Calling All Migrants: Recasting Film Noir with Turkish-German Cinema in Christian Petzold's *Jerichow* (2009)

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Christian Petzold is among the most critically acclaimed film directors of post-1989 Germany, and his *Jerichow* is particularly intriguing because, on the one hand, it addresses an issue of contemporary controversy, namely, ethnic diversity in Germany, while also, at the same time, emphatically positioning itself within world cinema by taking as its inspiration a US-novel and film cycle, the *Postman Always Rings Twice*. The film engages specific national discourses while emphatically underscoring German cinema's place within the larger system of world cinema (and especially global genres). In order to analyze Petzold's *Jerichow* and comprehend its politics, the essay takes up its multiple contexts, including: that of the so-called Berlin School, of the many German films about Germany's growing ethnic diversity, and of US film noir, which Petzold cited as the inspiration and basis for his film. In particular, Petzold's deployment of spaces, both domestic space and what Edward Soja has called a "third space", reflect his engagement with the genre of film noir, the tradition of Turkish-German films, and what theorists have called uneven geographical development, that is, globalization. Ultimately, the film deliberately moves beyond the conventional, German-host versus Turkish-guest relation and into one of reciprocal interaction and influence

1. Christian Petzold, Art Cinema, and Genre Film

Jerichow (2009) is, after his 2007 *Yella*, Christian Petzold's second film in a row in which he has openly based his work on another film. The films that Petzold has cited as his inspiration in his two most recent works are deemed classics of their respective Hollywood genres: both Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962) and the various versions of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* are regarded as paradigmatic examples of their genres, horror in the former and film noir in the latter case (Hawkins 2002: 130; Langford 2005: 215; cf. also Naremore 1998: 83-84). This interest in Hollywood genre is surprising for an auteur regarded as the head of what the *Cahiers du Cinéma* has called the "nouvelle vague Allemande," the German New Wave (Abel 2006). But both *Yella* and *Jerichow* nevertheless suggest how a European auteurist filmmaker engages with popular genre, particularly how a nationally inclined auteur and transnational genre are not necessarily at odds, but rather how the director can engage with transnational genre while reconstituting it locally. Such an art-auteurist use of genre cinema is to be

distinguished from a merely Hollywood film from Germany (as Brad Prager has argued about *Das Boot*), but also, simultaneously, to be differentiated from art cinema as it has been conventionally contrasted to popular genre cinema – here one can uncover an arresting art cinema cannily deploying, even indulging, popular genre, but to its own ends (Prager: 2003, Bordwell 1986: 211, Neale 2002:103-20).

Petzold's subversion of the binaries of art and popular cinema – of the poles of European auteurism and Hollywood genre – parallels, in *Jerichow*, a similar subversion of the prevailing binaries within German cultural discourse about migrants. Much as *Jerichow*'s genre aspects underscore that European art cinema should be regarded not in opposition to, but rather as part of a global system of circulating cinematic forms and strategies, it also, subtly, dismantles prevailing binaristic logic about ethnicity and migrants in German cinema, with its clearly drawn lines between ethnic Germans and migrants. Although some may see Petzold's cinema as political primarily in its alternative film aesthetics (Abel 2006), *Jerichow* also makes a clear a more overt political engagement with this troubling constellation. In *Jerichow*, in a way consistently brushing against the grain of viewer expectation, ethnic German and ethnic Turks are depicted, together and apart, in new ways: the film deliberately moves beyond the conventional, German-host versus Turkish-guest relation and into one of reciprocal interaction and influence. This shift from a conventionally vertical to more horizontal relationship, away from a hierarchal binaristic/oppositional relation to one of system of interchange and exchange, parallels an evolution tracked by scholars like Stuart Hall and others in post-colonial theory. One can see how Petzold achieves this sort of shift by examining how *Jerichow* refigures conventional notions of space as they intersect migrants and migrant status within Germany.

Jerichow takes its title from the town in which it is set, a place that invokes the verdant, prosperous oasis of the Biblical Jericho. Here, however, the hometown of the film's protagonist, Thomas, parodies that almost edenic association: the Jerichow of contemporary Germany is a moribund town in the former East in which money is scarce, work disappearing, and people desperate. The film follows Thomas, a Bundeswehr veteran who served in Afghanistan but who was dishonorably discharged, as he struggles to find his emotional and professional way after the death of his mother. Committed to renovating his childhood home, which he has now inherited, but running out of the funds to do so, Thomas turns first to the local unemployment office, but

eventually finds work, via a surprising encounter with a Turkish-German entrepreneur named Ali, who owns forty-five snack-bars in Jerichow and its environs. Without a car and walking home from the supermarket one afternoon, Thomas happens upon Ali after the latter has drunkenly driven his Range Rover off the road. When Ali soon thereafter loses his license for driving under the influence, he hires Thomas as his chauffeur and then employs him increasingly as his assistant in deliveries to his many snack-bars. Following the basic parameters of *The Postman Always Ring Twice*, despite Ali's growing trust in and dependence on him, Thomas quickly has an affair with Ali's ethnic German wife, Laura, whom Ali has also saved/employed. Together Thomas and Laura conspire to kill Ali and take over his lucrative business.

Cycles and Genres of German Films about Ethnic Turks

To appreciate how intriguing and even innovative Petzold's approach is, it is crucial to review the German cinematic precedents for *Jerichow*, namely, the sorts of films that have been made about ethnic Turkish people in Germany. First, *Jerichow* contrasts starkly to the kind of "cinema-of-duty" approach to ethnicity that Sarita Malik has described in British cinema and that in many ways dominated 1970s and 1980s depictions of Turkish people in Germany, known as *Gastarbeiterfilme* (Malik 1996). Such cinema, in films like *Shirin's Wedding* (1975), *40m² Germany* (1986), and *Yasemin* (1988), focuses on the victimization of immigrants in society, particularly by racism, social alienation, and economic marginalization. By the 1990s and thereafter, scholars like Deniz Göktürk, Rob Burns, Stan Jones, and Barbara Mennel have traced a marked departure from this politically pedantic approach. Göktürk and Burns, in particular, problematize what they characterize as the "social-worker perspective" of many 1970s-1990s films about ethnic Turkish people in Germany, many of which offer schematic and predictable victimization scenarios (Göktürk 2000, Burns 2007). Göktürk has traced the abandonment of this perspective in the filmic relocation of Turkish people from claustrophobic private spheres into the city's public spaces, while a somewhat skeptical Mennel has elaborated the generic aspects of the trend: in her essay "Bruce Lee in Kreuzberg and Scarface in Altona", she tracks how many of the highest profile films about Turkish-Germans have been influenced by the US "ghetto film" of

the early 1990s (Mennel 2002).[1]

Both of these genres, the *Gasterarbeiterfilm* and the ghetto film, tend to what Stuart Hall (1996) has termed a "binary form of narrativization" in terms of their treatment of Germany's (alleged) ethnic "Others": the lines between Germans and non-ethnic Germans are, in these films, clearly drawn and usually structure the conflict built into the film, whether it be the (German) social-work intervention in the victimization of migrants or the (German) police interdiction in crimes committed by migrants or their children. In both cases, the differences between the two sides are sketched as indelible: even if, as in the *Gastarbeiterfilme*, there is cross-ethnic empathy, it is based on the thematized differences between Turkish and German cultures, located specifically with Turkish "guest workers" in Germany as the (apparent) host country. While weighing the possibility of other forms of intercultural interaction, Guido Rings has underscored the persistence of such difference in his work on films of migrant cinema (2008).

Of course, these sorts of depictions and their differences are, as Hall suggests, entirely constructed: these narratives rely on these processes of othering and difference to discursively construct certain subjects (the good, nonracist ethnic Germans) as autonomous and self-identical and assert the fundamental stability of German society (Hall 1996: 252). Related to this discursive construction of difference, other scholars like Leslie Adelson, following Butler, have highlighted the constructed character of identity as performative. The other is instrumentalized in these discourses and performances to fortify the autonomous German subject and the stability of the increasingly diverse and dynamic German society. One almost has the sense that both of these types of films offer German audiences arenas in which they can come to terms with globalization (*Globalisiserungsbewältigung*) and its myriad flows (flows in capital, people, even identity itself, cf. Fisher 2003).

Hall, however, argues forcefully that these sorts of binaries should be contested in culture as well as in post-colonial scholarship and theory. Hall outlines (and advocates) a conceptual shift in what had been called the post-colonial to transculturation and transnationalism. Rather than the presumed and apparently stable binaries of colonized and colonizers, Hall lobbies for a model that emphasizes the reciprocal influencing and

[1] Jennifer Gallagher is also skeptical of Göktürk (2006), but it is important to observe that, at least in Arslans's films, Göktürk is correct primarily for the female character, who does seem to escape the confining home, a trope I shall discuss in the context of *Jerichow*.

intertwinement of the presumed poles of colonized and colonizers, for a model that emphasizes circulation and interchange instead of mere political and economic hierarchy. He does not intend to deny the inherent hierarchies and power relations, but rather to regard them as operating within a larger and more complex field, in which the colonizing societies were also irrevocably changed. Examples might be found, for instance, in the work of Anne McClintock or Ann Laura Stoler, who, in works like McClintock's *Imperial Leather* (1995) or Stoler's *Race and the Education of Desire* (1995) and *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (2002), meticulously trace not only life in the colonies, but also the fundamental changes to the colonizing subjects and societies, the large-scale transformation of the (colonizing) metropole, due to the experience of colonization and continual contact with the so-called other.

In terms of cinema in Germany, I would submit that a recent wave of films about migrants and other non-ethnic Germans, including those by Thomas Arslan (at least in films like *Geschwister*), Fatih Akin (at least in his more recent films), and Petzold's *Jerichow* move in precisely this direction – that is what is, in part, so intriguing about these recent films in the context of Germany's increasing ethnic diversity. Some scholars have underscored a sort of hybridity in Akin's films (as Stan Jones has in his reading of Akin, Jones 2003: 89), but with Arslan's and now Petzold's work, one can, I think, speak of a later, broader trend that is moving beyond binaristic forms of narrative to treat wider and more complex fields of ethnic diversity. In Arslan's *Geschwister*, for instance, the three eponymous siblings are ethnically Turkish-German (with German mother and Turkish father) and negotiate between German and Turkish society in three different ways, while Fatih Akin's recent films offers ethnic Turks self-identifying with aspects of German culture in surprising ways (*Gegen die Wand*'s Cahit with German punk culture, *Auf der anderen Seite*'s Nejat with Goethe, as a German professor in Bremen and then German bookshop owner in Istanbul). In both cases, then, the usual binary of Turkish guests versus German hosts is dismantled in favor of transcultural formations. While some scholars like Rings see this trajectory toward the transcultural as limited, I would offer Petzold's *Jerichow* as more evidence of at least a modest trend (Rings 2008: 32-34). Below, I attempt to outline how Petzold also refigures Turkish-German relations in consistently surprising ways, ways that subvert easy binaries and hierarchies of the migrant-host relationship and does so in a manner that also utilizes genre usually seen in opposition to art cinema. With his neo (art) noir, Petzold offers a

portrait of mutual influences, reversed and surprising interchanges and interactions, and new spaces of encounter.

The Spaces of Genres

To render Petzold's approach most legible, it is most productive, I think, to read for its manipulation and refiguring of spaces in which encounters between ethnic Turks and ethnic Germans unfold. Petzold's cinema proves so arresting in large part because it operates at that nexus of a space symptomatic of what some theorists have come to call uneven geographic development and the subjective processing of it. Petzold allows the aesthetic approach and, above all the spaces, of his films to be recast by contemporary economic-geographical processes (cf. Harvey 2000: 54). The mainstream genres of the *Gasterarbeiterfilm* and ghetto films, like many genres, have a particular spatial logic: that is, they almost always transpire in the city. The *Gastarbeiterfilme* often construct a revealing contiguity from the victimizing conditions to the city that "hosts" the guest workers: cramped and crowded workplaces and living quarters spill over into cramped and crowded city streets. The city, however, also provides the setting for the narrative's central encounters between ethnic Germans and ethnic Turks that lead to greater awareness on the German side and a modicum of amelioration on the Turkish side. Urban settings function even more emphatically in the ghetto films, for which urban streets and bars are the most important iconographic settings, not least because they become the venue for clashes between the productive and destructive impulses of the ghetto ethos.

Much as it avoids simple ethnic and therefore political binaries, *Jerichow* avoids both the simplistic perspectives of the *Gastarbeiterfilme* and the ghetto films by relocating its ethnic Turkish and ethnic German encounter to the countryside, to this small town in the former East Germany. There is a distinct remapping here, related to that some have found in Akin (Jones 2003: 76), but perhaps even more fundamental in its implications for Germany. One of the interesting things about *Postman Always Ring Twice* is its displacement of ethnic tensions out of the urban milieu of most noir films, and *Jerichow* similarly steers clear of ethnic enclaves and the stereotypical Turkish-German encounters they might engender. Non-ethnic Germans are not limited to Germany's global cities, but inhabit even the smallest, most modest and dearest *Heimat*. Petzold's

generic choice of *Postman* as a model emphasizes the uneven geographical development at the core of his politics. This alternative representation of space and diversity underscores how important a spatial imagination and spatial practices are to comprehending how immigration, ethnic diversity, and so-called globalization function in German culture and society. Although urban space has emerged as an important category in analyses of feature films about Turkish people in Germany, Petzold manages to work against the grain of the stereotypical depictions.

Why such shifts of the films to the country? In response to an interview question about why he set *Jerichow* in Prignitz, Petzold answers:

> Wenn man das Amerikanische in Deutschland erzählen kann, dann in der Prignitz. Hier fahren die Leute Picks ups und Geländewagen, Malls schießen aus dem Boden, Autobahnen und Parkplätze sind von amerikanischen Dimensionen, während die Industrie aus dem letzen Loch pfeift. Das sind alles Ruinen eines amerikanischen Traums. (Uehling 2009b)

The quote underscores the framework within which he plans to approach ethnicity and diversity in Germany, namely, one that reflects on economic promises and frustrations as well as the psychological processing of them. The passage underscores Petzold's interest in the wider networks and exchanges of which Germany is part – it highlights not only Petzold's interest in economics and its concomitant psychological processes, but the specifically global character of them.

Part of what the countryside affords *Jerichow*, and one of Petzold's auteurist themes, namely, is business's interface with nature and landscape: his films are full of shots of business people amidst lovely, if eerie landscapes, as if to underline the unnatural and contingent character of all economic activities, even as they become all-consuming. Part of this dialectical tension between nature and the artificial is the recurring space of the character's house, therefore of the domestic, of the private sphere in his films. In the country, in its frequent single family homes set on roads, yards, and/or near forests, the shape and condition of the house become more conspicuously expressive of the personality of the owner. *Jerichow* is no exception: the homes of both Thomas and Ali both play central roles in the film and are featured very prominently in the film's iconography. But here, again, Petzold works against viewer expectation in both its generic and ethnic terms.

First, on the generic side, one of the most remarkable variations on the films on which *Jerichow* is based on the foregrounding of Thomas's childhood home as a beloved and

emotionally-charged place. In Cain's novel, in Visconti's *Ossessione*, and then in the various noir versions, it is hard to imagine that readers or viewers would learn about the childhood home of the drifter: his disruptive narrative force derives in part from his status as rootless outsider, as fundamentally different, as an external force threatening the home of the wealthy husband and lovely-lonely wife. But in Petzold's hands, the narrative, as in his other films, starts with Thomas's commitment to the place of home and memory: after his mother's funeral, he decides to renovate the house and remain in the hometown in which he grew up. Petzold has emphasized in interviews about *Jerichow* how he is fascinated by "Heimat-Building" (sic) in this part of Germany namely, how especially men expend endless time and money on elaborate renovations of their homes, which they might (in this age of Hartz IV) have to leave anyway (Uehling 2009a). Petzold's film foregrounds in this way the drive individual people have to establish domesticity, even as they live in an increasingly mobile era – as Petzold points out, and to which his films consistently testify, we, as human beings, are poorly equipped to deal with the mobile, dynamic, even labile world as it has emerged amidst late capitalism (Abel 2008).

To emphasize this contradiction of domesticity and capitalism, even as Petzold gives *Postman*'s drifter a home, he avoids sentimentalizing the domestic sensibilities and drive of which the home is symptomatic. Thomas's return to his childhood home highlights the continual "creative destruction" of place concomitant with capitalism's constant remaking of space. From the first moment viewers see Thomas's childhood home at the beginning of the film, Petzold foregrounds the processes of capitalist destruction swirling around the home. Thomas has been driven from his mother's funeral to her home by Leon because he owes him from a failed business venture. Viewers learn from Leon that Thomas borrowed money from him, but that the venture for which he did so, an urban cafe, is bankrupt and has now been liquidated, with ice maker, espresso machine, and stereo system all removed. In the background of Thomas's plan to renovate his childhood home is not a sentimental dedication to the *Heimat*, but rather the failure of his business and his debts, contextualizing what one might regard as a nostalgic reconstruction of his mother's house within the framework of capitalist turnover.

So, even as Petzold varies the noir plot by offering the drifter a surprising home, he underscores that home's contingent character, its precarious underpinnings amidst late

capitalism's constant creative destruction. The film then charts a basic narrative trajectory arching from Thomas's childhood home – his mother's GDR-era-decorated house – to work, first, as a pickle picker on a grotesque, almost gothic harvesting machine reminiscent of Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, and then as an employee of Ali, the Turkish-German entrepreneur he coincidentally meets. Petzold's films offer such coincidental but fateful encounters between strangers quite often and often centrally (Jeanne with Heinrich in *Innere Sicherheit*, Nina with Toni in *Gespenster*, Yella with Philipp in *Yella*), but I would underscore that this form of the coincidental/fateful encounter is, in Petzold's work, always facilitated by some process of economy that the film is foregrounding. As David Harvey has pointed out, capitalism's assiduous remaking and above all homogenizing of space allows for unprecedented social encounters and alliances: people who would previously never have met now do because of capitalism's leveling of spatial difference. In capitalism, the rendering of these older forms of space and sociality as fundamentally homogenous permits and encourages new forms of encounter among people who now likewise circulate more freely (Harvey 1985: 13).

In *Jerichow*, this recurring encounter scenario becomes especially provocative, since the operations of capitalism on space are linked to migration. The encounter and eventual alliance with Ali confounds and complicates the childhood home of Thomas by emphasizing how the presumed foundations of German individuals and society more generally (childhood home, the hometown) are shifting. If the lost and adrift Thomas at the beginning of the film wishes to get back to basics – to his own metaphorical and literal foundations in hometown and house – his hometown is now dominated, it seems, by the immigrant entrepreneur, who travels its rural roads in an enormous Range Rover while Thomas is left to walk. In this variation on conventional ethnic hierarchy in Germany, the distance from both the *Gastarbeiterfilme* and the ghetto film is palpable: the ethnic Turks are not to be paternalistically helped by the film's ethnic Germans, as they were in the cinema of duty, nor are they to be (merely) policed by the ethnic Germans, as they were in the ghetto-film. If anything, Ali is the patriarch, especially within *Postman*'s loose Oedipal subtext, and Thomas and Laura want, in their murderous machinations, to do anything but help him. On the other hand, nor is Ali the young delinquent of the ghetto film, trying to resist but failing to stay out of the melee of the urban "jungle." Instead, he serves as the only source of wealth in the meticulously

drawn socio-economic desolation of the former East: the iconography of his depiction, his fine clothes, expensive Range Rover, and perfectly appointed house suggest a Berliner Republic yuppie rather than a West-German guest worker.

This, then, is a new kind of society in a new kind of space, at least ethnically speaking, that Petzold's *Jerichow* sketches and thematizes. The rethinking of ethnicity required by the film is occasioned perhaps more than anything by contrasting Thomas's childhood home, foregrounded in the film's first ten minutes, to that of Ali, foregrounded for much of the rest of the plot.

Jerichow: Thomas's dilapidated house

In depicting Thomas's relationship to Ali's affluent home, the film once again intersects one of Petzold's recurring, auteurist interests: the image of the late-capitalist wanderer standing, almost mesmerized, in front of (and perhaps fantasizing about) the luxury house

Jerichow: Thomas the drifter outside the affluent house of Ali

In Petzold's last four films, there is a moment when the drifting protagonist – usually after the chance and fateful encounter described above – stands before a wealthy home to which he or she does not or should not have access. The homes in front of the drifter serves a kind of fantasy purpose: they symbolize the better lives imagined by the drifter, an almost utopian yearning for domestic plenitude, but do so, I would emphasize, spatially, in a way that reminds, in a postlapsarian manner, of the emotionally vested place destroyed at the start.

These complex depictions of the domestic underscore how Petzold is once again working against the binaristic forms of narrativization that have tended to dominate the depiction of ethnic Turkish people in German cinema. In the earlier cinema-of-duty *Gastarbeiterfilme*, there was a tendency to depict the homes of ethnic Turks as socially oppressive (and sexually repressive) spaces of confinement, perhaps most famously in *40m^2 Germany*. If the goal of the films was to raise awareness for ethnic German audiences about the hardships for ethnic Turks in Germany, to give them a peek, so to say, into the house of the ethnic other, then the protagonists' trajectories were very often a trajectory from "conventional" Turkish homes into German society. The character of this setting and its narrative deployment has provided one of the debates within the scholarly literature, with Göktürk celebrating the move from the confining home to German city streets, while Gallagher has questioned, even in critically acclaimed films like Arslan's *Geschwister* and *Dealer*, liberation as liberation from the confining home. Even in relatively late films, like Arslan's *Geschwister* and Akin's *Gegen die Wand,* the

home of the ethnic Turkish family becomes the site of confinement, especially for women. In *Jerichow*, of course, quite remarkably, the house confines not the Turkish woman, but the ethnic German woman, and the liberation of her planned by the German male is utterly criminal.

Jerichow's spaces (the setting in the countryside, the foregrounded homes of the principle characters) as well as the unusual Turkish-German encounter emphasize how the film works in unconventional ways with the themes of ethnic diversity. These aspects of the film help subvert the notion of ethnic Germans' hosting ethnic Turks in German society: when Thomas returns to his hometown after his failed ventures in Afghanistan and in the city, Ali is already entrenched there with a successful business and a massive house. Given his well-established and resourced presence and then his offering Thomas a job, it is as if Ali is actually hosting Thomas. In this way, Thomas's return to his hometown after his unsuccessful ventures abroad (Afghanistan) and in the city (the failed café) resonates with migration: it underscores how Thomas himself is a migrant trying to find a place in an increasingly unfamiliar place, even if it happens to be the place where he grew up. Late capitalism has rendered the ethnic German a drifter-migrant, the itinerant of *Postman Always Rings Twice*, even in his own hometown.

Beach as Ethnic and Economic Third-Space: The Politics of Solidarity

This sense of Thomas and Ali's shared status as migrants – as mutually drifting amidst late capitalism's spatial practices – comes through in a scene that is among the film's most discussed, that of a beach picnic during which Ali becomes drunk and sings to the music of his homeland. Up until this beach scene, the characters offer no comment at all on Ali's ethnicity – there is not one remark on his being Turkish or on ethnicity in general. Viewers are certainly cued to be aware of Ali's ethnicity by his snack bars and, even more conspicuously, by his name ("Özkan") as it appears on his delivery truck. While Ali drives his unmarked green Range Rover, Thomas ends up driving the ethnically branded delivery truck, rendering the ethnic German the (guest?) worker at a Turkish business. In this way, in Petzold's hands, business and economic interest eclipse, at least provisionally, the particularity of ethnicity. Conversations about business dominate the first part of the film, with no comment at all on the usual topics

of German films about ethnic Turks: nothing on ethnic diversity, on the social struggles migrants face, or on the ethnic nature of underworld crime (as would be common in the *Gastarbeiterfilme* or the ghetto films). This is a world, as Petzold suggested in his comment on "the American" in the Prignitz, remade by late capitalism, in which people relate to each other primarily through economic interests – a trope underscored by Petzold's observation that he noticed, after he had finished the film, that every scene in *Jerichow* is about money (Hoch 2009).

Contrary to Petzold's observation, however, is this first beach scene, in which money, unusually, moves into the background and ethnic difference to the foreground. The beach provides a space at a revealing remove from the contrasting homes I emphasized above: here, they (and viewers' sympathies) are not held in the crucible of a poor man staring in envy at a rich man's house. The beach would seem to evoke what Edward Soja has termed a third space beyond existing dialectical tensions, here between the ethnic German veteran's decaying house and the ethnic Turkish entrepreneur's luxurious house (Soja 1996: 8-10). As with earlier films about ethnic Turks in Germany, the space away from the house becomes the crucial one to the narrative trajectory, particularly because the film will conclude by returning to the same beach setting. But, contrary to most of those films and in a distinctly noirish mode, this third space away from the contrasting homes will hardly hold out the promise of a redemptive place of ethnic reconciliation. Petzold deploys the noir genre to refashion the nondomestic, public spaces that the films Göktürk analyzes hold out as potentially emancipatory (Göktürk 2000). The potentially redemptive space away from the uneven geography of late capitalism – a non-domestic space that could have joined Laura, Ali, and Thomas in a new, diverse solidarity – ends up noirishly destroyed by greed and passion and the inextricable intertwinement of the two.

In the first of the two beach sequences, at about 27 minutes into the film, the first shot frames Ali singing and dancing, silhouetted by sunlight sparkling off the Baltic Sea's mild undulations.

Jerichow: Ali dancing on Baltic seashore

The iconography of the scene transpires at a bright remove from film noir, and matches instead the happier deployment of the Mediterranean or Black Sea in any number of films about ethnic Turks, for example, the recurring images of the Bosphorus in Akin's *Gegen die Wand* or the memorable Black Sea closing image of his *Auf der anderen Seite*. But Petzold is manipulating social stereotypes and genre conventions by relocating the dancing/singing ethnic Turk on the Baltic. In these ways, the Turkish diegetic music as well as Ali's humming, singing, and dancing all suddenly reterritorialize this space, in Germany, as one belonging to an alternate geography, one of and made by immigrants. The scene recalls one in Bob Rafelson's 1981 *Postman Always Rings Twice*, in which downtown Los Angeles is reterritorialized by ethnic singing and dancing in a Greek immigrant community center. But *Jerichow*'s immigrant space is not a confining domesticity or gritty cityscape, but rather one of the most beautiful views in Germany. Ali's romanticizing misrecognition of the Baltic seems no different from Thomas's romanticizing misrecognition of his childhood home (a childhood home grounded in a completely changed society): while loss of and longing for home are central to the migrant experience (Jones 2003: 79), Petzold emphasizes how that kind of loss is shared by both ethnic Turk and ethnic German due to late capitalism. The beach would seem to point to a distinct solidarity between the migrant and the hometown boy, both, in their own ways, drifters due to late capitalism. Given this redemptive reterritorialization that Ali initiated both metaphorically (in song and dance) and literally (the picnic is his idea), Petzold emphasizes that it will be the ethnic

Germans who ruin this potential solidarity, the ephemerally redemptive space held out by the beach.

After Ali complains that he is dancing alone, Thomas jokes with him that Ali dances like a Greek, a knowing provocation given Turkey's long standing history and tensions with Greece. Less angry than disappointed that they are not participating, Ali encourages them to "dance like Germans," and convinces them to stand up ("come, German Thomas!") and start to dance. He nudges them closer and closer, to dance together as Germans do, and dances next to them in his own style, a three-shot of apparent harmony.

Jerichow: Three-shot of apparent harmony

But when Ali heads back to his SUV, presumably to get more alcohol, Thomas takes the opportunity to start to kiss Laura. For now, she resists his advances, asks what kind of friend he is, and tells him to go help Ali, as the latter is completely drunk. Thomas literally follows in Ali's footsteps to the top of the cliff about the ocean, finds him there looking down at Laura: it is not clear to viewers if Ali has witnessed them kissing. When he abruptly slips on the cliff, Thomas saves him after a short hesitation, an action Laura will come to regret and the one deliberately revisited at the end of the film.

The viewer is left wondering why Ali seems to encourage Laura and Thomas to dance together, and dance close, if he already had observed, as he did on Thomas's first day of work, Thomas ogling Laura. His likely motivations for bringing them together – perhaps also for hiring Thomas at all – become clear in the second beach scene, the climactic and concluding scene of the film some forty minutes later. Ali has returned

from his mysterious trip, during which Thomas and Laura realize a full-blown affair and plan to kill him at the very same beach where Ali first brought them together. After Laura picks Ali up from the airport, he reveals to her the truth about his trip: that it was not a return to Turkey to plan their later, permanent return – another cliché of the Turkish-German film (cf. *Gegen die Wand*) – but rather to have his irregular heartbeat checked at a clinic in Leipzig. He has only two, maybe three months to live. She cries in guilt at her plan to kill him, and the married couple end up on the beach, with her head on her Ali's shoulder as he outlines his financial plans for after his death.

It is at this moment that he suggests to the grieving Laura that "Thomas will help you, he's okay," which reveals that his plan all along was to bring someone into their lives whom he could trust. His earlier encouragement that Thomas look admiringly at Laura (twice) and his exhortations of their close dancing suddenly makes sense, as does his having seen them from the cliff above when Thomas kissed her. Ali seems the kind of metteur-en-scene well known from the noir genre, the puppet master who controls things both economic and emotional, but it is of course a shock that the ethnic Germans might have been put in this position by an ethnic Turk (Gunning 2008: 108-13). This sense of Ali's controlling matters is emphasized by the spatial dimensions of the beach location: the couples interact on the horizontal beach in front of the flat sea, but, up above on the beach and on the vertical axis, a third person is present who controls the goings on in the horizontal dimension. The vertical space is an important aspect of noir's Expressionistic mise-en-scene: from the *Maltese Falcon* through *Gilda,* certainly also in *Postman Always Rings Twice,* and then in the late noirs like *Kiss Me Deadly* and *Touch of Evil*, the vertical dimensions of otherwise horizontal space suggest the power dynamics that the films consistently explore and highlight.

This being a Petzold film, however, hovering up on the cliff with the metteur-en-scene is the Range Rover that has been important throughout the film. All of Petzold's feature films, from *Die Innere Sicherheit* on, feature automobiles in important scenes, so the domestic/geographical unevenness detailed above is likewise met, typically for him, by a vehicular contrast: the film pairs and contrasts Ali's Range Rover to Thomas's little red racecar lighter, which Ali finds on the cliff. With the noirish clue of the lighter – indicating the verticality seized by the ethnic German – Ali quickly surmises that Thomas is hiding and planning to kill him. The carless Thomas planned to kill the man who hired him and even encouraged him to pursue his wife. In the end, as Ali

financially plans for his own death, viewers realize that he was likely planning to hand his business over to Laura and Thomas all along, that they would have received from the immigrant that of which they dreamed without murdering him. Although Ali knows he inhabits "a country that doesn't want me with a wife I bought," he is nonetheless shocked that those closest to him would murder him to get what he was going to give them anyway. This line, the most quoted of the film, underscores the utter lack of solidarity of Thomas and Laura feel with Ali, a lack of solidarity that immediately evokes the era of noir, in which demobilizing veterans found no place to call home, and so felt little or no empathy and solidarity, in the postwar society to which they returned. The noirish lack of social solidarity in *Jerichow*, however, is also, in Petzold's hands, more precisely the familiar lack of solidarity with the ethnic Turk who is ready to give so much to the Germans and Germany, as any migrant gives to the society to which he or she immigrates. In the face of this absence of solidarity or even sympathy, Ali drives his Range Rover over the cliff, compressing the verticality and horizontality of the early sequences and, one senses, leaving his wife Laura and employee Thomas to contemplate their fatal lack of solidarity and sympathy in Germany's changed social circumstances.

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