

INTRODUCTION

Sabine Hake and Barbara Mennel

When Yasemin Samdereli's *Almanya–Willkommen in Deutschland* (*Almanya: Welcome in Germany*, 2011) premiered at the Berlin Film Festival 2011, with the German President and the Turkish Ambassador in attendance, it also served as a celebration of fifty years of labor migration from Turkey to Germany. This historical moment confirmed the status of culture, particularly film, as both object and subject in the history of labor migration and its aftereffects. The 1961 labor recruitment agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Turkey had launched a migration flow that changed individual and familial lives and transformed the social and cultural landscapes of both nations in unforeseen ways. Fifty years later, as *Almanya* retells the story of labor migration in a comedic vein, the resulting social conflicts and cultural clashes and often heated debates about integration, multiculturalism, and ethnic and national identity have produced a diverse body of films, television series, and multi-screen installations that we evoke here under the heading of Turkish German cinema.

An integral part of the cinema's own history of defining peripheries and centers and constructing images of self and other, Turkish German cinema is often associated with a particular sensitivity toward national belonging and ethnic embodiment and an acute awareness of the politics of identity and place. However, this body of work has more recently been associated with attempts to complicate and destabilize discourses—of social realism and identity politics—no longer found adequate to the multiple affiliations and fluid attachments in a globalized world. The films made since the 1990s tell stories about the problems of dislocation and integration; yet they also open up new ways of thinking beyond fixed categories of identity and the binary logic of native and foreign, home and abroad, and tradition and modernity. Against this backdrop, the volume at hand maps the emerging field of Turkish German film studies in relation to contemporary German and European culture and society, the transformations of filmic conventions and audiovisual styles in the age of digital culture and

multimedial platforms, and the authorial strategies and performative styles that at once mediate, resist, and illuminate the dynamic and fluid positions marked by the qualifiers “Turkish” and “German.”¹

The individual contributions presented here engage productively with the methodological approaches and theoretical inquiries on hyphenated identities, transnational cinemas, and new approaches to documentary, genre, and art film. As editors, we have consciously chosen not to gloss over the contradictions that situate this growing field of inquiry within specific discursive traditions, scholarly debates, and institutional contexts. On the contrary, our decision to leave out the hyphen signifies our unwillingness to reduce the remarkable productivity of Turkish German filmmakers to the easy logics of compatibility and commensurability implied by it. Thus it is the purpose of the introduction to demarcate the field in which the films circulate, beginning with a brief overview of the history of postwar migration and the politics of social, political, and legal integration that found expression in the first wave of films about Turkish Germans that continue to inform the filmic imagination in the new millennium.

A Brief History of Labor Migration: From Guestworker to Fellow Citizen with Migration Background

Labor migration has been central to West Germany’s economic development, definition of citizenship, and self-understanding as a western nation and Judeo-Christian culture (Göktürk et al. 2007). Postwar labor migration began with the first recruitment treaty signed with Italy in 1955, six years before the treaty with Turkey. These treaties responded to the shortage of working-age men after World War II and played a key role in the Economic Miracle and, by extension, the geopolitics of the Cold War; the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the resulting stop of refugees from the East only exacerbated the situation. The so-called *Gastarbeiter* (guestworker) program presumed that these largely manual workers constituted a temporary labor force without immigrant status. In fact, the very term reflects the assumption of temporariness and the reduction of human beings to their labor power (Chin 2007). Its legacy continues to haunt the critical reception of films thus reduced to unmediated reflections of ethnic identities and histories of migration. We revisit the history of labor migration here to open up lines of inquiry into the reconceptualization of filmmaking as artistic labor and of German cinema as a long tradition of creative exchanges, cultural contacts, international and transnational relations, with film professionals as the quintessential guestworkers and the cinema as the very model of cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism.

The unexpected consequences of the early labor migration program found expression in a problematic discursive construction, the use of Turks as the embodiment of the guestworker and the immigrant. The doubling

of their numbers during the early 1970s contributed to the rise of ethnic stereotyping and xenophobic rhetoric and resulted in growing public criticism of the guestworker program, including by leftist intellectuals. Initially the German government had stipulated a principle of rotation specifically in its treaty with Turkey, limiting residence permits to two years. However, because rotation was neither profitable nor practical, the government routinely granted extensions and, until the *Ausländergesetz* (Foreigner Act) of 1965, left the details to corporations employing most of the guestworkers. The global oil crisis in 1973 and ensuing high unemployment radically changed official policies and public debates, with the *Anwerbestopp* (cancellation of recruitment agreements) of November 1973 ushering in a new phase in the approach to migration and immigration.

The end of the active recruitment of laborers coincided with a shift toward integration as a new discourse based on the assumption that German society could absorb a certain number of foreigners. The emphasis on culture inherent in the concept of integration provided a context for migrants to assert agency through cultural production and to acquire an understanding of German identity, nation, and belonging in the absence of actual citizenship rights. The new term “foreign fellow citizen” recognized immigration as a fact, requiring “a complete reorientation of foreigner policy toward making guest workers and their families into full members of West German society” (Chin 2007: 104); but the phrase still implied an authoritative perspective at the center from which these new fellow citizens were to be defined and treated.

The emerging self-understanding since the mid-1980s of West Germany as a country of immigration coincided with the rise of multiculturalism as a critical concept that focused on ethnic (cultural, religious) diversity as constitutive of postfascist society and embraced it as a form of social and cultural enrichment rather than a mere economic necessity. Seen as a progressive, emancipatory concept at the time but since then often criticized as naive, flawed, or obsolete, multiculturalism facilitated not only differentiation among immigrant groups, but also within them. In regards to immigrants from Turkey, this meant greater public awareness of ethnic, religious, and political differences among Alevis, Sunnis, and Shiites or between Turks and Kurds. Along similar lines, multiculturalism provided a context for dialogues with other racialized and ethnicized groups, including Afro Germans and German Jews.

In the absence of full legal recognition, migrants’ participation in the field of cultural production assumed particular relevance, with literature—that is, nonnative speakers writing in German—playing once again a privileged role as a substitute public sphere (Cheesman 2007; Chiellino 2007; Teraoka 1996). Confronted with their instrumentalization as native informants and exoticized others, migrant authors developed various strategies for engaging with those broader structures of reception, from outright defiance or denial to exaggerated performances of ethnicity and

self-branding to an elaborate critique of the culture industry in their work. Comparable to the ethnographic gaze, these structures of reception often reduced artistic production and aesthetic imagination to a reproduction of social reality. These conditions continued throughout the conservative 1980s as political discourses shifted to a rhetoric of essential differences in line with Europe's new racisms and nationalisms. The same fault lines can be traced in the post-Wall debate on parallel societies and the shift from dreams of a unified Europe to the critique of a supposed Fortress Europe. Today politicians and the popular media increasingly look to Turkey—and by extension, Islam—to explain the problems of, and with, migrants in Germany, with the Turkish woman cast as the embodiment of deeper threats to western notions of gender, modernity, and democracy.

The difficulties of German unification in 1989 further undermined the public commitment to diversity and gave way to a period of unprecedented rightwing violence that began with attacks on asylum seekers and contract workers from Vietnam and Mozambique in the former East German towns of Hoyerswerda (1991) and Rostock-Lichtenhagen (1992) and culminated in two fire attacks killing Turkish women and children in the former West German towns of Mölln (1992) and Solingen (1993). A decade later, the violence of 9/11 and subsequent attacks in London and Madrid produced yet another tectonic shift from the appreciative engagement with national, religious, and ethnic differences to the often reductive and undifferentiated focus on Islam as absolute Other (Wohlrab-Sahr 2007). This global realignment occurred one year after the change of the citizenship law, from *ius sanguinis* to *ius soli*, which provided a legal framework for a new understanding of German citizenship and, by extension, national identity.

Against this backdrop the filmmakers discussed in this volume must be seen as actors on a national and transnational stage; they intervene in, and respond to, local and global frames of reference. Many are the children of labor migrants, grew up during the culturally innovative 1970s, witnessed the debate about belonging in the 1980s, and became adults when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. By the time 9/11 occurred, Turkish German filmmakers had already been telling their stories for over half a decade, reason enough for us in the next section to revisit the beginnings of Turkish German cinema to define its significance and cultural contribution to the overlapping fields in which its films circulate.

The Making of Turkish German Cinema

Film professionals work within existing frameworks of culture and industry and present their artistic visions against prevailing political, economic, and discursive horizons. However, they also create new modes of production, develop innovative ways of seeing, and inspire

new aesthetic styles and sensibilities. As an integral part of German and European cinema, Turkish German cinema has been identified with three distinct historical periods and critical paradigms. The first phase, roughly lasting from the 1970s through the 1980s, brought initial attention to the living and working conditions of guestworkers primarily by directors identified with New German Cinema. Drawing on a social realist tradition and relying on ethnic stereotypes, many used empathetic identification to promote social reform and political change. Critics today tend to associate these films with a social worker perspective and take issue with what they perceive as essentialized representations of Turks as mute victims.

The second phase, which has been described as a shift from “the cinema of duty” to the “pleasures of hybridity” (Göktürk 1999: 1; the terms are from Malik 1996), is associated with the self-reflexive appropriation of generic conventions by a new generation of younger German, Turkish, and second-generation Turkish German filmmakers. Inseparable from postmodernism and its antiessentialism, the emphasis in many films is on playfulness and performativity, and the affective habitus is one of empowerment and self-assertion. The third phase, which begins with the new millennium, has brought more critical engagement with questions of migration and immigration beyond Germany and greater interest in documentary and experimental modes. These three paradigms, in turn, can roughly be equated with three very different sets of narrative conventions and affective styles. First, the cinema of mute victims is predicated on a binary relationship that implies a paternalistic structure and exoticizing aesthetic. The embrace of multiculturalism and hybridity during the second phase resituates the films in a transnational context and responds to the performative quality of identity, thus moving beyond the earlier focus on topicality and social realism. Finally, in the contemporary configuration, the presumed link between filmmakers’ biographies and filmic representation is further complicated, if not completely severed, in cosmopolitan productions made by Turkish Germans as well as ethnic Germans or Austrians, featuring Turkish actors cast as ethnic Germans, and involving multiscreen installations about migration within Turkey exhibited in Germany and elsewhere.

In order to understand this trajectory, we need to return to the first films thematizing “the problem” of the guestworker. From the beginning this process of inscription and projection involved the overdetermined figure of the suffering and entrapped Turkish woman, a key witness in both feminist critiques of patriarchy and liberal arguments for secular democracy. In three controversial films, Helma Sanders-Brahms’s *Shirin’s Hochzeit* (*Shirin’s Wedding*, 1976), Tevfik Başer’s *40 qm Deutschland* (*Forty Square Meters of Germany*, 1986), and Hark Bohm’s *Yasemin* (1988), Turkish women experience oppression at the hands of Turkish men. As many scholars have noted, using women’s bodies as ciphers for oppression

shifts the discursive framework from labor migration to gender and sexuality, connections that resonate in the headscarf debate today (Abu-Lughod 2002).

Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Angst essen Seele auf* (*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, 1974), by contrast, must be seen as the prime example of an enlightened victimology. His film straddles the tension between criticizing postwar racism as a continuation of the Nazi past and reifying the mute stranger as an object of orientalist fascination. Fassbinder originally intended the film to tell the story of a Turkish labor migrant titled "All Turks Are Called Ali." Instead his film aestheticizes the nude body of the main character Ali, a Moroccan. Ali's spectatorial objectification falls in line with the central role that female characters have played for a liberal discourse of tolerance that pivots on the melodramatic staging of feminine victimization; to what degree an ethnicized masculinity serves similar purposes will be examined by Berna Gueneli in this volume.

The guestworker as a heuristic device in the negotiation of identities also appeared in Turkish films where migration has constituted an important trope in thematizing the movement from the country to the city in economic terms (Dönmez-Colin 2008). Framing transnational labor migration from a Marxist perspective, Yılmaz Güney's film *Baba* (*The Father*, 1971) features a poor fisherman who dreams of working in West Germany in order to be able to take care of his wife and two children, but he does not pass the medical exam required for a work permit. When his rich landlord murders a man, the main character, Baba, takes the fall for him, falsely confessing to the crime. The film suggests that his subsequent time in prison equals the life he would have spent abroad as a labor migrant. While Baba is in prison, the landlord destroys his family, forcing the daughter into prostitution and leading the son into a life of crime—an anticapitalist critique largely missing from the films made in Germany.

In the mid-1990s heretofore unseen images produced by Turkish Germans of the second generation brought a fundamental change in the modes of representation and enunciation. Several films launched new careers, with Seyhan Derin's *Ben Annemin Kızıyım—Ich bin die Tochter meiner Mutter* (*I Am My Mother's Daughter*, 1996), Aysun Bademsoy's *Nach dem Spiel* (*After the Game*, 1997), Thomas Arslan's *Geschwister—Kardesler* (*Brothers and Sisters*, 1997), Fatih Akın's *Kurz und schmerzlos* (*Short Sharp Shock*, 1998), Yüksel Yavuz's *Aprilkinder* (*April Children*, 1998), Hussi Kutlucan's *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (*Me Boss, You Sneakers!*, 1998), Kutluğ Ataman's *Lola + Bilidikid* (*Lola and Billy the Kid*, 1999), and Ayşe Polat's *Auslandstournee* (*Tour Abroad*, 2000) all appearing over the course of four years. Gone were the exploited guestworkers and their suffering wives and oppressed daughters. The majority of these emerging filmmakers was born in Germany or Turkey and grew up with one or two parents with migration background. The films offer self-confident responses to lived experiences often in conflict with the parent generation and open to other minoritarian positionalities,

be they other immigrant or refugee groups or gays and transgender people. In the process, they leave behind old dogmas of privileging politics over aesthetics, realism over fantasy, suffering over pleasure, and an aesthetic of estrangement over emotional engagement.

Today genre cinema has emerged as the dominant form of Turkish German cinema, a development examined explicitly in the contribution by Daniela Berghahn. However, proliferation across networks and platforms, including television and art installations, has also diversified forms and formats, addressing different audiences and modes of cultural consumption, a point confirmed in the essays by Brad Prager, Brent Peterson, and Nilgün Bayraktar. Market forces highlight mainstream genres, as evidenced by *Almanya* and its reworking of history as comedy in asserting the new normalcy of Turkish Germans and, by extension, German multicultural society. Feature-length films privilege genre conventions, some with ironic distance, and others with calculated conventionality. Ayşe Polat's youth drama *Luks Glück* (*Luk's Luck*, 2010), Feo Aladağ's melodrama *Die Fremde* (*When We Leave*, 2010), Fatih Akın's comedy *Soul Kitchen* (2009), and Thomas Arslan's Berlin neo-noir *Im Schatten* (*In the Shadows*, 2010) share a subtle sensitivity vis-à-vis assumed ethnic or national identities and an embrace of genre conventions, at times playful. They overcome the traditional split between genre cinema with its commitment to popular entertainment and the kind of auteur cinema or *cinéma engagé* often aligned with ethnic or political minorities. The proliferation of new forms even extends to lowbrow comedies such as Anno Saul's *Kebab Connection* (2004) or films that do not focus on Turkish German characters such as Buket Alakuş's *Finnischer Tango* (*Finnish Tango*, 2008) and Thomas Arslan's *Ferien* (*Vacation*, 2007)—all powerful indications of the normalization of ethnic imaginaries and the possibility of moving beyond paradigms implied by ethnicity altogether.

Documentary forms, attractive to many filmmakers because of the lower production costs, do not enjoy the privileged status of feature films among the viewing public and generally receive little scholarly attention. Several recent documentaries explicitly engage with this new normalcy in more critical ways, thus paradoxically revealing its status as not-yet-taken-for-granted, a dynamic explored by Ingeborg Majer-O'Sickey and Angelica Fenner. The same tension can be found in first-time filmmaker Anna Hepp's documentary *Rotkohl und Blaukraut* (*Turkish Kraut*, 2011) and its endearing portrait of Turkish Germans in the industrial Ruhr region. Other documentaries such as Martina Priessner's *Wir sitzen im Süden* (*We Are Based Down South*, 2010) and Asli Özge's *Men on the Bridge—Köprüdekiler* (2009) move the scene of representation to Turkey, thus expanding the spatial imaginary toward a global south, in the former film through the story of Turks who grew up in Germany working at an outsourced German call center in Istanbul. Moreover, *Men on the Bridge* confirms the increasing difficulty of defining the boundaries of

national cinema. Director Asli Özge and cameraman Emre Erkmen grew up in Turkey and now live and work in Germany. The film's production company is German-based with backing from German as well as Turkish and Dutch film and media funds, revealing connections also observable in the methodological and theoretical shift from binary and reductive scholarship to more dynamic, dialogic, and multidimensional models explored by Randall Halle in his contribution to this volume.

Turkish German (Film) Studies: Intersecting Fields, Emerging Paradigms

Scholarship on Turkish German cinema has changed greatly in response to the explosion of films since the mid-1990s; the resultant disagreements and contradictions are an integral part of this process. Thus one of the first German-language publications on the subject, the 1995 anthology *"Getürkte Bilder": Zur Inszenierung von Fremden im Film* ("Fake [related to: 'Turkish'] Pictures": About the Staging of Strangers in Film), edited by Ernst Karpf et al., achieves a compelling deconstruction of the filmic representation of the figure of the foreign and the foreigner. But the criticism of the representation of migration and ethnic minorities in Germany remains within a limited theoretical frame that imagines the migrants on screen only in terms of their foreignness. In the late 1990s Deniz Göktürk observed a gradual shift in filmic sensibilities from the above-mentioned "cinema of duty" to the "pleasures of hybridity"; the implications of this shift have since been discussed extensively in numerous scholarly articles (Ezli 2009; Fenner 2003; Göktürk 1999; Rendi 2006).

In responding to new filmic and critical sensibilities, scholars on both sides of the Atlantic also make use of important theoretical interventions such as Homi Bhabha's theorization of the postcolonial location of culture, Arjun Appadurai's writings on the labor of the imagination under globalization, and Hamid Naficy's concept of accented cinema (Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1996; Naficy 2001). Gender and sexuality emerged as an important nexus of analysis and a particularly salient marker of cultural and conceptual change (Eren 2003; Göktürk 2000; Kılıçbay 2006; Menzel 2002a and 2002b). On the level of formal analysis, cinematic spaces and soundscapes, too, have emerged as major sites for analyzing the films' political efficacies and aesthetic practices (Baer 2008; Gallagher 2006; Kosta 2010; Kraenzle 2009) and for utilizing the various spatial, visual, and affective turns in relation to Turkish German culture (Kaya 2007).

The theoretical apparatus developed over the last two decades, however, not only draws on methodologies from film studies and cultural theory. Literary scholars, in particular, have made critical interventions that force us to reconsider the larger theoretical framing of discussions of Turkish German culture in general. Leslie Adelson, Azade Seyhan, and B. Venkat

Mani have complicated the terms taken for granted in earlier debates on migration, ethnicity, and (national) identity. Adelson persuasively argues against reading cultural production about migration as a mimetic representation of social reality and rejects the view of migration as “in-between” two whole cultures incommensurable with each other (2001). Seyhan extends the context for Turkish German cultural production, focusing on narratives that are not “bound by national borders, languages, and literary and critical traditions” (2001: 4). Opposed to the terms ethnic and immigrant literature, she prefers the concept “transnational” as “a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon” (2001: 10). Continuing Adelson’s and Seyhan’s complication of the relationships of authors and texts bound by national imaginaries, B. Venkat Mani endows literary texts with the ability to “push the boundaries of the German language and transform its grammar and vocabulary both literally and figuratively” putting forth “cosmopolitical claims,” based on multiple simultaneous affiliations that unsettle the links among “home, belonging, and cultural citizenship” (2007: 5 and 7). Analyzing a “literature of Turkish migration” that incorporates itself “into and beyond national archives,” Adelson in fact observes a Turkish turn in German culture (2005: 12).

Nonetheless, these contributions confirm that ethnicity continues to be a valid, even if problematic, category of inquiry, enhanced by a set of recent scholarly works that enable us to theorize ethnicity beyond its reductive, normative, or exclusionary functions. Ruth Mandel has shown that the German state aspires to present itself as cosmopolitan by branding itself as “tolerant humanist, and universalist” precisely through its engagement with the question of ethnicity (2008: 14). Another way of rethinking ethnicity informs Katrin Sieg’s concept of ethnic drag and its implications for the productivity of cultural performance, including forms of self-ethnicization (2002). Her model allows for a conception of identity not as biologically innate but a performative masquerade able to negotiate power in the field of culture. In film studies, the interpretative frameworks anchored in this new understanding of cosmopolitan and cosmopolitical claims also extend to economic relations in the New Europe and beyond. For instance, Randall Halle’s study on *German Film after Germany: Toward a Transnational Aesthetic* grounds the theorization of transnational film aesthetics in an economic approach, emphasizing ensembles of production and funding (2008: 30–128). In Akın’s films, the focus of the anthology’s fourth part, he finds a transnational normalcy that moves beyond the model of cohabitation and opens up a space similar to Mani’s vision of cosmopolitical claims.

Theoretical approaches to the transnational flows of culture have significantly shaped the discussion of Turkish German cinema since the mid-1990s and linked it to new research in critical geography, anthropology, and cultural studies. The growing interest in European cinema as a category of academic inquiry and cultural consumption has allowed

scholars to examine Turkish German cinema in comparative contexts, from Deniz Göktürk's participation in early transnational diasporic cinema research to Daniela Berghahn's and Claudia Sternberg's coedited 2010 volume on *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*. Meanwhile Turkish German films are used to expand and complicate standard accounts of German film history (Bergfelder et al. 2008; Hake 2008; Brockmann 2010); this phenomenon can even be observed in the limited academic engagement with Turkish German cinema in Germany, as evidenced by Özkan Ezli's 2010 edited volume on Akın's *Auf der anderen Seite (The Edge of Heaven, 2007)*. Last but not least, on both sides of the Atlantic, the growing interest in Turkish German cinema cannot be separated from the proliferation of film festivals such as the Nuremberg-based Filmfestival Türkei/Deutschland (Film Festival Turkey/Germany), the availability of many (subtitled) films on DVDs and their exhibition in noncommercial and commercial venues, the inclusion of representative films in German-culture courses offered at British and North American universities, and the active involvement of academic publishing houses in promoting scholarship on the subject.

Turkish German Cinema on Multiple Screens: Theoretical Interventions and Institutional Frameworks

In this volume, we propose to move beyond the traditional focus on representation and signification to approach Turkish German cinema as part of a long history of film professionals in German and European cinema with a migration background. The connection between the transnational as a function of film production and film aesthetics, and the movements of film workers and ethnic/national stereotypes across borders and media are an essential part of this long history. As argued earlier, the important, provocative, and innovative—but sometimes also mediocre and conventional—films subsumed under the category of Turkish German cinema cannot be reduced to the discourses of identity, as defined through a fixed number of narrative themes and motifs, the implicit equation of filmic representation and social reality, and specific assumptions about film authorship and (auto)biography. Instead of abandoning identity as a critical category altogether, we suggest expanding our definition of Turkish German cinema to include the perspective of filmmaking as a profession and of ethnicity as a function of self-branding. This enables us to theorize transnational cinema as part of Europe's new creative economies and its long history of film migration and cultural exchange. Turkish German cinema makes a rightful claim to occupying both sides of the divide marked by the absent hyphen: of being self and Other, at home and abroad, foreign and native—a unique position that explains the frequent enlistment of these films in larger theoretical debates about national cinema.

Even a cursory look at recent publications confirms the transnational as a key category in explaining the new cinema of hybridity that emerged in the Berlin Republic and the New Europe of the 1990s and that today finds privileged expression in Turkish German cinema. Central to most writings on these films is the search for critical tools adequate to the movements of peoples, ideas, and services in a globalized world and the filmic constructions of identity as fluid, contingent, and multiple (Bergfelder 2005; Hjort 2009). Scholars have recognized the limitations of the national as a category of film analysis (and do the same for the distinctions between art cinema and popular cinema) and begun to reassess the historical narratives and cultural topographies that place Germany within Europe and both in relation to Hollywood (Silberman 1996; Higson 2000). Furthermore scholars have rejected the critical binaries—captured in terms such as in-betweenness, interculturalism, and so forth—that still conceive of such artistic trajectories and aesthetic sensibilities primarily in one-directional terms (i.e., from the south to the north, from the periphery to the center) and hierarchical modes (i.e., through the dynamics of self and other, majority and minority, or the universal and the specific).

In the growing body of scholarship, the conflation of the economics and politics of transnational cinema and the filmic representation of the problems of ethnic, racial, and national identities has produced important new insights and critical blind spots. As we have shown above, the latter result from the discursive enlistment of, or self-presentation by, Turkish German filmmakers as native informants or typical immigrants and a reading of their films as allegories of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, that is, as either accurate reflections of social reality or utopian projections of the pleasures of hybridity. At the same time, the theoretical preoccupation with fluid subjectivities, contested identities, and negotiated meanings ignores well-established traditions that, in the form of genre conventions, type casting, and the star system, have made ethnic stereotypes and the actors who perform them an integral part of German cinema since the Wilhelmine era. More specifically, ahistorical approaches often elide the material conditions under which film professionals with migration background come to perform their various roles: as directors insisting on their status as unhyphenated filmmakers but willing to speak out on Turkish German issues; as actors both empowered and constrained by being cast in ethnic roles; as screenwriters at once resisting and relying on the demand for typical stories in typical settings with typical characters; as producers and distributors marketing Turkish Germanness as a commodity to different audiences (German, Turkish German, Turkish, European); and as creative individuals building on informal networks of family and friends to realize their film projects under the typical conditions of artisanal production and new local and regional funding schemes, points addressed in greater detail in the final section on Akın.

From its inception German cinema has been multicultural, accented, hybrid, and hyphenated; Turkish German cinema is only the latest manifestation of a model of cultural production and representation unique to cinema and other modern forms of entertainment. Notwithstanding the official discourse on national cinema, filmic production, distribution, and consumption have always been international as well as transnational, with film professionals (both native and foreign-born) as the quintessential skilled migrant worker. Examples include the Danish film professionals in Wilhelmine cinema, the Russian film as the first diasporic cinema in post-1918 European cinema, the contribution of German Jewish actors and directors to Weimar cinema, or the leading role of Austro-Hungarians in the sound film of the late 1920s and early 1930s (Behn 1994; Diestelmeyer 2006; Schöning 1995 and 2005). German cinema after 1933 may be described as the model of a national/nationalistic cinema; but the Central European exiles and émigrés in Hollywood and elsewhere also became the best-known historical example of an accented or diasporic cinema. After the war, such transnational movements continued in the contribution of remigrants, political exiles, and avant-garde cosmopolitans (Peter Lilienthal, Jean-Marie Straub/Danièle Huillet) to New German Cinema, and the East German coproductions with Eastern Bloc and Third World socialist countries. In order to understand ethnicity as a representational, performative, discursive and historical category, we therefore need to untangle the various strands that define its contradictory functions in the making of national and transnational cinemas, beginning with the self-representation of directors and actors as ethnic or foreign in changing historical contexts.

Linking the mobilization of ethnic and national stereotypes in genre and art cinema to the professional and artistic choices of film directors and actors with migration background leads us to a better understanding of the significance of Turkish German cinema as a unique social, cultural, and artistic phenomenon. These film professionals stand in a long history of mobility and cultural contact made possible by the great disruptions of twentieth-century history: wars and revolutions, but also exile, diaspora, global capitalism, labor migration, and cultural modernity. Yet the filmmakers discussed here also differ fundamentally from most of their precursors in that most are German-born, second-generation immigrants, unlike the foreigners, migrants, and exiles who have performed ethnicity and projected otherness on German screens until now. In this sense Turkish German cinema resembles more closely early Hollywood cinema and its heavy reliance on immigrants and foreigners as the producers and consumers of popular constructions of nationhood and images of Otherness.

Nonetheless, filmmakers such as Fatih Akın, Thomas Arlsan, Kutluğ Ataman, Ayşe Polat, and Seyhan Derin, along with the actors regularly cast in their films, share with their predecessors—the Danes of the 1910s, the

Russians of the 1920s, and the Austrians and Hungarians of the 1930s—an acute awareness of the profitable, productive, and performative quality of ethnicity as a marker of difference and an essential part of the economics of signs and significations in national and transnational cinemas. In that sense, the central position of Turkish German cinema within a contemporary visual culture that encompasses film, television, live comedy, hip hop music, social networks, Internet culture, and installation art not only refers back to a longer history of media convergence and aesthetic hybridization but also opens up a perspective from which to rethink existing accounts of German film and film history beyond the national and beyond identity.

The volume at hand responds to this proliferation of new artistic and critical approaches by attempting a systematic but not comprehensive stocktaking of contemporary filmic practices of Turkish German cinema. Individual contributions access a range of disciplinary frameworks, including reception studies, television studies, star studies, feminist theory, and minority studies. Several take the opportunity to expand on themes that have emerged in the previous years such as Fatih Akın's representative role as auteur in a new global art cinema. Throughout we propose to make productive use of the disagreements and contradictions that, as outlined on the previous pages, define rather than confine this field of artistic production and critical engagement. In other words, the volume seeks to reproduce the centrifugal proliferation of methodologies that accompanies the prevalence of Turkish German visual culture, including film, television, installation art, actors and actresses, and the reception of films in Germany and Turkey. At the same time, the fifteen contributions resonate with each other and their geographically and materially constituted fields, with keywords such as identity, stereotype, hybridity, migration, globalization, cosmopolitanism, social realism, spectatorship, nostalgia, and performativity functioning like an invisible thread.

Accordingly the first three essays intervene in the status quo of scholarly debates about Turkish German cinema by revisiting the objects of study that have haunted its theorization from the outset: ethnic stereotypes. Daniela Berghahn's "My Big Fat Turkish Wedding: From Culture Clash to Romcom" opens the section by illustrating popular culture's contemporary self-aware employment of stereotypes in romantic comedies and their globally circulating spin-offs. Using Roland Barthes's notion of myth, David Gramling focuses on cinematic narratives that appear to adhere to well-known conventions. His "The Oblivion of Influence: Transmigration, Tropology, and Myth-Making in Feo Aladağ's *When We Leave*" invites us to read the film's seeming realism as a myth-making in which the actors' iconic presence overrides their roles and undermines the film's narrative legitimacy. The section concludes with Marco Abel's provocative intervention into scholarly debates overdetermined by the concern with identity. Building on Jacques Rancière's notion of the political, "The Minor Cinema of Thomas Arslan: A Prolegomenon" theorizes Arslan's films as

minor cinema in the Deleuzian sense and entails a reconceptualization of the political through the film's formal and aesthetic choices.

The volume's second section foregrounds the diversity of genres and media that Turkish German visual culture inhabits today. In her piece "Roots and Routes of the Diasporic Documentarian: A Psychogeography of Fatih Akin's *We Forgot to Go Back*," Angelica Fenner resituates Akin's autobiographical documentary through his public self-presentation and the film's dynamic spatial designators, and examines its invocation of nostalgia as a symptom not of individual affection but of larger social and cultural phenomena. Ingeborg Majer-O'Sickey's "Gendered Kicks: Buket Alakuş and Aysun Bademsoy's Soccer Films" also concerns documentary modes but shifts the focus to the ways in which these cinefeminists use filmic soccer narratives to imagine and advance women's presence in the public sphere. Nilgün Bayraktar's "Location and Mobility in Kutluğ Ataman's Site-specific Video Installation *Kiiba*" continues these lines of inquiry by focusing on recent shifts in the modes of exhibition from single-screen movie theaters to multiscreen installation art. As the first of two contributions on television, Brent Peterson's "*Turkish for Beginners*: Teaching Cosmopolitanism to Germans" argues that a popular television series can teach cosmopolitanism to Germans via its staging of interethnic romances. Similarly Brad Prager's "'Only the Wounded Honor Fights': Züli Alakuş's *Rage* and the Drama of the Turkish German Perpetrator" uses the political debates about violent Turkish German youth to shift attention to the portrayal of the emasculated liberal German father as a symptom of the fragile authority of the generation of 1968 and its surface habitus of social tolerance.

The undergirding question of how institutional contexts and practices shape Turkish German cinema comes to the fore in our third section, beginning with Randall Halle's reading of the institution of the motion-picture theater as an interzone, a term he proposes as an alternative to Arjun Appadurai's concept of the ethnoscape, and which he tests in his empirically based case study of Karli Kino in Berlin. Berna Gueneli continues this line of inquiry by focusing on two actors, Mehmet Kurtuluş and Birol Ünel, and the ways in which their casting reproduces orientalist strategies of sexualization and eroticization, not least through the continuities and discontinuities with New German Cinema. The final two contributions in this section survey the reception of Fatih Akin in the German and Turkish press, outlining two distinct but related sets of responses in which a desire for national identification and representation emerges as a central concern. Karolin Machtans traces the reactions to Akin's oeuvre and public persona in the German press, whereas Ayça Tunç Cox reads the Turkish reception of Akin in the larger context of Turkey's relationship to Europe and of individual newspapers' ideological positions within Turkish party politics. These last two essays prepare the ground for the fourth section, a case study on Fatih Akin and his contribution to what Rosalind Galt and

Karl Schoonover call global art cinema (2010). Accordingly Mine Eren's "Cosmopolitan Filmmaking: Fatih Akin's *In July* and *Head-On*" relates cosmopolitanism in Akin's films to the arabesque as a recurring aesthetic theme and affective mode, outlining a shift in Akin's hopes and attitudes toward Europe from *In July* to *Head-On*. The final two essays engage with music as an integral part of Akin's cinematic strategies. The practice of citing, riffing, referencing, and remixing within a global musical archive and the citational community that it seeks to create shapes Roger Hillman and Vivien Silvey's jointly authored argument in "Remixing Hamburg: Transnationalism in Fatih Akin's *Soul Kitchen*." Their observations on how global soundscapes contribute to the construction of a local place—in this case Hamburg—dialogues with the last contribution, Deniz Göktürk's "World Cinema Goes Digital: Looking at Europe from the Other Shore." Here Göktürk shows how contemporary global cinema constructs locality based on a close reading in *The Edge of Heaven* of the music of Kazım Koyuncu from the Black Sea region, negotiating the aural dimension of film that proliferates in the digital world of multiple textual platforms.

This project grew out of a workshop held at the University of Texas at Austin in March 2010. Not all participants were able to contribute, but several other contributors were added in order to include underrepresented areas of inquiry. From the beginning, our goal has been threefold: to offer an overview of contemporary practices and debates associated with Turkish German cinema, to outline the shifts in aesthetic and critical sensibilities since the 1970s, and to complicate the dominant terms of analysis by introducing intertextual, contextual, institutional, and transnational perspectives. The resulting contradictions remain an integral part of the contemporary discourse on Germany as a country of immigration and characterize the overall organization and purpose of this volume as well. We propose that this structural tension is integral to the richness and diversity of Turkish German cinema and the theoretical field that it has constituted and that continues to be constituted through it. The strategies with which filmmakers respond to those tensions speak to broader issues of social belonging and artistic expression in the globalized world; they also allow us to affirm the power of film and related audiovisual media in making sense of its actual and imaginary movements and places.

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1. A note on translations: All translations from German or Turkish are by the contributors unless noted otherwise. All films are quoted first in their original language and then by their English release title or translated title. We followed the correct spelling of Turkish names and quotes whenever possible, but did not correct incorrect spelling in original quotes and titles.