, to provide immigrants to Germany with an identity with which to align themselves; citizenship alone does not achieve this sense of belonging —

“Ein Pass trägt nicht zur Integration bei, wenn damit keine „Identität“ verbunden ist”⁷ (Tibi 2002).

The term *Leitkultur* was employed in varying ways in the political discourse of the time; moreover, it shifted conceptually to position German culture within a perceived unifying European Christian tradition (Pautz 2005). In Tibi’s original discussion, the *Leitkultur* was attached to a concept of European identity, and he has since stated that he sees the discussion of a German *Leitkultur* as dangerous (in Musharbash 2004). Pautz writes that Tibi’s “concept of cultural belonging [is] ultimately static; he postulates that there can be no mobility between civilisations — yet exceptions are possible, for he is evidently one himself” (Pautz 2005, pp. 43-44).

The German negotiation of historical national identity and a new ‘post-national’ identity is part of a wider trend across Western Europe, whereby national identities, arguably, are no longer hegemonic but exist alongside other forms of identity (Levy 1999, pp. 104-105). Even in their approaches to accommodating the social change of immigration into their own countries, some member states of the EU have sought to align themselves with a certain trans- or multinational identity as represented by the laws of the Union (see Joppke 2007). Western Europe itself is a multicultural space, albeit one in which certain cultures are considered foreign to European identity; cultural differences between the Netherlands and Germany raise little concern, but differences between ‘Dutch culture’ and its Moroccan and Muslim immigrant community, or between ‘German culture’ and its Turkish and Muslim immigrant community have long been and continue to be a source of much anxiety.

There are varied views on the interplay between national and European identities, falling into three broader categories (Spohn 2005, p.2): a “confederal-intergovernmentalist” view of the European Union, holding that European identity exists only weakly while strong national identities continue; the “federal-functionalist” position that EU structures will lead to European identity gradually overtaking identification with current nation-states; lastly, a position falling somewhere between these two, viewing the EU as a “multi-level polity”, and expecting that European and national identities will continue alongside each other in variable relationships.

With the expansion of the European Union have come the ever-present questions of who is European and what Europeanness means. Much as national identity is

⁷ “A passport does not contribute to integration if no identity is bound to it.”

constructed and imagined through processes of nation-building, European identity is shaped by cultural and political forces and is not something that emerges simply from geographical proximity or a shared currency. Europe is “being built day by day. Effectively, Europe is being *Europeanised* — and this process is being resisted just as it is being pushed forward” (McNeill 2004, p.9, emphasis in original).

The countries of Europe, though not countries of immigration to compare with Canada, the USA or Australia, have found themselves dealing with large waves of immigration. Particularly through the work migration of the second half of the 20th Century, but also through asylum policy, post-colonial migration, repatriation and family reunion, Germany and other Western European states are addressing not only the question of their own national identities, but also the matter of a collective European identity. In dealing with their own domestic matters of integration, the authorities of various countries make reference to the policies of other European nations; the legitimacy and appropriateness of governmental initiatives are suggested by comparisons across Europe, and the impression that Europe is moving in step. The boundaries of European identity can be subtly reinforced through an implied collective effort of controlled and selective inclusion.

In France, with its stated strong commitment to secularism and civic participation, the ethnocultural differences that various immigrant groups might bring were largely ignored in favour of a resolute commitment to particular notions of French citizenship and nationhood; according to such a view, anyone can readily ‘become French’, but French identity cannot accommodate challenges to certain long-held traditions. French secularism has been the foundation of arguments in favour of banning the burqa as well as religious iconography (not only of Islam) in classrooms.

Famously, the Dutch government introduced a video as part of their programme of tests for immigration applicants abroad; this was meant to exhibit the ideals of tolerance and liberalism and showcase some of the scenarios in Dutch daily life that might be confronting for new arrivals — a bare-breasted woman, two men kissing in front of an EU flag — as well as unappealing images of rainy Dutch weather and people queuing (Slade 2010, pp. 130-131). Such a portrayal of social ‘liberalism’ as the Dutch government promotes is, Joppke argues, “nothing but a device for excluding a specific group, Muslims” (2007, p.15).

On 1st January 2007 the most recent Integration Act (*Wet Inburgering*) came into effect in the Netherlands, according to which immigrants who have lived in the

Netherlands for five or more years and hold a residence permit must pass a Civic Integration Test — like the tests abroad, with not-insignificant costs attached — in more advanced language skills, knowledge of Dutch society, and the ability to navigate real-life situations (Slade 2010, pp. 131-132). On the problematic nature of such tests, Slade writes

In common with civic integration tests elsewhere, the Dutch model of filtering prospective migrants shares assumptions about cultural identity and belonging that are unexamined and ill-justified. The tests are predicated on the view that certain types of cultural knowledge create ‘good citizens’. The complex theorising of the relations between the state, its citizens and its laws is reduced to a set of requirements, linguistic, cultural and financial, assumed to provide the right filter for the new European. (Slade 2010, p. 133)

The reference to European identity serves to remind us that in the member states of the European Union in particular, migrants and their offspring are now being construed not only as Others to the national, but Others to the supranational; the commonalities assumed to exist between European nations must be proved to be upheld by their ‘newcomers’.

With the acknowledgement that Germany is home to permanent immigrants and their descendants, the state has belatedly introduced more support with the aim of facilitating integration — with German naturalisation being constructed as a ‘reward’ of sorts for people who obtain the requisite language skills and cultural ‘knowledge’. Integration measures now offered with generous funding from the German federal government have attracted hundreds of thousands of participants, but it is not clear whether the initiatives are welcomed by those they affect (see Möllering 2010, pp. 155-161).

The European Union as a supranational political entity rules over many European countries in which a ‘national culture’ or identity is perceived to be challenged or under threat of erosion by immigration and a lack of integrative measures or expectations. The New Europe is “ethnic heterogeneity inserted into a multicultural supraculture” (Modood 1997, p. 1) — already a multitude of regional identities that in many cases are only partly contained by national ones, and are now facing the challenge of understanding a European identity to contain them all. 20th Century migration within

and to Europe has created “a multiculturalism that is qualitatively different from the diversity of personal lifestyles or cultural differences of historic, territorially based minorities that already characterise some western European countries” (Modood 1997, p. 1).

While the population of Germany clearly is multiethnic, there is still heated debate around questions of assimilation and multiculturalism, often focusing on language or symbols such as the head-coverings worn by some Muslim women — a highly visible sign of perceived cultural ‘otherness’ that has been a focus of much public discussion in Germany as in other countries such as France, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Germany’s integrative measures around citizenship and anxieties about national cultural identity and social stability are shared by its neighbours, along with whom it is answerable to EU law and directives. The question of European identity is pertinent to Germany, the Netherlands, France and other countries where national identities are already informed by a sense of what it means to be European. To ‘be German’ would seem to also entail ‘being (Western) European’. This conceptualisation is underlined by comments such as Chancellor Angela Merkel’s, that Germany is founded on Judeo-Christian values — a belief she affirmed in 2010 in response to a speech by Bundespräsident Christian Wulff, in which he observed that Islam was now a part of Germany alongside other religions (Drobinski and Preuß 2010). Just as Turkey’s suitability for EU membership is questioned in some quarters on grounds of being a majority Muslim nation, so much of the attention on Germany’s Turkish immigration is given in particular to immigrants’ Islamic faith and its place in German society.

Yasemin Yildiz has critiqued the central argument of Necla Kelek’s (2005) book *Die fremde Braut (The Foreign Bride)* and its appeal to a sense of German liberalism. Kelek, a Turkish-born sociologist in Germany, discusses the phenomenon of so-called ‘import brides’, brought from rural Turkey to Germany to be married to the sons of Turkish immigrants (Kelek 2005). The book drew public criticism, including a petition to the *Zeit* newspaper, undersigned by 60 researchers lead by Mark Terkessidis (see also Chapter 4.2) and Yasemin Karakasoglu; their letter questioned the quality and integrity of Kelek’s work and the manner of its reception, and called for a more informed and ‘serious’ approach to discussing integration and forced marriages (Karakasoglu and Terkessidis 2006). Yildiz criticises the book as being “a hodgepodge of polemic, autobiography, pseudo-history, and Orientalist tales about beauty and slavery in the

Ottoman harem into which the stories of a few Turkish women who married Turkish-German men are inserted towards the end” (2009, p. 477).

Kelek’s argument, Yildiz writes, is in fact not particularly concerned with the protection of ‘import brides’ from Turkey or other Turkish-background women pressured into marriage; rather, it presents an outrage at the lack of regard for German law, and at many points throughout the book encourages a view of Muslim immigrants as a threat to German liberalism as expressed in its constitution.

Yildiz further writes that Kelek gives the appearance of employing specific legal knowledge — although in fact referring only to quite widely-known aspects of the German constitution — in an attempt to appeal to the German post-war tradition of alignment with widespread Western ideals as a remedy of sorts and preventive measure against Nazism. “She uses the consensus concerning equality and human rights in an attempt to overturn a supposed emerging consensus about multiculturalism” (2009, p. 480). Kelek, too, ties the discourse of Muslim immigrants in Germany to the wider European discussion (Yildiz 2009, pp. 480-481).

The case of the Netherlands is interesting in that a country which prides itself on a history of tolerance towards others, is perhaps challenging this very stance in the name of upholding it. Language and civics courses have been introduced that affect Muslim immigrants in particular, even though according to European Union directives, discrimination on this basis is not allowed. Germany’s ‘segregationist’ approach has given way to a more interventionist stance aiming to facilitate social cohesion, with a focus on the obligation of immigrants to integrate rather than on their access to the same rights as other residents of Germany. The language requirements and civics testing have the aim of promoting integration and placing certain expectations and responsibilities on the foreign national who applies. Such tests also amount to an attempt to crystallise some explanation of what it means to be German.

In Germany, the matter of individuals’ stated nationality has been obscured somewhat by statistics that mostly recorded citizenship rather than place of birth or parents’ place of birth. Given the nature of the *ius sanguinis* law that was predominant until January 2000, there was indeed strong correlation between having foreign citizenship and being born abroad or born to parents who were. More recently, the *Mikrozensus* (micro census) of 2005 and *Zensus* (census) of 2011 asked respondents to name their countries of ancestry and birth; this gives a fuller picture of the makeup of the German population, which is particularly useful in light of the politics surrounding

citizenship. Citizenship is variously seen as highly important, if not essential, to the process of integration, or as the ultimate outcome of successful integration — the end point, not the facilitation, of the process. Whatever the view of citizenship, it is evident that a formalised recognition of membership in the nation-state does not equate, always and automatically, to a feeling of belonging. As Zafer Şenocak writes:

Wer einen deutschen Pass erwirbt, fällt zwar aus der Ausländerstatistik heraus, selten aber aus dem Raster des Fremden. Dabei fühlen sich viele dieser Menschen durchaus in Deutschland zu Hause. [...] Sie sind Deutsche geworden, aber auch Türken geblieben. Der Integrationspolitik fehlt eine dialogische Sprache, um mit ihnen zu Kommunizieren.⁸ (Şenocak 2011, pp. 117-118)

It is to be welcomed that immigration to Germany has been recognised, instituted in law, and acted upon so that ‘foreigners’ may more easily take up full political and legal rights in the state. If citizenship testing is designed to administrate capabilities and encourage views that are seen as vital to membership of the nation, other measures and means also have a role to play in encouraging a self-identity and a daily co-existence that reflect Germany’s diversity.

2.3 Everyday multiculturalism in Germany

Far from signalling an end to concerns about preserving German identity, recognition of German society’s ethnocultural diversity, and the broadening of the formalised belonging offered by citizenship have reset the parameters of the discussion that still continues. A central topic now is integration or social cohesion — how best to manage, how even best to conceptualise, a multicultural Germany — and indeed whether multiculturalism is the most appropriate term for the mission and aims of German immigration politics.

Chancellor Merkel declared in October 2010 that multiculturalism had “failed, utterly failed” as an approach, and said that better integration, such as learning German,

⁸ “Whoever has a German passport admittedly falls outside the foreigner statistics, but seldom out of the grid of otherness. At the same time, many of these people feel utterly at home in Germany [...] They have become Germans, but also remained Turks. The politics of integration lacks a dialogic language, in order to speak with them.”

should be expected of immigrants (Weaver 2010). This came at a time when, after decades of multicultural policies, public figures in many countries are expressing concerns that multiculturalism has not yet fulfilled its promise and requires further consideration; within Germany that same week, the Bavarian Premier Horst Seehofer had proposed halting immigration from Turkey and Arabic countries in favour of focusing on people already in Germany and ‘similar’ cultures (Connolly 2010). Elsewhere in Europe, British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy have highlighted what they perceive as failures or oversights of multicultural politics in their own respective countries. Multiculturalism itself, according to the viewpoints of many, is the problem; others rightly acknowledge some merit in the ideal of multiculturalism while critiquing its implementation in Germany. The concept of multiculturalism, like the idea of integration, is open to considerable vagueness of definition and use, so that debate can be coloured by misunderstandings or misapprehension, and the term harnessed to various political viewpoints (Shohat and Stam 2003, p.6).

Where multiculturalism in Australia, Canada and elsewhere has been connected to government policies or initiatives, elsewhere it may simply refer to ethnic pluralism, or be a rather hollow catchcry. Multiculturalism is

a situated utterance, inserted in the social and shaped by history. It can be top-down or bottom-up, hegemonic or resistant, or both at the same time. Its political valance depends on who is seeking multicultural representation, from what social position, in response to what hegemonies, in relation to which disciplines and institutions, as part of what political project, using what means, toward what end, deploying what discourses, and so forth. (Shohat and Stam 2003, p.6)

The ‘crisis of multiculturalism’ has appeared in many countries, including Australia. While multiculturalism has generally been studied as something led from the top down, as policy and political rhetoric, there is also an “everyday multiculturalism” that is manifested in the experience and cultural diversity in everyday situations (Wise and Velayutham 2009, p. 2). On a similar note, Noble (2009) proposes the term “unpanicked multiculturalism” to describe a sort of everyday communal experience of interculturalism, as found in his Australian case studies; he also suggests that cosmopolitanism, so often viewed as a characteristic owned by elites belonging to the

majority group, could productively be reconsidered as something experienced by all parties within a multicultural setting (Noble 2009, pp. 46-51).

People on both the left and right sides of German party politics have acknowledged that integration in Germany has not (yet) been fully successful; there are some aspects in which different groups in the population live in parallel to each other with relatively little interaction. Moreover, much of the discussion seems underpinned by quite outdated concepts of culture: references to a ‘clash of cultures’ or to people ‘caught between two cultures’ imply separate spheres with little overlap — a view which contradicts the lived reality of most people. For all the power and frequency with which the word is used, ‘culture’ is often ill-defined, and arguably “by its very nature hybrid” (Erel 2009, p.33). Transculturalism is perhaps the most fitting model (see for example Welsch 2000, and the discussion in Chapter 4.2 of this thesis), but as attention is drawn to the instability and fluidity of nationhood, the discourse returns defensively to discussion of national identities.

The lack of immigration policy and other measures, because many of the workers were viewed as temporary ‘guests’ rather than new permanent additions to the German cultural landscape, has been partly responsible for what is instead frequently blamed on a multiculturalist approach or solely on the failure of immigrants themselves to integrate. It can be argued, on the contrary, that many immigrants currently living in Germany have, in the past, been subjected to “policies of disintegration: short-term residence permits, exclusion from the labour market or from certain professions, exclusion from political rights and from certain social rights” (Cyrus and Vogel 2007, p.127). Cyrus and Vogel further note that there is a significant minority of foreign nationals in Germany who still have not secured ongoing residency after ten years (2007, p. 127).

In the late 1980s, ongoing high unemployment in Germany seemed to play a part in increasing expressions of xenophobia (Galanis 1989, p. 15). There were notorious attacks such as the riots in Hoyerswerda and a Turkish family in Solingen being killed in their sleep when their house was burnt to the ground. It has been shown that German media coverage has — at times at least — skewed towards a negative portrayal of immigrants (Galanis 1989, p. 202; see also Ruhrmann, Sommer, and Uhlemann 2006). Local media have been found to provide a broader coverage, including local events in support of ‘foreigners’ or immigrants (Cyrus and Vogel 2007, p.137). While positive portrayals of immigrants in newspapers seem to assuage anti-

immigrant sentiment, it may also be that simply an increased visibility of immigrants in the news — that is, more news coverage featuring immigrants — has had some similar effect (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2009).

The long-term resident foreign nationals gradually became accepted as a part of German society, while more attention was given to refugees and asylum seekers and the regulation of their migration; but it was “only for a rather short period, around the turn of the millennium, that the debate showed a tendency in favour of more liberal immigration management” and the World Trade Centre attack in 2001 and declining IT industry soon changed the mood (Cyrus and Vogel 2007, p.136).

The arrival of Turks in Germany has added a discourse of migration to three pre-existing factors, each with centuries of varied history: German images of Turkey, Orientalist projections, and the perception of Islam (Neubauer 2011, p. 165; see also pp. 131-164). Although Germany’s Turkish community in particular has a high visibility in most areas of public and cultural life, there is an aspect of that representation that portrays Turkish culture as something foreign and novel. The seven-part documentary TV series *The Özdays* (2007) follows the everyday lives of a Turkish immigrant couple and their four sons and three daughters in Germany; it was envisaged, according to its director Ute Diehl, as a way of encouraging Germans to learn more about their ‘Turkish neighbours’ — an idea that “might seem an odd proposition” in light of the several-decade history and the scale of Turkish immigration to Germany (Tzortzis 2007).

While immigration to Germany and other European countries stems from the 19th Century and earlier, the great waves of post-1945 immigration are seen as presenting different and particular challenges in terms of social cohesion and long-held ideas of national identity. This view generally underestimates or overlooks similarities to the circumstances of earlier immigration (Lucassen, Feldman, and Oltmer 2006). Although there are aspects particular to the discourse on integrating Turks in Germany, there are prior examples of immigrant groups being viewed with suspicion or anxiety that gradually subsided. Lucassen (2006, pp. 29-30) finds a parallel in the history of the Poles in the Ruhr area: they were viewed as foreigners in spite of technically being German citizens, and they were seen as culturally and religiously different — Catholic migrants from the predominantly Protestant Prussia, at the time of Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* (see also Chapter 2.1) — although the Catholicism of the immigrants became less important in their reception over time.

Guest workers in Germany met working and living conditions determined by a stringently specific set of guidelines laid out by the Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, including a living area with a total of at least eight square metres per person, wash basins in rooms accommodating five people, and showers for rooms with twenty. Men and women were to be housed separately (Franz 1975, p. 48). While such rules are desirable as a means of regulating the system and to avoid potentially grave exploitation, the image is one of cramped rooms, and guest workers living marginal, makeshift existences in Germany. At work, German and foreign workers were equal under German law, when it came to provisions for wages, safety standards, holidays, work hours, maternity leave and legal protection, as well as strikes, unemployment insurance benefits and family dependents allowances (Franz 1975, p. 48). The 1965 *Ausländergesetz* was not an indicator of social openness but a pragmatic reaction to the needs of the German economy and labour market: “In the final analysis, hard-headed economic interests are the decisive factor for admitting foreigners. When the commodity of manpower is in demand, legal safeguards are of secondary concern” (Franz 1975, p. 53).

Similarly, Boos-Nünning and Hohmann in 1989 assessed the state of migrant education policy as “primarily characterized by a lack of anticipatory planning or of at least medium-range concepts” (p. 40). Earlier concerns about the children of immigrants in the German education system related to their arrival in a country where school attendance was compulsory — whatever their school experience in their country of origin. The focus gradually shifted as German-born ‘foreigners’ reached school age, and the matter of unequal distribution of migration-background pupils, leading to a segregation of sorts, came to the fore (Boos-Nünning and Hohmann 1989, p. 40).

Today, Germans with Turkish background are still under-represented at the more academically-oriented *Gymnasien* and *Realschulen*, and over-represented at *Hauptschulen* and among school dropouts. Compared to autochthonous German pupils, immigrants and their descendants are less likely to obtain a school completion certificate or to gain admission to university, and more likely to receive a lower-category leaving certificate (Möllering 2010, p. 158). According to a 2009 report by the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, only 14 percent of second-generation German Turks complete the *Abitur*; around half of this section of the population was born in Germany, suggesting that socialisation into the German education system is not

always easier for German-born pupils than for children who arrive as immigrants themselves (Wirwalski 2010).

It is by now almost axiomatic to say that nations — and states — construct and relate to their female citizens differently from their male citizens (for example, see Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). Metaphorically, women are seen as “mothers, sisters or daughters [...] as biological and ideological reproducers of the nation or ethnic group and its boundaries [...] On another level women and their appropriate (sexual) behaviour serve as signifiers of ethnic and national difference” (Erel 2009, p. 35). Immigration too, broadly and statistically speaking, relates to men and women differently; traditionally assigned roles remain important in life in the adopted country, and the types of work available to, or chosen by, female migrants may vary from the options for men. Scholarship on migration has not always accounted for the complexity of women’s reasons for migrating, nor the breadth of their experiences (DeLaet 1999).

Discussion of immigration and multiculturalism in Germany recognises — indeed focuses on — these differences. Views of Turkish-Muslim culture in Germany are frequently expressed in terms of the position of Turkish-German women. There are some clear discrepancies between popular images of immigrant Turkish women in Germany and the statistical reality. In the early years, even studies of Turkish female immigrants suggested that most were from rural backgrounds and had minimal formal education or training. Bozkurt counters that in fact after the 1960s, Turkish migrant women arriving in Germany were mostly skilled and educated and from urban areas of Turkey; demand for women workers even increased after the West German recessions of 1966 and 1967 lead to worse job prospects for men (2009, p. 66). Similarly, Akgündüz has found that labour migration from Turkey to Western Europe began in provinces of Turkey that were the most developed and modernised, and that such provinces, along with the large cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, accounted for a large percentage of migrants (albeit in many cases the urban dwellers had been part of Turkey’s internal migration from rural areas); on the other hand, migration from more conservative areas was predominantly male (see Akgündüz 2008, especially pp. 129-143 and pp. 175-176). Women were recruited for work which reflected ideas about traditional gender roles in (German) society; this work commonly was in small manufacturing, tailoring, food processing, textiles, packaging or cleaning (Bozkurt 2009, p. 66).

The first Turkish guest workers in the 1960s were predominantly (but certainly not exclusively) men; when they were joined in Germany by their children and wives these women, as mothers and housewives, strengthened “das vorherrschende eurozentristische Bild von der Orientalin und luden dazu ein, den verlorenen Emanzipationskampf auf die ausländischen Frauen zu projizieren”⁹ (Bulut 2000, p. 258). Migrant women tend not only to be over-represented in manual labour roles, but it also tends to be assumed that they are dependants and that their income is supplementary; this can be misapplied as an explanation for their low pay compared to their male counterparts (Kadioğlu 1997, pp. 539-540). Women from rural areas of Turkey mostly started to arrive in Germany in the second wave of migration in the 1970s; their main reasons for making the trip to Germany were family reunification, marriage, but also in some cases to escape marriages in Turkey, for economic or educational improvement, for training or to seek political refuge (Bozkurt 2009, p. 66).

Yildiz (2009) echoes Göktürk’s and others’ observation that the blame for hardship and segregation shifted from the majority German culture, to being placed on Turkish immigrants themselves. Yildiz argues, though, that the blame for this suffering of women has shifted from being placed on ‘Turkish culture’ to being placed on Islam, in light of the Muslim faith of the majority of Turkish immigrants and their descendents; women have been portrayed as “foreign, deficient, and, most often, as pitiable victims of domestic abuse” (Yildiz 2009, p. 465). Studies of Turkish immigrants in Europe have frequently linked ethnicity and culture, and failed to account fully for “the situational and instrumental nature of ethnicity” (Kaya 2007, p. 485); immigrants’ cultural parameters and cues were explained in terms of the homeland rather than the new milieu. In many cases, the traditions and values of rural areas were taken to represent Turkish culture more generally, and Islam elevated to a central role in these traditions (Kaya 2007, p. 485).

In her book *The Foreign Bride* (2005, see also earlier in this chapter), Necla Kelek paints a picture of Turkish enclaves in which immigrant women have no contact with anyone from other ethnocultural backgrounds, don’t learn any German, and have no real experience of the country in which they live. Kelek argues that there is no real difference between forced marriages and arranged marriages, since in the latter, the young woman may only consent under pressure or out of a sense of obligation. Towards

⁹ “the predominant Eurocentric image of the Oriental woman, and invited the projection of the lost fight for emancipation onto the foreign woman.”

the end of the book, she argues against the headscarf, saying it is a symbol of difference (as perceived both by others and the wearer).

Veiling practices have become a central focus for much of the public discourse in Germany and elsewhere, regarding ideas about the different situation of women in German and Turkish — more specifically Turkish Muslim — culture (on these constructions, see for example Amir-Moazami 2007; Mandel 1989). Through this discourse the headscarf has also become “a mirror of identity which forces the Europeans to see who they are and to rethink the kinds of public institutions and societies they wish to have” (Joppke 2009, p. 2).

Though Lutz was writing two decades ago, it still holds true that migrant women are often judged to be either traditionalist or attached to a modern lifestyle, according to their clothing: “When they wear a scarf or a veil they are assumed to be in favour of a traditional (often equated with fundamentalist) ethos, whereas dressing like a Western woman equates them with modernity” (Lutz 1991, p. 132). There are different laws in Germany’s various *Bundesländer* controlling the wearing of a headscarf or veil in public office; in 2000, the states of Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony banned Muslim teachers from wearing headscarves at school (see Joppke 2009, pp. 53-80); in 2004 a decision by the *Verfassungsgericht* (constitutional court) meant such decisions were left to individual states (where responsibility for education policies sit). North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin have since adopted bans, which focus mostly on the influence of teachers rather than, as in France, on choices made by pupils (Ehrkamp 2010, p. 13).

There has been media coverage of gangs and violence towards women; there have been high-profile ‘honour killings’ of women at the hands of usually male family members seeking to restore the family’s good name if a woman has had pre- or extra-marital sex, or behaved in a way judged to be inappropriate. At the heart of such debates are perceptions of migrant women’s control of their own sexuality (Ehrkamp 2010, p. 14). The primacy of Islam as an imagined indicator of women’s behaviours and beliefs has led to the homogenising of a group that crosses many varied backgrounds, circumstances and experiences; assumptions from ‘outside’ can also overlook or obscure the debates that have long taken place within such cultural spheres.

The perception of women’s clothing as a marker of their identity, personal character and sexual availability is manifested in numerous examples across history and across cultures. In Western contexts there are recorded instances of judges or lawyers

on rape cases claiming that the female complainant must have consented because her tight jeans could not have been removed without her assistance, or that a woman was dressed in a way that indicated she was advertising her sexual availability. Women in many office environments are advised not to dress ‘provocatively’ lest their words not be taken seriously — dress should be sombre, their heels not too high, their makeup not too striking. Compilers of best- or worst-dressed lists and evaluations of red-carpet gowns frequently offer judgement on ‘too much’ cleavage or hems ‘too short’ for the occasion, with an underlying assumption of particular standards that are at once subjective and somewhat arbitrary, but also connected to the management of female sexual appeal. In many cultural traditions, the white wedding dress is an “enduring symbol of female redemption in wedlock” (Geller 2001, p. 214). Appearances matter a great deal for men and women alike — for men, for example, facial hair is deemed by some to risk the appearance of being less trustworthy, ‘having something to hide’ — and for women, these matters frequently centre on their biological and sexual differences from men. Gender and sexuality — and social mores around them — inform clothing choices across history and across cultures (Barnes and Eicher 1992; Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1992).

In the past decade in Germany there has been quite a spate of biographical literature about, and frequently written by, women of Turkish background. Many of the books combine personal accounts with discussions of the difficulties of integration in Germany. Seyran Ateş, a practising lawyer born in Istanbul and living in Germany since she was sixteen, has written a series of books on varying themes: multiculturalism, sexuality and Islam, and her personal history under the title *Große Reise ins Feuer: Die Geschichte einer deutschen Türkin* (*Great Journey Into the Fire: The Story of a German Turk* (2003)). Some of the necessarily attention-grabbing titles in such literature exhibit a simplistic symbolism — for example, the alliterative *So wie ich will: Mein Leben zwischen Moschee und Minirock* (*As I Like: My Life Between Mosque and Miniskirt*) by Melda Akbaş (2010). Here, the mosque as a definitive symbol of one cultural sphere is matched by the miniskirt as something apparently from a different one altogether, and again, a piece of female-coded clothing is assigned quite a deal of implicit meaning: with a hemline naturally at odds with predominant Muslim codes of modesty, the miniskirt implies a post-feminist and post-1960s modernity assigned to majority German culture.

Such books are surely a welcome example of immigrant women — or in some cases, their daughters — having a voice in German literature and society, and telling their experiences themselves rather than merely being reported about by media producers and others. Unsurprisingly, given that they have been chosen for publication, many of the stories are very dramatic, confronting even, such as in the case of *Ich bin Zeugin des Ehrenmords an meiner Schwester* (*I Witnessed My Sister's Honour Killing*) by Syrian-born Nourig Apfeld (2010). It goes almost without saying that uneventful lives are not likely to be turned into books, and that on the other hand, oppressive behaviour deserves to be challenged; but the collective weight of books about distressing and violent events from the lives of Turkish-German women surely must contribute to a picture that exaggerates the statistical reality. Presumably it is this corner of the market Sineb El Masrar refers to when she writes of the need for alternatives, “Denn nicht nur mit Opfergeschichten lassen sich Bücherregale füllen”¹⁰ (2010, p.14).

The stories of oppressed Turkish women are not limited to autobiography and other non-fiction — books such as the lengthy *Leyla* by Feridun Zaimoğlu (2006) also offer harrowing stories of sexism or misogyny and sexual abuse. That other women — mothers, grandmothers, older sisters and friends — often instruct the victim on how to bear, rather than escape, the treatment, paints a picture of culturally sanctioned misogyny and of women robbed of any power to rebel or resist. Zaimoğlu's earlier book *Koppstoff* (1998), a series of interviews with 26 real subjects, projects a much more self-assured and assertive image of young Turkish women in Germany, while at the same time rejecting any paternalistic or didactic perspectives towards ‘Turkish culture’. Its title, meaning ‘head material’ is a reference to the headscarf worn by some of its interviewees, as well as to the ‘stuff’ going on inside their heads. Through Zaimoğlu's transcribed text, the women talk about their lives in a matter-of-fact, and even unapologetically aggressive way; even if they find themselves in difficult circumstances, they generally refuse to be cast in the role of victim.

More positive stories are still in the minority of publications and media reports, making them seem to be the exceptions that prove the rule. The disadvantage and mistreatment of some cannot be overlooked — indeed, it is an issue for real concern — but a greater breadth of experiences needs to be paid attention to by the media. There has been too great a tendency in immigration research, including Turks in Germany, to

¹⁰ “Because not only with victim stories can bookshelves be filled.”

assume “that their identity and behaviour can mainly be explained on the basis of their culture of origin. Women in ethnic majority groups, as well as in ethnic minority groups are regarded as the Other, while maleness is seen as constituting the norm” (Erel 2009, p. 33).

Such a view has been memorably described, by Helma Lutz , as making Muslim migrant women into the “other other” — their integration is considered to be made more difficult by their own cultural background, and an Islamic value system believed to oppress women and place most power in the hands of men. In this way, Muslim women's disadvantage is ascribed to their cultural origins, and Western women, by contrast, are portrayed as successfully liberated from such gender-based oppression (Lutz 1991, p. 121).

Lutz has rightly noted, as early as 1991, that the role of fundamentalism amongst European immigrant minorities cannot be ignored; it can of course be argued that under Muslim fundamentalism — as with its Christian or Jewish equivalents — women “are not afforded with independent and autonomous ways of expression” (Lutz 1991, p. 122). In a piece of research by the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations in 2006 (in Naiboğlu 2010, p. 84), the majority of Turkish-German women respondents saw an urgent need for a change in the sexual politics affecting their lives; furthermore, they expressed admiration for German women’s freedom to choose their own partner and determine their own lives. At the same time, respondents had less positive views of German women’s looser ties to family and need to balance work and family responsibilities.

The ideologies underpinning and enabling 19th Century Western colonialism had two main variants: in cases of conquest over a predominantly black population, the beliefs of the colonists were shaped by racist constructions alluding to skin colour; encounters in the Ottoman Empire instead emphasised religious and cultural differences. Views of the Orient were based on 18th Century reports and “characterized by the interlacing of science with economic interests” (Lutz 1991, p. 124). Islam was placed at the centre of attempts in the West to interpret Middle Eastern cultures, in the process identified by Edward Said as “Orientalism” (1978); Western perspectives of the Orient have been “shaped by the paradigm defining the society, the community and the individual of oriental background as representatives of a culture diametrically opposed to the Western, Christian, enlightened one” (Lutz 1991, p. 125; on the history of German Orientalism, see Hodkinson and Morrison 2009, pp. 12-13; Wilson 2009).

The Oriental woman received a particular kind of focus within Orientalist discourse: in the early 20th Century, Western art and literature viewed her as erotic and as much more sexually active than the demure Victorian woman in the West — though in the later 20th Century, the image of the Oriental woman had lost its seductive aspects and become almost asexual (Lutz 1991, p. 125). This desexualisation has been seen in Turkish cinema, too, arising from a different viewpoint and from different motivations (see Naiboğlu 2010, p. 85; also Chapter 5.1 in this thesis).

It is true enough that immigration can be anything but a liberating experience for women; some early Turkish female immigrants found themselves largely confined to the domestic sphere, with little interaction with their host society in Germany; women who migrated with their husbands and were registered as dependents could only take employment illegally; the immigration experience generally uprooted women from the social networks they had known at home, in which the extended family could provide support and help with childcare (Aliefendioğlu 2004, p. 60).

The wearing of the headscarf is often used metaphorically or symbolically in German discourse to refer to Islam and Turks quite homogenously, overlooking the complexity surrounding the issue even within Turkey itself (see for example Gökarıksel 2012). In rural areas of Turkey, the choice to wear a headscarf can be as much due to long-standing cultural traditions as directly linked to Islamic faith; the simple piece of cloth knotted under the chin is to be distinguished, in at least some cases, from the *hijab* or other covering. As a secular state with a history of strong reform, Turkey has witnessed a similar ‘headscarf debate’ to those in France or Germany or elsewhere; the headscarf, it has been argued in Turkey, is outdated and has no place in public life; there are conflicting discourses around, for instance, the ban in place since the 1960s on wearing *hijab* at Turkish universities (see for example Bayram 2009). Şenocak refers to the oversights in German discourse about ‘Turks’ and Turkey when he writes, “Es geht nicht um eine zivilisatorische Erziehung der Menschen, sondern um ihre kulturelle Bevormundung. [...] Moscheen, Schulen und die Muttersprache stellen keine Rechtsverstöße dar. Sie sind aber starke Identitätssymbole. Sie werden als Angriffe auf die deutsche Identität wahrgenommen”¹¹ (Şenocak 2011, pp. 118-119).

¹¹ “It is [from certain German perspectives] not about the civilising education of people, but about their [Germans’] cultural paternalism. [...] Mosques, schools and the native language do not constitute any breaking of the law. But they are strong symbols of identity. They are perceived as attacks on German identity.”

Ahmed (2011) outlines the complex path of the *hijab* or other covering, from pre-colonial tradition to apparent symbol of patriarchy or of political Islamism, its resurgence in countries where it had been traditionally worn, and in the West (she writes primarily from the perspective of Egypt and the United States). On Turkey, Ahmed writes that although the country was never directly colonised, it did experience an influx of ideas from the West, and local attitudes to the veil gradually gave way to the Westerners' view, seeing the veil as symbolic of Islam's inferiority and of a degrading treatment of women; Atatürk's 1925 characterisation of the practice as "barbarous" was typical of a view that was spreading through the middle and upper classes of Muslim societies (see Ahmed 2011, p. 44).

In Western Europe, where countries including Germany have discussed or implemented laws banning certain veiling practices, (Western) feminism is placed in a difficult position in finding its response. It is the task of feminism to focus on oppression based on gender, but in doing so it cannot be blind to questions of class, 'race' or other intersecting and overlapping considerations. As Rottmann and Ferree (2008) outline, German feminist voices have been divided on their reactions to the *Kopftuchdebatte*:

German feminists who oppose Muslim women's legal right to wear headscarves focus on specificity: Muslim women's relationships with Muslim men and their need for protection from Islamic patriarchy, while those who favor women's legal right to wear headscarves emphasize gender commonalities and argue that all women should be allowed by the state to make their own decisions. (Rottmann and Ferree 2008, p. 486)

The broader issue as Rottmann and Ferree go on to discuss, is how feminism deals with issues where gender may not be the prime consideration; the recognition and balance of this complexity is part of the ongoing work of feminism (see also Lutz 1991, pp. 134-137).

One of the themes in discussions of integration is the notion of 'ghettoisation' or of parallel societies within Germany: immigrants and their descendants living amongst themselves and not mixing with Germans. The word ghetto in German-language discourse is, on the one hand, surrounded by the sensitivity of the associated history of the Polish and Jewish ghettos of World War II. On the other hand, in the current social

context, it can be used quite loosely to mean an urban area dominated by one ethno-cultural group, based on a presumption of lower socio-economic standards, perhaps higher crime, borrowing from the US context. I would not claim that such neighbourhoods do not exist in Germany: there are areas with marked problems; rather, I would suggest that the word is thrown around a little too freely, and in cases where terms like ‘community’, ‘neighbourhood’ or simply ‘area’ could be more appropriate. Then there is also the influence of ghetto as a mark of pride, especially in hip-hop cultures, so that it seems to take on an almost attractive mythical quality. All the same, as Inken Keim (2007, pp. 39-40) illustrates through examples from her interviews with young migrant women in Mannheim, the word *Ghetto* can be understood primarily to have negative connotations and to be a distancing device rather than to involve self-identification.

The anxiety about ghettoisation taking place is not without some foundation; it is true that some areas of some German cities have a noticeably high percentage of foreign-born residents, and in some cases that a particular immigrant group will appear to dominate the demographic makeup. Seen in context and with quantitative analysis, though, the picture changes somewhat: in spite of the similarity in their population size and their percentage of immigrants, Frankfurt am Main is less segregated than Brussels and Amsterdam — including the segregation of various immigrant groups, such as Greeks and Turks, from each other (Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart 1998, pp. 71-79). In 1989, the Frankfurt Amt für Multi-Kulturelle Angelegenheiten (Office for Multicultural Affairs) was established — a first among German cities (Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart 1998, p. 80). Düsseldorf is similarly non-segregated, with the exception of Japanese residents (generally employed by one of the number of Japanese companies with offices or interests in Düsseldorf); their relative affluence may explain both their segregation compared to other immigrant groups, and the fact that this nominal lack of integration raises little concern on the part of Düsseldorf authorities (Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart 1998, pp. 84-97). Policies of dispersal have been implemented to ensure that no one immigrant group remains isolated and concentrated in a particular neighbourhood, this view is also met with the argument that, in some cases, landlords have deliberately declined to let their apartments to immigrant families.

In 2010 the SPD politician Thilo Sarrazin released the book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (*Germany Does Away With Itself*), meeting with high sales but engendering fierce debate. It was a record-breaking bestseller, with around 1.5 million copies in

hardcover sold by the beginning of 2012 (Krieger 2012). In his book, Sarrazin argues that Germany is in decline due to a number of factors; he discusses the falling birthrate (fewer than two children per woman), growing poverty, and his concerns regarding the workforce and education. Sarrazin is deeply critical of the outcomes of immigration and the politics of multiculturalism. Specifically, he expresses concerns about Muslims and Islam in Germany, and proposes a number of measures including more stringent language proficiency requirements, obligatory preschool attendance from the age of three, and the banning of headscarves from schools. Sarrazin's work in turn was countered with vehement opposition from some quarters. The *Sarrazin-Affäre* (Sarrazin affair) as it quickly came to be known, became yet another focus point for suspicions that the multi-ethnic immigration state of Germany is failing.

From 2006 to 2009 the CDU Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble organised the so-called *Islamkonferenz* (Islam Conference), a series of meetings between government officials and Muslim representatives, which constituted the first high-level governmental undertaking to discuss integration of resident foreigners (Yildiz 2009, p. 466). In 2007, the Bavarian Office for the Protection of the Constitution asked that academic staff at Bavarian universities report any evidence of radical Islamist sympathies or activities, from students or colleagues (Yeşilada 2009a, p. 181).

Comparing two articles — one written in 1990, the other in 2004 — as examples, Yıldiz discusses the discursive relabelling of Germany's largest immigrant minority from 'Turks' to 'Muslims'. Yıldiz argues that the naming of the Schäuble-organised meetings served to frame 'Islam' and 'Muslims' as matters of state interest and salient categories of identification; yet, as she explains,

the majority of the 'Muslim' representatives were of Turkish origin, that is, they hailed from the group that has constituted Germany's largest resident ethnic minority since the early 1970s and on whose presence there has never been a similar event held by the government. [...] The same individuals long treated as ethnonational Others have thus become embodiments of a differently underwritten Otherness. (Yildiz 2009, p.466)

This has also meant, for instance, that some German writers of immigrant background are assigned roles as "public Muslims [...m]ore or less involuntarily

representing their new (or rather: newly discovered) Muslim identity” (Yeşilada 2009a, p. 183).

Attention to the religious identity of Germany’s Turkish immigrants has not only developed since 2001. Writing in 1996, Karakasoğlu argued that “More than any other manifestation of their [Turkish immigrants’] cultural values, Islam is regarded as the one feature that most strongly differentiates them in terms of identity from the majority host society” (1996, p. 157). At the time of the recruitment agreement between Germany and Turkey, the matter of religious affiliation was referred to, but ultimately regarded as the business of individuals rather than policy-makers. The Turkish government of the time, secular and looking to the West, took the position that its emigrants should only pursue their cultural or religious interests without governmental support; the West German government took this same position, and did not expect the guest labourers to establish their own cultural sphere, but to exist within the host society (Karakasoğlu 1996, p. 157). In the early years of Turkish migration to Germany, Turks generally practised their Muslim faith within their accommodation, with fellow workers acting as *imam* (Pauly 2004, p. 77).

The new circumstances introduced through migration can redefine the role of religion in one’s life: there may be a greater reliance on religion for moral guidance and reassurance in the new surroundings; the new non-Muslim environment may appear threatening, particularly exciting a desire to protect one’s religious identity from it; the experience of “becoming a Muslim Other” may inspire or necessitate a greater religious awareness, so as to deal with any questions or suspicions that may come from others (Bozkurt 2009, p. 40; see also Karakasoğlu 1996, p. 157).

The literature of German authors with Turkish background has been attracting great attention since at least the early 1990s; authors such as Zafer Şenocak, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Yadé Kara, and Feridun Zaimoğlu have brought new perspectives to German identity and social history, notably at a time when (re-)unification was drawing attention to nationhood and what sort of country the new ‘Berlin Republic’ would be (on migrant and ‘Turkish-German literature’, see for instance Brinker-Gabler and Smith 1997; Adelson 2005; Cheesman and Yeşilada 2003). In positioning these and other Turkish-background authors, the question is, “What narratives of German history — past, present, and future — are enabled in the transitional decade of the 1990s by Turkish configurations of contemporary German literature?” (Adelson 2000, pp. 94-95). Adelson outlines how Turks in Germany have been positioned, in one way, as

peripheral to narratives of post-World War Two history — the *Wirtschaftswunder*, dealing with the past, and (re-)unification — and in other ways at the centre of historical narratives — the changing face of Germany, debates about societal integration and citizenship (2000, pp. 95-98).

The work of the author Feridun Zaimoğlu presents different voices that reveal the limitations of over-simplified integration debates and identity politics. His first book, *Kanak Sprak* (1995) takes the form of a collection of 24 interviews, through which a series of working-class Turkish-German men tell their stories, frequently involving criminality or drugs, and told in aggressive, profane language. The German word *Kanake* is derogatory, used to deride foreigners from the south, and became particularly associated with Turkish immigrants. The slang use of *Kanak* as a self-identifier is an effort to reclaim the word from its abusive meaning, thus redirecting its power — similar to the way that the usage of ‘queer’ has been turned around. The *sprak* (for *Sprache*: language) of the title reflects the distinctive sociolect used by the interviewees. Zaimoğlu followed this book with *Abschaum* (*Scum*, 1997), later adapted into a film under the title *Kanak Attack* (dir. Lars Becker, 2000 — see Chapter 3.3). In *Kanak Sprak* Zaimoğlu writes that “die Kanaken suchen keine kulturelle Verankerung. Sie möchten sich weder im Supermarkt der Identitäten bedienen, noch in einer egalitären Herde von Heimatvertriebenen aufgehen”¹² (Zaimoğlu 1995, p. 12).

Zaimoğlu was a founding member of the collective known as *kanak attak* (lower case was originally used). In a manifesto released in 1998, the group announced itself as “a community of different people from diverse backgrounds who share a commitment to eradicate racism from German society.” The manifesto — which has been made available in German, English, Turkish and French — continues with a clear rejection of old categories of national belonging:

Kanak Attak is not interested in questions about your passport or heritage, in fact it challenges such questions in the first place. Kanak Attak challenges the conservative and liberal orthodoxy that good ‘race relations’ is simply a matter of tighter immigration control. Our common position consists of an attack against the ‘Kanakisation’ of specific groups of people through racist ascriptions which denies

¹² “Kanaks don’t seek a cultural anchor. They neither want to help themselves in the supermarket of identities, nor to lose themselves in the egalitarian flock of expellees.”

people their social, legal and political rights. Kanak Attak is therefore anti-nationalist, anti-racist and rejects every single form of identity politics, as supported by ethnic absolutist thinking. (Kanak Attak 1998)

The opening and closing sentences of this strongly-worded statement make it clear that long-held ideas of identities and cultures can fail to accommodate reality or can simply become tiresome — an “ethnically agnostic spirit” (Gramling 2010, p. 361). Moreover, linking that thought to the rejection of racism and nationalism suggests that prejudice will not be overcome as long as old, rigid notions of nationhood and identity are adhered to.

Particularly in the wake of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the position of Muslims and Islam itself within the European Union has attracted a great deal of attention. Concerns about the integration of immigrants are often expressed in terms of whether Islam is compatible with the values promoted by the EU, and with European societies — yet there have long been Muslims living within Europe (see McNeill 2004, pp. 29-30; see also Chapter 2.1 of this thesis).

The use of ‘Muslim’ as a descriptor places the subject in a much broader context than only their immediate — local, national, or regional — setting, and Germany’s former ‘Turks’ can now be

imagined as being part of a much larger and much more globally extended community than before. Without a change in actual numbers, this indexical function alone multiplies their size in the dominant social imaginary. The change is not just numerical, however, but also affective. The associated events [...] mark large-scale, hard-to-control incidents of violence and are taken to be indicative of the threat posed by ‘Muslims’. However unfair, ‘Muslim’ thus functions discursively as a source of anxiety. (Yildiz 2009, p. 475)

A similar switch has taken place elsewhere in the past decade, including in Australia. ‘Middle Eastern’ as a descriptor has not so much been replaced, as become effectively synonymous, in media discourse, with Muslim — though naturally other religious groups are represented by immigration to Australia from the Middle East, and

in the 2007 Census, 53 percent of Lebanese-born Australians named Christianity as their religion (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). At the latest around the time of the Cronulla riots (see earlier in this chapter), concerns were being raised about the ability — or willingness — of Middle Eastern immigrants *as Muslims* to fit into Australian life.

Such discursive associations serve to create anxiety around Muslims in Germany, even though Islam, quite apart from containing a variety not always addressed by mainstream depictions, may in fact not play a large role in the current lives of many people. In Germany at least, ‘Muslim’ as a discursive category “is primarily a cultural attribution that is by no means synonymous with actual religious practice. The latter, as in most religions, varies enormously. [...] If nothing else, however, Islam will have played a key role in most people’s upbringing” (Karakasoğlu 1996, p. 158). Certainly not all Muslims in Germany are of Turkish background; also, only around two-thirds of Turkish immigrants in Germany describe themselves as Muslims (Ehrkamp 2007, p. 11).

Studies of Turkish immigrants in Europe have frequently linked ethnicity and culture, and failed to account fully for “the situational and instrumental nature of ethnicity” (Kaya 2007, p. 485); immigrants’ cultural parameters and cues were explained in terms of the homeland rather than the new milieu. In many cases, the traditions and values of rural areas were taken to represent Turkish culture more generally, and Islam elevated to a central role in these traditions (Kaya 2007, p. 485).

This imagining of a broader Muslim community is of course not only the work of non-Muslims; religious groups constitute perhaps the “quintessential form of transnational communities” (Faist 2004, p. 10), and there is a sense of boundary-crossing commonality — not homogeneity — in Islam as there is in Judaism or Catholicism. It is also clear that events and public discourse involving Muslims in another country may have implications for people in Germany; anti-Muslim violence in the wake of Theo van Gogh’s murder in the Netherlands inspired a protest gathering of over 20,000 people, mostly of Turkish background, in November 2004 in Cologne; the demonstration was to call for the acceptance of Islam as a religion in Germany, and the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslims (Ehrkamp 2007, p. 11). It is also argued that Europe will see — or already is witnessing — the development of a European Islam; it is also argued that Islam “as a world religion transcends specific cultural traditions; but by the same token, it also transcends its own original culture, since it is constantly being made and re-constructed by religious actors” (Malik 2004, p.

2). Religion can have the effect of segregating, but can also assist in the process of integration — “Whatever the different schools of thought and varieties of religious practice among Turks in Germany, Islam has been the moving force behind the development of organisational networks within the Turkish minority” (Karakasoğlu 1996, p. 158).

As Berghahn notes, the anxiety around Germany’s Turkish minority is particularly concerned with the Turkish man, now a figure represented as “more suspect than ever before: as a possible ‘sleeper’, he poses a threat to security and as a Muslim husband or father, to the values of Western liberal democracy” (Berghahn 2009, pp.56-57; see also Chapter 3.3 for a discussion of such representations). Butterwegge (2007) describes this as a tendency of journalists to judge immigrants according to two criteria: their economic ‘usefulness’, and their ethnic origins. Migration, he argues, “erscheint als Bedrohung oder Bereicherung der Einheimischen, jedoch selten als Normalität in einer globalisierten Welt”¹³ (Butterwegge 2007, p. 57).

Yalçın-Heckmann argues that “multiculturalism of the German type reifies community while revealing its cleavages” (1997, p. 108). Where multiculturalism is based on community-based associations or groups, the expectation that representatives will be found to speak for “the community” in question can lead to a privileging of certain people within the group; in the case study of a Turkish association in Bamberg, the movement to “visibilise” overlooked internal differences, and community representatives at the mosque were more likely to be male and older, and Alevi Turks were excluded (Yalçın-Heckmann 1997, pp. 96-97). Karakasoğlu (1996, p. 159) also notes that rivalry between various Turkish representative groups, none of them able to speak for all Muslims, has confused the public view of Islam.

Around three quarters of Muslims in Germany are of Turkish background, but the others originate from a wide range of countries, including large communities of Bosnians, Iranians, Moroccans and Afghans (see Pauly 2004, pp. 69-70). Even within the population of Germans with Turkish background, there are different identifications; there are, naturally, varying interpretations of Islam, and there is a significant minority of Turkish Kurds (Pauly 2004, p. 73; a number of ‘Turkish-German films’ portray Turkish Kurds: see Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 5). Through political organisations and networks, Kurdish immigrants or their descendants in Germany may interact with the

¹³ “appears as a threat or an enrichment of the native, yet seldom as a normality in a globalised world.”

politics of nationalism and identity in Turkey (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001; see also Üngör 2011, for a history of eastern Anatolia including its Kurdish population). For the significant population of Alevi Muslims in Germany, particularly in Berlin, this branch of the faith has a religious freedom not yet afforded it in Turkey. Alevism differs from other branches of Islam in a number of ways, including Alevis' practice of dissimulation; not infrequently, Alevis are considered by some other Muslims, particularly Sunnis, to not be part of the same religion. Like other diasporic groups, Alevis have been able to employ technology in community-building, and 'virtual communities' have been especially clear (for example see Sökefeld 2002, 2006); the same may be observed of the Kurdish diaspora in Germany (Candan and Hunger 2008). It has even been argued that Alevism as an identity and group rights movement has its home in Europe, with communities in Berlin and Vienna, and shapes identities on the European periphery in turn (Özyürek 2009).

Though Islam is sometimes the basis of one imagined transnational community, it is also true that Turkish emigrants and their descendants across Europe enjoy a certain connectedness and sense of belonging to part of a diasporic-type group. Media products, including a number of Turkish-produced television channels and publications distributed widely outside of Turkey itself, help to construct some sense of collective identity for Europe's Turks (see for example Aksoy and Robins 2000, for a discussion of Turkish media consumption in the UK).

Turkish-language media produced within Germany is readily available in Berlin, with a 24-hour Turkish television channel and a dedicated radio station, as well as public access TV programs and a number of small television projects sharing a frequency, and Radio Multikulti which includes programmes in Turkish alongside German and other languages. Amongst Western European countries, it is in Germany where migrants have most notably begun to use mass media for themselves (Kosnick 2007, p. 3). Kosnick portrays the many Turkish-language media products produced in Germany as both supplementing and on occasion deliberately competing with the offerings directly from Turkey, available since the 1990s in Germany thanks to satellite and cable (2007, pp. 3-4). Eight Turkish-language daily newspapers are available in Germany. The widely-distributed conservative and secular-oriented *Hürriyet (Liberty)* is printed at a number of locations in Turkey, and in Frankfurt am Main in Germany; its European circulation of around 100,000 is mostly in Germany (70 percent) and it also has a German-language website (www.hurriyet.de). Media coverage in Turkey evinces a

strong interest in German affairs and its relevance to an EU-focussed Turkey as well as to the *almancilar* — a seeming portmanteau of the Turkish words for ‘German’ and ‘foreigner’, often used colloquially to refer to German Turks; in the 1960s, the term was used colloquially for Turkish labour emigrants regardless of their destination, because of the sheer number who did go to Germany (Kadioğlu 1997, p. 538; on Turkish newspapers in Germany, see also Kulish and Homola 2007).

Yet studies in recent years have revealed little evidence that Turkish speakers consume their media completely separately from the ‘mainstream’; amongst other findings was the revelation that the comic TV presenter Stefan Raab is very popular with Turkish-German audiences (Wirwalski 2010). Nor, of course, are Turkish media and films the sole competitors against German ones; in addition to the dominance of American films and many TV series in the German marketplace, Turkish-Germans also are great consumers of Bollywood films; *My Name is Khan* (dir. Karan Johar, 2010) was released in Germany with both German and Turkish dubbing options to forty screens (IANS 2010).

There have been two magazines explicitly aimed at an audience of German-speaking, immigrant-background women. The author Sineb El Masrar (*Muslim Girls*, (2010)) is also the founding editor of *Gazelle*, the first *multikulturelles Frauenmagazin* (multicultural women’s magazine) in Germany, published quarterly (Gazelle website 2012). Another publication, the now-defunct *Imra’ah* (Arabic for “woman”) considered itself the first German women’s magazine for Muslim women; it required of its readership both a good knowledge of German, and a familiarity with current affairs in Germany (Almakhlafi 2010). In catering to German-speaking female readers of various minority backgrounds, such publications evince a recognition of more diverse reading audiences, as well as an identification of new niche markets and new ways to consume.

It has become almost apposite to refer to the transnationalisation of space in Germany, particularly its largest cities. Transport and communications being what they now are, immigrants in Germany are much more able than ever before not just to enjoy images of the homeland, but to stay in real contact with it and consume new cultural output from it. Certainly the discourse of integration has, in many quarters, greatly changed — particularly as the topic of discussion has expanded to include the German-born second and third generations and their more assured place in Germany. Prominent Germans of Turkish background, and the work they produce or participate in, make their voices heard in discussions about immigration and integration; Germany’s

immigrant minorities have a stake in such discourses, not as foreigners but as Germans — with the caveat that such labels of nationality seem increasingly problematic, and that being German does not mean one cannot also be Turkish, European, or recognise any number of varied self-identities.

This more complex, intersectional and transnational perspective also points to the inadequacy that ‘formalised’ systems of belonging (such as national citizenship) may suffer compared to informal *feelings* of belonging. It is this flexibility of transnationalism (see also Chapter 4.2) Bozkurt refers to when she writes that “home comes to signify not only a personal space of belonging and sheltering that is protected against others, but expresses also a collective imaginary placement that divides us from the others, who have their own mental maps, boundaries, social and political references, and spatial projections on territories” (Bozkurt 2009, p. 14).

The shift to a transnational perspective is clear in the literature, in which “studies on the in-betweenness, identity crises and problems of the second generation — who are argued to be in search of a home (singular!) that is found neither here nor there in the country of origin — are replaced by the conception of their affiliations and identities as complex and open in recent analyses” (Bozkurt 2009, p. 11). As Adelson (1994, p. 305) highlights, the term *Migrantenliteratur* can seem to limit writers of immigrant background to the margins; it is a similar pigeonholing that the ‘migrant cinema’ in Germany (and elsewhere) has escaped (see Chapters 3.2 and 3.3).

Transnationalism figures large in discussions of Turks in Germany in at least a few respects. The connectedness between Turkey and Germany seems only to grow closer. Turkey’s citizens and the ‘German Turks’ can imagine themselves — and can be imagined — as part of a larger Turkish emigrant population throughout Western Europe and elsewhere (including Australia). In Turkey and in Germany, there is a negotiation of the role of Islam, in discussions echoed across Europe and elsewhere — though its heterogeneity and adaptability may be underestimated, Islam as a world religion is a reference point that crosses borders. Finally, Germany and other European countries act in awareness of each other and the European Union, and have the question of a European identity as the background to matters of national identity and social cohesion. To these countries, Turkey itself might one day be added. Already, traffic between Turkey and Germany (and the rest of the EU) is certainly not one-way: quite apart from Germans holidaying in Turkey, migration between Turkey and Germany has not only been that undertaken by Turks to the latter. It is estimated that 100,000 EU citizens live

in Turkey, including around 60,000 German nationals — a number dwarfed by the size of the Turkish-background population in Germany, and accordingly given less research attention, but which has increased in recent decades (Kaiser 2004, p. 91).

At the same time, the destabilisation of old notions of nationhood has created a strong undercurrent of anxiety, fuelled by fear of violence and of change. Multiculturalism is considered by some to have failed German society; in Germany as in Australia, the United Kingdom and many other countries, enduring social problems — the economic and educational disadvantage of some immigrant groups, and the creation in some respects of ‘parallel cultures’ to the perceived majority culture — are met with the argument that a more prescriptive approach to integration, or perhaps even assimilation, must be adopted.

Assembled like patchwork from varied regions, the German state of the late 19th Century was the product of many decades of political thought. The fledgling political entity was given cultural legitimacy through the notion of a unified German nation — a construct that has been reiterated again and again through history and survived changes in borders. This belief in a nation was, notoriously, exploited under the Hitler regime, in which Nazi ideology drastically narrowed the view of German nationhood and accordingly recast some sections of the population as ‘outsiders’. Though this period of extremism has been left well behind, Germany, like most countries, has at times exhibited a national identity that is perhaps limited in its reflection of the real social fabric. The belief in ‘one [German] people’ helped to fuel change at the end of the German Democratic Republic, but now the nation is preoccupied with a different set of issues relating to unity, and a changing Europe in which to solve them. Nationalism is by its very nature exclusionary — a line, however vague, must be imagined somewhere. All the same, the efforts to recognise Germany’s ethnoculturally diverse society and to facilitate integration of its many migrant minorities — most visibly the Turkish-German population — are evidence of a national identity open to debate. Long-term residents and citizens with immigrant background have opportunities — at least through organisations and well-known representatives — to engage in this debate and attest to their right to belong.

For some time now, the German government and authorities have recognised the need to actively facilitate integration. It is an approach that acknowledges the responsibility of both parties — the immigrants and the receiving society — to work towards a common goal. If Germany is indeed an immigration country, then like every

other it needs “eine spezielle Zukunftsvision [...] Diese Vision kann als eine Gefährdung des eigenen Selbstverständnisses, aber auch als Chance wahrgenommen werden, dieses Eigene zu erweitern. Zunächst aber braucht die Gesellschaft einen Konsens über dieses Eigene”¹⁴ (Şenocak 2011, p. 110).

There is unequal power between the state and its ‘foreigners’, making it all too easy for authentic voices from immigrant minority groups to go unheard; there are likewise discrepancies between state-led integrative policies and the ‘everyday multiculturalism’ that large swathes of the population experience and negotiate in their own ways. If some civic integration measures “appear to conceptualise migrants as disembodied *tabulae rasae*, which the nation state can fill appropriately with language, values and practices” (Slade 2010, pp. 135-136), then these flawed expectations about nationhood often extend to those of the second or third generation.

The gradual arrival since the 1980s of Turkish-German literature, film, and even television and music has provided a broad popular base of representations to complement those at the level of policy and politics. Perhaps the most far-reaching and most-discussed of this cultural output, alongside literature, is the cinema, and a whole array of films that have appeared since the mid-1990s; the following chapter presents this development in the context of the history of German cinema — as a mirror to the country’s social history and its present.

This ‘Turkish-German’ identity continues to draw much attention at a time when the idea of the national is at once fiercely defended and the most untenable it has been since its inception. Though the integration of Germany’s ‘foreigners’ and ‘immigrants’ — even those of the third generation — is an area worthy of political attention with the aim of always improving social cohesion and equity, it must be done with an understanding that certain expectations of nationhood can only become more difficult to support.

¹⁴ “a special vision of the future. This vision can be perceived as a danger to [the country’s] self-understanding, but also as a chance to broaden this ‘self’. Firstly though, the society needs consensus about this ‘self’.”

3 Nation and gender in German cinema

3.1 Building the nation: depicting the German man and woman

This work explores recent cinematic representations of Turkish-German women and seeks to situate them in the history of both ethnicity and gender in German cinema. To do this, it is of course vital to consider what is meant by ‘German cinema’, and to define the limits of that term. Just as it is now recognised that identities are complex and adaptable, and that the borders of nations are anything but absolute, so too has there been a shift in film studies away from ‘the national’ as a category. Nonetheless, cinema remains a potent force for the construction and reinforcement or critiquing of national identities.

As the world’s “story-teller *par excellence*” (Shohat and Stam 1994, p.101; italics in original), cinema was an ideal medium for building a national historical narrative that in turn would shape the nation’s image of itself. The concept of a ‘national cinema’ has historically been a dominant paradigm of film studies, offering both a means of categorisation and an approach to the study of films. Knowing the national origin of the film tells us which country it ‘belongs’ to, so it can be grouped conceptually with others from that country; it also suggests the context in which to understand the film — what do we know or believe about this country and its culture, and how does the film support or challenge those beliefs or knowledge? Yet the term ‘national cinema’ and the idea behind it raise numerous questions. If the object of study is the cinema of a particular nation, how is that nation defined? How can difference within that nation and its cinema be accounted for? What of the international nature of cinema — in production, content and distribution?

The concept of a ‘national cinema’, projecting images of a nation and reflecting them back to the nation as an audience, has existed since quite soon after the birth of cinema. This thesis assumes a modernist understanding of the relationship between nations and nationalism — namely that historically, nationalist sentiments create a need to construct the nation’s awareness of itself (see for example Gellner 1983, p. 4; 1987; Smith 1987). National identity — and therefore also belonging and exclusion — does not merely exist, nor does it spontaneously emerge within given geographical and institutional parameters; rather, it is a concept built from collective experience filtered

on a large scale through institutions that archive and disseminate the shared stories. In the archiving and retelling, certain stories or aspects of stories are favoured over others — stories that encourage admiration of the nation and loyalty towards it by its inhabitants.

It was in European countries in particular that national cinema came to be identified with arthouse films and stylistic realism. While largely true of localised cinematic movements such as the French *nouvelle vague* and the New German Cinema, this reputation also serves to create a contrast to the output of Hollywood. In terms of film distribution and audience taste, the ‘globalisation’ or ‘internationalisation’ of cinema often manifests itself simply in the dominance of Hollywood in numerous other national markets. This being the case, a marketable point of difference has been found in the image of the ‘foreign film’ as a more contemplative, unusual, or interesting alternative. This has been seen still in recent years in the advertising for SBS World Movies, a pay-TV channel in Australia, whose slogans since its launch in 1995 have included “See what the rest of the world has to offer” and the visual joke of the famous white lettering on the Los Angeles hills now reading “Hollywouldn’t” — whereas foreign films, by implication, *would* (deal with particular themes, settings, styles, stories, etc.). It must also be observed that such viewpoints frequently are Anglocentric ones. In the USA, the Academy Award (Oscar) category for ‘Best Foreign Film’ is dominated by specifically non-English language films to the exclusion of films from Anglophone countries — as reflected in the German reporting of the same category as simply *Bester nicht-englischsprachiger Film* (Best Non-English-speaking Film). By the same token, American films screening in Australia are seldom, if ever, referred to (at least in everyday conversation or media) as ‘foreign films’.

Discussions of nationalism and German cinema are frequently filtered through the memory of a chapter of overtly nationalistic and exclusionary film-making, during the era of Nazi leadership and anti-Semitism. The history of extreme nationalism has lent the very term ‘national cinema’ such a taint that the equivalent *Nationalkino* is rarely seen in the German language. German cinema has at times had a significant role to play in the evolution of cinema, as well as in the development of film studies as a discipline. Cinematic technologies had been in development in Germany, France and the United States for a number of years before November 1895, when a paying audience attended a film screening in the *Wintergarten* (Winter Garden) in Berlin. In the

following two decades, Germany was one of the leading centres of film production (see Jacobsen 1993; see also Hake 2002, pp. 10-15).

On the earliest years of German cinema, most histories have had “have little to report as being worthy of detailed study. [...] Against the background of either documenting the roots of nationalism, or rescuing from the debacle an international, self-confident avant-garde tradition, the early [German] film business seemed haphazard, inconsequential” (Elsaesser 1996, p.9). Yet even in the period before World War I, German cinema played a significant role as an emerging collective entertainment — one that came to attract an audience that crossed class and gender. Screening programs did not identify particularly with German nationalism, but rather were markedly international in scope, and a majority of films circulating in the German market were of foreign origin. Films were often presented in a variety format, with one bill offering a range of films of different origins; ticket prices of up to 3 Marks indicate that in spite of its reputation as entertainment for the less-educated masses, early German cinema culture was not aimed only at the working class (Elsaesser 1996, p. 21-23).

Nonetheless, cinema in Germany in its early decades was viewed by many as a lesser cultural form — one that posed a risk to social fabric and culture — and it was the object of sometimes heated debate (Jacobsen 1993, pp. 29-30). Expressionist films of this early Weimar period, like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920, dir. Robert Wiene), came to be viewed by film critics as “German cinema at its most German, a curious blend of cultural sensibilities, iconographic traditions, and nineteenth-century philosophies of individual self-expression” (Schindler and Koepnick 2007, p. 1). The Weimar cinema proved to be enduring in its appeal and influence; alongside *Caligari*, many other classics of German cinema — and cinema generally — stem from this time: *Nosferatu*, *Metropolis* and *M*. The films of this period were “often strikingly misogynistic, but many [...] openly call attention to phenomena like looking, voyeurism, the objectification of the female, and the castration anxiety of the male — topics of crucial interest in psychoanalytical feminist film theory” (McCormick 2001, p. 18; see Chapter 4.4 for more on feminist film theory/analysis).

Cities as sites “have always been used to represent, construct and challenge national, collective, marginal, and gender identities” (Mueller 2006, p. 118) and the birth of cinema — in Germany and elsewhere — coincided with migration to rapidly developing urban centres. The shift from static to moving cameras ushered in new ways

of surveying and depicting urban space (see for instance Keiller 2008). The German *Großstadtfilm* (big city film) emerged as a genre in the early 20th Century. In German cinema, Berlin has served as the definitive metropolis of the genre, acting as the backdrop to both positive and negative portrayals of urban life. While the most obvious early example is *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (*Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, dir. Walter Ruttmann 1927), Ludewig (2001, p. 176) argues that Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) is also part of the *Großstadtfilm* tradition even though Berlin (or any real city) is not explicitly depicted.

The city film tradition would be continued in numerous films throughout the 20th Century, including Wolfgang Staudte's *The Murderers Are Among Us* (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*, DEFA 1946) and late-20th Century films such as *Life is All You Get* (*Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, dir. Wolfgang Becker 1997), which took the post-Wall Berlin as their setting (see also Chapter 3.2). Films thematising migration and with migrant-background protagonists have been almost uniformly — and unsurprisingly — set in Germany's largest cities, Berlin and Hamburg (see Chapter 3.3, Chapter 4.4, and Chapters 5 and 6).

The early cinematic city became the setting for new depictions of women. Representations of German women have variously manifested concerns about gender roles and sexual identities, notions of national identity and exclusion of minorities, anxiety about modernisation and social change, and the loss of male power. During World War I, films communicated the stories of war to the home front, encouraging in the mostly-female audience an admiration for the heroic soldier figure. Following World War I, German cinema was instructional in showing women how to support their returned men — but this was an uncomfortable fit with the role women had needed to take up in the workforce while the men had been away (Kaes 2009, p.36).

The era of the Weimar Republic in Germany was a time of marked social change: the emphatic onset of modernity; the increased visibility and agency of women in public life; an increased openness about sexuality; and considerable political instability. This change fed not only a crisis of male authority, but also a reassessment of female identity (McCormick 2001, p. 3). Cinema of the time reflected the emergence of the 'New Woman' in German society: emancipated, in paid employment, urban-dwelling. The street drama genre helped to make the new cinematic urban spaces available to women (Bruno 2008, p. 15). This period also introduced Marlene Dietrich as an archetypal 'vamp' figure, exemplified by her first film role in *The Blue Angel*

(*Der blaue Engel*, dir. Josef von Sternberg, 1930), in which her character, the alluring young performer Lola, leads the older Professor Emanuel Rath into temptation and his ultimate, humiliating downfall. Considered to be Germany's first lesbian film, *Girls in Uniform* (*Mädchen in Uniform*, dir. Leontine Sagan, 1931) critiques the legacy of Prussian authority in the surrounds of a boarding school for girls.

Weimar cinema was concerned not only with the changing image of women but also, correspondingly, with the attendant implications for male identities. Beyond the overtly thematised castration anxiety, "the films contain as well a certain amount of sexual objectification of the *male* (which can be read as a function either of homoeroticism, of heterosexual male paranoia, of an address to heterosexual female viewers — or all of the above)" (McCormick 2001, p. 18, emphasis in original). Gender roles and constructions are relational, and the spectator is implicated in such constructions.

The concern with social change continued in the escapist dramas and comedies of the wartime era, in which the tendency was to explore the apparent tensions created in the home and in male-female relationships by women's choice to work, and also to reflect the reality of a German workforce depleted of men and requiring women to support the war economy. Films during World War II primarily "facilitated a fictional dialogue between antagonistic positions and ambivalent attitudes [...], across the entire range of filmic means: dialogue, actions, looks, and, most importantly, the gendered identifications and spectatorial pleasures available within classical narrative" (Hake 2001, p. 209). During World War II, another female star, Zarah Leander, became popular in films whose narratives were driven by "guilt and redemption, love and renunciation, transgression and punishment" and made heavy use of "extreme close-ups, dramatic lighting, claustrophobic settings, and exaggerated costumes" (Hake 2002, p. 65).

During the period of the Nazi regime, the thriving German film industry was harnessed to the national, *nationalistic* cause, both overtly through propaganda films, and more subtly through the subject matter and tone of popular light entertainment films, promoting heroes and ideologies in keeping with Nazi doctrine (Hake 2001). The technical and aesthetic achievements of the director Leni Riefenstahl in her two most famous films, *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*, 1934) and *Olympia* (1938), were considered by many people to be inseparable from their role in promoting the ideology and image of the Nazi party. Under the Nazi leadership, German cinema

contributed to a very particular view of the nation — a view that made overt, and took to its extreme, the exclusionary nature of nationalism — and its abhorrent message would be rejected by later generations. Arguably “[n]o other film industry in the world has ever been so subservient to government propaganda; no other government has ever represented itself so obsessively on film” (Kaes 1989, p. 4).

During this period, the state support of film art and a German film industry was tied to Nazi ideology; the *Deutsche Filmakademie* (German Film Academy) aimed “to create as the cornerstone of German film art a model community geared to the racial selection and cultivation of artistic genius” (Carter 2004, p. 44). Stars continued to be viewed as major drawcards for attracting audiences and their money; Carter argues, on the basis of several studies, that stars of the era even exhibited an ambiguity that resisted compliance with the ideology of the time (2004, pp. 60-61).

The content and style of the films themselves were designed to be, it was hoped, populist and unifying, giving the nation what it most wanted (Hake 2001, pp. 78-80). Movie houses were required to exhibit weekly newsreels, evaluated and to an extent even edited by the Minister for Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. For twelve years, commercial films and documentaries were carefully screened for their usefulness to Nazi ideology, yet the political and didactic intent of films was carefully concealed by the Ministry, under the guise of apolitical entertainment for the masses (Kaes 1989, pp. 4-5). The view of Nazi domination of entertainment must be tempered somewhat by a number of factors as outlined by Hake: foreign films and American products remained popular; members of the film industry and the Propaganda Ministry had differing ideas about film-making; there were difficulties controlling film exhibition in the Reich and its occupied territories; and attitudes to entertainment and propaganda before and during World War II were changing (2002, p. 59).

The lasting legacy of Nazi-era cinema was “an instinctive distrust of images and sounds that deal with Germany” (Kaes 1989, p. 8) — a view later expressed by directors including Wim Wenders (see Cook and Gemünden 1997). The *Heimatfilm* of the Nazi era was an “arch-German film genre, with all its negative connotations: national chauvinism, “blood and soil” ideology, and overwrought emotionalism” (Kaes 1989, p. 15). The *Heimat* genre would continue to experience its heyday in the 1950s (see Ludewig 2001), when the confrontation with modernisation caused it to develop “in two distinct directions: while some films took a resolutely antimodern stance that insisted on turning back the clock by offering escapes into premodern idylls [...] [others] sought

ways to accommodate those pressures within received iconographic and narrative frameworks of Heimat” (von Moltke 2007, p. 48). The *Heimat* film is readily distinguishable from the *Großstadtfilm* (big city film — see also earlier in this chapter) that “has to be seen mainly as a dystopian depiction of its setting or at least as sceptical of an idyllic portrayal”, even though both connect strongly to a sense of their respective milieus (Ludewig 2001, p. 176).

In the years immediately following World War II, “Der Begriff der Kollektivschuld gehörte zu den Grundvokabeln der politischen Sprache Nachkriegsdeutschlands”¹⁵ (Frei 2005, p. 159). The German film industry was largely under the control of the occupying Allied forces and was harnessed to the cause of building a new German democracy. Films of this era also evince a need to reaffirm the gender roles that had been unravelled during the war; a common response to a period of such social and political upheaval, but a response that overlooked an opportunity to “question the very foundations of subjectivity upon which Germans’ understandings of themselves were based” (Shandley 2001, p.186).

After the end of World War II and Hitler’s dictatorship in 1945, German cinema, it was hoped, could play a role in nation *rebuilding*, but these years came to be seen as a “period of missed opportunities and meek and unsuccessful attempts to break with the past, [and] as a period of American political colonialism and cultural colonisation” (Bergfelder 2005a, p. 19). Initially, German film production stopped for over a year, in what came to be known as the *Filmpause* (film(ing) break); the reasons were political, technical and aesthetic, and at first included a total filmmaking ban instituted by the Allies (Baer 2009, p. 23). The occupying Allied forces seized control of German media with the aim of removing Nazi elements; not only was the film industry deeply implicated in the dissemination of Nazi ideology and now a key target in the deNazification of public life, but it presented a lucrative market for the Americans to control (Shandley 2001, p. 2).

Nearly 200 films including documentaries were shipped from the US to help ‘re-educate’ Germans and provide a model of democratic life (Fay 2008, p.xiii). Instructional films such as the short film *The Invisible Barbed Wire* (*Der unsichtbare Stacheldraht*, dir. Eva Kroll, 1951), were produced by Americans for German audiences, with the aim of instilling a sense of democracy and tolerance. Allied

¹⁵ The expression ‘collective guilt’ belonged to the fundamental vocabulary of political language in post-war Germany.

authorities also controlled the release of films or could veto their distribution to German audiences — such as in the case of *Oliver Twist*, withheld in the British sector at the request of military authorities, because of its arguably anti-Semitic depiction of the character Fagin (Bergfelder 2005a, pp. 21-22). At first, all German films were banned from being screened — in favour of dubbed or subtitled productions from Allied countries — but from the autumn of 1945 quite a number of films from the Third Reich era were approved, and proved highly popular with audiences looking for the familiar and escapist in their cinema experience (Baer 2009, p. 21).

The discussion that grew out of the *Filmpause* explicitly recognised the difficulty — though it was perhaps underestimated — of re-establishing a legitimate German cinema after its association with National Socialism. If they were to appeal to the German public, post-war filmmakers could not break completely with existing conventions of German cinema from the 1930s and 1940s; there were, however, some new formal conventions established within limits. Chiefly, the quest was to redefine the roles of realism and, correspondingly, illusionism in German cinema. Post-war cinema was mostly realist, but was based on a variety of influences including Hollywood-typical classical forms — also associated with Third Reich cinema — and Italian neo-realism (Baer 2009, pp. 23-24). On the level of content, the first German films after the war were “moral events [...] serious, pedantic, and anchored in the depressing psychological and material reality of Germany’s absolute defeat. They bespoke the Allies’ stated wishes that German films should address the gravity of the country’s mistakes over the twelve years of Nazism and should reject all forms of militarism and national pride” (Shandley 2001, p.24). It was to be a national cinema with as little nationalistic sentiment as possible.

In the post-war era, women were generally returned to the domestic sphere, as epitomised by the image of the *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women) who worked in droves to clear the detritus of bombed and collapsed buildings; it is, as well as domestic, “an image of solidarity and strength, one that many of the era’s films depict as coming at the cost of male defeat” (Shandley 2001, p.186). The *Trümmerfilme* (rubble films) of this era, as they became known, were filmed — sometimes literally — against the backdrop of rubble and ruins. Even if films did not depict a landscape of rubble and ruins, the films of the immediate post-war period took place in a *Trümmerzeit* that had real effects on film production and often necessitated improvisational approaches to filmmaking (Pabst 2012, pp. 29-31).

The widely-held view of this era of German cinema is that it fell short of the sort of moral stance and introspection that would be desirable (in the aftermath of military aggression and widespread persecution of minority groups), and the assumed guilt of having started a war. There were limited attempts in cinema to deal directly with the immediate past, but this was done in a way that distinguished between Nazi ideologues and common soldiers or other Germans who were given a chance to act heroically or nobly. As Wilms writes, the *Trümmerfilm* “owes its existence to destruction and death”, yet these themes are not at the centre of such films; rather, the *Trümmerfilme* exhibited a humanist response to the collective rubble experience, but lacked “even the beginnings of an extensive reflection on what caused the rubble, namely, the area bombing of German urban centers and their noncombatant inhabitants” (Wilms 2008, p. 27). The difficulty of public discussion did not mean that the matter was ignored; rather, it weighed heavily and undeniably. This “political and psychological preoccupation with guilt and retribution” would last for decades to follow, including through the (re-)unification of 1989 and 1990 and beyond; but the “emotional urgency and intellectual openness” of the immediate post-war discourse, before the return of more organised politics, are perhaps the most nuanced (Barnouw 2008, p. 53).

The first German-produced feature film after the end of the war was *The Murderers Are Among Us* (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*, dir. Wolfgang Staudte, 1946), released in the Soviet-controlled zone. Ever since, it has been seen as something of a test case in German cinema histories — on the one hand it has been used to illustrate the continuities of post-war cinema with Third Reich cinema and the failure to address the Nazi past effectively; yet on the other hand, it has been seen as an early break with the previously dominant styles of German cinema and a pioneering attempt to deal with history and the new reality (Baer 2009, p. 28). The style of Staudte’s film “consciously rejects the intoxicating style of National Socialist propaganda and instead adopts the expressionistic style of the Weimar Republic, decried as degenerate by the Nazis, as well as elements that recall Italian neorealism” (Kaes 1989, p. 12). The film tells the story of a concentration camp survivor, Susanne, who returns to Berlin to find her old apartment being used by Hans Mertens, who is haunted by his memories of the war; as the two grow closer and fall in love, Mertens eventually decides to take revenge on his former captain, Brückner, for ordering the mass murder of Polish women and children on Christmas Eve 1942. Mertens’ passivity is typical of “a long line of conspicuous passive male protagonists in postwar German cinema”; the film delves into questions of

guilt and responsibility in a way that few others would until decades later, yet the “appeal to the legal system of the state makes little impression primarily because it does not inevitably follow from the film’s dramatic structure; it seems tacked on (Kaes 1989, p. 12).

The Sinner (Die Sünderin, dir. Willi Frost, 1950) depicts an affair between an artist named Alexander, played by Gustav Frölich, and the prostitute Marina (the female sinner of the title), played by Hildegard Knef. The nudity and themes of the film led to its being banned, implicitly reinforcing particular notions of morality and decency for the German public. There was a public campaign, fostered by the Catholic Church, against the perceived immorality of the film: its depiction of prostitution was portrayed as an affront to decent German women (Baer 2009, p. 129; compare also with the media response to Sibel Kekilli’s background in porn, in Chapter 5.1).

In the 1950s, the “repressed political and psychological energies were re-channelled into the physical reconstruction of Germany” and the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) encouraged an optimistic view towards the future instead of dwelling on the past (Kaes 1989, p. 14). The official creation, in 1949, of two separate German states — the German Federal Republic in the West and the German Democratic Republic in the East — set in motion the development of two different film cultures; the two national identities now developed not only in relation to the past from which they wished to break, but in comparison to each other. In the East, the state-sanctioned production of GDR films was done by the DEFA, which took over the Ufa studios in Babelsberg; in West Germany, production and funding were the work of a number of state-sponsored funding schemes along with privately-owned production companies and some private funding.

Tim Bergfelder (2005a) has shown how, at the level of funding and production, West German films took a decidedly transnational turn in the post-war era. The films of this period had been considered to be largely insubstantial genre films, contributing little to German culture and with little attraction for researchers into German cinema. With changing views on defining national cinema, more attention has been paid to the popular films of the 1950s and 1960s in spite of their generic conventions and multinational funding sources.

During the Adenauer and Erhard Chancellorships, West German cinema presented an idyllic projection of beautiful scenery and noble characters, of romance and happy endings: “an illusory image of German reality and history that indirectly

points up the repressions, self-deceptions, and collective wishes that were at work” (Kaes 1989, pp. 14-15).

In the 1950s, the so-called *Problemfilm* made a return; the ‘problem’ referred to in the name was taken from topical social issues of the time — homosexuality, juvenile crime, race or prostitution for instance — and the exploration of such a topic lent legitimacy to films that also offered scenes of sex and violence to titillate the audience (Baer 2009, p. 184). The genre known as the *Heimat* film was deeply nostalgic for a mythologised earlier Germany, and avoided reference to the guilt of its most recent history.

The so-called *Schlagerfilm* of the time (a *Schlager* is a hit pop song) likewise avoided such discussions, in favour of a more international and ‘cosmopolitan’ spirit. Primarily extensions of chart music and American influences of the time, the *Schlagerfilme* were often vehicles for music stars; films such as *Wenn die Conny mit dem Peter* (*When Conny and Peter...*, dir. Fritz Umgelter, 1958, starring singer-actors Cornelia Froboess and Peter Kraus) and its follow-up *Conny und Peter machen Musik* (*Conny and Peter Make Music*, dir. Werner Jacobs, 1960) offered a milder, less subversive version of rock’n’roll and rebellion than could be seen in some Hollywood imports (Bergfelder 2005a, pp. 44-49). The 1950s also saw the West German revue films, which have been “one of the most disparaged genres of German cinema” (Hake 2007, p. 58). Based around a filmed performance, often showing rehearsals and the audience as well, the revues were meant to be distinctly ‘American’ in flavour and featured a range of ‘ethnic’ characters: the American South, Latino and Afro-Cuban influences, and even performances *braun angemalt* (painted brown — i.e. in a form of ‘blackface’) were featured in various revues (see Hake 2007). The revues, in their difference from other narratives at the time, display a “dependency of postwar definitions of Germanness on an ethnic Other [that] also sheds new light on the function of “America” as a marker of difference in the ongoing reconceptualization both of German cinema as a national/transnational cinema and of Germany as a postnational, multicultural society” (Hake 2007, pp. 58-59).

War films also proved popular in the 1950s; they took an anti-war stance, but made a heroic figure of the soldier who is powerless against the authority around him, and offered up battle scenes in an uncritically naturalistic way as visual spectacle. These films were of interest in light of the German rearmament debate; also, in employing some directors of the Nazi era and in some of their stylistic choices, the films failed to

make a clear break from that period (Kaes 1989, p. 16). Germany was not alone in the quick return to World War II imagery in cinema only five years after the real event had ended; the United States, too, made many films on the subject. Of the 224 war films shown in West Germany between 1948 and 1959, more than half came from the USA (Kaes 1989, p. 17).

Through this first half of the 20th Century, film also arrived and established itself in Turkey, whose cinema would come to interact with German cinema, and even arguably to include German-born directors (see Chapter 3.3). The first film screening in Istanbul took place in 1896, which Erdoğan (2010, p. 129) suggests as the beginning of modern Istanbul. Cinema was introduced to Istanbul mostly by non-Muslim residents, many of whom had business connections with European capitals; in Turkey, cinema coincided not just with a turn-of-the-century period of modernisation (as in other countries), but developed into both a Westernising and nationalising force (Erdoğan 2010).

As in Germany, the 1950s were also a time of great social change in Turkey, and its cinema reflected on this. From the 1950s, domestic cinema took its place in Istanbul as part of the social and economic fabric, offering commentary on the transformation of the city through class issues, housing problems, and migration from rural areas. Particularly in comedy and melodrama, Turkish films depicted the migration experiences that had a great impact on Istanbul in the second half of the 20th Century (see Türeli 2010, especially pp. 144-148).

3.2 Gendered nation and gendered immigration: a brief history of post-war German cinema

Women formed the great majority of German post-war cinema audiences. The *Film Revue* magazine presented a selection of women's responses to *The Murderers Are Among Us*; on the evidence of their collected testimonials, female viewers seem to have engaged in considered ways with the social and political themes of the film (Baer 2009, p. 22). Part of the film's appeal to women may also lie in its lead, Hildegard Knef, who was an early star of the postwar era (Baer 2009, p. 29).

Melodrama in the post-war era became a cinematic field of battle between two contradictory forms of femininity as proposed by Carter (1997, pp. 177-178): the wife

and mother in the domestic sphere, and the public, self-determined female consumer. Though the films were not feminist in outlook, they frequently addressed the German woman as a model consumer-citizen in the nation. Here, the use of melodrama played a significant role, dramatising the conflict between domesticity and desire. The identification of women with cinema was recognised with the publication, from 1949, of the magazine *Film und Frau* (*Film and Woman*), which helped to model and mediate the female cinema audience (see Baer 2007a, for a discussion of the magazine). The 1960s would see a further increase in pan-European co-productions; a shift from a core audience of women and families towards a younger male, and international one; and a move from women-centric genres such as melodrama and the *Heimat* film in favour of a range including horror, crime thrillers and Westerns (Bergfelder 2003, p.198).

One widely accepted decisive moment in German film, and a clear attempt to break continuities from the 1940s and 1950s, was the Young German Cinema of the 1960s; this and the so-called New German Cinema that followed in the 60s and 70s, constituted an attempt to break the mould of what had come to be the dominant forms of German film. With their famous remark that “The old cinema is dead”, the filmmaker signatories of the 1962 Oberhausen Manifesto took a stance against the mainstream cinema of the time. The statement is frequently quoted as “Papap Kino ist tot”, which, not unreasonably, conflates the manifesto with references in the journal *Filmkritik*, which had begun in the late 1950s to call for an end to ‘Daddy’s cinema’; the disparaging term refers both to a generation of older male filmmakers and to a style of cinema that aligned itself with a female viewer (Baer 2009, p. 263). Particularly maligned were the 1950s *Heimatfilme* — many of them remakes of Nazi-era films — with their “cliché-ridden, Agfa-colored images of German forests, landscapes, and customs, of happiness and security” which were viewed as a sort of “deceitful movie kitsch” (Kaes 1989, p. 15).

The socially critical content of the Young and the New German Cinema, and their filmmaking influenced by the French New Wave, caught the attention of critics and students of film — including, or even *especially*, abroad — but received less interest from wider audiences in Germany, where it was essentially a minor cinema. In this respect the New German cinema was “a potent mythical construction, replete with a heroic historical narrative driven by hero-directors” (Rentschler, 2000, p.261), the reception and machinations of which were already being met with more measured

responses by the early 1980s. Particularly the American view of New German Cinema recognised

strategies of national dissent and aesthetic disidentification [sic] as the core of what in the 1970s made German filmmaking German. Whereas expressionist cinema had once brought to light the deepest recesses of modernity, New German Cinema places avant-garde sensibilities in the service of deflating the myths of modern German nationhood. (Schindler and Koepnick 2007, p. 2; see also p. 64 of this thesis)

The New German Cinema was socially critical, and addressed problems in society as viewed by the directors. This was a large part of their motivation, and indeed, helped them win funding. There were also, in this period, some efforts to deal fully with the questions of the post-war era that had been put aside by the 1950s. As the internationally-regarded figurehead of the New German Cinema, the director Rainer Werner Fassbinder was viewed by foreign media as “a reliable (because incorruptibly critical) chronicler of the Federal Republic” and emblematic of a generation of Germans who sought to hold their parents’ generation to account (Kaes 1989, p. 75). Fassbinder’s historical films appeared in rapid sequence from the late 1970s: *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*, 1978), *Lili Marleen* (1980), *Lola* (1981) and *Veronika Voss* (*Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss*, 1981). In these, he explored the post-war era that particularly fascinated him; born in 1945, his lifetime coincided exactly with the chronology of post-war Germany. *Maria Braun*, *Lola* and *Veronika Voss* form Fassbinder’s so-called *BRD-Trilogie* about the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s in the BRD, or Federal Republic of Germany. His focus in these films is on female protagonists; he believed them to be more interesting than men, and his stories eschew politics and economics on a larger scale in favour of private lives and the “politics” of the everyday (Kaes 1989, pp. 78-82). Berghahn (2005, pp. 179-80) outlines the argument that allegorical female characters serving a function of national identity, such as Fassbinder employed, are more generally found in work by male directors because such a role is counter to the realistic portrayal wished for in an autobiographical approach (see later in this chapter).

It was in the 1970s that ‘foreigners’ began to appear more frequently in films set in Germany. Ethnographic films and stories set in exotic locations had existed even in

German cinema's early decades (see Oksiloff 2001); Italian and Spanish *Gastarbeiter* had appeared in some 1950s revue films, *Heimatfilme* and youth films (Hake 2002, p. 174). Now, as the filmmakers of the New German Cinema surveyed 1970s German society, one of the topics in their purview was the arrival and situation of guest workers from various countries, and Germany's reaction to its foreigners. This interest would continue into the 1980s, paving the way for the 'Turkish-German cinema' that emerged in the late 1990s (Burns 2007, p. 362, see sub-chapter 3.3).

Already in 1969, in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Katzelmacher*, a work migrant took a pivotal role in the narrative: the arrival of the Greek labourer Jorgos, played by Fassbinder himself, has a disruptive effect on a group of friends and he becomes a focus of their hostility to foreigners. The title is a (now somewhat obsolete) slang term for someone who performs abortions illegally. Fassbinder's *Angst essen Seele auf* (*Fear Eats the Soul*, 1974, dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder) is seminal in portrayals of foreigners in German film. It tells the story of Ali, a Moroccan guest worker who meets Emmi, a much older German widow in Munich. Both lonely, they fall in love and marry, much to the horror of her adult children and neighbours. Emmi and Ali find themselves excluded by the racist attitudes of other people. Gradually, the prejudice of Emmi's neighbours subsides, as they realise that Ali is strong and can help them with heavy lifting and so forth. Emmi, pleased to have friends again, starts pandering to their curiosity about Ali, saying how strong he is and telling him to show them his muscles. Soon, the marriage seems to be falling apart. Then, just as they have reconciled, and are dancing together in the bar where they first met, Ali collapses in pain. At the hospital, it is revealed he has a stomach ulcer brought on by stress. The film ends on that note. As has been widely observed, Germany's foreigners — not yet perceived as immigrants — didn't do much speaking in films like this. Events tended to happen to them; their lack of influence reflected the perception of powerlessness, of victimisation; the 'poor foreigner' adrift in the work and social conditions of 1960s and 1970s Germany. Early films such as *Katzelmacher* and *Fear Eats the Soul*

präsentieren Fremd(heits)bilder eines kulturellen *alter*, das als Bedrohung, Untergeordnetes, Begehrtes etc. semantisiert wird: Auf der Basis oberflächlicher, quasi-objektiver Unterschiede konstruieren viele Filme tiefgreifende kulturelle Gegensätze. Gerade die Bilder vom Fremden in Form von überkommenen klischeehaften

Vorstellungen, stark vereinfachten und schematisierten Vorstellungen (Stereotype) oder affektiv aufgeladenen Vorurteilen werden genutzt, um sich vom Gegenüber abzugrenzen und sich selbst aufzuwerten. (Halft 2010, pp. 5-6)¹⁶

Another example of this can be found in the made-for-television film *Shirins Hochzeit* (*Shirin's Wedding*, 1976, dir. Helma Sanders-Brahms). It follows the young woman Shirin from her village in rural Turkey to life as a guest worker in Germany. She lives with the other female workers in hostel-style accommodation, and between shifts at the factory she tries to find her old love from the village, who moved to Germany some time ago. Through a combination of her own naivety and, mostly, plain bad luck, things go downhill for her. While working as an office cleaner, she is sexually assaulted by a German employee; she ends up in prostitution, and is dead by the end of the film. Throughout, there is a voiceover taking the form of a conversation between the director herself, and the character of Shirin, who speaks in broken German. Thus the Turkish central figure is reduced to being little more than a victim — the film is ultimately more concerned with its critique of the Federal Republic's treatment of its foreigners, seeming to suggest that Turkish-German encounters are “destructive” for Turkish culture. Knight suggests this might explain the very negative response the film received from Turkish audiences in Germany when it screened on television in 1976, which even included death threats against Ayten Erten who played Shirin (2004, p. 49; compare with the varied reactions to Sibel Kekilli's role, in Chapter 5.1).

Such films, though seemingly with the best of intentions, arguably reinforced foreigners' positions as victims, outsiders, as the 'other'. Deniz Göktürk (see 2000a, 2004) has described the film funding of the 1960s and 1970s as leading to 'ghettos of subsidy' for immigrants in German cinema; a useful metaphor for the films and filmmakers themselves, escaping from the 'ghetto' of worthy 'problem films' and asserting that it was possible to have German romantic comedies and other genre films with Turkish-German characters (see Chapter 3.3). On the other hand, it would be ahistorical not to also regard the earlier films in the context of their time, in which most foreigners were regarded as temporary migrants, and the focus, on screen as in public

¹⁶ [The films] “present images of the other(ness), of an *alter* semanticised as a threat, subordinate, desirable etc: on the basis of superficial, quasi-objective differences, many films construct deep-rooted cultural oppositions. Precisely the images of the other in the form of handed-down clichéd notions (stereotypes) or affectively loaded prejudices are used to delineate the self from the counterpart and to valorise the self.”

discourse, was on their living conditions rather than the task of building integration and social cohesion.

The New German Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, concerned with questions of German history, identity and social change, had an international profile in which the names of male directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog loomed large. At the same time, there was a group of female filmmakers including, among others, Margarethe von Trotta, Helke Sander, Ulrike Ottinger, Claudia von Alemann, Helma Sanders-Brahms and Jutta Brückner. Prior to this era, in which West German cinema had quite a high proportion of female filmmakers, only very few German films had been made by women (Knight 1992, p. 2). The work produced by the women filmmakers of the New German Cinema, beyond its contribution to the immediate national cinema, was also integral to the development of a feminist film culture (Knight 1992, p. 2). Helke Sander and Claudia von Alemann organised the first International Women's Film Seminar in 1973, and it was Sander who founded the feminist film journal *frauen und film* (see also Chapter 4.3).

Women's cinema is a much-discussed and malleable term that has been defined variously as cinema by, for, or about women. Further complicating matters, there have been efforts to differentiate between women's cinema, women's film, and 'the woman's film', leading at times to a lack of semantic clarity (Baer 2007b, p. 160). In the early 1960s, a number of film culture publications were incorporated into women's magazines (such as *Petra* and *Brigitte*) and 'film stars' were emphasised as the province of women viewers; yet by the later 1960s, in the emergence of 'anti-stars' and the celebration of new female directors, the inherited women's film culture from the 1950s (see earlier in this chapter) also took on some feminist dimensions and experienced the 1960s as a decade of breaking from the past (see Caprio 2000).

The so-called *Frauenfilm* was "a logical continuation of, and a powerful challenge to, the New German Cinema" and was informed, in the case of many women directors, by the 1960s student movement and 1970s women's movement (Hake 2002, p.165). For these female directors, films were a means of raising awareness and a form of political activism. The approaches varied from overt criticism of patriarchal traditions to personal stories typical of the problems women faced, to focusing on relationships — platonic or otherwise — between female characters (Hake 2002, p. 165). While the foregrounding of individual stories may have been a way of retreating from the collective approach of the 1960s, it likely made such themes more accessible

to audiences, through identification with a central voice (Elsaesser 1989, p.126). In the German Democratic Republic in the 1970s, ‘women’s films’ expressed a different ideological underpinning, according to which the women’s movement elsewhere was viewed more as response to capitalism, and women’s equality had been co-opted by the socialist state; GDR films of the 1950s had espoused women in employment, and later films were a response to an ideal that had soured (see Berghahn 2005, especially pp. 175-183). By the 1980s in West Germany, the women’s film was gradually losing its influence as a genre, due to the variety of approaches within the women’s movement and the “not unproblematic essentialist celebration of women’s otherness” that the films sometimes displayed (Hake 2002, p.165); the female directors had been “producing their features in far from optimal conditions and often at expense to themselves” (Kaplan 1986, p. 289).

In the 1980s, although the New German Cinema of social criticism had waned, there continued to be films that directly addressed the issue of immigrants’ circumstances in Germany. *Ganz unten* (*Lowest of the Low*, 1986), directed by Jörg Gfrörer based on a best-selling book by Günter Wallraff, is a documentary exposé of the work conditions of Germany’s guest workers. Disguised as a Turkish worker — borrowing the real name of Ali Levent Sigirlioglu — Wallraff goes undercover for two years with a hidden camera and microphone to explore Germany’s illegal job market, with its poor pay and dangerous work. The film has been criticised variously for too narrowly associating Turkish immigrants with hired labour, for amounting to ‘cultural tourism’ and for not in fact representing Turks in any real way, since the main figure is Wallraff in disguise and any actual Turks are presented primarily only as victims. The writer Aysel Özakin (in Burns 2007, p. 362) found that Wallraff depicts the Turks as unskilled, uneducated and ignorant, oppressed, naive and pitiful. The film does little to question stereotypes; it is mostly a study of oppression (of an exclusively male subject), rather than a voice for Turkish immigrants (Burns 2007, p. 362; see also, for example, Kuhn 1989, for a discussion of Wallraff’s published account and its reception). *Ganz unten* also can be placed alongside other *Arbeiterfilme* (workers’ films), and viewed as an extension of Wallraff’s “successful raids into the taboo areas of German capitalism” (Elsaesser 1989, p. 180).

Die Kummeltürkin geht (*The [female] Turkish Bastard Departs*, 1985, dir. Jeanine Meerapfel) presents a similar context and is also a documentary, but with a female subject — as Burns (2007, p. 362) suggests, this perhaps offers a “partial

corrective” to *Ganz unten*’s purely male subjectivity. The ‘Kümmeltürkin’ of the title is Melek; she is 38 years old and has been in West Berlin for 14 years, but has decided to leave due to the prejudice she frequently encounters. She surveys her experiences in Germany — her first impression, her living conditions and so on — through interview or revisiting certain places, with the director posing questions from off-camera. Meerapfel herself migrated to Germany as a student from Argentina, where she was born to Jewish German parents who had settled there as refugees (Magee 1985, p. 63). Burns (2007, pp. 362-363) suggests that *Die Kümmeltürkin*’s non-sensationalising approach was perhaps the reason it received less attention — from critics or audiences — than *Ganz unten* or *40 Square Metres of Germany*. Though the documentary style involves some construction and manipulation on the part of the director — documentary is a subjective viewpoint and cannot lay claim to objective truth — *Die Kümmeltürkin geht* affords Melek the opportunity to address the viewer quite directly.

Tevfik Başer was born in Turkey in 1951 and studied visual arts in Hamburg in the 1980s; he became a German citizen in 1989. His first feature film, *40 Quadratmeter Deutschland* (*40 Square Metres of Germany*, 1987) was nominated for the Federal Film Prize in 1987. The protagonist of the film is Turna, a young Turkish woman brought to Germany as a bride to Dursun who already lives there. Once in Germany, Turna is effectively imprisoned in their small apartment, its forty square metres being the only space she occupies and her only experience of life in Germany. Through flashback scenes, Turna’s memories of her life and budding relationship in an Anatolian village are revealed, and provide a sunlit nostalgic contrast to her dreary life in Germany. Her only glimpses of the latter are from her window: the apartment building opposite; fireworks on one occasion; the street below; a prostitute on the corner. It is only when Dursun dies suddenly of a heart attack that Turna escapes, leaving the apartment literally over his dead body; she encounters a female neighbour, but the language barrier prevents them understanding each other, and the film ends with a shot of Turna staggering through the brightly-lit front doorway of the building, into an uncertain future.¹⁷

On the one hand, the film was well-received for shedding light on lives such as Turna’s; on the other hand, Başer was accused of providing material for anti-Islamic

¹⁷ Başer also made the films *Farewell to the False Paradise* (*Abschied vom falschen Paradies*, 1989) and *Lebewohl, Fremde!* (*Farewell, Stranger!*, 1991), which are discussed, along with *40 Square Metres of Germany*, by Hamid Naficy (2001, pp. 93-97).

views, while “others have observed that such representations of female alterity grounded in schematic binary models of aggressive (male) perpetrator and passive (female) victim may simply reinforce existing patterns of prejudice in the Western public sphere” (Burns 2007, p. 364).

If women and Turkish immigrants have traced distinct paths through German cinema, Turkish women characters have been influenced by both perspectives; in film as in public discourse, they have been — in the words of Helma Lutz — the “other other”, occupying a subordinate position within the group of Turkish immigrants, which holds a subordinate position itself when compared with wider German society (see Lutz 1991, also pp. 42-43 of this work).

In the film *Yasemin* (dir. Hark Bohm, 1985), the title character seems to be happily living out her own wishes while also upholding those of her Turkish parents. At the beginning of the film, she is shown wearing a sleeveless dress, with the skirt hitched up, at school; after classes, she lets the skirt down to ankle-length and dons a loose jumper; after this adjustment, her entry into the ‘Turkish world’ is further demarcated when she greets a neighbour in Turkish before arriving at her parents’ shop and the family home. Yasemin is allowed to attend judo classes, where she is chaperoned by her cousin Dursun.¹⁸ At these classes, she catches the attention of the non-Turkish boy Jan, who goes about wooing her — initially on a dare from his friend — in spite of her initial reticence. When Yasemin agrees to a rendezvous with Jan away from the eyes of her cousin, there are other disapproving witnesses she wishes to avoid — the older Turkish men sitting over their games of backgammon — and she insists that she and Jan duck around the corner. As Göktürk notes, these men are the predominant representation of Turkish immigrants in the film, apart from Yasemin herself and her family — most Turks in the film are watchful, suspicious and seen playing backgammon as often as working (2000a, pp. 333-334).

By contrast, the non-Turkish German characters have as their representatives Yasemin’s friend at judo and school, and their teacher who intervenes when Yasemin stops attending school. Yasemin has been told she is needed to help her family in the shop; her teacher Frau Rathjens, comes to the shop and threatens to report Yasemin’s parents if she isn’t permitted to return to school. Although Yasemin seems able to

¹⁸ The title character in the film *Ayla* (2009, dir. Su Turhan) has attended karate classes in her youth, and in a second intertextual link to Yasemin, also had plans to become a paediatrician (Yasemin’s father refers to this planned profession as a reason he allows Yasemin to still attend school). On *Ayla*, see also Chapter 3.3.

negotiate the different, occasionally competing, cultures in her life, the films suggests a world in which the German and Turkish have little to do with each other and there is little mutual understanding. When Jan first expresses an interest in Yasemin, he does not realise that her cousin is there to act as a chaperone; Yasemin, for her part, is not quick to explain the situation to Jan.

When Yasemin's father eventually discovers her budding relationship with Jan, he is furious, and shuts her in her room. When this does not put an end to Jan's approaches, Yasemin's father decides, in the middle of the night, to have her taken to Turkey in a van. When the van stops en route, Yasemin seizes a knife and threatens to kill herself rather than move to Turkey; her would-be boyfriend Jan appears on his motorbike, Yasemin climbs on the back and they ride off into the night, presumably returning to Hamburg.

The film's ultimate rejection of its early promise of transcultural harmony, and the positioning of Germans — in the figures of Jan and Miss Rathjens — as the saviours of Turkish women from Turkish men, attracted considerable criticism even as the film was being praised by others as a significant contribution on the topic of immigrants in Germany. Yet for all the melodramatic rendering of the plot, it is not removed from the reality for some families, reflecting as it does the psychological stress and even alluding to the high suicide rate of young women in the second generation of immigrants. It is perhaps in recognition of the difficulties still ahead of her that Yasemin cries as she and Jan drive away on his motorbike (Burns 2007, p. 365). Yet perhaps the most problematic aspect of the film is what Burns identifies as “the conversion of the genial, doting father into a cruel, tyrannical patriarch” (2007, p. 365). As the embodiment of fatherly love, but also the person who most fiercely controls and punishes Yasemin's behaviour, the character arc of her father, Yunuf, implies that out of even the gentlest men, certain (Turkish) cultural values can make controlling aggressors (compare with my analysis of *When We Leave* in Chapter 5.3).

In many German films of the 1980s and 1990s, writers on film have identified a predominance of relationship comedies filled with yuppie characters and young professional women typified by the roles played by Katja Riemann, “the consummate star of 1990s German cinema” (Baer 2007b, p. 160). For the most part, such films still involved plots in which a female protagonist was searching for a man, and *Keiner liebt mich* (*Nobody Loves Me*, dir. Dorris Dörrie, 1994), *Der bewegte Mann* (*Maybe, Maybe Not*, 1994, dir. Sönke Wortmann) and *Stadtgespräch* (*Talk of the Town*, 1995, dir.

Rainer Kaufmann), included gay characters as confidantes or accomplices in the affairs of the straight characters at the centre of the narrative (on the perception of such 1990s films as anti-/post-feminist, see Cooke 2012, pp. 168-169). Such films were still able to thematise social issues such as gender roles, class and race. In the 1990s, the political and feminist activism of the 1960s and 1970s faded, and circumstances changed accordingly. Though there were female directors such as Katja von Garnier and Caroline Link, German women in cinema were primarily “the ideal protagonists of male films, portrayed in yuppie comedies as frustrated working girls trying to reconcile career and love, or, later, at the end of the decade, as post-feminist heroines, strong and determined characters” such as in *Run Lola Run* or Max Färberböck’s *Aimée und Jaguar* (dir. Max Färberböck, 1999) (Rendi 2006, p. 85).

Bergfelder argues that recent *Beziehungskomödien* (relationship comedies) by directors such as Sönke Wortmann and Detlev Buck hark back to the farces of the 1930s and 1950s (2005a, p. 242). This is a view shared by Baer, who calls the 1990s films “neo-*Heimatfilme*”, and writes that in spite of their explicitly gay and lesbian characters and occasional feminist touches, “they were hardly more nuanced in their representation of gay issues or women’s issues than were their precursors, the *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s” (2007b, p. 163).

The director Doris Dörrie, in both her films and her published writings, presents a multicultural Germany. She deals carefully with Germans’ idealised views of Mediterranean or Asian destinations as, in Flinn’s words, “escapist venues” — but there is a sense that non-German cultures are offered as “cultural alternatives for primarily white consumers, who can actually opt to buy into them, whether psychically or economically” (2007, p. 149). On the other hand, Benbow (2007) has convincingly defended Dörrie’s work against the dismissive ‘cinema of consensus’ criticism (see Rentschler 2000), arguing that many of Dörrie’s films have explorations of cultural identity and ‘ethnic’ difference at their core.

The satirical crime thriller *Happy Birthday, Türke!* (dir. Doris Dörrie, 1992) features a lead character of Turkish background (the ‘Turk’ of the title) who doesn’t speak any Turkish and has no real sense of a personal Turkish identity; Kemal Kayankaya (played by Hansa Czipioka) was orphaned as a child and raised by German foster parents, but nonetheless bears the brunt of anti-immigrant sentiment from some Germans he encounters.

Dörrie's later film *Keiner liebt mich* (*Nobody Loves Me*, 1994) centres on the friendship of Fanny Fink with her neighbour, Orfeo de Altamar, who is gay, performs in drag, dabbles in voodoo/witchcraft, tells an elaborate story about the mothership one day coming to take him home, and claims to be African — but, as Fanny discovers, is actually East German-born and named Walter Rattinger.¹⁹ Orfeo/Walter displays a knowingness about German attitudes towards 'foreigners'; the persona he has constructed for himself is built partially on vague Western ideas of African otherness: body painting, dance, ritual and wisdom, magic. In a telling scene, he sits in the pedestrian mall, with a table and a sign advertising his palm-reading services. When business is slow, he turns the sign around to reveal, in (presumably deliberately) misspelled German, "Wil zürük nach Afrika" (Want to go back to Africa). An elderly woman stops by his table and tells him, "Damit du wegstommst, dafür zahl' ich gern" (So that you get out of here, I'll gladly pay). The audience is privy to Orfeo's deception, and thus able to "admire Orfeo's ability to manipulate the imposition of otherness, that is the racism of other Germans, to his advantage" (Halle 2005, p. 169). All the same, the character embodies an exotic quality, and as a gay male confidante who performs in drag at a nightclub, is different from Fanny in ways that have nothing to do with his heritage. His cultivated air of 'otherworldliness' is made literal at the end of the film, in his implied departure to another planet (as a metaphor, or fantasy version of, his presumable death).

As Benbow (2007, pp. 526-527) observes, the performative nature of Orfeo's "ethnic masquerade" is emphasised against the background of *Karneval* festivities in Cologne — with white Germans in various costumes and even blackface — and yet his assumed African identity might seem more plausible to some than the truth that he is as German as Fanny Fink. Orfeo encourages this exotic image through the decor of his apartment and primitivistic ritual. Later, in glamorous drag, Orfeo performs onstage at a gay bar, lip-synching to *Loverman* by Billie Holiday. His white boyfriend Benno is transfixed by the performance, but annoyed when Orfeo joins him later, out of costume and asking to borrow money; Benbow views this scene as an example of what Sieg has called the "commodification of ethnic differences", according to which ethnic outsiders

¹⁹ Afro-German characters feature in the lead roles of *Everything Will Be Fine* (*Alles wird gut*, 1998, dir. Angelina Maccarone); Gemünden (2004) suggests that black German identities have had to take their cues from Hollywood and America, in the absence of German models.

are appreciated only for their exoticism, without being accepted in German society (Sieg in Benbow 2007, p. 527; see also pp. 518-519 on Sieg's "ethnic drag"; Sieg 2002).

Exceptions notwithstanding, immigrants or Germans with immigration background were rarely the central figures in cinema. All the same, by the 1990s, ethnic diversity was becoming more commonplace in German cinema, as in German society. Changing styles of cinematic representation not only reflected social changes, but also “participated in the discourses of legitimisation necessitated by the growing pressure on traditional definitions of national identity in an increasingly multi-ethnic, multicultural world” (Hake 2002, p. 174). Cinema was, yet again, a site of renegotiating and adjusting ideas of Germanness.

An early film to play with notions of Turkish-German space and intercultural encounter is *Berlin in Berlin* (1993, dir. Sinan Çetin). It follows the experiences of Thomas, a young (non-Turkish) Berliner who is caught photographing a Turkish woman from a distance; the woman's enraged husband attacks Thomas, who accidentally kills him in the tussle. Pursued by the man's relatives, Thomas hides in an apartment that is soon revealed to be the home of the dead man's family. Thomas stays on, seeking refuge under the unwritten rule of Turkish hospitality. The German thus finds himself in ‘Turkish space’ within the ‘German space’ of Berlin (on this film, see Fenner 2000). *Berlin in Berlin* is the only German-set production by Çetin, who has otherwise worked only in Turkey; in 1999 he released the black comedy *Propaganda* to critical acclaim and commercial success.

Alongside the matter of integration, there were also films in the 1980s and 1990s that dealt with the issue of refugees and asylum seekers; these were arguably the thematic descendents of films like *Fear Eats the Soul*, but dealing with people from quite different backgrounds. The 1987 film *Dragon Chow* (*Drachenfutter*, dir. Jan Schütte) is one of the few films to feature characters from Pakistani or Chinese background. *Otomo* (dir. Frieder Schlaich, 1999) is based on a real event in Stuttgart, and speculatively follows the final hours in the life of Frederic Otomo, a black man seeking asylum. Turned away from the temporary employment office because he has the wrong shoes and wrong ID, he suspects racism. On the tram, he is mistakenly accused of having no ticket, and attacks the officer; Otomo flees from the police, trying to make arrangements to leave Germany, by paying 400 Marks to a truck driver, and becoming more and more desperate through the night. Finally, he is shot by a police officer in a standoff on a bridge. Otomo's desperation is emblematic of the situation of

many asylum seekers in Germany — and elsewhere — and the film strongly implies that he is the victim of German racism. Much more recently, the film *Fernes Land* (*Distant Land*, dir. Kanwal Sethi, 2011) has dealt with the situation of undocumented migrants in Germany, featuring a Pakistani protagonist named Haroon. Such films, though dealing with similar issues of ‘otherness’ and interculturalism, occupy a different position from films about long-term German residents or citizens like those discussed in the next sub-chapter.²⁰

Since (re-)unification in 1990, German cinema has also dealt not only with the events of that time, but with the resultant renegotiation of German identities; the absorption of East Germans into the Federal Republic, the end of the formal division but the lingering cultural differences; and more recently, with retrospective reflections on life in the German Democratic Republic. The *Wendefilm*, dealing with the great *Wende* (change) in German history brought on by the fall of the Berlin Wall, has been created with perspectives from both East (for example *Good Bye, Lenin!*, dir. Wolfgang Becker, 2003) and West (for example *Herr Lehmann — Berlin Blues*, dir. Leander Hausmann, 2003) (on the retrospective depiction of 1980s Kreuzberg in recent cinema, see Mennel 2007). A film such as *The Lives of Others* (dir. Florian Henkel von Donnersmarck, 2006), by contrast, includes the *Wende* as a final chapter but has as its focus the time beforehand (for a longer discussion of these points, see Zeisberger 2012).

The films of the later 1990s and beyond saw the return of some agreement between critics and German audiences. Noted box office successes such as *Run Lola Run*, *Good-bye Lenin!* and *The Lives of Others* were also well-received critically. While domestic audiences still flocked to see movies such as *(T)Raumschiff Surprise — Periode 1* (*Dreamship Surprise — Period 1*, 2004, dir. Michael Herbig), there was also a quality and depth to mainstream, popular German cinema that had in many ways been absent for the two decades prior. Tom Tykwer, who directed *Wintersleepers* (*Winterschläfer*, 1997), *Run Lola Run* (*Lola rennt*, 1998), *The Princess and the Warrior* (*Der Krieger und die Kaiserin*, 2000), the Kiezkowski-scripted *Heaven* (2000), and *Perfume* (2006) based on Patrick Süßkind’s novel, has commented on the close relationship of the popular and the *auteur* in German cinema, saying “it’s this new mix

²⁰ The film *Winterflowers* (*Winterblume*, dir. Kadir Sözen, 1996) might be considered an exception, in that it shows the attempted remigration to Germany of a long-term Turkish national resident who has been deported on expiry of his residence permit. However, most of the film is a story of his journey, with only occasional scenes in Germany as his wife navigates German officialdom to try to resolve the situation.

that's interesting. I think they're more closely connected here [Germany] than in other countries. We don't look at it as a competition — we're enjoying the diversity" (quoted in James 2006, p. 3). This reinvigoration of German cinema, witnessing a return to the socially critical and the politically infused filmmaking of earlier eras, has been called the "cinema of dissent" (Hake 2002, p. 192). Like a direct response to the 'cinema of consensus', the 'cinema of dissent' is a term coined to describe "a more complex, formally more diverse, and thematically more critical cinematic scene [in Germany]" (Skidmore and Mueller 2012, p. 3).

The alignment of the popular and the 'quality' film is one of the strongest threads running through post-unification German cinema. It is in this context that the so-called 'Turkish-German cinema' grew in the latter part of the 1990s. When Rentschler (2000) wrote of the 'cinema of consensus' and the end of the *Autorenkino*, "he could not have reckoned with the invigorating creative force of the Young Turks, which was yet to establish itself" (Berghahn 2011, p. 239) — though as Berghahn also notes, Rentschler does acknowledge Thomas Arslan and Fatih Akin towards the end of his essay. The following section outlines this chapter in German film history, and shows how 'Turkish-German cinema' developed from a perceived marginal or niche group of filmmakers in the late 1990s, to embrace a transnationalism that places such films at the centre of a cosmopolitan and revived German cinema.

3.3 'Turkish-German cinema' and after: at home in transnational space

The term 'Turkish-German cinema' emerged in the 1990s in relation to a group of young German film-makers of Turkish background, making films with Turkish-German characters. These films marked a departure from the previous 'migrant films' in that they were told from the perspective of the second generation: the 'foreigners' for whom Germany was their main home, or their only home, but who still questioned whether German society, including German cinema, had really found a place for them. This sub-chapter discusses a number of films released since the late 1990s; they are set out loosely chronologically and thematically, but due to the multiple points of comparison, the discussion takes some detours back and forth.

This categorisation of ‘Turkish-German cinema’ and various approaches to its analysis (to be discussed here) grew from the interest, from the 1980s, in Turkish-German literature as *Gastarbeiterliteratur* or *Migrantenliteratur* (see Chapter 2.3). Turkish-German filmmaking must be viewed against the background of contemporary efforts to promote such cultural products and diverse immigrant German voices; the more direct predecessors of Turkish-German cinema are certain films of the New German Cinema that dealt with ethnic minorities (Burns 2007, pp. 358-362; see also previous sub-chapter). Fatih Akin, de-emphasising the importance of the ‘migrant film’ as a category, aligns his breakthrough film (see p. 84) instead with Tom Tykwer’s *Run Lola Run*; Akin has said *Run Lola Run* was “die Revolution, auf die wir alle gewartet hatten, und durch die Tür, die Tom Tykwer uns allen geöffnet hat, ist auch KURZ UND SCHMERZLOS gegangen”²¹ (Akin 2011, p. 67).

A number of press articles appeared in the late 1990s heralding the arrival of a new type of ‘migrant film’ or a new variety of German film. Three films in particular appeared within a year of each other to very mixed responses and “encoded two dominant thematic concerns in the initial phase of migrant literature [...] namely, the social and material reality of the *Gastarbeiter* experience and the problems of ‘living between two cultures’” (Burns 2007, p. 362). In 1998 the *Spiegel* reported on *Aprilkinder* directed by Yüksel Yavuz, *Geschwister — Kardeşler* by Thomas Arslan, and *kurz und schmerzlos* directed by Fatih Akin (Voigt 1998); in 1999, the journal *Filmforum* published an article in which Tuncay Kulaoğlu asked whether the new German film was Turkish (Kulaoğlu 1999).

Tevfik Başer (*40 Square Metres of Germany*, 1987, see Chapter 3.2) has been regarded by some as a representative of a ‘first generation’ of Turkish-German filmmaking, but was in Germany temporarily to study (albeit for seven years) and had already spent five prior to that studying in England. Başer’s circumstances, then, were at least somewhat removed from those of most *Gastarbeiter* (see Chapters 2.1 and 2.2), leading Cox (2011, p. 118) to consider Başer “an observer” rather than being a first-generation Turkish-German filmmaker himself.²² Moreover, the category of ‘observer’

²¹ “[*Lola* was] the revolution we had all waited for, and through the door Tom Tykwer opened to all of us, *Short Sharp Shock* also went.”

²² Although Başer’s experience was not that of a guest worker, his stay in Germany became a longer-term one and he took up German citizenship shortly before making his third film in Germany, *Farewell, Stranger* (1991) — perhaps reflecting a changing position, as in the film’s setting on the island of Halig, and autochthonous German protagonists (Naficy 2001, p. 196). Göktürk (2002, p. 251) suggests the

also allows relevant films by Fassbinder, Dörrie, Böhm and Schütte to be considered alongside Başer's film (to this list I would add Helma Sanders-Brahms for *Shirin's Wedding* — see Chapter 3.2); they all may be regarded as, in Cox's words, "opinionated outsiders who relayed the experiences of guest workers in Germany" (2011, p. 118).

The second generation, then, are those Germans of Turkish immigrant background who arguably "will remember, perceive and experience the same incidents from an alternative perspective and probably by means of their parents' stories, that is, via post-memory" (Cox 2011, p. 118). In this group, Cox (2011, p. 119) includes Akın, Yavuz and Arslan, as well as Ayşe Polat, Buket Alakuş, Sinan Akkuş, Sülbiye V. Günar, Kadir Sözen, and Züli Aladağ; all of their filmmaking careers began in the second half of the 1990s — directors who, stylistic and other differences aside, share the experience of having spent their formative years in Germany rather than Turkey. The emergence of the second generation of filmmakers coincided with a period of decisive change in immigration law and in German national self-perception; perhaps more significantly for the films' reception, it was also a time of great renewal in German cinema (see Chapter 3.2) and of changing theoretical frameworks within film studies itself (see Chapter 4.1).

There is evidence of a more recent 'third generation' of filmmakers, amongst whom Cox names Kemal Görgülü, Hakan Savaş Mican, Ayla Götschlich and Özgür Yıldırım: in most cases born and raised in Germany, this generation "can also remember the actual migration process mostly via prosthetic memory, determining their particular perception of the events and shaping their self-consciousness" (Cox 2011, p. 119). This group, "the children of the second generation of migrants, the grandchildren of those original Gastarbeiter who arrived in Germany in the 1960s, are now considered the heirs of the New German Cinema of the 1970s" — but have no shared manifesto, and find a reception that tends not to focus on the ethnic background of the filmmakers themselves (Rendi 2006, p. 78).

In response to the problems of 'national cinema' as a concept, and the fluidity of cinematic national borders, many film theorists have adopted the concept of the 'transnational film' or 'transnational cinema'. Already, numerous journal articles and entire books have been dedicated to the idea in various regional or group contexts (see for instance Ezra and Rowden 2006b; Nestingen and Elkington 2005). Transnationalism

relative lack of success of *Farewell, Stranger*, a love story unlike Başer's earlier films, shows the limiting expectations viewers have of Başer as a director of "migrant misery" stories.

is a useful concept, but demands some closer defining (see Chapter 4.2). As hybrid identities in German films are being normalised, this perspective of German society is becoming a given. The Turkish-German film ‘movement’, to the small extent that it was a collective project, has been part of the reshaping of German cinema at a critical juncture, but is evolving now into something more in step with the current social and political landscape of Germany.

Even in the expansion or revision of ‘national cinema’, Turkish-German filmmaking can be seen in a European context: the emergence of Turkish-German characters and filmmakers has parallels with Asian-British and other cinemas, which were garnering similar attention in the 1990s (Peitz 1994). Göktürk (2002, p. 249) regards the 1994 *Tageszeitung* article by Peitz as “pioneering in terms of re-contextualising minority perspectives in German cinema in a broader international horizon”. Likewise, there are films by and about French people of Arabic and northern African background that inhabit milieus similar to those of the Turkish-German cinema. The trans- or internationalism of such stories lies not only in the stories themselves, but in the intertextual fabric of ‘minority cinemas’ across many countries in which the need for more diverse and inclusive representations is prosecuted by filmmakers who wish to see themselves reflected in the national self-imagery.

Internationalism in films, German cinema included, is not a recent phenomenon. Co-productions using funds from more than one country existed even in the earliest decades of silent film. International influence and input, though, has clearly not robbed German films of a degree of cultural specificity, nor prevented the development of a cyclical tradition of certain genres and stories; this independence “should not be mistaken for national parochialism, and does not preclude international cross-fertilisation” (Bergfelder 2005a, p.11). Göktürk stresses the importance of acknowledging that German cinema, like other film industries, has always been the site of migratory experiences, since from its earliest days actors and filmmakers were migrating to and from Germany (Göktürk 2000a). The director Ernst Lubitsch, for example, was in the rare position of being a leading figure in one industry — the German cinema — before becoming equally well-regarded in Hollywood, even with its different stylistic norms, after he was lured there in the 1920s (Thompson 2005, p. 12). International connections were forged in both directions, with the American Louise Brooks, the Dane Asta Nielsen, the Frenchman Pierre Brice, Swede Zarah Leander, and

the Cairo-born, Budapest-raised Maria Röck (among many other ‘immigrants’) finding often pivotal roles in German films (Göktürk 2000a, pp. 329-330).

In discussing the nationalism or transnationalism of cinema and individual films, matters are complicated by the existence of numerous international co-productions, and by the highly internationalised nature of the film industry and its employees, from film stars and directors through to distribution. Furthermore, there have been efforts to broaden the understanding of what constitutes a national cinema, so that even within this category of the ‘national’, there may be some conceptual space for the ‘inter-‘ or ‘transnational’.

Transnationalism is not confined to the Turkish-German axis: Cooke (2012, pp. 130-137) notes that German-Polish connections and interactions have been particularly prevalent in cinema since the 2000s: in some directors’ work, “eastern Europe in general and Poland in particular became an important locus, functioning as a liminal space of self-discovery for the films’ German protagonists” (Cooke 2012, p. 130). In films such as *Distant Lights* (*Lichter*, dir. Hans-Christian Schmid, 2003) (see also Kop 2007), Cooke sees an orientalisering of Poland as Germany’s new other, seeming “to move deeper into the east the kind of images previously associated with the former GDR to be found in a number of films by west German filmmakers during the early days of unification” (Cooke 2012, p. 132; see also pp. 243-253; similarly, Ludewig 2006, discusses the shifting of the German Heimat film towards the east and the Baltic).

The transnational biographies and networks of many German residents with immigrant background were perhaps, as Deniz Göktürk argues, “not the first route that comes to mind if one starts to rethink German cinema in a global perspective”; moreover, this “cinema of migration as a social-realist genre [...] has developed largely apart from the canon of national cinema and oblivious of other kinds of traffic in and out of German film-making” (Göktürk 2002, p.248). Yet Turkish-German filmmaking and narratives of Turkish-German migration have become perhaps the most potent manifestation of German transnationalism — more so even than the American films of Wim Wenders or Hollywood productions of emigrant filmmakers such as Roland Emmerich, or stories of Germans abroad in unfamiliar territory, such as in *The White Masai* (dir. Hermine Huntgeburth, 2005) or Doris Dörrie’s *Cherry Blossoms* (2008).

Hamid Naficy wrote in 1993 that the films produced by ‘transnationals’ tended to be “framed discursively” within the national cinemas of their new home countries, within established genres of cinema, as the work of auteurs, or their directors were

“marginalised as merely ‘ethnic’, ‘national’, ‘Third World’, or ‘third cinema’ filmmakers, unable to reach mainstream audiences in either their country of residence or origin (Naficy 2003, p.204). For Naficy, transnational cinema is produced by “filmmakers who not only inhabit interstitial spaces of the host society but also work on the margins of the mainstream film industry” (Naficy 2003, pp. 208-209). He argues that they must operate as independent producers, finding funding from a variety of sources at a variety of levels.

Naficy’s description is arguably true, to varying degrees, of many Turkish-German directors one can name. Thomas Arslan is a noted member of the critically well-regarded Berlin School of filmmakers; Aysun Bademsoy works primarily in documentary; many of Germany’s filmmakers of Turkish background have, in common with others of their generation, film school training and a keen interest in the films of Hollywood or of other national cinemas. Moreover, as Berghahn (2011, p. 242) notes, diasporic filmmakers are those of the postmigrant experience, whose knowledge of their parents’ migration — or in some cases also their own at a young age — is fleshed out through photos and family stories. Diasporic cinema differs from the globalism of Hollywood, in that “diasporic cinema tends to be more limited in its address, targeting primarily specific national audiences, diasporic collectivities dispersed across several countries or continents, as well as cosmopolitan cinephiles with an interest in world cinema” (Berghahn 2011, p. 242). Similarly, Cooke (2012, pp. 137-147) considers Turkish-German cinema under the sub-heading “transnational production versus national reception”. Diasporic cinema challenges and transcends the idea of a national cinema; it is “a particular type of transnational cinema that resists the homogenising effect of globalisation, foregrounding instead issues of cultural and ethnic diversity” (Berghahn 2011, p. 242).

Though many of these directors have spent most of their lives since childhood in Germany — and in some cases were born there — their films frequently have dealt with some feeling of displacement or rootlessness in their characters. It is there in the drug dealer, Can, in Arslan’s 1999 film *Dealer*, and the elder brother Cem in *Aprilkinder* (*April Children*, dir. Yüksel Yavuz, 1998). The problems such characters face are not expressed simplistically as a ‘clash of cultures’, but rather as the result of a combination of factors, including the socio-economic situation and the personality of each character. The fact of their low socio-economic status can of course be read as typical of the experience of immigrants to Germany — guest workers, for instance, tended to be

employed in lower-paid and lower-status roles (see Chapters 2.1 and 2.3) — but in the interactions between characters in similar circumstances, differences in their cultural backgrounds generally play a small role or none at all. These milieus exhibit the mix of people from varied backgrounds who find commonality in their social position in the working class or even on the poverty line; this is not the world of expats and ‘world travellers’, nor a cosmopolitanism underpinned by an ideological commitment to multiculturalism and social justice (compare, for example, with the ‘Kanak Attak’ manifesto, see Chapter 2.3).

Many films have shown Turkish — and other — immigrants as shopkeepers and small business owners, a tendency highlighted by the ironic title *Mein Türke ist Gemüsehändler* (My Turk is a greengrocer), given by Kühn and Hickethier (1995) to their chapter in the volume *Getürkte Bilder*, but also speaking to the reality that many Turkish immigrants in Germany have taken up small businesses (see Chapter 2.3). Again, the problem lies not in whether or not the depiction is accurate, but in whether any other models are presented; individual characters all too quickly become emblematic of large groups.

Fatih Akin’s early association with the Kanak Attak manifesto and movement (see Chapter 2.3) reveals something of his attitude towards either simplistic categorisation or well-meaning but paternalistic or condescending social measures. At 19 years old, he wrote a screenplay and presented it to the Wüste Film independent production company; he was disappointed with the stereotypical roles he was finding in small acting jobs, and his potential as a director had been spotted by Ralph Schwingel, a Wüste producer (Kulish 2008, p. 9).

Akin’s first feature film, *Short Sharp Shock* (*kurz und schmerzlos*, 1998), features a trio of protagonists who are “lautstark, lebensfroh und humorvoll”²³ in which point alone Neubauer sees a distance from existing representations (Neubauer 2011, p. 208). The film deals with criminality and violence, but at its heart is the long-standing affectionate friendship between Gabriel (a superimposed title introduces him as The Turk), Costa (The Greek) and Bobby (The Serb). This friendship is gradually unravelled by the involvement of Bobby and Costa in crime, and Gabriel’s affair with Bobby’s girlfriend; by the end of the film, both Bobby and Costa are dead, and Gabriel must go to Turkey to avoid arrest in Hamburg.

²³ “strident, joyful and humorous”

Heavily influenced both by its setting in the Hamburg suburb of Altona and by the early Martin Scorsese film *Mean Streets* (1973), *Short Sharp Shock* is very much a genre film; the majority of the scenes take place at night, out on the street or in dimly-lit interiors, and there is a moderate level of violence. For Kulish, though, “[the] quiet moments between the Turkish father and his troubled son stand out as more powerful than any spurts of blood in the finale” (2008, p. 9). Akın himself has said he does not perceive it as “den realistischen Film, als der er in den Medien gefeiert worden ist”²⁴ (2011, p. 66). Saying that to this day, Turkish people will sometimes criticise him for representing them as gangsters, Akın asks rhetorically, “Hat der Film Vorurteile von messerstechenden Ausländern befördert? Es ist ein Genre-Film, und so sollte er auch wahrgenommen werden”²⁵ (2011, p. 67).

In contrast to the images of Turkish criminality on German television, Berghahn (2009) notes that the stereotype of the Turkish gangster as a form of “self-othering” in cinema became more widespread only with the late 1990s films of Turkish-German directors, an image in turn reinforced by other German directors such as in *Ghettokids* (Christian Wagner, 2002) and *Knallhart (Tough Enough)*, dir. Detlef Buck, 2006).²⁶ The film *Kanak Attack* (dir. Lars Becker, 2000) is set in Kiel and is based on the 1997 book *Abschaum* by Feridun Zaimoğlu (see also Chapter 2.3). The milieu is multiethnic and on the margins of society; the anti-hero protagonist, like most of the other characters in the film, is unapologetically, defiantly involved in crime: robbery, drug dealing and prostitution. Questioned by the police several times, Ertan nonetheless continues on his path, and his crimes grow in scale. The film concludes with a shoot-out between Ertan, his main competitor Attila, and Ertan’s friend Kemal; Attila shoots Kemal, and Ertan shoots Attila. The film does little to challenge any stereotypes of ethnic minority criminality, but like *Short Sharp Shock* puts the emphasis on the socio-economic circumstances; at the same time, Ertan is the embodiment of the men introduced in *Abschaum*: brusque, rude, aggressive, and not interested in trying to counteract the view of him that majority Germans might have.

A variation on this trope is the film *Rage (Wut)*, dir. Züli Aladağ, 2006). Set in Berlin, *Rage* portrays the harassment of the upper-middle class Laub family by the title

²⁴ “the realistic film, like it’s been celebrated as in the media”

²⁵ “Did the film encourage prejudices about knife-thrusting foreigners? It’s a genre film, and ought to be received that way.”

²⁶ For further discussion on criminality and the ethnic ‘gangster’ in *Knallhart/Tough Enough*, see also Prager (2012).

character Can, a young gang member from a Turkish immigrant family. The film draws on the archetype of the aggressive, angry young ethnic (specifically Turkish) male (see Mennel 2002), taken to its violent extreme; however, it attempts something more than this, in that “it problematizes the social norms of Germans as much as it probes those of Turkish culture” (Berghahn 2009, p.57). The family’s failure to take action against Can’s increasingly threatening behaviour, by going to the police, is attributed to a leftist ‘do-gooder’ mentality and a heightened sensitivity about *not* appearing racist. The father of the Laub family, Simon, initially believes that he can reason with Can, and even visits Can’s father to discuss their sons. He is met firstly with the father’s half-hearted dismissal that it is normal boys’ behaviour, and secondly by the father’s physical reprimand of Can, which contravenes Simon’s views of parenting.

In *Rage*, too, the female character becomes a potential target of the archetypal sexually powerful Turkish male (see later in this sub-chapter); Can sees nude portraits of Simon’s wife Christa, and his lewd comments about her are designed as both a threat to her and an emasculating, contemptuous gesture towards her husband. Can’s implied sexual aggression contrasts with the mild way in which the professor conducts his relationships with his wife and his covert lover. Berghahn (2009, pp. 64-67) discusses the ethnographic gaze of *Rage* that is directed not only at the aggressive main character Can, and the apparent effects of his traditional Turkish upbringing, but also at the upper-middle-class, liberal-intellectual German father of the victim of Can’s bullying. *Rage* is much less about the Turkish immigrant community than it is a critique of the sort of paternalism and disingenuous liberalism that Simon Laub portrays (see also Prager 2012) — though this does not stop the film from employing Can’s speech to characterise him as having migrant background (Androutsopoulos 2012, p. 309).

Clearly it would also be inadequate to place too much emphasis on gender at the expense of acknowledging the very different expectations and pressures that may shape the lives of various women. Broad generalisations about women as a homogenous group are undoubtedly only as helpful or accurate as similar assumptions about ethnic or cultural groups.

As previously noted, Akin’s *Short Sharp Shock* (1998) centres around a trio of male friends and their dealings with other men; there are only two key women in the film. Barbara Mennel (2002) views this marginalisation of female characters as belonging to the nature of the “ghetto film” genre; that is, that the film and its “ghetto discourse” are essentially gendered as masculine, and women, accordingly, are only

needed for particular limited functions within the narrative. Alice, Bobby's girlfriend, becomes involved with Gabriel, which naturally completes the estrangement of Bobby from Gabriel. Ceyda is Gabriel's sister, but also his friend Costa's girlfriend until she breaks up with him a short while into the film. It has been argued that in spite of having their own small business, the two female characters adhere to long-standing tropes: "Alice remains the attractive object of desire, whereas Cayda [sic] represents the sister in need of protection. Notably, the object of desire is played by a German actress and the sister by a Turkish-German woman" (Mennel 2002, pp. 150-151).

It is worth noting, though, that Costa's break-up with Ceyda, initiated by her, causes him considerable distress; he is furious when he sees her kissing her new boyfriend in the street — for Costa, Ceyda *is* the object of desire. Furthermore, as Göktürk has noted, it is a sign of changing times that the 'ethnically German' Alice is played by the only one of the main cast who is not formally German: Regula Grauwiler is a Swiss national, while Idil Üner, Mehmet Kurtuluş and the other 'Turks' and 'foreigners' have German citizenship (Göktürk 2000a, p. 336).

Ceyda's freedom to go out is credited to her brother Gabriel's influence in the family. When they are arguing, he reminds her that he has "always protected her from Mama and Papa", that she can go out when and where she wants, and, he challenges her, "show me the Turkish woman who can say that." Ceyda's independence, then, is thanks at least partly to the protection of a sympathetic male, her brother. As Mennel notes, Gabriel fulfils the role of the male ethnic lead in the ghetto genre, which dictates that one of his tasks is to protect his sister. On the other hand, this contradicts the stereotype of the strict, watchful male; as Fachinger (2007, p. 255) notes, it is not family honour that Gabriel protects, but his younger sister's freedom .

But beyond her roles as sister and daughter within the family, it is Ceyda's friendship and business partnership with Alice that play the biggest roles in Ceyda's life. It is with Alice that Ceyda discusses her intention to break up with Costa— which she then does quite calmly and resolutely— and they run their own jewellery business in partnership. Her relationship with Costa and Costa's friendship with Gabriel subvert the stereotype of enmity between Turks and Greeks (Fachinger 2007, p. 255) — an enmity also used for comedic effect in *Kebab Connection* (see later in this chapter). Yet Ceyda's next relationship may conform to a certain stereotype: she becomes involved with a non-minority German man, because (as Ceyda says) he treats her with respect, has a good job, and is not into drugs. Her friend Alice, meanwhile, becomes more and

more concerned by her boyfriend Bobby's dealings with organised crime; her affair with Gabriel could be seen, Fachinger argues, as "inverting the common model of the German man rescuing the Turkish woman" — the model Ceyda's new relationship seems to adhere to (2007, p. 256). Yet for all these points of debate, the female characters in *Short Sharp Shock* are secondary to the male friendship trio at the film's centre. Primarily, Ceyda and Alice serve as "objects of contention and exchange between the men, in the process diffusing the homoerotic potential of the intense male bond and positioning them as resolutely heterosexual" (Leal 2012, p. 70).

In Akin's next feature film *Im Juli* (*In July*, 2000), the young woman Melek (Idil Üner, who plays Ceyda in *Short Sharp Shock*) is the catalyst for the journey undertaken by a reserved young teacher from Hamburg named Daniel (Moritz Bleibtreu). He meets Melek by chance at a street festival. The free-spirited woman Juli (Christiane Paul), who sold him a ring from her jewellery store earlier in the day, has told Daniel that a sun will be the symbol showing him his ideal woman. Juli, wearing a sun on her top, plans to meet up with Daniel at the festival, but before that can happen, he sees Melek in her sun-print top. She is looking for a place to sleep on the eve of a trip to Turkey, and rather than going to the hostel as planned, she ends up listening to records with Daniel before falling asleep on his apartment balcony. The next day, infatuated, Daniel decides to go and find Melek in Turkey.

Melek is an object of desire in the film, the beacon drawing Daniel ever onward towards Turkey. It is only fitting, then, that she bears this name, which means 'angel' in Turkish. This desirability, though, is entirely a projection of Daniel's romantic vision, based on the invented scenario that Juli has described. When Melek and Daniel first meet on that evening in Hamburg, Melek is attractive, but decidedly not mysterious and not ethereal. When she appears, she is backlit by diffuse golden light — the almost angelic effect reflected in the character's name — but the cut to a close-up of Daniel's admiring expression emphasises that the audience is seeing the approaching woman through the eyes of the lovestruck Daniel. Melek seems to enjoy Daniel's company, but her focus is on her own plans. The very fact that she is travelling on her own indicates how far this character is from, for example, Turna in *40 Square Metres of Germany*. Melek's appearance bears little resemblance to Turkish-German women in many other films. Her hair is lightened, and her spaghetti-strap top shows off of her tanned skin; she looks like many young German women, including those of Turkish background, do in summer.

Gender is privileged over ethnicity; the story is, apart from being a road movie, essentially something of a love triangle. Daniel is pursuing one woman, Melek, while the other woman, Juli, pursues him. That Melek remains somewhat unknown is connected to this narrative, and not to Orientalistic notions of the exotic Middle Eastern beauty. The audience identifies with Juli, because we observe her conversation with her friend and thus are made privy to her plans for winning Daniel. Fatih Akin has admitted that Juli is a character he would treat differently now; *In July* is the last film he made before completing his degree at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg, and at the suggestion of his professor Helke Sander (see Chapter 3.2) wrote his thesis on the topic of female characters in his own films (Akin 2011, pp. 90-91).

Another noted German director of Turkish background, but directing quite different films, is the Berlin-based Thomas Arslan. Born in 1962 in Braunschweig, to a Turkish father and German mother, he attended school in Turkey and Germany and trained as a director at the DFF [Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie] film school in Berlin. Arslan is one of the directors of the so-called 'Berlin School' making generally still, slow-paced and introspective films. In the words of the German director Oskar Roehler, the films of the Berlin School "always are well received critically and then have [as few as] around 5,000 to 10,000 viewers" (Suchsland 2005; for some qualification of such a view, see also Abel 2012). Like Fatih Akin (see Chapter 4.4), Thomas Arslan has said that his films were a response to his dissatisfaction with previous depictions of Turkish-Germans (Arslan 1996). Arslan's first feature film was set in Essen (*Mach die Musik leiser/Turn Down the Music*, 1994), but he is best-known for his trilogy of Berlin films that, although not directly linked, form a group by way of their common setting and the reappearances of several actors in the casts.

Arslan's 1997 film *Brothers and Sisters* (*Kardeşler — Geschwister*) is set in Berlin-Kreuzberg, specifically in the area around Kotbusser Tor. The siblings of the title are two brothers and their sister, the children of a Turkish immigrant father and German mother. Leyla, the youngest child, spends most of her free time with her friend Sevim; both of them work as seamstress apprentices. Leyla has less agency than her brothers, and appears less likely to leave the suburb and socioeconomic stratum of her upbringing. Erol, the eldest brother, is taking up service in the Turkish army, and near the end of the film is last seen at an airport departure gate; Ahmed is completing his Abitur, and at the end of the film is seen reading a book, in profile, a sunlit window in the background seeming to frame him and separate him from the context of his current

life; Leyla, though, is seen in the closing shots of the film once again walking with her friend Sevim along a crowded footpath.

Göktürk views the ending of *Geschwister* as a hopeful one, saying that Arslan's film signals a new mode of depicting immigrants and their hybrid offspring by following their diverging pathways through their neighbourhood, letting them drift along and casually observing their encounters in various 'contact zones' such as the family dinner table, the working place, the boxing studio, the nightclub, and primarily the street. (2000b, p. 65)

Gallagher (2006, p. 343) sees in the film's depiction of Berlin "a positive modification of the enclosed and hostile cinematic space reserved for immigrant characters in the past". This depiction includes numerous glimpses of Turkish-language newspapers and Turkish words in shop signage, as well as overheard snippets of spoken Turkish.

Burns (2009) views Leyla in the closing shot as "joyfully striding through the streets of Kreuzberg" but considers the final images of the siblings to represent the ways Turkish-German cinema "has typically configured its protagonists: confined in domestic spaces, out and about on the streets (where they might experience these urban environments as terrains of containment or liberation) and in transit between Turkey and Germany" (Burns 2009, p. 11).

Similarly, Gallagher concludes that the film's setting in a known "ethnic" suburb, and the repeated threats of conflict in the streets, suggest greater spatial limitations than others have perceived. The film concludes with Erol leaving for Turkey, the streets of Kreuzberg having "closed in around him, placing him under escalating surveillance and threat"; Gallagher sees Ahmed "seeking shelter" inside, and Leyla "again walking the streets of the suburb she is simply not permitted to leave. [...] Though their movements may display an attempt to reappropriate the German urban exterior, these movements are consistently subject to regulation and constraint by others" (Gallagher 2006, pp. 343-344). This closing image of Leyla could also be viewed as an expression of liminal space, Leyla's restlessness showing that she is in constant search of a fixed sense of belonging or identity (compare with the discussion of liminality in Landwehr 2009).

Notably absent from the siblings' relationships with each other is any sense of the brothers' authority over their sister, or of the eldest brother being a semi-paternal or authority figure towards the younger siblings. In contrast to the portrayal of male family roles in, for example, *Yasemin* (see Chapter 3.2) or *When We Leave* (see Chapter 5.3), Erol and Ahmed have little involvement with Leyla's life. Each of the three children has a separate life outside the home, with only occasional overlaps, mostly between Erol and Ahmed. The children's father, though, does treat Leyla differently from her brothers, and refuses permission for her to travel to Hamburg with her would-be boyfriend Cem: "Kommt nicht in Frage" (Out of the question). Leyla grows angry, arguing that at least she has been honest with her father, where she could have lied and said she wanted to go with her friend Sevim.

In *Dealer* (1998), the second film of Thomas Arslan's "Berlin trilogy", the protagonist is in prison at the end of the film, but throughout the film is confined to a sort of prison made of his own disadvantage and poor choices. Can is a drug dealer in Kreuzberg, and in his work inhabits the quiet corners of parks and dark alleyways. His world as depicted by the camera is within the graffiti-spattered walls lining Kreuzberg's streets, and the small apartment he shares with his partner and son — though the sun is shining, the sky is rarely in frame. He is stopped a number of times by the police for questioning. The space of his own apartment offers no respite, because it is here that his relationship with his partner Jale unravels, resulting in her eventually leaving with their child. Can is effectively "excluded from all spaces — mainstream and marginal, surveilled and unsurveilled" (Gallagher 2006, p. 347).

Can's partner Jale lives in a world almost as confined as her partner's; as Gallagher outlines, Jale has escaped the confinement of earlier cinematic characters and is employed outside the home — but at work, she appears against the simple background of a wall, hemmed in by an escalator and a service counter. The one scene in which Jale appears outside has her likewise tightly framed against the backdrop of a wall rather than in open space. In this regard, Gallagher argues that the spaces afforded Jale "are not so far removed from the restrictive and claustrophobic spaces experienced by earlier female characters in the Turkish-German *Gastarbeiterkino*" (2006, p. 348). At the same time, *Dealer* avoids "die gängigen Erwartungen an einen Gangster-Film. Statt auf rasante und spannungsgeladene Action zu setzen, stellt der Film das

Alltägliche und die Langeweile im Leben eines Kleinkriminellen ins Zentrum der Darstellung”²⁷ (Neubauer 2011, pp. 209-210).

The third film in Thomas Arslan’s Berlin trilogy is *A Fine Day* (*Der schöne Tag*, 2001). It follows 24 hours in the life of Deniz, a young Berlin woman; she goes to work, breaks up with her boyfriend, visits her mother, and auditions for a film role. Finally, Deniz has dinner with her sister before spending the rest of the night talking with her neighbour Diego, whom she has seen a few times that day on public transport. Here, in *A Fine Day*, there is no apparent connection to Turkey as a place. There is very little in the film that foregrounds the Turkish family background. As Deniz travels around Berlin through the course of the day, she speaks only German. Indeed, her work as a dubbing voiceover actress means a ‘Turk’ is providing the German voice that will enable other Germans to watch a French film. Talking with her neighbour Diego, who is of Portuguese background and has often been to Portugal, Deniz says that she does not like travelling. Juxtaposed against Diego’s physical connectedness to his parents’ homeland, Deniz emphasises her exclusive attachment to the local area in Germany.

There are two particular scenes, on the other hand, that indicate how much Turkish(-German) identities are a part of her local environment. As she walks past a group of teenage boys in the grounds of her apartment block, they whisper about her and one of them propositions her in Turkish. Angrily, not intimidated, she turns and chastises them in German. When Deniz visits her mother, they hold a completely bilingual conversation: the mother speaks in Turkish while Deniz responds in German, but each apparently understands the other, without need for clarification. Also in this scene, Deniz suggests that her mother, a widow, could find a new partner if she wanted to. The scene conveys a warmth and concern for each other, evidently not hampered by generational, language or cultural differences. *A Fine Day* is “Kein Film für Multikulti-Etiketten oder Hymnen über einen neuen deutschen Film”²⁸ (Nicodemus 2004) but its significance lies in its very understatement about multiculturalism.

All the same, there are comparisons to be made. Deniz meets with her sister who is in Berlin only briefly as a break in her longer train trip. Her briefcase and skirt suit, her discussion of work, her pregnancy and mention of a partner rather than a husband are all markers of lives far removed from the strict confines and pressures experienced

²⁷ “the common expectations of a gangster film. Instead of relying on swift and suspenseful action, the film places the everyday and the boredom in the life of a petty criminal in the centre of the representation”

²⁸ “No film for multicultural tags or hymns to a new German film”

by characters such as Turna in *40 Quadratmeter Deutschland* but also, along with Deniz's experiences with relationships and the discussion of romantic love that takes place in a cafe near the end of the film, suggest their own different set of attendant pressures.

Burns (2007, p. 375) delves further into the contrast between Deniz and Turna, noting that the opening sequence of *A Fine Day* echoes the closing sequence of *40 Square Metres of Germany* (see Chapter 3.2): in both instances, the camera stays behind as a woman descends the stairs of an apartment building and walks out the front door into the sunlight; for Turna, the end of the film suggests an uncertain future outside the enforced 'security' of her life in the small apartment, but for Deniz, this is only the beginning of the film and a day in which she criss-crosses the district on foot and by tram. Her own apartment to which she returns is in Kochstraße, associated with Checkpoint Charlie — “What had earlier symbolised stasis and the seemingly unbridgeable divide between the political cultures of East and West now becomes a space facilitating mobility and cultural exchange” (Burns 2007, p. 375). In this subtle way, Deniz's identity as the child of immigrants is positioned within the history of Berlin and Germany, and her lifestyle as a young Berliner is aligned with the post-Wall era and future. The array of possibilities open to Deniz is reflected in her career as an actor, in which the roles she plays cover “Alles mögliche” (Everything possible) — as she tells one of the local youths when he asks (Burns 2007, p. 375). While *A Fine Day* may well be viewed as “an exception to the rule of dreariness that apparently governs depictions of Turkish women”, this very approach, with its confident female protagonist and only peripheral reference to her family heritage, invited some criticism for failing to acknowledge social problems that exist for some Turkish-German women (Göktürk 2002, p.254).

In German film, much as in political and public discourse, the headscarf has often been used as a symbolic marker of Turkish-Muslim culture (see also Chapter 2.3). This burden of symbolism has brought with it a tendency towards simplifications, and at times rather haphazard or confusing messages. An early instance is found in *Shirin's Wedding* (1975, dir. Helma Sanders-Brahm; see also Chapter 3.2), the guestworker title character allows another Turkish woman in the workers' hostel to talk her into wearing a short dress, but Shirin insists on still wearing her headscarf, saying that it's the law in her home village. Later in the film, she gives up wearing it, and this change is one of the prime visual markers of her attempted integration into Germany; it is followed by her

dying her hair blonde, which is commented upon by the director as the narrator's voice, addressing Shirin directly: "Du wolltest so sein wie wir, damit du es leichter hattest" (You wanted to be like us, so you would finally have it easier).

The title character in *Anam* (2001, dir. Buket Alakus) also pointedly removes her headscarf at various times throughout the film. When her adulterous husband gives her a new scarf as a present and ties it over her head, she takes it off defiantly, not wanting the gift; she removes her scarf, much to the surprise of her female co-workers, before meeting a non-Turkish policeman who is showing a romantic interest in her; most significantly, when she is learning to drive, she and her female friends take the car for a drive along the beach, and she throws her scarf into the air, where it is caught by the wind and blown to the sand. The camera shows it lying discarded, behind the car that is driving towards the horizon. Thus, the headscarf is burdened with the symbolic meaning of 'liberation' or 'freedom'. This differentiation is underlined by the character of Anam's sister-in-law, who wears a headscarf knotted under her chin, and a loose-fitting dust coat, and whose dialogue consists mostly of disapproving comments about Rita, Didi and Melek, and Anam's association with them.

The main characters of Kutluğ Ataman's film *Lola + Bilidikid* (1999) are a group of gay men and transgender women in Berlin. The two characters of the title are lovers who share an apartment: the rocker-stylised Bilidikid (Billy the Kid) and Lola, born male but using the name of the character he performs at a nightclub, in a trio called the *Gastarbeiterinnen* (female guest workers). It has been noted by various authors (Sieg 2002) that the performance of drag serves to highlight the performative nature of femininity (and gender more generally, though within the film the idea of masculinity is addressed more directly by other characters). Bilidikid would like Lola to undergo gender reassignment surgery, so they can live together in Turkey as a 'real' man and woman; Lola doesn't personally desire this and sees nothing wrong with things as they are. Bilidikid's anxiety about their homosexuality is expressed elsewhere. He makes his money offering himself to men in the public toilets, but only to receive oral sex; he advises Murat, who is considering this work himself, that a man should never let himself be 'a hole' (see also Treiblmayr 2011; Kuzniar 2012). In the context of 'Turkish-German filmmaking', it must be noted that Ataman is a Turkish national who, apart from *Lola + Bilidikid*, has worked outside Germany. Prior to making this film, Ataman had not been to Germany, but set his film in Berlin because of its active and visible LGBTIQI community; this caused Ataman to be viewed (temporarily, at least) as

one of the Turkish-German filmmakers (such as Akin, Arslan, Yildiz — see earlier in this chapter) releasing films around that time (Halle 2009, p. 46).²⁹

In *Lola + Bilidikid*, Lola's transgender friends Calypso and Venus do plan to undergo gender reassignment surgery, when they have the money. Through the contrast between their insistence on physiological change to become 'real' women, and Lola's satisfaction with 'performed' womanhood, the film draws attention to the idea that womanhood is "just another performative imitation" (Kılıçbay 2006, p. 108; see also Göktürk 2000a; for an extended discussion of alterity and queer Turkish cultures in Germany, see Clark 2003). This is addressed more directly in a scene between Calypso and her older, veiled, Turkish neighbour. The older woman curses Calypso for her hedonistic lifestyle, but the pair eventually reach understanding when Calypso talks about how hard life is for a woman.³⁰

Bilidikid's anxiety about his sexuality and masculinity is echoed in Osman, the older brother of Lola and Murat. Osman takes Murat to a prostitute so he can lose his virginity and 'become a man'; he is also threatening towards Murat (who has not revealed to the family that he is gay), and has become self-appointed head of the household since their father's death. After Lola is found floating dead in the river, Murat discovers the murder was at the hands of Osman. This revelation and Murat's confrontation of Osman come at the end of the film; their mother slaps Osman and leaves the apartment, walking outside with Murat; as they walk along the street shot from behind, the mother removes her headscarf and drops it to the ground. This can readily be seen as her discarding a symbol of Turkish-Muslim gender roles; Osman's eagerness to assert his masculinity and the family's 'honour' — and, as the audience knows, to conceal his own homosexuality — have lead to the death of her second child, who was already cast out of the family home years ago (see also Kılıçbay 2006).

A different approach can be seen in *Saniye's Lust* (*Saniye's Desire*, 2004) directed by Sülbiye Günar, in which the lead character Saniye, who does not cover her head, discusses her marriage, sex life, and desire for children, with her sister, who does wear a headscarf; the content of their conversation, and the fact that two sisters from (one assumes) the same upbringing have come to different decisions about whether or

²⁹ This fact, on the other hand, simply illustrates the point that Turkish-German cinema 'traffic' (to borrow from Göktürk's expression) and the development of transnational cinematic space has come from within Germany, but also from Turkey (see also *Berlin in Berlin* in Chapter 3.2).

³⁰ See also Cooke's (2012, pp. 178-185) discussion of gender performativity in connection to the film *Fremde Haut* (*Unveiled*, dir. Angelina Maccarone, 2005); Jasmin Tabatabai plays an Iranian woman trying to claim asylum in Germany under an assumed male identity.

not to veil, shows that generalisations and assumptions about the individual wearing the headscarf are to be avoided.

The simplistic symbolism that the *Kopftuch* has attracted is referred to self-reflexively in the comedy *Süperseks* (2004, dir. Torsten Wacker). Here, the Schanzenviertel area of Hamburg becomes the home of Germany's first Turkish-language sex hotline; from the back room of his brother's Turkish bakery, Elviz sets up his own company. His new girlfriend, Anna, teaches Oriental dance, but is a medical student (the combination of the 'exotic' dance form and a commonly 'German' name already suggesting the film's knowing interplay of stereotypes). Her Turkish father is a doctor with his surgery in central Hamburg. Anna dislikes the way he seems to be covering up their Turkish identity; when she speaks Turkish with him, he insists she speak German. He is adamant that she should pursue a career in medicine rather than her passion for dance; she feels that he downplays their Turkish background, and expects her to do the same, for fear of not 'fitting in' (Androutsopoulos 2012). He tries to arrange a practicum (with a hinted potential for marriage) for her against her wishes, and she voices her suspicion that he has assured the prospective employer that she 'doesn't look that Turkish'. To provoke her father, Anna turns up to the meeting in a headscarf and blue eyeshadow, playing a stereotypical dutiful Turkish daughter (the garish bright blue eyeshadow is meant to suggest the same lack of sophistication that she performs through the conversation), with Elviz in tow as a stereotypical Turkish macho. Feeling that her father is rejecting his cultural background and hers, she embarrasses him by resorting to obviously simplistic role-play, emphasising that in fact she has her own personally negotiated identity that mixes both cultural influences.

The Turkish-born father in *Süperseks* belongs to Germany's affluent middle class; his dismissal of the headscarf is portrayed not as stemming from his own convictions, which are left unexplored, but from his desire that he and his daughter be seen to conform to the most prevalent norms of German society. Within this narrative, his efforts in this direction are seen as annoying rather than praise-worthy; the film presents a character who seemingly embodies the much-discussed concept of 'integration' (at least in the sense of successfully gaining access to the bourgeois ideal), only to satirise this concept.

In *Süperseks*, as in *Kebab Connection* or much of Akin's directorial work, the graffiti-splattered and litter-strewn urban setting is emphasised in the *mise-en-scène*: *Süperseks* is set in the Sternschanze area, at the easternmost edge of the Altona council

area where it borders the red-light district of St Pauli. Any temptation to view this as a ghetto setting is challenged directly by a scene that refers to the word self-reflexively and with humour: Elviz makes a request to two buskers, and takes on the vocal part himself, to sing Elvis Presley's *In the Ghetto* to Anna, which leaves them both grinning. Thus the word ghetto is brought up, only to be completely shrugged off and stripped of its power.

The importance of both the physical locality and the transnational cultural setting are introduced from the beginning. The film's opening shot tracks in from the south, beginning with an aerial view of the river, to a background of Turkish music; with the water and boats, it could be Istanbul, and the music encourages this until the shot pans up to take in the rooftops of Hamburg. Thus both the physical setting and the cultural one within it are established; this is emphasised a few minutes later by shots of the Rote Flora theatre in Altona, a political slogan on a wall, fruit and vegetable stands and various shop signs. Though confined to this physical locale, the film's plot stretches to include Turkey — there is an issue with the old family home, leading Elviz's mother to visit him unexpectedly. There are reminders of this connectedness through the glimpses of a football game broadcast with Turkish-language commentary; the Turkish film that two characters watch on a couple of occasions; the red and gold colours worn by Elviz's niece, and decorating Elviz's bedroom, for the Istanbul football team Galatasaray.

In *Anam* (2001, dir. Buket Alakus), the friendships between the title character and two of her co-workers show a privileging of gender and class over differences in ethnocultural identities. Anam is the wife and mother in a Turkish family in Hamburg; she works as a commercial cleaner and is friends with Rita, of white Western European background, and Didi, a black South African immigrant. Anam discovers that her husband is having an affair with one of her co-workers; she kicks him out of the house, but also learns that her son is using hard drugs. The film is designed as the emancipatory story of a woman discovering a new life outside of her marriage — for instance, she learns to drive, and flirts with the police officer instructing her — and rescuing her son, thus restoring the integrity of the family unit.

Anam's role as a universal mother is confirmed by the arrival of her son's girlfriend Mandy. Anam has Mandy stay with her, and even tells her that Mandy 'sounds funny' because it is similar to the Turkish word for handkerchief. Anam

decides to call her Melek instead — with its meaning of ‘angel’, the choice of name suggests that Mandy is somehow elevated through Anam’s attention and care.

The trio of women, with Mandy/Melek for a time, represent a sort of multicultural idyll, but one in which the various cultural influences are largely overlooked; their greatest points of commonality are their shared gender identity and the work they do. The friendships, although secure, should perhaps be viewed not as a model of multicultural harmony, but rather as an illustration of the fact that ethnic and cultural identities should not be focused upon at the expense of other points of difference or similarity. That some intercultural encounters can be superficial and not offer any particular insight is demonstrated by the sequence in which Anam, Rita, Didi, and Anam’s houseguest Mandy/Melek have an ‘Indian night’, watching a Bollywood film, wrapping themselves in saris and sticking bindis on their foreheads. Turks are in fact avid consumers of Bollywood films (see p. 59) but this scene contributes little to the narrative of *Anam*; it shows the group dynamic of the women, and Melek’s inclusion, but mostly adds a thin layer of cosmopolitanism to the more substantial everyday multiculturalism experienced by these characters. As Seeßlen notes, the Turkish-German cinema as a cinema of *métissage* “steht immer in Gefahr, hinter der Absicht die Kunst zu verlieren”³¹ (Seeßlen 2002). In this respect, he is critical of *Anam*, saying that

Das allzu Gutgemeinte in Emanzipationsfilmen wie *Anam* [...] führt schnell wieder zu neuen Klischees: die türkische Putzfrau, die, während sie sich mit anderen Frauen zusammentut, um ihren Sohn aus dem Drogensumpf der *Métissage* zu holen, ihre eigene Freiheit entdeckt, ist eine Kino-Figur, die in ihrer Mutmacher-Funktion ein entscheidendes bisschen zu weit von der Wirklichkeit entfernt angesiedelt ist.³² (Seeßlen 2002)

The unlikely story and character may be less questionable if the film is viewed simply as a piece of entertainment; thus Seeßlen draws attention to the limitations in reception that the weight of ‘Turkish-German cinema’, as a category, can bring.

³¹ “is always in danger of losing the art behind the intention”

³² “The all-too well-meaning in emancipation films like *Anam* [...] leads quickly again to new clichés: the Turkish cleaner, who discovers her own freedom while she bands together with other women to get her son from the drug swamp of *métissage*, is a cinematic figure who, in her bolstering function, is located decidedly a little too far from reality.”

Director Sülbiye V. Günar's low-budget and comparatively little-known film *Karamuk* (2002) overlays the coming-of-age story of a teenage German girl with her discovery and exploration of her Turkish background. Johanna approaches her absent father, to ask that he fund her desire to study fashion design in Paris. To Johanna's shock, he reveals that he is not her biological father. From the mementos her mother has hidden in a cupboard, Johanna learns that her father is a Turkish immigrant, Cumhur, who had an affair with Johanna's mother before fulfilling his obligation to a marriage arranged by his family in Turkey; he now owns a successful Turkish restaurant in Cologne. Johanna, without revealing her identity to Cumhur, convinces him to hire her as a waitress, and the two become acquainted. Johanna's mother meets with Cumhur to reveal who Johanna really is; eventually, Cumhur and Johanna openly discuss their relationship, and with Cumhur's support, she makes her way to Paris.

Coincidentally, the older of Cumhur's two daughters from his current marriage is one of Johanna's classmates. It is largely through the comparison of Johanna and her half-sister Idil that the film examines and questions ideas of Turkish and German female identity and gender roles. Significantly, it is Johanna, not Idil (who is popular at school), who is the outsider. Cumhur's family, moreover, is a traditional nuclear one, and still whole, while Johanna lives with her mother and grandmother and has grown up with an absent father. That Cumhur was also an absent father to her is dealt with by his assertion that "*of course*" he would have wanted to be part of her life, had he been told of her existence by her mother. Cumhur's relationship to his wife and their two daughters is protective but gentle and respectful. Once his prior relationship and fatherhood is revealed, he and his wife discuss honestly how she, too, had been attracted to someone else before she was obliged to marry Cumhur. The way they share their feelings and histories further contributes to the impression of a loving and functional family. The character of Cumhur constitutes not just a dramatic break from the Turkish husband and father figures of earlier films, but as Berghahn suggests, Cumhur also arguably is an embodiment of an ideal of integration from the German majority perspective: he represents the new Turkish man, being in effect an idealized cultural hybrid in which the German middle-class values of education, tolerance and material success are fused with Turkish family values" (Berghahn 2009, pp. 60-61).

Johanna gradually incorporates her Turkish heritage into her personal identity; it becomes a part of her coming-of-age. She has worked in her father's restaurant, developed relationships with her newly-discovered family members, found a loving

father and the means to finance her future, and has slept with and perhaps fallen in love with her co-worker Zervan. Finally, Johanna's outsider status and (re-)creation of her own identity are underlined by her leaving Germany by train at the film's end — she has met her father and a new part of her family, but her future plans are still connected with Paris. The only act of border-crossing or migration in the course of the film is undertaken by Johanna, and not by any characters who have always been aware of their Turkish heritage. The real message of the film is the questioning of “essentialist notions of identity based on bloodline and ethnicity, [and in] promoting voluntary affiliations and the formation of hybrid identities instead” (Berghahn 2009, pp. 63-64). The examination of Turkish male stereotypes in recent films runs in parallel to the changing image of Turkish women; these twin paths of development are each significant and positive in their own right, and — gender being a relational category — each influences the other.

Kebab Connection (2004, dir. Anno Saul, co-written by Fatih Akın) is primarily a comedy about a Hamburg youth, Ibo, and the way he learns to confront his impending fatherhood with his non-Turkish girlfriend, Titzi. In Ibo's reaction to news of Titzi's pregnancy, and his subsequent behaviour, the film plays on the image of machismo associated — through ghetto and kung fu imagery — with Turks and other ‘ethnic’ men, and assumptions about the strictness of gender roles in Turkish culture. *Kebab Connection* foregrounds intercultural play. There is the central romance between Turkish-German Ibo and his pregnant non-Turkish girlfriend Titzi, and the problems this creates for his family (all solved by the end: this is a comedy after all); there is the ongoing feud between Ibo's uncle, who owns a Turkish restaurant, and the owner of the Greek taverna across the road. On top of this, the film has a veneer of kung fu, because Ibo is a budding film-maker: his declared dream is to make the first German kung-fu movie, and the advertisements he makes for his uncle's restaurant are mini-films in this style. Ibo's friend Lefty, the son of the Greek restaurant owner, runs a falafel place, and has been disowned by his father for being vegetarian. The Turkish and Greek restaurants stand opposite each other, and their respective owners are able to stand in their doorways staring each other down.³³

³³ The adult niece of the Greek restaurant owner is flirtatious and sexually assertive around Ibo, which acts as a contrast to the relative piety of Ibo's parents, but also counters the notion of the demure ‘ethnic female’ whose sexuality and honour must be protected by her male cohort (see also discussion of Ceyda in *Short Sharp Shock*).

It is notable that *Kebab Connection*, like *Short Sharp Shock*, is largely monolingual, except for occasional scenes in languages other than German; along with *In July*, these earlier projects of Akin's (he co-wrote, but did not direct, *Kebab Connection*) exhibited

an instrumental and pragmatic understanding of language selection, whereby the language spoken on screen served primarily as a delivery vehicle for a linguistically transcendent narrative, rather than as an element of dramatic and social consequence itself. With the revealing exception of *Solino* [...] Code-mixing within these first feature films mainly serves comic relief or is left to the margins. (Gramling 2010, p. 359)

By contrast, in Akin's later work (see Chapter 5), language has a much clearer role to play in the construction of the cultural landscape. One example of the language-based comedy to which Gramling refers can be found in *Kebab Connection*: Ibo's father is angered (though in an amusingly theatrical, rather than genuinely threatening, way) to discover that Ibo's non-Turkish girlfriend Titzi is pregnant. He drives along after Ibo, scolding him in Turkish-accented German; he tells Ibo the child will call him *Papa* and not the Turkish *Baba*. Finally, he yells from his car window that the child will not speak Turkish, and says (in German) that he's been in Germany for twenty years and never speaks German himself. Androutsopoulos (2012) observes that in this scene, the father also switches from German to Turkish when Ibo addresses him as *Vater* and not *Baba* — a more pointed use of language than mere comic effect, showing “not only how film dialogue appropriates a common discourse function of conversational code-switching, i.e. indexing dissent, but also how the dramatic deployment of linguistic difference can become iconic to some dimension of narrative difference among characters” (Androutsopoulos 2012, p. 307).

Aprilkinder (*April Children*, dir. Yüksel Yavuz, 1998) is notable for its inclusion in Claudia Voigt's 1998 *Spiegel* article (see also earlier in this chapter). Like *Brothers and Sisters*, *April Children* deals with a trio of siblings: two brothers and their younger sister, in a Turkish Kurd immigrant family in Hamburg. Cem, the eldest, is dutiful and responsible; the second child, Mehmet is rebellious and aggressive, and becomes involved in petty crime; their younger sister Dilan faces certain restrictions when it comes to being allowed to go out and so on. After an affair with a prostitute, Cem

ultimately follows familial duty and marries his first cousin from Turkey; the final moments, a speeding 360 degree shot of the wedding guests, highlight Cem's lack of control and sense of displacement.

By contrast, more recent films such as *Evet, ich will!* (*Evet, I Do!*, dir. Sinan Akkuş, 2009) have employed Turkish weddings in the romantic comedy tradition of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* or *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (see Berghahn 2012). In the film *Ayla* (2009, dir. Su Turhan), the title character's new romantic interest, Ayhan, runs a photographic studio where he frequently takes wedding portraits of Turkish couples; Ayla's older sister runs a dressmaking business in the same street, specialising in weddings. When Ayla first visits Ayhan's studio, she must stifle her laughter as she looks through his wedding portraits, featuring elaborate wedding dresses, formal poses and sunset-design fake backgrounds; the scene is one of many ways the character is constructed, somewhat simplistically, as a modern German woman whose choices have led to her estrangement from her Turkish immigrant father. Later, Ayla and Ayhan incorporate a mocking mimicry of the wedding poses into their foreplay (in one of a number of scenes that lend *Ayla* aspects of a romantic comedy, in spite of the other major plot thread being a planned 'honour killing'; compare with Chapter 5.3).

Increasingly, German actors of Turkish (and other) backgrounds are being cast in roles for which this aspect of their identity is not foregrounded, nor in many cases even written into the character. This is sometimes seen only in small roles, such as Idil Üner as the waitress Bernadette in *Bella Martha* (*Mostly Martha*, 2001, dir. Sandra Nettelbeck), but also in the title role in *Saniye's Desire* (*Saniyes Lust*, dir. Sülbiye Günar, 2004), in which the character's marriage and longing for motherhood, not her particular ethnocultural background, are scrutinised. In films that do thematise Turkish-German identities as a part of the narrative, there is evidence of a greater variety of perspectives, and some markedly more complex female characters given greater voice and agency in their own stories, even if still driven to dramatic gestures or decisions by their immediate circumstances.

In contrast to most films discussed in this section, the film *Jerichow* (2008) is set not in a large city, but in the titular town in Saxony-Anhalt. The plot centres around a love triangle between returned soldier Thomas, a middle-aged Turkish immigrant named Ali, and Ali's younger wife Laura. The film suggests that Eastern Germany identity in the post-Wall Federal Republic is marginalised and in flux much as Turkish-German identity has been (see Miller 2012). On a similar note, Fisher (2010) has argued

that the film is situated in multiple ways: it reflects on a national discourse of immigration and integration; it is part of the Berlin School that has attracted attention to art house German cinema; it is based on the American film *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (dir. Tay Garnett, 1946; a 1981 version by David Mamet is one of several other adaptations from the novel) and evokes *film noir* as both an American and an international genre.

Fatih Akin's *Soul Kitchen* (2010) shows the director at his most light-hearted; the film is mostly a comedy of errors, set in a Hamburg restaurant operated by two brothers — one on day release from prison — and a temperamental chef played by Birol Ünel (who plays Cahit in *Head-On*, see Chapter 5.1). Akin has said that this film was knowingly made as a change of pace from the weightier subject matter and style of its predecessor *The Edge of Heaven* (2007, see Chapter 5.2). *Soul Kitchen* is not noteworthy for any narrative of identity-seeking or migration, but is another of a growing number of films that take a multiethnic, contemporary urban setting (in this case, again, Hamburg-Altona) as a fundamental and unproblematic part of German reality. This diversity is reflected in the cast (most of them also have acted in previous Akin films), as well as the central role of food, and the transnational axes opened by the choices of music on the soundtrack (Hillman and Silvey 2012). The social and cultural importance of food, and thus its usefulness to constructions of culture, is no doubt part of why so many of the films in this chapter can be linked to kitchens or restaurants: *Soul Kitchen*, *Mostly Martha*, *Kebab Connection* and *Karamuk* all demonstrate the significance of making and sharing food, and the symbolic possibilities.

The film *Almanya — Willkommen in Deutschland* (*Almanya — Welcome to Germany*, 2011, dir. Yasemin Samdereli) combines comedy with a nostalgic and moving family story (Berghahn 2013 (forthcoming), promises an interesting discussion of this film as an example of the diasporic family in cinema), and reflects playfully on stereotypes of both Turkish and German identity and reciprocal beliefs about each other. The film won the silver prize at the German Film Awards in April 2011, and was written by Nesrin Samdereli together with her sister Yasemin, who directed it. In its focus on one family and on a number of characters at once, *Almanya* avoids easy stereotypes about gender roles and instead delivers well-rounded male and female characters, none of whom is particularly dominant or subservient. In its light-hearted but honest approach, the film is a timely consideration of notions of home and identity, and a reassurance that most problems can be worked through or around. Göktürk has

argued the need for a sense of humour, playfulness etc in films to release the ‘Turkish-German cinema’ from the confines of the ‘subnational’, from paternalistic overtones or a “patronising culture of compassion” (Göktürk 2002, p. 249). The appearance of the emotionally involving but lighthearted *Almanya* (in the 50th anniversary year of the arrival of the first *Gastarbeiter*) is timely in the wake of the ‘Sarrazin affair’ — the film could practically be a response to Sarrazin’s comments (Martenstein 2011, see also Chapter 2.3).

The playful tone is set from the very first moments of the film, as the opening credits appear over a series of close-ups of an Oriental rug, accompanied by Turkish music. Family photos of the protagonists are seen, and the narration by the character Canan introduces the story; one of the photos becomes animated, black and white footage of a nostalgic musical number from German television in the early years of mass labour migration. Documentary footage — including of the one millionth guest worker arrival, Armando Rodrigues, is inserted into the fictional story of Hüseyin (the one million and first arrival), who narrowly misses out on the gifts bestowed on Rodrigues.

From this opening sequence, the film jumps forward to — as the superimposed title declares — 45 years later. Hüseyin and his wife Fatma are standing in the entrance to an Aldi supermarket, and discussing the looming moment when they become German citizens. In a dream sequence, Hüseyin imagines the stereotypical German practices that they now must adopt — the official says they must now undertake to eat pork, holiday in Mallorca and watch *Tatort* (the long-running German TV crime series, see also later in this chapter), and as Hüseyin watches in horror, Fatma begins feasting on the meal of pork that has been put before them; he glances at his reflection in the glass door of a nearby cabinet, and sees that he has grown a Hitler-style toothbrush moustache.

The portrayal of Hüseyin both as a young man and in old age is a much more sympathetic one than the stern Turkish patriarch often seen in film; the young Hüseyin is a handsome romantic figure, in love with Fatma, and frequently smiling and winking in close up, encouraging the audience to like him. Even in older age, Hüseyin and Fatma are a loving couple, the scenes between them are full of good humour. A conversation about olives, in which Fatma complains that Hüseyin thinks only of himself, is resolved in a playful spirit. Hüseyin is less concerned by the fact that his granddaughter Canan is pregnant — a fact he has correctly, perceptively, guessed at before she confesses — than adamant that she tell her mother as soon as possible. He is

also dismayed to learn that the father is not a German but an Englishman — an attitude that places Turks and Germans on the same ‘side’, with the Englishman cast in the role of outsider.

Later, Fatma reveals to her daughter and granddaughter that she was pregnant when she was ‘kidnapped’, that is, before she married Hüseyin; evidently breaking with traditional norms is not confined to the German-born younger generation. This revelation comes as a shock to Leyla, who is coming to terms with the fact her daughter Canan is pregnant at a young age, and unmarried; that her own mother can relate to the situation suggests that notions of generational differences or progressiveness do not always hold true.

Flashback sequences throughout the film tell the migration story of Hüseyin and Fatma, and their children Veli, Muhamed, Leyla and Ali. The film very effectively shows that fear of the other is often born purely of ignorance. Before the family moves from Turkey to Germany, Muhammed’s friend warns him that Germans eat not only pork, but humans; they worship a dead man on a cross, and when they go to church they eat his flesh and blood (an allusion to some Catholics’ belief in transubstantiation); on Muhammed’s last night in Turkey, he dreams of drinking litres of Coca-Cola, but is visited by the nightmarish vision of a bloodied Jesus on the crucifix, glaring at him from beneath his crown of thorns. Muhammed’s fear is genuine, based on having no contextual knowledge of Christianity.

When Hüseyin and his young family first encounter their new apartment in Germany, the wooden crucifix on the kitchen wall fills Muhammed with terror; Fatma is merely bemused to learn that Germans (seemingly) pray to a wooden figure. At the children’s request, the family celebrates Christmas with gifts and a small tree, drawing attention to the difference between religious observance and the choice to participate in certain cultural traditions. The German language is also heard from an outsiders’ perspective as the family arrives in Germany; initially, a deliberately comical nonsense-speak is used in place of German, to convey how it sounds to the Turkish speakers. The film asks that the audience consider Germany as the foreign, at least temporarily, and by implication portrays fear of the other as unfounded, and merely stemming from ignorance.

In the present-day thread of the story, Hüseyin’s young grandson Cenk represents the third generation of Turks in Germany; raised by his German-born Turkish father Ali and non-Turkish mother Gabi, Cenk begins to wonder about his identity. In

class, his well-meaning teacher uses small flags affixed to a map on the wall, to show the countries of heritage of the pupils. Evidently, this class exercise is meant to be inclusive and to celebrate diversity, but it also is predicated on the idea of the students' foreignness; tellingly, when the teacher asks Cenk where he was born, he replies, "Deutschland", and without pause she clarifies, "Ja, aber woher kommt dein Papa?" (Yes, but where was your father from?). Cenk readily answers, "Anatolien." Explaining to the class that Anatolia is in eastern Turkey, the teacher suddenly sees a problem: that the map of Europe reaches only as far east as Istanbul.³⁴ In sports class, Cenk is teased by his Turkish-background classmates for not being 'a Turk' and told he has to be on the other team with the non-Turkish children. Later, Cenk demands to know of his family, "Was sind wir?" (What are we?); his older cousin Canan — Leyla's daughter — subscribes to the model of hybridity or transnationality, and says that a person can be both. Cenk retorts, "Das geht nicht" (No, that doesn't work), and says a person must be on one 'team' or the other. At home, Cenk asks his parents why he can't speak Turkish; his mother Gabi protests that he can, but she and Ali realise the ability may not be there as much as they think — Ali, after all, doesn't often speak it. Even in Turkey seated alongside another boy, Cenk is too timid to try out his Turkish language ability and speak with him. Cenk embodies the feared 'loss of culture' that can come about through the process of migration.

Later, the film shows dramatically that identity and belonging mean much more than simply a passport; when Hüseyin dies while on holiday in Turkey, he cannot be buried as a Muslim in his original homeland — thanks to his recently acquired German citizenship, he can only be buried in the foreigners' cemetery. His son Muhammed, who has lived in Germany since his early childhood when he dreamed of its plentiful supply of Coca-Cola, takes a decision to stay on in Turkey and rebuild the now-derelict former family home. Ultimately, the film concludes with the idea that a sense of belonging comes from identification with the family, and reinforces the notion that individual personal identities are far more complex — and adaptable — than can be expressed through outdated notions of distinct, separate cultural identities .

In Turkey, Cenk's father Ali expresses concerns about child labour — the boy selling *simit* pastries by the side of the road — and the hygiene of the food and the

³⁴ This problem is solved at the film's end, when Cenk brings a map of Turkey to class, allowing the teacher to add it to the map of Europe on the wall. The other pupil, who had claimed Istanbul as his family's home so as not to repeat Cenk's mistake, now proudly admits that he also comes from Anatolia.

roadside restaurant. His is the voice of progressive, liberal Europe, coming from a German who happens to be of Turkish background; he views Turkey with the critical eye of those who question its suitability for inclusion in the EU or even in Europe. Ali's wife Gabi is of non-Turkish background, and is a stereotypically fair-skinned and blonde German; in the family scenes, she appears as a fully-accepted and loved daughter-in-law, sharing affectionate looks and comments with Ali's parents, and casually turning to Ali for a German translation when the surrounding conversation is in Turkish. Her presence acts as a sign of integration, but not only of the family's acceptance of other Germans: her easy interaction with her Turkish in-laws and the customs of their cultural origins — such as when she wears a headscarf to attend Hüseyin's funeral — suggest an openness and adaptability on her part, and symbolically on the part of present-day Germany.

Deniz Göktürk has discussed the potential for comedy to highlight the performative aspects of identity and to provide catharsis.³⁵ *Almanya*'s primary role as a comedy invites the viewer to engage with the topic in a way far removed from a film such as *Shirin's Wedding*, and potentially even offers a sort of reassurance or catharsis through laughter:

Wie gut tut es, dass wir mal lachen dürfen über die Integrationsprobleme türkischer Einwanderer. Dass wir mal durch ihre Augen auf die deutsche Wirklichkeit von damals und heute schauen können – und zwar nicht in einem Problemfilm. Wie heilsam kann eine Komödie sein, weil sie sich löst von den festgefahrenen Meinungen der Integrationsdebatte oder der Furcht vor Islamisten, Ehrenmorden und jugendlichen Intensivtätern muslimischen Glaubens. Der Film *Almanya* zeigt normale Menschen, komisch überzeichnet zwar, aber doch wahrhaftig.³⁶ (Sadigh 2011)

³⁵ See her discussion of *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh!* (*Me Boss, You Sneakers!*, 1998, dir. Hussi Kutlucan), in which characters adopt other identities or deploy stereotypes ironically to escape difficult situations (Göktürk 2000a).

³⁶ “How good it feels that we are allowed to laugh about the problems of Turkish immigrants. That we can look through their eyes at the German reality of then and now — and not in a “problem film”. How healing a comedy can be, because it frees itself from the deadlocked opinions of the integration debate, or the fear of Islamists, honour killings and youthful intensities of Muslim faith. The film *Almanya* shows normal people, comically exaggerated, and yet truthful.”

It is worth noting that the film does more than allow the audience to laugh about “the integration problems of Turkish immigrants”; this comment rather underplays the extent to which the German majority culture is held up for examination and for gentle mockery, from the perspective of the foreigners who in the past might have been the sole targets of such a view. To borrow from Gutjahr’s discussion (2003, see also Chapter 4.2 of this thesis) of interculturalism in literature: *Almanya* positions itself as a film about intercultural encounters and interculturalism itself, exploring the experience of immigrants in the new country, but also the foreignness of Germans from an outside perspective. The film highlights otherness itself.

If the *Frauenfilm* or the more broadly defined ‘women’s cinema’ have played a key role in German film history (see Chapter 3.2), we may wonder whether this is also true of Turkish-German filmmaking. Rendi (2006) notes that Turkish-German women directors have, as early as Aysun Bademsoy’s documentary film *Fremde deutsche Nachbarschaft* (*Foreign German Neighbourhood*, 1989), been developing their cinematic ideas alongside their male Turkish-background colleagues; she suggests that the more limited distribution of films by the women is due to their “refusal to submit to a focus on the kind of identity politics which restricts minority women filmmakers to stereotypes similar to those of the “cinema of duty” (Rendi 2006, pp. 85-86). Further, Rendi asks whether it is possible to speak of a “gendered discourse in German-Turkish film”, and concludes that a “Kanakan Sprak” (see also Chapter 2.3 on Zaimoğlu and the word *Kanak*) does exist, even if it is not clearly defined; in her discussion, she identifies common elements and a poetic style in the work of directors Seyhan Derin and Ayşe Polat, both women of Turkish background in Germany (Rendi 2006, pp. 91-92).

The past two decades have witnessed a marked change in the depiction of immigrants and their descendants in German cinema. This change reflects a number of shifts in German — and arguably European, and Western, and global — society and discourse. Firstly, the late 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century has seen a definitive end to the widely accepted view of immigrants as visitors to Germany; secondly, the notions of nationality and nationhood are subjected to considerable scrutiny in an age when transnational connections and lifestyles seem more possible than ever, and when migration worldwide is a process involving many millions of people; thirdly, European identity continues to slowly take shape, but is constantly under revision.

While Germany's 'Turks' have been reconstructed as 'Muslims' in political and media discourse of the past decade (see Chapter 2.3), this shift has only become apparent in German films more recently. In Berghahn's view "it seems as if, on the whole, Turkish-German film-makers were making an effort to counterbalance these dominant media discourses by featuring 'enlightened' Turks [...] This is not to say that the portrayals of Turks are predominantly positive" (Berghahn 2009, pp. 56-57).

Despite the widespread occurrence of 'Turkish-German' as a means of categorisation — of literature, film, theatre, music and so on — or as one in a variety of terms of identification, it is not absolutely clear that the process of acceptance and normalisation has been completed. Nicodemus (2004) notes that in at least one report about *Head-On* and Fatih Akın at the 2004 Berlinale, there is a tone of mild novelty still about the vision of an ostensibly (but implicitly) exotic-looking man speaking in the Hamburg vernacular. It is a novelty potentially reinforced through the attention of media and through academic work such as this thesis. In 2008 when Mehmet Kurtuluş (Gabriel in *Short Sharp Shock* and Isa in *In July*) took up a lead role in the long-running crime series *Tatort*, it elicited "ein bemerkenswertes Medienecho [...] welches nicht nur einen nahezu ethnographischen Blick auf den Neuen offenbart, sondern auch alte, stereotype Fremdbilder aktualisiert"³⁷ (Halft 2010, p. 5). The German-authority role of a police inspector had already previously, in the series *Türkisch für Anfänger* (*Turkish for Beginners* — see Chapter 2.1), been played by a Turkish-background actor (Adnan Maral); yet the casting of Kurtuluş in *Tatort* was seen as something of a revolution. The series itself, and some of the media reactions, reveal a sexualised and almost ethnographic gaze — scenes of a bare-chested Kurtuluş at the swimming pool or in the shower — that seems to invite female viewers: "hierin treten auch alte, stereotype Fremdbilder in keineswegs neuer Gestalt zutage: Der dunkle, athletische Ausländer beschämt den deutschen Mann durch seine Männlichkeit und droht auch noch in dessen Revier zu wildern"³⁸ (Halft 2012, pp. 225-226). Around Kurtuluş, and to a lesser extent Birol Ünel (who appears in *Anam*, *Soul Kitchen* and *Head-On* — see also Chapter 5.1), an image has grown that melds his real-life person with his characters (see Gueneli 2012).

³⁷ "a remarkable media response [...] which not only reveals a nearly ethnographic view of the new, but also updates old, stereotypical images of otherness."

³⁸ "in this, even old, stereotypical images of otherness come to light, by no means in a new form: the dark, athletic foreigner shames the German man through his manliness and threatens to hunt in his territory."

Recent films may be heralding a shift, but it is still a gradual one. Many new films question old stereotypes, in some cases even presenting corresponding stereotypes of Germany through the eyes of its others; but in any case, Halft considers that new stereotypes such as the ‘dealer’ and ‘gangster’ have replaced the old ones (Halft 2010, p. 6). Moreover, the terminological fields seem to be shifting. Seeßlen’s “*cinema of métissage*” originally was used to refer to life in two cultures, but has more recently been employed in reference to the idea of a multicultural cinema. There has also been a change in meaning for ‘interculturalism’, and changes to the migration discourse in cinema (Halft 2010, pp. 6-7). Rendi, by contrast, considers the work of the young Turkish-German filmmakers to have ushered in a “crucial change in the cinematic representation of German minorities, which in turn led to a radical transformation of the way in which national identity is understood” (2006, p. 78).

Fundamentally, cinema is a powerful site for identity constructions, and the films of Akin, Arslan, Kutlucan, Yavuz, Bademsoy and other directors contribute new stories and images to the identity of Germany — an identity always in flux and always contested, in cinema as elsewhere. The discussion now, as reflected through cinema, takes place against the weakening hegemony of the nation, and the rise of the supranational and transnational in a Europe built of multicultural states. In this sense, the real point of interest is not the normalisation of ‘foreigners’ as Germans, but the normalisation of fluid and multiple identities. We live in

an increasingly urban, multinational world of travelling cultures and conflicting voices, identity and difference can no longer be defined as fixed, stable and confined within one coherent culture or language. Routes/roots are subject to constant negotiation, home and belonging become difficult to determine [...]. (Göktürk 2000b, pp. 65-66)

It is particularly in the context of backlashes against multiculturalism, and the institution of civic integration measures and the like, that representations such as those in cinema become significant. At a time when the difficulty of defining the German nation seems apposite, such attempts nonetheless continue in political and media discourse and in everyday life. If the elusive concept of ‘integration’ is held up as the desirable endpoint of immigration, for the sake of a functional society, the question arises as to whether or not there is anything in the country’s cultural output to encourage

this or to comment upon it. Cinematic and other imagery can also project ideas of what such integration — or its failure — looks like.

In discussing Turkish-German female characters on screen, the argument of this thesis rests on the concept of a German cinema at once national and transnational, representing the diversity of identities and experiences within its borders but frequently, like this population, crossing those borders. It is precisely in transnational spaces and journeys that German cinema is best able to reflect the experience of many Germans of Turkish background. Parallel to these changes, the religious identity of Turkish and Middle Eastern immigrants in Germany has taken greater primacy in discussions of integration and multiculturalism, and the daily practices of Islam are more directly represented or addressed in some films.

The comedy of the majority of *Almanya*, and the great commercial and critical success of the film, calls to mind Göktürk's comments about the cathartic possibilities of comedy in dealing with intercultural encounters; the existence of a film such as *Almanya*, and before it *Kebab Connection*, *Süperseks* and others, shows a 'normalisation' of immigration in Germany, releasing it from being the province only of dramatic moments. However, the in-depth analysis in Chapter 5 is of three films that, occasional lighter moments notwithstanding, are dramatic and even tragic in tone. Comedies frequently make obvious the exaggeration in their stories and characters, and their negotiation — use or subversion — of stereotypes and long-standing tropes. Dramatic films, particularly the many that employ a naturalistic style, are frequently burdened with greater expectations of authenticity, plausibility and representational accuracy.

The following chapter sets out the theoretical and methodological framework for these analyses, as well as discussing in greater depth the competing definitions of multiculturalism and integration, and the national and transnational, that underpin the discourses covered in Chapters 2 and 3.

4. Analysing transnationalism in film: theoretical frameworks

4.1 Concepts of national cinema

In considering particular aspects of German cinema, this thesis takes as its beginning point the assumption that nations are created out of the nationalist impulse and manifestations of that impulse in projects of nation-building (Gellner 1983). It is almost axiomatic to note that national cinemas are largely a construct — the elevation of collections of certain socially-sanctioned films over others — albeit with some foundation in national funding sources and the reception by domestic national audiences. Germany's national cinema is, in terms of the films it produces, its relationship to Hollywood and its market share, of a kind readily identified with European countries (see Crofts 1993). Compared to Germany, perhaps no other country “has lent itself so consistently and productively to investigations into the relations between film and nationhood” (Rentschler 2000, p. 260). In step with the current landscape of film studies, this thesis aims to avoid an essentialising view of ‘the German cinema’ or ‘the Turkish-German cinema’ just as other essentialist notions of national culture should be avoided. Even with respect to ‘cinema’ (as distinct from simply a collection of films), the discussion benefits from terminological precision (Ludewig 2001, p. 173). It is necessary to consider the theoretical field in which the film analyses in Chapter 5 are situated: the contested, evolving, and overlapping concepts of national, transnational and European cinemas.

National cinema has had a variety of meanings; Higson (1989, 2000) identifies four main ways in which the term has been applied. Firstly, there is the economic context, in which national cinema corresponds to ‘the domestic film industry’; secondly, there is the text-based approach, analysing the films in terms of thematic and stylistic commonalities, and their combined ‘message’ about the nation; thirdly, the consumption-based or exhibition-led approach examines which films audiences are watching; finally, Higson lists

what may be called a criticism-led approach [...] which tends to reduce national cinema to the terms of a quality art cinema, a culturally

worthy cinema steeped in the high cultural and/or modernist heritage of a particular nation state, rather than one which appeals to the desires and fantasies of the popular audiences. (Higson 1989, p. 37)

Higson argues for an alternative approach, according to which a national cinema must be understood to include not just a canon of films deemed by critics and scholars to be artistically worthy, but also those films that have proved popular with the cinema-going public of that nation; too often, the concept of national cinema has been used “prescriptively rather than descriptively, citing what *ought* to be the national cinema, rather than describing the actual cinematic experience of popular audiences” (Higson 1989, p. 37). He also argues that a national cinema should include non-domestic films which domestic audiences have seen, because the reception of these films, too, may be filtered through a sense of collective national identity (Higson 1989, pp. 44-45; see also Higson 2000, pp. 65-66). Bergfelder (2005b, p. 319) argues that while Higson’s more market- and consumption-based approach has many merits, “it does often seem to foreclose the possibility of a European cinema beyond national boundaries”.

At the levels of both production and distribution, cinema is part of globalisation; arguably, it is not only subjected to globalising forces, but also helps to spread the impression of life in the ‘global village’. For many people across the world, it is possible to have watched a French comedy, a Spanish drama or a Japanese thriller, without ever having been to those countries. However, the internationalisation of the film industry is by no means uniform worldwide. Differences in funding and resources, population and language spread, and even the ‘exportability’ of films (in terms of the likelihood that foreign audiences will understand and appreciate them) mean that films from particular countries have advantages over others. As Ezra and Rowden write, “cinema is borderless to varying degrees, subject to the same uneven mobility as people” (2006a, p.5). The supposed globalisation of cinema is, in reality, perhaps most evident in the opportunities to watch American films in so many other countries. It is less common that (for instance) a New Zealand or Belgian film has significant success in US cinemas. This inequality of cinema traffic must be remembered, particularly in the context of talk of globalisation.

Apart from this international exchange of cultural products, there is also the onscreen cultural exchange. Intercultural encounters onscreen could be considered to include far more than the meeting of different nationalities. Naturally, cultural identity

encompasses not just nationality, but also may include gender, ‘race’ or ethnic background, religion, sexuality, age, social stratum, locality, occupation or social role, and tastes and preferences. Arguably, the onscreen meeting of, for instance, a wealthy businessman and a child living on the streets could be considered an intercultural encounter just as easily as, say, Spaniard meets Mayan. Stories are driven by conflict, which can arise from countless situations. Yet it is still the borders between national groups that create the impression of greatest potential difference. This is understandable, given the persistence of the nation as a means of social organisation. Even — or especially — in many obviously multicultural or multiethnic states, the call for cohesion is made through catchcries such as ‘unity in diversity’: the diversity itself is to be acknowledged as a defining characteristic of the nation (see Chapter 2.3).

If nations can be considered, as in Benedict Anderson’s formulation, as “imagined communities” (1983, see also p. 10 of this thesis), in which every single member of a nation presumes the existence of all those others that he or she will never actually meet, cinema offers a prime opportunity for achieving this sense of connection. Indeed, the heightened audiovisual experience of cinema arguably means that less imagination is required. Unlike Anderson’s example of the newspaper and the imagined communal experience of the nation’s members reading simultaneously, cinema (and television) can show the moving images of ‘the nation’. Of course, especially in the case of fiction films, but also in documentaries, the images are highly specific and carefully selected *versions* of what constitutes that nation. Even a camera set on a tripod in the main street, apparently objective in its recording of passers-by, clearly is capturing only one section of the population, the landscape, and sociocultural life — a section that is not necessarily representative.

In this respect, films can offer audiences views into the lives of different groups of people within their own nation. The urban dwellers can observe life in the country; the wealthy can watch stories about the poor; the elderly can witness the experiences of teenagers. Omission or unsatisfactory representation of particular groups in films may lead to accusations of exclusion; this is particularly clear in the case of ethnocultural minorities, such as the marginalisation of Native Americans in US cinema (see for example Shohat and Stam 1994). The relative internationalism or national specificity of these spectatorial frameworks clearly plays a role in the success or failure of films domestically and internationally, or in some foreign markets but not others. The German film *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, dir. Tom Tykwer, 1998) enjoyed great success

at the German box office, and was, at the time, the most successful German film in the United States since *Das Boot* was released there in 1982. The success of *Run Lola Run* in other countries such as Great Britain and Australia notwithstanding, it had a notably poor reception in France (Roth 1999, p.13).

Cinema lends itself in a particular way to the task of representing a nation to its own members and others. Similarly to literature, films can present events as belonging to “a temporal narrative that moves toward fulfilment”, thus informing the views of national history; the narrative models of cinema “are not simply reflective microcosms of historical processes; they are also experiential grids or templates through which history can be written and national identity created” (Shohat and Stam 2003, pp. 9-10).

The paradigm of national cinemas is reasserted again and again, especially through its usefulness to the marketing of films overseas and at film festivals. In Sydney for instance, there are or have been German, French, Spanish, Greek, Russian, Canadian and Japanese film festivals (amongst others), supported by their respective cultural, trade or political representative bodies. Such groupings often showcase films that otherwise would not screen in Australian cinemas, presenting them together on the premise of offering an overview of new work from another country. International commercial success and prizes at overseas film festivals are a cause for celebrating the quality of ‘our’ cultural exports, while failure, especially the failure to attract domestic audiences, is cause for consternation over the state of ‘our’ film industry.

The blurring of national boundaries and the unavoidable overlapping of cultural spheres have placed in doubt the integrity of the nation as a form of cinematic categorisation. A national cinema, it is argued, can be neither as wholly representative of the internal diversity of the nation, nor sufficiently separate from other nations — in production, content or distribution — as to distinguish itself. A national cinema, to be truly national, should not shirk from representing the diversity of subgroups within the nation; yet in becoming too diverse, the cinema risks losing its national audience and any sense of cohesiveness. Jarvie (2000, p. 86) sees little scope for multiculturalism within the confines of a national cinema, believing that with a certain degree of difference or tension, “the infant industry will fragment its audience, the culture will not defend itself, and the project of nation-building will be subverted”. That is to say that the project of a national cinema necessitates a degree of uniformity which is at odds with the reality of many, if not most, contemporary pluralistic societies. Such an

interpretation is a strong argument for the obsolescence of national cinema as a paradigm of film studies.

Just as nationalism is being reassessed in light of multiculturalism within states and transnational movement between states, so too is the validity of the concept of a national cinema. The trend in studies of German cinema has reflected wider changes in film studies, particularly in British and American academia, towards “socially specific contexts of production and reception” and away from fixed oppositions such as high and low culture (Bergfelder 2005b, pp. 318-319).

As in Higson’s argument for a broader concept of national cinema, it is assumed here that “German (national) cinema” refers not only to a canon of (oft-studied) films, but to any and all domestically-produced German films including co-productions. It seems to be the case that the popular cinema of Germany has been less readily accepted in this respect than its counterpart in Britain; Bergfelder (2005b, p. 319) suggests that attachment to the national as a category may be “more pronounced and urgent in countries which feel beleaguered in their political or cultural identity, and in countries which see themselves as either economically excluded or culturally independent from the developments of central and Western Europe”.

If Hollywood seems to be a non-nationalist contrast to the cinemas of other countries, this is, Shohat and Stam argue, because the “projection of a national [United States] power” can be taken for granted; but in fact “[a]s the products of national industries, produced in national languages, portraying national situations, and recycling national intertexts (literature, folklores), all films are in a sense national. All films [...] project national imaginaries” (Shohat and Stam 2003, p. 10).

Miller (1999) writes quite scathingly about national cinema as an approach to film studies, particularly on the grounds that it is unlikely to represent adequately the diversity of the nation it purports to represent. Picking up on the common view of ‘national cinemas’ as opposition to Hollywood, he argues that “[n]o cinema that claims resistance to Hollywood in the name of national specificity is worthy of endorsement if it does not actually attend to sexual and racial minorities and women, along with class politics. Is there a representation of the fullness of the population in the industry and on the screen? If not, then such cultural protectionism is a smokescreen designed to privilege the dominant” (Miller 1999, p. 97). It may have been true that national cinemas provide frameworks for a more complete understanding of individual films, but “increasingly these frameworks are losing the national and cultural particularity they

once had; the need for emotional identification overrules the us-them binaries of “xenophobic nationalisms” (Ezra and Rowden 2006a, p. 4).

The balance of uniformity against diversity is also interesting in the case of distinct ‘nations’ existing within a larger nation-state; key examples of this are French Canadian cinema, and the Scottish cinema, which can be viewed as national cinemas within the Canadian and British cinemas respectively. These sorts of subnational cinemas are somewhat different from the films of minorities within nations — such as ‘Asian-British’ or ‘Turkish-German’ films — but in all cases where any sense of the national is used to categorise films, similar problems arise.

Ian Jarvie (2000) identifies three main arguments that are made in support of the concept of a national cinema. These are: protectionism; cultural defence; and nation-building. He notes that these arguments suggest movies are considered somehow to be different. Though not always viewed as the equal of traditional high artforms such as theatre, films clearly amount to cultural products. The Western European countries particularly associated with national cinemas— such as France, Germany, and Italy— were, Jarvie notes, seemingly much more secure in their nationhood than those emerging nations, such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, further east. In these pre-existing nation-states, Jarvie argues, films were viewed by the elites as a means of reinforcing the sense of nationhood; in effect, the still-young mass medium was considered perfect for educating the masses in how to be good citizens (Jarvie 2000, p. 77).

Subjecting these arguments to Ernst Gellner’s (1983) theories of nationalism, Jarvie finds inadequate support for the need for national cinema as a means of categorisation. Noting that Gellner considered cultures to have their own inherent strength, Jarvie questions whether cultures are really in need of defence. A truly national cinema should, in theory, represent as many diverse subgroups as exist within the nation. Indeed, groups are likely to feel excluded and to complain if they are under-represented in films produced in their country. Film practitioners and cultural policymakers are likely to express concern, for instance, at the lack of Asian-Australians or Native Americans in the films of their respective countries. The concept of a national cinema may provide a framework in which it is recognised that particular groups of people in a particular nation are due greater representation onscreen.

The concept of transnational cinema expresses more than simply internationalism at the level of production — such as co-productions between nation-states — and more than simply an acknowledgement of migration or globalisation at the

level of content. Bergfelder suggests a view of national and transnational cinema that focuses instead on the centre and the margins — a concept which can be applied to the cinemas of peripheral or small countries within Europe, or to the films of ethnic or other minority groups within one country. He raises this specifically in a discussion of the emergence of a ‘European cinema’, the study of which occupies a “contested position between national and supranational interests” echoing the central issue of European unity, “namely to negotiate and reconcile the desires for cultural specificity and national identity with the larger ideal of a supranational community” (Bergfelder 2005b, p. 315).

Bergfelder proposes an understanding of the ‘European’ in ‘European cinema’ “not so much as a stable cultural identity or category, but rather as an ongoing process, marked by indeterminacy or ‘in-between-ness’” (2005b, p. 320). He suggests that liminality and marginality be considered part of the nature of European cinema, and contrasts the acknowledged centrality of exile and immigration to the construction of Hollywood with the comparatively overlooked role of migration in national cinemas of Europe (Bergfelder 2005b, p. 320). A history of European cinema, then, “might well begin by exploring the interrelationship between cultural and geographical centres and margins, and by tracing the migratory movements between these poles”; it is also important to consider the role of metropolises such as Berlin, Paris, London, and Vienna, which “became focal points and destinations for migrant film-makers at certain historical moments, and which thus transcend their status as purely ‘national’ locations” (Bergfelder 2005b, p. 320).

Even as European art cinema has been harnessed to notions of European culture and opposition to Hollywood, it has also been used, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, to promote the cultural worth of individual nation-states such as Germany and France (Bergfelder 2005b, pp. 317-319).

The analyses of *Head-On*, *The Edge of Heaven* and *When We Leave* in Chapter 5 presuppose that the so-called ‘Turkish-German cinema’, always a problematic term, should not be considered primarily as a minority or subnational cinema, but as those films that occupy the contested terrain between German national cinema and transnational cinema (see also Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 4.2). The dominance of the national is perhaps inescapable in film studies, but these three films — and others — are situated in both national and transnational cinemas, even as they stake the claim of their protagonists to be unmistakably part of Germany. Part of this process of situating three films (and others) is an acknowledgement that national cinema, ‘migrant cinema’, and

migration experiences, are heterogeneous and changing — that “national film cultures and migrant perspectives (themselves rarely ‘pure’) are always locked in a reciprocal process of interaction”, a process not limited to independent or minority cinema; even films that are centrally important to their respective national cinemas “have often been conceived by individuals who are cultural outsiders in more ways than one” (Bergfelder 2005b, p. 320). Outsiders figured prominently in many films of the New German Cinema (Elsaesser 1989, pp. 130-133), for instance, much of which has become canonical to German film.

At the same time, such cultural interactions between ‘outsiders’ and the majority or mainstream “do not simply imitate or reflect already existing national discourses of either the host culture or the outsider” but rather, they add “new discursive and aesthetic layers, which irrevocably change but also ultimately contribute to the continuing evolution of, national cultures” (Bergfelder 2005b, pp. 320-321). In this sense, the three films analysed in Chapter 5 are at once firmly part of a cinematic tradition — in Germany and elsewhere — of social critique from within the nation (see Chapter 3.2), as well as using ‘outsider’ characters and border-crossing narratives to contribute to evolving perspectives on German cinema and national identity.

The study of German cinema has been dominated by certain key approaches and texts. An overarching theme has been the attempt to identify a German national identity or disposition through its cinema. In the 20th Century, the cinema of Germany “appeared to reflect or interrogate a collective national identity more strongly than the film productions of the many other nation-states” and the lens of national cinema “establishes a moment of continuity within a film historiography that has otherwise often defined the history of German film around a series of historical ruptures and Oedipal rejections” (Kaes 2009, p. 36). Particularly two chapters in German filmmaking shaped this view: early-Weimar expressionism, and the New German Cinema (see Chapters 3.1 and 3.2 respectively). These two periods of cinema “sought to articulate the aesthetic, the historical, and the national in fundamentally different ways, [but] both supplied a nascent academic discipline with a normative canon of good objects whose semantic and formal wealth could be played out against commercial filmmaking” (Schindler and Koepnick 2007, p. 2). This was especially true of film studies in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s, where the focus on art house films served two purposes: it brought cultural respectability to the young discipline of German film studies, and “helped defend this new discipline’s exploration of cultural

particularity against the simplistic suspicion of energizing nationalist agendas” (Schindler and Koepnick 2007, p. 2).

A notable attempt to identify the national psyche of a particular time is Siegfried Kracauer’s *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947), an overview of the early decades of German cinema. Kracauer sets out to trace the rise of fascism through a socio-psychological study of Weimar-era films as evidence of the German ‘character’. The book expresses his view “that through an analysis of the German films deep psychological dispositions predominant in Germany from 1918 to 1933 can be exposed — dispositions which influenced the course of events during that time and which will have to be reckoned with in the post-Hitler era (Kracauer 2004, p. 383). Kracauer’s belief in the films’ connection to a national German psyche is frequently reiterated: the films of the 1920s that were shown abroad were “exposing the German soul” (2004, p. 3); films reflect “those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness” (2004, p. 6).

Another significant work from the mid-20th Century is Lotte Eisner’s *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*. In a similar vein to Kracauer, Eisner seeks to identify and describe the German character as it is conveyed through the expressionist films of the inter-war period. Eisner views the classical cinema of the epoch as “highly evocative of German romanticism” and “sees similarities in style and the recurrence of certain motifs ontologically, as being grounded in identical world views, as emanations of a distinctly German *Geist*. Eisner does not discuss whether these recurring romantic elements served to reflect contemporary reality or whether they merely served as ideological emanations of bourgeois culture” (Schlupmann 1986, p. 11).

The influence of Kracauer’s work has been seen throughout the subsequent decades of the German cinema and the study of it; standard works such as Kracauer’s and *The Haunted Screen* by Lotte Eisner, “had already, explicitly and implicitly, associated Germany with baring its ‘soul’ or ‘collective mentality’ on film” (Elsaesser 1989, p. 294). Such a standpoint clearly opens his argument to the criticism that it underestimates or completely overlooks heterogeneity within the German cinema of that period. Kracauer explains his reasoning early in the book, arguing that the means of filmmaking, and the paths of viewing and reception of the films, make it possible to speak collectively of Germans at the time (2004, p. 5).

A second reservation is that in attempting to show how the mood of the nation was expressed through German cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, Kracauer is ahistorically conflating ‘the German character’ with what could more accurately be viewed as but one case study of a nation entering a period of totalitarianism and war. Kracauer pre-emptively addresses this concern, explaining that “[t]o speak of the peculiar mentality of a nation by no means implies the concept of a fixed national character. The interest here lies exclusively in such collective dispositions or tendencies as prevail within a nation at a certain stage of its development” (2004, p. 8). Ultimately, Kracauer’s work is “a product of its time and the circumstances of its author. A common criticism — that Kracauer too readily and simplistically identifies influences of Weimar-era iconography on that of Nazi films — can be attributed to a desire to explain chapters of history and film history that were still reaching their conclusion even as Kracauer worked on his research (Quaresima 2004, p. xlii).

Others have argued that Kracauer overstates the authoritarian power of German cinema; Schlüpmann argues that cinema in the Wilhemine era already included a subtly transgressive female subjectivity (Schlüpmann 1996), while Rogowski notes the contribution of foreign directors and scriptwriters as well as actors, and seeks to redress Kracauer’s underestimation of the influence of Jewish culture in popular cinema of the era (Rogowski 2003).

The importance of the concept of national cinema within film studies is reaffirmed by the title of Sabine Hake’s *German National Cinema* (2002), an overview of German film from its 19th Century beginnings to the end of the 20th Century. The book received positive reviews which noted that such an overview of German film history was long overdue. Von Dassanowsky notes the problematic nature of the title, saying that, although Hake “does an admirable job in dealing with the book’s title in her compelling introduction”, the concept is “too (mis-)interpretable to function as the heading for Hake’s well-balanced look at all German cinema” (von Dassanowsky 2003).

With respect to German national cinema, Rentschler has written of “the difficulty of saying we” (2000, p. 274). In the introduction to her study of German national cinema, Hake notes that, “the category of national cinema cannot be discussed without acknowledging the foreign influences, international movements, and global developments and without recognising their relevance to the cultural paradigms — of integration, assimilation, cross-fertilisation, and hybridity — evoked as a threat to

national culture” (Hake 2002, p. 1). In this approach, the notion of a national cinema retains its significance even as it is constantly under challenge or at least reassessment. A true ‘national cinema’ in fact is more a product of imagination than reality. From the outset, Hake avoids an absolute and therefore problematic view of national cinema or national character, proposing instead to explore “the tensions among national, regional, and local traditions; among national, international, and global perspectives; and among cultural, economic, and political definitions of nation” (2002, p. 2).

This approach informs the concept of national cinema in this thesis. The three films analysed in this thesis are taken as examples of German contemporary cinema, but with the understanding that ‘national cinema’ and ‘German cinema’ (or for that matter ‘Turkish cinema’) as categories are contestable and highly susceptible to over-reification. The films are considered individually as contributions to the national imagery/imagination and to public discourse; their collective significance lies in this same reception, rather than in a concept that implies the German psyche as the author of these films as text.

4.2 Terminological considerations

It is clear, on close examination, that the term multiculturalism, though it has widespread and frequent use in many countries including Germany, carries a great range of definitions and connotations. Even amongst countries in which multiculturalism explicitly informed government policy — Australia and Canada being two oft-studied cases — there are differences; in countries that have not experienced multiculturalism as a clear political direction, the word, or at least the idea of it, has still found its way into public and political discourse. In both cases there is, moreover, some difference between the multiculturalism expressed through policy, and its meaning when used as a buzzword. No one model or definition “can capture the richness of multiculturalism in its entirety” (Fleras 2009, p. 205). Though the word has become commonplace, the concept of multiculturalism is “polysemically open to various interpretations and subject to diverse political forcefields; it has become a contested and in some ways empty signifier onto which diverse groups project their hopes and fears. [...] Multiculturalism, unfortunately, has not succeeded in defining itself” (Shohat and Stam 2003, p.6).

All the same, there is a core meaning of multiculturalism that is almost always present: “its central mission [...] is to make society safe from difference, yet safe for difference by improving the process of minority integration while neutralizing the salience of ethnocultural differences as sources of disadvantage or divisiveness” (Fleras 2009, p. 203). Also implicit in the idea of multiculturalism is “a notion of the distinctiveness of each culture, each separate from others, a notion which is vigorously challenged by modern anthropology which has emphasized time and time again the lack of any substantive boundary between cultures, but one which is for the moment entrenched in contemporary debates” (Watson 2000, p. 1). In spite of the variety of implementations and manifestations of such a viewpoint, Ghassan Hage considers that with its ties to globalisation, multiculturalism has undergone “a paradoxical homogenisation of its meanings and its social significance, a homogenisation primarily based on its American meaning: cultural pluralism and identity politics” (Hage 2003, p. 58).

Multiculturalism as a policy emerged in the 1970s, but a political theory of multiculturalism only came about in the 1990s, led by Canadian and US scholars (Modood, Triandafyllidou, and Zapata-Barrero 2006, p. 4). In Britain and elsewhere in Europe, multiculturalism at the political level — as the recognition of group differences balanced against state laws, national identity and so on — has a somewhat narrower focus than the politics of identity seen in some nation-states. It may be that “the narrower and the broader meanings of multiculturalism — focusing on the consequences of immigration and on the struggles of a range of marginalized groups or on group differences per se — cannot be entirely separated from each other” (Modood 2007, p. 2).

It is evident that a great many countries in which multiculturalism has not been pursued as a policy are nonetheless home to multiple cultures; such countries are forced to deal with the same ramifications of multiculturalism as avowedly multicultural societies, facing as they do “the conflicting claims of groups of people who share identities and identity-conferring practices that differ from those of the majority in the states of which they are a part” (Kelly 2002, p. 1). We can distinguish between the top-down view of multiculturalism, that is concerned with policies and programs, and the “everyday multiculturalism” of various encounters and situations that daily life in a diverse society brings (Wise and Velayutham 2009, p. 2). Some European countries, though not adopting multiculturalism as government line, nonetheless embraced a

multicultural approach through other measures such as anti-discrimination; this indirect approval of multiculturalism is now in decline in Britain and the Netherlands (Fleras 2009, pp. 203-206). Australia, along with Canada and Sweden have been examples of what Castles and Miller call the multicultural “ideal-model” of citizenship: the nation is primarily a political community united by its laws, constitution and citizenship, while also accepting cultural difference. Britain, the Netherlands and the USA have also been influenced by this model (2003, p. 43; for an overview of Australian multiculturalism, see also Hage 2003, pp. 58-62). By contrast, Germany held fast, until recently, to an ethnic model of citizenship (see Chapters 2.1 and 2.2).

In this dissertation, the word multiculturalism is used fundamentally in the sense of expressing a plurality of co-existing cultural spheres within one nation-state. While reference is made to certain historical cases of direct multicultural governance, focus is drawn to the clear emerging theme across a multitude of societies that are multicultural, whether by official policy or by default: their cultural pluralism challenges the concept of nationhood based on thick cultural ties and a large degree of (imagined/constructed) cultural homogeneity. Multiculturalism amounts to a contradiction of a fundamental component of the mythology of the nation; the perception of multiculturalism as a threat or challenge to cohesion is clear in the backlash against multiculturalism, occurring even in countries such as Germany, where multiculturalism was not pursued as policy in the first place, but is viewed as something thrust upon the state.

There is a line of argument according to which the state of the world has changed so greatly, through migration, globalisation, communication technologies, supranational organisations and so on, that the old ideas of national or cultural identity no longer hold true for most people. Stuart Hall has suggested that “We all are migrants now” — a view that has been characterised as projecting “a benign scenario of a psychic and social world in which the boundaries of modernist nation-states are transgressed and the pleasures of difference are celebrated” (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000, p. 3; see also Bauman 1998).

The varied understandings of ‘interculturism’ are united by the fundamental idea of exchange “zwischen sozialen Einheiten und Individuen [...] bei denen differente Erfahrungshorizonte, Wertvorstellungen und Handlungsweisen auf die Sozialisierung durch unterschiedliche Kulturen zurückgeführt werden. Interkulturalität umfasst also

Interaktionsformen, bei denen die Partner sich wechselseitig als unterschiedlich kulturell geprägt identifizieren”³⁹ (Gutjahr 2000, p. 15).

Wolfgang Welsch has surveyed the history of the term ‘culture’ in its monolithic use, and the usefulness of the terms ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘interculturalism’. Just as the concept of culture, as it was used, has become outdated, so too multiculturalism and interculturalism are concepts that at times can be used to refer to a notion of ‘culture’ that is problematic. Employing the term ‘transculturalism’ — distinct from both transnationalism and interculturalism — he argues that

[w]enn die heutigen Kulturen tatsächlich noch immer, wie diese Konzepte unterstellen, inselartig und kugelförmig verfasst wären, dann könnte man das Problem ihrer Koexistenz und Kooperation weder loswerden noch lösen. Nur ist die Beschreibung heutiger Kulturen als Inseln bzw. Kugeln deskriptiv falsch und normativ irreführend. Unsere Kulturen haben de facto längst nicht mehr die Form der Homogenität und Separiertheit, sondern sind weitgehend durch Mischungen und Durchdringungen gekennzeichnet.⁴⁰ (Welsch 2000, p. 335)

Though the concept of transculturalism is used widely (see for example Blumentrath et al. 2007), Welsch’s formulation has been criticised as overly positive, too utopian in its views of cultural flexibility. Mark Terkessidis (2010) takes a less hopeful view of contact between cultures and continues to use the term *interculturalism*; he has argued that for many people, daily encounters between cultures lead to significant issues that cannot be theorised away. He describes his view of culture, as he applies it to *Interkultur*, as having to do with principles of organisation, “und keineswegs vorrangig mit ethnischen Gemeinschaften oder kultureller Identität wie in

³⁹ “between social entities and individuals [...] in which different experiences, value systems and ways of interacting can be attributed to socialisation in differing cultures. Thus interculturalism comprises forms of interaction, in which the partners reciprocally identify themselves as having different cultural influences.”

⁴⁰ “[i]f cultures nowadays really were still [...] island-like and spherical, then one could neither be free of, nor solve, the problem of their coexistence and co-operation. But the description of current cultures as islands or spheres is descriptively wrong and normatively misleading. Our cultures have *de facto* no longer the form of homogeneity and separateness, but rather are characterised through and through by mixing and penetration.”

den Theorien des Multikulturalismus”⁴¹ (Terkessidis 2010, p. 130). Moreover, Terkessidis feels that

Unterschiede schlicht für gegeben zu halten, ist durchaus ein Erbe jener Art von Multikulturalismus, die theoretisch und teilweise auch praktisch in den USA, Kanada oder Großbritannien gepflegt wurde. Zwar kann man den Exponenten der multikulturalistischen Theoriebildung [...] nicht einfach Essentialismus vorwerfen, doch setzen sie in ihrer Beschreibung der Gesellschaft die unterschiedlichen ethnischen Gemeinschaften und deren kollektive, kulturelle Identität als zentral.⁴² (Terkessidis 2010, pp. 14-15)

Terkessidis emphasises that diversity is not an imported burden, but simply the state of things; furthermore, he argues that the political approach in Germany has often been normative rather than based on experience or research (Terkessidis 2010, p. 12). In his understanding of interculturalism, “geht es also nicht wie im Multikulturalismus um die Anerkennung von kulturellen Identitäten, die Relativität unterschiedlicher Perspektiven oder das Zusammenleben der Kulturen, sondern das Ziel ist die Veränderung der charakteristischen Muster, die aktuell mit der Vielheit eben nicht mehr übereinstimmen”⁴³ (Terkessidis 2010, p. 131).

Otherness or alterity in literature also refers to the capacity to take a new, distanced perspective on language itself (Gutjahr 2003, p. 116). Even in this aspect, though, the very conceptualisation of the relationship between the known and the other is culturally determined: “Vielfalt und Selbstverständnis europäischer Kultur ist in weiten Teilen der hegemonialen Aneignung anderer Kulturen (cultural negotiation) geschuldet”⁴⁴ (Gutjahr 2003, p. 116). In the case of immigrant ‘others’ in literature, the encounter with otherness is now also shaped from the perspective of the immigrants themselves, even if

⁴¹ “and by no means primarily with ethnic communities or cultural identity as in the theories of multiculturalism.”

⁴² “Taking differences as a given is absolutely inherited from that type of multiculturalism that, theoretically and in practice, was cultivated in the USA, Canada or Great Britain. Certainly one cannot simply accuse exponents of multicultural theory of essentialism, yet in their description of society, they do place the various ethnic communities and their collective, cultural identity at the centre.”

⁴³ “that is, it is not about the recognition of cultural identities like in multiculturalism, the relativity of different perspectives or the coexistence of cultures, but rather the goal is to change the characteristic templates, that currently simply no longer accord with the diversity.”

⁴⁴ “[The] variety and self-understanding of European culture is in large part indebted to the hegemonic adaptation of other cultures (cultural negotiation).”

aufgrund ihrer interkulturellen Sozialisation tradierte Bedeutungszuschreibungen von Eigenem und Fremdem oft obsolet geworden sind. Den räumlichen Zuschreibungsmustern werden nun vielfach zeitliche Modelle kontrastiert, die die Gleichzeitigkeit kultureller Ungleichzeitigkeit an ein und demselben Ort inszenieren. Unter diesem sozial-räumlichen Aspekt wird das Fremde in Bezug auf das Eigene intensiviert und Differenzkonstruktionen werden neu austariert — bis hin zur Aufhebung der Differenz zugunsten vergleichender Relation.⁴⁵ (Gutjahr 2003, p. 117)

It is precisely this form of intensified — yet often obsolete — differentiation and ‘othering’ to which also Göktürk and others have drawn attention in their commentary on (Turkish-)German cinema; it is a limitation of ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘interculturalism’ that, at least in some understandings of the terms, too much attention is drawn to the points of difference *between* cultures at the expense of recognising difference *within* cultures, or indeed similarities and a lack of actual reciprocal foreignness.

For his discussion of alterity in *Lola + Bilidikid* (see Chapter 3.3), Clark adopts the term transculturation to describe the process involved in inter- or transcultural contact. Coined by the Cuban anthropologist Ortiz in the 1940s, and used mostly in Latin American studies, the term was a variation on and response to the idea of “acculturation” becoming popular in North American anthropology. Acculturation at first referred to mutual interaction and change between cultures in contact, but came to be used mostly to discuss the effect of the dominant culture; transculturation instead emphasises reciprocity in contact between cultures (Clark 2006, pp. 556-557).

Clark employs Pratt’s concept of the ‘contact zone’: “an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect” (Pratt in Clark 2006, p. 557). This definition, Clark argues, can easily be applied to Turkish communities in Germany; because Turkish-German culture is a contact zone generally located within

⁴⁵ “On account on their intercultural socialisation, handed down ascribed meanings of the self and the other have often become obsolete [for these people]. The spatial patterns of ascription are now contrasted with multiple temporal models, that depict the simultaneity of cultural asynchrony at one and the same place. In this social-spatial aspect, the other is intensified in relation to the self and constructions of difference are calibrated anew — through to the removal of difference to the benefit of the comparative relationship.”

Germany, it may also be “a particularly useful site for examining what impact transculturation might or might not have on the dominant culture” (Clark 2006, pp. 555-557).

The concept of identity is also central to these discussions. The perception of identity, whether personal, cultural or national, requires “continuity over time and differentiation from others” (Guibernau i Berdún 2007, p. 10). Introduced into psychology in the 1940s, the concept of ‘identity’ has become widespread, and is central to discussions of migrant literature and Turkish-German film; despite this centrality, much of the work assumes a rather “volks-psychologisch” (folk-psychological) definition of identity, and fails to distinguish clearly between, for example, national and collective identities (Neubauer 2011, pp. 53-54). National identity, like the construction of the nation, involves the belief in shared history, and attributes shared by at least many or most members of the nation (often elevated to instructive ideals of how one should best signify their belonging or allegiance). Guibernau i Berdún (2007) suggests that there are five dimensions to national identity: the psychological (a ‘felt’ belonging or commonality with other members); the cultural dimension (in which language, symbols and so on demonstrate who is a member of the nation, and are internalised into personal identities); territorial (the nation is the people who live in and are tied to a particular area); the historical dimension (even in the case of young nation-states, and in spite of the modernity of nationalism); and the political dimension (the measures, such as education systems or maintaining the official language, undertaken by the state in the name of national cohesion) (Guibernau i Berdún 2007, pp. 12-25).

Culture is viewed widely as an important means of personal identity formation. Even though “national identity is not simply one among many” from the perspective of nation-states and their institutions (Erel 2009, p.36), there is considerable overlap and slippage when it comes to the concepts of ‘national identity’, ‘cultural identity’, ‘collective identity’, and even ‘ethnicity’. Given that concerns about multiculturalism in Europe — and elsewhere — are so frequently expressed in terms of an appeal to equality and individual freedom, or indeed as explicitly as a defence of liberalism itself (most famously in the Netherlands), it seems especially apt to explore the line of discussion that weighs multiculturalism and liberalism and assesses their compatibility.

Parekh (2000) shows how three pioneering theorists of cultural diversity — Vico, Montesquieu and Herder — helped to pave the way for a pluralist perspective of

culture. Each of them, in different ways, suggested a view that broke away from the tradition of “moral monism”, giving difference itself a new ontological status and arguing “that moral life could not be separated from the wider culture and elevated to a transcendental realm of its own as monists had insisted” (Parekh 2000, pp. 76-77; on Herder and nationalist sentiment see also chapter 2.1).

Parekh considers Herder’s theory of culture to be ultimately unsatisfactory in spite of its considerable useful contributions; in Herder’s work there is an assumption that each culture is distinct and whole, and any diversity within each individual culture is overlooked in favour of the diversity of the groups of cultures. Moreover, this concept of cultures ultimately means that they

exist side by side with nothing to say to each other [...] being selfcontained and integrated wholes, they not only do not need each other but suffer from a close contact. This was why Herder was haunted by the fear of cultural miscegenation, including even the borrowing of foreign words. (Parekh 2000, p. 73)

Studies of Turkish migration to Germany have moved from an early focus on demographics and circumstance, through a second stage concerned with notions of ‘culture clash’ and ‘in-betweenness’ (Kaya 2007, pp. 483-484; see also Chapter 2.3). From the 1990s, a variety of approaches have been used in a third stage of research; it has shown a greater interest in “questions pertaining to the relationship between structure and agency”, and in cultural production such as literature and film (Kaya 2007, p. 484). While the first two stages were dominated by sociology, psychology and economics, the third stage has covered a great number of disciplines including anthropology (notably lacking from the first two stages), and subjects of study have included citizenship, discrimination and racism, socio-economic performance and, increasingly with the emergence of diasporic networks, cultural production. In this third stage, researchers have often applied a syncretic conceptualisation of culture: rather than the integrated and static “whole”, as culture was predominantly viewed in classical modernity, the syncretic view “is most obviously influenced by the increasing interconnectedness of space, and has been proposed by contemporary scholars to show that cultures emerge by mixing beyond political and geographical territories” (Kaya 2007, p. 484)

The view of cultures as separate and holistic, Kaya (2007, pp. 484-485) argues, places too great an emphasis on shared meanings and values, having a homogenising effect, and making syncretism (or bricolage, or the mixing of cultural codes from different sources) seem merely an impurity in the ‘authentic culture’. A syncretic concept of culture, on the other hand, considers that culture

does not develop along ethnically absolute lines but in complex, dynamic patterns of syncreticism; and cultural identity is considered a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’. This perspective rejects the idea of ethnic groups as pre-given social units and views migrant cultures as mixing their new set of tools, which they have acquired in the migration experience, with their previous lives and cultural repertoires. (Kaya 2007, p. 485)

The idea of the transnational is economic in origin (Ezra and Rowden 2006a, p. 1). The term was used in the 1960s in economics circles to describe organisations based in two or more nation-states; the meaning that established itself as the common definition was the sense of “an abatement of national boundaries and the development of ideas or political institutions that spanned national borders” (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 1995; see also Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). It is arguably most useful and appropriate to think of transnational in terms of the processes that create it: the “multistranded social relations that are at the base of these immigrants' daily existence [...] sustained through multiple overlapping familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political practices that transcend borders” (Blanc, Basch, and Schiller 1995, p. 684).

Definitions of transnationalism range from the very simply expressed — “living in one or more cultures and maintaining connections to both” (Stone et al. 2005, p. 381) — to the more complex. Westwood and Phizacklea use the term to refer to two simultaneous processes: “[o]n the one hand the continuing importance of the nation and the emotional attachments invested in it, and on the other hand those processes such as cross-border migration which are transnational in form” (2000, p. 2). It is essential to note the variety of *types* of connection, and that they frequently overlap or interact. Ulf Hannerz considers the term ‘transnationalism’ to be a more fitting term than the over-used ‘globalisation’; ‘transnational’ better accounts for the specificity of processes that are not in fact global, and also for the variations in size and scope of such processes.

‘Transnational’ accounts for the fact that, rather than two or more nations, “the actors may now be individuals, groups, movements, business enterprises, and in no small part it is this diversity of organization that we need to consider” (Hannerz 1996, p. 6).

From the recognition of transnational ties and networks, especially with respect to immigrants and diasporic groups, the concept of transnational spaces has emerged, and become quite a dominant way of conceptualising the cultural and social world inhabited by people — by communities — with transnational ties.

Faist’s concept of transnational social spaces links two expressions of transnationalism: on the one hand, the “doors” of nation-states, their formal external and internal measures such as entry visas, integration policies and citizenship law, and their informal factors such as cultural difference and stereotypes; on the other hand, the bridging effect of some organisations and networks that connect across national borders, such as labour recruitment, but also including informal arrangements such as “migration networks” (Faist 2000, pp. 198-199).

Transnational social spaces as defined by Faist (2000, pp. 199-200) comprise a combination of social and symbolic ties, involvement in networks, and ties to organisations in multiple states. The spaces are dynamic rather than static, and involve human and social as well as economic capital. These social spaces evince the fluidity of migration and re-migration, and show that even long-settled immigrants may hold strong ties to their country of origin; also, some activities within transnational space are outside the control of nation-states — in this respect, transnational social spaces “supplement the international space of sovereign nation-states” (Faist 2000, p. 200). That is to say, transnational space is evidently something different from, and also not necessarily in competition with, international or national structures. Ezra and Rowden note that transnationalism “presupposes” nationalism even as it “transcends” it (2006a, p.4). That is, the experience, exercise or indeed concerted project of transnationalism takes its very significance from the fact of the existence of nations, nation-states and their borders. Transnational space, like the concept of transnationalism itself, presupposes the nation and transcends it — but does not ignore it.

It is especially useful here to look again to the conceptual distinction between place and space. Perhaps the simplest definition is a comparative one: ‘space’ understood as the “cultural, economic and political practices of individual and collective actors within territories or places” and pertaining “not only to physical characteristics” but not excluding them from consideration (Faist 2004, p. 4). Another way of

understanding this differentiation is that “place is ontologically given, whereas space is discursively constructed” (Kaya 2007, p. 485). This second definition brings us closer to the idea of a constructed cinematic ‘space’, which is central to the definition of transnationalism in film. Germans of Turkish background are no longer fixed or isolated, but rather their transnational space is described in terms of flows — “continuity and passage between cultures and civilizations”; boundaries — “discontinuity and obstacles between cultures and civilizations”; and hybrids — “the syncretic character of emerging cultures, boundaries, and hybrids” (Kaya 2007, p. 498).

Transnational cinema dwells not between nations, but “in the interstices between the local and the global” (Ezra and Rowden 2006a, p. 4; see also Miller 1999). In comparison to postcolonialism in cinema studies, transnationalism brings

a more multivalenced approach to considering the impact of history on contemporary experience owing to the fact that the issues of immigration, exile, political asylum, tourism, terrorism, and technology with which it engages are all straightforwardly readable in “real world” terms [...] defined not by its colonial past (or even its neocolonial present), but by its technological future. (Ezra and Rowden 2006a, p. 5)

In cinema, space is “not merely the setting of stories but actually generates the narrative [...] Moreover, as with maps, cinema acquires a power of control by fixing in place conflicting ideas about the constitution of social space” (Konstantarakos 2000, p. 1). Although he wrote about literature rather than film, Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of “chronotope”, meaning “time-space” in Greek, is a useful insight into the temporality of space as constructed by cinema; space and time cannot be separated (Konstantarakos 2000, pp. 2-3).

The motif of travel itself has been discussed as a means of inscribing border-crossing, or transnationalism or transculturalism, into the narrative. Mazierska and Rascaroli (2006), in the introduction to their edited volume on European road movies, outline various distinctions between the different types of such films: the “urban journey” film taking place within one city is contrasted with nation-traversing or transnational journeys; the film drawing attention to changes in its multiple locations is different from the film in which the road or railway itself is the place of transformation; some films, such as the road movies of Wim Wenders’ early career, make conscious

reference to their counterparts in the American genre, while other films project a distinctly European or national space (Mazierska and Rascaroli 2006, p. 6). Burns, too, argues that “transnational travel can represent journeys of despair or, more positively, open up a ‘third space’ for the negotiation of cultural difference” (Burns 2009, p. 11).

The concept of transnationalism in migration studies has lost much of the novelty it held in the early 1990s, and in fact has come to dominate perspectives in the field; still, what this transnationalist perspective amounts to, and “the real extent of its novelty”, are unclear (Boccagni 2012, p. 118). Boccagni argues that transnationalism “has more in its potential scope for research than what has been tapped so far” and that progress is needed in three aspects provided that the transnational is considered “a continuous (if selective) variable, rather than in stark ‘either/or’ terms” (2012, p. 118). Firstly, Boccagni sees a need for a greater linking between transnationalism and globalisation studies, and an understanding of “the impact of global processes on everyday social reproduction”, especially with respect to how they may also affect non-migrants, and to differentiation between interactions locally or over distance. Secondly, there is a need to understand more precisely what is meant by transnational ties. Boccagni warns that “[d]istinct homeland references are often conflated with one another under the common rubric of transnationalism”, and outlines three different areas of emphasis for such ties: interpersonal ties between migrants and those who stayed, especially family members left behind; interactions with institutions of the home country with respect to rights, opportunities or obligations; symbolic and emotional ties that migrants have to their past lives, and attempts to reproduce aspects of it (2012, pp. 118-119). Thirdly, Boccagni argues that progress can be made with respect to migrants’ identities and sense of belonging: is identification with the (original) homeland a matter of “symbolic ethnicity”, or does it amount to “a pre-condition for transnational social practices, or as a significant issue in its own right?” (2012, p. 119).

Sökefeld writes that “sentiments of belonging, attachment to a home and ideas of a place of origin do not constitute the ‘substance’ from which diasporas – like other identity groups – are made but the codes in terms of which ‘a’ diaspora is imagined” and proposes a definition of diasporas as “*imagined transnational communities*, as imaginations of community that unite segments of people that live in territorially separated locations” (Sökefeld 2006, p. 267; emphasis in original). Diasporic communities are, like others, founded on the imagination of their existence; from a research perspective, this focus on imagination may help to avoid an essentialising

view. In any imagined community, there may be considerable variation between its members, and their personal ideas of and sense of connection to that community. Imaginations of community “are never true representations of social reality but instead cover up complexity and difference within the imagined community. Instead of mapping social life such imaginations *project* a community” (Sökefeld 2006, p. 268).

For his discussion of different expressions of alterity in the film *Lola + Bilidikid* (see Chapter 3.3), Clark (2006) adapts the term ‘transness’, from discourses about gender and sexuality. He suggests its application to describe “a moment of in-betweenness, a liminal status that may represent a point in a process of transformation from one category to another, and/or which may be(come) a new category itself – even if [...] it simultaneously reveals the instability of all categories” (2006, p. 556).

Leslie A. Adelson (who has written on Turkish-German literature, see Chapter 2.3) warns that a notion of ‘betweenness’ is limiting for discussions of Turkish-German culture; the idea that immigrants or their descendants are “between two worlds” is, Adelson argues, “designed to keep discrete worlds apart as much as it pretends to bring them together”, and ultimately succeeds in “reifying different cultures as fundamentally foreign” (2003, pp. 132-133).

As one approach for avoiding notions of ‘betweenness’ and of ‘whole’ cultures, Kaya (2007) has drawn on Deleuze and Guattari’s model of “rhizomatic space”. The rhizome is a kind of plant stem (like ginger) that generally sends out shoots from nodes along its length. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept is “a persuasive perspective: A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. [...] The “middle” does not refer to “caught betwixt and between,” but connotes a separate space in itself where, for instance, diasporic subjects, bricoleurs, cosmopolitans and hybrids dwell” (Kaya 2007, pp. 493-494). This shifting positioning is reflected also by Bozkurt, when she writes that the “flexible nature of home is revealed by crossings, transformations and reconstructions of these spaces by individuals and communities, their changing positions as insiders and outsiders, and the socio-political negotiations of difference” (2009, p. 15).

In viewing these processes, it is essential we also remember that, as with migration itself, assimilation and transnationalism have different expectations and implications according to gender. While gender must always be understood in relation to a range of social contexts, the discussion of women in particular is important because women are imagined “as the family, the community and the nation [...] This

responsibility gains a special importance with migration that connotes a threat to social, cultural and national unity and continuity” (Bozkurt 2009, p. 63, emphasis in original; see also Anthias 2003).

4.3 Feminist perspectives and film analysis

Cinema includes women as a part of the world to be portrayed, but film studies has long recognised that gender plays a significant role in the nature of representation, the construction and treatment of characters onscreen, and the recognition and positioning of the spectator in relationship to the film. Film, as a medium for disseminating or rejecting prevailing societal norms, has followed the history of women’s social roles as well as providing an arena in which personal and national anxieties around sex and gender identities can be played out. Both onscreen and in their positioning as cinema spectator, women have a relationship to film that merits particular consideration alongside, or in intersection with, other aspects of identity construction.

As Heide Schlüpmann notes (1993, p. 465), the beginnings of cinema as a technology and entertainment coincided with the stirrings of the first women’s movement. Early theoretical work on women and cinema was primarily concerned with female cinema-goers and the woman as film’s spectatorial addressee; the first major study of the presence of the female spectator was Emilie Altenloh’s dissertation *Zur Soziologie des Kino* in 1914. In early 20th Century Germany, women constituted a high percentage of the cinema audience; there was a tendency for cinema itself, still a relatively new mass cultural medium, to be characterised as feminine (Petro 1989, pp.5-9).

In more recent decades, feminism has informed cinema, not only in its themes and content (see Chapter 3.2), but in the analysis of film: the range of feminist film theory developed and expanded upon since the 1980s has been hugely influential in cinema studies (see for example Stam 2000; Chaudhuri 2006; Hansen 1993; Petro 2002; Kuhn 1994). Although this dissertation is not primarily an explicitly feminist analysis, it is nonetheless informed by feminism, including in its analysis of the three film case studies.

In her seminal essay *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema*, Laura Mulvey (1975) argued that cinema constructs the gaze of the viewer in a way that assumes a

(heterosexual) male spectator, and correspondingly makes its object the female onscreen. In the 1970s, film studies as a discipline was still in its early years and highly receptive to new ideas such as Mulvey's; her 1975 essay swiftly became a classic of film theory, both for the feminist field and more generally — it became part of the establishment to which it had initially presented an opposition, and altered approaches not just to film but to visual culture. Although Claire Johnston and other theorists also made early contributions to such discussions, Mulvey was arguably “the generator of an entire discourse” (Chaudhuri 2006, p. 121). Subsequent work has built on Mulvey's writing, to expand the analysis of the spectatorial position; theories have been developed based not only on Freudian analysis, but also on the work of French theorists Lacan, and Deleuze and Guattari.

The German *frauen und film* journal was founded by Helke Sander in 1974 (see also Chapter 3.2); its early focus was on praxis rather than theory, though over time it followed the trend of film studies in Germany towards more academic discourse (Curry 1993; Hansen 1993). Just as German cinema has been highly significant to discussions of national cinema, German women directors and ‘women's films’ have had a considerable role to play in feminist film theory and its attendant discourses.

Through the history of German cinema, there have been attempts to utilise film in discourses about women's liberation and matters considered to particularly affect women: in the 1910s about the welfare of mothers; in the 1920s about abortion. The first real connection between content and reimagining the form of the films themselves came with the new women's movement around 1970. Yet the engagement of the 1970s failed to reach a broad female audience, and became lost between the need to expound on ‘women's themes’ through film, and the desire for a radical break from dominant forms of the medium (Schlupmann 1993, p. 465).

Psychoanalysis has been central to the development of feminist film theory, but this use has also met with criticism: feminist film theorists have been accused of being too abstract and of over-generalising aspects of psychoanalysis. There have been many calls for feminist film theory to account for differences such as those around class, race, and sexuality, but as Chaudhuri notes, this is more difficult to achieve than to say, “especially in a way that acknowledges the complex relations between all these differences” (2006, p. 122).

In discussing areas for future expansion and elaboration of feminist film theories, Chaudhuri (2006, pp. 123-127) argues for the need to look beyond Hollywood,

and to acknowledge non-Western perspectives — though in a nuanced and non-essentialising way. Islamic veiling practices, for instance, imply a concept of the gaze that differs from the voyeurism discussed in Western feminist film theory. For example, Naficy (1994) explains how the predominant gaze in Iranian films relates to Deleuze's third type of looking; it is a masochistic gaze based on the idea that the person looking is more affected by the act than the person being observed. According to this Islamist view in post-revolutionary Iranian cinema,

[m]en's postulated weakness in sexual temptation by women is the source of men's pleasure. [...] Likewise, as spectators, women obtain masochistic pleasure from being 'controlled' by looks from men, and from watching women being looked at, controlled, and possessed by men. (Naficy 1994, p. 142)

Classic Hollywood cinematic style turns the spectator into a voyeur through various strategies that render the spectator invisible (that is, to the film and its inhabitants); known as 'suture', this situating of the spectator might include the use of point-of-view shots and reverse-shots. Characters do not acknowledge the audience, but the spectator's positioning within the story is encouraged and guided by directorial choices. Suture is the centre of psychoanalysis, referring in cinema to

die Interaktionen zwischen den Ausdrucksformen des filmischen Apparats, dem Schauspiel und dem betrachtenden Subjekt. Diese Interaktionen ermöglichen dem betrachtenden Subjekt Zugang zu kohärentem Sinngehalt, indem sie es auffordern oder »interpellieren«, eine Reihe wechselnder Positionen einzunehmen.⁴⁶ (Chow 2011, p. 22)

Baer presents a case that much of the history of German cinema can be accounted for under the umbrella of 'women's cinema' with its various meanings — that these vagaries “allow for a productive reading of women's cinema as a primary genre of German national cinema” (Baer 2007b, p. 159). If the new German cinema is 'Turkish', it has also been considered by some writers to be 'female' (Cooke 2012, p.

⁴⁶ “the interactions between the expressive forms of the film apparatus, the acting, and the observed subject. These interactions afford the observed subject access to a coherent meaning, by demanding or “interpellating” that it adopt a series of changing positions.”

164). We may look also to Turkish cinema, with which German films increasingly interact. Suner (2010, pp. 163-178) has shown how recent Turkish cinema shows a predominance of male characters, but also displays some awareness that it is embedded in patriarchal structures. The ‘absent women of New Turkish Cinema’, to borrow Suner’s chapter title, are not invisible in their absence.

Judith Butler’s concept of gender as performative, as introduced in *Gender Trouble* (1990), offers an expansion and complication of feminist discourses on ‘the woman’. Butler argues that “gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed” (1990, p. 25). In this understanding, gender is neither fixed nor given, but the result of repeated practices — practices that create but also *are* the identity.

This view of gender identities as performative links can be applied productively in the following film analyses, where the female identities are not only obviously and necessarily performed (as cinema characters), but on the diegetic level adopt shifting and various roles, individually and collectively. That is to say, the characters’ performing their various roles ‘as women’ is a fruitful line of analysis in these films. In turn, this performativity applies also to ethnocultural identities (see also Chapters 3.2 and 3.3).

In examining the depictions of Turkish-German women in transnationally-oriented films, it is the aim of this thesis to contextualise these characterisations and their implications not only in ‘migrant cinema’, but also in the traditions of female cultural archetypes, in particular as they have been manifested in German cinema. Though the influence of feminist film analysis is acknowledged, the analyses in Chapter 5 will primarily employ a textual approach. Taking a cue from the work of Sabine Hake (2002) and others, the film analyses are intended to be contextual as well as textual: though each film alone as a text rewards close analysis, they also exist — as do many of their spectators — within the complex social and cinematic fields discussed at length in the opening chapters.

4.4 Film selection

The three films to be studied through a close textual analysis are *Head-On* (*Gegen die Wand*, 2004) and *The Edge of Heaven* (*Auf der anderen Seite*, 2007), both

written and directed by Fatih Akin, and *When We Leave* (*Die Fremde*, 2010) written and directed by Feo Aladağ.

Since Akin directed his first feature film, *Short Sharp Shock* (*kurz und schmerzlos*, 1998; see Chapter 3.3), his position as a filmmaker has shifted from that of the promising young director of the ‘Turkish-German cinema’, to a leading director of contemporary German cinema.

Feo Aladağ was born in Austria where she studied psychology and journalism and received her doctorate from the University of Vienna. She also studied acting in Vienna and London, and later, while working in Germany attended the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin. As Gramling (2012, p. 40) observes, there has been some attention to the fact that Aladağ carries the Turkish-origin surname of her husband Züli Aladağ (director of *Wut*, see Chapter 3.3), but is a pale-skinned blonde whose own immigration background is from Vienna. Further, Feo Aladağ’s career prior to *When We Leave* had been in journalism and making short films or promotional material for Amnesty International. In preparation for making *When We Leave*, she undertook research and interviews. Since Aladağ is new to feature filmmaking, there is accordingly much less literature about her than about Akin; however, Aladağ has been quite explicit about her intentions for *When We Leave*, in interviews about the film.

It must be observed that Akin’s profile as a German director finds its counterpoint in his reputation, evident in some Turkish media and discourse, as a son of the Turkish diaspora, that is, as a ‘German(-born) Turk’. Savaş Arslan (2009), discussing the new cinema of Turkey, mentions Akin in the same context as other young Turkish (-background) filmmakers including Kutluğ Ataman and Ferzan Özpetek, as Turkish diasporic filmmakers. The biographies of Ataman, Özpetek and Akin are considerably different: Ataman and Özpetek are Turkish-born and raised and have spent significant portions of their careers abroad from their home country — Ataman studied in the US but has resided in Istanbul again later in life, and Özpetek has been based in Italy since his student days. Nonetheless, Arslan groups the three of them as Turkish diasporic directors in a liminal position that “highlights the ambiguities and opportunities of multiple belonging and multiple ethnic and cultural affiliations”; their “preoccupation with travel, border crossings and identity politics represents a significant new departure” (Arslan 2009, pp. 89-90). Here, Savaş Arslan invokes Elsaesser’s notion of “double occupancy” (Elsaesser 2005, pp. 108-130) to describe these filmmakers and the liminal position they hold between Turkish and other cinemas; this, Arslan argues,

enables the filmmakers to contribute new perspectives and open new dialogues with Turkish cinema (2009, p. 90).

There are some clear similarities of setting in the three films to be examined in the following chapter. The storyline of each film begins in one country and ends in another: in *Head-On* the narrative takes the protagonists from Germany to Turkey; in *The Edge of Heaven*, characters travel both from Germany to Turkey and in the reverse direction. *When We Leave* begins with the return migration of a German national from Turkey to Germany. The respective narrative structures mean that each film ‘begins’ in Turkey, even though their respective plotlines do not.

The films directed by Fatih Akin can also reasonably be judged to have had a more wide-reaching impact on the collective consciousness of the German population than other German films in recent years with similar aspects of plot, theme or character. The work of Thomas Arslan — a Berlin-based director whose father was Turkish and whose characters in the main have been, like Arslan himself, Germans of Turkish background — offers fertile ground for comparison with Akin’s work, but such comparisons would always be tempered by acknowledgement of considerable differences between the two directors, their respective films, and their reception and profile.

Early in his career, Akin told the *Spiegel* (Voigt 1998, p. 261), “Ich will weg von diesem Ghetto-Ding” (I want to get away from this ghetto thing) — and he arguably has done that. In his case, there is clearly an element of adopting a strong sense of transnationality, often manifested in actual journeys undertaken by his characters (see also Chapters 2.3 and 3.3).

When *Head-On* won the Golden Bear at the 2004 Berlinale, it secured Akin’s status as a leading German director — amid great cause for celebration that after eighteen years, the Golden Bear had finally been won again by a domestic film. The win and media echo around it helped to re-position Akin from a transnational, marginal filmmaker to an *auteur* firmly at the centre of German cinema; the significance of Akin’s own background was recast as the significance of a ‘cosmopolitan’ perspective in German film (see Gramling 2010, pp. 358-359).

Akin has readily been identified as a filmmaker in the *auteur* tradition: he frequently writes or co-writes the screenplays of his films, works with largely the same crew from film to film, and recurring themes and milieus run through his work. Though arguably the most high-profile of the directors of the ‘Turkish-German cinema’, Akin is

frequently named simply as one of a new generation of German directors. Eric Rentschler, for instance, distinguishes between

pliers of a liminal cinema like Thomas Arslan, Kutluğ Ataman, Lars Becker and Eoin Moore who survey the multicultural realities of a post-wall community, [and] ambitious new arrivals like Tom Tykwer [...] and Fatih Akin [...] with a desire to fathom the psychic and social makeup of today's young Germans [...]. (2000, p. 275)

Though many German directors — Oliver Hirschbiegel, Robert Schwentke, Mennan Yapo — have worked on Hollywood productions in the past decade, Fatih Akin says he has no plans to follow this example, in spite of having had offers. He explains: “I come from this European auteur thing. [...] I'm producing the stuff I'm doing, I'm writing the stuff I'm doing, I'm directing the stuff I'm doing. In the end it's me on the front line, you know?” (quoted in Kulish 2008, p. 9). In the same interview, Akin does reiterate his love of American films, saying “If you love the cinema, you have to love America.” This interview was conducted shortly before Akin went to the US to film one of the 18 vignettes in the collaborative film project *New York, I Love You* (2008) (Kulish 2008, p. 9).

Fachinger (2007, p. 254) describes Akin as a “representative of independent transnational cinema”, citing his different funding sources, his founding of his own production company, and the three (at least) audiences he addresses: German, Turkish, and Turkish-German. Akin has also worked, through the company Corazón, as a producer on the film *Takva* (2006) by Turkish director Özer Kiziltan; Kiziltan has said “If Fatih wasn't involved in the project, it wouldn't be that successful on the international side [...] If you showed the film with the first script to producers here, they say you can't find the financing. Now everybody is saying they wish it was their film” (quoted in Kulish 2008, p. 9). In the same year that Germany selected *The Edge of Heaven* for competition, Turkey chose *Takva* as its Oscar foreign-language entry, so that Akin was represented with entries from both countries.

What do we know of Fatih Akin's personal views? His own mother was a primary school teacher who continued to work after migrating to Germany. In an interview for his film *Solino* (2002), about an Italian immigrant family in Duisburg, Akin commented that in Italian culture, as in Turkish, it is really the women who are in control; that this aspect of Italian culture was one he could relate to from his own

experiences. An early example of the strong woman in Akin's films can be seen in his short film *Weed* (*Getürkt*, 1996), in which Akin himself plays a young German staying with his mother, who's bought herself a holiday home back in Turkey. He has to spend his days weeding the garden for her; the film is interspersed with scenes of her ranting at him, often in close-up, mostly about his laziness. It's exaggerated for comedic effect, but nonetheless an example of how the perspective from which Akin tells his stories is far removed from the pity which Helma Sanders felt for her female immigrant protagonist Shirin (see Chapter 3.2).

For his part, Akin has often expressed frustration or boredom at any preoccupation with his identity as a Turkish-German filmmaker. In one interview around the time of the release of *The Edge of Heaven*, he said: "Imagine I'm a painter, and we speak more about the background of the paintings than the foreground of the paintings, or we speak about the framing but not about the painting. [...] For sure this is frustrating, and for sure that's why I will leave it behind sooner or later" (in Kulish 2008, p. 9). Yet for many critics, Akin's own identity is central to the authenticity and value they assign to his filmmaking: "Having straddled a hyphen for all his thirty-four years, the Turkish-German filmmaker Fatih Akin has a right to tell crossover stories" (Klawans 2008, p. 51). Such a view of ascribed 'ownership' is too simplistic, overlooking as it does the variety of experiences that different filmmakers may have. Though Akin was crucial to the recognition of a new chapter in German cinema, 'Turkish-German' cinematic space owes its existence to more than only those filmmakers with personal migration (or 'post-migration') experience.

Like New York, London, Berlin or numerous other cities, Hamburg lends itself to many varied cinematic interpretations. This can be seen in Akin's work, for instance, in the difference between *Short Sharp Shock* (1998) and *In July* (2000). The latter, a road movie beginning in Hamburg, shows Altona as a collection of sun-drenched walls and lantern-lit nighttime street parties, its inhabitants preparing for their summer holidays; *Short Sharp Shock* (see 3.3) takes place mostly at night, on shadowy footpaths and in alleyways. In two of their most emotional moments, the characters sit on the edge of the harbour, watching the ships and cranes, at the border of their district but unable to leave it. When one of the characters does leave, the journey happens off-screen, as though Altona is the entire world — certainly it is the entire world of this particular film; but Akin increasingly takes the audience on the journey with the characters, and in

the two Akin films analysed in Chapter 6, physical journeys between Germany and Turkey are undertaken by Germans with and without Turkish background.

Akin has plans to make a biographic film about the life of Kurdish filmmaker Yilmaz Güney, who directed *Yol* in 1982 (Jaafar 2008). Previously, Akin has compared himself to Istanbul — half in Europe and half in Asia (Riding 2005); he also has said it is important to him to convey something of Turkey for his “Brüder und Schwestern hier” in Germany, expressing a desire that *Crossing the Bridge* (his new film at the time of the interview) reach this group of Germans, “die sich so gerne als Türken outen, indem sie Halbmonde am Hals tragen, die wissen ja so wenig von der aktuellen Türkei”⁴⁷ (Bax 2005). Akin is a self-confessed fan of Martin Scorsese’s work, and as Nicodemus has very aptly put it: “Hamburg-Altona became Fatih Akin’s Little Italy” (Nicodemus 2007).

Founded as a fishing village, the Altona district of Hamburg lies to the west of the city centre, and is bordered on its southern side by the busy shipping harbour on the River Elbe. Until a law of 1st April 1937, Altona was a separate city, having belonged to Denmark for part of its history, then Prussia, and Altona still maintains something of its own distinctive identity as a part of Hamburg, but also geographically removed from the town centre. The old town of Altona has been something of a home to Hamburg’s minorities. From the late 16th Century a Jewish community developed in Hamburg and Altona, and being under different rule and offering equal rights, Altona at times became a refuge for Jewish families forced out of Hamburg. In the first half of the 20th Century, a small but distinguishable Chinese quarter existed in Hamburg, around the border of Sankt Pauli and Altona. Beginning in the mid-60s, Altona became home to many Turkish workers arriving as *Gastarbeiter* (see Chapter 2, especially 2.1). Eventually Altona became part of Hamburg, and the administrative Bezirk Altona now includes a number of suburbs — Groß Flottbek, Ottensen — including Altona itself. To its east, Altona borders onto Sankt Pauli with its red-light district, which lies in the next Bezirk, while in the west lies the more affluent suburb Othmarschen.

Aladağ’s film is set in Berlin, in the area of the largest Turkish-speaking (and Turkish-background) population outside Turkey itself. The district of Kreuzberg (*When We Leave* is set in the Kreuzberg and Neukölln border district known as Kreuzkölln) features in many well-known films of the ‘Turkish-German’ milieu (see Chapter 3.3).

⁴⁷ “[Akin ’s] brothers and sisters here [...] who so gladly out themselves as Turks by wearing the crescent moon around their neck, [but] they know so little of contemporary Turkey.”

Kreuzberg was a suburb in West Berlin during the four decades of the two German states, and when the Berlin Wall stood, Kreuzberg was bound by it on three sides. The area has high unemployment and projects a strong image of both disadvantage and bohemian creativity; the low rents historically have attracted a high number of students and artists, as well as the area having a high number of immigrants of many backgrounds including Turkish.

Like much of Akin's work, *When We Leave* has received a generally very favourable reception from film critics and at film festivals. Due to its subject matter and the story that unfolds, *When We Leave* could be seen as another film in the tradition of women falling victim to patriarchal traditions in their Turkish families. In its position as a recent (2010) and noted film, *When We Leave* is worth examining for the extent to which it adds new perspectives to this trope.

Films set in Hamburg-Altona or Berlin-Kreuzberg could hardly present anything other than a multicultural view of Germany; such films reflect the reality of their locations, which can be viewed as focal points for reshaping German national identity. While intercultural encounters could feasibly occur or be staged anywhere, it is urban space that "offers a multitude of casual, often strange encounters [and] can be seen as a microcosm of a world increasingly determined by mobility and rootlessness, by the clash or amalgamation of cultures [...]" (Göktürk 2000b, p. 65).

The three film analyses in the following chapter (with a comparative discussion in Chapter 6) focus on the female characters in particular, and their relationships both to each other, and to the male characters. The construction of gender identities is relational, but it is acknowledged here that the gender binary has its limitations just as other binary identity categories do (see particularly the discussion of *Lola + Bilidikid* in Chapter 3.3). The analysis of female-male interactions in the following chapter revolves primarily around family (and family-like) dynamics and (hetero-)sexual relationships, in which performative gender identities are linked closely to roles within the family.

The approach to analysis is above all a textual one, considering the elements of production design, dialogue, narrative, the *mise-en-scène*, soundtrack and camera work. My own responses to the films, or to particular elements of them, are necessarily subjective at times; I am conscious, too, of my position as an Australian 'outsider' to the Turkish German spaces these films depict. Attention is also paid to the positioning of the spectator, particularly with regard to the female characters. This thesis does not employ a feminist methodology of film analysis, but is nonetheless informed by the

perspectives that feminist film criticism has brought to considering how (particularly female) characters and the spectator are positioned.

The three analyses and subsequent discussion also seek to explore how the films are embedded transnationally, through intertextual references and their reception, as well as through their narrative structures and depictions of place and space. Just as the transnational challenges the national but does not entirely supersede it (see Chapter 4.2), the acknowledgement of both German and Turkish influences (in the lives of the characters, or on the films themselves) can never suggest that ‘German’ and ‘Turkish’ are homogenous categories.

The three films analysed were released within a timespan of seven years; it is not suggested that they should show an evolution within themselves, but rather that they provide three well-known examples from German cinema of the past decade. They have garnered attention through various combinations of (relative) box office success, critical success (awards and film reviews) and academic study. It is during this decade that ‘Turkish-German filmmaking’ has shifted from the margins to the centre of perceptions of German cinema (see Chapter 3.3). As will be shown in Chapters 5 and 6, the films provide multiple means of comparison and contrast, even in their reception.

5. Film analyses

5.1 *Head-On/Gegen die Wand* (dir. Fatih Akin, 2004)

Screenplay: Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Rainer Klausmann; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Klaus Maeck; **Cast:** Catrin Striebeck, Sibel Kekilli, Birol Ünel, Meltem Cumbul, Güven Kiraç, Demir Gökçül; **Producer:** Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel; **Production Company:** Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with corazón international/Hamburg; **Length:** 120 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Fatih Akin's *Gegen die Wand/Head-On* is a seminal German film in its vivid depictions of multicultural urban spaces — both in Germany and Turkey — and its creation of an iconically and insistently strong-willed heroine, who finds her rebellion subdued not by her Turkish-background family in Germany, but ultimately by maturity and motherhood in Istanbul. While all Akin's fiction films have dealt at least peripherally with the experiences of Turkish Germans or other migrant minorities, the theme is handled particularly directly and radically in *Head-On* (Neubauer 2011, p. 224).

The female protagonist, Sibel, is twenty years old, unemployed, and lives in her family's apartment under the watchful eyes of her older brother and their Turkish immigrant parents. At the beginning of the film, she is in a psychiatric clinic in the north of Hamburg, having attempted suicide. While there, she meets the 44-year-old Cahit, who likewise has attempted suicide — driving his car at speed against a wall, as seen in the film's opening sequence. Recognising by his name that Cahit is also Turkish, Sibel asks him to enter into a sham marriage with her, so that she can move out of her family home and live her life the way she wants to — going to clubs, dancing, drinking, sleeping with different men — under the protective guise of being a respectable married woman. Sibel threatens to kill herself if Cahit will not agree to it; he acquiesces and they have a formal wedding, and she moves into his small apartment. Sibel gets a job as a hairdresser in the salon owned by Cahit's occasional lover, Maren. As Sibel lives out her plans of going out to clubs and sleeping with whomever she chooses, Cahit gradually realises he is in love with Sibel, and his jealousy leads him to explode at the taunts of one of her previous lovers, accidentally killing him. Cahit is sentenced to several years in prison. Sibel vows to wait for him, but her family has learned of her lifestyle and her father disowns her for bringing shame on the family; her

brother confronts her in such a threatening manner that Sibel knows her life is at stake if she stays. She takes shelter for a night in the small apartment of Cahit's friend Seref, before leaving the next day to stay with her cousin Selma in Istanbul.

In Istanbul, Sibel is given a job as a cleaner in her cousin's hotel, but quickly becomes deeply dissatisfied with her life there. She begins recreating the lifestyle she had in Hamburg, but now with a more desperate and joyless edge: going out late to nightclubs, taking drugs and drinking heavily. In one climactic sequence, she drinks to the point of unconsciousness, and is raped on the floor of a nightclub, by the owner after hours. As she leaves afterwards, she passes three men in an alleyway, one of whom makes a suggestive comment as she walks by. She yells back and runs at them, head-butting one of them and kicking him as he lies on the ground; they assault her brutally, and she seems likely to die. A taxi appears, and the headlight flare fills the screen as it fades to white.

The next sequence shows Cahit leaving prison in Germany, showing that some years have passed. He is met by Seref, and tells him he is going to Istanbul to find Sibel. In Istanbul, Cahit meets with Selma at her hotel, and convinces her to put him in contact with Sibel. Sibel, now mother to a young child, Pamuk, leaves her daughter with Selma and spends a weekend with Cahit in his hotel room, where they make love and he invites her, with her daughter, to come with him to Mersin. Sibel returns to her apartment and begins packing, but changes her mind; her partner and daughter's voices can be heard in the next room. The film ends with Cahit waiting at a bus station for Sibel, who does not join him; alone, he boards a bus to Mersin.

The image, in the opening sequence, of Cahit crashing his car into a wall, is picked up in the original German title *Gegen die Wand* (Against (directional) the Wall); Akin has expressed the implication of this title as, "You run at a wall to break through it". The English title *Head-On* captures the same sense of protestation and determination tinged with recklessness or defiance. In the wall motif, Landwehr (2009, pp. 77-78) sees a reference to the Berlin Wall, and a linking of Akin's film to the liminality of the former divided German space into West and East (straddling Eastern and Western Europe); by extension, then, the wall metaphor hints at the meeting of East and West in Istanbul. The German and English titles combined, then, suggest the rebellion of the film's protagonists, yet also precisely the breaking down of barriers, and transgression of cultural-national binaries, that the film explores and constitutes.

In 2004, *Head-On* became the first German film in 18 years to win the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival; it subsequently won numerous awards at other festivals in Europe and elsewhere, including some awards for its lead actors. Widely well-received by film critics, *Head-On* also proved to be popular with audiences. It had 750,000 cinema admissions in German cinemas, and captured considerable attention in theatrical releases abroad.

Akın's win was celebrated in Turkey as well as in Germany, and his new fame brought with it something of an expectation that he could be a representative for Turkish-Germans, a spokesperson beyond his filmmaking role. Dieter Kosslick, the director of the Berlin International Film Festival at the time, felt that the film's win showed "a little bit also the change of our country and the change of our people's mood about people who have come from different countries" (in Kulish 2008, p. 9).

Jaafar describes *Head-On* as "the first ethnic film to be both a box-office and critical success in Germany" and saw it as signalling a "new acceptance of multiculturalism. On screen, at least, Germans are now ready to meet immigrants they have long walked past on the street" (2006, p. 27). While this seems somewhat overstated, at the same time it satisfactorily captures the degree of significance ascribed to the film, and the level of attention the film received upon its release, as well as subsequently in academic work. Jaafar (Jaafar 2006, p. 27) compares the role of *Head-On* to that of *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985, dir. Stephen Frears) that portrayed a Pakistani immigrant family and racism in Britain, or *Hate (La Haine)*, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995), which featured a trio of protagonists from three different backgrounds, set in a *banlieu* in France; in the Netherlands, the most popular Dutch film in 2005 was the comedy *Shouf Shouf Habibi!* about first- and second-generation Moroccan immigrants.

The commercial success of *Head-On* may owe at least as much to the film's style and the quality of Akın's filmmaking, as it does to Germany's increased embrace of its own diversity. Lane (2005, p. 46) hints at this when wondering how best to describe the film in his review: he writes that Akın could be lauded "for laying bare the lives of Turkish Gastarbeiter in modern Germany, but that announcement of social worthiness is enough to send most moviegoers fleeing into the arms of [US action star] Vin Diesel". In its stylistic elements, and much of its narrative, *Head-On* is quite different from the quiet realism and social critique, the comedic intercultural play, or the

genre film, that one might have expected from ‘Turkish-German cinema’ previously (see Chapter 3.3).

The film and its female star continued to make headlines when it was revealed by the *Bild* newspaper that Sibel Kekilli’s prior film experience had been in hardcore pornography. Like her on-screen parents, Kekilli’s real-life parents disowned her. Specifically, the *Bild* published film stills, from the porn films, of a nude Kekilli, and ran further stories over the subsequent few days. Other media were less sensationalistic, but of course also reported the story and thus contributed to the attention. The film seemed to have “anticipated the reality” (Akin 2011, p. 141). It is interesting to compare this reaction with the outrage, from some sections of Germany society, over Hildegard Knef’s role in *The Sinner* (see Chapter 3.2); in the case of Sibel Kekilli, though, the media storm was not the expression of outrage, but of prurient interest in the scandal and the pornography, while also reporting on the outrage of Kekilli’s family, representing the conservative side.

It was reported in Germany that conservative forces in Turkey threatened a boycott, and that Akin and Kekilli would have bodyguards when attending the Turkish premiere — but the reaction in Turkey “expressed itself not through rejection, but lead to a paparazzi cult” (Akin 2011, p. 141). Akin adds that *Head-On* was received as a Turkish film, and had around 300,000 viewers in Turkey (2011, p. 141). The film was aimed at Turkish-German, other German, and Turkish audiences, and was certainly successful in both Germany and Turkey (and elsewhere). Some Turkish-Germans had concerns about the linking of domestic violence to the Turkish immigrant family in the film:

The German-Turkish audience was very divided. Half of the reactions were very positive. Some people say, “We can identify with that. It’s my story.” But we had a lot of people who were really angry about it, saying, “Why do you just show the bad attitudes of our society? Or how can you show Turkish women naked in the film?” (Akin in Mitchell 2005)

A review of the film by the author Feridun Zaimoğlu (see Chapter 2.3) emphasises the positive responses: “Überall im Lande feierten die Türken den neuen König von Deutschland. [...] Es war die Zeit der großen Gefühle und der symbolischen Gesten, und endlich konnte man, erschöpft von den lähmenden Debatten, sich einfach

nur mal freuen”⁴⁸ (2004, p. 209). He goes on to ask “Läßt sich aus der Erfolgsgeschichte Fatih Akins eine Münze schlagen? Wie normal ist das deutsch-türkische Verhältnis vier Dekaden nach der ersten Einwanderungswelle?”⁴⁹ (Zaimoğlu 2004, p. 209)

The film manages to be unflinchingly ‘realistic’ in some of what it depicts, and in its unadorned view of the Hamburg-Altona milieu, while also, in some other aspects, conveying a heightened melodrama and punk-tinged self-conscious style. As Falcon notes, both Sibel and Cahit recover from a number of injuries, including attempted suicides and self-harm (2005, p. 52). Akin employs a distinctive directorial approach in *Head-On* that is like a heightened version of his work up to that point, but one that he would seem to turn away from in *The Edge of Heaven* (see Chapter 5.2). In its stylistic devices and some of its content, *Head-On* is “nothing if not operatic in its gestures. In its febrile, raging passions, *Head-On* seems more a symptom of the sociocultural maladies it tackles than a diagnosis of them — and is all the better for that” (Falcon 2005, p. 52). In a later review for *The Edge of Heaven*, Jaafar refers to *Head-On* as “a sexy, blood-stained punk love poem that remains arguably the best single depiction of Muslims living in the west” (2008, p. 9); yet in *Sibel and Cahit*, the film has two lead characters who, outwardly at least, express no religious conviction. It is, rather, some other characters who invoke religion — though frequently intermingled with cultural traditions.

While the reception of *Head-On* has, unsurprisingly, focused on its significance as a Turkish-German story, there also are other axes of transnationalism at work more subtly. The love story at the heart of *Head-On* links to long-standing literary tradition that has reached into many countries, invoking other stories such as *Romeo and Juliet* or the Persian story of *Leyla and Majnun*; in this respect, *Head-On* is arguably “more universal than supposed ethnical or social markers might suggest” — though much of the reception has focused on these (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 87). Akin originally wrote *Head-On* as a romantic comedy in the style of the US film *Green Card* (dir. Peter Weir, 1990), but rewrote it several times over the years; he was influenced by the aftermath of

⁴⁸ “Everywhere in the land, Turks were celebrating the new king of Germany [...] It was the time of big feelings and of symbolic gestures, and finally, exhausted from tiring debates, one could simply be glad for once.”

⁴⁹ “Can one make much currency from the success story of Fatih Akin? How normal is the German-Turkish relationship four decades after the first wave of immigration?”

the attacks of September 11th, 2001, as well as his own defiance after the poor critical reaction to *Solino* (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 85, see also footnote).

In Sibel, *Head-On* features the most complete and complex of Akin's female characters, certainly up to that point, and arguably since (compare also with Chapter 5.2). As one of the film's two lead characters, Sibel goes through a process of rebellion and maturation that lends coming-of-age overtones to the film's story. As the film begins, she already has the self-confidence — motivated by frustration — to ask Cahit, a stranger at the time, to marry her. The film begins (after the first Istanbul vignette) with Cahit's story: he is seen clearing bottles in the Fabrik (Factory) live music venue, then drinking heavily, rejecting the advances of his occasional lover Maren, and then attempting to kill himself. When the film shifts to the clinic, Sibel is introduced suddenly and in a visually powerful way — necessary to establish her as an equal protagonist to Cahit. Even in this first appearance to the audience, Sibel subverts expectations of her as an immigrant woman onscreen. She is first seen not in context within the room or in relation to Cahit, but in close-up looking directly to the camera (at Cahit, at the viewer). Sibel's hair falls around her face, her red lipstick is noticeable, and she smiles gently, knowingly. After Cahit's psychiatrist appointment, Sibel speaks to him bluntly, confirming that he is Turkish (she has heard his name called earlier) and asking him to marry her, further underlining her active rather than passive role (Naiboğlu 2010, pp. 78-79). Her submissiveness around her father and brother makes a striking contrast: when her family visits her in the clinic, they sit in relative silence, and Sibel keeps her eyes lowered and head bowed slightly. Her suicide attempt is shameful behaviour in their eyes, as according to Islamic belief. Her father scolds her, and her brother Yilmaz threatens to kill her himself if her behaviour causes more stress to their father.⁵⁰

This family scene at the clinic establishes the strict gender and generational roles within Sibel's family, with everyone listening to the word of the father. Sibel and her mother only speak freely after Yilmaz and his father have left, when Sibel frees her hair from its elastic, and then she and her mother light cigarettes. In the presence of her father and brother, Sibel wears her hair pulled straight back with an elastic; in the other early scenes, she wears her wavy hair loose around her face, and when talking with

⁵⁰ The air of contempt for women, and barely-controlled violence, is foreshadowed by the first dialogue in the clinic sequence: two men sit between Cahit and Sibel in the waiting room, with one telling the other he is in the clinic because his wife is afraid of him — he follows this declaration with threatening language that suggests her fear may be well-founded.

Cahit outdoors, we see her pull the elastic from her hair to release it. As Naiboğlu (2010, p. 79) observes, Sibel's mannered change of appearance echoes the title character's ritualised adjustments to her clothing in *Yasemin* (see Chapter 3.2).

When Sibel and Cahit meet for an evening drink outside the clinic, it becomes clear how aware of her own sexuality Sibel is, and how determined she is to pursue her own desires, sexual and otherwise. She explains that her nose was broken once when her brother hit her, “weil er mich beim Händchenhalten erwischt hat” (because he caught me holding hands [with a boy]). She draws Cahit's attention to her breasts — “Wie findest du meine Titten? Hast du schon mal so geile Titten gesehen?” (How do you like my tits? Have you ever seen such great tits?). She tells him, “Ich will leben, Cahit. Ich will tanzen, ich will ficken — und nicht nur mit einem Typen. Verstehst du mich? (I want to live, I want to dance, I want to fuck — and not just with one guy. You get me?) When Cahit, again, dismisses her marriage idea, she snaps at him in anger. Calmly and swiftly, she smashes her beer bottle and uses it to cut her wrist, finally causing Cahit to spring into action and wrap a cloth around the bleeding. Sibel seems at once self-possessed and determined to enjoy her life, and so desperate as to be inured to her own pain (see also Neubauer 2011, pp. 232-233).

Yet Sibel's desires for herself do not outweigh her commitment to her family, particularly to her mother. In fact, no matter the degree to which she feels stifled, she does everything to fulfil her role as a ‘Turkish daughter’, and the obligations to her family she recognises as part of that role. Sibel ensures Cahit goes with her, having been married six months, to finally visit her brother Yilmaz at a dinner at his house; family connections must be maintained, especially to avoid arousing suspicions about Sibel's marriage or husband. Sibel later tells Cahit that her mother was the reason she ultimately did not run away despite having saved the money to do so. Later, before leaving for Istanbul, Sibel stops and says goodbye to her mother while the father is out of the apartment. Sibel's proposed marriage of convenience makes sense in the context of her wish to maintain her connection to family and not disrupt these relationships. In this respect, Sibel's plans present a clear contrast to the break from family suggested by the ending of *Yasemin* (see Chapter 3.2).

Sibel's relationship with her mother, Birsen, illustrates the role of mothers in the socialisation of children into cultural norms and familial expectations. The relationship with her mother seems close, although they share little screen time. Their conversations within the film take place only when the men in their family are not present. Not only

do the two of them share a parent-child bond, but “[t]he repression coming from the mere presence of the males in the family causes solidarity between the female members” (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 81). After Sibel’s father and brother have left the cafeteria of the psychiatric clinic, Birsen and Sibel stay sitting together and each light a cigarette. Sibel says she hoped her suicide attempt would cause her father and brother to leave her alone; Birsen responds, “I never could teach you anything”. Birsen’s role in the family is destined to be Sibel’s role in her own family one day; it is the mother’s task to prepare Sibel, in more than one sense of the word, for this role. When Sibel is later disowned by her father and brother and her photos are burned in the kitchen sink, a medium long shot with melancholic music shows Sibel’s mother protesting against it and trying in vain to rescue the photos — her key moment of resistance, where she otherwise quietly acquiesces. The scene of the photos burning, Eren (2012, p. 183) argues, also signals Sibel’s permanent break with her family, and acts as a cathartic process for both Sibel and the viewer (through the tragic quality underlined by the music across this sequence).

The character of Selma, Sibel’s cousin from Istanbul, is crucial as a means of comparison between women in urban parts of Turkey and the women of the Turkish diaspora in Germany. The role is played by Meltem Cumbul, a film and TV star in Turkey. Specifically, it is through Selma that *Head-On* shows that this transnational Turkish culture is as heterogenic as any another group of people. Through Selma, the film completely dispels the binary according to which Turkey as a country is assumed (monolithically) to be more backward than Germany. When Selma comes from Istanbul to Hamburg for Sibel’s wedding, she is dismayed that Sibel is marrying, in Selma’s view, ‘a bum’. There are, Selma says, other choices Sibel could have made to leave the family home — for example, going to university in another city. Sibel notes wryly that she didn’t finish high school. It is not clear what the reasons were for this, and the extent to which this had any connection to her upbringing or background⁵¹, or whether Sibel was an ‘outsider’ in school as elsewhere. The scenes with this cousin Selma are noteworthy for the pragmatism with which Sibel’s future and options are discussed.

In Istanbul, it is clear that Selma is leading the sort of life not available to Sibel in Hamburg. Selma is part of the management of a major hotel, and it’s through her that Sibel finds employment as a hotel room cleaner. In a letter heard in voiceover, Sibel

⁵¹ See Chapter 3.3 on the under-representation of Turkish-background students in school completions and university attendance.

tells Cahit that while she used to admire Selma, now she only has contempt for her. This attitude comes to a head when Sibel moves out of Selma's apartment to live with a bartender who supplies her with opium. Sibel tells Selma that she is sick of just living to work, and that Selma's preoccupation with her work is "probably the reason you're divorced." While understandably motivated by a great degree of bitterness about her current circumstances, this commentary and the depiction of Selma's career-focused lifestyle serve to remind of the importance of avoiding simplified categories, and that freedom is about individual choice rather than merely the 'freedom' to conform to particular norms of emancipation.

Another key female character is Maren, who provides both a point of contrast and comparison to Sibel (and Selma), and with her non-Turkish background further helps to set the frame of cultural reference beyond ideas of 'Turkish women' and 'German women'. Maren is like Cahit's female counterpart: she is around the same age, has known him since the days when his wife was still alive, and dresses in a similar punk-influenced or hard rock fashion. It is she who first notices that Cahit is happy — because, as she tells him, "Du fickst besser" (You fuck better) — which the audience knows is due to Sibel's influence in his home and life.

Maren also enjoys a liberation that encompasses her self-employment, her sexual freedom, and her single status (as opposed to Sibel's more restricted choice between remaining in the family home or being married). In this respect, Maren is one role model for Sibel. The other is Selma, who is also financially independent and lives alone (is divorced), but who seems to have no personal relationships or social life alongside her work. Maren represents a certain ideal of a liberated Western woman, while Selma mimics only aspects of it (Naiboğlu 2010, pp. 84-85). This could be seen, as Naiboğlu suggests, as an oscillation between female and male gender roles, as Sibel "unsettles and resettles the cultural and sexual binaries by performing both sides of the opposition, constantly negotiating the subordinate position assigned to her" before finally making her own decision to stay (Naiboğlu 2010, pp. 84-85). Alternatively or additionally, Sibel might be seen as embodying two different views of the Oriental woman (see Lutz 1991, also Chapter 3.3): early in the film, she is overtly sexual, expressing her desires to Cahit and sleeping with different men; in her dancing and flirting at clubs, she is performing a modern-day seduction routine. By the end of the film, she has adopted the cultural-historically contrasting role of mother and wife.

Given the religious-political-cultural significance with which the headscarf has been burdened in German discourse and cinema, it is something of a new perspective that Sibel's parents, though holding quite religious views, present as urban rather than rural and traditional. Sibel's mother, with her unveiled and blonde hair, is visually far removed from the mother of *Lola + Bilidikid*, or Anam's disapproving sister-in-law (see Chapter 3.3). By not using the headscarf in the symbolic way of some other German films, Fatih Akin manages to step away from the discourse in which it is argued that the headscarf signifies a barrier to integration, or it becomes shorthand for Turkish-Muslim women— and the Turkish community— in Germany. Hatice Ayten, herself a filmmaker (including *Ohneland*, 1995; *Out of Istanbul*, 2005), has questioned whether Sibel really experiences liberation through her marriage, since it is manifested in her sex life and dependent upon her interaction with men. Ayten considers that Akin wants to escape the “headscarf as a clichéd symbol of non-integration” but that his offered alternative is inflexible (in Gass 2004). This question of whether old stereotypes or clichés are simply being replaced with new ones is also especially pertinent to *When We Leave* (see Chapter 5.3; on ‘dealers’ and ‘gangsters’, see also Chapter 3.3). Even if *Head-On* avoids over-burdening the *hijab* with symbolic meaning, the film still constantly employs, in other ways, the taken-for-granted shorthand of clothing choices as reflective of personality and identity.

Sibel's wedding, when Cahit agrees to it, is conducted in an outwardly traditional manner: Sibel dons a full-skirted white dress, makeup and bridal veil. The symbolism of the wedding dress — connoting purity and romance as well as the redemptive ascension into marriage for the woman (see Chapter 2.3) — is contrasted with Cahit's cursing at Sibel when he has to dance, and with their use of cocaine in the anteroom during the proceedings. As well as providing one of the film's moments that is close to comedy (see Neubauer 2011, p. 227), the wedding sequence underlines Sibel's ability to use tradition as a mere performance, covering her pursuit of her own desires. Sibel's ‘rebellion’ is embodied in the way she quickly changes her appearance after moving into Cahit's apartment. She wears tight jeans and fitted tops and skirts; wears her hair in a new way, straightened and loose; wears dark eye make-up; and gets a navel piercing (and later a tattoo). She snorts cocaine before going out clubbing, where she dances and picks up men for one-night stands. In Istanbul, Sibel's clothing and appearance go through another change. When she arrives at the airport and is collected by her cousin, Sibel's hair has already been cropped short, a sharp visual

change marking the abrupt change in her life. For her work in the hotel, she wears the maid's uniform. In her life in Istanbul away from work, she dresses in dark and drab colours, and in loose trousers and jackets. When going out, she still outlines her eyes with thick black makeup, but here it seems almost like war paint. These changes in appearance, especially at three points throughout the film, signify not only the new chapters in her life, but partly a way of asserting her own power over her body and subjectivity. Her new haircut, modified wardrobe, her navel piercing and her tattoo (as appears in later scenes, after Sibel has mentioned wanting one), all stem from her new independence, but also perhaps involve some mimicry of Maren, her new employer — as Sibel tells Cahit, she thinks Maren is a really cool woman (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 84).

In the final sequences of the film, after Cahit's release from prison, the passage of time is suggested with further changes in appearance. It becomes clear that Sibel entered a new phase of her life after the brutal attack at the hands of the three men. Her hair is cropped short in a different, more gamine style than the punkish crop of her early days in Istanbul; her face is mostly free of make-up, and she wears glasses. She looks not merely somewhat older — as she doubtlessly is — but calmer and more subdued, her appearance no longer an attention-grabbing expression of her frustration. In this final section of the film, she and Cahit are reunited and belatedly consummate their relationship, but ultimately go their separate ways; it confirms the change Sibel has undergone and seems to be the completion of her 'growing up'. She has rebelled, but now submits maturely to her responsibility as a mother, whether completely willingly or not. There is some clear suggestion that Sibel's feelings for Cahit have dissipated; at one point during their time in the hotel room, Sibel stands naked by the window, and Cahit watches her from the bed. Sibel, rather than steadily returning his gaze, looks out the window into middle distance. Akin describes the scene — which was not in the screenplay, but rather came about in the process of filming — as showing “the end of a love”, as though that love has “disappeared out the window” (2011, p. 133). Even while in the hotel room with Cahit, Sibel rings Selma to check in and speak with her daughter (2011, p. 133).

Almost nothing is revealed about the nature of Sibel's new relationship in Istanbul; it is not clear how much of her decision to stay is due to her relationship with her partner, or whether it is due only to their daughter. Sibel's motivation for her choice is not expressed directly, but suggested through the use of off-screen sound: while she is packing a suitcase in the bedroom, she hears her daughter's voice in the next room. In

the following scene when she fails to appear to meet Cahit at the bus station, it is clear to the viewer that she has chosen to stay with her child and partner.⁵²

The film, notably, does not depict onscreen any of the sex Sibel has with other men (and Sibel's rape as she lies unconscious in an Istanbul nightclub is filmed in medium long shot and in darkness); the only nudity and sex involving Sibel are in scenes where her husband Cahit is also present. In the scene in the Istanbul hotel room, where Sibel stands naked by the window, the nudity is banal: merely part of the *mise-en-scène* depicting Sibel and Cahit's comfort with each other. Sibel slouches slightly, looking out the window in contemplation; the nakedness is not sexual, but symbolises honesty and a lack of pretence. The sex between Sibel and Cahit is filmed with more detail suggesting tenderness or love — close-ups of facial expressions, and the sound of their breathing (Gueneli 2012, p. 147) — compared with the much more aggressive sex between Cahit and Maren, seen in two scenes filmed from above and from a greater distance. Sibel's naked body is not presented to a sexualised gaze, but Cahit's is, and increasingly throughout the film (Gueneli 2012, pp. 146-147).⁵³

The character of Cahit is key to the construction of Sibel's character and her development throughout the film. He provides a counterpart to her rebellious spirit, a relational means of emphasising Sibel's positioning as a woman, and — perhaps most significantly — he helps to create a critical view of cultural essentialism. The film gives no adequate explanation as to why Cahit agrees to the marriage, except that he does tell Seref that Sibel would kill herself otherwise; the viewer is left to make assumptions (Neubauer 2011, p. 225). Lane suggests it might be that “[the marriage's] sheer novelty, perhaps, offers respite from his dogged indifference to life” (Lane 2005, p. 46). For his part, Cahit apparently has little interest in his Turkish heritage or embracing Turkishness as part of his identity. Though he can speak Turkish — he willingly does so with his friend and colleague Seref — Cahit's preference is for German. When he visits Sibel's family to ask for her hand in marriage, he is obliged to converse with them in Turkish. As it becomes apparent that Cahit is not completely fluent in Turkish, Sibel's brother Yilmaz pointedly asks him in German, “Was hast du mit deinem Türkisch gemacht?” (What have you done with your Turkish?). Cahit stares him down and replies with one word: “Weggeworfen” (Thrown away). The blunt answer serves both

⁵² Neubauer (2011, p. 226) attributes this decision also to Sibel's reluctance to leave her life that is now familiar and functioning well — a believable motivation.

⁵³ Gueneli also discusses the sexualised gaze directed at actor Mehmet Kurtuluş (see also Chapter 3.3).

as a defiant answer to Cem's hostile manner, and as a suitably dismissive description for Cahit's attitude towards his ethnocultural heritage. Although Cahit and Yilmaz are of the same background and same generation — both speak fluent German, for example — they clearly differ in their attitudes. Cahit is “unfashionably indifferent to his Turkish identity” and an “embodiment of the migrant's fears of loss of identity — of the western threat against the family and tradition” (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 79). Cahit is so much a German that he sneers at his taxi driver in Istanbul, who is a repatriated Turkish immigrant from Munich (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 84). Akın's focus in *Head-On* is on individual life choices rather than on playing ironically with stereotypes — yet it is ironic that the ‘Turk’ Sibel marries, as she must in order to leave her family home, is the ‘anti-Turk’ Cahit (Blumentrath et al. 2007, pp. 114-115).

Cahit is represented in contrast to both his friend and co-worker Seref, and Sibel's brother Yilmaz. Yilmaz has grown up in Germany and is a fluent speaker of both Turkish and German, but supports and actively upholds the patriarchal views of his father, Yunus. Seref has immigrated later in life, does not speak German, and provides a good-natured and at times comedic counterpoint to the other men, but also to the more urban/e Turkish character of Selma. Seref becomes a parody of himself, and therefore a parody of a certain stereotype of the Turkish immigrant in Germany (see Naiboğlu 2010, p. 83, also p. 78). Seref is not without his cynical and sexist — even mildly misogynistic — views: he warns Cahit that women are trouble, scheming, crazy; that love is trouble; when Sibel sits on his sofa, crying over Cahit's imprisonment and her own situation, Seref scolds her for her behaviour, and again complains about women. If Cahit is a man who dislikes and actively criticises the patriarchal structures he sees around him, Seref is someone who simply does not engage with women for the most part. He has married in the past, though, for the sake of obtaining German residency: a pragmatism not unlike Sibel's initial view of her own marriage. Ultimately, Seref gives his tacit approval to Cahit's relationship with Sibel. When Cahit leaves prison, Seref offers an envelope of money he has been saving up; Seref tells Cahit to take the money and go to Turkey (where he will look for Sibel). It can be seen primarily as a gesture of friendship, but Seref also ties it to the marriage by recalling, jokingly, that he is Cahit's ‘uncle’ — a reference to the role-play when they visited Sibel's parents to ask for her hand.

The delineation of gender is emphasised in a sequence at Yilmaz's house. Sibel, her sister-in-law and two other women talk in some detail about their husbands' sexual

abilities; it is the sort of conversation that, in many cultural contexts, is most likely to take place when only women are present — and in this context would be unthinkable in a mixed-sex group. The women's frankness is mirrored by their husbands' conversation in the next room as they play okey (a rummy-like numbered tile game popular in Turkey and its diasporic communities). While the women speak about sex within their marriages, though, the men are making ribald jokes and referring to their visits to brothels. Cahit becomes annoyed: partly, it seems, by the attitude to women, but also in no small part by the hypocrisy of the other men; he may also simply be annoyed by their general manner and by having to be there at all. Much of the film's criticism of patriarchal traditions is done through Cahit (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 86). He deliberately provokes them with the blunt question: "Warum fickt ihr nicht eure eigenen Frauen?" (Why don't you fuck your own wives?) — that is, instead of going to brothels. The other three men are enraged, and one tells him never again to use that word in connection with his wife. Such language is anathema to the modesty and status associated with married women, and their own wives in particular, even though the men's comments and jokes in the preceding conversation have been similar. Again, these are things they clearly would not discuss in a mixed-sex group; this is underlined by the way the men's conversation switches seamlessly to the football results for the exact amount of time that one of their wives is in the room — then reverts to their argument with Cahit as soon as she leaves.

In a number of ways, *Head-On* draws attention to the performative aspects of both gender and 'ethnic' identities, and the dependence of such categories on interrelational ascription. Sibel's role as 'wife' is initially a performance for her family, to shield other aspects of her life from their gaze; yet she also, particularly as her feelings for Cahit grow, reaches to various cultural traditions and norms in the expression of her personal identity and desires.

In a pivotal sequence for the revelation of their developing relationship after several months, Sibel goes shopping, smiling as she walks down the aisle with her basket and chooses ingredients. She then prepares a dinner and sets the table with traditional side dishes, shown in a montage set to Turkish music. There is great attention to detail; the audience sees in medium close-up how Sibel adds water to the can of tomato paste and stirs it with a teaspoon, to then pour this mixture over the tops of the stuffed peppers waiting to be cooked; she sets the table; a close-up shows water being stirred into a glass of raki, making it cloudy. The saturated colours are reminiscent of

1950s films (Ludewig 2011, p. 402), underscoring the romantic mood and Sibel's performance of a traditional 'wife's role'. Sibel and Cahit then sit opposite each other at the table, enjoying the meal; Cahit, between mouthfuls, says "Es war eine gute Idee, dich zu heiraten" (It was a good decision to marry you), which Sibel appears to take in the spirit in which it was intended, quite tongue-in-cheek. She then replies "Hab' ich von meiner Mutter gelernt" (Learned it from my mother). She goes on to say that her mother has asked when Sibel and Cahit will have children, and suggests they can pretend that Cahit is impotent, which also will be a useful reason for their eventual separation. Cahit abruptly leaves the table and the apartment, and Sibel is left to flush the leftovers down the toilet. In precisely this moment of apparent domestic bliss constructed along traditional gender role lines, Sibel breaks the illusion by again treating Cahit as her co-conspirator in their sham marriage; she undermines his role as man/husband/potential father with the reference to impotence and — most significantly for Cahit, who already is in love with Sibel — she reminds him of her intention that they eventually separate, and drawing attention to the fact that their marriage is still only a performance. The relative fragility of the intimacy in this scene is signalled by the static medium-shot of the married couple in profile, instead of the shot-reverse-shot approach that could be expected of such a conversation (Blumentrath et al. 2007, p. 116). The strong single light source above them adds to this detached, somewhat clinical effect.

Sibel's married status can also serve her more immediate purposes: when a former one-night-stand is pressing for a chance to see her again, Sibel rejects him and says she merely wanted to know what it would be like, and now she knows. When he persists and grabs her arm, she yells at him, "Ich bin eine verheiratete Frau — eine verheiratete türkische Frau. Mein Mann bringt dich um!" (I'm a married woman — a married Turkish woman. My husband will kill you!). Thus Sibel momentarily adopts the role in a strategic way as an extension of the same logic that led to her sham marriage, before she is ready to voice an emotional commitment to being Cahit's wife. Sibel's threat, as Neubauer (2011, p. 235) also observes, knowingly deploys the stereotype of the potentially violent Turkish husband, which takes on prophetic overtones when Cahit does in fact kill Niko accidentally. As Hillman (2010, pp. 268-269) argues, there is a clear suggestion by this point in the film that "conviction is fast catching up with the performative aspects of identity"; in the following sequence, Sibel

realises she does love Cahit, and soon after that, when he faces his prison sentence, she declares that she will wait for him.

When Sibel realises that she has fallen in love with Cahit, she consciously revels in the realisation, going to a fairground and riding the Ferris wheel, laughing and tucking her hair behind her ears. She appears like a teenage girl compared to her more worldly and ‘older’ behaviour elsewhere up to this point. To symbolise her feelings, she buys a traditional German token of affection and courtship: a decorated heart-shaped gingerbread (*Lebkuchenherz*). She chooses one that reads *Ich liebe dich* (I Love You) and leaves it on the pillow of the bed in the shared apartment. It is an endorsement of her relationship with Cahit in terms much more innocent and romantic than the drugs and alcohol and casual sex of the rest of their lives — albeit with a self-conscious and subtly ironic undertone, and the same sense of the grand gesture evident in other actions by both Sibel and Cahit. This artefact of German *volkstümlich* (folksy, vulgar) culture is an object of fun but signifies real feelings; as a young urban-dwelling German in cosmopolitan Hamburg, Sibel knowingly adapts it to her purposes, just as she has adapted marriage to her purposes.

One clear transcultural thread running through *Head-On* is the repeated motif of self-harm, modelled on the Turkish melodramatic tradition of *kara sevda* (dark passion), both Cahit and Sibel draw their own blood as an expression of melancholic love as well as desperation and loss (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 87; see also Zaimoğlu 2004, pp. 212-213). Dönmez-Colin (2008, p. 75) likewise identifies *kara sevda*, along with rape and honour, as one of “the usual elements of Turkish melodrama” that *Head-On* contains. In German, Zaimoğlu describes *kara sevda* as *Katastrophensucht* (catastrophe addiction) and writes:

Alle Morgenländer dieser Welt kennen die Katastrophensucht (kara sevda), die mehr ist als Melancholie und die Trauer darüber, dass man die Geliebte, die Unschuld, den schönen Augenblick verloren und versäumt hat. Wer in diesem paradoxerweise berauschenden Elend steckt, kann nicht anders, als das böse Blut ausfließen zu lassen.⁵⁴
(Zaimoğlu 2004, p. 212)

⁵⁴ “All Oriental people of this world know the catastrophe addiction (kara sevda), which is more than melancholy and the sadness that one has lost and neglected one’s beloved, innocence, that beautiful

Especially through this melodramatic aspect, the film shows both the constructive and destructive possibilities of love: the loss of Cahit's first wife has sent him into a spiral of depression and lack of self-worth; Sibel's love (or his for her) helps him to restore his life, but also triggers the jealous rage in which he kills one of her lovers; the careful watch and stringent rules of Sibel's family can perhaps also be regarded as a protective love towards her (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 87). On Yeşilda's last point, I would argue that, although it may be perceived in such a way, the film does nothing to encourage such a reading: in contrast to Sibel's menacing brother and dour father, it is only her mother who is clearly affectionate towards her. Yet it is worth noting that when Yilmaz realises Cahit has lied about his workplace, and confronts him with the knowledge, he seems genuinely disarmed to realise Cahit loves Sibel. Later, when Cahit is released from prison, he visits Yilmaz at work (to ask where Sibel is now). Yilmaz defends his actions with the explanation that "Wir mussten unsere Ehre retten, verstehst du?" (We had to save our honour, you understand?). Cahit retorts with the pointed question, "Und habt ihr sie gerettet, eure Ehre?" (And did you save it, your honour?). Yilmaz casts his eyes downward, his regret implied, with no further defence.⁵⁵

Sibel cuts her wrists repeatedly. While it is a suicide attempt that has caused her to be in the psychiatric clinic at the beginning of the film, her subsequent wrist-cutting is done more to prove her point to Cahit, and to express her frustration. When he realises he loves Sibel, Cahit can only express his feelings in a melodramatic fashion, and not to Sibel herself. He goes to the bar of the Fabrik, gets drunk and cuts his forearms on his smashed glass; in front of his concerned friend Seref, he declares in desperation that he is in love, then smashes a glass to lacerate his skin on the shards. When Cahit is arrested for killing Niko in the bar, Sibel puts a CD of Turkish music on the stereo, and cuts her wrist over the bathroom sink.

Sibel's self-mutilation and self-harm in the film — cutting her wrists more than once, drinking heavily and smoking opium in Istanbul, and then welcoming the savage attack in the alley — are a way of transgressing the body politics according to which the female body should be "clean" (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 82). Though her assault is carried out

moment. Whoever is stuck in this paradoxically intoxicating misery can do nothing else but let the wicked blood flow freely."

⁵⁵ Another note of hypocrisy is struck in this scene, in that Yilmaz greets Cahit as his brother-in-law and is willing to speak with him, even though he tells Cahit "Ich hab' keine Schwester mehr" (I have no sister now).

by others, Sibel actively encourages an escalation of the violence in an act of self-harm equal to the suicide attempt that lead her to the psychiatric clinic; the way she yells insults at her attackers, and physically initiates the fight, is like the culmination of her wrist-cutting after Cahit's arrest and her self-destructive habits while living in Istanbul. The scene recalls the advice of the psychiatrist to Cahit in the Hamburg clinic: "Wenn Sie Ihr Leben beenden wollen, dann beenden Sie doch Ihr Leben, aber dafür müssen Sie doch nicht sterben" (If you want to end your life, then end your life, but you don't have to die to do that" (Lane 2005, p. 46). The brutal attack in the alley constitutes a rebirth for Sibel — a self-harming behaviour that Favazza would call "anti-suicide", different from suicide because it is by contrast "a way of coming back to life" (in Naiboğlu 2010, p. 83). When the men insult Sibel and she turns around to retort, she knowingly insults their mothers, invoking the patriarchal discourse around sexuality and honour, and using it against them. Her language and aggression in this scene become a parody of their masculinity "turning the self-harm into a spectacle revealing the ambiguity of gender relations that confine her to subordination" (Naiboğlu 2010, pp. 82-83).

Landwehr (2009) views the various settings of *Head-On* as mostly liminal spaces, symbolising the restlessness and development of the two protagonists: these are characters living on the edges of society, in cheap bars and clubs, low-rent accommodation, in prison (in Cahit's case), sleeping temporarily in a corner of other people's homes (as Sibel does in three different places throughout the film) and in a mental health clinic as at the beginning of the film. Scenes of transportation — car trips, bus rides, and planes and airports — underline the sense of transition and change, and the outsider status of Cahit and Sibel is emphasised by their being "literally cast out of a community space: Thus, Cahit is thrown out of a bar [...], both Cahit and Sibel are told to get off a bus [...]; and later, Sibel gets kicked out of a bar in Istanbul" (Landwehr 2009, p. 78).

The early scene in the cafeteria, between Sibel and her family, establishes the dynamics of their respective relationships and that their familial expectations are informed by gender. It also establishes the family's religiosity, with Sibel's father scolding her for her sinful behaviour in trying to end her life — which is, as he reminds her, a gift from God. He tells her she must pray daily in gratitude that she did not die. After their father leaves, Yilmaz lingers to warn Sibel that if anything should happen to their father because of her behaviour, he will kill her. Though they are in a psychiatric

clinic, it is religion and family that is to be the “curing institution” (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 81).

The film focuses on the grime and patina of Altona: characters walk past or lean against graffiti-sprayed walls; Cahit spends a lot of his free time in a seedy small bar. The ‘alternative’ spirit of Altona, like Cahit’s own character, is underscored by the handful of punk and new wave songs on the soundtrack. The importance of the neighbourhood to the lives of the characters is clear: in Hamburg, most of the scenes take place in Altona. The morning after Sibel’s wedding and subsequent one-night stand, she walks in slow motion along a nearly-empty street (the same street, or similar to the one, where she is later chased by Yilmaz after her ‘shame’ is revealed). Her wedding dress and white jacket, the soft and warm-toned sunlight, the stage-like framing of the surrounding buildings, and the music playing (albeit non-diegetically) are reminiscent of a film musical; this theatricality is emphasised by a pull-back shot as Sibel crosses the road. Having performed the part of the bride the previous day, Sibel is already enacting her ideal(ised) life.

Cahit’s lack of interest in life, in the period before his marriage to Sibel, is expressed through the almost unliveable mess of his small apartment; when Sibel returns the morning after the wedding, Cahit has been asleep, naked, on the sofa rather than in bed, suggesting he passed out after drinking. Dirty dishes are stacked high in the sink, and the overall grey and black tones are suggestive of a prison cell. When Sibel leaves him and he fires an air rifle at their wedding photo the destruction proves to be aimed at himself; the close-up reveals that the slug has passed through his own face in the photo (Lane 2005, p. 146).

Sibel’s desire to have ‘space’ away from her family is manifested in the actual space of Cahit’s apartment. Sibel’s first act in her new life is very deliberately to turn the apartment into a place where she can also feel at home; she tidies and redecorates, telling Cahit it has cost so much money that she is now “pleite” (broke). This situation, in turn, leads to Cahit asking Maren to give Sibel a job— she needs to earn money to pay her half of the rent— and Sibel starts work as a hairdresser, which she seems to relish from the outset.

When Sibel turns to Cahit’s friend Seref in desperation, he offers her a bed for the night before she departs for Turkey. Here, like a precursor to her sleeping arrangement at her cousin Selma’s apartment, Sibel is given a single bed pushed against the wall in the second room. When Seref hears Sibel crying, he soothes her by singing a

Turkish lullaby, the lyrics of which are fatalistic in a similar vein to those of the Bosphorus-side tableaux throughout the film. In her first days in Istanbul, Sibel's only 'space' of her own is a bed in one corner of Selma's apartment, emphasising that Sibel's life in Istanbul has not taken root and the permanence of her migration has not yet been manifested.

As a newly arrived migrant in Istanbul, Sibel takes up the kind of work that low-skilled female work immigrants to Germany might find themselves doing (see Chapter 2.3), cleaning rooms in the hotel Selma manages — the promised hairdressing job does not eventuate. Her migration has been not so much from one culture to a different one, as from one social role to another. In Istanbul, Sibel goes about creating a lifestyle of clubs and drug-taking similar to the one she had in Hamburg, albeit (more) self-destructively now. The scenes in Hamburg showed her joyful celebration of a newfound independence; the scenes in Istanbul echo those in Hamburg, but instead show Sibel losing herself, drinking grimly, blacking out, being raped in a deserted club. Her seemingly joyless life echoes that of Cahit in the early scenes of the film, suggesting Sibel is "innerlich an dem Punkt angekommen, an dem Cahit zu Beginn des Films war: Sie hat mit ihrem Leben im Prinzip abgeschlossen" (Neubauer 2011, p. 225).⁵⁶ Sibel's 'turning point' in reaching this attitude is suggested visually, when her daily alarm clock buzzes at 5.00am (the third time this sound is heard and ritual plays out); this third time, it is followed by a close-up of the plug being pulled, by the cord, from the socket.

In Istanbul, Selma's lifestyle and her difference from Sibel are highlighted through her living space. Living in her own apartment, with a career which she seems to enjoy, Selma gives the impression of independence and fulfilment. As Sibel observes Selma's life close up and suddenly finds it less attractive, the audience also sees Selma frequently being called or paged: at least two of her scenes end in this way, with her being summoned elsewhere. When she is at home, we see her using the weights machine while watching TV, rather than simply relaxing. As Landwehr (2009) discusses, Selma's life is represented through her appearances in liminal spaces, in spite of the relative comfort her career and income afford her; for all the trappings around her it does not appear to be a comfortable existence, but rather a harried and isolated one, in which her primary companion is a TV broadcasting global imagery via satellite — a feature which also contributes to situating Istanbul as transnationally linked space.

⁵⁶ "internally has come to the point where Cahit was at the beginning of the film: she is, in principle, done with life."

Selma's apartment is simply but elegantly furnished, with a large weights machine in the living room in front of the TV.

The transnational aspect of *Head-On* has been discussed by many. Perhaps the greatest signifier here of the similarity of urban spaces to each other is the way that Sibel, when she moves to Istanbul, manages to some extent to recreate her Hamburg-Altona lifestyle. The perspective that the two cities may not be so different contributes greatly to Akin's approach to breaking down stereotypes about culture and cultural identity.

In *Head-On*, music plays a prominent role in the evocation of various intertwined or overlapping cultural spheres. The soundtrack includes a number of punk and New Wave songs: *I Feel You* by Depeche Mode's, *Ho Ho* by The Birthday Party, *Temple of Love* by The Sisters of Mercy. Cahit in particular is portrayed as having a punk style or character: the film's opening sequence has him driving drunkenly and haphazardly, while *I Feel You* plays, until he deliberately steers the car into a wall. Sibel's 'rebellion' is similarly aligned with a punk spirit: this is particularly evident in the scene where she and Cahit dance in their apartment, as Cahit yells twice (in English), "Punk is not dead!", joined the third time by Sibel. Landwehr (2009, p. 78) notes that the English-language songs generally express freedom and choice — most notably by the clinic psychiatrist's advice to Cahit, citing the lyrics by English band The The: "If you can't change the world, change your world".⁵⁷

The film has also been particularly noted for its memorable musical vignettes in Istanbul, featuring the Selim Sesler ensemble of Roma musicians and German actress Idil Üner singing. They are arranged alongside the Bosphorus, and serve as a Brechtian device at intervals throughout the film (comparisons to the Greek chorus tradition have also been made). The lyrics of the songs tell of love and loss, in effect a commentary on the action in the narrative. These interspersed scenes on the bank of the Bosphorus offer an idealised and somewhat Orientalist view of Turkey: between the music, the river and the great mosque in the background, the image is one of tradition and easy symbolism (see Landwehr 2009, pp. 78-79). For Kauffmann, the purpose of these vignettes is connected to generational change, with the group serving as "a recurring statement of old Turkish custom and ethos, which Cahit and Sibel and their friends have abandoned"

⁵⁷ This is a slight misquote of the repeated line from *If You Can't Change the World*, which is "If you can't change the world, change yourself" — conveying the same meaning more directly, and without the subtle suggestion of spatial references that the doctor's version may connote.

(2005, p. 23). Given the similarity between Sibel's life in Hamburg and what she finds in Istanbul, Kauffmann feels that these vignettes begin as a comment on exile, but become "a statement of all young people's departure from the past" (Kauffmann 2005, p. 23). The scene is a "kitschy postcard" view of Istanbul" (Mitchell in Naiboğlu 2010, p. 77) Landwehr wonders if, with these scenes, Akın could be insinuating

what Jameson has clearly articulated, that our past is forever out of reach and that we can only seek the historical past through media images and stereotypes [...] Perhaps this state of affairs is particularly acute for a second-generation émigré who has learned about his parents' culture in western schools and films. (Landwehr 2009, p. 86)

This is hinted at in Sibel's comment to Cahit that "Mersin soll schön sein" (Mersin [Cahit's birthplace in Turkey] is meant to be beautiful). On the other hand, Turkish pop music also has its role to play in the 'real' world of the narrative. Sibel plays a Turkish CD as the 'soundtrack' for cutting her wrist after Cahit's arrest; Eren (2012, pp. 184-185) argues that the use of close-ups suggests Sibel's affiliation with the Turkish song and points symbolically to the role of digital media in transnationalism.

Petek (2007, pp. 183-184) offers two contrasting readings of the film's soundtrack as a presentation of multiculturalism: on the one hand, the final sequences in Istanbul restore a quite monolithic 'Turkish' musical sphere that suggests a failure of multiculturalism; on the other hand, the mythic-symbolic, Orientalist-tinged vignettes of 'Turkish music' by the Bosphorus are assigned to extradiegetic performers and not to the film's protagonists (p. 184). In this sense, Petek argues, *Head-On* demonstrates the difficulty of an authentic Turkish cultural experience in Germany, and thus opens a more productive engagement with multiculturalism.

Some reactions to the *Head-On* — mostly film reviews rather than academic responses — have read the ending as Sibel and Cahit finding a sense of belonging in Turkey that eluded them in Germany. In this respect, the ending is somewhat at odds with the earlier parts of the film, in which both characters have been portrayed as rebellious figures who are nonetheless 'at home' in the punk-infused and transcultural locales of Hamburg-Altona. As Dönmez-Colin (2008, p. 75) puts it, Sibel's and Cahit's problems "are with society in general, not with German society in particular", making the ending in Turkey problematic. It is made clear, in their wedding ceremony at the registry office, that Sibel and Cahit are both German citizens. While formalised

membership in the nation certainly does not always equate with a feeling of belonging (see Chapters 2.2 and 2.3), this scene confirms that Germany is, for all intents and purposes, home to Sibel and Cahit. Sibel has negative experiences to associate with traditional norms, and Cahit, for the most part, has ‘thrown away’ his Turkish language. Their respective journeys to Turkey (Istanbul/Mersin) are not a conscious return to their ‘roots’, but rather more the coincidental endpoints of two outsiders (Blumentrath et al. 2007, p. 115). What might be considered their *Heimatlosigkeit* (lack of *Heimat* , rootlessness) is in fact

less a marker of ethnical exclusion but rather the consequence of a radical claim for an independent life beyond cultural or ethnical markers — something that almost all Akin characters share. Even if Sibel, like Gigi in *Solino*, tries out a new existence abroad, in Turkey, this is not about “coming home” for her. In this way, Cahit’s journey to south-eastern Turkey in a bus in the final sequence of the film symbolizes yet another transition to the next phase in life, rather than into a new culture. (Yeşilada 2009b, pp. 86-87)

There is, on the other hand, a useful contrast between Sibel’s life in Istanbul and Cahit’s still-undetermined future elsewhere in Turkey. Sibel’s creation of her own nuclear family can be viewed as her finding a new *Heimat* in people (Ludewig 2011, p. 404), while Cahit has decided to return to his birthplace. In the hotel room, he tells Sibel, “Ich habe keine Angst” (I’m not afraid) about his planned life in Mersin; his comment has rather the opposite effect, of drawing attention to the uncertainty of what awaits him. Cahit’s final appearances onscreen, waiting at a bus terminal and then seated in a bus, suggest a liminality that the film does not resolve; the film can offer no comparison of Sibel’s and Cahit’s futures beyond this point, or judgement as to whose search for belonging is more successful in the longer term (Ludewig 2011, p. 404).

In some senses, the Turkey to which Sibel and Cahit travel, or migrate, or escape, is not a real place, but an imaged one. Akin has stated that geographical space was less important, and that

he wanted to create ‘an imaginary space’ for his Turkish-German characters to escape. That ‘imaginary space’ happens to be Turkey, the homeland of their parents, but in that homeland Akin positions his

characters in impersonal and transitory spaces (hotels, airports and bus stations), places for someone passing through as a tourist. (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 76)

This sense of Turkey — specifically Istanbul — as an imagined better place is established after Sibel's wedding to Cahit, when she takes her cousin Selma back to the airport. Selma is dismayed that Sibel took the option of marriage — and to such “a bum” at that. Selma's final suggestion to Sibel, as they drive to the airport, is “Come to me in Istanbul”; Sibel does not respond, but the offer is implicitly left open, the idea planted, as the audience sees the next shot of a plane departing with Selma presumed to be on board returning to Istanbul.

This sense of unreality comes to the fore when Sibel first arrives in Istanbul. The lead-in sequence shows the relative ease of travel through the airport, and that Sibel has a cousin waiting to collect her by car — highlighting the connections between Germany and Turkey. Yet as Selma drives them to the hotel, her manner is markedly, inappropriately, upbeat compared to what Sibel has gone through and her visible distress. Selma compliments Sibel on her new haircut — itself a symbol of the rupture in her life — and makes promises about the work she will be able to organise for Sibel (the reality soon proves to fall far short). Rather than being a critique of Turkey, these scenes show the impossibility of ever reaching an ideal place, as well as the difficulties inherent to almost any migratory experience.

When Cahit is released from prison and travels to Istanbul to find Sibel, he first locates Selma at the hotel. They meet in the restaurant and bar on an upper level — where Sibel and Selma talked over a drink not long after Sibel came to Istanbul herself — and make small talk in Turkish, until they come to the subject of Sibel. At this point, Cahit pauses, and glances towards the windows of the hotel restaurant, where there is an expansive view of Istanbul. He then begins speaking in English to Selma, who responds in kind. It is striking that two Turkish-speakers in Turkey should now conduct this significant conversation in a foreign language. Adopting English as their *lingua franca* is at least partly pragmatic: Cahit mostly prefers to use German, which Selma does not speak or understand. At the same time, the use of this third language, neither Turkish nor German, draws attention to Istanbul as an international city; the use of a different language to bridge the language gap subtly echoes the idea of Istanbul — specifically its bridge — as the meeting point of Europe and Asia, and more explicitly rejects simple

national identities — since in this case, the official languages of the conversation partners' respective nations are inadequate.⁵⁸

On *Head-On* pre-empting later discussion about honour killings and forced marriages, Akin says

Das Gute ist, dass gesagt wird: Da sind Menschen, die brauchen unsere Hilfe, und wir müssen etwas für sie tun. [...] Andererseits ist die Gefahr da, das alles über einen Kamm geschoren wird, nach dem Motto: Alles Barbaren, alles Machos und Bauern. Das führt schnell zum Rassismus. Auf diesem schmalen Grat bewegt sich die Debatte.⁵⁹

(Akin in Bax 2005)

Akin wonders why there was not the same debate in the aftermath of *40 Square Metres of Germany* (see Chapter 3.2), and says he suspects the current interest is related to Turkey's ambition to join the European Union (Bax 2005). Akin has said that he does see *Head-On* as a “plea... to give Turkish daughters in Germany more space” and hopes that Turkish parents who see it might be provoked to discuss these issues (Bax 2005).

As Berghahn (2011, p. 252) observes, Turkish audiences watching *Head-On* are likely to be reminded of the classical-style melodramatic films of the *Yeşilçam* (Green Pine, after the street where it was founded) cinema in Turkey (on Green Pine cinema see also Suner 2010, pp. 3-4). *Head-On* may also be seen as belonging, in its closely-interlinked musical and melancholic aspects, to the *Arabesk* tradition of 1970s Turkish cinema (Berghahn 2011, pp. 253-254). This is in itself quite a nostalgic gesture, since cinema in Turkey has gradually transitioned away from *Yeşilçam*'s “popular national and nationalist cinema [...] an exclusively ‘Turkish’ cinema, that was made by Turks for Turks” and towards a “post-national and/or transnational forms of film-making” (Arslan 2009, p. 84). Suner (2010, pp. 153-162) also ties the film to its Istanbul location, discussing both *Head-On* and *Crossing the Bridge* as examples of “transnational

⁵⁸ When Sibel visits Cahit in prison after his arrest, her only words — the only dialogue between her and Cahit — is in Turkish, to tell Cahit she will wait for him. Considering how little Turkish they speak together, even years later when reunited in Istanbul, this linguistic choice seems to foreshadow Sibel's arrival in Turkey.

⁵⁹ “The good thing is it's being said: there are people, they need our help, and we have to do something for them. [...] On the other hand is the danger, that everything is lumped together, like: all barbarians, all machos and peasants. That leads quickly to racism. The debate moves along this narrow ridge.”

Istanbul films by a Turkish-German filmmaker”⁶⁰; Idil Üner, the German actor who sings with the orchestra in the Bosphorus vignettes, also appears (as a German) in *Istanbul Tales* (released 2005 — the year after *Head-On*, dir. Selim Demirdelen, Kudret Sabancı, Ümit Ünal, Yücel Yolcu and Ömür Atay).

In these respects, *Head-On* clearly delineates its terrain as one that is not only transcultural within Hamburg and transnational in its narrative, but situated transnationally in terms of cinematic style, production and history.

⁶⁰ Suner also discusses, in relation to the musical performances in *Crossing the Bridge*, the concept of *hüzün* (intense longing or melancholy) as captured by Orhan Pamuk in his writing about Istanbul. Sibel’s daughter is named Pamuk, which adds another intertextual layer to the sense of melancholy and pensiveness in the concluding chapter of *Head-On*.

5.2 *The Edge of Heaven/Auf der anderen Seite* (dir. Fatih Akin, 2007)

Screenplay: Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Rainer Klausmann; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Stefan “Shantel” Hantel; **Cast:** Nursel Köse, Tuncel Kurtiz, Patrycia Ziolkowska, Hanna Schygulla, Baki Davrak, Nurgül Yeşilçay; **Producer:** Fatih Akin, Andreas Thiel, Klaus Maeck; **Production Company:** corazón international/Hamburg, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, Anka Film/Istanbul, Dorje Film/Rome; **Length:** 122 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

The Edge of Heaven takes the border-crossing impulses of Turkish-German films to something of an extreme: Germans with and without Turkish background travel to Istanbul and Trabzon in Turkey; Turks travel to and from Hamburg and Bremen in Germany. Where *Head-On* focuses on the quest to determine one’s own life in a cosmopolitan milieu (in both Germany and Turkey), *The Edge of Heaven* places journeying and its repercussions at the very forefront, and makes more explicit the fatalism only hinted at in *Head-On*. As the second in Akin’s as-yet-incomplete thematic trilogy on “Love, Death and the Devil”, *The Edge of Heaven* is preoccupied with death, but also with family and connections.

The film is structured around three episodes. Each of the first two involves a death, as introduced with their intertitles: *Yeters Tod* (Yeter’s Death) and *Lottes Tod* (Lotte’s Death). The former is the death of a Turkish-born woman in Bremen, the latter of a German-born woman in Istanbul. The first episode introduces Yeter, who earns her money as a sex worker in the red-light district of Bremen. She takes a client who is an elderly Turkish man named Ali; he is pleased to find a Turkish-speaking prostitute and some companionship as well as sex. Two men, overhearing Yeter speaking Turkish, later threaten her on the tram, telling her in Turkish that she is disgracing herself and Islam, and saying they will kill her if they see her doing such work again. Visiting Yeter again, Ali suggests Yeter come and live with him in exchange for an allowance; Yeter agrees, seeing this arrangement as a solution to her immediate predicament, and perhaps as something of an escape route more generally; although there are certain expectations on her, she has a degree of control over the household, and begins to assert her equality in the relationship. Her assertiveness eventually leads to her rejecting Ali when he grabs at her, wanting sex even after she repeatedly refuses; finally, Yeter says she will leave and begins packing her things. Ali strikes her hard across the face. Yeter hits her head as she falls, and is killed.

Ali’s son Nejat is a young professor of German literature. He views his father’s arrangement with some suspicion, but has grown to like Yeter. Though Ali had

drunkenly accused them of having slept together, Nejat and Yeter interact in a way that suggests she could have become a mother-figure to him with time — a feeling echoed later in his relationship to Susanne Staub (see Hillman and Silvey 2010, p. 100). When Ali is sent to jail for Yeter's death, Nejat decides to travel to Istanbul in search of the daughter she has spoken of. There, he takes over the running of a German-language bookshop, while he continues to search for Yeter's daughter.

Unbeknownst to Nejat, this daughter, Ayten, has already left Turkey. Ayten is a political activist, and has been taking shelter in a share house after participating in a demonstration where police have made numerous arrests and tried to arrest her. When this share house is raided, she leaves for Germany, thinking she can find her mother Yeter. In Germany, Ayten meets the student Lotte, who decides to help her. Going by the pseudonym Gül, Ayten stays with Lotte and her mother Susanne, and soon becomes Lotte's lover. When the German police catch up with Gül/Ayten and she is deported, Lotte decides to follow her to Turkey, telling her mother she will stay as long as it takes. Lotte finds a room to rent — from Nejat, though neither is aware of their convoluted link. One day she becomes lost in a quiet part of Istanbul, and is accidentally shot, and killed, by some boys playing with a gun they have found — a policeman's gun that was hidden on a rooftop by Ayten as she fled the demonstration.

In the third episode, with the title *Auf der anderen Seite* (On the Other Side), Lotte's mother Susanne comes to Istanbul and traces Lotte's footsteps. Susanne contacts Nejat, and stays in Lotte's former room; she goes to visit Ayten, who asks for forgiveness. Susanne says she will help her. Nejat hears that his father, deported to Turkey from Germany, has travelled onward to Trabzon; Nejat decides to go and see him there, and asks Susanne to mind the shop for a few days. Once Ayten is released from prison, after repenting, she stops at the bookshop to see Susanne. Susanne suggests Ayten stay with her for a few days, in the room she is renting from Nejat. They leave the bookshop together, and the camera pans left to the empty space on the corkboard, where the poster with Yeter's face had been until Nejat removed it, apparently giving up hope of ever finding the missing daughter.

The German original title *Auf der anderen Seite* translates as "On the other side" — an evocation of both 'crossing over' and 'passing over' (dying), as well as a sense more generally of looking outward and beyond. Some variations of title — in diverse language markets — are more suitable than others. As Gramling (2010, p. 354) observes, the English title *The Edge of Heaven* (like the Italian title *Ai confini del*

paradiso) “profoundly alters the symbolic scope of the film narrative, replacing a spatial rhetoric of antilogy (“sides”) with one of otherworldliness (“heaven”)”, thus raising questions about the exportability of films into different linguistic contexts. The French title *De l’autre côté* “connotes an emergence, an approach from a sublime or banal elsewhere” while the German is even more ambiguous, suggesting both a simple indexical opposition to wherever ‘here’ is, and “Protagorian antilogy: a philosophical commitment to the notion that two contradictory arguments may be held simultaneously, as expressed in English with the expression “on the other hand”” (Gramling 2010, p. 355).

The film closes with the image of Nejat sitting on the beach looking out to the storm-whipped ocean, where his father went out in a fishing boat. It is left open as to whether Ali will return or not, and whether or not Nejat holds that expectation — does Nejat believe he is waiting for his father to return, or is he looking out to where Ali has presumably died? The beach here as the threshold to the sea serves as a metaphor of that other threshold, from life into death. Gramling (2010, p. 355) observes that of the various titles for the film, only the Turkish *Yasamin kiyisinda* (On the Shore of Life) “resonates with” this closing shot, and the idea that Ali may not return to his waiting son.

Compared with *Head-On*, Jaafar finds *The Edge of Heaven* to be “an altogether more contemplative affair”; Akın himself says that after *Head-On* he wanted to make a “more neutral” film to prove he was not an “angry young filmmaker” (Jaafar 2008, p. 9). While making *Crossing the Bridge*, he got to know the politics of the musicians as well as their art; their views gave him pause for thought about his attitudes to Turkish succession into the EU (Akin 2011, p. 187). Akın says it was part of his intention to portray some of this in *The Edge of Heaven*: “There were so many political aspects I wanted to touch on [...] but I also wanted to tell a story about mothers and sons, fathers and daughters -- and about hope as the last refuge we have as human beings” (in Jaafar 2008, p. 9). *The Edge of Heaven* is

eine komplexe, die nationalen Grenzen querende Geschichte, die den Blick auf aktuelle Transnationalisierungsprozesse der Lebenswelten richtet, ohne dies im Gegenzug als naiven Kosmopolitismus oder Postnationalität zu romantisieren. Der Film stellt indirekt nicht nur kritische Fragen an den methodologischen Nationalismus der

klassischen Integrations- und Assimilationsforschung, sondern bietet auch inspirierende Sichtweisen, die bei der Suche nach neuen Ansätzen hilfreich sein könnten.⁶¹ (Rauer 2010, p. 120)

Similarly, Savaş Arslan describes the film as “an example of transnational *auteur* cinema, that promotes the dialogue between Turkish and German cultures by probing questions of national identity and belonging” (2009, p. 85). These questions, though, are indirect as Rauer notes.

Akın won the prize at the Cannes Film Festival for best screenplay, but has since conceded that even he finds the coincidences of his scripted story too contrived. The script is full of “[a]ccidental meetings and coincidences [that] are overused. Bumps and questions interfere” (Kauffmann 2008, p. 34). These ‘near misses’ serve almost as metaphors for the difficulty of meeting half-way, but ultimately seem to have more to do with providing narrative texture than with themes of encounter. Around a third of the way through the film, Nejat’s cousin comments wryly that with 20 million people (in Istanbul), Nejat is bound to cross paths with the woman he is trying to find.

Akın has said that the process of making *The Edge of Heaven* began with his desire to make a film with Hanna Schygulla; when meeting with her, the actor Tuncel Kurtiz was also present. Akın says he was taken with the idea of combining a Fassbinder actress and a Güney actor in one film (Akin 2011, pp. 167-168). If the musical vignettes of *Head-On* were reminiscent of Turkey’s *Yeşilçam* cinema (see Chapter 5.1), in *The Edge of Heaven* and in his expressed desire to make a biographical film about director Yılmaz Güney (see Chapter 4.4), Akın aligns himself specifically with a Turkish director whose films were banned in Turkey in the 1980s, who spent much of his time imprisoned for his political engagement, and was known for his depictions of everyday and often working-class Turkish life (on Güney see Suner 2010, pp. 4-6). Mennel (2010, p. 98) finds Naficy’s notion of an ‘accented cinema’ (see Chapter 3.3) does not fit a film such as *The Edge of Heaven*, because Akın and his peers are not themselves in an exilic position, and the idea of the ‘accented’ cinema still places too great an emphasis on the nation; rather, Akın takes a cosmopolitan and

⁶¹ “a complex story crossing national borders, its focus on current processes of transnationalisation in people’s lives, without romanticising this on the other hand as naive cosmopolitanism or postnationality. Indirectly, the film poses not only critical questions on the methodological nationalism of classical integration and assimilation research, but also offers inspiring perspectives that could be helpful in the search for new approaches.”

transnational perspective, and is able to “breathe new life” into Fassbinder’s work by opening it beyond the national (Hillman 2010, p. 274).

As one would expect, Akin is equally aware of his own position within German cinema history, and how his films might relate to earlier ones. In an earlier concept for the film, Akin envisaged a young politically-active Turkish woman coming to Germany and falling in love with “a German boy”; but Akin claims that this seemed too boring, and the relationship with the “understanding German” seemed to him too much like Hark Bohm’s *Yasemin* (see Chapter 3.2)(Akin 2011, p. 170).

As embodied in the character of Yeter, the archetype of the ‘fallen woman’ or ‘whore’ is combined with its counterpoint, the doting maternal figure — Yeter sends money to her daughter who still lives in Turkey and desperately wishes they could be reunited. Yeter also develops an almost maternal relationship towards Ali’s son Nejat, though with some sexual overtones in their interactions in the absence of Ali (who asks both of them, separately whether they had sex while he was away — they each refuse to respond to such a question). Yeter’s ‘transformation’ from prostitute to wife- and mother-figure is expressed unmistakeably through a change in her appearance. As a sex worker in Helenenstraße, she used the name Jessi, and wore corsetry and high boots, heavy makeup, and a blonde, very artificial-looking wig; meeting Ali for a drink to discuss the arrangement, and later living in Ali’s home, she has abandoned the wig and wears less make-up, and her clothing, though modern and fashionable, is markedly less revealing. The shedding of her sex-worker ‘costume’, with the role-playing overtones, draws attention to the performative aspect of the rest of her life, too.

Like Sibel in Cahit’s apartment (see previous sub-chapter), Yeter sets about making Ali’s home her own; out of this physical space she carves a metaphorical one for herself. The domestic sphere is not her prison, but her respite from her life before — albeit through dependence on a man. Previously, Yeter made a living from having sex with male clients; she now has sex with, and shares a household with, one ‘client’ who is cast in a spouse-like provider role. While Sibel in *Head-On* finds work as a hairdresser, outside of her new home life and sham marriage, Yeter’s work is to be a sexual partner and companion in the home. There is some fondness between Yeter and Ali, but it is fundamentally a mutually beneficial arrangement — technically a business transaction. In this respect, Yeter’s agreement to move in with Ali echoes Sibel’s marriage of convenience, albeit Yeter is not the instigator.

Yeter's transformation is made possible by Ali's proposition that she come and live with him, for pay equivalent to what she would earn in the brothel. Even when they first meet, Ali brings undone Yeter's careful performance as Jessi. He asks her, initially, "Machst du französisch?" (Do you do 'French' (style)?), and Jessi responds that she does "Französisch, italienisch, griechisch... für dich, mache ich international" (French, Italian, Greek... for you I can do international). Gramling (2010) notes that Jessi's outfit is in the colours of the German flag: a golden-blonde wig, red corset and black boots. The national coding is refuted by Jessi's need "to assume a flexible disposition towards her own labor as pleasure-producer; she has become habituated to "tradapting" herself to the nationally-coded predilections of an ever-diversifying clientele"; this, and the bilingualism of the ensuing scene (resolved to Turkish monolingualism), raise questions about the role of monolingualism and universalism in film (Gramling 2010, p. 359).

In *The Edge of Heaven*, language also plays — as it has in other films — a central role in conveying different cultural contexts: Yeter and Ali speak mostly Turkish with each other, and the Muslim men on the tram also address Yeter in Turkish; Nejat, being confidently bilingual, easily switches back and forth between Turkish and German, according to location and conversation partner. Lotte and Susanne, both German speakers, must switch to English when dealing with non-German Turks such as Ayten or the officials at the Istanbul women's prison. The switching back and forth between three languages reflects the transitory movement of characters, and the language use shows "the supposedly insuperable, different cultures are bridged almost casually, as if social and cultural belonging and exclusion were a matter of language capacity in the film" (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 90).

The shifting languages, almost paradoxically, draw attention away from foreignness or identity, and instead are connected to temporary situations of the film's characters. As Mennel (2010) observes, each character in the film, at some stage, speaks with an accent,

der von zeitlichen und geographischen Koordinatoren abhängig und nicht an bestimmte Figuren und ihre Herkunft gebunden ist. Diese topographische, zeitliche und mobile Konstellation der Filmfiguren ergibt somit ein bewegliches und dynamisches Netzwerk, in welchem ›Akzent‹ die Verbindung von Zeit, Ort und Figuren markiert: Nicht

als absolute, sondern temporäre Verrückungen aus einer normativen und nicht-markierten Sprache.⁶² (Mennel 2010, p. 98)

The characters' linguistic flexibility suggests a crossing of boundaries; the commonality and changeability of accents suggests that no one person is foreign, and no one person 'at home', but reinforces the idea that the construction of otherness can only ever be a situated one.

When Ali first visits her, Jessi puts a Turkish pop song on the stereo: Nese Karaböcek's *Son Hatıra* (The Last Memory) (Gramling 2010, p. 356); Ali recognises the Turkish lyrics, and asks Jessi (Yeter), "Sind Sie Türkin?" (Are you a Turk?), which Jessi confirms with an offhand, "Kann sein" ([That] could be). At this point, Ali switches into Turkish to admit that he is getting embarrassed and to ask her name — implicitly wanting to know her real name, since she has already introduced herself under the pseudonym Jessi. In this way, "A conversation that, in the previous instant, had been based on a shared and deliberate disinterest in questions of ethnicity suddenly becomes wholly reconstituted in ethnic terms, as Ali demands" (Gramling 2010, p. 356). The characters who began as Germans discussing different sex acts in terms of 'internationalism' are now, through Ali's reframing, to interact with each other as Turks (Turkish-Germans) first and foremost. In Gramling's (2010, p. 359) view, this use of language in the scene between Ali and Jessi shows a "staggering oscillation" in "language choice, language diversity, and codeswitching" compared to Akın's earlier films (with the exception of *Solino*) in which they were less developed.

As Naiboğlu (2010) discusses, the embarrassment Ali admits to in this scene can be understood as his expression of shame at desiring a Turkish woman, who ought to be a maternal and virtuous figure according to his values — and the shame evidently stays with Ali even after Yeter moves in with him. In casting Nursel Köse for the role of Yeter, Akın made a conscious choice to place someone unexpectedly 'sexy' in the role, to address the whore/mother binary (Naiboğlu 2010, p. 88)⁶³. One could also express

⁶² "that is dependant on a temporal and geographical coordinates, and not bound to particular characters and their backgrounds. Thus the topographic, temporal and mobile constellation of the film characters gives a moving and dynamic network, in which 'accent' marks the combination of time, place and characters: not as absolute, but rather temporary displacements out of a normative and non-marked language."

⁶³ In this context it is worth observing that some years earlier, Köse had played the part of Ibo's (quite unglamorous) mother in *Kebab Connection* — but alongside her acting career, she has been a cabaret performer. She founded the group Die Bodenkosmetikerinnen (The Floor Cosmeticians — a playful take on 'cleaning ladies').

this in terms of the erotic Oriental woman and the desexualised figure, and an attempt to find the middle ground between the two (cf. Lutz 1991, see also Chapter 5.1). Of Yeter herself, Akin also explains that she represents his view of a Turkish cinematic archetype: the “alternde Hure” (ageing whore) — but a more realistic version than the “verklärt und romantisiert” (glorified and romanticised) version of Turkish films (Akin 2011, p. 181).

It is remarkable that for all the foregrounding of travel and transitions, *The Edge of Heaven* addresses transnationalism only to a limited extent. What is not explicitly said becomes quite noticeable in its absence. Tezcan writes that the transnational aspect is evident in almost every scene of the film, and yet one cannot escape the feeling

dass die transnationale Dimension der Beziehungen, die dermaßen präsent im Film ist, keine besondere Aufladung in den Dialogen erfährt. Als wollte Fatih Akin mit allen Mitteln vermeiden, dass der Film irgendwie auf der üblichen Identitätsachse interpretiert würde. Je weniger die Identitätslinie befolgt wird, desto stärker tritt die Ebene existenzieller Erfahrung hervor, die die Individuen angesichts des Todes machen, die schließlich den Figuren eigensinnige Räume der Begegnung eröffnet.⁶⁴ (Tezcan 2010, pp. 53-54)

The narrative logic of the film might almost seem to redress protagonists who are on ‘the wrong side’, and to return protagonists, even if in death, to their rightful home (Rauer 2010, p. 119). Yeter’s body is returned to be buried in her original homeland Turkey, the endpoint to a less than ideal life in Germany; Lotte’s determined but ill-planned stay in Istanbul ends with her death, and the return of her body to Germany as though she never should have left; at the very end of the film Ali has returned to Trabzon, having been deported from Germany after time in prison for his crime, and it is implied that he will die at sea. Yet, if the transitions in the film relate to the national border-crossings to and from Turkey, they are all motivated at least partly

⁶⁴ “The transnational dimension is thereby present in almost every scene of the film. [...] Yet one can’t resist the impression that the transnational dimension of the relationships [...] has no particular bearing on the dialogue. As if Fatih Akin, by all available means, wanted to avoid the film being interpreted along the usual identity axis. The less the identity line is followed, the stronger the level of existential experience comes to the front, that the individuals make in light of death, which finally opens up idiosyncratic spaces of encounter to the characters.”

by senses of personal belonging (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 89). The life stories of the protagonists leave traces,

die quer, transversal zu den Grenzen von Nationen und von Generationen verlaufen, ohne dabei die Prägekraft solcher Kollektivsingulare zu verleugnen. Der Film ermöglicht daher eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Frage, wie und wo sich Lebensläufe und Leidenschaften trotz zunehmend delokalisierenden Vorstellungswelten verorten können.⁶⁵ (Rauer 2010, p. 119)

In this sense, the film is in fact “keine klassische Erzählung von Fremdheit, Wurzellosigkeit und Heimatverlust, sondern ein Film über De- und Relokalisierungsprozesse in einer sich zunehmend globalisierenden Welt”⁶⁶ (Rauer 2010, p. 119). Crucially, when viewed in the broader context of notions of nation and national cinema, in this film it is also ‘ethnic majority’ Germans who experience these processes. Yeter and Ayten, and in the broadest sense also Ali, have come to Germany for political reasons and return ‘home’ involuntarily; Nejat, Lotte and Susanne travel to Turkey “more or less voluntarily, though not without an urgent reason. [...] All of them follow someone and, after having trespassed onto the other side, decide to stay in Istanbul” (Yeşilada 2009b, p. 89). It is notable that Susanne has been to Istanbul once before. As she reveals to Nejat when they first meet, she stopped in Istanbul some thirty years earlier, when she hitchhiked all the way to India. Therefore her personal, albeit brief, history with Istanbul can be traced from the 1970s, barely a decade after the beginnings of mass Turkish immigration to Germany. Susanne’s revelation also provides a familial symmetry with her daughter’s experiences: Lotte has recently returned from a trip to India, before meeting Ayten and later following her to Istanbul.

The Edge of Heaven is fundamentally a family story, or three family stories intertwined. Its driving theme is death, and the intercultural, transnational milieus merely the setting. In spite of the subject matter and the stories of its characters “wird in Akıns Film weder der Mythos von der Rückkehr zu Geburtsort, Heimat und Identität bemüht, und ebenso nicht das Ankommen in einer Zielgesellschaft, noch handelt es sich

⁶⁵ “cross the borders of nations and generations without denying the influence of such group identifications; the film is thus able to grapple with the question of how and where lives and passions can be located in increasingly delocalised imaginative worlds”

⁶⁶ “no classical narration of otherness, rootlessness and loss of home, but rather a film about processes of de- and relocalisation in an increasingly globalised world.”

bei diesem Film um einen Kulturdialog oder um einen Kulturkonflikt”⁶⁷ (Ezli 2010, p. 9).

Akın himself readily identifies the intercultural aspect of the film, having said that he does not consider the encounters in *The Edge of Heaven* to be specific to Germany and Turkey; that in fact, “this Turkish-German gap, you know, or this connecting element of the two nations, or systems, or worlds — you can change that and put other things instead. [...] Mexico and the U.S., same thing” (Kulish 2008, p. 9). Yet in the reception of *The Edge of Heaven*, some critics readily perceived the film as the work of a filmmaker familiar with both national settings: “[Akın’s] camera absorbs the authentic beauty in both countries, from tidy Bremen to pulsing Istanbul to the tea-covered hillsides and fishing villages of the Black Sea coast. [...] “The Edge of Heaven” is firmly rooted in these places, manifesting a local knowledge that quietly demolishes received ideas about East and West” (Scott 2008, p. 7).

The scene in which Yeter is confronted by two men in the tram is one of the very few references to Islam or any religion throughout *The Edge of Heaven*; as with Sibel and Cahit, religion plays little role in the lives of the protagonists, even if it influences people or circumstances around them. The other key moment when religion is discussed is much closer to the end of the film. One morning in Istanbul, while renting the room from Nejat, Susanne sees groups of men making their way down the stairs outside; she asks him where all the people are going. Nejat explains the story behind Bayram: that God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, as a sign of Abraham’s devotion to God. When Nejat recounts this story for Susanne, she responds, “Diese Geschichte gibt’s auch bei uns” (“We have that story too”) This interlinking of Islam and Christianity has been discussed by Hillman and Silvey; they identify strands throughout the film that triangulate Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and many small details that subtly create links between Germany and Turkish history (Hillman and Silvey 2010). El Hissy notes that this particular conversation is accompanied by three shots, showing two mosques and a church respectively, depicting Istanbul as a place of religious diversity (El Hissy in Hillman and Silvey 2010, p. 99).

The two deaths in their respective ‘chapters’ of the film are pre-announced with intertitles: *Yeters Tod* (Yeter’s Death) and *Lottes Tod* (Lotte’s Death). Even in death, the

⁶⁷ “Akın’s film does not labour the mythology of the return to birthplace, home and identity, and equally not the arrival in a destination society, nor does the film deal with a cultural dialogue or a cultural conflict.”

bodies of Yeter and Lotte still travel across borders — their coffins are transported back to their respective origins. As Rauer writes, the focus is not the return to the homeland, but on transit and movement even in death; the bodies are not at rest, but in fact restless; the coffins are viewed on conveyor belts, and their burials remain offscreen (2010, p. 123). One might interpret this as a punishment of sorts for the transgression of national boundaries — both Yeter and Lotte met their death while abroad (though Yeter's time in Germany was much longer than Lotte's in Turkey); rather than receiving a peaceful burial in their homeland soil, their bodies are handled along with the rest of the luggage and freight being loaded onto an aeroplane. Rauer argues that the coffins represent a border-crossing and blurring between life and death, mirroring the transnational space with which the film deals (Rauer 2010, p. 123).

The final death and resting place of Ali are obscured much further. When Ali is released from German prison and deported to Turkey, Nejat goes to find him — he is told his father has gone fishing, and sits on the beach watching the ocean, to wait for his return. That the film ends at this point strongly suggests that Ali will not return, but has died at sea. Most commentary on the film, though, has perceived an imminent reunion; this scene follows, after all, Nejat's recollection of his father's love, and a sudden decision to reconcile with him. In this sense, the scene may be read in either case as a reunion of the father and son — whether literally or only by Nejat's intention.

Yeter's daughter Ayten is played by Nurgül Yeşilçay, a Turkish actor who has mostly appeared on stage and television. Ayten is a political activist in Istanbul, demonstrating in support of the Kurdish-affiliated PKK, the Kurdistan Workers' Party. When their protest is broken up by the police, Ayten picks up a gun dropped by a policeman and runs through a building where a resident lets her through to the rooftop, where she hides the gun. After others in her group are arrested, Ayten flees to Germany where she lives in a safe house she knows of through contacts. When that situation sours, Ayten drifts to the university campus where, adopting the pseudonym Gül, she meets and befriends Lotte in the cafeteria. Lotte is immediately attracted, and eagerly offers her own home as a place for Gül to stay; they go there briefly before heading out for the evening. Later in the night they go to a club, where they share a joint and begin to kiss; they return home in daylight for breakfast and retire to Lotte's room where they have sex.

Through the character of Ayten (or Gül, the pseudonym she uses), the film affirms that there is the same breadth to womanhood in Turkey as elsewhere. Ayten is

cast as a highly politicised rebel, and with a posturing aggression that eschews any demure femininity. Her characterisation borders on the stereotypical, a point self-consciously and self-reflexively made when Ayten walks past a piece of stencilled graffiti at the University of Hamburg: a picture of Bob Marley with the slogan REBEL STUDIES. It is seen in the background as Ayten walks past in medium shot, mostly in profile. The polysemy of ‘studying’ draws attention to the audience’s own viewing of and attitudes towards Ayten in this moment. She is far from desexualised, though: for her early scenes in Germany, she spends most of the time wearing only a close-fitting tank top over her jeans, emphasising her shoulders, breasts and hips. Lotte’s excitement at meeting Ayten is obvious. As they eat lunch in the cafeteria, Lotte’s attentive expression as she talks with Ayten is intercut with reverse shots of Ayten’s sullen (and no doubt tired) expression, and the artless way she devours her meal of chicken. Lotte invites Ayten home and even offers Ayten some of her own clothes — in effect, providing Ayten with the costume she needs for her new role. By the time they kiss as Orient-influenced pop music plays, the projected attraction has leant Ayten a *femme fatale* quality. With the soundtrack and the warm orange light and smoke, this party scene also suggests a slightly Orientalised view of Ayten’s sexuality (see also Chapter 2.3). The film strongly suggests that Lotte’s immediate attraction to Gül/Ayten is attached to a sort of cosmopolitanism: Lotte’s studies are in two foreign languages (English and Spanish), and she has recently returned from a trip to India. She also takes on a protective and assisting role to Ayten, pointing out to Susanne that Ayten has run away and needs help. By the time Ayten is deported after six months, Lotte is evidently very much in love with her, yet there is also an intensity about Lotte’s determination — such as when she ransacks her room in search of her passport, and is quick to accuse her mother Susanne of hiding it.

Where Lotte is infatuated with Gül/Ayten, Susanne engages Gül in a discussion of politics. They talk about the future of the European Union; Susanne appears somewhat dubious as to Gül’s motives and political views, and angered by her tone and language. Susanne reminds Gül that “This is my house” — a comment that readily brings to mind the perspective of a majority population towards its immigrants. Gül is

being told that her presence is accepted, but that her host sets the rules and has the higher status, and rudeness will not be tolerated.⁶⁸

Susanne is played by Hannah Schygulla, famous for her lead roles and muse-like association with Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Through this work, she arguably embodies “den generationalen Bruch der 1950er und 1960er Jahre in der Bundesrepublik.[...] Mit diesem impliziten Verweis auf die Filme Fassbinders kommentiert Akin’s Film indirekt die spezifisch deutsche Sichtweise auf Migration und Integration im Werk Fassbinders”⁶⁹ (Rauer 2010, p. 126). This may be somewhat overstated — whether this was Akin’s intention, or whether most viewers will identify this allusion as such, can surely be debated — but nevertheless the presence of Schygulla is a visual connection to a wealth of German cinematic history and certainly to a number of films that took a socially critical stance towards German society and the treatment of its history. Hillman has identified other allusions to past German films: the character Ali, Nejat’s father, recalls the Ali of Fassbinder’s *Fear Eats the Soul* (its working title was *Alle Türken heißen Ali* — *All Turks Are Called Ali*); when Ayten rings the telephone service to ask for her mother’s phone number in Bremen, the only name beginning with a Y is for a Yasemin, like the title character of Hark Bohm’s film (Hillman 2010, p. 270). In these, *The Edge of Heaven* is intertextually aligned with German cinema, even as it opens up other links to Turkey and Germany. In an interview for *The Edge of Heaven*, Akin said, “I’m a Turkish-German film-maker and Fassbinder and Güney are heroes”; of his choice to cast their respective longtime lead actors Hanna Schygulla and Tuncel Kurtiz in *The Edge of Heaven*, Akin explained, “Because I’m a son of both cinemas I could bring the two together — and now I feel complete” (Jaafar 2008).

The Edge of Heaven opens with a road trip, which it returns to twice briefly, and again at length in the final sequence. The opening shot of the film is a small, nondescript building with no obvious signage or other clue as to its setting; the camera pans to the right to reveal a small petrol station, where two men speak in Turkish and one asks the other to fill the tank. Inside the shop, Nejat (as we soon know him to be called) asks about the music playing, and another employee tells him the performer died of cancer two years ago; even this early in the film, death intrudes. This opening is “a

⁶⁸ Some reactions in Turkey to the film have focused on the Turkish-European Union relationship, for instance as expressed through the characters of Ayten, Lotte and Susanne (see Cox 2012, especially pp. 165-166).

⁶⁹ the generational break of the 1950s and 1960s in the Federal Republic. [...] With this implicit reference to the films of Fassbinder, Akin’s film indirectly comments on the specifically German perspective on migration and integration in the work of Fassbinder.”

scene that has become Akin's signature situation: a man in a car, going somewhere. Stopping at a gas station, he buys some bottled water and we realize he is in Turkey, near the Black Sea" (Elsaesser 2008, p. 36). Nejat's car trip to this place appears as a story-framing device at the beginning and end of the film, with the rest of the film serving to explain how Nejat came to this point.⁷⁰ Before the chapter "Yeter's Death", the audience sees Nejat back in his car, continuing his drive, now through a series of tunnels: these shots enforce the sense of movement and transition in the story that immediately follows. Similarly, "Lotte's Death" is preceded with more shots of Nejat's journey through Turkish countryside and towns. The third section is *Auf der anderen Seite* (On the Other Side), matching the original German title on the entire film. This final section opens not with imagery from Nejat's road trip (this returns towards the end) but with a long shot of luggage being unloaded from a plane at Istanbul's airport; thus, as well as introducing the arrival of both Susanne Staub and Ali Aksu in Istanbul, the motif of travel is maintained. This centrality of transit itself and the elliptical structure bring to mind Gutjahr's (2009) discussion of the intercultural *Bildungsroman*, in which the process of travel is closely intertwined with the process of learning.

Ayten's journey and arrival in Hamburg are followed more closely than any other international trip made in the film. This sequence not only reveals that she is travelling under a fake passport — there is a shot of the passport title page with Ayten's photo beside the name Gül Korkmaz — but also draws greater attention to Ayten's position outside the law: she arrives, in effect, as an undocumented immigrant (Hess-Lüttich and Hobi 2011, pp. 344-347).

The experience of crossing from one country into the other is perhaps the most disorienting for Lotte, the young German. In spite of her previous travel (she mentions a trip to India) and her motivating passion (for Ayten as well as for a vague sense of making things right), she seems arguably the most adrift. Yeter has been a resident in Germany for some years by the time she meets Ali, and at least has the basics she

⁷⁰ The DVD release includes in its extras a short film called *Das Schwarze Meer* (*The Black Sea*), comprising additional footage and scenes of Nejat's journey, which were filmed but "aus dramaturgischen Gründen" (for dramaturgical reasons) ultimately not included in the main film. In this extra section of narrative, Nejat is on the journey to meet his father: Nejat stops to see his mother's grave in Filyos, where he happens to meet his former step-sister Emine (now almost 40) and the two sleep together — an unusual, borderline incestuous take on the themes of family reunification in *The Edge of Heaven*. In Trabzon, Nejat buys himself a No. 11 football (soccer) jersey, and in the evening in a bar, hears the end of a live performance. He has a brief conversation with the woman who has been singing, who tells him Bob Dylan's maternal grandmother was from Trabzon (a connection to which Akin has also referred in interviews) (on this particular scene, see also Göktürk 2012, pp. 206-207).

requires. Nejat is not only fully bilingual but shows an easy familiarity with Turkish customs, and in Istanbul he has the dual mission of searching for Yeter's daughter, and running the German bookshop. In Hamburg, Ayten's sullen defiance makes her not entirely sympathetic to the audience, and her apparent worldliness — she seems, for example, to expect rather than only hope that Lotte will give her money — gives the *impression* that she knows what she is doing.

Lotte, by contrast, has shown herself to be naive in the way she takes up new interests; even allowing for the filter of parental concern, Susanne paints a picture of a young woman who is searching for her identity and purpose. Her intense infatuation with Ayten convinces her to do all that she can to help her, dealing with authorities through interpreters since she speaks no Turkish. Lotte first approaches the German embassy in Istanbul, appealing to the authorities of her home country for support; as they explain, their duty does not apply to Ayten as a non-German national. It is a clear reminder of the limiting effect of nation-states — but in this same scene, the German employee gives Lotte the name of a local Turkish advocate who may be able to help. Thus the scene is strongly suggestive of the ways connections do not always align with national borders, and specifically that local knowledge can be vital.

Jaafar notes the particular political circumstances against which background the story plays out: there is tension between religion and secularism, and before the film's release there had been an escalation in tension between the Turkish state and Kurdish nationalism. The Istanbul depicted in *The Edge of Heaven* shows “the resurgence of the state, with flags unfurled on every corner” (Jaafar 2008, p. 9). For his part, Akın attests that this was simply the setting he encountered:

Go to Turkey and you see flags everywhere. [...] As a film-maker you have two choices: ask the art department to take the flags down or leave them flying. Some people have read it as a sign that I'm a nationalist, but the flags are there because I shot the film in a documentary style. There's a build-up of anger and nationalism right now, with Kurdish people attacked in the streets or getting their windows smashed. It's like Germany in 1935. (in Jaafar 2008, p. 9)

Not only Ayten's fate is directly affected by the politics of contemporary Turkey. Yeter is a widow, her husband having been killed in a massacre, mostly of Alevi Muslims, in Maraş (the site of other battles in history, and since 1973 known as

Kahramanmaraş). Yeter mentions merely that her husband was killed in Maraş in 1978, and Ali recognises the reference point. This suggests also that Yeter is a Kurd, and that her husband may have been involved with the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) (see Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 77). This history and the sensitivity of nationalistic movements within Turkey are referenced fleetingly again later. Nejat tells a police officer that the Ayten Öztürk he is looking for came from Istanbul or maybe Maraş; the officer pauses slightly before pointedly repeating the town under its official name "Kahramanmaraş" in response. The generally leftist politics, and the cause, of the people killed back then are echoed by Ayten's contemporary cohort of protesters. The character of Ali, too, carries echoes of Turkey's political history: "probably born in the 30s, [Ali] is a true child of the Kemalist vision of a secularist state, in his readiness to defy his God" (as in Ali's words to his young son, which Nejat recounts to Susanne) (Hillman and Silvey 2010, p. 100).

While the characters of *Head-On* travel between Hamburg and Istanbul — two cities, particularly the former, that are well-represented in Akin's previous work — *The Edge of Heaven* introduces a third main urban location: Bremen. Akin describes how, while in Bremen in summer 2005 for the screening of *Crossing the Bridge*, he encountered the Helenenstraße 'contact zone' where prostitutes work from their rooms; he was interested to see the bright colours of the buildings, and that the women were mostly over forty (Akin 2011, p. 181).

As in *Head-On*, there is also an evident liminality to many of the spaces the characters inhabit in *The Edge of Heaven*, these liminal spaces highlight both the transitional state of the characters' own lives, and the changing society they exist in. At the same time, the film uses different culturally-coded spaces to highlight the transnational linking and elliptical and continuous nature of its pathways. Naiboğlu considers both *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven* to depict characters who seek a liminal position in what Bhabha calls "third space"; the third space offers an alternative to essentialised ideas of different cultures, and emphasises that cultural hybridity is a process (Naiboğlu 2010, pp. 76-77). It is this transcultural, transitional space, rather than national spaces or the processes of border-crossing, that the characters of these films inhabit.

Yeter's work as a prostitute is conducted in a small basement room off a gated street; the dim lighting and small window at street level underscore the impression that she is shut away from society — for the work she does rather than where she is

originally from. Yeter's brothel window, where she stands on display to potential customers, frames her like an inverted version of the window through which Turna in *40 Square Metres of Germany* looks at the outside world on display — in one scene observing a sex worker on the opposite street corner below. Turna is confined to the apartment, unable to leave; though Yeter lives elsewhere, her small room off the street is also a place she must remain throughout the day. Unlike the expanse of glass Turna could only look through, Yeter's open window invites paying customers in — nonetheless it represents the parameters of much of her interaction with the rest of Germany. As Ali leaves, two men walking along Helenstraße overhear, and comment on, the fact that Yeter is speaking Turkish. As they look at her more closely, Yeter closes the window and draws the curtain, trying to shut out their gaze; the red curtain, subtly evoking that of a theatre stage, further underlines the performative aspect of her work (see earlier in this sub-chapter). Later, they confront her in the tram as she leaves for the evening. Addressing her with the traditional Arabic-language greeting “Selam aleikum” (Peace be with you), they create a conversational space in which the references are to Islam and to traditional Turkish values of women's modesty and piety. Yeter attempts to avert the conversation by responding, in a rather ironic gesture of linguistic appropriation, with the stereotyped ‘foreigner-speak’ German of “Nix verstehen” (Not understand) — as though she were a native speaker dismissing the two Turkish-speakers in a patronising way. The men assume the role of policing her behaviour and upholding the particular cultural values to which they subscribe; their unmistakable implication is that they will kill her if they see her continuing her work in the Helenenstraße brothel. Their hypocrisy is evident from the fact that they first saw Yeter because they were visiting Helenenstraße themselves.

This scene is a transitional moment for Yeter, who suddenly has good reason to consider Ali's offer of paying her to live with him. Cornered quite literally, and on a moving vehicle, her marginalisation is clear (even as the scene also displays a transcultural aspect, in that Yeter immediately understands the language and context of the men's comments, and is familiar with the appropriate responses she must give). The following scene, in which she meets with Ali to accept his offer, returns some control to her even though it is through selling her services that she will escape the threat the two men have made. Once in Ali's house, Yeter begins to exert more autonomy; she emphasises that she is not his property, and that she will not have sex with him whenever he demands it. This gesture of independence is undercut dramatically as Ali

lashes out and hits her, causing her death when she hits her head as she falls. In the moments before her death, Yeter has begun packing her things and saying she will move out — that she can go where she likes. Ali's violence and Yeter's death come as a denial of this hoped-for freedom, and the ultimate confirmation of her marginalised status, in spite of her own ability to negotiate the transcultural space.

Ayten is first encountered running through the streets and onto a rooftop; she then moves from ramshackle shared accommodation to sleeping in a safe house, to temporarily sharing Lotte's room, to being incarcerated in Istanbul. Going to Istanbul to be near Ayten, Lotte sleeps on a mattress in a flat above Nejat's bookshop. Nejat's bookshop in itself is a small island of German literature with the rest of Istanbul outside its door.

The German bookshop also serves as a point of transnational connection and intercultural encounter, reflecting on Turkish-German relations nearly as much as it does on German cultural history. When Nejat buys this bookshop, he is surrounded by the literature so familiar to him from his academic career in Germany. When he first enters the shop and almost breathlessly looks around at the shelves, there is recorded harpsichord music playing, providing a Western European contrast to the Oriental music throughout the other scenes in Turkey. The bookshop adds another node to the network of transnational ties built up in the film, acting as both a site of encounters between characters and as a symbol of a culture's transportation abroad. Nejat's bookshop in Istanbul is functionally the same as a Turkish shop in Hamburg or Bremen (compare, for example, with the role of the restaurants in *Kebab Connection* or *Karamuk* — see Chapter 3.3).

The bookshop is also the scene for questioning the ability to really leave 'home' behind, and the limits of trying to transport or connect with a piece of homeland culture in a new place. When Nejat first speaks with the owner, Markus Obermüller, about purchasing the shop from him, Markus explains why he wants to sell it at all: after ten years in Istanbul, he suddenly finds that he misses Germany and its language; even though he is surrounded by German literature, it has begun to feel like a dead language to him, and "Ich hab' einfach... Heimweh" (I'm simply... homesick). This confession is in some way all the more poignant because on the surface, Markus seems to have adapted well to life in Turkey — he speaks Turkish to his employee Cengiz, and owns what seems to be a very successful business. The experience of homesickness even while surrounded by the trappings of German culture, as manifested in its language and

literature, suggests also that cultural artefacts do not necessarily create a sense of ‘belonging’ or of being ‘home’, nor compensate if the yearning for home becomes sufficiently strong.

Literature takes quite a prominent role in the *mise-en-scène*: Nejat reads from Goethe in his lecture at Hamburg University, and his first encounter with the Istanbul bookshop features a slow tracking shot around the shelves crammed with books. Nejat gives Ali a book to read: Selim Özdoğan’s novel *Die Tochter des Schmieds* (*The Blacksmith’s Daughter*, 2005), which tells the story of an Anatolian family, ending in Delmenhorst. Akın takes the rare measure of listing the book in the end credits, encouraging viewers to read it for themselves (Hillman and Silvey 2010, see p. 100). Also primarily in connection with Nejat, the value of education is emphasised: through Nejat’s obviously high level of education, the fact Yeter works to fund her daughter’s education (which raises Nejat’s opinion of Yeter), and through Nejat’s desire to find Yeter’s daughter and continue this funding himself (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 77). Nejat’s symbolic significance as a Turkish-background cinematic figure, with a high level of education and a high-status profession, is even referred to self-reflexively within the film. As Yeşilada (2009b, p. 90) observes, the dialogue between Markus and Nejat draws attention to both the normality of Nejat’s position and its cinematic rarity. Markus laughingly observes, “Das wäre lustig [...] Ein türkischer Germanistik-Professor aus Deutschland landet in einer deutschen Buchhandlung in der Türkei. Das passt doch!” (That would be funny [...] A Turkish Professor of German Literature from Germany ends up in a German bookshop in Turkey. That’s perfect!)⁷¹ Nejat, seeming to find this situation less noteworthy than Markus does, replies simply, “Ja, vielleicht” (Yes, perhaps) as he looks around the bookshop and ponders the idea.⁷²

To the significance of education in the film, one can add that for Ayten/Gül, the university provides a refuge: it is in the safety of the Hamburg campus that she washes herself, sleeps in the back of the auditorium where Nejat lectures, and where she meets Lotte, whose first gesture in their relationship is to buy lunch for Ayten. A discussion of education also becomes a launching point for reference to Turkish-EU relations and to internal Turkish politics and social issues: seeking Ayten through official channels,

⁷¹ My translation from the German dialogue differs slightly from Yeşilada’s English translation, which has Markus calling Nejat “A Turkish-German professor for German Literature...” I interpret the comment by Markus to refer to Nejat as solely Turkish (adjectivally) in his wanting to make the point about intercultural complexity, rather than to make a point of asserting Nejat’s hybrid or transcultural identity.

⁷² Nejat’s high professional status is echoed by the Turkish-background female doctor who speaks to him about Ali’s condition in the hospital.

Nejat tells a detective that he wants to finance the missing woman's study because education is a human right. The detective, perhaps caught off-guard by the earnestness of Nejat's response, stifles a laugh and responds with a simply "Well said"; the reference to human rights may also be seen as a reference to expectations and conditions that the European Union (as represented here by Nejat and his emphatic comment) places upon potential Turkish accession into the EU. The detective suggests that Nejat's money would be well-spent helping any of the many Kurdish children living in the streets below or whose names fill the files in his office.

As Yeşilada (2009b, p. 90) notes, the transitioning and border-crossing motifs in *The Edge of Heaven* also encompass varied social milieus: Nejat's world of academia, bookshelves, and auditoriums; Ali's working-class surrounds; the stylish middle-class home of Lotte and Susanne Staub. The film crosses social borders as well as cultural or national ones. The varied physical spaces within the film are at times similar to one another, with their small differences therefore all the more revealing. Ali's apartment in Bremen and Nejat's apartment in Istanbul are both small, but the latter appears more welcoming thanks to the light coming in through much larger windows (Hess-Lüttich and Hobi 2011, p. 340).

The music in *The Edge of Heaven* is almost entirely Turkish: the similar music choices for sequences in Germany and in Turkey underline the transcultural connectedness of the spaces occupied. The recurring song throughout the film, as introduced in the opening scene at the petrol station, is *Ben seni sevdiğimi Dünyalara Bildirdum* (I Told The World(s) That I Love You) by Kazım Koyuncu, the "absent hero of the film" (Göktürk 2012, p. 205), who died at 33 of lung cancer. When the petrol station scene, and with it the song, are repeated near the end of the film, it is the song as performed with the female vocals of Şevval Sam; the rest of the scene plays out as before. Sam had performed the song with Koyuncu on television, and is also from the Black Sea region. The regional specificity relates, like other moments in *The Edge of Heaven*, to the possibility of Turkey's accession to the European Union: the EU process has increased Turks' interest in the regional cultures of their own country (Göktürk 2012, p. 206).

In different ways, each of these films expresses what Ezli refers to in the context of *The Edge of Heaven*:

Dieses zielgerichtete Migrations- und zugleich Integrationsnarrativ beruht auf einer klaren Trennung von Herkunfts- und Aufnahmegesellschaft, von Auszug und Ankunft. Die Ankunft [...] ist jedoch keine materiell-körperliche mehr, sondern eine identitätspolitisch-symbolische. Die viel beschworenen Zwischenräume deutsch-türkischer Bindungen und ihre Problematisierungen in den 1980ern und 1990ern in Politik und Medien, Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften, in Literatur und Film scheinen bei dieser langen Odyssee überwunden.⁷³ (Ezli 2010, pp.7-8)

The Turkish critic Veedi Sayar (in Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 78) considers *The Edge of Heaven* to express the sort of ‘humanist’ ideology that appeals to Western viewers and their guilt complex, and that Akin views Turkey from ‘the other side’, presenting clichés even as he might wish to subvert them. Perhaps the film is more successful in its view of Germany from the other side. If *Head-On* features Turkey as an ‘imaginary space’, framed by the melodramatic nostalgia of the musical vignettes, then *The Edge of Heaven* begins with Turkey as an utterly real place, bordering on banal — albeit with an “atmosphere of melancholic stagnation” (Göktürk 2012, p. 204) at the petrol station. There is also, naturally, the liminality inscribed into this space as a point on a journey; this brings to it a sense of momentum, which is affirmed when Nejat then drives onward. The establishing shots of Bremen, by contrast, are not merely of daily life or a specific scene, but of its landmark cathedral, a protest/parade, and of a statue of the *Bremer Stadtmusikanten* (Town Musicians of Bremen): a rooster on the back of a cat, on the back of a dog, on a donkey’s back, representing an old fairytale. Momentarily, it is Germany that is represented through ritual and mythology.

The opening scene also establishes that Nejat, in spite of conversing casually in Turkish with the petrol station employees, and recognising that it is Bayram, is only a visitor. It is not yet clear that he is from Germany, but the fact he does not recognise the song playing, nor is familiar with the story of its performer who died of cancer, makes him at any rate an outsider compared to the ‘locals’ in the shop (Göktürk 2012, pp. 200-201).

⁷³ “This purposeful narrative of migration and also integration touches on a clear separation of the society of origin and the receiving society, of exodus and arrival. But the arrival is no longer a material-physical one, but rather one of identity politics and symbolism. The oft-conjured spaces between German-Turkish connections and their problematisation in the 1980s and 1990s in politics and media, social sciences and humanities, in literature and film, seem to be overcome in this long odyssey.”

The shots of Yeter's coffin being unloaded from a plane is mirrored not by Lotte's being unloaded in Hamburg, but loaded in Istanbul — like a direct reversal of the earlier shot rather than a mirror of it. Though the Germany-Turkey/west-east axis might be visualised as left-right like the compass bearings, the images of the airport loading conveyors reverse this direction. Yeter's coffin is unloaded in Turkey from the right to the left of the screen; Lotte's coffin is loaded in Turkey from the left to the right. Finally, in the following sequence when Ali and Susanne arrive (separately) in Turkey, the first shot is of luggage being unloaded to the left. This reversed directionality in itself suggests a position of the viewer on 'the other side' from the more obvious visualisation; the situating of these scenes in Turkey makes this connotation more explicit. By contrast, when Ayten travels to Germany to avoid the Turkish police, there is at first no national context provided. One shot shows Ayten walking along the street in Istanbul, away from her housemates being taken by police; the next shot after the edit is of a plane filmed from below and behind as it lands. Geographical location is not implied by the camera's position — the image simply indicates *arrival*, without yet showing where the destination is.

The Edge of Heaven presents a densely interwoven series of connections between Turkey and Germany, with an (attempted, at least) emphasis on looking at both Turkey and Germany, Turks and Germans as 'the other'. In Yeter and Gül in particular, the film complicates Orientalised (and German or universal-archetypal) notions of femininity: the Madonna/whore dichotomy, and the sexualised/desexualised Oriental woman. In its family stories and family-like pairings — Ali/Nejat, Yeter/Ayten, Yeter/Nejat, Susanne/Lotte, Susanne/Ayten — the film also expounds on the idea of the transnational family between Turkey and Germany (see also Chapter 3.3) and on the way in which migration is experienced, or the migration memory 'synthetically' experienced by, different generations.

5.3 *When We Leave/Die Fremde* (dir. Feo Aladağ, 2010)

Screenplay: Feo Aladağ; **Cinematography:** Judith Kaufmann; **Editing:** Andrea Mertens; **Music:** Max Richter, Stéphane Moucha; **Cast:** Florian Lukas, Serhad Can, Almila Bagriacik, Nursel Köse, Alwara Höfels, Ufuk Bayraktar, Blanca Apilánez, Derya Alabora, Settar Tanrıöğen, Nizam Schiller, Sibel Kekilli; **Producer:** Feo Aladağ, Züli Aladağ; **Production Company:** Independent Artists Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, RBB/Potsdam-Babelsberg, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 119 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Feo Aladağ's film deals with the fallout in a Kurdish Turkish-background family in Berlin, after the adult daughter breaks with convention and brings 'shame' on the household. Leaving her abusive marriage in Istanbul, the German-born (or at least German-raised) Umay returns to her family in Berlin, bringing her young son Cem with her. Rather than supporting Umay in her new life, her family members are mostly disapproving and increasingly resentful. Finally leaving her family's apartment, Umay continues to build her new post-marriage life in Germany, but is distraught by her family's attitude towards her. The film closes with the culmination of her older brother's threatening behaviour — but in trying to kill Umay, he accidentally stabs and kills Cem.

The 'honour killing' story may be somewhat familiar to many viewers; the topic has often been covered by German media, or particular cases reported — and *When We Leave* is based on the details of a specific case: that of Hatun Sürücü, whose death at the hands of her brother in February 2005 triggered a wave of attention and fuelled questions about the potential for successful integration. Honour killings in Germany are estimated to take place at a rate of around twelve cases per year — an abhorrent but quantitatively rare occurrence, which nonetheless captures considerable public attention because it is so at odds with the dominant familial and liberal norms of German society.

The film delves further into the concept, portraying the complicating emotional factors of the situation — both for the estranged daughter and her family — and the difficulty of using easy labels for the people involved. At the same time, it offers no excuses for people who fail to take a stand against the maintenance of an oppressive patriarchy in the name of tradition. The film focuses on one female protagonist, Umay, and her relationships with her family members. Umay is primarily a mother to her son, but her roles as a daughter and sister are also important to her and their breakdown causes her a great deal of grief.

The family relationships in *When We Leave* serve to avoid simplistic notions of Turkish male roles as either the ‘good’ or the ‘bad’; this film, through the depictions of Umay’s family members, emphasises even in people (men) who hold seemingly deeply sexist or misogynistic views, there are other facets to be explored and understood. Aladağ is “klug genug, die männlichen Protagonisten nicht einfach als Monster darstellen. Auch sie sind Gefangene eines Ehrenkodexes, der ihr Leben ebenfalls zerstört”⁷⁴ (Kappert 2010).

The official English title, *When We Leave*, is not a translation from the German title, but a reference to a conversation between Umay and her son. The motto is also repeated in a later scene: when we leave, we leave something behind to remember us. This title draws attention to departure: Umay’s departure from Istanbul is the trigger for all events that follow, and she and Cem are forced to ‘leave’ another two times in the film (by the final stages of the film, Umay is planning a third departure). Restlessness and liminality are suggested by the English title. The original German title is *Die Fremde*; the word *fremd* has a number of meanings, equating to the English ‘foreign’, ‘strange’ or ‘alien’ but also to ‘unknown’; thus the feminine adjectival noun *die Fremde* indicates ‘the (female) foreigner’ or ‘the (female) stranger’ or ‘the unknown woman’. It also can be understood to mean ‘the unknown (place)’ This is a telling comment on Umay’s predicament: she is in fact no foreigner in Germany, but is made a stranger to her family by their disapproval of her actions. In this sense, the German title constructs Umay as an other.

When We Leave won the 2010 German Film Award for Best Film — the ‘Lola’ in bronze — and Sibel Kekilli won Best Actress for her role; it won Best Film, Best Debut Film and Best Screenplay at the German Film Critics Award for 2010, as well as another award for Kekilli. The film won awards at other festivals in Germany and many other countries, and was selected as the German entry to compete for the Foreign Language Oscar (though it failed to make the short list).

Compared with *When We Leave*, Scott considers *Head-On* to have been “another, far more nuanced and disturbing drama of violence, desire and the collision of cultures” (2011, p. 4). On the contrary, there are elements of *When We Leave* that explore the same issues in greater depth and with more shades of uncertainty than the brashness of *Head-On*. The father of *Head-On* glowers quietly from the beginning,

⁷⁴ “clever enough, not to portray the male protagonists simply as monsters. Even they are prisoners of a code of honour, which equally destroys their lives.”

making his ruthless banishment of Sibel seem like a culmination; the father of *When We Leave* is jovial and affectionate in many scenes (compare also with the father in the early scenes in *Yasemin*, see Chapter 3.2), making his adherence to norms of family honour all the more shocking to many viewers. For Taylor, *When We Leave* has “the intensity of a noirish maternal melodrama and the domestic specificity of a movie made by a woman. In fact it was made by several: Ms. Aladağ's cinematographer, editor, production designer and co-producer are all women.” (Taylor 2011) However, no easy assumptions can be made from the fact that the director of *When We Leave* is a woman; if the film paints an effective and realistic picture of Umay's situation — as representative of other such stories in Germany — it speaks to Feo Aladağ's stringent research and two years of preparation.

The film is “a somber, sometimes powerful and frequently schematic drama about a woman trying to free herself from the emotional and physical violence of a cruel, patriarchal system” (Scott 2011). Reviewing the film, Buß notes that the tragic story arc of the female protagonist in *When We Leave* is reminiscent of classic women's dramas, in particular *Effi Briest*. The question, he says, is whether one may narrate a story of an honour killing in the style of a classic of German literature; at the film's premiere at the 2010 Berlin Film Festival, the film drew both praise and criticism; it is possible that the reaction partly

aus dem Umstand resultiert, dass die Ungeheuerlichkeit der sich ankündigenden Tat hier mit einer gewissen Zwangsläufigkeit präsentiert wird, in der selbst die Täter zuweilen als Opfer erscheinen: Der Vater ist kein religiöser Eiferer, die kleine Schwester sucht nur ihr eigenes Glück, und selbst der ältere, fanatisierte Bruder wirkt am Ende nur noch wie ein Vollstrecker mikro-gesellschaftlicher Zwänge.⁷⁵
(Buß 2010)

As director, Feo Aladağ “works in the quiet, stricken tones of modern socially conscious melodrama. Each scene makes its emotional and thematic point carefully, and builds into a solid, absorbing, conventional story, by which I mean that while there are twists and reversals in the plot, nothing really comes as a surprise. [...] the behavior of

⁷⁵ “results from the circumstance, that the monstrosity of the signalled act is presented here with a certain inevitability, in which even the perpetrators themselves seem to be victims. The father is no religious zealot, the little sister only wants her own happiness, and even the older, raving brother appears at the end to be just an enforcer of microsocietal pressures”

the characters seems constricted. There is only intermittently a sense of how life is lived; only rules, obligations, heavy sighs and bitter contradictions” (Scott 2011, p. 4).

With Sibel Kekilli playing Umay and Nursel Köse playing Gül, *When We Leave* is linked intertextually to *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven* at the level of reception and iconography. From their roles as Sibel and Yeter respectively, Kekilli and Köse carry what Gramling (2012, p. 41) refers to as a “personal signature”. Kekilli specifically was the target of some criticism for taking a role in such a film as *When We Leave*. In a discussion forum her critical comments about Islam caused some audience/panel members to walk out. Upon the Turkish release of *When We Leave*, the *Hürriyet* newspaper (see Chapter 2.3) resurrected the story of her background in porn films (see 5.1), to print a still from one of them alongside an image of her as Umay, under the headline “Sibel Kekilli türbana girdi!” (Sibel Kekilli puts on a turban!) (Gramling 2012, p. 41; see also endnote).

Feo Aladağ has made clear her desire to make a film that might educate, and present a considered text on a complex subject. She also combines a criticism of some immigrants who (in her view) do not integrate, with a criticism of the parts of the ‘majority’, emphasising that there is responsibility on both sides:

Ich würde mir das sehr wünschen, dass wir dazu einen kleinen Beitrag leisten. Ein Großteil der Türken ist ja schon angekommen, aber eben noch nicht alle. Nur, auch ein Teil der Mehrheitsgesellschaft ist noch nicht integriert, hat die Arme noch nicht weit genug geöffnet, um zu sagen: »Wir sind eine Gemeinschaft, und Eure Probleme sind auch die Unsrigen.«⁷⁶ (Aladağ in Kettelhack 2010)

As part of her extensive research and desire to make a ‘realistic’ film, Aladağ oversaw a process of ‘street casting’ for the roles of Umay’s brothers and sister, rather than filling all roles with known actors such as Kekilli and Köse. Umay’s parents, however, are played by two noted actors from Turkey: Derya Alabora as Halime, and Settar Tanrıöğen.

The first sound or piece of dialogue in the film is a child’s voice saying, in Turkish, “Anneceğim?” (Mama/Mummy), over a black screen. The first image then is a

⁷⁶ “I would like it very much, if we could make a small contribution [to the discourse]. A large section of Turks is already ‘here’, but not all of them. Only, there’s also a part of the majority society that hasn’t integrated yet, hasn’t opened its arms wide enough yet to say: “We are a community, and your problems are ours.”

tracking shot behind a woman walking along a footpath with a young man to her left and a boy to her right. The woman strokes the man's back affectionately, and has her hand resting on the child. After several steps, the man pulls out a concealed gun and aims it squarely at the woman's face as she turns to look at him. The scene ends, but it soon becomes clear who the characters are, and that it is a point in the future towards which the subsequent narrative is unfolding, on "a path of brutality, oppression and stifled individuality leavened by a few glimmers of tenderness and grace" (Scott 2011, p. 4).

The next sequence, after the title is revealed, takes place in Istanbul; Umay is having an abortion — without her husband's knowledge, as we learn. Having severed that remaining tie with him, she leaves for Germany, where she tells her family she is leaving her marriage. Umay plans to stay on in Germany, find work, and support herself and Cem. Initially, her family are dismissive and reassure her husband, when he rings, that she is simply taking a break and will return soon enough. They gradually become more and more angry with her, arguing that she is bringing shame upon the family.

When We Leave avoids oversimplifying the relationships between Umay and other women. Umay's mother Halime strongly disapproves of Umay's decision to leave her husband. Halime is shocked and moved to tears when she sees the bruises on Umay's back, and discovers that the marriage was an abusive one; yet at the same time, she views the abuse as a hardship that Umay must bear in her role as a married woman. Her concern for her daughter is outweighed by her concern that the smooth running of family life, and her family's reputation, be preserved. Later, discussing Umay's decision with Kader, it is Halime who says, "[Kemal] should come and get her. She's his wife."

Between Halime and Umay there is a familiar pattern of the child forging their own path rather than following in the parent's. When Umay talks of going back to school so she can then go on to university, Halime scolds her that she is 25 years old, and a mother. "You have to stop dreaming," says Halime, who also says she had to make sacrifices for her children including Umay. Umay retorts that she wants to make something of her life, and asks Halime rhetorically, pointedly, "Do you want me to end up like you?" Seeing the look on Halime's face and thinking better of the comment, Umay apologises, but the implication is left hanging in the air: Umay sees reason to look down on her mother's life, and Halime knows enough to understand why Umay would.

Later in the film, when Umay has fled to a women's shelter, Halime agrees to meet her in a park. It has something of the appearance of a conciliatory gesture; a mother wanting to see her estranged daughter again, and bearing a gift for her grandson. What is soon revealed through the dialogue is Halime's adherence to the norms that Umay has transgressed. Halime can offer Umay no reassurance and no other option but to return to the family; Halime expresses concern for Umay, but mostly wants to reunite the family for the sake of Rana.

Umay has a warm relationship with her younger sister Rana, who confides to Umay that she is in love and wants to marry soon. It is later revealed that the quick marriage is also necessary, because Rana is pregnant — and premarital sex, much less pregnancy out of wedlock, is not allowed. Rana gradually becomes resentful of Umay, viewing her choices as a disruptive force on the family and particularly her own future; her fiancé calls off the marriage, and Rana blames Umay for having turned the family into pariahs. Although Rana herself has (secretly) broken a taboo in the eyes of her parents and community, she reproaches Umay for her transgression once its effects impinge directly on Rana's life. In the relationship between two actual sisters, it is easy to read the particular dynamic as symbolic of a wider metaphorical one; Rana's goal is her own happiness, and to quietly take measures to ensure she does not bring disgrace upon herself — her sister Umay's wellbeing is secondary to her own. By the time that Umay makes her dramatic appearance at Rana's wedding, Rana is willing to completely ignore her sister's words of congratulations.

Nursel Köse — Yeter in *The Edge of Heaven* — plays Gül, the business owner who hires Umay and is sympathetic towards her predicament and the challenge she has in caring for Cem and holding down the job. When Umay brings Cem to work, Gül expresses concern instead of chastising her employee; soon after, Gül pays a visit to Umay's family. Dressed in a suit and bearing a gift for her hosts, Gül directly addresses the situation and asks that Umay's parents reconsider their stance. When the conversation becomes heated and she is asked to leave, Kader offers the formal farewell "God protect you"; Gül retorts with, "Leave God out of it." Her matter-of-fact approach suggests an attitude that Umay's parents are conveniently hiding behind religion and tradition rather than summoning the strength to support their own daughter in the face of some social stigmatisation.

The character of Gül provides an important counterbalance to the actions of Umay's parents and siblings; she embodies a Turkish-German identity separate from the

views held by Umay's family, and acts as a model of the sort of assertiveness and self-determination Umay seems to strive towards. It could be argued that Gül simplistically fulfils the wish of a certain viewpoint of Western feminism and liberalism: she is a Turkish woman with a thriving career and wearing a pinstriped suit, like a business uniform. Her visit to Umay's parents, in which she expresses herself formally and carefully in fluent Turkish, bears a gift and takes tea with them, shows at least that Gül maintains some familiarity with the norms of Turkish tradition — that moving in a particular cultural sphere does not preclude her from moving in others, too. Her perceptive concern for Umay at the workplace, and her attempted intervention with Umay's parents, suggest that Gül sees all too well the situation that is unfolding in the family, and the potential fatal outcome. She tries to warn Umay that if her family must choose between their community and Umay, "they won't choose you." Umay tearfully shakes her head and insists that her family will, eventually. Such are Umay's loving and mostly happy relationships with her parents and siblings — except for her strained relationship with Mehmet — that she holds onto hope, thinking that things in her family will be different from the stories that are hinted at in the subtext of Gül's comments.

Throughout her conversation with Umay's parents, Gül addresses herself primarily to Kader; but also, several times, she looks pointedly at the mother. This is particularly noticeable when Gül says, "You're the head of the family" — looking directly at Kader, but giving a sideways look towards Halime — and to do something about your sons; and "You don't want to lose a son too." Halime seems to understand the intent, and more than once she does attempt, in small ways, to alleviate the situation: she meets with Umay in a park, and ensures that Rana's marriage goes ahead. She will only go so far, though, and for the most part is complicit in the patriarchal system that Umay tries so hard to overcome.

Umay's best friend is Atife, who works at the restaurant where Umay is also given a job. Atife is also of Turkish background⁷⁷; apart from her name, this would seem to be confirmed by a scene in the restaurant kitchen, in which Gül, Atife and Umay share a few joking lines of dialogue in Turkish. Though Atife is presumably — and appears to be — the same age as Umay, her life has taken quite a different path. Umay has been married and has a son approaching school age; Atife lives alone, but from the number of guests at her party seems to have no shortage of friends and

⁷⁷ Atife is played by Alwara Höfels, who is not of Turkish background; this may partly explain why the character has also been understood in some reviews or critiques to be non-Turkish.

acquaintances. She is strong-willed, urging Umay to report Mehmet to the police after he turns up at the women's refuge; when Umay is adamant that she will not, Atife says Umay and Cem are welcome to stay with her as long as they need to, and she is not afraid. Like Gül's appeal to the Aslans not to 'lose a son', Atife's comment alludes to the knowledge they all share — not simply as part of the Turkish community, but as Germans — of the threatening, even violent repercussions such family matters can have.

Of Atife, Aladağ says Alwara Höfels "spielt eine Deutsche, so wie Umay für mich natürlich auch eine Deutsche ist. Sie ist hier geboren und aufgewachsen"⁷⁸ (Aladağ in Kettelhack 2010); Aladağ goes on to suggest that Atife may be the daughter of a Turkish mother,

die sich sehr gut integriert hat und ihre Tochter allein großgezogen hat, sehr liberal. Sie ist hier angekommen und hat ihrer Tochter eben ein ganz anderes Modell vorgelebt, eins von Müttern, die sich an die Seite ihrer Töchter und Söhne stellen und auch mal ihren eigenen Lebensentwurf in Frage stellen, weil die Dinge sich nun mal verändern. Ihr Verhalten darf der Zuneigung und Loyalität unseren Kindern gegenüber keinen Abbruch tun.⁷⁹ (Aladağ in Kettelhack 2010)

The latter part of Aladağ's response echoes the didacticism that may be perceived in the film, in the careful construction of every character and moment towards making its argument (see Gramling 2012).

Scott describes the apartment as "a fascinating amalgam of two homelands. She [Umay] speaks mostly Turkish with her father, her mother and Mehmet, and German with her sister and younger brother. The atmosphere in the family's home suggests both an aspiration to middle-class German respectability and some of the courtesy and formality that characterize traditional Anatolian society" (Scott 2011, p. 4). Yet the review appears under the title "When two cultures collide under one roof", suggesting a

⁷⁸ Höfels "plays a German, like how for me Umay is naturally a German, too. She was born and grew up here [Germany]."

⁷⁹ "who integrated very well and raised her daughter alone, very liberal. She arrived here and lived a really different model for her daughter, one of mothers who stick by their daughters and sons, and also question their own life plan, because things change. Their behaviour cannot abandon their affection and loyalty towards our children."

binary ‘clash of cultures’ depiction that the film, in spite of its troubling story, follows *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven* in avoiding.

In the opening scene of the main narrative, Umay lies on her back in a medical gown, prone on an examination bed and with her feet in stirrups. The doctor and nurse performing the abortion are barely seen; they both wear surgical masks and are in frame only from the lower face down. From out of frame, the male doctor’s voice asks Umay “Tamam mı?” (Okay?), and the nurse offers a reassuring hand on Umay’s shoulder; yet the scene conveys a sense of Umay’s extreme isolation. As Gramling observes, the doctor’s sole question makes him seem “a passive bystander with no procedural instructions to convey” and In several shots, Umay is framed by white curtains in the foreground, or against the window whited-out with strong sunlight; her surroundings appear colourless and lacking in human warmth. She catches the bus back to her home: the neighbourhood is a characterless grouping of high-rise buildings, removed from the city and with little infrastructure around.

Later, only the barest of details are given to signal that Umay has arrived in Germany: a long shot of a Turkish Airlines plane touching down, then a long shot of Umay and Cem standing on a landing in the dimly-lit stairwell of an *Altbau* (an old, generally pre-WWII apartment building). A sign on the door gives the surname of the residents: the Turkish name Aslan. When the door to the apartment is opened and the dialogue begins, it is mostly in Turkish — there is little apart from the surrounding architecture and relative darkness to distinguish this apartment from the one in Istanbul Umay has just left. The film’s first complete line of dialogue in German is spoken by Acar, as he arrives home during the family dinner and greets Umay. Fragments of conversation, especially what is said in German between Umay and Rana, and Umay and Acar, relate to German school life and so forth. Rana and Umay speak in German about Rana’s boyfriend, and Rana switches into Turkish to assure Umay that she loves her fiancé very much, and to ask Umay to be at her wedding.

In Turkey, Umay lives with her husband’s family: his sister, parents and grandmother. Though they are only briefly in the film, the three women make subtle contributions to the questions about gender roles and violence that the film raises. Umay’s sister-in-law, Zeynep, appears to be the younger sibling, and at least to some extent has been a friend towards Umay. Zeynep has waited with Cem while Umay went for the abortion, comforts her afterwards when she returns; the very fact that Umay has entrusted Zeynep with this assisting role suggests a supportive relationship.

Less is revealed about Kemal's mother and grandmother, whose only appearances in the film are as the family eats dinner. It is noteworthy, though, that Kemal's mother looks concerned by Kemal's anger towards Cem; the grandmother goes further, twice telling Kemal to stop. Yet both women, along with Zeynep and Kemal's father, stay at the table eating while Kemal runs after Cem to punish him, and Umay tries to stop him. The commotion and fight end with Cem locked in a cupboard, sobbing, and Umay slumped to the floor on the other side, crying loudly. The scene ends with a final shot of the table where Kemal's family are still sitting and eating, any disapproval or concern they feel not enough to make them intervene; they do not put themselves between Kemal, as the head of his own family, and Umay and Cem.

Umay's older brother, Mehmet, is depicted from the beginning as a threatening presence. From her first reappearance at the family home, he is antagonistic and expresses no pleasure at seeing her. He takes Cem out for the day without Umay's permission, and generally has no respect for her wishes. His supervision becomes so oppressive that Umay takes the drastic step of calling the police to help her leave the family's apartment. His anger growing still, Mehmet and his friends try to discover where Umay and Cem are staying; when they learn the location of the safe house, they arrive late at night to attack the gate and yell abuse in Umay's direction.

Yet even Mehmet, who is menacing towards both Umay and Acar, shows himself to be — at least when he chooses it — an attentive and caring uncle to Cem⁸⁰; he plays with him at the kitchen table, and flashes a quick smile at him during Friday prayers at the mosque.⁸¹ Mostly, Mehmet's relationships with family members other than Kader are marked by his apparent contempt for them, and his attempts to assert his own authority, as perhaps the true patriarch of the family compared to Kader's milder approach. Mehmet has assumed the responsibility of enforcing expectations based on traditional gender roles. He bullies his younger brother Acar, able to tell him, with just a nod of his head, that he must go and follow Umay; when Acar brings home a note from Umay to their mother and conceals it in Halime's bedside jewellery case, Mehmet is hovering behind him in the doorway to the room, and immediately threatens him

⁸⁰ Umay's husband Kemal is physically violent, but also can play kindly with his son. It is not made clear how Umay came to be in this unhappy and seemingly loveless marriage.

⁸¹ In a deleted scene included in the extras of the DVD release, Mehmet plays football with Cem, sitting together to share a drink afterwards. Another deleted scene has Mehmet trying to speak more reasonably to Umay, about Cem's need for a father, as they both sit in the stairwell outside the apartment. It should be considered that the depiction of Mehmet in the final 114-minute cut of the film is more alienating than it might have been, had these two scenes not been part of approximately thirty minutes of material removed.

verbally and physically, trying to find out Umay's location. Mehmet's quite relentlessly verbal and physical bullying throughout the film is an important counterpoint to Kader. Mehmet's deep-seated beliefs and quick anger paint him as a thoroughly unlikeable person, and a presence that cannot be talked away with discussion of integration measures or liberal feminism. His character's conviction throws into relief the more conflicted feelings of Kader and, especially, Acar; Mehmet also helps the film to rightly condemn the practice of 'honour killings', even as it offers new dimensions to the archetypal Turkish patriarch onscreen.

Umay's first dinner when she returns to her family takes place around the dinner table, with strong overhead lighting creating deep shadows and high contrast — the effect is reminiscent of an interrogation scene, and the discomfort erupts in the form of an angry outburst from Mehmet. In this scene, Kader's anger comes to the fore, but only to silence Umay and Mehmet and stop their fighting. At this early stage of the film, Kader's main role as head of the household is displayed as his power to maintain peace. Later, a similar motivation leads him to make the unthinkable decision: to sacrifice one of his children for the supposed benefit of the rest of the family.

The subject of gender roles is raised again when Kader and Umay sit watching TV together, both laughing at the show. Kader asks whether Umay also watches the show "at home" to which, after a slight pause, she responds firmly with, "This is my home, Father." Kader can only sigh and reiterates the situation from his point of view: "Umay, we love you, but you belong to Kemal". Kader's love and concern for Umay is made obvious at a number of points throughout the film. When he first sees her back in the family apartment in Kreuzberg, he greets her warmly, and their conversations in the initial days are relaxed and affectionate when not focused on the immediate problem of Umay's perceived intransigence. When Mehmet and Umay fight over Cem, Mehmet pushes her and she falls to the kitchen floor, hitting the workbench on the way down. Seeing Umay slumped on the floor, crying with pain and frustration, Kader goes to his daughter's aid to check that she is all right. In this scene, though, his attempt to comfort her manifests itself also in a lecture, reminding her that in the patriarchal structures, Kemal's rights as Cem's father predominate. Enraged and desperate, Umay grabs a kitchen knife and — not very convincingly — threatens her father; then in despair she turns the knife on herself, slashing her own arm and screaming again with anguish and physical pain. Kader's face conveys his shock and frustration, as he says, "Stupid girl" through gritted teeth — here, an expression of his own helplessness and inability to

make her, according to his perspective, see reason. Later, he tells his wife that he wishes Umay had been born a boy; it is not completely clear whether he wishes it more for her sake — to spare her the grief she is going through — or to spare himself the trouble of having to deal with a troublesome daughter. The latter seems perhaps more likely.

Throughout the film, Umay continues to believe she can appeal to her family's better nature; she wants to continue to have a relationship with them, not just to be safe from them. Kader is a father doing his utmost to fulfil his traditional role in the family, complicated by his daughter's refusal to fulfil hers. Umay's characterisation as a young woman stepping outside her culturally proscribed boundaries relies on the characterisation of those around her. When Umay calls the police during the night, to help her leave the family apartment, Kader curses her and spits; Umay pauses in front of him almost expectantly, obediently, waiting for the ritualised performance of family and gender to be played out.

Though not as forceful as Mehmet, Kader does also attempt to enforce gender roles for Acar; when Acar arrives home late again, Kader slaps his face and tells him he has to act "like a man". It is through the figure of Acar that the film shows most poignantly how gender binaries can also have negative repercussions for men. Acar has grown up admiring and being doted on by his older sister, but becomes alienated from her through the expectations placed on him as he grows into a man in the family. Torn between his love for Umay, and his loyalty to the rest of the family, his eventual anger towards Umay seems to grow from his own frustration and helplessness. Acar can do little more than act variously as a bystander or unwilling intermediary, until he is asked to kill his own sister.

The family's history is also scarcely revealed; the apartment seems comfortable enough and there is no obvious deprivation — we are not witnessing the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder. With no information given, the audience is left to assume the father, Kader, came to Germany as a guestworker. It is mentioned that he works in the printery for the *Berliner Woche*; the father in the source story worked as a gardener. In this change, Gramling sees an effort to inscribe the film into the media response to the actual crime, making Kader part of the tailored 'hyper-local' news that the *Berliner Woche* offers in 31 districts, and by extension giving him a hand in making national German news (as the 2005 crime did) (2012, p. 38).

Kader is portrayed in a faceted way, and his character gives full voice to the conflict of feeling bound both to tradition and to the love for one's own child and her wishes. He displays a genuine emotional reaction to Umay's actions and conflicted feelings about the actions he is, from his point of view, obliged to take in response. For all the distress it causes Umay to be cast from the family, it causes her father genuine hurt that she has shamed the family and that he has to become estranged from his child. Yet his views lead him to seek the counsel of an unnamed older relative (likely his father) in his homeland in eastern Turkey, after which Kader tells his sons that Umay must die. It is the complexity of Umay's relationships with her family, Garcia (Garcia 2011) says, that explains "the seemingly improbable faith Umay has in her father's judgment" and her realisation that her father, Kader, must be helped if he is to reject the orthodoxy to which he is accustomed. Kader's eventual reconciliation with Umay comes as he lies in hospital; Umay comes to visit, and tearfully, he asks for her forgiveness. To Umay, naturally, he is apparently asking to be forgiven for his behaviour towards her to date; not knowing what awaits her, Umay experiences this as a moment of reconciliation. In fact, the viewer knows that Kader has set in motion the plan to have Umay killed, and it is at least as likely, if not more so, that he is referring to this in asking for forgiveness. To Kader, this is his final meeting with the daughter he has sentenced to death.

When Kader learns that Rana is pregnant — his wife tells him pointedly that Rana and her fiancé "*must* marry", knowing Kader will infer the full meaning of her words — his reaction is a deep sigh of exasperation and dismay. Having already had such trouble with his older daughter, he has a chance to at least resolve this situation with his younger daughter; a payment to the fiancé's family will ensure the marriage goes ahead. This scene puts into relief his behaviour towards Umay: it seems that his anger and dismissiveness towards her are less about what she has done, and more about her refusal to set it right — or allow him to set it right by sending her back to Istanbul, or returning Cem to his father. Rana's pregnancy is also a transgression, but it is one that, by comparison, has a simple solution — and can be kept secret from the judgement of the surrounding community. As Scott (2011, p. 4) says, Kader is "terrified of losing face and suffers at the thought of what Umay will do to his family's reputation. But he is also a loving father trying, much as his daughter is, to find some workable common ground between them".

This portrayal of a father with sympathetic qualities gives greater context and plausibility in turn to Umay's distress at the estrangement from her family. She cannot contemplate a complete break from her family, as is implied by the ending of *Yasemin* in 1986 (see Göktürk 2000a, also Chapter 3.3 of this work). It is precisely because she cannot simply sever ties with her family that Umay's situation causes her so much pain, rather than only fear of losing her son. It is only after Cem is nearly abducted in the street that she talks of moving away.

Mehmet and Umay clearly have a barely-existent relationship; the younger brother Acar, on the other hand, is shown as loving and respectful, admiring even. Umay has played a large role in raising Acar. On Umay's first night back in the family apartment, when she is lying down after dinner and Acar comes to see her, she wraps her arms around him and inhales the smell of his hair. Much later, when Acar escorts her from the wedding, Umay reminds him again that she helped bring him up. The film argues that strong, loving relationships aren't immunity against carrying out obligations in the name of family and cultural tradition, as the younger brother plans to do. It would seem to be Acar's love for his sister that prevents him from carrying out her murder; when he confronts her on the street he is not only unable to go through with the act, but overcome by the thought of what he could have done. Umay meets him with a steady gaze, and Acar appears confused and ashamed as he runs away. His unmistakable reaction, either to the crime he has almost committed or to the fact he could not bring himself to carry it out, provides a stark contrast to the notional shame that the family and their community have attributed to Umay's actions.

The young child Cem represents the next generation of his family and of many; thus his death is a clear and perhaps somewhat heavy-handed symbol of the effects of violence — a 'killing off' of the future. After Acar is unable to carry out his task of killing Umay, he drops his gun and runs away. Looking after him, Umay then realises that Cem has picked up the gun and is examining it. She tears it away from him and holds him. This is symbolism equal to that of Cem's death: Umay wanting to save her son from becoming part of the cycle of violence. The film ends with Cem's death and its immediate aftermath. Mehmet is horrified at what he has done, and Umay is so shocked as to appear almost emotionless initially. She carries Cem's body to the street, but without direction or purpose; the traffic of the road drives past impersonally, suggesting both momentum and a lack of societal attention. Acar, by contrast, is transfixed in horror, but views the scene from the back window of a passing bus, unable

to act even if something could now be done. Anything further — the reactions of other family members, or Mehmet being arrested — can be suspected, but not witnessed by the audience. The symbolic significance of Cem (Cem's death) is the reason the character is perhaps underdeveloped and unrealistic as a portrayal of a child — he acts as a cipher, asking pointed questions as cues to exposition and actions by other characters (see Gramling 2012); within the narrative at least, the strict authority exerted over Cem by his father, and the abrupt changes in his life (moving from his home in Istanbul, to Berlin, to a shelter, to another apartment in Berlin) may go some way to explaining his subdued behaviour. It certainly seems merely convenient for the story, initially, that Cem so rapidly switches from speaking Turkish into speaking German.

The figure of Stipe, Umay's new non-Turkish boyfriend is interesting in comparison with Uwe and Yasemin in the 1986 film — a comparison invited, especially, by the fact that Stipe takes Umay for a ride on his motorbike. The two characters in the more recent film are both significantly older than the teens of *Yasemin* — possibly by a good decade in Stipe's case. Umay's independence compared to Yasemin also brings a different dynamic to the relationship. Where Uwe is a smitten teenage boy, with little understanding of the effect of his pursuit of Yasemin, Stipe takes a more pragmatic approach, and the relationship is steered by Umay as much as by him. Stipe is respectful of Umay's relationship with her son, and assumes a fatherly role in Cem's life; when he realizes the full extent of Umay's difficult situation, Stipe asks directly whether things would be easier if they married, and Umay declines the offer but is appreciative. The German character of Stipe provides a contrast to Umay's Turkish husband, but he is not accorded the role of rescuing Umay; she loves him and appreciates his support, but she tries to fight her battle herself. Her relationship with Stipe serves to show how Umay creates a new life, and therefore conveys her independence rather than a sense of reliance.

The greatest confrontation between Umay and the rest of her family, their relatives and friends, takes place at Rana's wedding; in *When We Leave*, Umay's appearance at the wedding is a potentially disruptive force serving to highlight her conflict with long-held traditions and beliefs. Having left her own marriage, she is not welcome here at the celebration of her younger sister's marriage. At this wedding, it is not the bride who commands the attention, but Umay as an intruder; desperate to make herself heard, particularly for her family to stop excluding her, she deliberately hijacks proceedings and makes an impassioned speech, presumably knowing how much such an

act goes against the grain. Wearing a formal, dark red dress, Umay is dressed appropriately for the wedding, but the red also causes her to stand out, and is strongly reminiscent of the colour of blood; it also subtly invokes the idea of the ‘scarlet woman’ who has transgressed the boundaries of her marriage. Umay has done this by leaving her husband — not the adultery traditional to the trope, but nonetheless shameful in the eyes of her family and their community. As Berghahn (2012, p. 21) observes, the wedding is already unusual for the ‘Turkish wedding’ trope of German cinema, in that underlying the tradition is the fact that there has been premarital sex, and the bride is already pregnant; in this respect, Umay’s transgressive behaviour is simply the one that has been acknowledged in the open, and of which the family’s immediate community are aware.

The role of German bureaucracy and authority is pivotal in *When We Leave*, and particularly interesting in comparison with *Yasemin* and *Head-On*. Umay is not passive like Yasemin, who is rescued from the house by a teacher who brings paperwork to remind Yasemin’s father of his legal obligation to let her attend school; nor does Umay rely, as Sibel in *Head-On* does with her orchestrated marriage to Cahit, on a tradition of Turkish culture to address the situation. Umay calls the police herself so she can get out of the apartment and is taken to a safe house, where she is able to file the paperwork that will provide protection under German law. “Dafür sind wir hier” (That’s what we’re here for), says a stereotypically blonde German woman (like Frau Rathjens in *Yasemin*), after helping Umay to complete the necessary paperwork, and then dons her reading glasses.

Umay’s encounters with non-Turkish Germans might be seen to overlook some hostility towards Muslim immigrants and the recent political climate of suspicions about multiculturalism (Taylor 2011, p. 11; see also Chapter 2.3 of this thesis). German society is welcoming to Umay, offering new opportunities and some respite from her difficulties with her family. The faultlessly nice and helpful ‘German-Germans’ could be considered a weak point of the film, in that it reproduces the older trope of the German ‘saving’ the woman from Turkish traditions: “Letztlich verheddert sich der Film damit in den Klischees vom dunklen, ewig unverständlichen Türken, der zwar ganz sympathisch aussieht, aber de facto eine Zeitbombe ist, und von der deutschen, aufgeklärten Parallelgesellschaft”⁸² (Kappert 2010). Asked about this relatively

⁸² “In this way, the film ends up entangling itself in clichés of the dark, eternally unknowable Turk, who admittedly looks likeable, but is a de facto time bomb, and of the German, enlightened parallel society.”

uncritical approach, Aladağ responds, “I don't think [a more negative view is] a constructive way to tackle the debate, though everything there needs to be discussed and ventilated. It's just, how do you lead a discussion like this, what's the spirit behind it?” (in Taylor 2011, p. 11).

After Mehmet's attack on the safe house, Umay will not give the names of the attackers, at that moment choosing to shield her brothers from police action. Later, though, after Umay's family and estranged husband attempt to take Cem from her, she is seen leaving a police station — presumably she has made a statement. No results or consequences are shown, suggesting a certain impotence to this measure; the fact that her two brothers do approach her at the film's end, both with the intention of killing her, suggests a relative inability of authority to prevent certain things from happening when the will of the perpetrators is strong enough. It is noteworthy, though, that none of the processes at the police station are shown; rather, the action is indicated only by Umay, walking briskly through the stairwell atrium of the building, hand in hand with Cem. A wayfinder sign on the wall indicates that it is a police station. This scene, then, depicts Umay as the sole actor, and all emphasis is placed on her determination, rather than on the interventions made by German authorities. As with Umay's late-night emergency call from the family's apartment, it is her decision to act, based on her understanding of the legal pathways available to her as a German.

The work that Umay finds in a restaurant kitchen is, like in so many other examples (see Chapter 3.3), essentially a working-class or lower-paid job. Here though, the impression is given that she is learning new skills; she is working alongside her long-time friend and in her co-worker Stipe meets her new boyfriend; quite apart from Umay's relative happiness at work, there is a sense of potential quite unlike Sibel's experience cleaning rooms in her cousin's Istanbul hotel. Umay's new job, like Sibel's job as a hairdresser in Hamburg, is both a symbol and a key component of a new chapter in her life.

Umay's new apartment in Berlin is the first space in the film that really belongs to her. In Istanbul, she and Kemal and Cem shared one bedroom in the extended family's apartment. In Berlin, she returns to her old room, but is captive to her family's wishes, particularly those of her menacing older brother. In both apartments, her only retreat has been to close the door to the room; potential confrontation, or even physical abuse, has been in the next room. In both apartments, there are scenes of confrontation — between Umay and Kemal, and Umay and Mehmet respectively — that employ a

series of doors opening and closing to suggest constrictions on Umay's life. In the Aslan apartment in Berlin, doors are left ajar, or opened without warning; Halime enters the bathroom while Umay is showering, and family members let themselves into the bedroom where Umay sleeps. Doorways and the hallway become frames suggesting observation.

Her escape is into a safe house where she and Cem share one sparsely furnished room, and communal spaces with the other women who have likewise had to remove themselves from their previous lives. The shared aspect is presented as somewhat welcoming; being surrounded by women with similar experiences, and representatives to help her undertake the appropriate legal actions, is comforting. Yet in the safe house, Umay's room looks straight onto the street, and the gates that separate the building from the threats outside. When a threat arrives in the form of Mehmet and his friends, Umay conceal herself in the dark room behind the thin curtains, but the noise cannot be blocked out — nor the rock that comes flying through the window, breaking the glass and intruding into Umay's refuge. When Umay does see members of her family, the encounters take place on footpaths and near doorways; she appears as if from the shadows one evening, to speak with Acar; her final, conciliatory conversation with her father takes place in his hospital room.

There is a scene between Umay and Stipe that take place on a hill overlooking the city at night. Other than in her own apartment and at work, it is here that Sibel seems safe. On the streets of Kreuzberg, Mehmet is looking for her, and the family tries to kidnap Cem; here, briefly removed from the city, she can sit and watch from a distance. There is a similar moment of calm that she and Stipe share on the balcony of her apartment, where Stipe now also spends much of his time. Gramling (2012) observes that in the scene on the hill, Umay needs to confirm what it is that Stipe is showing her; he replies simply, with reference to the expansive view of the Berlin skyline, "Das hier". Umay's uncertainty, Gramling argues, suggests that she does not need Stipe to show her the city she is already familiar with; especially considering that actors in the film were encouraged to improvise their lines, Gramling argues that this scene blends the character Umay with the film star Sibel Kekilli (Gramling 2012, p. 42).

In his review of the film, Kauffmann (2011, p. 23) says that "though the family is thoroughly at home in Germany, its members are strictly orthodox Muslim in their principles" in their objection to Umay leaving her husband. It is worth observing, though, that Umay's family frequently express their objection in terms of how their

community around them will react, rather than in terms of their own beliefs, be they religious or cultural codes. In their own opinions, there is blurring between the religious and the cultural.

Yet it is notable that the film includes scenes of prayer. Cem is taken to the mosque for Friday prayers, where a medium shot has him alongside Mehmet, framed amongst the bodies of faceless adult men; this scene builds a direct link between Cem's role as a son and male within the family, and his socialisation into Islam. A subsequent scene has Umay and Halime with other women, at prayer in the family's apartment with a visiting *hodja*. Umay joins other women in the prayer session, a *kuran okuma* ceremony to give strength and protection. Soon after, her mother ties a triangular amulet on a necklace around Umay's neck, to protect her from the 'evil eye'. This folkloristic belief is assigned a greater significance, combined as it is with the mother-daughter relationship. It is also notable that Halime will express this desire that her daughter be 'protected', but otherwise does little herself to protect Umay. Later, Umay gives the same necklace to Cem to wear, to give him courage; this emphasises the inter-generational passage of cultural norms and beliefs, but also that they can be adapted.

The sequence of the two scenes together illustrates the separation of genders according to Muslim belief, but also underlines, again, that women may be socialised into the very same beliefs, and that notions of modesty and honour are not perpetuated only by men (though of course in this reading it must be noted that a man, the *hodja*, is the one leading the instruction). The two scenes also make the family's religious beliefs highly visible in a film produced "Mitten in der Islam-Debatte, die stark von einer Islamophobie geprägt ist"⁸³ (Kettelhack 2010). In this way, the film connects the family's cultural beliefs to their religious identification more directly through visual means than the dialogue.

Umay does not undergo the personal change and maturation that Sibel does in *Head-On*. At 25, Umay is five years older than Sibel at the beginning of her story; Umay has already been married and begun raising their son, and survived the physical abuse of her husband (though Sibel has also experienced her brother's violence, and the continual pressure to conform in her family). Like Sibel, Umay does take decisive, accumulative steps to reshape her life according to her own wishes. Where Sibel orchestrates a marriage to allow her to leave her parental home, Umay leaves her

⁸³ "in the middle of the 'Islam debate', which is strongly influence by an Islamophobia"

marriage and seeks refuge with her family. *When We Leave* also offers a new take on migrations between Turkey and Germany: the trip of a German woman returning home from Istanbul. For her part, Umay seems to have little interest in maintaining ties to Turkey. Her separation is such that any contact with him is undesirable (for her sake or for Cem's), and there is no evidence of any other connections in Turkey — any friendships, for example — that Umay would wish to maintain. Her own story has featured migration at least twice, but now her energies are devoted to creating the next stage of her life in Berlin. Transnationalism touches her life in other ways.

As the Aslan family sits at dinner on Umay's first night back in Kreuzberg, Kader asks after "the cafe", and Umay responds that Kemal has been working on it. Kader suggests they open another one, perhaps even one "here" in Berlin: "That would be nice." It is a fleeting, but telling reference to the way that small businesses and entrepreneurship operate as a major tie in transnational networks (see Chapter 4.2). Another significant connection is revealed in a conversation between Kader and Mehmet. Umay overhears them planning to have someone remove Cem and take him to Kemal. Mehmet explains that the contact is someone Kemal knew in his army days. Considering that Turkish nationals resident abroad are still expected to do their compulsory service in the Turkish military, it is likely that Kemal's contact is based in Berlin, and will make the trip to Istanbul once he has Cem.

Kader's journey to Turkey is introduced suddenly, with an edit that is all the same less disorienting than it might have been: the idea of the family in eastern Turkey has already been introduced through dialogue, so that Kader's sudden appearance in a bus in the Anatolian countryside has to it a certain narrative inevitability. Kader is shown to take his cues, at least on this most significant matter, from archaic, traditional beliefs held by his father in the home village, rather than from urban, modernised parts of Turkey. This reiterates the pathway of migration that many (but certainly not all) *Gastarbeiter* took, from rural Turkey to urban Germany, even if this took place via an interim migration to Istanbul (see Chapter 2). There is also something quasi-mythological about this sequence, in the way it is introduced and concluded with so little explanation, and no dialogue; the sudden departure from urban locations to a rural area, with no clear framing either in narrative or editing, lends the sequence almost a dreamlike or other-worldly quality. It is both logical that Kader should seek advice, and disorienting that this advice should come from a place that is, visually, so unlike the rest of the film.

The scenes of Istanbul, before Umay arrives in Berlin, are far removed from the carefully-staged postcard-like arrangements of *Head-On* or even the daily-life imagery in *The Edge of Heaven*. When Umay catches the bus home from the clinic after her abortion, Istanbul is revealed merely as the view from the bus: a major road with its traffic and signage; a panorama of the densely-populated hillsides by the water, but no glimpses of the most famous landmarks. In a similar way, the treatment of Berlin mostly avoids the most obvious visual markers, and the setting is suggested through more banal details: the architectural features of the *Altbau*; the riveted metal of the station and the yellow train; the facades and signage of the mixed residential and commercial streets.

The music in *When We Leave* is used minimally. A recurring piece of piano music is used to underscore particular scenes of emotional or narrative import. The music itself is Western rather than Oriental, and like the other production elements aligns *When We Leave* with a social-realist tradition of European cinema.⁸⁴

In the early scenes in Turkey, Cem speaks only Turkish, but soon switches to speaking predominantly German when he and Umay move to Berlin, where she speaks and reads to him mostly in German. It is not clear to what extent he is bilingual — whether he has always been raised speaking some German as well as Turkish, or whether he has picked up most of his German since coming to Berlin.⁸⁵ This is significant only in the sense that it helps to portray Cem's experience either as that of an immigrant, or as a child of both countries. Umay, after all, is a German who has returned home, but her son has spent far less time in Germany. The readiness with which he takes up German suggests — as well as the relative ease of language acquisition in childhood — the adaptability that migration often demands, and also makes possible.

The codeswitching in the early scenes of Umay's life in Berlin gradually gives way to more clearly-delineated German-only or Turkish-only conversations. At work, Umay speaks German even with her bilingual employer, Gül. Umay and Atife speak German with each other and with Cem, and Stipe can only speak and understand

⁸⁴ For example, compare this with the sparse piano music used in the British production *Ae Fond Kiss* (2005, dir. Ken Loach), or the use — albeit also with a central narrative significance and in a stylistically classicist film — of the “Sonate vom guten Menschen” in *The Lives of Others* (2006, dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck).

⁸⁵ The DVD release includes, in the deleted material, a scene of Umay reading to Cem while they are still in Istanbul, and Kemal is outside on the balcony; Umay reads in Turkish, and then switches to German. Cem mouths the words as she speaks them, suggesting that Umay was already raising him with an awareness of her other native language, not only Turkish.

German. Umay's contact with her family becomes limited to specific encounters, where they address each other in Turkish. This slight linguistic shift suggests an unravelling of the transcultural experience, as though Umay, in spite of her efforts to reunite with her family, must choose a 'side'.

In *When We Leave*, the border-crossing intertwined history is given another layer. For a film made nearly fifty years after the original recruitment agreement between Germany and Turkey, it seems appropriate and timely that the protagonist should be a German of Turkish background, returning home *from* Istanbul. Umay's journey offers a different view from the idea of Turkish immigrants' (or their children's) return to the homeland.

One of her motivations in returning might give us pause for thought. Umay is leaving Turkey and an unhappy, abusive marriage, to rebuild her life and pursue new opportunities in Germany. Of course, this idea of Germany as a refuge or a land of promise has a long history; Umay is not only retracing the cinematic path taken by Shirin in Sanders-Brahms's 1976 film (see Chapter 3.2), but in a sense making the same journey as the Turkish work migrants to Germany in the second half of the 20th Century. She is a German cast in the role of a Turkish immigrant to Germany. Gramling (2012, p. 40) rightly observes that this change of migratory direction "nourishes the film's political aura of iconoclasm, innovation, and commitment to debunking stereotypes through radical authenticity" that it otherwise might not merit.

With some justification, certainly, Gramling criticises the way that all the elements of *When We Leave* are arranged to serve its message: that its "strategic myth lies not in antirealism, but in how it parasitically appropriates a certain species of local, semiotic capital" (Gramling 2012, p. 37). The characters of *When We Leave* may be seen as emblematic or symbolic — Gül as a symbol of an 'integrated' or 'liberated' Turkish-German professional woman; Umay as a symbol of a transculturally situated and assertive woman of the post-migrant generation. As Gramling (2012, pp. 37-38) notes — though he is more critical than I am of the perceived didactic tone of the film — these emblematic figures are the result of semiotic patterns in German cinema that have developed over time since the 1970s. Though it shares features with both *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven*, including the narratives of travel and transnationalism, and the vocally independent female leads, it remains to be asked whether — or how — *When We Leave* sits alongside these other films.

The subject matter of *When We Leave* perhaps inevitably invites comparisons with earlier films such as *40 Square Metres of Germany* and *Yasemin*; dealing with a topic as troubling and sensitive as honour killings in Germany places the film, at least thematically, in a tradition of socially critical German cinema, even if the precise subject is relatively new to German cinema screens. The 2009 film *Ayla* (dir. Su Turhan; see also Chapter 3.3) received much less attention and critical praise, and the titular female protagonist is not the target of her own family's reprisal, but rather intervening to help another woman (whose story is similar to Umay's). *Ayla* is stylistically different from *When We Leave*, and in the romantic story that is the film's chief narrative, has somewhat more in common with the German comedies of the 1990s (see also Chapter 3.2).⁸⁶ The theme also links *When We Leave* to some of the more difficult terrain of debates about immigration and integration (see Chapter 2.3). Therefore the question arises as to what new layers or perspectives, if any, this recent film can bring to this discursive tradition. *When We Leave* is an effective film that appears to feature a well-developed female protagonist, and a suitably multi-faceted depiction of family members and friends around her, as well as the complex dynamics of her relationships with them. The elements of the film seem to be arranged to achieve precisely this, while also conveying more subtle messages through its construction of various culturally-coded spaces. It is interesting, then, to compare this approach to the obvious transnationalism and 'rebellion' of *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven*, and to question whether *When We Leave* has more in common with such films, or with the history of Turkish German portrayals on film.

⁸⁶ Another recent film, *Yella* (2007, dir. Christian Petzold), deals with the title character's escape from her violent and vengeful husband, but without the thematisation of intercultural conflict and Turkish traditions.

6. Turkish-German female identities in transnational cinematic space

German cinema, like the cinemas of many other countries, has become undeniably transnational in its outlook. Transnationalism was always evident to some extent in separate cases of co-production, international career paths, narratives of travel, and international distribution (see Chapters 3.1 and 3.2). The fragility of the ‘national’ as a category has become obvious, and more attention is paid to the axes of transnationalism. The three analysed films illustrate two major threads seen in many German films of the past decade: a tendency towards border-crossing narratives and a transnationalisation of German identity, and a more complex, varied discourse surrounding Turkish female identity and gender roles. In each of these films, the notion of Turkish patriarchal traditions is dealt with rather than ignored, but in a way that gives voice and agency to a strong female protagonist, even if her wishes are not fulfilled or her efforts ultimately prove fruitless. A tension is evident when one considers that the women at the centres of these films are outsiders or outcasts, yet they exist in milieus that seem to reaffirm the arrival of Turkish immigrants as insiders, and part of German space. These films focus on urban spaces in both Germany and Turkey, and relationships between female characters in both countries and/from both Turkish and non-Turkish background.

All three films continue the work, begun in the 1990s, of broadening representations of Turkish female identities (see Chapter 3.3). Sibel, Yeter, Ayten and Umay at various points fall victim to, or are threatened by, patriarchal traditions, violence at the hands of men, legal systems, religious fundamentalism, and family expectations. Each of these characters, though, attempts to free herself without a reliance on a saviour-figure. Not each of these attempts succeeds, and in the failed attempts lie the socially critical aspects of these three films. Crucially, this criticism is staged through vocal, assertive women who exert their autonomy as much as they can, and whose lived experiences neither fall ‘between two cultures’, nor demand resolutions into an identification with one or the other ‘side’. The female protagonists are cast as rebels or outsiders in various ways, but seldom ethnoculturally or linguistically. Marriage, and marriage-like relationships, are used to subvert the expectations of

tradition, and the performativity of (especially traditional) gender roles draws attention to the flexibility and performativity of cultural identities.

In *Head-On*, Sibel rails against her family's strictures and orchestrates a marriage of convenience as the means to the life she wants. When she and Cahit take coke at the wedding, it affirms the idea that Sibel takes some pleasure in her ability to subvert tradition to her own plans. Her quick change in appearance (haircut, heavier makeup, navel piercing), somewhat symbolically convenient though it may be, underlines that this is not merely a matter of leaving the family home. It is a matter of arriving in the sort of lifestyle Sibel's rebellious spirit has yearned for. As she tells her cousin Selma, she feels too young (at 20) to get married 'seriously'. She has not been envisaging love-and-marriage in her near future. Indeed, when love begins to develop between her and Cahit, she realises she cannot sleep with him; that would effectively consummate the marriage, making them 'man and wife' against her plans. The marriage of convenience that comes to involve genuine feelings is part of the film's tragic-melodramatic love story; Sibel discovers love and devotion to Cahit, when his involvement in her life was meant to help her avoid a serious relationship. In spite of Sibel's earlier desires, *Head-On* ultimately resolves itself in a monogamous relationship for Sibel — with her partner in Istanbul. The decision to stay in this relationship and with her child is shown to be completely Sibel's choice (even if partly out of a sense of obligation, and not only love). The same autonomy that leads Sibel to spend two days with Cahit in his hotel room, belatedly consummating their marriage, leads to her packing her suitcase to go with him to Mersin, and ultimately to her decision not to go.

If Sibel is a rebellious, punk-edged outsider, *The Edge of Heaven* also depicts outsider women in three of its four female protagonists. Yeter is marginalised through her employment as a sex worker; her daughter Ayten/Gül is a radicalised political activist running from the police; Lotte is made rebellious through her intense idealism and her devotion to Ayten, which lead her to stay in Istanbul against her mother's wishes. Even though this film makes much of the transnational lives of its characters, and the transnational network they are enmeshed in, the multiculturalism is depicted much more subtly than in *Head-On*.

In *The Edge of Heaven*, Yeter is made an outsider by the work she does, and the difficult position that it places her in. Her sexual and domestic arrangement with Ali is one of necessity for her — but she rails against any attempt to control her. Like Sibel's marriage of convenience, Yeter needs to take up Ali's offer in order to escape her

present situation — not the sex work, but the threat of religious fundamentalists who have told her she must repent. Having seen an opportunity in Ali's offer, Yeter approaches the arrangement without surrendering a degree of autonomy, particularly over her body. She does not express any gratitude towards Ali or cast him in a saviour role undeservedly; from Ali's perspective, he has what he wants, and Yeter's reasons for taking up his offer remain her secret. It is to the son Nejat, not to Ali, that Yeter reveals she works to finance her daughter's education; Nejat, not Ali, sees Yeter cry and admit she has not been able to make contact with her daughter recently. If Sibel's sexuality is part of an expression of her liberation, Yeter's is more complicated: it is both the aspect of herself that she commodifies to earn a living, and the thing that she can trade in order to leave that life. She pointedly will not allow Ali to demand sex, telling him she is not his property and not to touch her; her final expression of independence is to decide to leave. Her resistance ends in Ali's striking her, leading to her death. This is a problematic resolution, for which the main atonement is perhaps not Ali's imprisonment, but Nejat's attempts to find Yeter's daughter and pay for her education.

Yeter's daughter Ayten also conducts herself in a highly independent manner, and yet is part of a political collective and an ideology to which she is loyal. She is running from Turkish law, and, once she has arrived in Germany under a fake passport, she must also avoid German police. Ultimately, Ayten's true rebellion is expressed through her repenting to the police — much to the anger of her cohort in prison — in order to free herself and take up the help that Susanne Staub offers. It is a gesture of vulnerability and dependence, both of which she had avoided until the death of Lotte, whom she loved.

Lotte and Susanne Staub are both somewhat isolated during their time in Istanbul, though they are seen communicating easily with others (including Nejat) in German, in English, or through an interpreter as required. The greater cause of their outsider status comes from the 'cause' they both follow in making their respective trips. Lotte's driving motivation is to help her girlfriend Ayten. Later, Susanne wishes to honour her dead daughter by helping Ayten, and while in Istanbul retraces Lotte's steps, seeking closure and to process her intense grief: she is visibly, as Nejat observes, "*der traurigste Mensch*" in the room. Their story, and Ayten's, is resolved in the formation of a sort of transnational mother-daughter relationship between Ayten and Susanne.

In *When We Leave*, Umay is cast in an outsider role in the eyes of her family, through her transgression of familial-cultural expectations. Umay's story begins with leaving a loveless, violent marriage, and her rejection of the marriage is the trigger for the breakdown of her relationships with her parents and siblings. Her much happier new relationship with Stipe is only one aspect of the fresh start she makes in Berlin. In leaving her abusive husband, Umay reclaims her body from his sense of sexual entitlement to which she had previously acquiesced — but she also gets a job, claims her own living space, and enrolls to complete her schooling. These aspects express how much at home she is in Berlin. Despite this belonging, Umay is cast in the outsider role by her family (as reflected in the German title *Die Fremde*). Her best friend Atife and her employer Gül, rather than her mother Halime and sister Rana, are the two women who offer active support to Umay's own goals, rather than primarily to the maintenance of family unity and reputation.

Family relationships are crucial to all three films. In *Head-On*, Sibel's final sense of belonging comes not from going to Istanbul, but from creating her own family and assuming that responsibility. In *The Edge of Heaven*, the ending suggests the possibility of new family-type bonds created between Ayten and Susanne, and Nejat and Susanne — the Turkish 'daughter', a Turkish-German 'son' and a German 'mother'. *When We Leave* ends on a deeply tragic note, which is the result of ruptured family relationships stemming from a refusal to compromise on value systems; in this sense, *When We Leave* could be read as suggesting that integration is as difficult as ever — were it not made to seem so achievable by Umay, Atife and Gül. Families in these three films are a source of pain and conflict, but in the construction of new family-type connections, new senses of belonging are found.

Just as important as the nuclear family relationships are the comparisons and contrasts between different female characters in the extended family or at the workplace. Selma in *Head-On* is a particularly effective refutation of any lingering idea that Turkish culture *per se* (which is clearly not homogeneous anyway) puts women at a disadvantage compared to women in 'majority' (but also not homogeneous) German culture. Ayten's relationship with Lotte is part of the way in which the film sidesteps an Orientalised male gaze towards Ayten, as well as providing a love pairing that is different from the German boy and Turkish girl pairing of *Yasemin* (see Akın's comments in Chapter 5.2). Neither of these points is to say that the film entirely avoids a certain Turkey-Germany binary in the composition of its shots with Lotte and Ayten

(also emphasised by their physical differences); there is also the offer of spectatorial pleasure, combined with exoticism, in the smoky close-up shot of their first kiss in the nightclub. Generally, it is in her interactions with everyone other than Lotte that the portrayal of Ayten is most interesting. As previously noted (see Chapter 4.3), strong representations of female characters and their relationships are far from enough to be a critique of patriarchy in themselves. The three films analysed here are certainly not radical, nor even especially feminist in their outlook. Rather, they help to affirm the terrain in which such discussions must take place: transcultural, inclusive, and free of binary simplifications. The greater problematisation of patriarchal structures comes from the male characters and from the complicity of some female characters.

These three films convey a strong sense of the complicating factors that make it impossible to generalise about Turkish women. In each film, education and finances play a central role in the circumstances of the female protagonist/s; while these factors might be bound to the women's status as immigrants of the first or second generation, it is also made clear that observations cannot be extended and attributed to a monolithic 'Turkish culture'. In this regard, the careful juxtaposition of female characters is important in each film: Sibel compared to her cousin Selma in Istanbul; Yeter compared to her highly politicised activist daughter; Umay compared with her mother and sister, with her friend Atife, and her employer Gül. The three films each, and in combination, reflect on the experience of motherhood with respect to personal identity and choices, the transmission of cultural norms, and adherence to or rejection of those norms. These films avoid binarism and generalisations through their depth of characterisation and range of representative figures.

The narratives also place women from different backgrounds in varying situations, as another means of highlighting the complex intersection of national and cultural identities with gender, class, religion, education, politics and more. In this aspect, it simultaneously plays with the notion of foreignness and otherness. Sibel in Istanbul, even though she is a German national, is placed in the role of migrant labourer much like the *Gastarbeiter* of her parents' generation in Germany. Selma, from the 'other' country of Turkey, leads a life that would not be out of place as the starting point in some German relationship comedies of the early 1990s. Ayten, a Turkish national, depends on a transnational political network to help her in Germany, but quickly falls into a familiar (from other films and stories) pattern of undocumented migration and illegal residency in Germany — with a rejected claim for asylum and then deportation

and imprisonment. Lotte, a German national, travels to Istanbul and becomes reliant on Turkish authorities — but also finds a connection in Nejat, another German. The German national Umay returns home from Turkey to her Turkish family in Germany, where she is cast out of her family but completely at home in Berlin.

In each of these three films, the male characters, too, have clear roles to play in the construction of the female characters' identity as women: the respective gender roles are evident in relationship to each other. In *Head-On*, Sibel's position as an outsider is supported and mirrored by Cahit's experiences and views. Cahit is in fact more vocal than Sibel in his critique of patriarchal traditions and the hypocrisy he sees in other men. As a man, he is placed in situations where he has more freedom to comment, whereas Sibel's frustration is mostly expressed through one-on-one conversations with her mother, with Selma, and with Cahit. They are both rebellious spirits, outsiders not by dint of their ethnocultural background, but by a more indefinable restlessness. This is underscored by the punk spirit that suffuses the film, in its soundtrack, aesthetic style and settings. Cahit's disdainful self-distancing from his Turkish heritage also reminds the viewer unmistakably that culture is malleable and far from inherent. Cahit's different character acts as an implicit rebuke to Sibel's father and brother — their adherence to patriarchy, even at the expense of Sibel's wellbeing, is in fact something they choose, not that they must uphold.

The men in *The Edge of Heaven* are not so closely connected to the female characters, though the relationships that are formed do develop slightly in the course of the film. Nejat and Ali between them represent two generations of Turkish immigration in Germany. Ali is clearly a man of his generation with quite narrow expectations of his 'marriage' with Yeter; Nejat's success as a professor of German studies paints him as an exemplary child of integration, who masters not just the language but the canonical culture of Germany. Unlike Cahit, Nejat expresses no rejection of his Turkish roots; he is, however, far removed from the archetype of the ethnic male, disowning his father for his violent crime, being softly-spoken, highly-educated and occupying a high socioeconomic position. On the other hand, he is quite prepared to leave behind his life in Hamburg, and manage the book shop in Istanbul, suggesting at least a slight dissatisfaction with his life as it has been. Nejat's presence in the film helps to delineate the view of contemporary German and Turkish experience.

In *When We Leave*, Umay's father, Kader, and younger brother, Acar, are shown to experience a great deal of conflict between their love for Umay and their desire to, in

their eyes, uphold the honour of the entire family. Kader in particular perceives a need to make amends for Umay's transgressive behaviour, for the sake of all other family members; he is acutely aware of the judgement of their community around them. Acar's growing anger with Umay seems to result from his direct observations of the pain she is causing the family, combined with the bullying pressure exerted by Mehmet, and to a lesser extent their father Kader. The sympathetic aspects of Kader, the affectionate father and grandfather, and Acar, the loving younger brother who was raised by Umay in a motherly way — and even of Mehmet, who is an attentive uncle — prevents the depiction of patriarchal norms from being overly simplistic. Mehmet's character is drawn a little close to caricature, but Kader and Acar present a more complex, and perhaps therefore more troubling, relationship between archaic traditions of gender roles, familial expectation, and yet love for their female family members.

In each of these three films, national border-crossing (and to a lesser extent simply the act of travel) are central to the narrative. The journeys undertaken can be viewed in at least four ways. On the one hand, the ability of the characters to travel suggests a freedom, or at least an opportunity, far removed from the near-imprisonment of Turna in *40 Square Metres of Germany* (see Chapters 3.2 and 3.3); moreover, these migratory impulses on screen speak to the transnational dimensions of 'Turkish-German traffic' and an evolution from the confines of belonging to a sub-category of German national cinema (see Göktürk 2002). On the other hand, the characters' apparent restlessness and ongoing questing might suggest that Germany is not an easy home for them — that they are outsiders (see Landwehr 2009). Though every main character in *The Edge of Heaven* travels (or is transported) to Istanbul in one way or another, in no case is it for leisure or even out of completely free choice. Yeter (Yeter's body) is returned to her homeland for burial; Ayten is deported to Turkey by German authorities after her asylum claim is rejected; Ali is deported to his place of citizenship, after his jail term in Germany is finished. Nejat, Lotte and Susanne go to Istanbul independent of the law themselves, but in each case on a mission to help someone. Finally, the border-crossing plays a role in linking Germany and Turkey in the film's reception, too; they encourage the view that both countries have a stake in the films.

The three films all feature examples of transnational ties and networking of various and sometimes overlapping kinds: the maintenance of family and other relationships; business opportunities; legal and institutional frameworks; and media, communication and transport possibilities. It is partly through these networks that

Turkey is constructed as an always-present other place while the characters are in Germany. In some cases, this constitutes an offer or temptation, as in *Head-On* when Selma returns to Istanbul with the suggestion that Sibel should come and join her. Both women know (in that moment, at least) that there in urban Turkey, with her cousin's connections, Sibel would have the opportunities she has not had as the daughter of a conservative family in Hamburg.

In each of the three films analysed in the previous chapter, cultural spheres are depicted as neither homogenous nor completely discrete. Cultures overlap in neighbourhoods, in households and in characters' own lives; characters' lifestyles and their stories are juxtaposed to illustrate the heterogeneity of individual identities within collective identity. It is notable, too, that only the briefest hints serve amply as cultural markers: spoken language is the dominant way this is done, with music also playing a significant role. Particularly in *When We Leave*, most ethnographic imagery has been done away with, suggesting that Germany's Turks long ago ceased to seem exotic to their neighbours. Notably, the reception of these three films has in many cases perceived a 'clash of cultures' or 'two cultures under one roof' as a central theme, even as the films go quite some way to countering such a view; *Head-On*, *The Edge of Heaven* and *When We Leave* show characters living in at least two cultures, and constructing personal identities informed by far more complexity than being simply 'Turkish' or 'German' — or for that matter the strong ethnocultural identification that 'Turkish-German' might imply.

In *When We Leave*, Umay is portrayed as linguistically and culturally at home as she moves through differently-coded spaces: switching languages in conversation (as do her siblings, too), and as familiar with practices like the evil eye amulet her mother gives her, as she is comfortable flirting with Stipe or attending Atife's house party. The ease with which Umay navigates these different situations reflects back on her parents (and her siblings to a lesser extent); they undergo a process of 'self-othering' through their adherence to traditional and patriarchal norms of marriage, gender roles and family 'honour'. This becomes a reservation about the film: in this respect, it does seem merely to update the older idea (see Chapter 3.2) that Turkish women in particular would integrate easily, were it not for (implicitly monolithic) 'Turkish culture' and especially Turkish men.

Umay tries to create a new life, but is threatened with losing her son, ultimately with death. Here again, the transnationalism is made obvious, even as the multicultural

setting in Berlin is quite subtly conveyed. Umay inhabits a comfortably transcultural life, were it not for her family. Though Umay continually tries to maintain her relationships with her family, in effect she lives as an outcast from them. Like Yasemin more than two decades earlier (see Chapter 3.3), Umay is asked to choose between her own wishes and her family — a choice in which the former is aligned with ‘German culture’ and the latter with ‘Turkish culture’. *When We Leave* brings new dimensions to the situation: an older and fiercely determined protagonist; a loving younger brother; a sister who is complicit for her own reasons; a supportive female employer who is also of Turkish background. All the same, it revisits the idea that the integration or ‘liberation’ of Turkish-background women in Germany rests largely with the response of the family — or with intervention by German authority figures (whether the police, a women’s shelter, or a romantic partner).

On this question, two points are the most relevant. First, that *When We Leave* is based — in its basic plot, quite directly — on the true case of an ‘honour killing’ in Berlin in 2005; it sets out to deal with a disturbing subject matter, in a way that does not fall into simplifications. Second, the character of Umay — who is a few years older than the young woman in the actual case, and is played by Sibel Kekilli who brings a considerably powerful persona to the role — is clearly positioned as the subject of the film. The viewer is encouraged to relate to her perspectives and feelings, rather to those of the man pursuing her (as is somewhat the case in *Yasemin*). Stipe is, if anything, a much less developed character than Umay; he appears as her love interest and a supportive presence, but he does not act except in relation to her actions. When Umay takes shelter in his apartment, it is because she makes the trip to his door; he later offers to marry her, presenting it as an option for her to consider, and she declines gratefully. Even when Stipe shows Umay his favourite view in Berlin, her reaction underscores her familiarity with the same space he inhabits.

Where *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven* depict stories that seemingly could only be told since the 1990s, *When We Leave* is most obviously contemporary in *how* its narrative unfolds, and the nuances it brings. *When We Leave* handles its difficult subject matter in a way that suggests some progress from the representations of over twenty-five years ago, though in its cinematic style its transnationalism is expressed as an alignment with pan-European, rather than a dialogue with Turkish cinema as in *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven*.

All three films emphasise a relative ease of travel between Germany and Turkey. When Selma comes from Istanbul to attend Sibel's wedding in Hamburg, her arrival is depicted with little fanfare: there is no prior mention of Selma; through the swift editing, the lack of anticipatory build-up, and the informal dialogue and clothing, the scene is constructed as both a happy reunion between the two cousins, and a thoroughly commonplace event in Germany. Likewise Sibel's arrival in Istanbul, under entirely different circumstances, is achieved without complication; in this sequence, though, there is more attention to shots at the airport, with the effect of emphasising Sibel's departure from Germany.

The Edge of Heaven contains the memorable images of coffins slowly being offloaded from aeroplane cargo holds, at which point the film slows to use lingering, contemplative long shots of the conveyor belt, luggage truck and aircraft — from the perspective of an airport observation lounge. Ayten and Lotte both travel — to Germany and Turkey respectively — under difficult circumstances, and yet with relative ease. The focus is on their experiences within each country, since the journey itself has become a simple enough task. The geographical distance and directional relationship between Turkey and Germany are twisted, subverted, and presented metaphorically more than literally. At the same time, departure and arrival are inscribed into the stories, emphasising the process of identity creation and re-creation.

Religion features to some extent in each film, though it is mixed with tradition and not always cited explicitly. If public discourse of the past decade has recast Germany's Turks as Germany's Muslims, these three films — and those discussed in Chapter 3.3 — still prioritise a multifaceted depiction of culture, in all its complexity, over a focus on religion. Indeed, an attempt to bring more religious ritual to the screen, one suspects, could all too easily assume ethnographic and documentarian overtones. In German cinema, the religious practices of Muslims are generally woven into the narrative as they are into life: present to varying degrees at different times; frequently internalised rather than visible; always interacting with, or reacting to, other circumstances and influences; of varying importance and observation from one individual to the next.

In *Head-On*, Sibel's parents clearly are observant Muslims: for instance, her father reminds her it is sinful to try to take one's own life; also, her parents want to be sure the chocolates Cahit offers do not contain alcohol. Though the parents follow such beliefs and practices, neither Sibel nor her mother wear any kind of veil. The headscarf

has become a potent and frequently over-simplified symbol of Islam and apparent traditionalism in Germany (see Chapter 2.3); its absence in *Head-On*, in spite of the family's religiosity, is a welcome reminder that cultural norms can be mistaken for religious ones, and more generally and significantly, a reminder of the limitations of forming a judgement based on appearances.

In *The Edge of Heaven*, religion plays its biggest role through the figures of the two Turkish-speaking men who accost Yeter on the tram. Their policing of her morals is a menacing intrusion on her life, highlighting how little she is living by a religious code. In this exchange on the tram, though, Yeter's passing familiarity with the codes of expressions of Islam would suggest that it certainly was part of her upbringing. Circumstance has brought her to being a sex worker, and her shame is evident in the fact she tells her absent daughter that she works in a shoe shop. After her death, Yeter is given a Muslim burial in Turkey.

It is only in *When We Leave* that the female protagonist is seen participating in religious ritual, alongside her mother and other women; Umay also wears a veil when in Istanbul and until she arrives at her family's Berlin apartment; in the fact that she does not veil through the rest of the film, one can perhaps read an echo of the idea that Germany is more liberal and its women more liberated compared to Turkey. Yet when Umay dons a veil to participate in religious observance with her mother, it underscores the fact that for Umay, this decision is determined by situation. Her father Kader and brother Mehmet attend Friday prayers at the mosque, and they take Umay's son Cem with them. A tightly-framed medium shot followed by a long shot, inside the mosque, show Cem praying amongst the adult men, suggesting the significance that religion would have in his socialisation if the choices were left to Kader and Mehmet.

Turkish Germans have come to be reconstructed as Muslim Germans (see Chapter 2.3) and Muslim worship and practices have become more visible in German film (see Chapter 3.3). In these films there is clear evidence of the importance of religious faith: for Kader and, intermingled with folklore, to Halime; Umay participates in worship, and Yeter recognises religious norms when confronted with them; Sibel's father Yunus invokes religion in his condemnation of her actions. Islam has a visible and vocalised presence, but not in isolation; rather, it is referred to in interaction with other influences on characters' decisions or behaviour, such as cultural norms or power relationships.

In all three films, Turkey is inhabited, even if briefly, as a geographical space, but also visited as an imaginary or imagined space. *Head-On* opens with a scene of a musical and vocal performance on the bank of the Bosphorus, with the Süleymaniye Mosque, a highly recognisable Istanbul landmark, visible in the background. In *The Edge of Heaven*, Turkish-language music is played by Yeter in her room in Helenenstraße, and by the DJ at the Hamburg university party. At least as vital as the actual territory is the idea of Turkey: Turkey as a series of performances of *Arabesque* music, punctuating the melodramatic story first in Hamburg and then Istanbul; Turkey as a lengthy road trip framing the rest of the narrative before the story is finally resolved into the car journey unfolding in the present; Turkey as a place left behind and yet constantly present through the threats of family and the experience of the local diasporic community in Kreuzberg-Neukölln. Even from Germany, the films make frequent reference to Turkey through their characters, soundtracks or *mise-en-scène*; but there is a knowing tension between the real and the imagined, or the actual homeland memory of the migrant and the synthetic memory of the postmigrant. Even in scenes set in contemporary Istanbul, there are marked differences between the self-conscious bridge panorama when Cahit looks out from his conversation with Selma, and the maze of streets and staircases where Ayten runs from the police.

The restrained music soundtrack of *When We Leave* helps to situate the film within conventions of a social realism particularly associated with European cinemas. The sombre piano piece is not overtly Turkish or German, but has instead a somewhat deterritorialising quality: in spite of the specificity of the story and setting, the music lends *When We Leave* the sound of (Western) universalism.

The Edge of Heaven consists mostly of events that have occurred prior to the opening sequence, in which Nejat is driving through the Nejat region of Turkey. This framing device, like the musical vignettes in *Head-On* and opening sequence of *When We Leave* heralding the violent ending, creates an elliptical style of storytelling that underscores the multidirectionality of transnational traffic between Turkey and Germany. The imagery of travel in all three films — aeroplanes, airports, cars and buses, trains and trams — highlight not only the actual travel within the narratives, but the notion that identities themselves are processes.

These three films released within seven years of each other are stylistically varied, but linked through themes and aspects of narrative. Alongside that, the recurrence of Sibel Kekilli and Nursel Köse, as well as the appearance of other well-

known actors (either already prior to, or since the respective films' releases), embed the three films into a star system of sorts. The close association of Sibel Kekilli with her role in *Head-On*, and the media echo around her personal story at the time, have helped to create her image. Her own criticisms of aspects of Islam and Turkish family life have furthered this image. It would be, of course, remiss to overlook her roles in other German films; these include a secondary character in *Kebab Connection* (as an Italian) and the lead in *Winterreise* (*Winter Journey*, 2006, dir. Hans Steinbichler).

Nonetheless, it is difficult to remove Kekilli's role as Umay from the power it is given intertextually, from her role as Sibel in *Head-On*; some of the media reception of *When We Leave* likewise evinces a memory of the earlier film and the porn 'scandal' and family story that surrounded Kekilli soon after *Head-On*'s win at the Berlinale in 2004. Nursel Köse appeared in *Yasemin* as the older sister who brought 'shame' on the family, through the absence of a blood-flecked sheet on her wedding night; she has appeared as a universal-mother figure in *Anam* (see Chapter 3.3) and as a mother-whore figure in *The Edge of Heaven*. Her character in *When We Leave* seems almost the completion of a logical progression, and yet perhaps too convenient by half.

Are these three films to be understood as examples of a transnational cinema (be it German or otherwise)? The narratives place some emphasis on the literal act of border-crossing, particularly in *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven*, but also at two key points in *When We Leave*. More than this, the narrative and dialogue in each film portray various kinds of transnational ties, especially in the case of family networks across Germany and Turkey. Particularly in this context it is noteworthy that both *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven*, though they are German productions by finance, were selected by Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism as exemplary Turkish films; of the eleven films on the list, four others were EU co-productions with Eurimages — all further evidence that national cinema is a highly contestable category (Göktürk 2010, p. 193).

The figure of Fatih Akin himself, as well as his films, has attracted a focus on Germany's 'Turkish' filmmaking, and Akin has been discussed in the context of contemporary Turkish cinema. Feo Aladağ comes to *When We Leave* without the extensive filmmaking career that Akin has; although Aladağ herself is an immigrant to Germany (which the Hamburg-born Akin is not), more interest in her biography has been focused instead on her husband's Turkish background. In Aladağ, there is some reminder of how 'foreignness' (immigrant status, foreign citizenship) do not always

correlate with perceptions of otherness. Züli Aladağ, who arrived in Germany with his family as a young boy, may be considered a Turkish-German director of the second generation (see Chapter 3.3): Germany is what he has known since his early years, but the migration experience is still within memory, whether his own or ‘synthetically’ reconstructed from his parents’ recollections. The Austrian Feo Aladağ, by contrast, is a first-generation immigrant to Germany, but from a country that is perceived as less ‘foreign’, and where German is the national language. Akin’s work exhibits some elements of diasporic filmmaking — an ‘accented cinema’ — but his own perspective is not an exilic one. Although he is acutely aware of his Turkish heritage as he expresses it through his films, he also occupies (now, at least) a non-marginal position in Germany cinema. Yet his work exhibits some of the characteristics associated with ‘accented’ filmmaking (see Chapters 4.2 and 4.4).

The three films analysed here are embedded transnationally in multiple ways. Particularly the two Akin films analysed here — *Head-On* and *The Edge of Heaven* — exhibit an intertextual embedding, through stylistic and casting choices, in both German and Turkish filmmaking traditions (and others). In *Head-On*, Akin invokes Turkey’s *Yeşilçam* melodramas and the melancholia of the *kara sevda* tradition, as well as aligning the film with both Western punk and Central Asian Arabesque music traditions. *The Edge of Heaven* pays homage to both Germany’s director Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Turkey’s director Yılmaz Güney. In all three films, actors who are well known to Turkish audiences appear in German-Turkish narratives, providing a further appeal to Turkish viewers, and linking the cinemas of both countries. The films also interact with different topics of politics and identity in Turkey; *The Edge of Heaven* in particular refers to the Turkish-internal, but also transnational, politics of dissent and Kurdish nationalism, and Turkey’s future in the European Union. The cinematic and political points of reference again draw attention to the difficulty of confining oneself to the ‘national’ as a category; yet this is a transnationalism that also clearly must acknowledge the existence of the nation in order to ‘transcend’ it. The references are to cinema and to political themes that relate closely to national identity.

Sibel, Yeter, Umay, and to a lesser extent Selma and Lotte, experience their lives as transcultural: living *in* not *between* two cultures. The transnationalism of these three films is an expression of the transnational networks these characters’ experiences are embedded in. They are socially and culturally connected to Turkey as they are to Germany, but this does not manifest in their lives as a clash of cultures. Where the

negotiation of differing social mores or cultures does show itself, it is more in the lives of other characters and figures, who cling to older conceptualisations of culture. This in turn has negative consequences for the female characters, but mediates the ‘cultural clash’ so that it is not an intercultural encounter itself that presents the problem, but how some people react to it. In this sense, Sibel and Umay in particular show a pragmatism and optimism about the capacity for transcultural adaptation, that is not matched by everyone around them.

Sibel, Yeter, Ayten, Umay, and the other lead characters of these films, occupy spaces within a complex transnational network — comprising the familial, cultural, economic and political — that stretches between Germany and Turkey, enmeshing their populations in varied ways. Intercultural encounters are not without tensions still, but the idea of a ‘clash of cultures’ is tempered by the recognition that cultures are fluid, overlapping, and internally heterogeneous. The transnational ties are explored from both Germany and Turkey, emphasising that there is no centre to such networks (see also Chapter 4.2). These depicted transnational networks, and the relative ease with which the women of these films travel in them, present a challenge to any lingering sense of cultural separateness or homogeneity.

Cinema, and storytelling generally, by their nature must be selective— what is worth telling, and who should it be told about? The danger lies in extrapolation, especially on the part of the audience. Clearly, it would be simplistic to suggest that these three films depict some truth that holds for all Turkish, or Turkish-background German, women. Such homogenisation is exactly what these films avoid. They show a balancing of gender identity and ethnocultural identity, privileging neither one nor the other at the cost of turning his female characters into caricatures. There is a broadening of the range of images of Turkish femininity, and ideas such as ‘double exclusion’ are pushed to the background to concentrate on individual characters.

It remains to be seen whether films in the vein of the three analysed here (and in Chapter 3.3) can account for a transnational reality — social, cinematic, cultural — without resorting to the creation of new stereotypes; whether transnationalism and transculturalism are becoming a new orthodoxy of German cinematic depictions, leaving behind characters that do not fit. *When We Leave* takes its story from the details of a real event several years earlier, but as a film its roots go back much further: in its tensions between intercultural ‘clashes’ and transcultural impulses, between urban Berlin and rural Turkey, between the strong young woman and the male family

members, and between that family and the interventions of helpful Germans from outside the same immigrant community. These delineations recall films from over twenty years ago. The new dimensions in *When We Leave* come primarily from the agency and assertiveness of Umay, and from the presence of Gül and Atife — a presence that is burdened with perhaps too much symbolic meaning in the context of discourses of integration. How these sort of social realist films present their criticisms without falling into cinematic-iconographic symbolism remains to be seen.

7. Conclusion

Germany has undergone enormous changes since the founding of its nation-state territory in 1871, and tremendous shifts even in the past 25 years. As in other countries where the value and potential of multiculturalism are being reconsidered, this ‘crisis of multiculturalism’ mostly amounts to a defensive reiteration of now-outdated concepts of nationhood. Political discourse has shifted, so that discussion now focuses on immigration and citizenship policy. Integration measures are useful and important if they genuinely encourage more harmonious co-existence within the nation-state; the goal of ‘integration’ is less positive if it relies too much on paternalistic or didactic notions of ‘teaching’ nationhood. There is a clear need to envisage, and in turn to enact policies that encourage the development of a society that acknowledges cultural heterogeneity. There seems no chance that Germany’s immigration will return to the official ‘invisibility’ of former decades. While some attitudes and measures towards integration may yet become more cautious, the general direction of these debates can not return to the days when Germany’s diversity was underacknowledged.

The vast array of cultural output by immigrants in Germany or their descendants — multiple voices and perspectives in literature, television, theatre, music, film — attests to the changed landscape of German self-identities. Rather than signalling the end of the processes of integration, such works are a way of reflecting upon and staking a claim in such processes. Discussions on integration can only be successful if they engage all sides, and avoid paternalism and assumptions.

If the ‘Turkish-German cinema’ that emerged in the second half of the 1990s began as a perceived niche of filmmaking, it soon met with a broader view of German cinema in the late 20th and early 21st Century. An array of directors, themes, styles, and ‘movements’ — in reality, not always consciously-aligned groups of filmmakers — have explored Germany’s past and present, opening new thematic axes and connections. Films about Germans of Turkish background are at the heart of this complexity and diversity, firmly embedded in German ‘national cinema’ (a category which persists in spite of its self-evident instability and flexibility) while also belonging to the transnational and in at least some cases being identified (in Turkey) as Turkish.

There also is evidence of clichés that linger from earlier days, such as the sexually powerful ‘ethnic male’ (see Chapter 3.3). There certainly is some indication of

new stereotypes replacing previous ones, although the new stereotypes may be more varied in their range. The rebellious, determined young Turkish-background woman defying tradition has new shades, but is, after all, founded in characters such as Shirin (see 3.2), or indeed in many female characters from a long tradition of rebellious woman in German (and Turkish) cinema (see Chapters 3.1 and 3.2). It is a welcome development of the past decade at least, that female characters with Turkish background are seen not merely defying the expectations of their traditional parents or communities, but provoking new dialogues about the very ideas of ‘culture’, ‘integration’, ‘belonging’ and ‘home’.

There is a compression of space, such that Germany and Turkey seem not only linked transnationally, but also geographically close. The stories of migration, or simply of travel, between the two countries tend to portray very little of the journey. More important is the arrival, often putting into question the idea that a ‘departure’ has taken place. In the age of satellite television, multilingual neighbourhoods and media options, digital media distribution and cheap airfares, travel and borders have gained new dimensions. The ideas of centre and margin, of ‘here’ and ‘there’, of the self and the other, are made more obviously malleable and temporally situated; transnational networks bring various perspectives close to hand.

It is telling that the reception of some German-produced films has become so much a transnational experience; this becomes another means of self-reflexivity, opening new ways of considering films from both an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspective — or overcoming such binaries altogether. In the context of ‘national’ cinemas that are filled with co-productions and often funded from supranational financial bodies, it seems clear that the cultural side of the film as product is reflecting the commercial. Filmmaking choices (narrative, stylistic references, casting and so forth) encourage the viewer to see German and Turkish cultures (always plural) from different perspectives, and without drawing oversimplistic delineations between them.

The female characters of these three films analysed, as women embodying the reproduction of nationhood, occupy transnational and frequently transcultural spaces. Their stories are the manifestation of rapidly changing beliefs about the ‘nation’ and about culture. It is a sign of the maturity of this position, that the three analysed films differ stylistically and thematically as much as they do, yet each in their own ways position themselves in similar terrain. From the breakthrough production (for its director) and breakneck pace of *Head-On*, to the far more contemplative and elliptical

story-telling of *The Edge of Heaven*, to the sombre revisitation of social realism in *When We Leave*, each film adds new layers to what has come before. Among many questions for the future, it will be interesting to see whether an identifiable comedy strand of filmmaking (such as *Almanya* – see Chapter 3.3), or the melancholic drama of the three films discussed in depth, dominates the next decade of representations of Germany's plurality and relationship with Turkey.

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Filmography

(alphabetical by German title as applicable)

40 Quadratmeter Deutschland / 40 Square Metres of Germany 1986. **Director:** Tevfik Başer; **Screenplay:** Tevfik Başer; **Cinematography:** İzzet Akay; **Editing:** Renate Merck; **Music:** Claus Bantzer; **Cast:** Özay Fecht, Yaman Okay, Demir Gökçöl; **Producer:** Tevfik Başer; **Production Company:** Studio Hamburg; **Length:** 80 min; **Format:** Colour

Abschied vom falschen Paradies / Farewell to the False Paradise 1989. **Director:** Tevfik Başer; **Screenplay:** Tevfik Başer; **Cinematography:** İzzet Akay; **Editing:** Renate Merck; **Music:** Claus Bantzer; **Cast:** Zuhall Olcay, Brigitte Janner, Ruth Olafsdottir, Barbara Morawiecz, Ayse Altan, Serpil Inanc; **Producer:** Ottokar Runze; **Production Company:** Ottokar Runze Filmproduktion; **Length:** 92 min

Aimée & Jaguar 1999. **Director:** Max Färberböck; **Screenplay:** Max Färberböck, Rona Munro; **Cinematography:** Tony Imi; **Editing:** Barbara Hennings; **Music:** Jan A. P. Kaczmarek; **Cast:** Heike Makatsch, Johanna Wokalek, Juliane Köhler, Maria Schrader, Detlev Buck; **Producer:** Hanno Huth, Günter Rohrbach; **Production Company:** Senator Film Produktion/Berlin; **Length:** 124 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

All That Heaven Allows 1955. **Director:** Douglas Sirk; **Screenplay:** Peg Fenwick; **Cinematography:** Russell Metty; **Editing:** Frank Gross, Fred Baratta; **Music:** Frank Skinner; **Cast:** Jane Wyman, Rock Hudson, Agnes Moorehead, Conrad Nagel, Virginia Grey; **Producer:** Ross Hunter; **Production Company:** Universal International Pictures (UI); **Length:** 89 min; **Format:** colour

Alles wird gut / Everything Will Be Fine 1998. **Director:** Angelina Maccarone; **Screenplay:** Angelina Maccarone, Fatima El-Tayeb; **Cinematography:** Judith Kaufmann; **Music:** Jacob Hansonis; **Cast:** Kati Stüdemann, Chantal De Freitas, Isabella Parkinson, Pierre Sanoussi-Bliss, Aglaia Szyszkowitz, Uwe Rohde; **Producer:** Claudia Schröder; **Length:** 88 min

Almanya — Willkommen in Deutschland! / Almanya — Welcome to Germany! 2010. **Director:** Yasemin Samdereli; **Screenplay:** Yasemin Samdereli, Nesrin Samdereli; **Cinematography:** Ngo The Chau; **Editing:** Andrea Mertens; **Music:** Gerd Baumann; **Cast:** Demet Gül, Vedat Erincin, Lilay Huser, Denis Moschitto, Petra Schmidt-Schaller, Aykut Kayacik, Aylin Tezel, Şiir Eoğlu, Fahri Oğün Yardim, Rafael Koussouris; **Producer:** Andreas Richter, Annie Brunner, Ursula Woerner; **Production Company:** Roxy Film/Munich, in co-production with Infafilm/Munich; **Length:** 101 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Anam 2001. **Director:** Buket Alakus; **Screenplay:** Buket Alakus; **Cinematography:** Marcus Lambrecht; **Editing:** Ann-Sophie Schweizer; **Music:** Mehmet Ergin; **Cast:** Nursel Köse, Saskia Vester, Audrey Motaung, Patrycia Ziolkowska, Navid Akhavan, Leonard Lansink, Birol Ünel, Tayfun Bademsoy, Juelide Giriken; **Producer:** Ralph Schwingel, Stefan Schubert; **Production Company:** Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg, Wüste Film West/Cologne; **Length:** 86 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Angst essen Seele auf / Fear Eats the Soul 1973. **Director:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Screenplay:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Cinematography:** Juergen Juerges; **Editing:** Thea Eymész; **Cast:** Irm Hermann, Marquard Böhm, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Karl Scheydt, Peter Gauhe, Barbara Valentin, El Hedi Ben Salem, Brigitte Mira, Walter

- Sedlmayr; **Producer:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Production Company:** Tango Film/Munich; **Length:** 93 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Aprilkinder / April Children* 1998. **Director:** Yüksel Yavuz; **Screenplay:** Henner Winckler, Britta Ohm, Yueksel Yavuz; **Cinematography:** Ciro Cappellari; **Editing:** Aparad Bondy; **Cast:** Senem Tepe, Bülent Esrüngün, Inga Busch, Erdal Yildiz; **Producer:** Thomas Kufus; **Production Company:** zero one film/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz; **Length:** 85 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Auf der anderen Seite / The Edge of Heaven* 2007. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Rainer Klausmann; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Stefan Hantel; **Cast:** Nursel Köse, Tuncel Kurtiz, Patrycia Ziolkowska, Hanna Schygulla, Baki Davrak, Nurgül Yeşilçay; **Producer:** Fatih Akin, Andreas Thiel, Klaus Maeck; **Production Company:** corazón international/Hamburg, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, Anka Film/Istanbul, Dorje Film/Rome; **Length:** 122 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Ayla* 2009. **Director:** Su Turhan; **Screenplay:** Su Turhan, Beatrice Dossi; **Cinematography:** Florian Schilling; **Editing:** Horst Reiter; **Music:** Ali N. Askin; **Cast:** Pegah Ferydoni, Mehdi Moinszadeh, Timur Isik, Türkiz Talay, Saskia Vester, Sesede Terziyan; **Producer:** Sven Burgemeister, Andreas Bareiß, Gloria Burkert; **Production Company:** BurkertBareiss Development/Munich, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg, Goldkind Film/Munich for TV60 Film/Munich; **Length:** 86 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Bella Martha / Mostly Martha* 2000. **Director:** Sandra Nettelbeck; **Screenplay:** Sandra Nettelbeck; **Cinematography:** Michael Bertl; **Editing:** Mona Bräuer; **Music:** Manfred Eicher; **Cast:** Martina Gedeck, Maxime Foerste, Sybille Canonica, Katja Studt, August Zirner, Idil Üner, Ulrich Thomsen, Sergio Castellitto, Oliver Broumis; **Producer:** Karl Baumgartner, Christoph Friedel; **Production Company:** Pandora Film/Cologne, in co-production with T & C Film/Zurich, Palomar/Rome; **Length:** 107 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Berlin – Alexanderplatz* 1931. **Director:** Piel Jutzi; **Screenplay:** Hans Wilhelm, Alfred Doeblin, Karl Heinz Martin; **Cinematography:** Nikolaus Farkas; **Editing:** Goeza Pollatschik; **Music:** Allan Gray; **Cast:** Heinrich George, Maria Bard, Margarete Schlegel, Bernhard Minetti, Gerhard Bienert, Albert Florath, Paul Westermeier, Oskar Hoecker, Hans-Peter Deppe; **Producer:** Arnold Pressburger; **Production Company:** Allianz-Tonfilm/Berlin; **Length:** 89 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Berlin Blues (Herr Lehmann)* 2003. **Director:** Leander Haußmann; **Screenplay:** Sven Regener; **Cinematography:** Frank Griebe; **Editing:** Peter R. Adam; **Cast:** Christian Ulmen, Detlev Buck, Katja Danowski, Janek Rieke, Uwe-Dag Berlin, Martin Olbertz, Hartmut Lange; **Producer:** Claus Boje; **Production Company:** Boje Buck Produktion/Berlin; **Length:** 115 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Berlin in Berlin* 1993. **Director:** Sinan Çetin; **Screenplay:** Sinan Çetin, Ümut Ünal; **Cinematography:** Rebekka Haas; **Editing:** Ömer Sevin; **Music:** Fahir Atakoglu, Clemens-Maria Haas, Nezih Unen; **Cast:** Cem Özer, Armin Block, Hülya Avsar; **Producer:** Cemalettin Çetin, Sinan Çetin; **Production Company:** Plato Film Production; **Length:** 99 min; **Format:** 35mm, colour
- Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt / Berlin: Symphony of a Great City/Metropolis* 1927. **Director:** Walter Ruttmann; **Screenplay:** Walter Ruttmann, Carl Mayer, Karl Freund; **Cinematography:** Robert Babeske, Reimar Kuntze, Lazslo Schäffer, Karl Freund (uncredited); **Editing:** Walter Ruttmann; **Music:** Edmund Meisel; **Producer:** Karl Freund; **Length:** 65 min **Format:** 35mm, b&w
- Der bewegte Mann / Maybe, Maybe Not* 1994. **Director:** Sönke Wortmann; **Screenplay:** Sönke Wortmann; **Cinematography:** Gernot Roll; **Editing:** Ueli Christen; **Music:** Torsten Breuer; **Cast:** Katja Riemann, Til Schweiger, Joachim Król, Rufus Beck;

- Producer:** Bernd Eichinger; **Production Company:** Constantin Film Produktion/Munich; **Length:** 93 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Der blaue Engel / The Blue Angel* 1930. **Director:** Josef von Sternberg; **Screenplay:** Robert Liebmann, Carl Zuckmayer; **Cinematography:** Hans Schneeberger; **Editing:** Sam Winston; **Music:** Frederick Hollander; **Cast:** Emil Jannings, Marlene Dietrich, Kurt Gerron, Rosa Valetti, Hans Albers, Reinhold Bernt, Eduard von Winterstein, Hans Roth, Friedrich Hollaender, Wolfgang Staudte; **Producer:** Eric Pommer; **Production Company:** Universum-Film (Ufa)/Berlin; **Length:** 107 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari / The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* 1920. **Director:** Robert Wiene; **Screenplay:** Carl Mayer, Hans Janowitz; **Cinematography:** Willy Hameister; **Music:** Alfredo Antonini, Giuseppe Becce; **Cast:** Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Friedrich Feher, Lil Dagover, Hans Heinrich von Twardowski, Rudolf Lettinger; **Producer:** Rudolf Meinert, Erich Pommer; **Production Company:** Decla-Bioscop AG; **Length:** 78 min; **Format:** Silent, 35 mm b&w (tinted)
- Conny und Peter machen Musik / Conny and Peter Make Music* 1960. **Director:** Werner Jacobs; **Screenplay:** Karl Georg Külb; **Cinematography:** Erich Claunigk; **Editing:** Heinz Haber; **Music:** Gerhard Froboess; **Cast:** Cornelia Froboess, Peter Kraus, Gustav Knuth, Walter Gross, Gudrun Schmidt, Kurt Großkurth; **Producer:** Luggi Waldleitner; **Production Company:** Melodie Film; **Length:** 87 min; **Format:** b&w
- Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* 2005. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Hervé Dieu; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Alexander Hacke; **Cast:** Duman, Alexander Hacke, Sezen Aksu, Orient Expressions, Selim Sesler, Baba Zula, Brenna MacCrimmon, Orhan Gencebay, Mercan Dede, Replikas, Erkin Koray, Siyasiyabend, Aynur, Muezeyyen Senar, Ceza; **Producer:** Sandra Harzer-Kux, Christian Kux, Andreas Thiel, Fatih Akin, Klaus Maeck, Tina Mersmann; **Production Company:** Intervista Digital Media/Hamburg, corazón international/Hamburg, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg; **Length:** 92 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Dealer* 1998. **Director:** Thomas Arslan; **Screenplay:** Thomas Arslan; **Cinematography:** Michael Wiesweg; **Editing:** Bettina Blickwede; **Cast:** Idil Üner, Birol Ünel, Tamer Yiğit, Hussi Kutlucan; **Producer:** Kaete Ehrmann; **Production Company:** Trans-Film, Berlin; **Length:** 80 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Drachenfutter / Dragon Chow* 1987. **Director:** Jan Schütte; **Screenplay:** Jan Schütte, Thomas Strittmatter; **Cinematography:** Lutz Konermann; **Editing:** Renate Merck, Andreas Schreitmüller; **Music:** Claus Bantzer; **Cast:** Bhasker Patel, Ric Young, Buddy Uzzaman, Wolf-Dietrich Sprenger, Ulrich Wildgruber, Frank Oladeinde, Loius Blaise Londolz, Su Zeng Hua, Peter Maertens, Manfred Brauneck, Ulrike Purschke, Youngme Song, Horst-Joachim Berodt, Arne Konnert, Sazzad Hossain, Sophie Plessing, Kai von Borster, Peter Fitz; **Producer:** Eric Nellessen; **Production Company:** Novoskop Film, Probst Film, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF); **Length:** 75 min; **Format:** colour
- Evet, ich will! / Evet, I Do!* 2008. **Director:** Sinan Akkus; **Screenplay:** Sinan Akkus; **Cinematography:** Peter Nix; **Editing:** Renata Salazar Ivancan; **Music:** Ali N. Askin; **Cast:** Ingeborg Westphal, Oliver Korittke, Lale Yavas, Meray Ülgen, Lilay Huser, Pinar Erincin, Idil Üner, Tim Seyfi, Heinrich Schafmeister; **Producer:** Gudrun Ruzicková-Steiner, Nikolaus Lohmann, Claudius Lohmann; **Production Company:** Luna-Film/Berlin, in co-production with Cinemendo/Munich, RBB/Potsdam-Babelsberg, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 90 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Fernes Land / Distant Land* 2011. **Director:** Kanwal Sethi; **Screenplay:** Leis Bagdach, Kanwal Sethi; **Cinematography:** Hanno Moritz Kunow; **Editing:** Claudia Wolscht; **Music:** Conrad Oleak; **Cast:** Pasha Bocarie, Christoph Franken, Olaf Hais, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Karina Plachetka, Mario Rohn, Raschid D. Sidgi, Atta Yaqub; **Producer:** Holm Taddiken; **Production Company:** Neufilm; **Length:** 88 min; **Format:** colour
- Die Fremde / When We Leave* 2009. **Director:** Feo Aladağ; **Screenplay:** Feo Aladağ; **Cinematography:** Judith Kaufmann; **Editing:** Andrea Mertens; **Music:** Max Richter,

Stéphane Moucha; **Cast:** Florian Lukas, Serhad Can, Almila Bagriacik, Nursel Koese, Alwara Höfels, Ufuk Bayraktar, Blanca Apilánez, Derya Alabora, Settar Tanrıöğen, Nizam Schiller, Sibel Kekilli; **Producer:** Feo Aladağ, Züli Aladağ; **Production Company:** Independent Artists Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, RBB/Potsdam-Babelsberg, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 119 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Fremde Haut / Unveiled 2005. **Director:** Angelina Maccarone; **Screenplay:** Angelina Maccarone, Judith Kaufmann; **Cinematography:** Judith Kaufmann; **Editing:** Bettina Boehler; **Cast:** Navid Akhavan, Jasmin Tabatabai, Anneke Kim Sarnau, Hinnerk Schönemann, Jens Münchow; **Producer:** Ulrike Zimmermann; **Production Company:** MMM Film/Hamburg, in co-production with Fischer Film/Vienna; **Length:** 97 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Ganz unten / Lowest of the Low 1986. **Director:** Jörg Gförer; **Screenplay:** Jörg Gförer; **Cinematography:** Jörg Gförer, Dieter Oeckl; **Music:** Heinrich Huber; **Cast:** Jörg Gförer; **Production Company:** Kaos; **Length:** 100 min

Gegen die Wand / Head-On 2003. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Rainer Klausmann; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Klaus Maeck; **Cast:** Catrin Striebeck, Sibel Kekilli, Birol Ünel, Meltem Cumbul, Güven Kiraç, Demir Gökçül; **Producer:** Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel; **Production Company:** Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with corazón international/Hamburg; **Length:** 120 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Geschwister—Kardeşler / Brothers and Sisters 1996. **Director:** Thomas Arslan; **Screenplay:** Thomas Arslan; **Cinematography:** Michael Wiesweg; **Editing:** Thomas Arslan; **Music:** Juks, DJ Hype; **Cast:** Tamer Yiğit, Serpil Turhan, Savas Yurderi, Hildegard Lena Kuhlenberg; **Producer:** Albert Kitzler; **Production Company:** Trans-Film, Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz; **Length:** 82 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Getürkt / Weed 1996. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Frank Barbian; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Ulrich Kodjo Wendt; **Cast:** Cem Akin, Fatih Akin, Alper Akkoc, Nadire Ilter, Mehmet Kurtuluş; **Producer:** Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel; **Production Company:** Wüste Filmproduktion; **Length:** 12 min

Good-bye Lenin! 2003. **Director:** Wolfgang Becker; **Screenplay:** Wolfgang Becker, Bernd Lichtenberg; **Cinematography:** Martin Kukula; **Editing:** Peter R. Adam; **Music:** Yann Tiersen; **Cast:** Maria Simon, Chulpan Khamatova, Katrin Sass, Daniel Brühl, Florian Lukas, Alexander Beyer, Michael Gwisdek, Burghart Klaußner; **Producer:** Stefan Arndt; **Production Company:** X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in cooperation with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 118 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Happy Birthday, Türke! 1992. **Director:** Doris Dörrie; **Screenplay:** Jakob Arjouni, Doris Dörrie; **Cinematography:** Helge Weindler; **Editing:** Raimund Barthelmes, Hana Müllner; **Music:** Markus Lonardoni, Peer Raben; **Cast:** Özay Fecht, Meret Becker, Doris Kunstmann, Lambert Hamel, Joachim Król, Nina Petri, Christian Schneller, Ömer Simsek, Ulrich Wesselmann; **Producer:** Christoph Holch, Gerd Huber, Renate Seefeldt; **Production Company:** Cobra Film GmbH; **Length:** 109 min

Heaven 2001. **Director:** Tom Tykwer; **Screenplay:** Krzysztof Kieslowski, Krzysztof Piesiewicz; **Cinematography:** Frank Griebe; **Editing:** Mathilde Bonnefoy; **Music:** Arvo Paert; **Cast:** Giovanni Ribisi, Cate Blanchett; **Producer:** Frédérique Dumas, William Horberg, Anthony Minghella, Maria Koepf, Stefan Arndt; **Production Company:** X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, Miramax International, New York; **Length:** 95 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Ich Chef, du Turnschuh! / Me boss, you sneakers! 1998. **Director:** Hussi Kutlucan; **Screenplay:** Hussi Kutlucan; **Cinematography:** Lars Barthel; **Editing:** Patricia Rommel, Catherine Steghens; **Music:** Erci Ergün; **Cast:** Hussi Kutlucan, Wiebke Inn, Senta Moira, Jules Gund, Özay Fecht, Heinz-Werner Kraehkamp, Kurt Ackermann;

- Producer:** Margarita Woskanjan; **Production Company:** Malita Film; **Length:** 92 min; **Format:** Colour
- Im Juli / In July* 2000. Director:** Fatih Akın; **Screenplay:** Pierre Aim; **Cinematography:** Pierre Aim; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Ulrich Kodjo Wendt; **Cast:** Moritz Bleibtreu, Christiane Paul, Mehmet Kurtuluş; **Producer:** Ralph Schwingel, Stefan Schubert; **Production Company:** Wüste Film/Hamburg; **Length:** 100 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Jerichow* 2008. Director:** Christian Petzold; **Screenplay:** Christian Petzold; **Cinematography:** Hans Fromm; **Editing:** Bettina Boehler; **Music:** Stefan Will; **Cast:** Hilmi Sözer, Nina Hoss, Benno Fürmann; **Producer:** Michael Weber, Florian Koerner von Gustorf; **Production Company:** Schramm Film Koerner & Weber/Berlin, in co-production with BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 93 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Kanak Attack* 1999. Director:** Lars Becker; **Screenplay:** Lars Becker, Feridun Zaimoglu, Bernhard Wutka; **Cinematography:** Hannes Hubach; **Editing:** Oliver Gieth, Marco Pav D'Auria; **Music:** Frank Wulff, Stefan Wulff; **Cast:** Luk Piyès, David Scheller, Tyron Ricketts, Özlem Çetin, Nadeshda Brennicke, Ercan Durmaz, Murat Karabey Yilmaz, Orhan Güner; **Producer:** Christian Becker, Thomas Haeberle; **Production Company:** Becker & Haeberle Filmproduktion/Krefeld, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz, Bavaria Film/Geiseltal; **Length:** 89 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Karamuk* 2002. Director:** Sülbiye V. Günar; **Screenplay:** Grit Neuber, Sülbiye V. Günar; **Cinematography:** Peter Przybylski; **Editing:** Dora Vajda; **Music:** Neil Black; **Cast:** Buket Yeni, Burak Güngen, Julia Mahnecke, Anne Kasprık, Adnan Maral, Helga Goering, Klaus J. Behrendt; **Producer:** Sonja Goslicki, Anke Scheib-Krause; **Production Company:** Colonia Media Filmproduktion/Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne; **Length:** 94 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Katzelmacher* 1969. Director:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Screenplay:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Cinematography:** Dietrich Lohmann; **Editing:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder (as Franz Walsch); **Music:** Peer Raben; **Cast:** Hanna Schygulla, Rudolf Waldemar, Elga Sorbas, Lilith Ungerer; **Producer:** Peer Raben; **Production Company:** Antiteater-X-Film; **Length:** 88 min; **Format:** B&w
- Kebab Connection* 2004. Director:** Anno Saul; **Screenplay:** Anno Saul, Jan Berger, Fatih Akın, Ruth Toma; **Cinematography:** Hannes Hubach; **Editing:** Tobias Haas; **Music:** Marcel Barsotti; **Cast:** Sibel Kekilli, Nora Tschirner, Güven Kiraç, Denis Moschitto, Adnan Maral, Hasan Ali Mete; **Producer:** Ralph Schwingel, Stefan Schubert; **Production Company:** Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with Creado Film/Constance, Wüste Film West/Cologne, WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 96 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Keiner liebt mich / Nobody Loves Me* 1994. Director:** Dorris Dörrie; **Screenplay:** Dorris Dörrie; **Cinematography:** Helge Weindler; **Editing:** Inez Regnier; **Music:** Niki Reiser; **Cast:** Maria Schrader, Pierre Sanoussi-Bliss, Michael von Au, Elisabeth Trissenaar, Ingo Naujoks, Joachim Król, Peggy Parnass, Lorose Keller, Anya Hoffmann, Erwin Grosche, Roland Kabelitz, Steffen Gräbner, Oliver Nägele, Ute Maria Lerner, Laura Medinger, Stefan Gebelhoff, Birgit Stein, Gruschenka Stevens, Claudia Matschulla, Ömer Simsek, Ruth Brück, Karin Johnson, Klaus Koehler, Peter Böhlke; **Producer:** Christoph Holch, Gerd Huber, Renate Seefeldt; **Length:** 104 min
- Kirschblüten – Hanami / Cherry Blossoms – Hanami* 2008. Director:** Dorris Dörrie; **Screenplay:** Doris Dörrie; **Cinematography:** Hanno Lentz; **Editing:** Frank J. Müller, Inez Regnier; **Music:** Claus Bantzer; **Cast:** Elmar Wepper, Hannelore Elsner, Aya Irizuki, Maximilian Brückner, Nadja Uhl; **Producer:** Harald Kügler; **Production Company:** Olga Film GmbH; **Length:** 127 min; **Format:** 35 mm colour
- Knallhart / Tough Enough* 2006. Director:** Detlev Buck; **Screenplay:** Zoran Drvenkar, Gregor Tessnow; **Cinematography:** Kolja Brandt; **Editing:** Dirk Grau; **Music:** Bert Wrede; **Cast:** David Kross, Jenny Elvers-Elbertzhagen, Hans Loew, Arnel Taci, Kai Michael

Müller, Erhan Emre, Oktay Oezdemir, Kida Khodr Ramadan; **Producer:** Claus Boje; **Production Company:** Boje Buck Produktion/Berlin; **Length:** 98 min; **Format:** 35 mm colour

Der Krieger und die Kaiserin / The Princess And The Warrior 2000. **Director:** Tom Tykwer; **Screenplay:** Tom Tykwer; **Cinematography:** Frank Griebel; **Editing:** Mathilde Bonnefoy; **Music:** Reinhold Heil, Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek; **Cast:** Franka Potente, Benno Fürmann, Joachim Król; **Producer:** Stefan Arndt, Maria Koepf; **Production Company:** X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne; **Length:** 129 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Die Kümmeltürkin geht / The Turkish Bastard Departs 1985. **Director:** Jeannine Meerapfel; **Screenplay:** Jeannine Meerapfel; **Cinematography:** Johann Feindt; **Editing:** Klaus Volkenborn; **Music:** Markus Lichtmann; **Cast:** Melek Tez; **Producer:** Klaus Volkenborn; **Production Company:** Journal-Film Klaus Volkenborn; **Length:** 88 min; **Format:** colour

kurz und schmerzlos / Short Sharp Shock 1998. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Frank Barbian; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Ulrich Kodjo Wendt; **Cast:** Adam Bousdoukos, Aleksandar Jovanovic, Mehmet Kurtuluş, Regula Grauwiler, Idil Üner, Ralph Herforth; **Producer:** Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel; **Production Company:** Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz; **Length:** 100 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Das Leben der Anderen / The Lives of Others 2005. **Director:** Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck; **Screenplay:** Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck; **Cinematography:** Hagen Bogdanski; **Editing:** Patricia Rommel; **Music:** Gabriel Yared, Stéphane Moucha; **Cast:** Ulrich Tukur, Martina Gedeck, Sebastian Koch, Ulrich Mühe; **Producer:** Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann; **Production Company:** Wiedemann & Berg Film/Munich, in co-production with BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg, Creado Film/Constance; **Length:** 137 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour

Das Leben ist eine Baustelle / Life is All You Get 1997. **Director:** Wolfgang Becker; **Screenplay:** Wolfgang Becker, Tom Tykwer; **Cinematography:** Martin Kukula; **Editing:** Patricia Rommel; **Music:** Jürgen Knieper, Christian Steyer; **Cast:** Jürgen Vogel, Christiane Paul, Ricky Tomlinson; **Producer:** Stefan Arndt; **Production Company:** X-Filme Creative Pool, WDR, Arte; **Length:** 115 min; **Format:** 35mm

Lebewohl, Fremde! / Farewell, Stranger! 1991. **Director:** Tevfik Başer; **Screenplay:** Tevfik Başer; **Cinematography:** Hans-Günther Bücking; **Editing:** Helga Borsche; **Music:** Claus Bantzer; **Cast:** Grazyna Szapolowska, Müslik Kenter, Gustav-Peter Wöhler, Badi Uzzaman, Ayub Khan-Din; **Producer:** Tevfik Başer, Klaus Bassiner; **Production Company:** Haro Senft Filmproduktion, Lichtblick Film- und Fernsehproduktion (I), Project Filmproduktion; **Length:** 100 min

Lichter / Distant Lights 2003. **Director:** Hans-Christian Schmid; **Screenplay:** Michael Gutmann, Hans-Christian Schmid; **Cinematography:** Bogumil Godfrejow; **Editing:** Bernd Schlegel, Hansjörg Weißbrich; **Music:** The Notwist; **Cast:** Andrzej Górak, Anna Yanovskaya, Sergey Frolov, Bartek Wójtowicz, Ivan Shvedoff, Andrej Lioussikov, Sergey Kalantay, Nikolaus Kieselmann **Producer:** Daniel Blum, Jakob Claussen, Ulrike Putz, Georg Steinert, Thomas Wöbke; **Length:** 105 min

Lili Marleen 1981. **Director:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Screenplay:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Cinematography:** Xaver Schwarzenberger; **Editing:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder (as Franz Walsch), Juliane Lorenz; **Music:** Peer Raben; **Cast:** Hanna Schygulla, Giancarlo Giannini, Mel Ferrer, Christine Kaufmann, Hark Bohm; **Producer:** Enzo Peri, Luggi Waldleitner; **Production Company:** Roxy Film/Munich; **Length:** 120 min; **Format:** Color (Fujicolor)

Lola 1981. **Director:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Screenplay:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder (as R. W. Fassbinder), Pea Fröhlich, Peter Märthesheimer; **Cinematography:** Xaver Schwarzenberger; **Editing:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder (as Franz Walsch), Juliane

- Lorenz; **Music:** Freddy Quinn, Peer Raben; **Cast:** Barbara Sukowa, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Mario Adorf, Matthias Fuchs, Helga Feddersen, Karin Baal, Ivan Desny; **Producer:** Wolf-Dietrich Brücker, Hanns Eckelkamp, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Production Company:** Rialto Film, Trio Film, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); **Length:** 113 min; **Format:** 35mm colour
- Lola + Bilidikid* 1999. **Director:** Kutluğ Ataman; **Screenplay:** Kutluğ Ataman; **Cinematography:** Chris Squires; **Editing:** Ewa J. Lind; **Music:** Apard Bondy; **Cast:** Erdal Yildiz, Baki Davrak, Gandi Mukli; **Producer:** Martin Hagemann, Martin Wiebel, Zeynep Oezbatur; **Production Company:** zero one film/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, Boje Buck Produktion/Berlin, C&O Production/Istanbul; **Length:** 90 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Lola rennt / Run Lola Run* 1998. **Director:** Tom Tykwer; **Screenplay:** Tom Tykwer; **Cinematography:** Frank Griebe; **Editing:** Mathilde Bonnefoy; **Music:** Johnny Klimek, Tom Tykwer, Reinhold Heil; **Cast:** Joachim Król, Franka Potente, Moritz Bleibtreu, Heino Ferch, Herbert Knaup; **Producer:** Stefan Arndt; **Production Company:** X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne; **Length:** 81 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- M* 1931. **Director:** Fritz Lang; **Screenplay:** Thea von Harbou; **Cinematography:** Fritz Arno Wagner; **Editing:** Paul Falkenberg; **Cast:** Georg John, Peter Lorre, Ellen Widmann, Inge Landgut, Gustaf Gründgens, Friedrich Gnass, Fritz Odemar, Paul Kemp, Theo Lingen, Ernst Stahl Nachbaur, Fritz Stein, Otto Wernicke, Theodor Loos, Rudolf Blümmer, Karl Platen; **Producer:** Seymour Nebenzahl; **Production Company:** Nero-Film/Berlin; **Length:** 117 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Mach die Musik leise / Turn Down the Music* 1994. **Director:** Thomas Arslan; **Screenplay:** Thomas Arslan; **Cinematography:** Arthur W. Ahrweiler; **Editing:** Frank Behnke; **Cast:** Andreas Böhmer, Marco Germund, Andy Lehmann, Miguel Buschhauer, Laura Tonke; **Producer:** Sibylle Hubatschek-Rahn; **Production Company:** Cine Image, Schramm Film, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF); **Length:** 85 min; **Format:** colour
- Mädchen in Uniform / Girls in Uniform* 1931. **Director:** Leontine Sagan; **Screenplay:** Christa Winsloe, F.D. Andam; **Cinematography:** Reimar Kuntze, Franz Weihmayr; **Music:** Hansom Milde-Meissner; **Cast:** Hertha Thiele, Gertrud de Lalsky, Dorothea Wieck, Emilia Unda, Marte Hein, Hedwig Schlichter, Lene Berdolt, Lisi Scheerbach; **Producer:** Friedrich Pflughaupt; **Production Company:** Deutsche Film-Gemeinschaft/Berlin; **Length:** 98 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Die Ehe der Maria Braun / The Marriage of Maria Braun* 1979. **Director:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Screenplay:** Pea Froehlich, Peter Maerthesheimer; **Cinematography:** Michael Ballhaus; **Editing:** Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz; **Music:** Peer Raben; **Cast:** Gisela Uhlen, Klaus Loewitsch, Hanna Schygulla, Ivan Desny; **Producer:** Michael Fengler; **Production Company:** Albatross World Sales/Heidelberg, Trio Film, Tango Film/Munich, in co-production with WDR/Cologne; **Length:** 120 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Metropolis* 1927. **Director:** Fritz Lang; **Screenplay:** Thea von Harbou, Fritz Lang; **Cinematography:** Günther Rittau, Karl Freund; **Music:** Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Frank Strobel; **Original Music:** Gottfried Huppertz; **Cast:** Heinrich George, Erwin Biswanger, Fritz Rasp, Gustav Fröhlich, Theodor Loos, Alfred Abel, Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Brigitte Helm; **Producer:** Erich Pommer; **Production Company:** Ufa/Berlin; **Length:** 145 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Die Mörder sind unter uns / The Muderers Are Among Us* 1946. **Director:** Wolfgang Staudte; **Screenplay:** Wolfgang Staudte; **Cinematography:** Friedl Behn-Grund, Eugen Klagemann; **Editing:** Hans Heinrich; **Music:** Ernst Roters; **Cast:** Hildegard Knef, Ernst Wilhelm Borchert, Erna Sellmer, Elly Burgmer; **Production Company:** DEFA/Berlin; **Length:** 91 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w

- Nachtgestalten / Night Shapes* 1999. **Director:** Andreas Dresen; **Screenplay:** Andreas Dresen; **Cinematography:** Andreas Höfer; **Editing:** Monika Schindler; **Music:** Cathrin Pfeifer, Rainer Rohloff; **Cast:** Myriam Abbas, Dominique Horwitz, Oliver Breite, Susanne Bormann, Michael Gwisdek; **Producer:** Peter Rommel; **Production Company:** Rommel Film Berlin; **Length:** 101 min; **Format:** 35mm colour
- Nosferatu* 1922. **Director:** Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau; **Screenplay:** Henrik Galeen; **Cinematography:** Fritz Arno Wagner; **Music:** Hans Erdmann, Art Zoyd; **Cast:** G.H. Schnell, Greta Schroeder, Gustav von Wangenheim, Alexander Granach, Max Schreck, Ruth Landshoff; **Producer:** Enrico Dieckmann, Albin Grau; **Production Company:** Prana-Film/Berlin; **Length:** 93 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Olympia I + II* 1938. **Director:** Leni Riefenstahl; **Screenplay:** Leni Riefenstahl; **Cinematography:** Hans Ertl, Walter Frentz, Guzzi Lantscher, Kurt Neubert, Hans Scheib; **Music:** Herbert Windt, Walter Gronostay; **Production Company:** Leni Riefenstahl Produktion/Poecking; **Length:** 205 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Otomo* 1999. **Director:** Frieder Schlaich; **Screenplay:** Klaus Pohl, Frieder Schlaich; **Cinematography:** Volker Tittel; **Editing:** Magdolna Rokob; **Music:** Freundeskreis; **Cast:** Barnaby Metschurat, Eva Mattes, Isaach de Bankolé, Hanno Friedrich; **Producer:** Irene von Alberti, Thomas Lechner; **Production Company:** Filmgalerie 451/Berlin; **Length:** 85 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* 2006. **Director:** Tom Tykwer; **Screenplay:** Andrew Birkin, Bernd Eichinger, Tom Tykwer; **Cinematography:** Frank Griebe; **Editing:** Alexander Berner; **Music:** Reinhold Heil, Johnny Klimek, Tom Tykwer; **Cast:** Ben Whishaw, Dustin Hoffman and Alan Rickman; **Producer:** Bernd Eichinger; **Production Company:** Constantin Film Produktion, VIP 4 Medienfonds, Nouvelles Éditions de Films (NEF); **Length:** 147 min; **Format:** colour
- Propaganda* 1999. **Director:** Sinan Çetin; **Screenplay:** Sinan Çetin, Gulin Tokat; **Cinematography:** Rebekka Haas; **Editing:** Aylin Tinel; **Music:** Sezen Aksu; **Cast:** Metin Akpinar, Kemal Sunal, Meltem Cumbul, Rafet El Roman, Ali Sunal; **Producer:** Cemil Cetin, Sinan Çetin; **Production Company:** Plato Film Production; **Length:** 120 min
- Saniye's Lust / Saniye's Desire* 2003. **Director:** Sülbiye V. Günar; **Screenplay:** Sülbiye V. Günar; **Cinematography:** Peter Przybylski; **Editing:** Karin Nowarra; **Music:** Neil Black; **Cast:** Idil Üner, Daniel Krauss, Silvan Pierre Leirich, Ellen Schlooz, Peggy Lukac, Henning Gissel; **Producer:** Jost Hering; **Production Company:** Jost Hering Filme/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz, Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (dfffb); **Length:** 90 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss / Veronika Voss* 1982. **Director:** Rainer Werner Fassbinder; **Screenplay:** Pea Froehlich, Peter Maerthesheimer; **Cinematography:** Xaver Schwarzenberger; **Editing:** Juliane Lorenz; **Music:** Peer Raben; **Cast:** Rudolf Platte, Eric Schumann, Cornelia Froboess, Doris Schade, Annemarie Dueringer, Rosel Zech, Hilmar Thate, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Johanna Hofer; **Producer:** Thomas Schuely; **Production Company:** Laura Film/Gruenwald, Tango Film/Munich, in co-production with Maran Film/Baden-Baden, Trio Film, Rialto Film/Berlin; **Length:** 105 min; **Format:** 35 mm, b&w
- Shirins Hochzeit / Shirin's Wedding* 1976. **Director:** Helma Sanders-Brahms; **Screenplay:** Helma Sanders-Brahms; **Cinematography:** Thomas Mauch; **Editing:** Margot Löhlein; **Music:** Ömer S. Livanelli; **Cast:** Ayten Erten, Jürgen Prochnow, Aras Ören, Aliki Georgouli; **West Germany;** **Producer:** Volker Canaris; **Production Company:** Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); **Length:** 120 min; **Format:** b&w
- Der Schöne Tag / A Fine Day* 2000. **Director:** Thomas Arslan; **Screenplay:** Thomas Arslan; **Cinematography:** Michael Wiesweg; **Editing:** Bettina Blickwede; **Music:** Selda Kaya, Morton Feldman, Saul William, shape:mod; **Cast:** Hanns Zischler, Selda Kaya, Serpil Turhan, Bilge Bingül, Florian Stetter, Hafize Üner, Elke Schmitte; **Producer:** Martin

- Hagemann, Thomas Arslan
Production Company: zero one film/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz, Pickpocket Filmproduktion/Berlin; **Length:** 74 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Solino** 2002. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Ruth Toma; **Cinematography:** Rainer Klausmann; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Jannos Eolou; **Cast:** Moritz Bleibtreu, Barnaby Metschurat, Gigi Savoia, Antonella Attili, Patrycia Ziolkowska, Lucas Gregorowicz, Vincent Schiavelli; **Producer:** Hejo Emons, Ralph Schwingel, Stefan Schubert; **Production Company:** Wüste Film West/Cologne, Wüste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with Bavaria Film/Geiseltal, Multimedia Film- und Fernsehproduktion/Hamburg, in cooperation with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 120 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Soul Kitchen** 2009. **Director:** Fatih Akin; **Screenplay:** Fatih Akin; **Cinematography:** Rainer Klausmann; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Music:** Klaus Maeck; **Cast:** Anna Bederke, Dorka Gryllus, Wotan Wilke Möhring, Demir Gökçel, Marc Hosemann, Cem Akin, Pheline Roggan, Birol Ünel, Moritz Bleibtreu, Lucas Gregorowicz, Adam Bousdoukos, Udo Kier; **Producer:** Klaus Maeck, Fatih Akin; **Production Company:** corazón international/Hamburg, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, Pyramide Productions/Paris, in cooperation with Dorje Film/Rome; **Length:** 99 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Stadtgespräch / Talk of the Town** 1994 **Director:** Rainer Kaufmann; **Screenplay:** Ben Taylor; **Cinematography:** Klaus Eichhammer; **Editing:** Ursula Mai; **Music:** Stefan Traub; **Cast:** Kai Wiesinger, Martina Gedeck, August Zirner, Moritz Bleibtreu, Katja Riemann; **Producer:** Henrik Meyer; **Production Company:** Studio Hamburg/Hamburg, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz; **Length:** 89 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Die Sünderin / The Sinner** 1951. **Director:** Willi Forst; **Screenplay:** Willi Forst, Georg Marischka; **Cinematography:** Václav Vích; **Editing:** Max Brenner; **Music:** Theo Mackeben; **Cast:** Hildegard Knef, Gustav Fröhlich, Anne Bruck, Wera Frydberg, Robert Meyn; **Producer:** Rolf Meyer; **Production Company:** Deutsche Styria Film GmbH; **Length:** 100 min; **Format:** b&w
- Süperseks** 2004. **Director:** Torsten Wacker; **Screenplay:** Kerim Pamuk; **Cinematography:** Andre Lex; **Editing:** Anja Pohl; **Music:** Florian Tessloff; **Cast:** Denis Moschitto, Marie Zielcke, Hilmi Sözer, Meral Perin; **Producer:** Nina Bohlmann, Babette Schröder; **Production Company:** Magnolia Filmproduktion, Valerian Film, Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures; **Length:** 96 min; **Format:** colour
- Takva** 2006 **Director:** Özer Kiziltan; **Screenplay:** Onder Cakar; **Cinematography:** Soykut Turan; **Music:** Gökçe Akçelik; **Editing:** Andrew Bird; **Cast:** Erkan Can, Meray Ülgen, Settar Tanrıöğen, Güven Kiraç; **Producer:** Onder Cakar, Fatih Akin, Sevil Demirci; **Production Company:** corazón international/Hamburg, Dorje Film, Yeni Sinemacılar; **Length:** 96 min; **Format:** 35mm colour
- (T)Raumschiff Surprise - Periode 1 / Dreamship Surprise - Period 1** 2003. **Director:** Michael Herbig; **Screenplay:** Michael Herbig, Alfons Biedermann; **Cinematography:** Stephan Schuh; **Editing:** Michael Herbig, Alexander Dittner; **Music:** Stefan Raab, Ralf Wengenmayr; **Cast:** Michael Herbig, Rick Kavanian, Christian Tramitz, Anja Kling, Til Schweiger, Sky du Mont; **Producer:** Michael Herbig, Patty Saffeels, Michael Waldeleitner; **Production Company:** herbX Film; **Length:** 87 min; **Format:** 35mm colour
- Triumph des Willens / Triumph of the Will** 1935. **Director:** Leni Riefenstahl; **Screenplay:** Leni Riefenstahl, Walter Ruttmann; **Cinematography:** Sepp Allgeier; **Editing:** Leni Riefenstahl; **Music:** Herbert Windt; **Producer:** Leni Riefenstahl; **Production Company:** Leni Riefenstahl-Produktion; **Length:** 114 min; **Format:** b&w
- Die weiße Massai / White Masai, The** 2005. **Director:** Hermine Huntgeburth; **Screenplay:** Johannes W Betz; **Cinematography:** Martin Langer; **Editing:** Eva Schnare; **Music:**

- Niki Reiser; **Cast:** Nina Hoss, Jacky Ido, Katja Flint, Nino Prester and Janek Rieke
Producer: Gunter Rohrbach; **Production Company:** Constantin Film
 Produktion/Munich; **Length:** 131 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Wenn die Conny mit dem Peter / When Conny and Peter...** 1958. **Director:** Fritzen Umgelter;
Screenplay: Aldo von Pinelli, Joachim Wedekind; **Cinematography:** Werner M. Lenz;
Editing: Walter von Bonhorst; **Music:** by: Werner Scharfenberger; **Cast:** Cornelia
 Froboess, Peter Kraus, Loni Heuser, Ernst Stankovski; **Producer:** Aldo von Pinelli,
 Joachim Wedekind; **Production Company:** Melodie Film; **Length:** 1958; **Format:**
 b&w
- Winterblume / Winter Flower** 1997. **Director:** Kadir Sözen; **Screenplay:** Kadir Sözen;
Cinematography: Franz Rath; **Editing:** Mevlut Kocak; **Music:** Orhan Temur; **Cast:**
 Menderes Samancilar, Meral Yüzgülec, Cengiz Sezici; **Producer:** Kadir Sözen;
Production Company: Filmfabrik/Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne;
Length: 107 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour
- Winterschläfer / Winter sleepers** 1997. **Director:** Tom Tykwer; **Screenplay:** Françoise
 Pyszora, Tom Tykwer; **Cinematography:** Frank Griebe; **Editing:** Katja Dringenberg;
Music: Johnny Klimek, Tom Tykwer, Reinhold Heil; **Cast:** Ulrich Matthes, Floriane
 Daniel, Heino Ferch, Marie-Lou Sellem; **Producer:** Stefan Arndt; **Production**
Company: X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with ARTE/Strasbourg,
 WDR/Cologne, MDR/Leipzig, Palladio Film/Cologne; **Length:** 134 min; **Format:** 35
 mm, colour
- Wut / Rage** 2006. **Director:** Züli Aladağ; **Screenplay:** Max Eipp; **Cinematography:** Wojciech
 Szepel; **Editing:** Dora Vajda, Andreas Wodraschke; **Music:** Johannes Kobilke; **Cast:**
 Oktay Özdemir, August Zirner, Corinna Harfouch, Robert Höller, Ralph Herforth;
Producer: Wolf-Dietrich Brücker; **Production Company:** Colonia Media
 Filmproduktions GmbH, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); **Length:** 89 min
- Yasemin** 1988. **Director:** Hark Bohm; **Screenplay:** Hark Bohm; **Cinematography:** Slawomir
 Idziak; **Editing:** Moune Barius; **Music:** Jens-Peter Ostendorf; **Cast:** Ayse Romey; Uwe
 Bohm; Sener Sen; Ilhan Emirli; Katharina Lehmann; Corinna Harfouch; **Producer:**
 Hark Bohm; Natalia Bowakow; **Production Company:** Hamburger Kino Kompanie,
 Hamburg, in cooperation with ZDF/Mainz; **Length:** 70 min; **Format:** colour
- Yella** 2007 **Director:** Christian Petzold; **Screenplay:** Christian Petzold; **Cinematography:**
 Hans Fromm; **Editing:** Bettina Boehler; **Music:** Stefan Will; **Cast:** Barbara Auer,
 Burghart Klaußner, Christian Redl, Hinnerk Schönemann, Devid Striesow, Nina Hoss;
Producer: Florian Koerner von Gustorf, Michael Weber; **Production Company:**
 Schramm Film Koerner & Weber/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz,
 ARTE/Strasbourg; **Length:** 89 min; **Format:** 35 mm, colour