

TRANSNATIONAL SUBJECTS IN A MULTIPLE EUROPE
AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE AND *ALMANYA: WILLKOMMEN IN DEUTSCHLAND*
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Abstract

The aim of the article is to address the different production strategies and formal solutions proposed by two European films by German-Turkish directors, *Auf der anderen Seite* (*The Edge of Heaven*, Fatih Akin, 2007), and *Almanya: Willkommen in Deutschland* (*Almanya: Welcome to Germany*, Yasemin and Nesrin Samdereli, 2011). The article will analyze the role of the spatial configurations and the temporal fragmentations in the representation of cultural conflicts and problematic identities. Both narratives address migration and border crossing issues, exploring the contemporary relations between (neutral) Germany and (exotic) Turkey. However, the approaches of the two films to these issues are very different, also because of the context of production and distribution. The analysis of these films will therefore be conducted in relation to the European cinematographic market, spatial-temporal configurations, and border thinking. It will be shown how European cinema responds to deep changes on imaginary, economic, and social levels, representing geopolitical mutations through narrative, formal, and productive choices.

Contemporary European cinema has often addressed geopolitical changes and their effects on hegemonic imaginaries. In the last twenty years, the idea of a solid state, defined by its national borders (geographical as well as cultural) and producing a shared identity for its inhabitants, has been radically challenged. The strengthening of the European Union's agreements, the definition of its institutions, and its expansion toward Eastern states have contributed to a change in imaginaries and identities. The representation of transnational connections in film and media has assumed a pivotal role in popular narratives, and migrants from inside and outside of Europe have been at the center of many stories.

The web of interconnections between diasporic subjects has problematized the idea of belonging; the notion of a "national identity," representable through cinematic narration, has been repeatedly challenged. The concept of the nation, however, far from having been erased or considered useless, has acquired new meanings in relation to local/global categories and the transnational approach.¹ Germany is among the countries that have historically contributed to the construction of the European concept of national identity.² Due to its internal division, produced by post-war negotiations, and the role that guest workers had during the booming economy of

the 1960s, Germany today has to face many conflicts between the various identities within its geographical boundaries. Moreover, contemporary German cinema shares production processes and imaginaries with other “national cinemas” in Europe.³ European and German cinema are no longer famous only for their “auteur films;” nor is genre cinema only synonymous with mindless entertainment. Hegemonic imaginaries and popular modes of production include the staging of cultural conflicts, problematic family bonds, and articulated spatial and temporal configurations.

With this in mind, I would like to address the fragmentation of temporality and the spatial dialectics proposed by two contemporary films: *Auf der anderen Seite* (*The Edge of Heaven*, Fatih Akin, 2007), and *Almanya: Willkommen in Deutschland* (*Almanya: Welcome to Germany*, Yasemin and Nesrin Samdereli, 2011). Both narratives address migration and border-crossing issues, exploring contemporary linkages between Germany and Turkey. However, the approaches of the two films are very different, in their stylistic choices and in the context of their production and consumption. An analysis of these films will be conducted in relation to the European cinematographic market, spatial-temporal configurations, and border thinking. In doing so, this paper aims to show how European cinema responds to deep changes on imaginary, economic, and social levels, representing geopolitical mutations through narrative, formal, and productive choices.

The transnational scenario: Production strategies and the role of film festivals

Directed by second-generation Turkish-German filmmakers, *Almanya* and *The Edge of Heaven* avail themselves of the institutional funding offered by the German Federal Film Board, the *Filmförderungsanstalt* (FFA). They are therefore included in the category of national cinema; in this way, they contribute to the blurring of the cultural boundaries traditionally posed by institutional bureaucracy.⁴ However, their representation of “local” cultures and their distribution patterns are very different. *The Edge of Heaven* emphasizes regional locations (Bremen, Hamburg, Istanbul, Trabzon), in order to “provide access-points for the international and global cinema markets, which includes the national audience.”⁵ *Almanya* is more oriented toward a national market and distribution, as is also shown by its visualization of the “exotic” Turkey and the “institutional” Germany.

In European cinema, localization is a conscious strategy to help the film meet the market, through the production of identities. The construction of an ongoing relation between the regional, the national, and the transnational is pursued by contemporary films in order to elaborate a wider European scenario, of which international film festivals become a celebration. Thomas Elsaesser underlines how “the festival circuit [...] holds some of these manifestations of post-national cinema together, giving them a European dimension, at the same time as it makes them enter into global symbolic economies, potentially re-writing many of the usual markers of identity.”⁶

The Edge of Heaven was presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007, where it won the Prix du Scénario; the same year, Fatih Akin won the European Film Award for Best European Screenwriter for this film. *Almanya* was presented out of competition during the 61st Berlin International Film Festival of 2011, and it was nominated in other competitions in Germany and in the US. Both are part of a wave of films made by directors and screenwriter of foreign (especially Turkish) descent,

usually co-produced by private and public service institutions, presented in international festivals and narrating the “ordinary multiculturalism” dominating contemporary Germany.⁷ Therefore, they both contribute to a transnational imaginary for European cinema; however, they fulfill different needs in the same national market, and are differently distributed in the foreign market.

With *The Edge of Heaven*, Akin situates himself in the tradition of European auteur cinema, especially through the casting choices: the character of Susanne is interpreted by Hanna Schygulla, an actress who has often appeared in films by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Already *Gegen die Wand* (*Head On*, 2004), Akin’s previous film, made references to Fassbinder, namely to *Angst essen Seele auf* (*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, 1974).⁸ With its art cinema references and worldwide distribution, *The Edge of Heaven* is representative of European cinema as “world cinema.” It is a cinema that positions itself between art film and mainstream productions;⁹ it is usually a product of cultural hybridity and of a transnational scenario, both at the productive level and in its narrative choices.¹⁰ *The Edge of Heaven* programmatically addresses issues of belonging and exclusion, questioning institutional borders. It can be compared with other films and audiovisual narrations that aim to entertain the audience by interrogating cultural conflicts and global networks.¹¹ The constant exchange between the global and the local is one of the main themes of Akin’s film, and contributes to the display of power relations. The random encounters between the characters mirror a complex balance of political and cultural positions.

Almanya is part of a wider group of European comedies that directly address the clash of cultures. There are many examples of this subgenre from different national cinemas: from the French *Chouchou* (Merzak Allouache, 2003) to the Italian *Into Paradiso* (Paola Randi, 2010), from the British *Bend it Like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002), to the Swedish *Jalla! Jalla!* (Josef Fares, 2000). The previous work of the Samdereli sisters with the German sitcom *Türkisch für Anfänger* (*Turkish for Beginners*, 2006-2008) already underlined their interest in the interlacing of familial bonds with cultural conflicts. Exponents of the last generation of filmmakers with diasporic backgrounds, the Samderelis are particularly interested in positioning themselves at the core of the multicultural Germany, embodied by a new Berlin whose representation can be likened to that of many other European metropolises.

Poststructuralism and scattered temporalities: Virtualization and representation

To say that European cinema addresses the problematic identities generated by changes in geopolitical assets is obviously not to consider films mirrors of “reality.” Film studies, in the wake of (or against) poststructuralism, have often discussed the links between phenomenal experiences and their cinematographic (i.e., linguistic, discursive, aesthetic) representation. Therefore, many have underlined how cinema contributes to the construction of individual and collective imaginary scenarios, and its narratives negotiate different positions in relation with hegemonic discourses.

An important contribution to the debate about webs of power and their performance comes from Rey Chow. The theorist starts from Martin Heidegger’s reflection on the world conceived as a picture. However, according to Chow, the contemporary world is not only a picture: it is a target, violently caught in the space between vision and representation. In her analysis, the world’s virtualization and visualization come together: everything knowable exists only inside the

representation.¹² The “world picture” is mediated by violent technologies of vision and control, and power chains are particularly constrictive. In a context dominated by economic globalization and cultural conflicts that are only too “real” and dangerous, Chow considers it essential to reformulate referentiality. The processes of the world’s representation that make meaning accessible do not produce de-materialization through virtuality, nor the relativity of equivalent differences. Global media products and comparative studies also use two main paradigms: “Europe and Its Others” and “Post-European Culture and the West.”¹³ To overcome the duality of these spatial categories, media and film studies have to relocate audiovisual narratives in their historical positions, and they have also to address these narratives’ specific inner temporal configuration.¹⁴

Space and time share a similar role in the films’ production and consumption, and they are essential to the narrative interpretation as well. Because it aims to belong to the global art cinema, *The Edge of Heaven* adheres to a complex spatial-temporal configuration that rejects any simplistic dualism. *Almanya* also represents historical knowledge about cultural conflicts, but its domestic target influences the construction of Germany as a “neutral” space of belonging, ironically opposed to the “exotic” Turkey. Moreover, *Almanya* produces the historical past as a private and nostalgic narrative, playing with the association between Turkey and the past (sometimes in the sense of backwardness). In fact, it follows the journey of an extended family of Turkish origin from Germany to their native land. This journey is intertwined with several other narrative strands: the love story between Hüseyin and Fatma, Hüseyin’s migration in Germany as a guest worker in the 1960s, and finally the family reunion. The voiceover of the young niece, Canan, narrates both the present and the past, directly addressing the audience. The visualization of the characters’ dreams, thoughts, fantasies, and desires, and the photography chosen to recall the nostalgic past in Turkey, are in conflict with the occasional envisioning of everyday life in Germany. In this way, we are always oriented in space and time, but the representation refuses to adhere to a “verisimilar” style.¹⁵ The past is playfully created as a “traditional past” through costumes and scenography, and the present is also affected by the fantastic, magical, and metaphoric flavor that permeates the film.

The Edge of Heaven instead dislodges the narration flow, disorienting the audience by going backward and forward in time.¹⁶ Akin’s film thereby interrogates the contingency of possible becomings and underlines the network interlacing the lives of the different subjects in labyrinthine patterns. The film narrates the intertwining stories of six characters: it begins by following the old Ali, a Turkish guest worker in Bremen, and his relationship with the Turkish prostitute Yeter. Ali kills her during a violent argument; his son Nejat goes to Istanbul to find Yeter’s daughter, Ayten. However, in the meantime, Ayten has gone to Bremen to escape the Turkish police and find her mother. In Germany she meets Lotte, and they fall in love. However, Ayten’s request for asylum is refused, and she is sent back to Turkey, where she has to face a prison sentence for terrorism. Lotte follows Ayten and casually rents a room in Nejat’s home, though he will never know that she is Ayten’s girlfriend. While she is trying to recover Ayten’s gun, Lotte is robbed and killed by a group of children; her mother Susanne goes to Istanbul to retrieve her body. Inspired by long talks with Susanne, Nejat finally decides to forgive his father for Yeter’s murder and to join him in Ali’s hometown Trabzon, while Susanne decides to help Ayten as Lotte would have done.

Temporality is thus exposed in its complexity and in its randomness, questioning the European tradition of narrative as a structure to organize time.¹⁷ The main narrative paths (the one involving Nejat and the one following Ayten) begin on 1 May of the same year and proceed in parallel, but

they are narrated one after the other. Therefore, time's perception is contradictory; on the one hand, a linear conception of time still endures and gives the audience the potential to reconstruct the narration flow. On the other hand, categories such as "the past" or "the future" are exhibited in their cultural construction, and are part of the differential temporality dominating postcolonial theory and poststructuralism. In particular, the scattered temporalities experienced by migrants are a byproduct of the diasporic and global scenario, where past, present, and future always coexist as representations.¹⁸

In any case, the temporalities of *Almanya* and *The Edge of Heaven* are reflected in their different approaches to the spatiality of Germany and Turkey. Both films reject the staging of "Turkish" characters as minoritized victims of migration and global economy, but they propose different solutions for the power relations and hegemonic positions of the subjects.

European cinema, world cinema: On the Other's side

The Edge of Heaven spatially represents the transformation from migrant (as opposed to "native") to "alien" (as opposed to citizen). Ali and Yeter are part of the first waves of migrants – people who came to Germany in search of better economic opportunities and, incidentally, of the institutional respect of human and civil rights. Their home is Bremen, visualized as a comfortable space inhabited by traditional families. Ayten, instead, belongs to the generation of asylum seekers: aliens who escaped from political persecution.¹⁹ She brings to Hamburg the violence and harshness of the political conflicts experienced in Istanbul. Ayten's discourses on Turkish reality reproduce the position of "globalism," according to which gendered and political violence is "primarily an effect of global capitalism without accounting for the ways in which global manifestations of power differ from as much as they intensify earlier and more traditional forms of patriarchy within the nation-state."²⁰

Proving Ayten wrong in her explanation of political relations, the film proposes instead a different discourse on the border. As observed by Rosa Linda Fregoso in a different context, the visual and narrative emphasis on power asymmetries, and on the clash of cultures, is useful to scatter the dialectic between the victims and their persecutors, creating a new space for agency and activism.²¹ In other words, cultural production from and about the border narrates and represents the agency of excluded citizens, contributing to the production of social transformation and political action. This is the reason why this section is called "On the Other's side," a reference to the German title *Auf der anderen Seite*. The film aspires to produce a discourse that belongs to what Ella Shohat and Robert Stam call "polycentric multiculturalism:" a perspective that calls for a strong refusal of Eurocentrism in favor of a "constitutive heterogeneity," a counterhegemonic position that emphasizes hybridization.²² The characters are taken in their institutional and hegemonic cultural positions; their multiplicity reflects the scattered geography of *The Edge of Heaven*, and they participate in the production of multifaceted perceptions of Germany and Turkey at a time when there was widespread political and institutional debate on the admission of Turkey in the European Union.

In 1999, Turkey obtained the status of candidate for EU membership; however, before obtaining full membership, its governments had to demonstrate that certain key political and juridical

changes had taken place. From 1999 to 2005, some of these transformations were effectively realized, and the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey, which are still unconcluded. At the very heart of the cultural debate was the possibility for the EU to truly influence the politics of an external government, and to change through diplomacy the precarious condition of human and civil rights in a non-member state.²³ This problematic issue is verbalized in *The Edge of Heaven* in an argument between Ayten and Susanne.

In this brief sequence, the shot scale constructs a complex space inside Susanne's house. The sequence begins with an establishing shot of the kitchen, where Susanne is sitting at the table. This placid, still, repetitive space is invaded by Ayten and her aggressive voice, while she moves around. The conversation begins neutrally, with Susanne asking Ayten about her political stances; but when Susanne suggests that the European Union can offer progress and freedom, Ayten declares that she does not trust the leaders of this institution because they are just looking for new space to expand global colonialism. While uttering this line, Ayten moves off-screen; after the cut, she is framed in a close-up (fig. 1), as is Susanne in the counter-shot (fig. 2). They are definitely divided, and the familiar space of the kitchen is constructed around this opposition. The sequence ends with Susanne looking through the window, while Lotte leaves with Ayten; the glass separating them, and the longing connoted in many point-of-view shots in this film, mark the irreconcilable division between the European Susanne, who believes in democracy and progress, and the Turkish Ayten, who underlines the importance of fighting for everyone's rights.



Figs. 1-2

Ayten and Susanne will find visual and emotional reconciliation only at the end of the film, after the death of Lotte. When Susanne visits Ayten in the prison the shot/counter-shot structure includes the two women in the same frame, even though they are physically separated by the glass and the bars of the parlor. Later, they will meet again in Nejat's bookshop, with a restored establishing shot framing them both, gradually transformed into a medium full shot through a slow zoom in (fig. 3). Susanne will probably never be able to replace Yeter for Ayten, nor will Ayten become a substitute for Lotte, but the two women are able to bridge the gap that divides their positions emotionally.

The Edge of Heaven thus proposes an opposition between the placid Europe, where political fighting is by now far away, and Turkey, where there is an ongoing struggle for human, civil, and political rights.²⁴ This opposition is also sketched through the different representations of the two parades on 1 May. The first one is a reassuring demonstration in Bremen, small, tidy, and including families (fig. 4).



Figs. 3-4

It is framed with shots from an anthropomorphic point of view and is observed by Ali on his way to the red-light district. It is therefore proposed as a constitutive part of the civil society, a ritual that is part of the holiday. The second one is a mass demonstration in Istanbul, full of menacing youths in masks, and initially framed through surveillance shots from the police helicopter (fig. 5). The visual importance accorded to the police underlines how political activism is perceived by Turkish institutions as threatening and disturbing.²⁵



Fig. 5

The crossing of the borders between Europe and Turkey cannot bring, in the contemporary reality of a global economy and institutional linkages, a euphoric celebration of multiplicity and hybridization. The construction of the cultural bridge connecting Ayten and Susanne is painful, and implies a reconsideration of the characters' political stances. If Nejat, strengthened by culture and education, and holding German-Turkish citizenship, can easily travel across the two borders and settle down anywhere he likes, in Istanbul Lotte is made vulnerable by her "foreign" look and inability to speak Turkish, and thus she becomes a victim of Turkey's poverty. In a similar way, Ayten is exposed to institutional control because of her illegal status in Germany, as also denoted by her inability to speak German, and she becomes a victim of European institutions and legislations.

The female characters' fight against the position of victim that they are forced into can only partially succeed.²⁶ *The Edge of Heaven* does not take a simplistic position in the debate on citizenship, international relations, multiculturalism, and global economy. The frequent border crossing between Germany and Turkey, visualized through the airports, on the one hand proposes a traditional perception of the geographical and institutional borders across nations and their citizens. On the other hand, it makes explicit the cultural interrelations connecting and constructing the two spaces, and their mutual dependency.

The “idyllic chronotope” of Turkish *Heimat*

In a similar fashion, *Almanya* openly interrogates the double German-Turkish citizenship in contemporary society; but its answers are more reassuring, as its objective seems to be the homogenization of cultural differences proposed by liberal multiculturalism.²⁷ As a comedy, it proposes itself as film entertainment, made for the German market and eventually distributed abroad.²⁸ In fact, while *The Edge of Heaven* includes dialogue in German, English, and Turkish, *Almanya*’s dialogue is exclusively in German,²⁹ although a Turkish-language version has been made for the Turkish community in Germany.

Almanya refuses the problematization of values and cultures as painful, preferring instead to exhibit the clash-hybridization of cultures and religions through the playful visualization of certain characters’ dreams, nightmares, and fantasies. This refusal of the “realistic” style usually associated with social-problem films,³⁰ both in the past and the present, is one of *Almanya*’s most interesting formal choices. According to Hamid Naficy, Turkish transnational cinema traditionally proposes a claustrophobic representation of a gendered space.³¹ By contrast, in *Almanya* even the nightmares are portrayed in an ironic fashion, while the film’s spatial representation is characterized by the presence of landscapes and outdoor settings. Moreover, no space is forbidden to any of the Turkish-German characters, neither in Germany nor in their paradoxically unknown *Heimat*, Turkey.³²

At a narrative level, *Almanya* depicts a common phenomenon among the old guest workers and their families: spending the holidays in their homeland. If Turkey is repeatedly defined by the German word *Heimat* by the grandfather Hüseyin – in an ironic reversal of the tradition³³ – it is also depicted as an exotic space to be discovered by the second-generation members of the family, Canan and Cenk. Germany is presented as a familiar place, where there is no need for spatial contextualization. Turkey instead is visualized through many full shots framing the landscape, punctuated by Turkish flags and minarets. This *Heimat* is natural and maternal, a site for the lost past, and filled with a sense of belonging: Turkey is a receptive land, where everybody can feel at ease.³⁴ Turkey therefore corresponds to the “idyllic chronotope,” the visualization of an imagined homeland in Hamid Naficy’s “accented” cinema.³⁵ This natural space is characterized even in contemporary times by its backwardness, but also by the beauty of its landscapes (fig. 6). The “idyllic” representation is particularly evident in the visualization of flashbacks, when Canan narrates the story of the family to Cenk. While Turkey is dominated by a yellow sunlight, the host land is initially grey and obscure. Only after the whole family moves to the new land does Germany become cozy and even sunny.



Fig. 6

The photographic manipulation of light is not the only strategy to enhance the constructed and private quality of the past. *Almanya* proposes an interesting relation between archival documentary footage about Germany's economic miracle, fantastic images, images from dreams or nightmares, and memorial images. All of these levels intertwine, underlining the personal dimension of the shared public past. The archival footage celebrating the German economic miracle – and the role of migrant workers in it – is connoted as an epic narration, not as a documentary. It is part of a fairytale about Hüseyin's social ascent. On the other hand, Turkey is described, in Canan's words and in Cenk's visualized fantasies, as an uncorrupted, traditional world. Germany is more multifaceted, as it can be the land of the future and of consumer pleasures (see Muhamed's dreams about Coke, fig. 7), but it is also a place of imposition of different traditions, as shown in Hüseyin's nightmare about the Nazi employee at the migration office, and in Muhamed's nightmare about the zombie-Jesus (fig. 8).



Figs. 7-8

In this reconstruction, history is a shared experience, where the personal level directly corresponds to the construction of a multicultural society, without conflicts or oppositions. The most important sequence in this sense is the one showing the ceremony “Deutschland sagt danke,” celebrated by Chancellor Angela Merkel on 1 October 2008. Even though the Samdereli sisters have stated that they only find it interesting to show this ceremony because they are narrating the migration history of a guest worker,³⁶ this finale heavily contributes to the idea of pacification in the history of migration workers in Europe. “Deutschland Sagt Danke,” meant that German institutions officially recognized the role of guest workers in the economic development of the 1960s. However, the discourse formulated by Hüseyin, and repeated by Cenk, returns the thanksgiving to these German institutions. Hüseyin is grateful because Germany has given to the Turkish people the possibility to migrate and construct a better life for themselves and their families. *Almanya* hence proposes an ideal society, where host institutions give everyone the same chance to improve their condition through hard work and respect for the law.

Both of these films are exemplary of wider trends in contemporary European cinema. *The Edge of Heaven* refers to art cinema, addressing a transnational audience and adhering to some formal solutions that emerge in other narrations pertaining to world cinema as well. Its aesthetics and style significantly intertwine on the local and the global levels, interrogating the problematic identities deriving from worldwide power relations. *Almanya* is more attentive to the national dimension; it does not differentiate among regional aspects, but enhances institutional multiculturalism. Yet, both films address the changes in geopolitical assets that derive from globalization, interrogate victimization and marginalization as well as a more positive hybridization, and productively compare cultural positions and different discourses across national borders.

- 1 Regarding vacillating borders in Europe, see Étienne Balibar, *The Borders of Europe*, in Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins (eds.), *Cosmopolitanism: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1998, pp. 216-229.
- 2 The reference here is to Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London 1983.
- 3 It is not possible to investigate here the complex networks of identities and positions, in relation to hegemonic discourses about migration or multiculturalism, and their representation in the European cinema. A few volumes have been dedicated to this issue, some of which have a productive comparative approach. For instance, see: Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2005; Luisa Rivi, *European Cinema After 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production*, Palgrave Macmillan, London-New York 2007; Daniela Berghan, Claudia Sternberg (eds.), *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, London-New York 2010.
- 4 For an analysis of national and European funds of migrant cinema, see Anne Jäckel, *State and Other Funding for Migrant, Diasporic and World Cinemas in Europe*, in Daniela Berghan, Claudia Sternberg (eds.), *European Cinema in Motion*, cit., pp. 76-95.
- 5 Thomas Elsaesser, *Film Festival Networks: The New Topographies of Cinema in Europe*, in Id., *European Cinema*, cit., p. 82. For the international distribution of *The Edge of Heaven*, see the national specification of the film's revenues, available on the website <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=edgeofheaven.htm>, last visit 30 September 2013.
- 6 *Idem*, p. 83.
- 7 See Sabine Hake, Barbara Mennel (eds.), *Turkish German Cinema in the New Millennium: Sites, Sounds, and Screens*, Berghahn, New York-Oxford 2012.
- 8 See Noah Isenberg, "Fatih Akin's Cinema of Intersections," in *Film Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 4, Summer 2011, pp. 53-61.
- 9 It is interesting to notice that it received distribution support from the European Cinema Support Fund Eurimages. See www.coe.int/dg4/eurimages/default_en.asp, last visit 30 September 2013.
- 10 See Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema as World Cinema: A New Beginning?*, in *European Cinema*, cit., pp. 485-513. See also the anthology: Rosalind Galt, Karl Schoonover (eds.), *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, Oxford University Press, New York 2010.
- 11 See for instance *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006) or the TV series *Touch* (2012-2013). On the complex geopolitical scale produced by "world cinema," see Kathleen Newman, *Notes on Transnational Film Theory: Decentered Subjectivity, Decentered Capitalism*, in Nataša Đurovičová, Kathleen Newman (eds.), *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, Routledge, New York-London 2010, pp. 3-11.
- 12 Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work*, Duke University Press, Durham 2006, p. 62.
- 13 *Idem*, p. 88.
- 14 *Idem*, pp. 68-69.
- 15 I refer to the idea of verisimilitude and realism "as a relationship between text, reality and audience that changes as does the culture in which it operates" (Louis Bayman, *Melodrama as Realism in Italian Neorealism*, in Lúcia Nagib, Cecilia Mello [eds.], *Realism and the Audiovisual Media*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke-New York 2009, p. 47). For the use of a magical realist perspective in *Almanya*, see also Daniela Berghan, *Far-Flung Families in Film: The Diasporic Family in Contemporary European Cinema*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2013, p. 70.
- 16 For an analysis of contemporary cinema whose narrative plays games with the audience, see Thomas Elsaesser, *The Mind-Game Film*, in Warren Buckland (ed.), *Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester 2009, pp. 13-41.
- 17 See Allan Cameron, *Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke-New York 2008.
- 18 Regarding postcolonial temporality, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London-New York 1994.
- 19 Ibrahim Sirkeci, Jeffrey H. Cohen, Pinar Yazgan, "Turkish Culture of Migration: Flows between Turkey

- and Germany, Socio-Economic Development and Conflict,” in *Migration Letters*, vol. 9, no. 1, January 2012, pp. 33-46.
- 20 Rosa Linda Fregoso, *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 2003, p. 18.
 - 21 *Idem*, pp. 25-27.
 - 22 Ella Shohat, Robert Stam, *Introduction*, in Id. (eds.), *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick 2003, pp. 7-8.
 - 23 On the diplomatic and political relations between Turkey and the European Union, see Elena Baracani, *Unione Europea e democrazia in Turchia*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008.
 - 24 Fatih Akin has declared that Turkey is always something foreign to his characters. Quoted by Rob Burns, “On the Streets and On the Road: Identity in Transit in Turkish-German Travelogues on Screen,” in *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2009, p. 16. See also Daniela Berghan, “No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecomings in the Films of Fatih Akin,” in *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2006, pp. 141-157.
 - 25 Rob Burns, “On the Streets and on the Road,” cit., p. 18.
 - 26 It is not possible to fully develop here the gender issues implied by the film’s victimization of the female characters; the debate around globalization, transnationalism, and feminist practices cannot be summarized in a few lines. For essential references and the reconstruction of the relations between feminist film theory, gender studies, and global feminism, see Veronica Pravadelli, “Cinema e Feminist/Gender studies oggi: percorsi molteplici tra teoria e storia,” in *Imago: Studi di cinema e media, Cinema e Feminist/Gender Studies oggi. Nuove prospettive dal 2000* (edited by Veronica Pravadelli and Ilaria A. De Pascalis), vol. 3, no. 6, 2012, pp. 9-21.
 - 27 Many theorists have criticized liberal multiculturalism; see for example Mino Moallem, Iain A. Boal, *Multicultural Nationalism and the Poetics of Inauguration*, in Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, Mino Moallem (eds.), *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, Duke University Press, Durham-London 1999, pp. 243-263.
 - 28 For the distribution of *Almanya*, see the national specification of the film’s revenues, available on the website http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/intl/?page=&country=IT&id=_fALMANYAWILLKOMME01, last visit 30 September 2013.
 - 29 It is interesting to notice how, in the narration of the past, the Turkish characters speak German correctly, while the German characters use a German-like gibberish.
 - 30 For a discussion on nationalism, realism, and cinema, see Francesco Pitassio, *Making the Nation Come Real: Neorealism/Nation: A Suitable Case for Treatment*, in Ansgar Nünig, Vera Nünig, Birgit Neumann (eds.), *The Aesthetics and Politics of Cultural Worldmaking*, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, Trier 2010, pp. 21-36.
 - 31 Hamid Naficy, *Phobic Spaces and Liminal Panics: Independent Transnational Film Genre*, in Ella Shohat, Robert Stam (eds.), *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*, cit., pp. 213-218.
 - 32 See Daniela Berghan, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, cit., pp. 70-71.
 - 33 For the concept of *Heimat* and its role in the foundation of national and European identities, see David Morley, Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes, and Cultural Boundaries*, Routledge, London-New York 1995, particularly Chapter 5, *No Place Like Heimat: Images of Home(Land)*, pp. 85-104.
 - 34 See Daniela Berghan, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, cit., p. 73.
 - 35 Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, Princeton University Press, Princeton-Oxford 2001, p. 155.
 - 36 See their interventions during the press conference at the Berlin International Film Festival, available on the website <http://www.traileraddict.com/trailer/almanya-willkommen-in-deutschland/biff-press-conference>, last visit 30 September 2013.