



## **The Politics of Space in the Cinema of Migration**

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This article offers a reading of three films associated with migration and mobility between Turkey and Germany organized around the cinematic representation of space. Focusing on the politics of space, instead of national and/or ethnic identity, I propose, allows us to account for larger cultural shifts from a national to a transnational framework for cultural production, but also to be mindful of representational continuities from filmmaking in Turkey to Germany. My reading of Tevfik Başer's *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* (1986) in the context of Yılmaz Güney's *The Father* (1973) and Fatih Akın's *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005) proposes that the film was significantly misread by the West German public at the time. The comparison of the three films reads their spatial aesthetics as responding to the shift from national to transnational contexts and left-wing ideological to multicultural politics.

### 1. From "Cinema of Duty" to "Pleasures of Hybridity"

In scholarship on Turkish-German cinema, it has become commonplace to read the brief history of films by and about Turkish migrants in Germany as a shift from, in the words of Deniz Göktürk, the "cinema of duty" to a cinema portraying the "pleasures of hybridity" (1999: 7). Films and literature by and about the first generation of labor migrants who arrived in Germany in the 1960s portrayed one-dimensional alienated Turks in Germany, either embodied by a figure of a silent male guestworker or by an oppressed female victim of Turkish patriarchy. New German Cinema, the West-German state-funded *auteur* cinema of the 1970s, created a cinematic iconography of limited roles accorded to Turkish migrants in West Germany: *Wunderkind* Rainer Werner Fassbinder cast his Moroccan lover El Hedi Bem Salem as lonely and alienated migrant in the main role of *Ali: Fear Eats Soul* (*Angst essen Seele auf*, 1974) originally entitled "All Turks are Called Ali." Fassbinder had intended the film to portray a Turkish guestworker.

*Ali: Fear Eats Soul* criticizes West German racism but also constructs the archetype of the alienated, lonely labor migrant who oscillates between silence and broken German. Leslie Adelson points out how Homi Bhabha reifies this figure in a scholarly context, suggesting that he "mobilizes „the Turkish *Gastarbeiter*“ as an icon for „the radical

incommensurability of translation“ in modern narratives of Europe“” (2005: 86). Characters that represent figures of migration in the landscape of West German film in the 1970s and 1980s embody silence and victimization. Helma Sanders-Brahms“s film *Shirin’s Wedding* (*Shirins Hochzeit*, 1976) created a cinematic formula of the feminist kind, namely that of the female victim as allegory for the violence perpetuated by Turkish patriarchy. In Hark Bohm“s film *Yasemin* (1988) the main character Yasemin needs to be rescued from her oppressive, patriarchal father by her German boyfriend Jan. Caught between the confines of Turkish restrictive paternal control and a rebellious liberation engendered by West German democracy, the figure captures the iconographic embodiment of the migrant woman in Europe, the traces of which still dominate public imaginary, debates, and policies through such topics as honor killing and head scarves.

When Deniz Göktürk employs the formulation “cinema of duty” as descriptor for the first generation of migrant cinema in Germany, and Great Britain for that matter, she refers to pressure for migrant filmmakers to portray and translate the migration experience for dominant society primarily through documentary and serious melodrama. This kind of unspoken mandate manifests itself in the works of Turkish filmmaker Tevfik Başer who worked in West Germany during the 1980s. Başer directed three films, *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* (*40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland*, 1986), *Farewell to False Paradise* (*Abschied vom falschen Paradies*, 1989), and *Good-bye, Strange Land* (*Lebe Wohl, Fremde*, 1991), before leaving Germany for Turkey never to make a film again. His film *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* created the most widely-circulated image of a Turkish woman in West Germany at the time, in part because the film not only ran in the movie theatres but was also shown on television. It offered the West German audience the fantasy of intimate knowledge of the reality and plight of the Turkish woman as victim of her husband and her society of origin.

In *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany*, Dursun, a first-generation “guestworker” in Hamburg brings his wife, the main character Turna, from rural Turkey to urban Germany and locks her into their apartment to protect her from what he perceives to be the immoral and corrupting influences of West German society. The film ends with his heart attack, suddenly enabling Turna to leave the apartment, which has become her prison. This and other selected films wielded a defining power in the representational politics about Turkish-Germans in West Germany and participated in the creation of cinematic types that influenced the public imaginary and discourse about Turkish migrants.

It is to these kinds of images and visual vocabulary that the radically new filmic images of second-generation Turkish-German migrants responded when they burst onto the German film landscape in the mid-1990s. Those films were written, produced, and directed by the second and third generation of Turkish labor migrants to West Germany in a postwall Germany. Fatih Akin, Seyhan Derin, Ayşe Polat, Yüksel Yavuz, and Thomas Arslan constitute a new generation that began making films in the mid-1990s and continues today. Their diverse films self-confidently claim Germanness, while advancing a cinematic language that integrates German, Turkish, and transnational culture. This historical map of a shift from the first to the second generation, captured by Göktürk's terms "cinema of duty" to "pleasures of hybridity," has by now become a mainstay in the scholarship on Turkish-German cinema, part of larger developments of migration in Europe and shifts from national to transnational cultures.

This shift coincides with a change from the cinematic portrayal of interior entrapment to exterior movement. Movement takes place either in German cities in Fatih Akin's *Short Sharp Shock* (*Kurz und schmerzlos*, 1988), Thomas Arslan's *Brothers and Sisters* (*Geschwister*, 1997), Kutluğ Ataman's *Lola and Billy the Kid* (*Lola + Bilidikid*, 1999), and Yüksel Yavuz's *Little Freedom* (*Kleine Freiheit*, 2003), as journey between Germany to Turkey as in Seyhan Derin's *I am the Daughter of my Mother* (*Ich bin die Tochter meiner Mutter*, 1996), as European road movie as in Akin's *In July* (*Im Juli*, 2000) and Ayşe Polat's *Tour Abroad* (*Auslandstournee*, 2000), finally criss-crossing European space in his *The Edge of Heaven* (*Auf der anderen Seite*, 2007), and, I argue, as deterritorialized urban soundscape in the urban space of Istanbul in his *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005).

Demarcating the change from earlier to contemporary cinematic representations by and of Turkish migrants in Germany has gone hand in glove with a turn to space as a category of analysis in contemporary theory. An approach that emphasizes cinematic space not only traces the shift outlined by Göktürk, it also provides us with tools to account for the contemporary changes under globalization. This scholarly attention to space enables the reconstruction of the history of Turkish, German, and Turkish-German cinema based on the intersection of aesthetics and politics beyond identity categories. I therefore trace the tropes of entrapment and movement, territorialization and deterritorialization, national identity and transnational cultural exchange, as part of

the political aesthetics in Turkish, German, and Turkish-German cinema with three examples.

After a brief account of scholarly work on space in relationship to Turkish-German cultural production, particularly the dominance of this approach in the study of Turkish-German cinema, I begin my comparative analysis organized around spatial politics with Tevfik Başer's *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany*. My analysis of the film's spatial politics leads me back in time to Turkish director Yılmaz Güney's political aesthetics, which I will exemplify with an analysis of *The Father (Baba, 1973)*, a Turkish film that motivates its narrative with the desire for labor migration to West Germany. *The Father* relies centrally on the spatial metaphor of the jail as an allegory of entrapment under capitalism. Pairing these two films in the context of a reading based on the importance of space enables an account of continuity and breaks that is based on political and aesthetic traditions instead of identity categories. This article concludes, however, by contrasting the spatial conceptions of entrapment in these earlier films with the complex spatial politics of Akin's film *Crossing the Bridge*, which deterritorializes national space. *Crossing the Bridge* also traces the historical dialectic interaction between the constitutions of national traditions continuously interfacing with transnational cultural exchange. Thus, the film bespeaks not only the dynamics of globalization but also the history of global exchange. The film's distinct spatial politics, which distinguishes it from the two other films, does not appear as a result of biographical coordinates of generation, ethnicity, or nationality, but instead corresponds to the new global world order that calls for a different politics, expressed in innovative spatial aesthetics for the cinema.

Categories of space have become central for describing cosmopolitan Turkish-Germans and their cultural production. Ayhan Kaya, in his essay "German-Turkish Transnational Space: A Separate Space of Their Own" (2007), sees contemporary Turkish-Germans as "[a]gents of ... transnational space," radically different than the "classic immigrants" who were recruited as labor migrants by the German governments in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Contemporary Turkish-Germans, according to Kaya, are "cosmopolitan, syncretic, rhizomatic, and transnational" (2007: 483), a list of adjectives that invokes several different theoretical paradigms that purport to explicate globalization and transnationalism, such as the notion of "cosmopolitan", explicated by Pheng Sheah and Bruce Robbins in their work (1998) and "rhizomatic", conceptualized by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987). If contemporary subjectivities articulate themselves as

“cosmopolitan, syncretic, rhizomatic” in transnational spaces, what does this imply about past subjectivities and prior spatial conceptions in contrast? While the description of changes in cinematic representation outline phenomenological shifts, these observations carry with them a danger of reading backwards from cultural production to subjectivities: for example, if cinematic representations in contemporary transnational spaces capture complex subjectivities, does that suggest that earlier one-dimensional characters in national spaces mirrored simplistic subjectivities of migrants?

Scholarship on Turkish-German cinema has taken up the particular conceptual emphasis on space in part because the films themselves reflect a strong sensitivity toward spatial configurations. Jessica Gallagher pays attention to the staging of urban space in the *Berlin Trilogy* by Thomas Arslan, arguing however that “this new generation of characters continues to struggle with the same kinds of spatial limitations as the predecessors” (2006: 351). Barbara Kosta focuses on “transcultural space and music” in Fatih Akin’s film *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* to argue that the film constitutes “Istanbul as a hybrid space” (2010: 343, 344). Her analysis situates the film *Crossing the Bridge* as a continuation of Akin’s earlier film *Head-On (Gegen die Wand, 2004)*, while I employ the film as a foil to highlight distinguishing spatial features in contrast to the two earlier films that focus on migration to Germany. The focus on space has also led scholars to expand the corpus of films from the limited category of Turkish-German to include “relations between Germans, Jews, and Turks,” in “two recent films, Turkish director Kutluğ Ataman’s *Lola + Bilidikid* (1999) and Israeli director Eytan Fox’s *Walk on Water* (2004)” (Baer 2008: 1). Nicholas Baer suggests that the films’ employment of “historically overdetermined spaces” allows the two directors to “enable the formation of a German/Jewish/Turkish constellation” (2008: 2). Thus, attention to space has become an analytical tool that can help move analysis beyond a theoretical impasse between identity politics and anti-essentialist deconstruction.

## 2. Turkish Entrapment in German National Space

Başer’s *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* exemplifies the iconography of entrapment associated with Turkish woman in Germany. In the film Dursun locks his wife Turna in their apartment in Hamburg while he goes to work. For the main character and the audience, the only visual relief is provided by a window, from which Turna sees a girl across the courtyard

playing with her dolls. The film articulates a political critique of Turkish patriarchy by showing Dursun limiting his wife's movement based on his reductive and paranoid interpretation of West German society. In the context of the late 1980s in West Germany the film gave credence to seeing Turkish men as violently patriarchal and Turkish women as dependent, child-like, and subservient.

*40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* is primarily characterized by consistent tracking shots. Instead of an establishing shot creating the space of the apartment, the opening sequence relies on the camera moving along the walls of the apartment, emphasizing not the apartment as living space but its outlines as the parameters of confinement. The visual strategy continues throughout the film. The space of the apartment, however, integrates mostly Turkish domesticity. From an opening shot of an alarm-clock, the camera moves in a slow tracking shot along the walls, accompanied by the sound of an alarm clock. The uninterrupted noise marks the length of the take, which disorients viewers because of the absence of an establishing shot. By moving along the walls, instead of establishing traditional features of a setting, such as a house, an apartment, a village, or a city, the film emphasizes the limitation of space rather than the location of place. Through this technique, the audience is aligned with the gaze and the experience of Turna, since we assume that the Dursun has access to a view of the exterior world as well. Ali Nihat Eken suggests: "the camera moves around the space as if someone is trying to make sense of his/her surroundings in a confined setting," also emphasizing the spatial limitation of the setting because the camera moves "inside a small and poorly lit apartment" (2009: 15). Moving along the walls, we see a photo of presumably three "guest workers," another of Cemal Atatürk, and a wall carpet of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. The camera then moves to the floor littered with pajamas and Turkish newspaper, until it finally stops at the couple in question who have arrived in the apartment.

The film thus creates a radical division of interior space decorated as Turkish and an exterior space coded entirely as German, which is however invisible. The camera is mobile but limited to the enclosed space capturing Turna's desire for movement. The only visual escape consists of Turna's memories of Turkey, which presents her national pre-history organized around traditional rituals. At the film's conclusion, Dursun dies and Turna leaves the apartment and then the house. While the narrative promises the

entry into German space and society, the camera does not leave with her and remains in the interior space watching Turna leave.

Kaya describes three different stages in the scholarship on Turkish-German migratory culture in Germany, and proposes that the first two stages relied on a notion of culture as “shared meanings and values” that makes “culture seem too unitary, homogeneous, and cognitive. Any disturbance of this unity is considered to result in crisis, breakdown, or degeneration. This approach claims that culture emerges along discrete ethnic lines, and diagnoses any deviation from this norm as an „identity crisis,“ „in-betweenness,“ „split identities,“ or „degeneration“” (2007: 484). Particularly in the case of Turkish migration to Germany, it was assumed that Turkish migrants brought their essential culture with them: “Usually the values and codes that predominated in rural areas of Turkey served as the norm. Islam emerged in these studies as the core of this „traditional culture.“ Moreover, identity was considered stable, fixed, centered, and coherent” (2007: 485). Kaya suggests that scholarship has moved away from a one-dimensional account of bi-national identity to conceptions of transnational cosmopolitanism. This shift reflects the changed socio-political landscape after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the acceleration of the dynamics of globalization.

The scholarly account of the brief history of Turkish-German cinema portrays Başer’s cinema primarily as damaging and dangerous in its reductive portrayal of Turkish woman. The film created negative and one-dimensional images of Turkish male and female migrants with detrimental effects on public opinion in West Germany. If we adapt our analytic lens from situating the film solely in the context of Turks in West Germany, and instead contextualize Başer’s film also in the context of the tradition of Turkish cinema, we find the reoccurring topic of entrapment and imprisonment appears as a symbol that pervades the political films of the Turkish left, particularly the works of most famous filmmaker Yılmaz Güney. *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* rearticulates the important trope of imprisonment in the left-wing, dissident filmmaking tradition of Turkish director Güney, and transposes this trope onto the Turkish community in Germany. Güney himself spent a large part of his short life in prison where he wrote two of his most important works, *The Herd (Sürü, 1979)* and *The Way (Yol, 1982)*. This view provides a genealogy of the trope of imprisonment that extends beyond migration to West Germany, positioning the metaphor in the political context of dissidence vis-à-vis the state.



### 3. The Allegory of Prison: Yilmaz Güney's Spatial Politics

The trope of imprisonment in relation to migration finds an important predecessor in the tradition of political left filmmaking in Turkey, in Güney's film *The Father* (*Baba*, 1973). *The Father* tells the story of Cemal, later nicknamed Baba (father) who lives with his wife, two young children, a baby, and his mother in a house owned by a rich landlord. Cemal attempts to migrate to Germany as a "guestworker" but is rejected. When the son of his rich landlord, Koray, kills a man, Koray's father offers Cemal a deal: Cemal would take the fall for Koray, go to jail for ten years (the time period of his potential stay in Germany), and receive 200,000 Turkish liras by the time he is released from jail. In exchange, his family would be cared for and the children would receive the material goods that they desire: a mandolin, a bike, a doll, and clothes, which he would otherwise would be able to buy with his the wages from his labor in Germany. Cemal goes to jail and his family is cared for at first. His children believe he is in Germany. Once in jail, however, he is sentenced to 24 years. Koray, the son of the rich landlord, has a nervous breakdown and moves into the house where Cemal's family is living and rapes Cemal's wife, who then loses her mind and abandons the baby. Cemal's mother cannot take care of the children, they are dispersed, and the landlord sells the house. When Cemal is finally released, through circumstance he is offered his daughter as a prostitute but recognizes her when he sees her birth mark. Unable to admit that he is her father, he offers to treat her like a father figure enabling her to leave the life of a prostitute. Cemal then takes revenge on Koray, and shoots him when his son arrives, who in turn avenges Koray's death by killing his own father, only to recognize him in the moment of death.

The film invites an allegorical reading by substituting prison for migration to West Germany. In a narrative critique of capitalism, Cemal's stay in prison is shown to have the same effects as migration to Germany: instead of a father, the children receive material goods; the family is torn apart for their economic betterment; the children are traumatized; the husband and wife cannot be together and write letters to each other. Cemal expresses the film's underlying political critique when he explains to his wife: "Don't cry. Suppose I went to Germany. There is no difference." The film contrasts the despair of the wife and mother of Cemal to the children's desire for and excitement about material goods.

The political allegory turns prison into a visual and spatial metaphor and infuses the entire film with a sense of imprisonment through spatial configurations and shot compositions. Domestic spaces are shot through bars. The film's opening aestheticizes imprisonment. The fishing ground in front of the house, which traditionally would represent access to the world, is turned into a symbol of imprisonment for the wife, because her house and body is accessed and violated by the rich man who can cross the waterway once Cemal is in prison. Narratively, the house becomes an economic and physical trap for Cemal's wife.

The opening sequence consists of extreme close-ups that create a sense of containment in each frame and disorient the viewer in the space. Every shot is composed as a tight space that separates the characters from each other. Shots through windows, grids, and bars create thematic continuity citing containment from shot to shot. The opening sequence consists of a sequence of shots that first shows Cemal himself marginalized on the far right. The majority of the screen is taken up by vertical paneling. We then see the two children through an iron fence, which reproduces the vertical organization of the shot and removes the children from our direct view with an obstacle that contains them. An extreme close-up of Cemal's mother with her grandchild is repeatedly interrupted when she moves her black sleeve across the screen, which interferes with the audience's view of the image. Cemal's wife is shot through the window into the house, again staging separation and enclosure. The lack of camera movement and the emphasis on cuts isolates the characters from each other but portrays them as marginalized by the cinematic space instead of controlling, mastering, or inhabiting it. The opening sequence also includes shots of the water, but separate from humans. Water does not come to stand for connection, movement, and escape. Instead, detached shots of an empty boat on the water capture the hopelessness and the characters' ability to move beyond their entrapment.

The opening scene of *The Father* illustrates that the characters' alienation from each other, from their domestic environment, and their work, such as fishing. Their spatial confinement predates and preconfigures the main character's desire to migrate to Germany and his entrapment in a deal that leads him to be imprisoned and that destroys his family. The opening translates Marxist tenets regarding exploitation and alienation into a cinematic visual language, primarily expressed through spatial metaphors. When the rich landlord calls Cemal over to his house to negotiate the deal, we find the same

emphasis on vertical patterns and visual obstructions as in Cemal's home that evoke a sense of imprisonment, except the patterns' ornateness and excessiveness marks the upper class, whereas simple bars mark Cemal's lower class status. Cemal and his family do not own the house they live in and the landlord's symbolic ownership extends to Cemal's labor and his wife's body. Cemal's and his family's spatial entrapment metaphorizes their social entrapment, and thus the imaginary migration to Germany becomes a transnational extension of class exploitation.

The national space of Germany is not represented and does not need to be represented because in a Marxist analysis of class exploitation, national belonging is subordinated to class and the agents of exploitation are as exchangeable, as are those who perform labor. The prison stands for different intersecting social and economic entrapments. The shots of the prison with men on bunk-beds confined to the space of a room are reminiscent of the early housing accommodations of "guestworkers" in West Germany. Class exploitation is aesthetically inscribed in the entire film, paradigmatic for a left critique of capitalism and the state, as it intersects and is physically expressed through patriarchal violence, as when the son of the landlord rapes Cemal's wife.

Thus, when Başer employs entrapment in a confined space as a result of migration in *40m<sup>2</sup> Germany* and *Farewell to False Paradise*, he not only comments on the social reality of experience of Turkish migrants in Germany, but he also continues a Turkish filmic tradition steeped in left politics. In that context, the imprisonment not only critiques the Turkish patriarch but also situates the film in a filmic tradition of class analysis. This kind of discursive apparatus was neither visible for a West German audience at the time, nor has it been reflected by contemporary scholarship so far.

The shift from the first generation of images of Turks in Germany to the second goes hand in glove with a reorganization of spatial metaphors that reflect a set of interlocking changes. Different aesthetic sensibilities allow for more complex narratives, and cinematic compositions of individual shots and geographic movement. Because filmmakers are not dependent on celluloid in production and post-production, they can shoot more extensively. Narrative frameworks of the national have given way to complex transnational relations. **This shift** does not solely result from an individual biographical migratory or minority background but reflects broader concomitant shifts from a focus on the nation to global networks. Finally, however, these socio-political and cultural changes have brought with them a transformation of models that underwrite

political filmmaking: from Marxism, which relies on a singular causality and subordinates all forms of oppression to that of class, to those models that are attentive to intersections of cultural identity, minority rights, feminism, and environmentalism. While ideologically overdetermined spatial entrapment metaphorizes the former, spatially intersecting, decentered, and deterritorialized spatial representation expresses the latter.

#### 4. Aerial Deterritorialization and Urban Soundscapes

Akin's *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* contrasts with these two earlier films by opening up spaces not only beyond the national but also surpassing the entrapment of individual subjectivities. In contrast to the other two films discussed above, in order to achieve this effect, Akin employs music to transcend boundaries, and an unusually high number of aerial shots that expand space into the third dimension. As a highly prolific director, he has garnered national and international fame and status since his breakthrough film *Short Sharp Shock* (1998), which portrays the life of three migrants in Hamburg, *In July* (2000), his European road-movie, *Solino* (2002), the epic story of Italian immigrants to Germany, and *Head-On* (2004), which won him the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival and secured his international success. His film *The Edge of Heaven* relies on a complex structure of criss-crossing characters and narrative movements between Turkey and Germany. *The Edge of Heaven* highlights the "space-time compression" identified by David Harvey (1990: 260-307) as collapsing characters' movement by plane between Turkey and Germany in cuts and by expanding the perception of local time by emphasizing travel in local regions between Hamburg and Bremen and Istanbul and the Black Sea Region.

All of Akin's work is centrally concerned both with place and space: the place often refers to real cities, such as Hamburg in *Short, Sharp, Shock*, *In July*, and *Head-On*. His films successively create spaces that centrifugally expand from national cities to the imagined space of Europe that characters traverse and inhabit. *Short, Sharp, Shock* only shows us the characters in Hamburg, but at the end the main character intends to leave for Turkey, which is not represented. *In July* and *Head-On* both show the movement from Germany to Turkey creating the cinematic space of Europe. *Crossing the Bridge*

employs a soundscape to create space that supersedes the national and urban of the individual city.

In *Crossing the Bridge* Alexander Hacke, the bass player of the German band *Einstürzende Neubauten*, who travels to Istanbul to search for and record different bands, becomes the interlocutor for a presumed non-Turkish audience. Yet, in Istanbul, he loses his objectifying distance, plays in bands, and is shown dancing to music. While his voice-over disappears and reappears at different points in the film, it does not perform the kind of mastery that accompanies the conventional consistent commentary of traditional documentaries. The film is about the place Istanbul but the music creates a global soundscape that includes and rewrites American hip hop, Turkish and Bulgarian minority, religious, regional musical traditions, Western rock and jazz, historical Egyptian influences via the radio, and musical rural-to-urban migrations. The bands and singers include Replikas, Duman, Siyasiyabend, Baba Zula, the Rapstar Ceza, Orient Expressions, Mercan Dede, Selim Sesler, Aynur, Orhan Gencebay, and Müzeyyen Senar. The cinematic space constructed as hybrid through the reinterpretation of the sound but also through the narrative movement of homecoming by Akin undermines notions of coherent and whole cultures (see also Kosta 2010).

The encounter between Germans and Turks is deterritorialized in the soundscape of transnational musical influences. On the one hand, the film traces influences through history, as for example the development of the saz-tradition brought to the city of Istanbul and the Arabesque. On the other hand, the film undermines the traditional imagined binary of East meets West that is invoked by its title *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* with a new model of transnational influence and exchange. The visuals show us Istanbul, describing the different parts of the city for a foreign gaze, and situating us as viewers in different neighborhoods and transitional places like hotels. While the visuals place us in defined locales, which the voice over explains, the music deterritorializes the space of Istanbul into an audioscape that includes the multiple, transnational musical influences. Again, attention to the opening sequence is instructive: the camera moves in aerial shots across the bridge, the Bosphorus, and the cityscape of Istanbul, intercutting such deterritorializing shots with talking heads in different alleys and streets. Thus, the film moves dialectically between setting up spatial terms of urban and rural, East and West to repeatedly also deconstruct them.

This representation reflects an understanding of culture which Kaya describes as a “*syncretic notion of culture*” that sees “mixing and *bricolage*” as “the main characteristic of cultures,” and which shapes current approaches to contemporary Turkish-German cultural production (2007: 485). According to Kaya, the “notion of German-Turkish transnational space,” shows “growing visibility of border-crossing cultural reproduction, capital accumulation, political engagement, hyphenated identities, and *cultures in fluidity*” (2007: 485). A contemporary account of the culture of migration under the conditions of globalization creates transnational spaces that include home and host countries and deterritorialize both. *Crossing the Bridge* simultaneously belongs to German cinema and world music. If we take Leslie Adelson’s approach to the intervention of Turkish-German literature into the “national archives of twentieth-century German culture” seriously, we can see how a film like *Crossing the Bridge* allows the Turkish-German artist to define Istanbul in a new way but also integrate this global culture of Istanbul into German culture as part of film history (2005: 12).

This contemporary model of migratory culture is entirely different from the model of two coherent whole cultures where one has to be subordinated to another in a process of assimilation that relies on the shedding of the original culture. However, I hope to have also shown that this transnational model of culture of migration does not imply that the model of two different cultural wholes determined migratory subjectivities to Germany in the past. Akin’s film *Crossing the Bridge* brilliantly illustrates that past cultural production also relied on borrowing, influencing, and exchanging of “other” cultural, sometimes, national traditions, that functioned in and resulted from a political context determining access and lack thereof to traditions and sounds. In the film historians and musicians explain how “traditional” Turkish music itself is a hybrid that resulted from integration of Egyptian music via the radio, and moves from rural to urban. The more the film continues, the more the concept of national is revealed to already be a product of transnational exchanges and migratory movements. *Crossing the Bridge* does not suggest a nationally bound pure musical past in contrast to a syncretic global musical present. Instead *Crossing the Bridge* traces the complex processes that create musical traditions and engages in the simultaneous movement of resituating music in appropriate places while deterritorializing the space of the national. Even though migratory culture shifts from a bi-national relationship to transnational networks under increasing globalization, Kaya’s proposed shift from “*holistic notion of culture*” to

“syncretic notion of culture” in the theoretical frameworks available to account for contemporary minority and migratory cultural production under globalization might not, however, entirely do justice to earlier forms of cultural production (2007: 484). The shift from national to transnational culture in globalization creates a need for theoretical accounts that can capture the new forms of organizing of cultural production. Yet, this shift should not lead us to project earlier forms of minority and migratory cultural productions as depicting tensions between two cultures that are negotiated by one-dimensional and limited subjects. My reading of the spatial configurations in Turkish and Turkish-German cinema outlines a genealogy of cultural production and migration that accounts for spatial politics reflecting different political models in response to diverse socio-historical contexts.

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