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Turkish delight - German fright

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Reframing "Minor" Cultures - from subnational to transnational

In a world increasingly determined by traffic across national boundaries, by migration, exile, displacement, by mobility and rootlessness, by the clash or amalgamation of cultures - where "the pure products go crazy", as cultural anthropologist James Clifford has put it - authenticity has become a highly problematic category. (Clifford, 1988: 1-17) Consequently, James Clifford opens his more recent book on "travelling cultures" by quoting the Indian writer Amitav Ghosh who contemplates the resemblance between an Egyptian village and an airline transit lounge, implying that remote and supposedly authentic cultures are subject to global flows and change as much as the post-modern Western world. (Clifford, 1997) People in Middle Eastern or North African countries and other post-colonial locations around the globe tend to be familiar with negotiations between religion and secularism, between tradition and modernization, mostly envisaged as "Westernization", before they even travel to the West. Turkish society, in particular, has undergone rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and socio-cultural transformation over the past century and absorbed many conflicting influences into its construction of a modern nation state which complicate any clear-cut notion of a homogenous Turkish

identity. (Ahmad, 1993; Tapper, 1991)
Current discourses about migrants and diaspora communities in Europe, however, are often informed by a social worker's perspective and haunted by residual notions of supposedly pure and authentic cultures of origin. Between national entrenchment and transnational globalisation, ethnic minorities are "imagined" as outsiders on a subnational level. Consequently, "third cinemas" or "sub-state cinemas" are "defined ethnically in terms of suppressed, indigenous, diasporic, or other populations asserting their civil rights and giving expression to a distinctive religion, language, or regional culture", examples being Catalan, Québecois, Aboriginal, Chicano, and Welsh cinemas. (Crofts in Hill and Gibson (eds), 1998: 385-394) This othering of so-called "third" or "sub-state" cinemas by cultural producers, critics and policy makers seems to me highly problematic. I would therefore propose to reframe the discussion about such "minor" cinemas within a broader consideration of travelling cultures and global flows, of mobility between margin and centre, between independent and mainstream productions, as well as cross-overs between different genres and reception across national boundaries.
This would also mean shifting the discussion of ethnicity, identity and hybridity from margin to centre, from the fringes to the core of national self-fashioning. A recent volume on British cinema entitled Dissolving Views, for example, features a still from the popular Black British (or British Asian) film Bhaji on the Beach on the cover. The image depicts an Indian woman with aspirations derived from Bollywood melodrama and an aging English actor with colonial desires engaged in a dialogue about movies on the beach at Blackpool. (Higson (ed), 1996) *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), the first feature film to be directed by an Asian woman in Britain, tells the story of a group of Indian women who go on a day trip from Birmingham to Blackpool, appropriating the public space of

this very English seaside resort and enganging in various encounters and adventures. Gurinder Chadha's film, funded by the British TV station Channel 4, presents the women as a diverse group which is by no means unified by common bonds to one tradition. The elderly bitch about the immorality of the young, while the visitor from Bombay is dressed in fashionable Western clothes and tells her old compatriots that home is no longer what they imagine it to be. Migrants develop new tastes and pleasures, such as having their fish and chips flavoured with hot chilli powder. In relation to some Black British films of the 1990s, it has recently been argued that a shift has been taking place from the social realism of a "cinema of duty" towards "the pleasures of hybridity". (Malik, 1996: 202-215) Films like Bhaji on the Beach, despite maintaining some elements of the social work scenario, succeed in displaying humorous enactments of ethnicity, repudiating an essential racial identity by offering fluctuating points of identification, playing on modes of performance and incorporating elements of comedy, irony, pastiche and self-conscious masquerade. These films speak about the transformations of British popular culture as much as they speak about the complex lives of immigrants. We can see traffic in both directions here. This will be important to keep in mind as a point of comparison for discussions on the location of Turkish culture in Germany. Looking at the Turkish-German scene comparatively, examples of of "speaking back" from margin to centre still appear to be rare, and we can only hope for more hybridity and pleasure, rather than victimization and closure in discourses on and by migrants. By drawing attention to processes of cultural mix and transition, we might be able to disrupt all too stable concepts of cultural identity which are prevalent, not only in the hegemonic discourse of nation states, but also in the discourse of marginal diaspora communities. By addressing cross-overs as a source of strength and pleasure,

rather than lack and trouble we might eventually move beyond dutiful performances of multiculturalism and community bonding, grounded in restrictive notions of rootedness and purity.

Over the past years, there has been growing interest on a global scale in films which visualise the experiences of migration and assimilation, of dislocation and seperation . These films have been described as a new genre of "postcolonial hybrid films" (Shohat/ Stam, 1994, 42) or as an "independent transnational cinema" (Naficy in Wilson and Dissanayake (eds), 1996: 119-144) and can be found in video stores on a shelve labeled "world cinema" - a label on the lines of "world music", which encompases a mixed bag of films ranging from "Europuddings" to new Asian auteurs, from urban underground to ethnographic documentary. The label signals the universality of diversity and mobility, in contrast to older, separatist categories which are also still in use, such as "third cinema" or "sub-state cinema". World cinema is consumed in the "global contact zone" (Roberts, 1998, borrowing the concept of the "contact zone" from Pratt, 1992), in world cities by a cosmopolitan audience for whom the experience of going to ethnic restaurants is similar to the experience of going to the movies.

As the space assigned to migrants in the cultural imaginary has been shifting from "subnational" to "transnational", films by and about migrants challenge us to rethink established notions of a "national cinema". Homi Bhabha and other post-colonial critics have described immigrant communities as "the other within", contesting the notion of a pure national identity and demanding to narrate the nation from the margins. (Bhabha (ed), 1990) On these lines, the experience of migration can be understood as a productive provocation which creates a transnational "third space" of travel and translation where our traditional patterns of classifying culture are put into question. While celebrating this "third space", however, we ought to be cautious not to forget about

local specificities and differences as we create a third box for "mixed pickles" and group all the hybrids together in a space of "in betweenness". In line with the valorisation of migrancy, itinerancy, mobility or nomadism in postcolonial theory, the "global contact zone" has become a space of multifocal mutual mimicry, rather than one sided colonial mimicry.
The generic grouping as "transnational" raises some general questions about the positions which are assigned to and occupied by migrants and their so-called "communities", by diaspora and minority cultures in a world of increasing transnational amalgamation. How does cinema re-work popular phantasies of unsettling infiltrations into the "imagined community"? How do transnational cinemas create imaginary homelands? Which discourses of identity construction are echoed in these films? Are mental ghettos reflected in spatial imagery (scenarios of imprisonment)? How do we define diaspora cultures without falling into the trap of reinforcing fictions of cultural purity? How are diasporic positions determined by the marketing politics of ethnicity and "otherness"? How "independent" are these films? Does the ethnic origin or even the gender of the director matter? Where does a business trip end and exile begin? My aim with these questions is to unsettle some prevalent notions of exile and diaspora which are often determined by a great deal of fake feeling, nostalgia and romanticism cultivated by cultural critics and policy makers as well as migrant artists who conveniently settle in the niche.

Making the Turk speak

In relation to Turkish-German cultural exchange it seems especially important to address these questions within a broader horizon and a comparative perspective, because there is still a great deal of indifference, othering and exclusion to be observed. After

several decades of co-existence and well-meaning multiculturalist endeavors there still appears to be a considerable lack of communication and of humour on both sides. Even Homi Bhabha, one of the foremost propagators of hybridity, following John Berger's A Seventh Man, imagines the Turkish migrant worker in Germany as an incommensurable, alienated, speechless victim without any voice. (Bhabha, 1990: 315-317) This representation of migration to Europe as a culture shock, obscures the fact that the "seventh man" can already be found back in Turkey where there is a high rate of migration from rural areas to the cities, a process which is frequently reflected in cinema. (Makal, 1994) In the following, I would like to pursue the question whether this mute figure has meanwhile learnt to talk and whether there have been any attempts in Turkish-German cultural production to speak back and to address hybridity as a source of strength and pleasure, rather than lack and trouble.

"Turkish delight - German fright" plays upon a reversal of current perceptions concerning German-Turkish relations where Turks generally tended to feature as victims. Since the reunification in 1989, the international media have been watching Germany cautiously, reporting on the rising level of xenophobia, on numerous violent, at times lethal, attacks against foreigners, on Neonazis burning down Turkish and refugee families in their homes. You would expect the Turks to be the ones who are paralyzed by fright whereas Germans take a delight in chasing them. However, there are also some indications of German fright caused by the presence of two million immigrants from Turkey who have not only introduced Döner Kebap (which has meanwhile become a staple German fast food), but who now wish to erect minarets in German cities. Instead of peacefully integrating into German society they seem to be reinforcing their Turkishness. Evidently, they have brought about fundamental changes in

German cityscapes. Must we assume then that European civilization is in danger of being turkicized?

Today, Istanbul is the largest metropolis in Europe, having exploded from 2.5 to about 16 million inhabitants over the past 30 years. But is it really in Europe? At the heart of Europe, the scope of demographic, economic, political and cultural upheavals in Turkey has gone largely unnoticed. People interested in Turkish culture usually still want their exotic expectations of an archaic, rural society to be confirmed. The Turkish immigrants in the popular German imaginary have somehow emerged from this remote land, bringing along their archaic customs and threatening to unsettle the house of Europe from within. In any case, there is no doubt anymore that the immigrants have come to stay. The number of people applying for German citizenship is increasing, and so is the number of people carrying two passports.

Over the past years, there has in fact been a growing concern with multiculturalism in Germany. The city of Frankfurt has an office for multicultural affairs, Berlin's radio station "MultiKulti", which for the past three years has specialised in minority issues and world music, has now become permanent. Television, too, especially on public broadcasting channels, is increasingly concerned with discovering ethnic identities in talk shows and soap operas. Despite a rising awareness of diversity, however, there are certain prevailing patterns in the perception of "foreign" cultures. An underlying thread in these discourses is the rather problematic assumption of coexisting pure and homogenous cultural identities. Well-meaning multiculturalist projects often result in the construction of binary oppositions between "Turkish culture" and "German culture". The focus on cultural difference which claims to be liberating, in practice, often covers up existing crosscultural traffic and makes dialogue and interaction more difficult. Furthermore, the question of minority discourse in Germany is tightly connected to issues of

the national past and identity, a connection which reinforces performances of duty rather than pleasure. With regard to cultural policy in Germany, I would therefore like to argue for moving beyond the whining rhetoric of being lost "between two cultures", and for exploring the "pleasures of hybridity" by envisaging broader, less provincial horizons and embarking on mutual border traffic.

Performing acts of duty

The New German Cinema relied heavily on public funding, on televison co-productions and on the acclaim for European "art cinema" on the international festival circuit. (Elsaesser, 1989) This framework of social mission and public funding opened up spaces for "minority views", for exploring differences and articulating "otherness", first in terms of gender and gradually also ethnicity. However, schemes of film funding ("Filmförderung") on a federal or regional level as well as co-productions with television, mainly with the public broadcasting channel ZDF (*Das kleine Fernsehspiel*) sometimes proved to be counterproductive and limiting, in the sense of reinforcing a patronizing and marginalizing attitude towards "Ausländerkultur", the culture of foreigners. Filmmakers from an immigrant or minority background often saw themselves reduced to producers of "a cinema of duty". In order to receive funding, filmmakers were expected to make films about the problems of their people and represent the "other" culture in terms of common assumptions and popular misconceptions. In consequence, a kind of ghetto culture emerged which was at great pains to promote politics of integration, but rarely achieved much popularity.
In the late 1960s and early 1970s, directors of New German Cinema had shown some interest in immigrants. Fassbinder who staged himself in *Katzelmacher* (1969) as "ein Griech aus

Griechenland / a Greek from Greece", shot *Angst Essen Seele Auf / Fear Eats the Soul* (1973) under the working title of "Alle Türken heißen Ali" (All Turks are called Ali) - all North Africans as well, one might add, because the film did not feature any Turks, but a black man (Ben Hedi El-Saalem) as an object of desire and erotic projection. (Silverman, 1992: 137-145) As the first imaginary "Turks" were appearing on the screen, the cinema audience was also undergoing major changes and many cinemas became venues for soft-core pornographic films. Thus the legendary mute and lecherous *Gastarbeiter* makes an unexpected reappearance as a spectator in the standard history of New German Cinema - "a volatile and furtive but none the less numerically quite sizeable clientèle began to oust, indeed eradicate, the last remnants of the family audience". (Elsaesser, 67)

While the male *Gastarbeiter* were imagined to satisfy their needs as porn spectators, women tended to be victimised on screen. Many films centred around the problems of Turkish women who were oppressed by their patriarchal fathers, brothers or husbands, excluded from the public sphere and confined in enclosed spaces. Helma Sanders' *Shirins Hochzeit / Shirin's Wedding* (1975), for example, less well known than her *Deutschland, Bleiche Mutter / Germany, Pale Mother* (1979), is a black and white film about Shirin (Ayten Erten) who leaves her Anatolian village, to search for her fiance Mahmut in Köln. The fiance was played by Aras Ören, who was around the same time becoming known as a writer of Berlin-poems such as *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße* (1973). Shirin ends up on the street as a prostitute and is killed by her pimp in the end, her fate being commented elegically by Helma Sander's voice-over, somewhat universalizing the suffering of womanhood. (Brauerhoch in Karpf et al, 1995: 109-115)

In the 1980s, pictures of victimization continued to circulate, and were replicated in the work of Turkish directors. Tevfik Baμer

came to Germany through a link between the film and television department at the University of Eskiμehir in Turkey and the Hamburg film school. His *40 qm Deutschland* (1986), is literally a *kammerspiel* about a young Turkish woman who is brought to Hamburg by her husband and locked up in a flat. The young woman with the telling name Turna (crane), played by the jazz singer Özay Fecht, is reduced to "40 square metres of Germany" for months, without any contact with the outside world. She is cast in framed-in shots in front of the mirror cutting off her braids or standing at the window, looking out into a grey courtyard. This film received the Bundesfilmpreis in 1987, an award given by the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs - dutiful national acknowledgement, which paradoxically seemed to cement the sub-national status of "Ausländerkultur".

There are no "pleasures of hybridity" to be found in films like *40 qm Deutschland*. Humour is not a strength of these productions. Immigrants are depicted as victims, totally incapable of communicating and interacting with Germans. In his second film *Abschied vom falschen Paradies / Goodbye to a false paradise* (1988) Tevfik Baμer, the Hamburg based Turkish director of the film, followed a similar pattern of staging women's confinement in enclosed spaces. Elif, a young Turkish woman in a German prison, tries to commit suicide in her cell just before her release. Her story is presented in flashback. Being sentenced to six years in prison for killing her husband, paradoxically, her experience of imprisonment becomes an experience of liberation. Her integration into German society is achieved in prison where she learns fluent German from a dictionary and finds a safe haven in the supportive community of women, reminiscent of the women's community in her village in Turkey. In this film, the Turkish woman interacts with German society, but only within the confined space of the prison.

The prison which filmmakers in exile have tended to use as a key

symbolic space is thus reevaluated in a dubiously positive sense by Baμer. The configuration of claustrophobic spaces has been described as an iconography which is characteristic to cinemas of exile. (Naficy, 1996) Baμer's heroines can only escape this enclosure and confinement by retreating into their subjectivity, into flashback memories and dreams. When Elif is feverish in her cell and longingly looks out through the iron bars of the window, rain brings back memories of the clean and clear waters back home. Home is associated with women bathing and doing the washing, with water, purity, nature. The scene offers a somewhat purified version of the Turkish village film genre, made consumable for Western audiences through the use of flute and violin music. The community of women back in the village is idealized in bright colours and contrasted with the harsh reality of German prison life, although in the course of the film the community of women in prison gradually grows stronger and develops into a second home. In the end, it remains unclear whether the "false paradise" is the pure and authentic homeland back in Turkey or the claustrophobic space of the German prison which Elif is reluctant to leave behind. But beyond the indeterminacy of the title the film offers little critical reflection on the fake warmth of closed communities. *Goodbye to a False Paradise* is a good illustration of cinematic imprisonment of immigrants within the parameters of well-meaning multiculturalism feeding on binary oppositions and integrationist desires.

However, Baμer's treatment of female subjectivity was taken as authentic and even acclaimed by feminist critics for "measuring the cultural no man's land which Turkish women in exile have to live in - equally exploited and misused by German men and their own compatriots". (Kühn in Karpf et al, 1995: 41-62) The stories of total incompatability, non-communication and silent suffering which these films tell are perceived as the experiences of Turkish

women in general. But how authentic is it? The liberation and Westernization/Germanification of the Turkish village woman (performed by Zuhal Olcay, an actress based in Istanbul who is familiar in Turkey from sophisticated theatre and film productions, usually in roles of modern urban women characters) is reached all too smoothly in the "fake paradise" of the prison.
Among the German productions of the 1980s dealing with experiences of immigrants, *Yasemin* (1988) has proved the most popular. It features on almost every German-Turkish film programme and is circulated by the Goethe-Institutes even in Thailand and India. *Yasemin* was released in 1988 and directed by Hark Bohm, a German director also living in Hamburg. His films emerged from a political engagement common to a lot of New German Cinema, in fact he is slightly mocked as social consciousness personified. In Yasemin he took up current debates about the problems of Turks in Germany. Yasemin (Ayµe Romey) embodies the total split between German and Turkish culture which was summed up in an exhibition title of those years: "Morgens Deutschland - Abends Türkei / Germany in the morning - Turkey at night". The double identity is also rendered in the linguistic mix of family conversations, featuring Emine Sevgi Özdamar as the mother, an actress who has meanwhile made a career as a writer of hybrid German with *Mutterzunge* (Mother Tounge, 1990) and *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus* (Life is a Caravanserail ..., 1992). Yasemin is active in a Judo club where she fights with great ability. In fact, she is just like her German classmates at high school, where her teacher encourages her to proceed with her studies and prepare for university. But when she returns from school to the family's green-grocery shop, she is the dutiful Turkish daughter who helps with the business and always has to be chaperoned by her cousin when she goes out. Initially,

her transitions from one sphere to the other are staged with some pleasure and sense for costume. She lowers her skirt and covers herself up on the way home from school to mark the shift from one sphere to the other, or switches gracefully from Western to "Oriental" style when she dances with her father at her sister's wedding - a scene from which her German admirer Jan (Uwe Bohm) is excluded and which he watches through a window from outside, thus providing a point of view for the voyeuristic ethnographic gaze of the camera on the Turkish wedding.
Eventually, the culture clash explodes. The kindly father, being concerned about his honour, switches into a brutal patriarch who rejects his elder daughter and proposes to ship Yasemin back to Turkey. Whereas the promoters of this film claimed to foster cross-cultural understanding, it really reproduced and generated common stereotypes and confirmed the view that German society in general is more civilised and enlightened than the archaic Turkish community. Integration in this binary model could only be achieved by a split between first and second generation immigrants. The popularity of the film draws on the common phantasy of victimised Turkish women who, especially when young and beautiful, need to be rescued from their patriarchal community. Within the parameters of this discourse, Yasemin does the right thing, when in the end she leaves the Turkish men behind and is carried off by Jan on the backseat of his motorbike.
In general, narratives about Turks in German society, have tended to centre around gender relations. The liberation of poor Turkish women from enclosure, oppression, subordination or even prostitution has been a popular phantasy. Although ethnic cinema, third cinema, and minority discourse in general, are usually presented and perceived as some kind of authentic expression of the real-life experiences of a group to which the director belongs, I wonder whether there is really a fundamental difference between a

German director's and a Turkish director's depiction of German-Turkish encounters. Perhaps, there is rather a set of popular images and stories which feed into the films of both. I would argue that the films of Tevfik Baμer and Hark Bohm (and even Helma Sanders) form part of the common discourse about the victimization of Turkish women and confirm the subnational positioning of the immigrant. I would also like to argue that the imagery and discourse of imprisonment and exclusion which we frequently encounter in exile cinema is often grounded in fake compassion, rather than authentic experiences. Separatist practices are often promoted by cultural institutions, funding schemes, and also readily taken up by some migrant artist, writers and film-makers. The construction of a diasporic identity can at times offer a rather comfortable retreat for cultural producers as well as audiences.

Reinventing Berlin in Berlin

Have there been any new departures in the 1990s? Are the migrants still in prison, or have they managed to break out? Is their cultural production still confined to niches, or has it meanwhile become mainstream? Are there any celebrations of hybridity in recent Turkish-German productions? *Berlin in Berlin* (1993) might be considered a step in this direction. This rather trashy movie offers a bizarre and entertaining view of intercultural encounters, and ironically subverts some of the established stereotypes and models. It was produced in Turkey, although with a Turkish-German team and partly shot on location in Berlin. Its fast pace and cinematic style appear to be influenced by director Sinan Çetin's work in advertising. The film is a genre mix, incorporating elements of thriller, melodrama, and comedy. The camera playfully engages in an investigation of voyeurism and dissects the power of the ethnographic gaze. In Turkey, the film was a box office hit in

1993, predominantly because it features Hülya Avμar, an actress and singer popular on Turkish television, as Dilber in a masturbation scene.

The "multicultural melodrama" (Martenstein, 1994) is set in Berlin. The establishing shots, initially aerial, then followed by scenes from the Alexanderplatz in the Eastern part of the city, point to a setting in the new reunified Berlin. The city in these days is a huge building site, and thus the story begins on a building site which is rendered as a potentially dangerous space. Thomas (Armin Block), an engineer and amateur photographer, follows the wife of a Turkish colleague with his camera and takes pictures without her noticing. The camera adopts the voyeuristic gaze of the photographer on the Turkish woman. Despite her headscarf, she becomes an object of erotic attraction and is objectified by the camera. When finally she looks back into the telephoto lens her gaze, too, appears to be somewhat threatening. The loud clicking of the camera underlines the thriller atmosphere. Later, the photographer hangs up the enlarged photographs in the office. When the husband sees them he is infuriated by this liberty taken with his wife. He assumes that she has deliberately posed for the camera and exposed herself to the gaze of a stranger - an offence against his honour. He rushes out to confront his wife. The photographer comes in on the row and tries to pacify the couple. In the resulting fight the husband is pushed against an iron bar and thus killed by accident. Fake blood dribbles from the corner of his mouth.

Three month later we see the photographer doing push-ups facing the photographs of the woman while memorising Turkish sentences from a dictionary: "Bu bir kaza. Ben katil depilim." (It was an accident. I am no murderer.) He travels by the underground in search of the woman and sits opposite her house in Berlin-Kreuzberg in a café which is run by her brothers-in-law. When he

finally gets hold of her and attempts to explain that he did not intend to kill her husband, he finds himself chased by the dead man's brothers. Ironically, his flight leads him into the flat of the very same family where he hides on top of the wardrobe in Dilber's bedroom.

Along with the intruder the spectator is introduced into the diegetic space of "Berlin in Berlin" - a city within the city, namely the home of an extended Turkish family in Kreuzberg. The matriarch of the family wakes up to the muezzin's call for prayers. A tapestry image of Mecca is hanging on the wall behind her bed. German voices mingle into the prayer call. The camera then moves to a portable mosque-shaped clock, the source of the muezzin's voice which is competing with a German commercial for a nail cure. This originates from the television set in front of which the father is just waking up. The use of diegetic sound and the delayed revelation of its sources gradually introduces the spectator into the hybrid space of "Berlin in Berlin" - a place where the day begins with competing voices and languages.

Meanwhile, the intruder is discovered on top of the wardrobe. The camera shows facial expressions of fright on both sides. Mürtüz, the angry young man (played by popular talk show star Cem Özer), claims that the stranger has murdered his brother and threatens to kill him with his pistol. The chase is stopped, just in time, by the father and the grandmother (Aliye Rona) who pronounce that this German is a guest, "sent to them by God" as a "trial", and therefore cannot be harmed while inside their home. The young avenger has to bow to the authority of the elders. The German is thus given asylum in the Turkish family - a reversal of the situation of foreigners seeking asylum on German territory. A close-up of his face displays an emblematic image of German fright.

Thus, the Turkish family home becomes a safe haven for the displaced German. He settles on the floor for a life in "Berlin in

Berlin" or "4 qm of Germany". (Reinecke, 1994) It is this reversal of the situation of the imprisoned guest/asylum seeker which makes this film potentially interesting, and which transgresses performances of duty which have determined most German attempts to produce "Ausländerkultur". In one scene, Thomas lingers on the doorstep, staring at Dilber, not daring to come in or to go out. His performance points to the borders running right through Berlin, while at the same time his lack of resolve subverts these boundaries and makes them appear ridiculous. What follows is a bizarre symbiosis between the German "foreigner" and the extended Turkish family. Four generations are living together in this flat (grandmother, father and mother, three sons and the daughter-in-law - the dead man's wife - with her son) and they all display different modes of interaction with their surroundings and with the intruder. The eldest brother Mürtüz (Cem Özer) is a caricature of the Turkish macho, playing around with his gun and screaming for revenge. Mostly, he insists on speaking Turkish and on keeping up Turkish customs, but he likes whisky and blondes as much as he adores his beautiful sister-in-law. The younger brothers who tend to speak German are more ready to fraternize with their guest. Thomas is gradually incorporated into family life. He is given a plate of food, handed a guitar, appreciated for fixing the television set during an important football match of Germany against Turkey, he befriends the grandmother and learns Turkish songs from her, familiarises himself with the customs such as the passing around of eau de cologne and Turkish delight, and even kisses everybody's hand on Kurban Bayram?, a religious festival. In this enforced symbiosis, the voyeurist ethnographic gaze is gradually reversed. It is now the Turks who are watching the German, almost like a circus animal and who stare at him in claustrophobic close-ups. When all the relatives come to visit, Thomas is the chief attraction. The uncle who does a great belly

dance to a German popsong, keeps bending down towards this odd stranger, asking why on earth he is sitting on the floor. While Thomas mingles with the brothers, Dilber finds herself interrogated about the circumstances of her husband's death. The discovery of the photographs makes her position within the family increasingly problematic. The film ends by pairing Thomas with Dilber. They leave the flat and walk hand in hand into an unknown future. Once again a Turkish woman liberated by a German man? The ending seems slightly forced. On the whole, however, *Berlin in Berlin* shows more potential in exploring the pleasures of hybridity than previous attempts to portray German-Turkish encounters. The reversal of the asylum situation and the resulting symbiosis open up possibilities of mutual humor and reflection, of traffic in both directions - aspects which seemed to be absent from earlier examples of a "cinema of duty".

Abschied vom falschen Paradies on the one hand and *Berlin in Berlin* on the other, seem to suggest two alternative routes for diaspora cinemas. In one, we get scenarios of imprisonment, claustrophobia, binary oppositions between cultures, nostalgia for authentic homelands, longing for purity. In the other, we find first attempts to break out from imprisonment in a marginal niche and speak back to the centre, to occupy shifting points of identification, to switch between different modes of performance and thus undermine restrictive identity politics by employing humour and irony. I would like to suggest that we need more of this ironic and irreverent spirit not only in the films to come, but also in the discourse about diaspora cultures. The reversal of the exile/asylum situation and the resulting symbiosis in *Berlin in Berlin* might open up possibilities of traffic in both directions, of shifts and transitions between Turkishness and Germanness, of mutual mimicry, performance, masquerade and humor. I have tried to argue for

opening up the ethnic pigeonhole of dutiful "Ausländerkultur" and for broadening our perspective beyond national boundaries for traffic in both directions. The figure of the mute and passive Turkish worker in Germany, whom even Homi Bhabha evokes, has been haunting us for too long. Writers and filmmakers have begun to tackle migration and cultural clashes with a sense of humour and irony. In Turkish German film production, there has been a considerable breakthrough since 1998. A new generation of filmmakers and actors has emerged, mostly based in Hamburg or Berlin, who are beginning to shake off the "burden of representation" and the limitations of public funding. At the Berlin Film Festival in February 1999, while debates about double citizenship were at their peak, these films were shown and critically acclaimed as "New German Cinema" - made by young Turks. One critic concluded - in relation to 1998 productions such as *Kurz und Schmerzlos* or *Aprilkinder* or *Lola and Bilidikid* - that perhaps the Turks were the only ones in Germany these days to make political movies on present day issues. (Martenstein, 1999) It is up to cultural policy makers and critics not to restrict these new departures to performances of duty, otherwise, they would be promoting a scenario of new tribalism and fetishization of cultural difference. We need to abandon the phantasies of victimization which have been cultivated on both sides. We need voices which disrupt the common assumptions about cultural purity, which explore the potentials of hybridity, which occupy shifting positions, speaking from within and without, claiming a place in the house of Europe. We need to develop more global, comparative, transnational, translational perspectives on travelling cultures. More pleasure and less closure should be the agenda of our explorations rather than constructing and reinforcing "German" or "Turkish" identities. Perhaps there is potential in fighting fright by delight!

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