

***Heimat, fremde Heimat: Renegotiating and
Deterritorialising Heimat in New Austrian Film***

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Abstract

This thesis explores the complex relationship between the concepts of *Heimat* and *Fremde* in a number of contemporary Austrian films. Firstly, by revisiting and re-examining a variety of *Heimatfilme*, from the genre's inception in the 1920s up until the present day, I aim to draw on the ideas posed by scholars including Johannes von Moltke which challenge the common assumption that *Heimat* exists in direct opposition to *Fremde*, and argue that the two seemingly contradictory concepts are in fact mutually contingent on one another. Then, focussing on key works by the New Austrian Filmmakers, Houchang Allahyari (*I Love Vienna*, 1991), Florian Flicker (*Suzie Washington*, 1998) and Barbara Albert (*Nordrand*, 1999), I demonstrate the manner in which these filmmakers continue to draw on the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre in order to re-evaluate the complex relationship between *Heimat* and *Fremde* within the context of post-1990 Europe. These filmmakers, as this thesis demonstrates, return to the *Heimatfilm* genre as a means to probe issues of space, place, identity and belonging, which, I maintain, also undergo a series of renegotiations and redefinitions within their films. By drawing on contemporary globalisation and migrant and diasporic film studies, and by critically engaging with contemporary *Heimat* discourse, this thesis seeks to investigate the manner in which these New Austrian Filmmakers attempt to renegotiate and deterritorialise the concept of *Heimat* in response to the changing needs of an increasingly globalised and multicultural society.

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Introduction

‘There is a desire to be “at home” in the new and disorientating global space.’¹

Setting the Scene

Since its inception in German-language culture during the 19th century, the term *Heimat*, which is often inadequately translated as ‘homeland’ or ‘homestead’, has been intrinsically tied to notions of identity and belonging within the German-speaking world. The concept, as numerous critics including Daniela Berghahn agree, ‘gains currency when precisely those certainties and securities are threatened.’² Accordingly, throughout German-language film history, the *Heimatfilm* genre has been employed as a tool to probe these notions of identity and belonging in response to the evolving geo-political landscape of the German-speaking lands. As film scholar Eric Rentschler notes, ‘the *Heimatfilm*, by dint of its persistence throughout the entire span of German [-language] film history, acts as a seismograph, one that allows us to gauge enduring presences as they have evolved over time.’³ Indeed, from registering the rise of the Nazis in the 1920s (as in the *Bergfilme* of Luis Trenker and Leni Riefenstahl), to engaging with the devastation and dislocation that characterised the postwar years (as seen in the classical 1950s *Heimatfilme* of Alfons Stümmer and Hans Deppe), and in assisting with the nations’ difficult process of

¹ David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 87.

² Daniela Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film: The Diasporic Family in Contemporary European Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 58.

³ Eric Rentschler, *West German Film in the Course of Time: Reflections on the Twenty Years since Oberhausen* (Bedford Hills: Redgrave, 1984), p.104.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung that followed (as achieved in the 1960s/70s/80s critical/anti-*Heimatfilme* of Christian Berger and Rainer Werner Fassbinder), the *Heimatfilm* genre can be seen as a multifaceted genre that evolves over time in response to the various contemporaneous needs and desires of the population.

Although, when one thinks of the *Heimatfilm*, one may be inclined to think back to its 1950s manifestations, which were typified by their bright, vivacious, idyllic representations of local townsfolk traversing picturesque Austrian and West German alpine landscapes, the genre has experienced a renaissance and a recuperation in contemporary German-language film. Indeed, in a contemporary ‘global age,’ characterised by increased mobility, global markets and the proliferation of interactive technologies, the Austrian and German film industries are re-engaging with their cinematic past as a means to visually represent and critically engage with the contemporary social and political concerns of the present.

While, in recent years, a plethora of scholarship has emerged which explores the changing notions of *Heimat* within the context of globalisation and multiculturalism, these works predominantly look to contemporary German film and literature to find evidence of *Heimat*'s semantic and syntactic progression. Works by scholars including Friederike Eigler, Yvonne Franke, Paul Cooke, Mareike Herrmann, Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, Sarah Wüst, Gabriele Eichmanns, Alexandra Ludewig and Daniela Berghahn, for instance, all offer insightful and engaging

examinations into *Heimat*'s contemporary redefinitions.⁴ However, with the exception of Alexandra Ludewig and Marieke Herrmann – who, nevertheless, approach Austrian film from under the rubric of German film – these scholars fail to recognise and realise the extent to which the *Heimatfilm* genre is also re-emerging in contemporary Austrian cinema. Hence, while I will engage with and draw on the ideas presented by these various scholars, I will look to the more neglected field of Austrian film to determine the prevalence and indeed the relevance of *Heimat* in the new global age.

Recent Discourses

Since the late 1980s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union – and the various new forms of migration that these historical events have engendered – Austrian audio-visual culture has continued to explore Europe's and its own shifting definitions through the optic of *Heimat* with renewed urgency. This becomes apparent, not least, when we look at how the nation is continuing to interrogate the concept of

⁴ See Friederike Eigler, 'Critical Approaches to *Heimat* and the "Spatial Turn"', *New German Critique*, 115, 39:1 (2012), pp. 27-48; Yvonne Franke, 'The Genres of Europeanization - Moving Towards the New *Heimatfilm*' (Unpublished PhD, The University of Pittsburgh, 2013); Paul Cooke, *Contemporary German Cinema* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2012); Marieke Herrmann, 'The Memory of *Heimat* in Recent Berlin School Films', in *Heimat: At the Intersection of Memory and Space*, ed. by Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 158-175; Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000); Sarah Wüst, 'Young German *Heimatfilm*: Negotiations of a Powerful Myth', *Austausch*, 1:1 (2011), pp. 76-94; Gabriele Eichmanns, 'Introduction: *Heimat* in the age of globalisation', in *Heimat Goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, ed. by Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 1-13; Alexandra Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia: 100 Years of German *Heimat* Film* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011); Daniela Berghahn, 'No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecomings in the Films of Fatih Akin', *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 4:3 (2006), pp. 141-157.

Heimat with regards to its increasingly multicultural population on Austrian television and cinema screens.⁵ A good case in point is the *ORF* television programme, *Heimat, fremde Heimat*, which appeared on Austrian television screens for the first time in the late 1980s. Although, as Petra Herczeg contends, ‘the Austrian media landscape is rather limited’ for migrants, *Heimat, fremde Heimat* offers Austria’s multicultural population a visual platform to engage with the ‘ethnic issues’ of ‘naturalised immigrants, long-term residents of foreign nationalities and members of Austrian ethnic groups.’⁶ Broadcast to the Austrian nation every Sunday afternoon, the show demonstrates *ORF*’s desire to remove *Heimat* from a specifically German-speaking context in order to explore notions of identity and belonging from the point of view of the nation’s multicultural citizens. Indeed, although the programme is broadcast in German, it features interviews and pre-recorded segments wherein the featured persons speak in their native mother tongues, and their dialogue is translated into German through the use of subtitles. The aim of the show, according to its editorial staff, is to ‘support togetherness, cultural variety and integration in Austria,’ while taking into account the personal and social issues that migration and displacement often incorporate.⁷

⁵ Also see the *Der Neue Heimatfilm Festival*, which takes place in the Austrian town of Freistadt every year. The film festival not only looks at *Heimat* as a concept which unites different cultures and ethnic backgrounds within an Austrian setting but it also looks to other films from around the world to demonstrate how they also draw on the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre. See Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 389.

⁶ Petra Herczeg, ‘Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Austria: Assimilation, Integration and the Media’, in *Media, Migration, Integration: European and North American Perspectives*, ed. by Rainer Geissler and Horst Pottker (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), p. 83.

⁷ ‘Ziel der zahlreichen Aktivitäten der ORF-Minderheitenredaktion ist es, das Miteinander, die kulturelle Vielfalt und die Integration in Österreich zu fördern.’ See *Ibid.*

The show's title, *Heimat, fremde Heimat*, offers an interesting and useful avenue to explore the relationship between the concepts of *Heimat* and *Fremde* within the context of contemporary *Heimat* discourse. Indeed, the term *Fremde*, which is often translated as 'foreign land' or that which is 'foreign,' on a superficial level, appears in diametric opposition to *Heimat*. As Chris Wickham explains, 'on the first level, *Fremde* is an antonym to *Heimat*. What is not of the *Heimat* is *fremd* or belongs to *Fremde*.'⁸ Traditional, parochial readings of the concept of *Heimat* attest to this view. For instance, *Heimat*, as Rentschler notes can be seen as 'an uncontaminated space,' which, as Anton Kaes adds, 'refers to everything that is not distant and foreign.'⁹

In contemporary *Heimat* discourse, these readings of *Heimat* appear wholly outdated. Indeed, when we approach the title of the *ORF* television show a number of ambiguities arise. Firstly, *Heimat*, which is regarded by Jeffery Peck as a word that 'belongs to the Germans, to a specific past and tradition that are linked to common values, ideals, customs, and locations,' is, it seems, being deterritorialised by *ORF* and is being removed from a quintessentially German-speaking context.¹⁰ For example, by approaching the concept of *Heimat* from a non-native perspective, *Heimat* is no longer bound to the ethnic, linguistic and geographical boundaries of the German-speaking lands. Secondly, by suggesting that a person can leave one *Heimat* and gain another, *Heimat* has become pluralised. No longer is the concept of

⁸ See Chris Wickham, *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany: Longing and Belonging* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), p. 55.

⁹ See Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 165.

¹⁰ Jeffrey M. Peck, 'Rac(e)ing the Nation: Is There A German "Home"?', in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 484.

Heimat absolute but it can be lost, regained, even multiplied, elsewhere.¹¹

Finally, the title implies that the *Heimat* can actually be *fremd*. Thus, *Heimat* and *Fremde* are no longer diametrically opposed but are in fact concomitant.

In light of these observations, a number of epistemological questions arise with regards to the very validity of the term. For instance, how can a term that has been so deeply rooted in a German-speaking context since the end of the 19th century suddenly transcend its cultural and geographical limitations? What is *Heimat* if it is no longer linked to a specific sense of place? And, if the concept of *Heimat* is so elusive, is there any validity in continuing to use the term? Firstly, by continuing to employ the term, this thesis aims to demonstrate that *Heimat* continues to provide an appropriate analytical tool for engaging with contemporary discourses concerning identity, belonging, space and place. Secondly, I wish to counter traditional and outdated works which tend to perceive *Heimat* as a regressive and reactionary term which implies homogeneity, biological essentialism and stasis.¹² Finally, I aim to demonstrate that it is perfectly possible for the seemingly contradictory concepts of *Heimat* and *Fremde* to coexist. As David Morley and Kevin Robins argue, in a world where mobility and displacement is commonplace, Germany, and indeed Austria are ‘at once *Heimat* and *Fremde* [...] home for some [...] exile for others.’¹³ By tracing the origins of *Heimat*, and in registering some of the contradictory ways in

¹¹ See Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, pp. 194-212.

¹² See for instance Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierung in den Naturwissenschaften* (Reinbek: Rohwohlt, 2006), pp. 288-289.

¹³ David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 102. Also see Heidrun Suhr, ‘Ausländerliteratur: Minority Literature in the Federal Republic of Germany’, *New German Critique*, 46 (1989), p. 72.

which the term has been appropriated throughout the course of German-speaking history, I will now highlight the incongruous nature of *Heimat* and will evaluate the purpose of these contradictions within the multifarious world of *Heimat* discourse.

Towards a definition

Heimat, as I stated earlier, is a German term that not only lacks a definitive English translation, but is so heavily implicated within a multitude of contradictory connotations, that there exists a variety of competing definitions with a range of nuances all revolving around notions of homeland, roots and belonging. As Alon Confino illuminates, ‘a flexible, dynamic, and malleable notion, *Heimat* was appropriated for different political and cultural ends; no one had exclusive copyrights of the *Heimat* idea, as it had been appropriated by very different hands in unpredictable ways.’¹⁴ Nevertheless, despite the term’s ostensible indefinability, the majority of scholars agree that in its simplest translation *Heimat* can be defined as ‘homeland’ or ‘hometown,’ as Alexandra Ludewig succinctly sums up:

Traditionally, the term elicits connotations of origin, birthplace, of oneself and one’s ancestors, and even of an original area of settlement and homeland. This corresponds most neatly with English terms such as “native

¹⁴ Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 28.

land”, “land of my birth,” “land of my forefathers,” “native shore,” and “mother country.”¹⁵

However, during the 19th century, as a result of the rapid industrialisation, social change and migration that was ubiquitous in the German-speaking lands at this time, *Heimat* lost this relatively simple, concrete definition and instead began to acquire emotional connotations and ties. Scholars including Celia Applegate and Confino trace the term’s semantic progression and its cultural propagation back to the late 19th century when, following the unification of Germany in 1871, *Heimat* began to emerge in the form of local, provincial, celebration as a regressive and reactionary response to the nation’s rapid modernisation and urbanisation. Applegate, for instance, examines the manner in which local communities such as the Pfalz were embracing their own locality and distinctiveness and adopting a ‘self-conscious, regional identity,’ despite their region’s position in a newly unified Germany.¹⁶ Similarly, Confino believes that the origins of *Heimat* lie ‘overwhelmingly in provincial Germany,’ arguing that the Swabians of the South German state of Württemberg, in a similar manner to the Pfälzers, drew on the *Heimat* idea in order to ‘show Württemberg’s distinctiveness in an age of national standardisation.’¹⁷ Thus, as a reaction to this period of rapid social and economic upheaval, *Heimat* emerged in the form of a set of cultural practices (*Heimatroman* (Heimat novel), *Heimatschutz* (preservationist activities), the *Heimatmuseum* (Heimat

¹⁵ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 19.

¹⁶ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 1-3.

¹⁷ Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, pp. 37-38.

museum), *Heimatrecht* (Heimat law) and *Heimatkunde* (local geography)), which actively celebrated local, traditional and provincial living.¹⁸

While the majority of studies on the emergence of *Heimat* tend to approach the origins of the term from a strictly German context, as Robert Pryah suggests, the term also emerged as a celebration of locality in the German-speaking lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire towards the end of the 19th century.¹⁹ Indeed, as Christopher Culpin and Ruth Henig acknowledge, Austria-Hungary, although not to the same extent as Germany, also experienced significant economic and social change during this period.²⁰ *Heimat* therefore also emerged in the German-speaking lands of Austria as a term that similarly promoted rural provincial living in reaction to the onset of urbanisation and industrialisation associated with the processes of modernity.²¹

Although *Heimat* emerged in the form of a local celebration of provinciality in reaction to the standardisation and loss of distinctiveness that the unification of Germany and the rapid modernisation of the German-speaking lands engendered, the term, somewhat paradoxically, began to take on a national dimension. Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th century and particularly during the First World War, the term became a local metaphor for the German nation. As Applegate and Confino both agree, ‘there is no

¹⁸ Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), p. 7.

¹⁹ Robert Pryah, *The Burgtheater and Austrian Identity: Theatre and Cultural Politics in Vienna – 1918-1938* (London: Legenda, 2007), p. 11.

²⁰ See Christopher Culpin and Ruth Henig, *Modern Europe: 1870-1945* (Harlow: Longman, 2005), p. 35.

²¹ Also see Philip Bolton, ‘Metropolis and Province Configurations of Identity in Contemporary Austrian Literature’ (Unpublished PhD, Durham University, 2006), pp. 14-15.

meaning to the national without the local,' and thus one should view 'local identity as a constituent of national identity and localness as a shaper of nationhood.'²² In other words, the local provinces and their separate local identities shaped and moulded the way in which Germany was perceived and celebrated nationally, which came about as a result of Germany's need for a national identity in a country built up of different localities. As Applegate elaborates, 'the survival and transformation of *Heimat* reveal to us the struggle to create a national identity out of the diverse materials of a provincially rooted society.'²³ The numerous *Heimat* museums that were appearing across the country (371 founded between 1890 and 1918), the abundance of *Heimat* art, *Heimat* poetry, and *Heimat* literature etc., which celebrated local life, were therefore acting as mediators and metaphors for the nation.²⁴

In 1918, *Heimat* gained renewed currency and was renegotiated to incorporate new political and social realignments following the end of the First World War and the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁵ During this period, the term *Heimat* once again transcended its geographical limitations to incorporate the new Germany and the German-speaking regions of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁶ As Michael Landl and Albert Kraler explain, the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire led to a series of new social, political and geographical shifts in which new nation states were established, which sought to establish more ethnically homogenous

²² Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 26.

²³ Applegate, p. 19.

²⁴ Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 42.

²⁵ Pryah, *The Burgtheater and Austrian Identity*, p. 11.

²⁶ Culpin and Henig, *Modern Europe*, p. 35.

populations.²⁷ Within this context, *Heimat* began to take on a pan-German regional identity which, as Confino highlights, came to signify ‘the locality, the region and the nation through an interlocking network of symbols and representations.’²⁸ Thus, as Johannes von Moltke sums up, *Heimat* was based on ‘a particular conceptualisation of local space, which can be related in various ways to the larger whole.’²⁹ Consequently, although *Heimat* embodied a real, lived in, functioning place with its own local community, it began to take on a metaphorical dimension in which, according to Confino, allowed people of all walks of life, faith, political alignment and locality ‘to form together a transcendent [...] community.’³⁰

Emerging as a local term at the end of the 19th century, being re-appropriated as a national term during the First World War and then being renegotiated as a pan-German term following the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, *Heimat* could be seen to mediate notions of space, identity and belonging vis-à-vis the evolving social, geographical and political transformations of the German-speaking lands in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This process of mediation, as Johannes von Moltke informs, took diverse forms, which led to the conflation of the national *Heimat*, the regional *Heimat* and the local *Heimat* under fascism.³¹ Indeed, during the 1920s, as chapter one will demonstrate, *Heimat* was usurped by National Socialism to tighten the boundaries of the German *Heimat*, which, on the one hand incorporated the Sudeten Land and Germany’s

²⁷ Michael Jandl and Albert Kraler ‘Austria: A Country of Immigration?’, *Migration Policy Institute*, 1 March 2003 <<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/austria-country-immigration>> [accessed 22 February 2014].

²⁸ Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 26.

²⁹ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 10.

³⁰ Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 35.

³¹ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 9.

neighbouring Austria, and on the other, excluded ‘those who did not [belong] by means of the Nuremburg racial laws.’³² Nazism thus, as Pryah notes ‘collapse[d] the regional associations of *Heimat* into an explicitly racial, nationalist conception of Volk [the people] initially absent from the concept.’³³

At the end of the Second World War, *Heimat* went on to experience yet more surprising metamorphoses and was propagated by different hands for different needs. While, as Boa and Palfreyman highlight, ‘after the Second World War, Germany’s total defeat meant that officially the National Socialist image of the *Heimat* [...] was utterly invalidated,’ *Heimat* was able to shed its National Socialist connotations and was redeployed and renegotiated in a now divided Germany in correspondence with new and often conflicting political and social requirements.³⁴ In East Germany (DDR – Deutsche Demokratische Republik), for example, *Heimat* was re-employed and redefined within a socialist context. As scholars including Nick Hodgkin and Jan Palmowski highlight, the DDR employed *Heimat* as a political tool which on the one hand was used to differentiate itself from the ‘post-fascist’, capitalist West Germany (BRD – Bundesrepublik Deutschland) – and on the other, propagated the SED’s (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland) socialist ideology.³⁵

³² See Florentine Strzelczyk, ‘Far Away, So Close: Carl Fröhlich’s *Heimat*’, in *Cultural History Through a National Socialist Lens: Essays on the Cinema of the Third Reich*, ed. by Robert C. Riemer (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2000), p. 110.

³³ Pryah, *The Burgtheater and Austrian National Identity*, p. 14.

³⁴ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 10.

³⁵ See Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Nick Hodgkin, *Screening the East: Heimat, Memory and Nostalgia in German Film since 1989* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), pp. 46-47.

In West Germany and Austria, however, the term was able to rid itself of any political affiliation and was renegotiated once more to reflect and negotiate the dislocation and personal and material loss that characterised the postwar years. It was during these postwar years that *Heimat* once more took on a metaphorical spatial dimension. Indeed, the term took on a dual character and not only began to represent the lost *Heimat* of those twelve million displaced ethnic German expellees (*Heimatvertriebene*) who were forcibly removed from Central and Eastern Europe and were relocated across Europe, mainly in West Germany and Austria, but it also came to signify an anchor in a new German and/or Austrian *Heimat*.³⁶ Furthermore, despite the division of Austria and Germany into allied zones following the end of the Second World War, the term referred to a regional West-German and Austrian space which buttressed a unified pan-German identity which incorporated West Germans, Austrians and those Eastern expellees. The term therefore was no longer clearly defined and could be seen to cut across geographical and cultural boundaries.

Looking back at the very origins of *Heimat* and the manner in which it has continually transcended geographical, ethnic, racial, political and psychological boundaries since its inception, one can deduce that the contradictions that *Heimat* discourse generates could, as Boa and Palfreyman argue, 'form part of a difficult negotiation as individuals struggled to find a stable ground from which to cope with rapid change.'³⁷ Indeed, as I shall demonstrate in my examination of the history of the

³⁶ Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 89.

³⁷ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 2.

Heimatfilm genre in chapter one, the key oppositions; local and national, national and transnational, *Heimat* and *Fremde*, tradition and modernity and urban and rural, can all be seen to undergo a complex process of negotiation throughout the history of *Heimat* discourse. Hence, in light of this assertion, instead of looking at the contradictions that characterise *Heimat* discourse as antagonistic and reactionary, we should, as numerous scholars including Boa and Palfreyman, von Moltke, Ludewig and Confino all agree, adopt ‘a more dialectical perspective,’³⁸ which involves blurring the boundaries between these apparent polarities in order to determine the extent to which ‘they are mutually contingent on one another.’³⁹

Locating the *Fremde* in *Heimat*

We can conclude that *Heimat*’s indefinability can be put down to a conglomeration of the various fields in which the term has been used – including the cultural, the conservational, and the political – the differing and often contradictory ways in which it has been appropriated, the emotional connotations that the term has acquired, and the contradictory ways in which the term incorporates and negotiates its apparent key oppositions. Furthermore, this flexible, malleable and heterogeneous term has been appropriated across the political spectrum from the far left to the far right and thus, as Cooke notes, ‘always escapes the words used to define

³⁸ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 14.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 13.

it.⁴⁰ In light of this conclusion, the simple terms, ‘homeland’ and ‘homestead’ appear obsolete. However, as von Moltke notes, ‘the spatial dimension clings to the semantics of *Heimat* in virtually all of its historical variants.’⁴¹ Consequently, as I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, despite ambiguities as to what kind of space the concept of *Heimat* embodies, whether it refers to a dwelling or building on a micro scale, a German or Austrian place or space on a macro scale, an international space that exists outside of the confines of the German-speaking world, a liminal space wherein a person may struggle to find a sense of grounding, a constructed space based around human relationships, or an illusionary, utopian space, existing only in the person’s imagination, it can be assumed that *Heimat* is always linked to a sense of space, which, as Peter Blickle informs us, is ‘the essence’ of *Heimat*.⁴²

In contemporary *Heimat* discourse these spatial parameters are constantly shifting. In a contemporary world characterised by increased mobility, global markets and technological developments, *Heimat* no longer evokes ‘stasis, location and exclusionary practices.’⁴³ As studies by the scholars, Gabriele Eichmanns, Heike Henderson, Friederike Eigler, Boa and Palfreyman and Yvonne Franke suggest, German-language audio-visual culture and literature now sets out to ‘challenge the spatialized interiority of the traditional *Heimat* idea’ and re-examines ‘the spatial and emotional

⁴⁰ Paul Cooke, ‘The Heimat Film in the Twenty-First Century: Negotiating the New German Cinema to Return to Papas Kino’, in *Generic Histories of German Cinema: Genre and its Deviations*, ed. by Jaimey Fisher (Rochester, N.Y; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2013), p. 232.

⁴¹ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 10.

⁴² Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2002), p. 15.

⁴³ Eichmanns, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

territory of *Heimat* vis-à-vis the conditions of our interconnected, global age.⁴⁴ Boa and Palfreyman, for example, in their final chapter of their book titled, *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*, look at the ways in which contemporary Turkish-German literature continues to challenge previous fixed notions of *Heimat*. In their examination of the Turkish-German author Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s award-winning 1992 novel, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei – hat zwei Türen – aus einer kam ich rein – aus der anderen ging ich raus*,⁴⁵ Boa and Palfreyman determine that the novel projects ‘a mobile sense of *Heimat*,’ which undermines the rigidity with which the term is often associated.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as Boa and Palfreyman conclude, *Heimat* no longer stands as a German place of origin or a utopian place of arrival, but rather, ‘a frame of mind.’⁴⁷ It is up to the citizens themselves, they argue, to ‘make a liveable social’ space which may exist outside of geographical and cultural boundaries.⁴⁸

While many scholars look to the works of German writers who are first- or second-generation migrants for tangible evidence of *Heimat*’s renegotiation and progression, according to Friederike Eigler these ethnic minorities are not the only ones in German-language literature and film to ‘challenge traditional, static notions of *Heimat* creatively.’⁴⁹ Indeed, as Eigler maintains, much of contemporary German-language literature and

⁴⁴ Herrmann, ‘The Memory of *Heimat* in Recent Berlin School Films’, p. 160.

⁴⁵ In 1991 Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s novel was the first work by an author who is not German, Austrian or Swiss born by law of *jus sanguinis* to win the Ingeborg-Bachmann prize.

⁴⁶ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 207.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Eigler, ‘Critical Approaches to *Heimat* and the “Spatial Turn”’, p. 39.

film ‘successfully reconceptualises traditional notions of *Heimat* and ponders new places of belonging.’⁵⁰ For example, Eigler discusses Düsseldorf born Dieter Forte’s 1999 literary trilogy, *Das Haus auf meinen Schultern*, which she believes actively undermines a static reading of *Heimat* as it traces the numerous homes and cross-border journeys of two families.⁵¹ She also looks to the German and Austrian writers, Jenny Erpenbeck and Peter Handke who, in their respective works, *Heimsuchung* (2008) and *Langsame Heimkehr* (1979), appear to once again challenge spatial configurations of the term. Erpenbeck’s *Heimsuchung* for instance foregrounds the ‘material and economic dimension’ of *Heimat* in the context of changing political systems, and more importantly evokes the transient nature of home.⁵² Meanwhile, Handke, according to Eigler, reconfigures the term so that notions of *Heimat* may not be found within a specific place but rather continue to emerge spontaneously ‘within a transient state of existence.’⁵³

These contemporary dialectical approaches to *Heimat* coincide with recent developments in theoretical considerations of space, otherwise known as the ‘spatial turn.’ As Eigler elaborates: ‘briefly put, recent discourses on space seek to dislodge the static “container” concept of space – space unmarked by time and change – and develop instead dynamic notions of space that are co-constructed by social and economic relations and therefore

⁵⁰ Friederike Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative: Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2014), p. 28.

⁵¹ See Friederike Eigler, ‘Zur Historisierung des Heimatbegriffs im Generationenroman: Dieter Fortes Trilogie *Das Haus auf meinen Schultern*,’ *Germanic Review* 83: 2 (2008), pp. 83-106.

⁵² Eigler, ‘Critical Approaches to Heimat and the “Spatial Turn”’, p. 46.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 39.

subject to historical change.⁵⁴ This evolutionary shift in the cultural criticism of space allows for *Heimat* – a term which is historically rooted in the German-speaking world – to be redefined, deterritorialised and ‘de-essentialised.’⁵⁵ Although the focuses differ in the works of Edward W. Soja,⁵⁶ Doreen Massey,⁵⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan⁵⁸ and Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson,⁵⁹ they all attempt to reassess, redefine and ‘de-essentialise’⁶⁰ the concept of space in the age of the ‘spatial turn,’ removing it from, and in the words of Soja, ‘liberating’ it from, historical, local, racial, cultural or linguistic boundaries.⁶¹ Soja, for example, calls for a ‘transformative re-theorization of the relations between history, geography and modernity,’ and wishes to ‘open up and recompose the territory of the historical imagination through a critical spatialization.’⁶² Similarly, Massey argues that ‘the particularity of any place is [...] constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that “beyond.”’⁶³ Soja, Massey, Tuan, and Gupta and Ferguson approach the discourse of space from different disciplines – a postmodern, a feminist, a humanist and an anthropological perspective, respectively – however, they all probe the concept of space as a

⁵⁴ Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative*, p. 14.

⁵⁵ Eigler, ‘Critical Approaches to Heimat and the “Spatial Turn”’, p.35.

⁵⁶ Edward W. Soja, *The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989).

⁵⁷ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

⁵⁸ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

⁵⁹ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, ‘Beyond “Culture”’: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 7:1 (1992), pp. 6-23.

⁶⁰ Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative*, p. 23.

⁶¹ Soja, *The Reassertion of Space*, p. 12.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 5.

transnational and transhistorical entity, once again demonstrating the fluidity and malleability of places and spaces, and opening up room for new, contemporary, dialectical considerations of belonging and identity. These contemporary theoretical renderings of space, and in extension *Heimat*, will assist in my analysis of a number of New Austrian Films which, as I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, continue to challenge the spatial and symbolic rigidity with which the term is often associated.

Renegotiating and Deterritorialising *Heimat* in New Austrian Film

Reporting for the New York Times on the beginning of a series of Austrian film screenings at the Film Society of Lincoln Centre in 2006, journalist Dennis Lim famously announced, ‘in recent years this tiny country with a population the size of New York City’s has become something like the world capital of feel-bad cinema.’⁶⁴ Despite attracting criticism from a number of film critics including Barbara Pichler and Todd Herzog, who dismiss Lim’s statement as both ‘polemical’⁶⁵ and ‘reductive,’⁶⁶ Lim’s summation of the current state of Austrian cinema successfully encapsulates the growing worldwide discourse surrounding the Austrian film industry’s recent revival. The apparent disappearance of Austrian film from national

⁶⁴ Dennis Lim, ‘Greetings From the Land of Feel-Bad Cinema’, *The New York Times*, 26 November 2006 <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/26/movies/26lim.html?_r=0> [accessed 26 March 2013].

⁶⁵ Barbara Pichler, ‘The Construction of Reality: Aspects of Austrian Cinema between Fiction and Documentary’, in *Cinema and Social Change in Germany and Austria*, ed. by Gabriele Mueller and James M. Skidmore (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), p. 267.

⁶⁶ Todd Herzog, ‘Book Review: The Newest New Wave - New Austrian Film Edited by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck’, *Senses of Cinema*, 62 (2012) <<http://sensesofcinema.com/2012/book-reviews/the-newest-new-wave-new-austrian-film-edited-by-robert-von-dassanowsky-and-oliver-c-speck/>> [accessed 22 August 2013].

and international cinema screens following the end of the Austrian ‘film-boom’ of the 1950s (wherein the *Heimatfilm* genre reached its zenith), according to Austrian film scholar Robert von Dassanowsky, allowed for ‘the erroneous and widely spread notion that “there is no real film culture” in Austria.’⁶⁷ However, having secured the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film in 2008 and 2012 with Stefan Ruzowitzky’s Holocaust drama *Die Fälscher* (2007) and Michael Haneke’s French-language drama *Amour* (2012), which follows an elderly couple battling the devastating effects of dementia, the Austrian film industry is certainly gaining a prominent name for itself on the international cinema landscape, despite the much disputed ‘feel-bad’ reputation it has acquired.⁶⁸

Austrian film’s recent renaissance, which has been dubbed ‘New Austrian Film’ by Austrian film scholar Robert von Dassanowsky, can be traced back to the 1990s, when, following the introduction of state funding in 1981, a number of Austrian filmmakers began to make critically engaging and stylistically innovative works which began to get noticed on the international film festival landscape. The majority of critics, including von Dassanowsky, Susan Lakida and Karl Markovics, all agree that this critical interest was initially sparked by a film from Austrian filmmaker Barbara Albert, whose 1999 feature film *Nordrand* was the first Austrian film in decades to be entered for competition at the Venice Film Festival.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema*, p. 179.

⁶⁸ Haneke also won the Palme d’Or in Cannes for his respective films *Das weiße Band* (2009) and *Amour* (2012) and remains one of only five directors to win the prestigious award twice.

⁶⁹ See Robert von Dassanowsky, ‘A Wave Over Boundaries: New Austrian Film’, *Film International*, 6:31 (2008), p. 31; and Karl Markovics, ‘Der österreichische Filmsommer’, *ORF*, 16 August 2012 <<http://tv.orf.at/orf3/stories/2545719/>> [accessed 20/08/2013].

Albert's film, which exhibits a critical examination of her native Austria vis-à-vis the social, political and geographical shifts that 1990s Austria engendered, and which will be explored in detail in chapter four of this thesis, is one of a number of films that appeared in that decade which explore the nation's problematic relationship with its ethnic 'others.' Indeed, during the 1990s, an abundance of documentary and feature works by New Austrian Filmmakers emerged, which incorporated narratives of displacement, migration and social alienation in response to the turbulent socio-political conditions that characterised that decade. These films include Houchang Allahyari's *I Love Vienna* (1991) and Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington* (1998), which will be studied in chapter two and three of this thesis respectively. Other films which could also fall into this category include Goran Rebić's *Jugofilm* (1997), Ulrich Seidl's *Good News* (1991) and *Mit Verlust ist zu rechnen* (1992), Michael Glawogger's *Die Ameisenstraße* (1995), Anton Peschke's *Zeit der Rache* (1990), Reinhard Schwabenitzky's *Ilona und Kurti* (1992), Paul Harather's *Indien* (1993), Kenan Kiliç's *Nachtreise* (1994) and Karin Berger's *Ceija Stojka* (1999). While an analysis of all of these films is beyond the scope of this study, these films can all be seen to have emerged in a decade when the term *Heimat* was beginning to gain renewed currency. Indeed, as I shall now demonstrate, the beginning of the 1990s signalled a turning-point in contemporary Austrian history, when the nation was, once again, faced with the difficult task of having to negotiate its *Fremde*.

As Allyson Fiddler notes in her article on contemporary Austria's cultural response to multiculturalism, 'the physical and territorial boundaries

of Austria may not have changed since the end of the Second World War and the founding of the Second Republic, but Austria's geopolitical significance, its democratic makeup, and its citizens' understanding of nationhood have all changed significantly over the last two decades.⁷⁰ Indeed, the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, which was first experienced in Austria through the opening of the border between Austria and Hungary in the summer of that year, as Sathe summarises, 'inaugurated redefinitions for Austria.'⁷¹ As Mirjana Morokvasik points out, 'the end of the bi-polar world and the collapse of communist regimes triggered an unprecedented mobility of persons.'⁷² During these years, Austria became a popular and convenient location for prospective migrants, particularly as the disintegration of the bordering Yugoslavia shortly followed. As Kraler and Sohler highlight, 'The inflow of immigrants from Eastern Europe following the end of exit controls in 1989, and the influx of refugees from former Yugoslavia after 1991, resulted in the almost doubling of the population with foreign citizenship between 1988 and 1993.'⁷³ This inflow of migrants and refugees initiated a surge in right-wing nationalism in the country, which is successfully demonstrated by the unprecedented rise to power of Austria's extreme right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ), led by the late Jörg Haider. Haider, who, as Michael Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak point out, had

⁷⁰ Allyson Fiddler, 'Shifting Boundaries: Responses to Multiculturalism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century', in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House; Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), p. 265.

⁷¹ Nikhil Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema at the Turn of the Century: Flicker, Allahyari, Albert,' in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York, Oxford: Bergahn Books, 2011), p. 228.

⁷² Mirjana Morokvasik, "'Settled in Mobility": Engendering Post-Wall Migration in Europe', *Feminist Review*, Vol 77 (2004), p. 8.

⁷³ Albert Kraler and Karin Sohler, 'Austria', in *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 19.

‘frequently expressed coded praise for Nazi fascism,’⁷⁴ exploited the nation’s anxiety concerning the recent rise in immigration by utilising an anti-immigration platform for his political campaign throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The party’s anti-foreigner initiatives included the 1989 *Lorenzener Erklärung* (Declaration of St. Lorenzen), which was the FPÖ’s first attempt at outlining a concise (anti-) foreigner policy,⁷⁵ and the 1992 *Österreich zuerst* (Austria First) initiative, which in 1993 became a referendum initiated by the FPÖ that sought signatures from the Austrian population who agreed with their anti-foreigner attitudes.⁷⁶ These campaigns not only managed to infiltrate public discourse, with Austria’s most widely-read newspaper, *Die neue Kronen Zeitung*, propagating the FPÖ’s campaigns and peddling anti-foreigner sentiment, but they also contributed to the FPÖ’s rise to power throughout the course of the 1990s.⁷⁷

In the national parliamentary elections of 1999, Haider’s party received 26.91 percent of the national vote and came in second place behind the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP). After a short period of negotiation, the FPÖ and the ÖVP consequently formed a grand coalition, only without Haider, who was forced to step down from his position due to the international controversy surrounding him.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, even without Haider the FPÖ developed a prominent voice on the Austrian political

⁷⁴ Michael Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Exclusion: Debating Migration in Austria* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 38.

⁷⁵ Reinhold Gärtner ‘The FPÖ, Foreigners and Racism in the Haider Era’, in *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria*, ed. by Ruth Wodak and Anton Pelinka (New Brunswick: Transaction Press, 2009), p. 20.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁷ See Herczeg, ‘Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Austria’, pp.71-96.

⁷⁸ The EU issued sanctions against Austria for its ‘undemocratic’ and ‘xenophobic’ politics, which were lifted in September 2000. See von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History*, p. 239.

landscape and immediately went about issuing new legislative policies that revised the previous immigration and asylum legislation. For example, between the years of 2000 and 2006, the new coalition undertook a series of major legislative revisions regarding immigration and asylum, beginning with the cessation of the quota for the labour immigration of low skilled workers. This was replaced by a quota for ‘key personnel’, who were highly skilled migrants who must prove that were able to earn a monthly wage of over 2000 Euros per month.⁷⁹ This was then followed by the introduction of the Integration Agreement (*Integrationsvereinbarung, IV*) in 2002, which, despite its name, as Krzyzanowski and Wodak point out, had an ‘assimilatory character.’⁸⁰ This new Integration Agreement issued compulsory German-language classes and compulsory language exams for all new migrants from third countries (non-Austrian and non-EU citizens), who had migrated to Austria after 1990.⁸¹ While the aim of the agreement was said to ‘create peaceful coexistence’ between native Austrian and non-native Austrian citizens,⁸² the assimilatory nature of this new legislation suggested that ‘immigrants [were] expected to dispose of their own cultural identities and convert to the ways of the majority.’⁸³

During their political campaign, the FPÖ drew on the concept of *Heimat* and its emotional resonance among the Austrian population to

⁷⁹ See Kraler and Sohler, ‘Austria’, p. 21.

⁸⁰ Krzyzanowski and Wodak, *The Politics of Exclusion*, p. 44.

⁸¹ See Albert Kraler and Alexandra König, ‘Austria’, in *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*, Second Edition, ed. by Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), p. 16.

⁸² Michael Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Exclusion: Debating Migration in Austria* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 44.

⁸³ Barbara Franz, *Immigrant Youth, Hip Hop and Online Games: Alternative Approaches to the Inclusion of Working-Class and Second-Generation Migrant Teens* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), p. xvi.

perpetuate their right-wing rhetoric. As Peter Judson highlights, using a ‘pure’ notion of *Heimat*, Haider propagated ‘an Austrian nationalism grounded in the sacred notion of *Heimat* that conjures German nationalist images.’⁸⁴ During their political campaign *Heimat* continued to be employed in political posters, where the term signified an Austrian identity that was rooted in a monolithic and static notion of space and belonging. For example, in 1998, placards across the city read ‘Unsere *Heimat* muss UNSERE *Heimat* bleiben’ and ‘Wien muss *Heimat* der Wiener bleiben.’ Moreover, *Heimat* was often used in these posters to conjure an idyllic notion of *Heimat* as a haven away from the perceived negative results of multiculturalism, which included unemployment and as Judson continues, ‘the growing threat of urban crime and welfare cheating.’⁸⁵ The 1998 poster which reads ‘*Heimat*, Sicherheit, Arbeit,’ for example, draws on these negative stereotypes, suggesting that the Austrian ideal of *Heimat* may only exist without the crime and shortage of jobs that immigration and multiculturalism supposedly engender. The campaign slogan, ‘Wien darf nicht Chicago werden’ further toys with these negative cultural images and, as Jacqueline Vansant argues, plays on ‘the image of Chicago as both the city of gangsters and home to the largest population of Poles outside Poland.’⁸⁶ It is these contexts, which, as Nikhil Sathe notes, provide the

⁸⁴ Peter Judson, ‘Austrian Non-Reception of a Reluctant Goldhagen,’ in “*Goldhagen Effect*”: History, Memory, Nazism – Facing the German Past, ed. by Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 138.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Jacqueline Vansant, *Trauma and Mourning in Memoirs by Jewish Austrian Reémigrés* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), p.30.

backdrop and catalyst in which Austrian cinema since the 1990s has flourished.⁸⁷

Frameworks

In this thesis I aim to explore the works of the three New Austrian Filmmakers, Houchang Allahyari, Florian Flicker and Barbara Albert, which, I will argue, engage with contemporary *Heimat* discourse by categorically subverting the exclusive, ethnically homogenous, nationalist *Heimat* discourse that was finding prominence under Haider at the time. Indeed, as my analyses of these films will demonstrate, the works of these filmmakers, although diverse, all attempt to renegotiate the spatial and symbolic dimensions of the term in order to adapt it to correspond with the needs and desires of the nation's multicultural population. These works, I shall determine, thus continue to engage with the enduring legacy of the *Heimatfilm* genre, which, as I will demonstrate in chapter one of this thesis, has been employed by filmmakers throughout the 20th and 21st centuries to visually represent the needs, desires and traumas of the population vis-à-vis the evolving geo-political landscapes of the German-speaking lands. The *Heimatfilm*, which is able to adapt, transform and metamorphose with social, political and geographical change, thus, as I shall determine, allows these filmmakers to employ a readymade model for engaging with and negotiating the changes that the 1990s engendered.

⁸⁷ Nikhil Sathe, 'The Spaces of the Other Vienna in New Austrian Film' in *World Film Locations Vienna*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), p. 106.

I will approach the *Heimatfilm* genre from a similar vantage-point to numerous scholars including Paul Cooke, Johannes von Moltke, Yvonne Franke and Alexandra Ludewig, who all draw on the works of Rick Altman, Steve Neale and Andrew Tudor to determine that film genres are not ‘the permanent product of a singular origin,’ but are the ‘temporary by-product of an ongoing process,’⁸⁸ which, as Paul Cooke adds ‘exist at the interface of numerous competing discourses.’⁸⁹ Thus, instead of merely attempting to locate an ‘indefinable X’ that defines the *Heimatfilm*, which would, as Tudor notes, lead to ‘genre imperialism,’⁹⁰ I will instead see the *Heimatfilm* genre as a dynamic, living genre which evolves in correspondence with the ‘broader social and historical context within which [it] exist[s].’⁹¹

I will examine the films in this thesis from a semantic/syntactic approach as outlined by Altman, which looks to both the ‘semantic’ components of the genre (which refer to the genre’s general characteristics including stock characters, typical settings, particular shots) and the genre’s ‘syntactic’ elements, (which seek to uncover the relationship between these semantic elements and the genre’s wider meaning).⁹² As Altman elucidates, ‘to insist on one of these approaches to the exclusion of the other is to turn a blind eye on the necessarily dual nature of any generic corpus.’⁹³ Altman’s

⁸⁸ See Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p.54; Also see Andrew Tudor, *Theories of Film* (New York: Viking, 1974); and Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁸⁹ Paul Cooke, ‘The *Heimat* Film in the Twenty-First Century: Negotiating the New German Cinema to Return to Papas Kino’, in *Generic Histories of German Cinema: Genre and its Deviations*, ed. by Jaimey Fisher (Rochester, N.Y; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2013), p. 223.

⁹⁰ Tudor, *Theories of Film*, p. 133.

⁹¹ Cooke, ‘The *Heimat* Film in the Twenty-First Century’, p. 223.

⁹² See Altman, *Film/Genre*, p. 54.

⁹³ Rick Altman, ‘A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre’, in *Film Genre Reader IV*, ed. by Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), p. 34

dual approach provides a suitable analytical tool when dealing with the complex and often contradictory history of the *Heimatfilm* genre, as it allows for a more open-minded, inclusive standpoint with which to distinguish a *Heimatfilm* corpus. A semantic approach to the *Heimatfilm* genre would simply look to the film's aesthetic iconography or for typical plots to determine whether or not it can be deemed a *Heimatfilm*. For instance, if the film was set in the West German heath or in the awe-inspiring Austrian Alps and featured local dirndl-clad townsfolk engaging in village fetes and traditional wedding ceremonies, those undertaking a semantic approach to the film would have no trouble in defining it as a *Heimatfilm*. However, as a number of contemporary *Heimatfilme* attest, a purely semantic approach to the genre would inevitably overlook vital contributions to the genre which also engage with the genre syntactically. Films which engage with the genre syntactically rather than semantically may, for instance, be set in the urban metropolis or indeed abroad, as opposed to in the Alpine or rural idyll. However, these films would nevertheless continue to probe issues of identity, displacement and belonging – vital syntactic *Heimatfilm* conventions – in a similar manner to a number of their semantically-focussed counterparts. Thus, by adopting Altman's dual approach to the *Heimatfilm*, this thesis is able to take into account the common iconographical characteristics of the *Heimatfilm* in addition to the fundamental messages that the genre seeks to convey.

In my examination of the history of the *Heimatfilm* genre in chapter one of this thesis, in which I will trace the genre from its inception in the 1920s up until the present day, I will highlight the manner in which the

semantics and the syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre have continued to be employed and renegotiated throughout the genre's vibrant history. While a number of films, as I shall demonstrate, seek to overlook or even subvert the semantic components of the genre, many other semantic elements (including the stock character of the 'outsider,' narratives of displacement and fundamental familial relationships) continue to be deployed. Furthermore, while the syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre adapts to correspond with the contemporaneous needs and worries of the population at the time – seeking, for example, to visually represent the geo-political changes of various historical events – the genre, nevertheless, continues to probe issues of identity, belonging, space and place in all of its manifestations. As I shall demonstrate in the chapters that follow, many of the films studied in this thesis draw on the semantic elements of the genre as a means to actively reconfigure the genre's syntax to correspond with the nation's shifting definitions following the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. These films thus engage with and rejuvenate the genre's semantic and syntactic make-up in order to explore Austria's international boundaries and its troubled relationship with the *Fremde*.

These films, as I shall highlight throughout this thesis, also draw on and renegotiate the semantics and syntax of other established film genres in order to assist their contemporary audio-visual representations. Indeed, the *Heimatfilm* genre, to quote Boa and Palfreyman, is an 'ill-defined category,' which lends itself to hybridisation.⁹⁴ The films studied in this thesis can thus be seen to experience a cross-over with a number of film genres including

⁹⁴ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 7.

the road movie, the comedy film, the western and the social drama, which, as I shall demonstrate throughout this thesis, are genres that have repeatedly been hybridised with the *Heimatfilm* throughout the genre's enduring history. More significantly, however, a number of the films studied in this thesis also experience a cross-over with an emerging trend in contemporary European cinema: the migrant and diasporic film. Numerous recent works by Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, Hamid Naficy, Isolina Ballesteros, Leen Engelen and Kris van Heuckelom, Luisa Rivi, Michael Gott and Todd Herzog and Yosefa Loshitzky all approach contemporary European film from a transnational perspective.⁹⁵ The films that are examined in these studies, which are subsumed under a number of headings including 'accented cinema' (Naficy), 'immigration cinema' (Ballesteros) and 'migrant and diasporic cinema' (Berghahn and Sternberg), all, in a similar manner to the New Austrian Films studied in this thesis, challenge traditional understandings of national identity and territorial boundaries in response to a number of contemporary socio-political challenges. Certainly, as Berghahn and Sternberg argue, this shift from a national to a transnational perspective in post-1989 European film is 'fuelled by the long legacy of colonialism, the ongoing process of European integration, the

⁹⁵ See Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, 'Introduction', in *European Cinema in Motion*, ed. by Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1-11; Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Isolina Ballesteros, *Immigration Cinema in the New Europe* (Bristol: Intellect, 2015); Leen Engelen and Kris Van Heuckelom, 'Introduction: From the East to the West and Back: Screening Mobility in Post-1989 European Cinema', in *European Cinema After the Wall: Screening East-West Mobility*, ed. by Leen Engelen and Kris Van Heuckelom (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), pp. vii-xxii; Michael Gott and Todd Herzog, 'Introduction: East, West and Centre: "Mapping" Post-1989 European Cinema', in *East, West and Centre: Reframing Post-1989 European Cinema*, ed. by Michael Gott and Todd Herzog (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 1-19; Luisa Rivi, *European Cinema after 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Yosefa Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010).

geopolitical repercussions of the collapse of communism, continuing intra-European mobility and the influx of migrants and refugees from across the world.’⁹⁶ While the films studied in this thesis could be, and indeed have been, discussed under the rubric of transnational migrant and diasporic film, this thesis will discuss these works as New Austrian *Heimatfilme* for a number of reasons. Firstly, the filmmakers’ preoccupation with *Heimat* and their re-negotiation of the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre places them within a quintessentially German-language ‘cinematic and cultural tradition.’⁹⁷ Secondly, I will approach these films from a majority perspective in order to, as Deniz Göktürk remarks, ‘shift the discussion of ethnicity, identity and hybridity from margin to centre, from the fringes to the core of national self-fashioning.’⁹⁸ Thirdly, by subsuming films by and about migrants under the heading of New Austrian *Heimatfilme*, this thesis aims to reinforce the transnational quality of New Austrian Film, which, since its inception, has not only been represented by numerous filmmakers of a migrant background but also incorporates co-productions with a number of other national film industries. Thus, although I will continue to draw on the ideas presented by a number of the migrant and diasporic film studies listed above, I will approach the films studied in this thesis from an

⁹⁶ Berghahn and Sternberg, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

⁹⁷ See Daniela Berghahn, ‘“No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecomings in the Films of Fatih Akin’, *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 4:3 (2006), p. 146.

⁹⁸ Deniz Göktürk, ‘Turkish Delight- German Fright. Unsettling Oppositions in Transnational Cinema’, in *Mapping the Margins: Identity, Politics and the Media*, ed. by Karen Ross and Deniz Derman (Cresskill, NJ : Hampton Press, 2003), p. 178.

Austrian cinematic perspective, which is, nevertheless, naturally transnational and multicultural.⁹⁹

Structure

In chapter one of this thesis I will trace the history of the *Heimatfilm* genre, from the *Bergfilme* of the 1920s up until the present day, in order to highlight the numerous ways that *Heimat* has appeared on film. A close examination of the *Heimatfilm*'s various manifestations will reveal that the ostensibly opposing concepts of *Heimat* and *Fremde*, tradition and modernity, local and national, and national and transnational have continued to undergo a complex process of negotiation throughout the history of the *Heimatfilm*. In my examination of a variety of Austrian and German works, I will pay particular attention to the manner in which these films incorporate the *Fremde* into their narratives and aesthetic iconography, and will determine that the *Heimatfilm* has been employed by filmmakers throughout history to negotiate the *Fremde* in times of political, social, cultural and geographical change. In my examination of a number of *Heimatfilme*, particularly those classical *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s and those that follow, I will demonstrate the numerous ways in which these films reject a static concept of *Heimat* as a birthplace or birth right and instead promote the possibility or indeed the necessity of seeking a *Heimat* elsewhere. While the *Bergfilme* of the 1920s and 30s, which were employed as an ideological tool

⁹⁹ See Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck, 'Introduction: New Austrian Film: The Non-Exceptional Exception', in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Bergahn, 2011), p. 5.

by National Socialism, pitted *Heimat* and *Fremde* in diametric opposition, the *Heimatfilme* that followed, as I shall demonstrate in chapter one, demonstrate a more nuanced relationship with the *Fremde* in light of new geographical and political alignments and new forms of migration. I will finish this chapter with an analysis of how *Heimat* is being renegotiated in post-unification German cinema and will look at how Turkish-German filmmakers are deterritorialising *Heimat*, removing the term from the realms of a specific German-speaking space or place.

In the case-study chapters that follow, I will then examine a number of works by the New Austrian Filmmakers, Houchang Allahyari, Florian Flicker and Barbara Albert, and will examine the ways in which these New Austrian Filmmakers also draw on the *Heimatfilm* mode as a means to adapt the genre's syntax in correspondence with recent socio-political shifts. I will focus on three films from the 1990s, Houchang Allahyari's *I Love Vienna* (1991), Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington* (1998) and Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999), and will assess the manner in which these films interrogate traditional, static notions of belonging and will ascertain as to whether or not these filmmakers are able to deterritorialise the term from the realms of a specifically Austrian sense of place or from a spatial context in general. Throughout these chapters, I will also offer a brief examination of a number of other works by these filmmakers in order to determine the how the semantic and syntactic elements of the *Heimatfilm* genre have continued to dominate their cinematic oeuvres. Indeed, as the following chapters will demonstrate, Allahyari, Flicker and Albert have been preoccupied with interrogating notions of space, place, identity and belonging throughout

their career; a preoccupation which, as I shall determine, places them within a quintessential German-language film tradition.

In chapter two, I will turn to the works of Houchang Allahyari. Born in Iran, Allahyari is representative of a number of New Austrian Filmmakers from a migrant background.¹⁰⁰ In this chapter I will highlight the ways in which Allahyari is able to inscribe his own biographical experiences of dislocation and displacement into his films. In my analysis of his films *Höhenangst* (1994), *Geboren in Absurdistan* (1999) and *I Love Vienna* (1991), I will examine the manner in which Allahyari exposes the socially constructed nature of *Heimat* and thus challenges traditional, parochial readings of the term which tend to define it in relation to an originary and organic homeland. Certainly, as I shall demonstrate, the Allahyari works discussed in this chapter feature protagonists who seek a *Heimat* outside of their place of birth. Whether or not they are able to reach their desired destination is left open by Allahyari who instead offers viewers images of alternative modes of belonging which exist outside of geographical boundaries. Indeed, as I shall reveal in my analysis of *I Love Vienna*, Allahyari looks to the transcendental power of multicultural relationships as a replacement for geographical or territorial stability, thus deterritorialising *Heimat* from a spatial context.

In chapter three, I will examine a number of works by the late New Austrian Filmmaker Florian Flicker, who, as I will demonstrate, hybridises the *Heimatfilm* genre with a number of other film genres in order to

¹⁰⁰ Other New Austrian Filmmakers from a migrant background include Kenan Kiliç, Goran Rebić, Hüseyin Tabak, Umut Dağ, Arash T. Riahi and Sudabeh Mortezaei.

successfully represent the personal and physical journeys that his protagonists must undertake in his films. His works, *Halbe Welt* (1993), *Grenzgänger* (2012) and *Suzie Washington* (1998), all hybridise the *Heimatfilm* with the sci-fi, the western and the road movie respectively, which allows Flicker to offer new and innovative engagements with the *Heimatfilm* genre within the context of globalisation. *Halbe Welt*, *Grenzgänger*, and *Suzie Washington*, I will reveal, demonstrate the physical and symbolic obstacles that face Flicker's protagonists as they search for a *Heimat* elsewhere. His films, as I will highlight in my analysis of *Suzie Washington*, do indeed reveal *Heimat* to exist outside of one's national boundaries. However, as is particularly evident in *Suzie Washington*, the search for a *Heimat* elsewhere is a complicated and often futile process. In my analysis of *Suzie Washington*, I will showcase how Flicker's film subverts the idea of the 'open road' that is seen as an integral component of the road movie genre, and underlines instead the various obstacles that lie between one destination and the next. By using the semantic elements of the road-movie as a means to ultimately disrupt the syntactic notions of liberation and freedom typically associated with the genre, Flicker re-interprets the road-movie genre to correspond with contemporary concerns surrounding the nation's exclusionary immigration policies. Furthermore, in this critical representation of the nation's treatment of its 'others,' Flicker, as I shall reveal, critically draws on the *Heimatfilm* mode to expose the Alpine idyll, in which the film is set, as an exclusionary and hostile space. Thus, Flicker engages with both the *Heimatfilm* and the road-movie, and adapts each of the genres' syntax as a means to represent the conditions of

immobility and alienation that characterise the protagonist's quest for a home as an illegal, undocumented and unwanted migrant. Flicker's films, as I shall conclude, thus offer a more sobering engagement with *Heimat*, suggesting that the deterritorialisation of *Heimat* is almost impossible for those who are born on the 'wrong' side of the East/West border.

In chapter four I will analyse a number of films by Barbara Albert, who, as I shall demonstrate in this chapter, probes issues of identity and belonging from a female perspective. As an important part of a strong female participation in New Austrian Film, Albert focuses on female protagonists in her films.¹⁰¹ Albert's films, although highly diverse, tend to draw on the generic syntax of the anti/critical-*Heimat* mode by representing the impossibility of a native Austrian *Heimat*, and contrarily promote the possibility or indeed the necessity of seeking a *Heimat* elsewhere. While the two films analysed at the beginning of this chapter, *Böse Zellen* (2003) and *Fallen* (2006), follow native Austrian protagonists who become alienated from their native surroundings, Albert's contribution to the documentary film *Zur Lage: Österreich in sechs Kapiteln* (2002) and indeed her critically acclaimed *Nordrand* (1999) both draw attention to Austria's multicultural population and probe the social, political and economic barriers that prevent these characters from having access to a *Heimat* at all. In my analysis of *Nordrand*, I will demonstrate the manner in which Albert categorically rejects the notion of an organic *Heimat* that is rooted in outdated and

¹⁰¹ Other female New Austrian Filmmakers who have also received critical attention include Jessica Hausner, Ruth Mader, Valeska Grisebach and Kathrin Resetarits. See Catharine Wheatley, 'Not Politics but People: The "Feminine Aesthetic" of Valeska Grisebach and Jessica Hausner', in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Bergahn, 2011), pp. 136-147.

conservative interpretations of Austrian space and place and will look at the ways in which Albert disrupts the national significance and specificity of the Austrian *Heimat* in her subversive representation of iconic Viennese spaces. While Austria, as I shall determine, does not offer Albert's migrant and native Austrian characters a sense of identity or stability, Albert's female protagonists are however able to find a *Heimat* within themselves. Indeed, as this chapter shall conclude, Albert's film deterritorialises *Heimat* by advocating new, non-spatial modes of belonging which cut across ethnic, geographical and heteronormative boundaries. In her engagement with the anti-*Heimat* discourse demonstrated by a number of her literary feminist colleagues, including Ingeborg Bachmann and Elfriede Jelinek, Albert dismantles traditional modes of belonging and substitutes ancestry, the nuclear family, marriage and traditional gender roles with more contemporary constellations predicated on mobility, hybridity, gender fluidity and above all, female solidarity.

Chapter 1: Retracing the Colourful History of the *Heimatfilm*

Literary Beginnings

The *Heimatfilm* had its antecedents in the *Heimat* literature of the late 19th century. Concomitant with the emergence of a *Heimatbewegung* in the late 1890s, (which comprised activities and institutions including but not limited to *Heimatkunst* and *Heimatschutz*), *Heimat* literature emerged as a reaction to the rapid modernisation and industrialisation in the German-speaking lands during this period. The literature of this period, suitably termed ‘*Provinzliteratur*’ in Austria, tended to base itself upon a number of binaries, as Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman illuminate:

Key oppositions in the discourse of *Heimat* set country against city, province against metropolis, tradition against modernity, nature against artificiality, organic culture against civilisation, fixed, familiar, rooted identity against cosmopolitanism, hybridity, alien otherness, or the faceless mass.¹

One of the most important of these binaries, as scholars including Helmut J. Schneider and Friedrich Sengele note, was the ‘Wünschbild Land/Schreckbild Stadt’ dichotomy, where the city was pitted in strict opposition to the province.² As Anton Kaes explains, the city ‘always remained the “other” – the site of rootlessness, hectic activity, and transient superficial

¹ Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 2.

² See Friedrich Sengele, ‘Wünschbild Land und Schreckbild Stadt’, in *Europäische Bukolik und Geogik*, ed. by Klaus Garber (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), pp. 137-159. Also see Helmut J. Schneider, ‘Erzählte Heimat und Heimatlichkeit des Erzählens: Zwei poetologische Modelle der 19. Jahrhunderts: bürgerliche Epos (Goethe) und humoristische Roman (Raabe)’, in *Heimat at the Intersection of Memory and Space*, ed. by Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), pp.15- 33.

values; a soulless anonymous desert of concrete; the scene of international business, immorality and decadence.’³ The rural *Heimat* on the other hand ‘stood for the possibility of secure human relations, unalienated, precapitalist labour, and the romantic harmony between country dweller and nature.’⁴ The German authors Adolf Bartels and Hermann Löns and their respective works *Die Dithmarscher* (1898) and *Der Wehrwolf* (1910) are representative of this trend. Their works, as Axel Goodbody explains, associate the city with ‘fremden Einflüssen, Chaos, Verbrechen, Zerstörung und unkontrollierte Sexualität.’⁵ Thus, as a ‘lokalisierbare Begriff,’ *Heimat* in these late 19th century and early 20th century texts symbolised an escape from and an antidote to the effects and threats of modernity.⁶

It is in these late 19th century and early 20th century cultural manifestations of *Heimat* that the concepts of *Heimat* and *Fremde* appear most diametrically opposed. Indeed, in its portrayal of local pride, permanence and a reactionary anti-urban bias, by the 1920s the *Heimat* concept, as it was projected in *Heimatliteratur*, was incorporated into the National Socialist ‘blood and soil’ ideology. As Kaes illuminates:

During the 1920s the concept absorbed agrarian-romantic, reactionary and also anti-Semitic variants, which in turn were incorporated in the National Socialist “blood and soil” movement. After 1933 *Heimat* was a synonym for race (blood) and territory (soil), a deadly combination that led to the exile or

³ Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 165.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See Axel Goodbody, *Natur und Moderne um 1900: Räume – Repräsentation – Medien*, ed. by Adam Paulsen and Anna Sandberg (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 186.

⁶ See Christian Sieg, ‘*Heimat* Berlin: Siegfried Kracauer and Alfred Döblin als urbane Ethnografen der klassischen Moderne’, in *Heimat at the Intersection of Memory and Space*, ed. by Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), p. 93.

annihilation of anyone who did not “belong.” Under the National Socialists *Heimat* meant the murderous exclusion of everything “un-German.”⁷

The concept of *Heimat* was thus transformed from a local concept into a nationalised concept under the Nazis. The rural *Heimat*, with its mountainous topography and tight-knit community, became a metaphor for nation, race and Volk. As Johannes von Moltke expands: ‘In its racist language, Nazism cut the notion of *Heimat* to its social-biological agenda.’⁸

***Heimat* and Nazism: The *Bergfilme* of the 1920s**

While *Heimatfilm* scholar Johannes von Moltke traces the beginnings of the film genre back to the early 1910s, with film titles including *Heimatliche Scholle* (1910) and *Heimkehr* (1911), he argues, providing evidence that ‘the *Heimatfilm* had begun to enter cinematic discourses and practices’ long before the 1920s,⁹ the majority of scholars (including Boa and Palfreyman, Alexandra Ludewig and Eric Rentschler) agree that the genre particularly flourished in the late 1920s and 1930s within the *Blut und Boden* climate of Nazi ideology.¹⁰ Indeed, the *Bergfilm*, which is the *Heimatfilm*’s forerunner,¹¹ and would go on to provide creative and narrative stimulus for the 1950s *Heimatfilme*, had absorbed the National Socialist connotations

⁷ Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, pp. 165-166.

⁸ Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), p. 55.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰ See Alexandra Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia: 100 Years of German Heimat Film* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011), p. 10.

¹¹ Some *Bergfilme* did explicitly sell themselves as *Heimatfilme*. Franz Seitz’s *Die blonde Christl* (1933), for example, has the subtitle ‘*Heimatfilm*.’ See *Ibid.*, p. 134.

that were embedded within its literary pre-runner and, according to its most scathing critic Siegfried Kracauer, was ‘rooted in a mentality kindred to the Nazi spirit.’¹²

The narratives of the *Bergfilme* of the 1920s and 30s focus on the battles between humanity and the ‘majestic force’ of nature, between the preservation of the beautiful alpine landscape and the rise of mass tourism in the early twentieth century, between the illusionary attraction of the exotic and the reality of a ‘soulless’ urban modernity, and importantly, between the humble, brave German or Austrian and the materialistic foreigner.¹³ Eric Rentschler argues that ‘read symptomatically, the mountain film manifests a desire to take flight from the troubled streets of modernity, from anomie and inflation, to escape into a pristine world of snow-covered peaks and over-powering elements.’¹⁴ The Tyrolian filmmaker Luis Trenker’s 1934 film, *Der verlorene Sohn*, for example, which in the year of its release was hailed by Nazi observers as ‘a tribute to local patriotism,’ is representative of Rentschler’s description and of the tensions highlighted above.¹⁵ The film follows the Tyrolian born Tonio and his voyage to America; a trip which is fuelled by the recent death of a friend at the hands of the treacherous mountain landscape together with his desire to experience

¹² Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 112.

¹³ See Nancy P. Nenno, ‘“Postcards From the Edge”: Education to Tourism in the German Mountain Film’, in *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective*, ed. by Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2003), pp. 61-84; and Susan Sontag, ‘Fascinating Fascism’, in *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*, ed. by Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (Winchester: Winchester Press, 1990), p. 205.

¹⁴ Eric Rentschler, ‘Mountains and Modernity: Relocating the Bergfilm’, *New German Critique* 51 (1990), p. 139.

¹⁵ Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 79.

new exotic places (*Fernweh*). However, when Tonio reaches his destination, a New York which is suffering the aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash and is, according to Rentschler, presented to the viewer as ‘a site of seduction and a dangerous object of desire,’¹⁶ Tonio is consequently subjected to a ‘nightmarish thrashing by soulless modernity.’¹⁷ Indeed, during his time in New York, Tonio struggles to find food, accommodation or work in this new alienating urban setting. The film thus culminates in Tonio’s return to his homeland with a newfound appreciation for his *Heimat* and an incentive never to leave it again. Tonio slips back into his former life as if he had not left; reunited with the *Heimat* girl, Barble, and maintaining his idolised status among the rest of the community. The film therefore not only demonstrates the dangers that abide in the seemingly attractive and exotic faraway places of the *Fremde* but it also emphasises the fundamental, intrinsic connection between man and his original *Heimat*.

Not only did these *Bergfilme* explicitly display National Socialist ideology through their representation of an anti-foreign mentality but the mysticism afforded to the mountainous landscapes in the *Bergfilm* is, as Boa and Palfreyman point out, a feature of *Blut und Boden* ideology in itself.¹⁸ As Susan Sontag explains, the mountainous landscape in the *Bergfilm* can be seen as ‘both supremely beautiful and dangerous, that majestic force which invites the ultimate affirmation of and escape from the self – into the brotherhood of courage and into death.’¹⁹ The act of mountain climbing in

¹⁶ Ibid, p.78.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 14.

¹⁹ Sontag, p. 205.

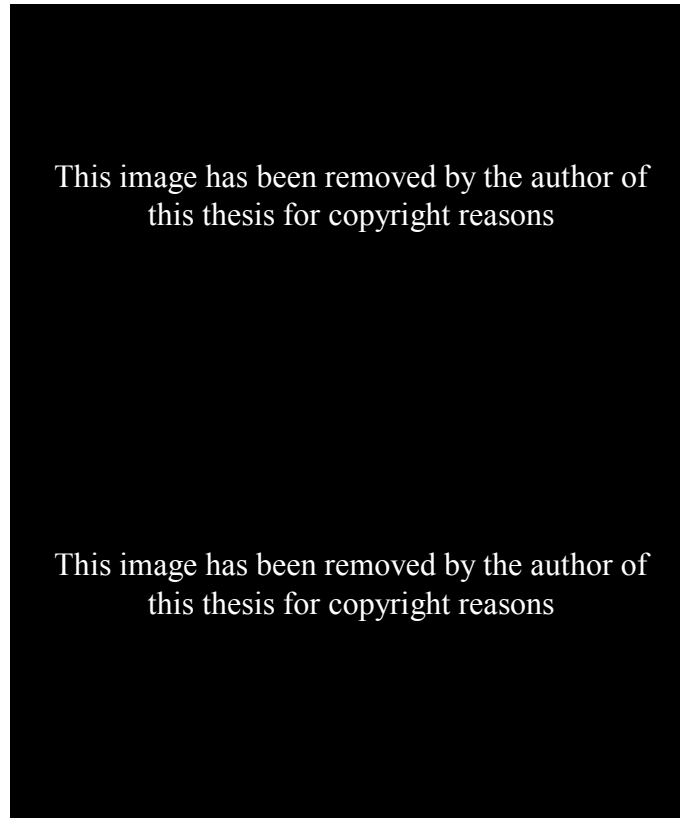


Figure 1: The beautiful untouched German alpine wilderness in Arnold Fanck's *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü* (1929) and Leni Riefenstahl climbing toward the high mystical goal in *Das blaue Licht* (1932). DVD capture.

these mountain films, she continues, thus constitutes a metaphor for the 'unlimited aspiration toward the high mystic goal'; a notion that would later 'become concrete in *Führer*-worship.'²⁰ Films including Leni Riefenstahl's *Das blaue Licht* (1932), Arnold Fanck's *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü* (1929) and Trenker's *Der verlorene Sohn* are representative of this notion of the unconquerable mysticism of the beautiful, untouched, alpine wilderness, which can ultimately be seen as a precursor of Nazi ideology.²¹

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ For a detailed analysis of the *Bergfilm* and its Nazi associations, see Sontag, pp. 204-219; Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, pp. 73-96; and Kracauer, pp. 110-2, 258-262. Also see Rentschler, 'Mountains and Modernity', pp. 137-161 for an article that challenges this.

After being propagated by the National Socialists and becoming synonymous with their *Blut und Boden* ideology, post-war the term *Heimat* was, according to Boa and Palfreyman, ‘utterly invalidated.’²² However, the success of the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, as I shall now discuss, demonstrates, ‘a remarkable continuity of a genre that seemed to survive every twist and turn of history;’²³ despite, as von Moltke notes, being ‘the quintessential “bad object” of German-language film historiography.’²⁴ Indeed, a term which was inundated with extreme nationalist connotations and anti-modern, anti-urban and anti-foreign mentalities, was able to rid itself of these previously ascribed pejorative ties and contrarily adopt a newly revived *Heimat* sentiment to correspond with the changing needs of a postwar society.

2.3. The Classical *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s

Although, following the end of the Second World War, The East and West German and Austrian film industries were split under allied occupation, and were subsequently developing separate industries at the time, Mary Wauchope notes that during this period of postwar development, including the 1950s, ‘a clear distinction among the industries and products of these three national cinemas is particularly difficult to maintain.’²⁵ Indeed, as she elaborates, the ‘interconnections between Austrian and German film

²² Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 10.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Johannes von Moltke, ‘Evergreens: The *Heimat* Genre’, in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk (London: British Film Institute, 2002), p. 18.

²⁵ Mary Wauchope, ‘The “Other” German Cinema’, in *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in a Divided Germany*, ed. by John Davidson and Sabine Hake (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 210-211.

systems – including economic dependencies, co-productions, shared personnel, and similar ideological goals – suggest that for some aspects of film study it makes less sense to speak of separate national film traditions for this period than of regional developments in German-language film.²⁶ This is particularly pertinent in the case of the *Heimatfilm*, which as Wauchope highlights, constitutes a regional rather than a national development ‘concentrated in the Western German-speaking area.’²⁷ Claudius Seidl agrees with Wauchope when he writes that during the postwar years, ‘der deutsche und der österreichische *Heimatfilm* sind so eng verwandt, daß man die beiden kaum auseinanderhalten kann.’²⁸ The *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s can thus, as scholars including Seidl, Wauchope, and von Moltke agree, be discussed in terms of ‘a German-Austrian co-production;’²⁹ a notion that is reiterated by Michael Neumann who refers to the *Heimatfilm* as ‘der deutsch-österreichische *Heimatfilm*.’³⁰

During the 1950s the *Heimatfilm* thus began to take on a transnational dimension. Not only were the industries of the now separate nations of West Germany and Austria tied financially but their respective audiences also had shared interests and affinities that could be addressed together, as Seidl elaborates:

²⁶ Ibid, p. 210.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 215.

²⁸ Claudius Seidl, *Der deutsche Film der fünfziger Jahre* (Munich: Heyne, 1987), p. 65.

²⁹ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 25.

³⁰ Michael Neumann, *Die fünf Ströme des Erzählens: Eine Anthropologie der Narration* (Göttingen, de Gruyter, 2013), p. 569.

In beiden Ländern fiel es den Leuten schwer, sich einzurichten. Beide Völker hatten große Schwierigkeiten mit der neuen Rolle, die sie nach dem Krieg spielen sollten, mit der neuen Identität, die sie sich zulegen mußten.³¹

In light of these industrial and emotional connections, the *Heimatfilm* buttressed the idea of group identity and unity during these times of social and physical displacement and dislocation. In order to appeal to both audiences, the *heile Welt* that the 1950s *Heimatfilm* portrays, in both its Austrian and West German variations, is therefore generally void of Austrian or German national specificities.

An interesting anomaly, however, is Ernst Marischka's *Sissi* trilogy (1955-1957), which, despite being set in a quintessential multicultural Habsburg past, was adopted and embraced by German audiences. Based on a 1931 play by Ernst Décsey and Gustav Holm, *Sissi* follows the marriage between the young Bavarian empress Sissi and Franz Joseph, the emperor of Austria, and is unanimously regarded as Austria's most successful film.³² Selling nineteen million tickets worldwide in 1956 alone, David Bathrick believes that the film achieved what would today be regarded as 'blockbuster status.'³³ Furthermore, the main actors, Romy Schneider and Karlheinz Böhm, became household names following the film's release and even, according to Nadja Krämer, created a 'new star cult.'³⁴

³¹ Seidl, *Der deutsche Film der fünfziger Jahre*, p. 66.

³² See David Bathrick, '22 December 1955: *Sissi* Trilogy Bridges Hapsburg to Hollywood through Hybrid Blend of Film Genres', in *A New History of German Cinema*, ed. by Jennifer M. Kapczynsky and Michael D. Richardson (NY.; Rochester: Camden House, 2012), p. 353.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Nadja Krämer, 'Models of Masculinity in Postwar Germany: The *Sissi* Films and the West German Wiederbewaffnungsdebatte', in *A Companion to German Cinema*, ed. by Terri Ginsberg and Andrea Mensch (Maiden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 341.

Marischka's film trilogy can be seen to integrate the generic formulae of the popular Austrian film genre, the *Wienfilm*, into the *Heimatfilm* genre. The *Wienfilm* was made famous in the 1930s by Viennese actor, director, screenwriter, producer and singer, Willi Forst and was revisited and re-appropriated in the 1950s by Austrian filmmakers including Franz Antel and Ernst Marischka. These filmmakers set their films in a quintessentially Habsburg past, offering viewers a nostalgicised image of an imperial past far removed from the realities of the post-WWII era and the questions of guilt and culpability which accompanied it. While these films do differ from the classical 1950s *Heimatfilm* in their return to the Habsburg past and in their use of an urban setting – locating the action in some of Vienna's iconic landmarks including St. Michael's Church and the Schönbrunn Palace³⁵ - by offering their viewers escapism from the realities of the postwar present through the visual return to an ostensibly innocent past, these films are regularly subsumed under the heading of *Heimatfilme* by scholars including Gertraud Steiner, Nadja Krämer and David Bathrick.³⁶

These postwar *Wienfilme*, which include Antel's *Der alte Sünder* (1951), Marischka's *Feldherrnhügel* (1953), and Géza von Cziffra's *Das unsterbliche Anlitz* (1947), often promoted pictures of multicultural harmony: Hungarian, Czech, and Italian characters were seen to co-exist and cooperate peacefully. However, these films, in their omission of the German-language region's most recent past, in addition to their cinematic

³⁵ See Maria Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre and Masculinity* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2013).

³⁶ See Gertraud Steiner, *Die Heimat-Macher: Kino in Österreich 1946-1966* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1987), pp. 126-132; Bathrick, '22 December 1955', p. 353; and Krämer, 'Models of Masculinity.'

propagation of a ‘political and socio-cultural process of harmonization of the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural plurality,’ were seen to problematically perpetuate what Habsburg scholar Claudio Magris has famously termed the ‘Habsburg Myth.’³⁷ As Katherine Tonkin explains:

Magris argues that when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in 1918, intellectuals and writers saw the foundations of their lives and their culture destroyed. They were unable to cope with the demands of a vastly changed political climate, and looking back they remembered Habsburg Austria “[als] eine glückliche und harmonische Zeit.”³⁸

Drawing viewers’ attention to a mythologised past in order to satisfy their escapist needs, the *Wienfilm* held a similar function to the *Heimatfilm* and thus became a hit with both West German and Austrian audiences. With both separate nations suffering the dislocating effects of political, social and geographical realignment, and, more importantly, historical amnesia, both West German and Austrian audiences as Erica Carter argues, were able to identify with ‘the imperial nostalgia and the melancholy of territorial loss,’ with which these films engage.³⁹ The success of Marischka’s *Sissi* films in both West Germany and Austria, is thus, as Carter continues, representative of ‘a cinema culture unconstrained by the boundaries of emergent postwar

³⁷ Jacques Le Rider, ‘Mitteleuropa as a lieu de mémoire’, in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), p. 41

³⁸ Katherine Tonkin, *Joseph Roth's March into History: From the Early Novels to Radetzkymarsch and Die Kapuzinergruft* (Rochester: Camden House, 2008), p. 8.

³⁹ Erica Carter, ‘Sissi the Terrible: Melodrama, Victimhood, and Imperial Nostalgia in the *Sissi* Trilogy’, in *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering*, ed. by Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (Rochester: Camden House, 2010), p.82.

states and fused instead into the larger cultural territories of the German-speaking lands.’⁴⁰

The classical 1950s *Heimatfilm* also experienced unprecedented success amongst both West German and Austrian audiences. Characterised by their agrarian, majestic, picturesque settings, 1950s *Heimatfilme* were typically set in Austria’s Salzkammer region, the Tyrolian Mountains, or, when in Germany, as Wauchope notes, they tended to be set south of the Main River in Upper Bavaria.⁴¹ The typical use of the Alps as a location in the *Heimatfilm* fulfilled a number of functions. Firstly, as Maria Fritsche notes, the mountainous setting offered a generalised setting that both West German and Austrian audiences were able to identify with; one which ‘avoids direct references to nationhood.’⁴² Secondly, as Claudius Seidl argues, non-urban landscapes such as mountains and forests were geographically and symbolically far-removed from the events of the Second World War.⁴³ These landscapes therefore offered viewers a ‘visual distraction’ from the troubles and traumas that post-war life generated, and by extension, a flight from questions of guilt and culpability.⁴⁴ The 1947 Austrian *Heimatfilm*, Hans Wolff’s *Der Hofrat Geiger*, for example, openly avoids an engagement with the past, as it reassures viewers in the opening introduction:

Dieser Film spielt im heutigen Österreich, das arm ist und voller Sorgen.

Doch – haben Sie keine Angst – davon zeigt er Ihnen wenig. Er geht an der

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Wauchope, ‘The “Other” German Cinema’, p. 216.

⁴² Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema*, p. 103.

⁴³ Seidl, *Der deutsche Film der fünfziger Jahre*, p. 64 and p. 82.

⁴⁴ Willi Höfig, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947-1960* (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 185.

Zeit nicht vorbei, er erzählt nur, daß vieles – wenn man will – auch eine heitere Seite haben kann.

By introducing itself from the outset as a visual distraction from the troubles and traumas of postwar life, the film provided the war-torn Austrian and German audiences with the escapist fare that they required at that time.

More importantly, these pastoral and mountainous landscapes were removed from areas that were already affected by modernity, migration and urbanisation. As a result, a number of critics including Kaes view the post-war cinematic return to the Alps and the provinces as a reaction to these postwar processes of modernity, dislocation and social change.⁴⁵ However, these locations were employed precisely to acknowledge and engage with these processes in a careful and comforting manner. As von Moltke explains, within these films the provincial *Heimat* ‘becomes a terrain on which to map’ patterns of mobility, displacement and modernisation.⁴⁶ Thus, as I shall now demonstrate in my analysis of Alfons Stümmer’s, *Echo der Berge* (1954) and Hans Deppe’s *Grün ist die Heide* (1951),⁴⁷ although these post-war West German and Austrian *Heimatfilme* display an evident lack of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), they are however concerned with a process of ‘coming to terms with the present.’⁴⁸

Alfons Stümmer’s Austrian *Heimatfilm*, *Echo der Berge* (1954), which is more commonly referred to by its West German export title, *Der*

⁴⁵ Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 166.

⁴⁶ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 118

⁴⁷ Hans Deppe had also made *Heimatfilme* during the Nazi era. *Gewitter im Mai* (1937), for example, can be seen to propagate the pro-Nazi propaganda that was typical of the *Bergfilme* of this era. See Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p.135.

⁴⁸ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 82.

Förster vom Silberwald, indeed exemplifies this process of careful modernisation. Filmed in a number of Austrian Alpine locations, including the provinces of Styria, Tyrol, Carinthia and Salzburg, these mountainous landscapes, are, according to Shane D. Peterson, employed ‘to negotiate contemporary concerns such as modernity and migration.’⁴⁹ The film follows the female protagonist Liesl’s return from Vienna to her home-village of Hochmoos, where she meets and falls in love with the village’s forester Hubert Gerold, an expellee from the lands east of the Oder-Neisse line. The function of the theme of migration in Stümmer’s film is thus twofold. Firstly, the film’s portrayal of Hubert as an expellee who finds a *Heimat* in Hochmoos and finds romance with the *Heimat* girl showcases how *Heimatvertriebene* (expellees from the East) are able to successfully rehabilitate themselves into a new Austrian or West German *Heimat*. Secondly, the process of urban to rural migration, as exemplified by Liesl in the film, in addition to the unsuccessful visit made by her Viennese artist boyfriend, Max, introduces the concept of modernity and urbanism to the Austrian and West German countryside. Liesl’s boyfriend Max, for example, is introduced to the viewer as he is driving a red convertible car through the Austrian mountain landscape. The stark contrast between the natural environment and the man-made car, which is made visible by Stümmer’s use of a tracking shot, immediately positions Max as a negative signifier of modernity in the film. His job as an artist and sculptor and his Viennese studio substantiate this modern, urban image. Max’s stay in Hochmoos is cut short as he struggles to adapt to

⁴⁹ Shane D. Peterson, ‘Projection Spaces: Manifestations of the Alpine in the Reception of the Austrian “Heimatfilm Echo der Berge” and of the Vienna Flak Towers’, *Austrian Studies*, 18 (2010), p. 127.

this new, traditional, provincial setting. Liesl on the other hand, although accustomed to her modern, artistic life in Vienna, is able to rehabilitate herself back into her original *Heimat*. She therefore acts as a mediator and a negotiator between tradition and modernity, demonstrating how modern, urban influences are not necessarily a threat to the German or Austrian *Heimat*.

Hubert, the expellee from the East, is represented from the film's outset as an 'outsider' – a notion which is made explicit at the film's beginning when he is excluded from the local community after being told by his fellow villagers that the issue of deforestation in the area is no concern of his. In her reading of the film, Hester Baer notes that Hubert's 'outsider' status is further exemplified by his apparent inability to successfully negotiate the terrain of the post-war province.⁵⁰ He does, for example, make a variety of bad choices in the film – including the decision to shoot Liesl's dog and his decision not to tell Liesl about Max's poaching – which leads him to lose both his job in Hochmoos and the *Heimat* girl, Liesl. However, throughout the course of the film, Hubert demonstrates a remarkable transformation from 'outsider' to 'insider.' Indeed, by the film's conclusion Hubert is fully integrated into his new Austrian *Heimat*; set to marry the *Heimat* girl, Liesl, and entrusted to look after and maintain the Silver Forest. Liesl's rejection of the Austrian Max in favour of the Eastern expellee Hubert therefore demonstrates that a commitment and an emotional connection to the rural *Heimat*, as exemplified by Hubert, holds far more

⁵⁰ Hester Baer, *Dismantling the Dream Factory: Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).

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Figure 2: While the Viennese artist Max remains an ‘outsider’ in the film, the Eastern expellee Hubert is able to rekindle a *Heimat* in the Austrian village of Hochmoos by proving an affinity with the natural landscape and marrying the *Heimat* girl in Alfons Stümmer’s *Echo der Berge* (1954). DVD capture.

importance than any native affiliation.⁵¹

As demonstrated in my analysis of *Echo der Berge*, the character of the Eastern expellee held a vital role in the *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s. Numerous critics, including Maria Fritsche, Robert G. Moeller, Sabine Hake, Boa and Palfreyman, von Moltke and Tim Bergfelder, all agree that Eastern refugees and *Heimatvertriebene* feature ‘strongly in the films’ narratives.’⁵² Indeed, as von Moltke notes, the theme of expellees ‘rapidly became a generic convention as images of refugees found their way into the

⁵¹ See Rachel Palfreyman, ‘Links and Chains: Trauma between the Generations in the Heimat Mode’, in *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering*, ed. by Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (Rochester: Camden House, 2010), p. 150.

⁵² See Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema*, p. 100; Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 118; Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 92; and Robert G. Moeller, ‘Winning the Peace at the Movies: Suffering, Loss, and Redemption in postwar German Cinema,’ in *Conflict, Catastrophe and Continuity: Essays on Modern German History*, ed. by Frank Biess, Mark Roseman and Hanna Schissler (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), p. 144.

narratives and iconographies' of the genre.⁵³ These *Heimatfilme* that deal with the trope of the Eastern expellee include but are not limited to Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter: Glocken der Heimat* (1956), Gustav Machatý's *Suchkind 312* (1955), Wolfgang Scheif's *Ännchen von Tharau* (1958), Paul May's *Heimat deine Lieder* (1959), Franz Antel's *Heimweh... Dort wo die Blumen blühen* (1957) and Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide* (1951). While an analysis of all of these works is beyond the scope of this chapter, I will, however, briefly turn to Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide*, which, as I shall demonstrate, offers viewers another visual example of an Eastern expellee's successful rehabilitation and relocation in the West German-speaking province following his initial emotional and physical dislocation.

Deppe's 1951 film, *Grün ist die Heide*, plays with issues of displacement and dislocation following the end of the Second World War as it follows the Lüdersen family's quest for a new *Heimat* in the picturesque north-west Lüneburg Heath following their forced expulsion from their first *Heimat* of the Eastern Pomerania. The picturesque West German setting of the Lüneburg Heath in Deppe's film functions both as a *Heimat* and as the *Fremde*, once again highlighting the contradictions that are a fundamental component of *Heimat* discourse. Indeed, while the Heath is initially an alienating space for the father of the family, Lüder Lüdersen, over the course of the film the viewer is able to observe Lüder and his family forge a new *Heimat* for themselves in this new provincial setting. At the beginning of Deppe's film, for example, Lüder Lüdersen initially struggles to adapt to

⁵³ Johannes von Moltke, 'Location Heimat: Tracking Refugee Images, From DEFA to the *Heimatfilm*', in *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in a Divided Germany*, ed. by John E. Davidson and Sabine Hake (New York; Oxford: Berghahn books, 2007), p. 76.

his new West German *Heimat*. This is exemplified by his constant desire to poach in the local woods despite it being illegal, which, as von Moltke notes, is ‘a habit that functions as a manifest symptom of his underlying sense of homelessness and displacement.’⁵⁴ However, as is so often the case in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, with the help of the local villagers in addition to the rehabilitatory powers of the picturesque, rural locale, Lüder Lüdersen is able to successfully adapt to his new surroundings, thus providing the millions of expellees in the aftermath of the Second World War with ‘an imaginary equivalent of return [and] a promise of settlement.’⁵⁵

According to Boa and Palfreyman, these visual representations of successful integration and rehabilitation ‘satisfied the perceived need of refugees and exiles to identify with a positive image of West Germany or Austria.’⁵⁶ Furthermore, the possibility of a second *Heimat* that the *Heimatfilm* advocated, presented the idea of a *Heimat* that is no longer bordered or clearly defined. As audiences observe Eastern expellees lose one *Heimat* and subsequently acquire another, the concept of *Heimat* is transformed from being a cosy, local, geographically defined place to, as von Moltke comments: ‘a homeland in flux.’⁵⁷ Consequently, in the 1950s, *Heimat* transformed from being a term that referred specifically to a local, exclusive, racially defined mode of belonging at the turn of the century, to a term that could be pluralised in order to demonstrate how a dislocated and fragmented nation could rehabilitate itself into a new West German or Austrian *Heimat*.

⁵⁴ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Boa and Palfeyman, *Heimat - A German Dream*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 88.

Interestingly, some 1950s *Heimatfilme*, including Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Die Trapp-Familie* (1956) and *Die Trapp Familie in Amerika* (1958), transcend *Heimat's* geographical boundaries even further and demonstrate that a new *Heimat* can indeed be realised abroad, in America. While, as von Moltke notes, America rarely features as a physical location in the *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s, it is however regularly referenced in the films' narratives.⁵⁸ In Liebeneiner's films, which are based on the biography of the von Trapps, the films explore the von Trapps' arrival in America rather than their departure from Austria, as seen in Robert Wise's Hollywood answer to the *Heimatfilm*, *The Sound of Music* (1965). By representing the characters' arrival rather than their traumatic departure, Liebeneiner's films can be firmly placed within the 1950s *Heimatfilm* tradition, which favours a positive image of relocation in place of an emotionalised picture of departure. Thus, as von Moltke concludes, while the films continue to remain 'deeply concerned with the displacement of refugees,' they also offer an alternative image of positive relocation to reinforce the idea that *Heimat* can in fact be regained in a variety of different locations.⁵⁹

The Austrian and German post-war *Heimatfilme*, as I have demonstrated above, signified a shift in the very meaning of *Heimat*. The term was no longer clearly defined, as it was in the Third Reich, and became pluralised to showcase how Eastern expellees and refugees could find a second *Heimat* in West Germany, Austria or, as observed in Liebeneiner's *Trapp* films, even in America. The films also, both

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 155.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

aesthetically and thematically, satisfied the needs of the West German and Austrian domestic audiences, offering them both, simultaneously, a positive, generalised image of nationhood to identify with while also offering them a visual distraction from the dislocation, devastation and regeneration that characterised the postwar period. Furthermore, the films did not fully oppose the forces of modernisation, cosmopolitanism and urbanisation. Rather, they revealed a negotiation with these processes, showing, as Marc Silberman acknowledges, that these modernising processes have ‘positive value.’⁶⁰ Hence, instead of providing a regressive safe haven away from modernisation, mobility and urbanisation, post-war *Heimatfilme* began to demonstrate how modernity could play an active role in the construction of a new *Heimat* and a new post-war identity.

In light of my examination of the *Heimatfilm*'s engagement with the theme of dislocation and expulsion throughout the postwar years, and in their negotiation with the concepts of modernity and the urban, I would be inclined to agree with Tim Bergfelder when he writes that ‘it would be wrong to deduce from the word *Heimat* an emphasis on stasis in the films.’⁶¹ This statement is also particularly pertinent with regards to the *Heimatfilm*'s engagement with the topic of tourism. The *Ferienfilm*, which Bergfelder deems the *Heimatfilm*'s ‘twin genre,’ overlaps with the *Heimatfilm* to such an extent that the films of these two modes are often, as

⁶⁰ Marc Silberman, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 113.

⁶¹ Bergfelder, *International Adventures*, p. 42.

Bergfelder adds, ‘indistinguishable’ from one another.⁶² Furthermore, these films, as Fritsche notes, incorporate similar aesthetic formulae and hold the same generic function.⁶³ While these films, which include Alfred Stöger’s *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut* (1948) and Franz Antel’s *Eva erbt das Paradies* (1951), do place more of an emphasis on voluntary mobility and social change, discussing them within the context of the *Heimatfilm* rather than as separate entities successfully reflects the multi-faceted and at times contradictory nature of the *Heimatfilm* genre, as the majority of critics including Boa and Palfreyman, Ludewig, Gertraud Steiner and von Moltke agree.

A number of these *Heimatfilme* were actively employed as a tool to promote tourism. *Echo der Berge* for example, was, according to Peterson, used to attract tourists to the area ‘under the scope of “Fremdenverkehrswerbung für Österreich.”’⁶⁴ Furthermore, the film received funding from a number of Austrian tourist authorities ‘with the explicit agenda to advertise Austrian holiday resorts.’⁶⁵ On the use of *Heimat* for tourism purposes, Lee Wallace Holt notes that ‘*Heimat* helped to commercialise the alpine experience and market alpine tourism to a broad potential customer base.’⁶⁶ This commercialisation of the mountain landscape not only helped to introduce the concepts of modernity and mobility into these provincial settings, once again providing a space to

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema*, p. 134. See Steiner, *Die Heimat-Macher*, pp. 68-76.

⁶⁴ Peterson, ‘Projection Spaces’, p. 129.

⁶⁵ Bergfelder, *International Adventures*, p. 43.

⁶⁶ Lee Wallace Holt, *Mountains, Mountaineering and Modernity: A Cultural History of German and Austrian Mountaineering. 1900-1945* (Unpublished PhD, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008), p. 6.

negotiate the onset of modernisation, but it also played a key role in the rehabilitation of the Austrian and West-German *Heimat* following the *Blut und Boden* ideology that was absorbed into the *Heimatfilm* genre during the Nazi era. As Mattias Konzett confirms, the *Heimat* now became ‘attached to a leisure culture patterned on the democratic and capitalist principles of the Western world,’ and thus, by promoting the mountainous landscape to potential tourists, the *Heimatfilm* continued to distance itself from the ideology of the National Socialist era with which it was once associated.⁶⁷

Not only was the *Heimatfilm* used as a tool to attract tourism into provincial Austrian and German settings but the genre also incorporated tourism into its narratives and aesthetics as a means to promote mobility and social change. Films including Stöger’s *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut* (1948) and Antel’s *Eva erbt das Paradies* (1951), for instance, both thematise physical and social mobility as a means to offer a positive image of travel and relocation in order to counteract the negative connotations of trauma and loss often associated with travel within the context of the displaced expellees. In Stöger’s *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut* (1948), for instance, two women, Gretl and Fritzi, escape from their tedious office jobs in Vienna to embark on a vacation together in Austria’s mountainous Salzkammergut region. As we witness Stöger’s female protagonists, Gretl and Fritzi, traverse the roads of the provincial landscape on their summer vacation, ‘hiking on the road is no longer reminiscent of the treks of refugees who fled the East, or the strenuous trips of hungry townsfolk to

⁶⁷ Mattias Konzett, *The Rhetoric of National Dissent in Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, and Elfriede Jelinek* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House; Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), p.110.

obtain food in the country,' as Fritsche rightly notes.⁶⁸ Furthermore, whereas Max's automobile in Stümmer's *Echo der Berge* acted as a negative signifier of modernity, the automobile in a number of films including *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut* evokes freedom, choice and endless possibility. Indeed, travel in these films symbolised new beginnings, potential marriage partners, and the possibility of a new *Heimat*. For Gretl and Fritz, for instance, their temporary vacation transforms into permanent settlement as they both acquire a job, a home and a proposed husband in the Austrian provinces at the film's conclusion.

What is interesting about this film, and indeed a number of classical *Heimatfilme* of this period, is that a close examination of these films reveal that they are overwhelmingly concerned with questions of changing identities. As the respective nations probed their own national identities and their new and unique position within a politically, socially and geographically altered Europe, postwar German-language film visually explored these questions through the portrayal of mistaken identities and the theme of identity performance. As Maria Fritsche notes:

The high frequency with which the theme of mistaken identity occurs [...] suggests that it had a particular resonance with the audience. This was an audience unsure about its national identity, as the experience of Nazi rule and defeat of Germany had made it impossible for most Austrians to describe themselves as Germans. [...] Popular cinema engaged with this political discourse and took up the issue through the theme of mistaken identity; it tapped into the collective fears, hopes and hidden anxieties of the

⁶⁸ Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema*, p. 148.

Austrians and offered reassurance by depicting how joyful and rewarding it is to assume a different self.⁶⁹

Fritzi's successful *Heimsuchung* in Stöger's *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut*, for instance, is only made possible through her adoption of an alter-ego. Indeed, although the women initially plan on travelling to the town of St. Gilgen together, they ultimately become separated and hitchhike to their destination alone. Fritzi arrives first at the hotel, which is owned by Gretl's fiancé Peter, and, upon arriving at the hotel, she is mistaken for a newly employed waitress who is due to begin work at the hotel that day. Fritzi decides to take on this new role at the hotel and, ultimately, she and Peter begin to fall in love. By taking on a new identity, Fritzi's world is therefore opened up to new and exciting possibilities. When Gretl arrives at the holiday resort, she too, fortunately, has fallen in love with the man who has driven her to her destination. Thus, the film's conveniently happy ending, as Fritsche writes, conveys the message that 'a change of identity provides you with the things you long for, be it love, a job or money.'⁷⁰ Films including Ernst Marischka's *Zwei in einem Auto* (1951), Wolf-Dietrich Friesse's *Wer küßt wen?* (1947), Franz Antel's *Vier Mädels aus der Wachau* (1957), Hubert Marischka's *Liebe, Sommer und Musik* (1956) and Hans Deppe's *Schwarzwaldmädels* (1950) similarly adopt the trope of mistaken identities as a means to not only signal the pleasures of identity variation but also, as

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 175.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 176.

Marc Silberman notes, to offer viewers a visual ‘strategy for dealing with the difficult relation to the “other.”’⁷¹

Deconstructing *Heimat* in the New German Cinema

While the *Heimatfilm* genre prospered throughout the majority of the 1950s, by the following decade a change in audience tastes, a decline in the need for obviously escapist films, increasing competition with television, and ‘a saturated market, which was in any case dominated by Hollywood,’ signified, according to Boa and Palfreyman, that the ‘formulaic *Heimatfilm* was running out of steam.’⁷² Furthermore, the genre had, as Marc Silberman acknowledges, exhausted its themes and conventions and ultimately metamorphosed into the rural sex-comedy.⁷³ The 1960s also marked a period when the Austrian and West German film industries went in different directions. While both industries, according to von Dassanowsky, were faced with this ‘general crisis,’ the West German industry could ‘count on government film promotion subsidies that had been in effect since 1962.’⁷⁴ The Austrian industry, however, was faced with a lack of government funding and, furthermore, many of Austria’s film stars including Willi Forst, Paula Wessely, Paul Hörbiger and Romy Schneider turned their backs on Austrian film to pursue work in television or theatre. This lack of financial investment and loss of artistic innovation, which, according to von Dassanowsky, ‘allowed for the erroneous and widely spread notion that

⁷¹ Silberman, *German Cinema*, p. 120.

⁷² Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 11.

⁷³ Silberman, *German Cinema*, p. 127.

⁷⁴ Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History* (McFarland: Jefferson, 2005), p. 178.

“there is no real film culture” in Austria,’ caused the Austrian film industry to ‘falter for the following three decades.’⁷⁵

While the latter part of the 1960s and 1970s signalled a severe decline for Austrian cinema – ‘by 1967, fourteen cinema theatres had closed in Vienna’ and ‘attendance had fallen drastically: from 65.8 million in 1966 to 57.6 million in 1967’⁷⁶ – the West German industry experienced a revival in its critical re-visitation to the *Heimatfilm* genre, which as von Dassanowsky highlights, represents a ‘missed wave’ for the Austrian film industry.⁷⁷ He explains:

The growth of a new generation of Austrian filmmakers was not forthcoming in any significant way, given the lack of government funding, which made artistic or non-commercial productions a near impossibility. The development of a commercially viable “New Wave” as in other European cinemas was thus stillborn.⁷⁸

Following the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961) and the Frankfurt trials (1963-65), the previously repressed collective memory of the Nazi past was re-emerging into German consciousness and, as Boa and Palfreyman note: ‘the younger, post-war generation sought a reckoning with their elders.’⁷⁹ The New German Cinema sought to re-evaluate German national identity in light of the Holocaust and the contemporary social conditions of the Federal Republic. The 1962 Oberhausen Manifesto, which was famously signed by 26 young German filmmakers, promised ‘the collapse of the conventional

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 192.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 178.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 179.

⁷⁹ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 12.

German film,' while proclaiming: 'the old film is dead. We believe in the new one.'⁸⁰ This New German Cinema sought to address social, ecological and political concerns and raise a key awareness of everyday social injustices rather than simply mask its recent past and gloss over its current issues. By utilising the previously tried and tested methods of the *Heimatfilm* genre and by achieving their critical re-evaluation of the genre by categorically inverting its mode, the New German Cinema *Autoren* had already established an audience. However, the rural locale was no longer seen as a safe haven away from a critical engagement with the past, rather, the picturesque setting was represented as a threat in itself; presented as a dangerous ground which, far from nurturing and protecting its inhabitants, was 'irretrievably violent and repressive.'⁸¹ Following the bright and vivacious *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s, the colour was drained from the audience's cinema screens, and enduring longshots of flora and fauna were either utilised for ironic effect or replaced with a realist aesthetic in order to portray cramped living spaces and poor social conditions. Perfect, provincial, patriarchal families were replaced with dysfunctional families, the longing to feel a part of the *Heimat* was replaced with a longing to escape it, and superficial issues of marriage partners, illegal poaching, and petty theft, were replaced with real, contemporary social issues including xenophobia, homophobia and class antagonism.

Peter Fleischmann's *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* (1968), for example, features a young mechanic named Abram who returns to his small village in

⁸⁰ Catherine Fowler, 'The Oberhausen Manifesto (1962)', in *The European Cinema Reader*, ed. by Catherine Fowler (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 73.

⁸¹ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 12.

search of his *Heimat*. However, Abram is soon a victim of vicious rumours regarding his sexuality and, as an ‘outsider,’ he is subjected to regular humiliation and abuse from the rest of the villagers. The hunting scenes which the title of the film promises and which are a regular feature of the formulaic *Heimatfilm*, involve the hunting of Abram rather than the local wildlife. In a similar manner to Fleischmann’s film, the rural locale of Kombach that Volker Schlöndorff portrays in his 1971 film, *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach*, is, according to Robert C. Reimer, a ‘parodied idyll’ of the 1950s *Heimat* film;⁸² one which oppresses rather than nurtures its inhabitants. Schlöndorff’s film, in its inversion of the 1950s *Heimat* rural utopia, offers an overt filmic critique of the relationship between the state and the church, the scapegoating of the outsider, and specifically, the oppression of the poor. By probing social issues and by demonstrating how the marginalisation and oppression of outsiders in the previously depicted innocent, rural idyll is achieved by the local community in order to stabilise its own system, Boa and Palfreyman argue that, ‘these works implicitly link the anti-Semitic Nazi past to the continuing dangers of racism and xenophobia in the present.’⁸³

According to Deniz Göktürk, the conception of the critical-/anti-*Heimatfilm*, which sought to cinematically represent and reinforce contemporary German societal issues with reference to its problematic past

⁸² Robert C. Reimer, ‘Picture-Perfect War: An Analysis of Joseph Vilsmaier’s *Stalingrad* (1993)’, in *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective*, ed. by Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p. 320.

⁸³ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 12.

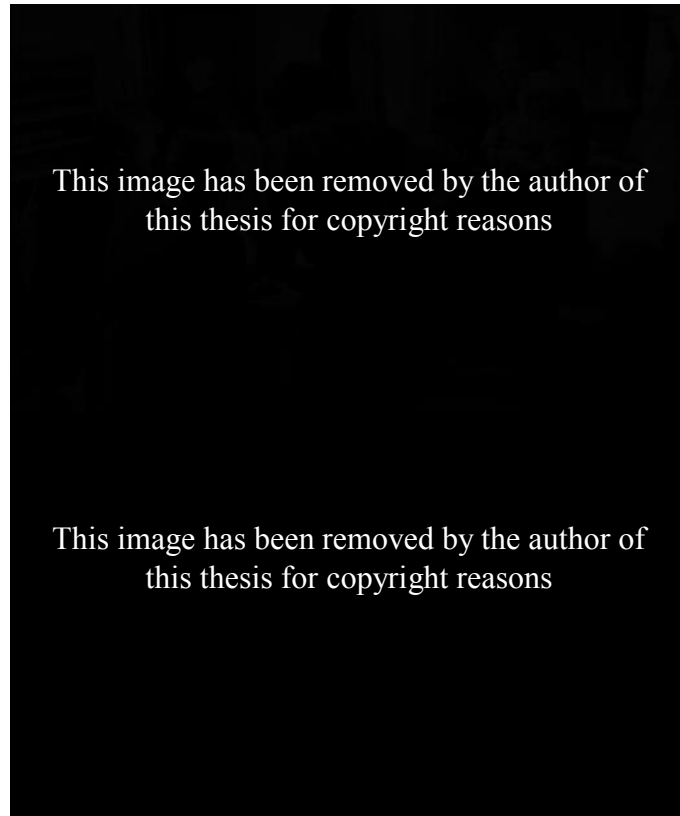


Figure 3: A return to black and white in the West German anti-*Heimatfilme* of the 1960s and 70s. Close-up shot to represent the cramped living conditions of the poor in Volker Schlöndorff's *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) and the hunting of the outsider, Abram in Peter Fleischmann's *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* (1968). DVD capture.

'opened up spaces for "minority views", for exploring differences and articulating "otherness", first in terms of gender and gradually also ethnicity.'⁸⁴ New German Cinema filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder can be seen as a prime example of this innovative cinematic interrogation. Considered by Boa and Palfreyman as 'the most productive and innovative' of the New German Cinema filmmakers, Fassbinder was one of the earliest filmmakers to engage with the issue of foreign guest-workers and ethnic

⁸⁴ Deniz Göktürk, 'Turkish Women on German Streets: Closure and Exposure in Transnational Cinema', in *Spaces in European Cinema*, ed. by Myrto Konstantarakos (Exeter: Intellect, 2000), p.66.

minorities in post-war Germany.⁸⁵ His 1969 work, *Katzelmacher*, in addition to his 1973 film, *Angst essen Seele auf*, were inspired by the growing resentment towards ethnic minorities that emerged in post-war West Germany. During the “economic miracle” of the 1950s, the West German government sought to alleviate the shortage of labour supply by introducing a governmental programme, beginning in 1955, where foreign workers were invited from all over the world to come and work in Germany as a *Gastarbeiter* (guestworker).⁸⁶ These guest workers were in theory supposed to return to their country of origin every few years and, as a result, no attempts were made by the government to help integrate them into West German society. However, as Chantal Wright notes, ‘the policy of labour rotation was never properly implemented,’ and thus many of the *Gastarbeiter*, along with their families, proceeded to settle in West Germany and continued to consider West Germany as their home.⁸⁷ As the number of *Gastarbeiter* continued to grow, from 1966-1967 West Germany simultaneously experienced its first economic downturn since the end of the Second World War. This resulted in a period of social unrest in the country, which as Boa and Palfreyman highlight, prompted feelings of resentment, anxiety and xenophobia among the West German population.⁸⁸

Fassbinder’s *Katzelmacher* (1969), which is based on his own 1968 play of the same name, can be read against this volatile social and political backdrop, with the title reflecting the xenophobia and racism with which the

⁸⁵ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 102.

⁸⁶ The majority of these guest workers were recruited from Greece, Portugal, Italy, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, Spain, Morocco and Turkey. See Chantal Wright, ‘Foreigners and Guest-Workers: Fremde und Gastarbeiter’, in *Directory of World Cinema: Germany*, ed. by Michelle Langford (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012), p. 149.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 111.

film engages.⁸⁹ Shot over the course of just nine days, the film follows Jorgos, a migrant worker from Greece, and the unstable social dynamic that ensues between him and a group of young Germans that he becomes acquainted with in Munich. Seen as an exotic ‘other’ by women and as a threatening ‘other’ by men, Jorgos incites resentment, envy and frustration among the German characters and therefore, as Boa and Palfreyman suggest, threatens to destabilise their ‘*heile Welt*’, which can be seen as ‘a perversion of the cherished goal of the 1950s *Heimatfilm*.’⁹⁰ As Alexandra Ludewig continues, the feelings of self-hatred, monotony and dissatisfaction that accompany the loveless relationships represented in Fassbinder’s film ‘are ultimately channelled into fantasising about or brutalising the newcomer.’⁹¹ The film’s ending does not culminate in the brutal murder of the ‘other’ as observed in a number of anti-/critical-*Heimat* films including Peter Fleischmann’s *Jagdsszenen aus Niederbayern* (1969) – although violence and aggression against Jorgos is portrayed in the film – however, the viewer is nevertheless denied a *Heimat*-esque happy-ending and is instead confronted with an open-ending which offers little resolution, the aim of which is to provoke a critical response from the audience.

Shot in black and white and using a predominantly static camera, the film’s drab, mundane aesthetic constitutes a cinematic antithesis to the bright, vivacious landscapes and gentle romantic panning shots that typify

⁸⁹ Katzelmacher is a German word with various meanings. Here it is used as a derogatory term from Bavaria which refers to a foreigner and implies sexual promiscuity. It is often translated into English as ‘cat-screwler.’

⁹⁰ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 112.

⁹¹ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 245.

1950s *Heimatfilm* productions.⁹² Furthermore, the static camera not only engenders a sense of claustrophobia and alienation within the characters' environment – a stark contrast once again to the vast rolling hills and cornfields of the 1950s *Heimatfilm* – but also evokes a sense of historical stasis; a community which is stuck in its historically fascistic mentality. This is reinforced by the epigram that appears before the opening credits, which repeats a quote made by Yaak Karsunke: 'Es ist besser, neue Fehler zu machen, als die alten bis zur allgemeinen Bewusstlosigkeit zu konstituieren.' This quote, in addition to the use of a static camera and the monotonous nature of the action and dialogue in the film, successfully supports Fassbinder's cinematic interrogation of postwar west-Germany's xenophobic treatment of foreigners, which he sees as a continuation of the unresolved legacy of Germany's fascist past. Ludewig agrees with this interpretation when she claims that Fassbinder's film 'highlights "täglichen Faschismus"' and therefore 'explores the roots of Nazism as a human precondition.'⁹³

By casting himself as Jorgos, Fassbinder also calls into question modes of ethnic and cultural identification. As Page R. Laws points out, 'physically, there is nothing remotely "dark" or alluring about Fassbinder's own body,'⁹⁴ and thus, as Boa and Palfreyman continue, Fassbinder's 'unexotic appearance' and 'unalluring performance' seek to 'comically undo the stereotype of sexual potency which his racist characters project on

⁹² A similar point is made by Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 112.

⁹³ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 249.

⁹⁴ Page R. Laws, 'Rainer and *Der weiße Neger*: Fassbinder's and Kaufmann's On and Off Screen Affair as German Racial Allegory', in *From Black to Schwarz: Cultural Crossovers Between African America and Germany*, ed. by Maria I. Diedrich and Jürgen Heinrichs (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2010), pp. 249-250.

the Greek stranger.’⁹⁵ Laws goes on to suggest that, while Fassbinder’s motivations for his self-casting as Jorgos are still contested, it does however appear that he adopts the role of the ‘other’ as a Brechtian effect to signal the performativity of identity;⁹⁶ a view mirrored by Katrin Sieg who sees his performance as an identity in ‘masquerade.’ Identity as performance and themes of disguise and mistaken identity were common motifs in the formulaic 1950s *Heimatfilm*, employed as a means to implicitly reflect the identity crises of the postwar German-speaking lands, as discussed earlier. While Fassbinder engages with this crucial trope, he adapts it to correspond with his critical representation of contemporary German society. Sieg correctly goes on to argue that, ‘the film insists that racial difference does not reside in the body of the Other but is produced in the psyche of the German collective, where it must be uncovered, indicted and undone.’⁹⁷ Fassbinder therefore, through the tropes of masquerade and identity performance, calls into question the racist and xenophobic motives of the postwar German population by representing himself as the physical embodiment of the ethnic ‘other’ only without the stereotypical attributes with which this ethnic ‘other’ is usually associated.

Finally, another important aspect of Fassbinder’s film, which successfully interrogates the concept of *Heimat* vis-à-vis the volatile xenophobic backdrop of a multicultural postwar Germany, is the film’s

⁹⁵ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 114.

⁹⁶ See Barbara Mennel, ‘Masochistic Fantasy and Racialised Fetish in Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*’, in *One Hundred Years of Masochism: Literary Texts, Social and Cultural Contexts*, ed. by Michael C. Finke and Carl Niekerk (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), p. 204.

⁹⁷ Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, Sexuality in West Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 166.

rejection of a spatially conceived idea of a German *Heimat*.⁹⁸ Although the film's ending reinforces a lack of resolve and implies a continuation of the monotony and tedium with which the characters live their day-to-day lives, it does however suggest that the utopian notions of happiness and belonging can still be attained and can only be achieved via a change of location. For Rosy, a bright future away from prostitution could indeed await her at film school beyond the confines of this drab, suburban milieu. Similarly, Maria, who longs for romance and love, dreams of being whisked away to the 'schön' Greece and so away from the 'kalt' Germany. As she states during a conversation with Helga in the film's final moments: 'In Griechenland ist alles anders wie da.' For the characters in *Katzelmacher*, 'Fernweh wins out over *Heimatliebe*,' successfully dissolving the notion of an organic German *Heimat*.⁹⁹ Fassbinder's *Katzelmacher* thus marked an important shift in the *Heimatfilm* genre and as Ludewig contends, 'proved a marked change in tradition.'¹⁰⁰ The film, as she continues, 'in essence became the new understanding of *Heimat* by the New Left' as it 'helped to define this anti-*Heimat* movement, which must be viewed as a rebellion against the unsophisticated concepts of the genre films of the 1950s.'¹⁰¹ In these anti-*Heimatfilme* of the New German Cinema, the *Heimat/Fremde* dichotomy was thus inverted. The German *Heimat* became the *Fremde* and the possibility of a *Heimat* could only be realised elsewhere; within the *Fremde*.

⁹⁸ This is typical of the anti-/critical- *Heimatfilm* and of the films of the New German Cinema in general. See Inga Scharf, *Nation and Identity in the New German Cinema: Homeless at Home* (New York; London: Routledge, 2008).

⁹⁹ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 113.

¹⁰⁰ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 252.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

A discussion of New German Cinema and its renegotiation and deconstruction of the mores of the *Heimatfilm* genre would of course not be complete without the mention of Edgar Reitz's fifteen hour and twenty-four minute chronicle, aptly titled *Heimat*.¹⁰² Reitz's series, which was first aired to the German public in 1984, constitutes a more ambivalent engagement with *Heimat* and in particular its negotiation of *Heimat* and *Fremde*. The project was initially conceived as a response to the 1978 Hollywood series *Holocaust*, which appalled Reitz in its stereotypical presentation of German society and in the 'crocodile tears' it provoked.¹⁰³ Reitz thus aimed to offer a more critical engagement with the nation's history, one which was based on real German people rather than a worn-out national stereotype.¹⁰⁴

Reitz's chronicle can be seen as an accumulation of the history of the *Heimatfilm* genre. For instance, the series can be seen to engage with the classical *Heimatfilm* in the sense that it 'adopts a stock narrative pattern and evokes sentimental pictures of regional life.'¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in its representation of German history through the local Schabbach village and its community, as viewers observe the return of soldiers following the end of the First World War, the 1918 Revolution, the Depression, the encroaching Nazism, and the village's modernisation and technologisation – albeit secondarily – Reitz's *Heimat* offers a universal picture of a German nation and German history through a localised image of a rural village; a

¹⁰² For more information on Reitz's *Heimat* and the critical engagement it attracted, see Miriam Hansen 'Dossier on Heimat', *New German Critique*, 36, (1985), pp.3-24; Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 57-102; and Rachel Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat: Histories, Traditions, Fictions* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000).

¹⁰³ Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 57.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

notion typical of the classical *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s. However, as Kaes notes, the series also negates the classical 1950s *Heimatfilm* and adopts an anti/critical *Heimat* approach by ‘ultimately undermin[ing] any spurious idyllic facade by its ending.’¹⁰⁶ Thus, in its revisitation to the *Heimatfilm*’s various manifestations, Reitz’s chronicle successfully exemplifies the ‘contradictory multiplicity of meanings clustered around the concept of *Heimat*.’¹⁰⁷

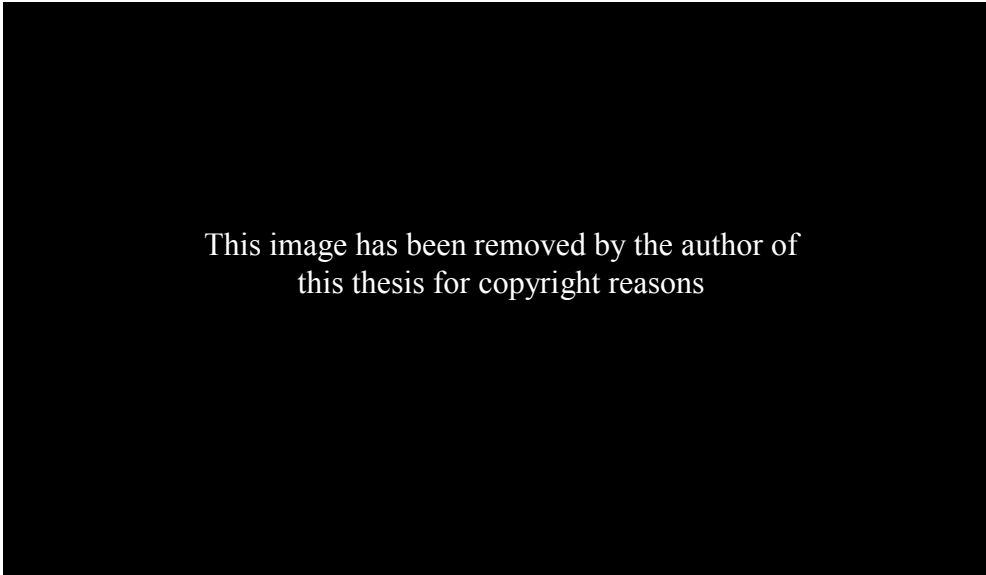
In his analysis of Reitz’s *Heimat*, von Moltke notes an interesting and often overlooked tension within the film: ‘the tension between nostalgia and critique inscribed into the film’s play between home and away, inside and out.’¹⁰⁸ Indeed, from the outset, the local village of Schabbach is inextricably tied to the outside world, initially indicated by the episode titles ‘*Fernweh*’ (episode one) and ‘*Mitte der Welt* (episode two).¹⁰⁹ The *Fernweh* to which the first title refers is exemplified through the character of Paul, a returning soldier who, struggling to come to terms with the trauma of war, is unable to reintegrate into his *Heimat* of Schabbach and thus longs for a life elsewhere. The *Heimweh* which one would usually associate with the image of the returning soldier is thus inverted in Reitz’s work; particularly when the viewer observes Paul leave Schabbach for the USA at the end of episode one. The *Fremde* is also inscribed into the chronicle through the onset of modernisation and technologisation within the village. As von Moltke

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 214.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 215.



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Figure 4: *Fernweh*: Paul leaves his *Heimat* of Schabbach for the USA in Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* (1984). DVD Capture

explains, 'Schabbach acquires radio reception, becomes electrified and increasingly motorised, and is connected to the telephone grid' and as a result, 'the places of *Heimat* become remapped onto an expanding map of modernisation.'¹¹⁰ This process of modernisation, he concludes, contributes to the 'eroding [of] spatial boundaries' within the rural *Heimat*.¹¹¹ Thus, if Reitz's *Heimat* does, as numerous critics agree, constitute an allegory for the German nation, the *Heimat* which is being represented onscreen, is nevertheless tied to the *Fremde* in a variety of complex ways.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 219.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Deconstructing Heimat (Later) in New Austrian Film

This period of critical reflection and generic reinterpretation in West Germany during the 1960s and 70s, as mentioned earlier, represents a ‘missed wave’ for the Austrian industry. However, where Austria’s film industry was unable to express its discontent due to the financial constraints of that period, an anti-*Heimat* rhetoric was emerging in the form of Austrian literature. Post-war Austrian writers, including Thomas Bernhard, Robert Menasse, Gerhard Frisch, Hans Lebert, Elfriede Jelinek, Elisabeth Reichart and Ingeborg Bachmann, for instance, returned to the *Heimat* mode by categorically inverting the *Heimat* tropes which were propagated by the *Heimatroman* of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the post-war years, as J.J. Long points out, ‘the *Heimatroman* was perceived by many serious writers as a compromised genre that could be resurrected only in the form of the critical or anti-*Heimatroman*.’¹¹² Indeed, writers including Lebert, Bernhard and Frisch returned to the Austrian province only to ‘expose the persistence of the Nazi past in post-war Austria,’ in their novels *Die Wolfshaut* (1960) *Frost* (1963) and *Fasching* (1967), respectively.¹¹³ Whilst exposing what they saw as a lingering fascist mentality in the Austrian post-war present, their novels also, according to Katya Krylova, de-mystified and dismantled the Austrian rural landscape,¹¹⁴ ‘sharply criticising’ the vision of Austria sold by the tourism industry.¹¹⁵ The literary

¹¹² J. J. Long, ‘Austrian Prose Fiction, 1945-2000’, in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (Rochester: Camden House, 2006), p. 226.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹¹⁴ Katya Krylova, ‘“Eine den Menschen zerzausende Landschaft”: Psychotopography and the Alpine Landscape in Thomas Bernhard’s *Frost*’, *Austrian Studies*, 18 (2010), p. 78.

¹¹⁵ Heidi Schlipphacke, *Nostalgia after Nazism: History Home and Affect in German and Austrian Literature and Film* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2010), p. 181.

works of Elfriede Jelinek, Ingeborg Bachmann and Elizabeth Reichart similarly criticise the perceived status of the Austrian nation as ‘the first victim’ of the atrocities of the Holocaust, and indeed interrogate the nation’s failure to come to terms with, and accept responsibility for, its National Socialist past, which, they argue, has allowed for the fascistic structures of Austria’s (supposedly historic) fascism to continue to exist in the present. Robert Menasse defines this Austrian anti-*Heimat* literature as the most important form of literature in the Second Republic:

Nation ohne Heimat. Es ist gewiß kein Zufall, daß in Österreich mit der sogenannten “Anti-Heimat-Literatur” eine im internationalen Vergleich völlig eigenständige, neue literarische Gattung entstanden ist: Österreich ist die Anti-Heimat par excellence. Aber die Anti-Heimat-Literatur ist nicht nur eine eigenständige österreichische Gattung, sie ist vor allem auch die wichtigste, die dominante Form der Literatur in der Zweiten Republik.¹¹⁶

Similarly, Philip Bolton argues that the *Anti-Heimatroman*, did function, and indeed continues to function as a ‘national literature.’¹¹⁷

It was not until the 1980s, however, when an adequate state funding programme was established, that the Austrian film industry was able to engage with this critical mode of cultural expression. While it must be acknowledged that the Austrian film industry did attempt to establish a cinematic new-wave in the form of an ‘iconoclastic, non-narrative film avant-garde,’ in the 1960s ‘it was regarded as too extreme by both audience

¹¹⁶ Robert Menasse, *Das Land ohne Eigenschaften: Essay zur österreichischen Identität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), p. 103.

¹¹⁷ Philip Bolton, ‘Metropolis and Province Configurations of Identity in Contemporary Austrian Literature’ (Unpublished PhD, Durham University, 2006).

members and critics.¹¹⁸ Works by Peter Kubelka, Kurt Kren and Valie Export were seen as far more radical than those of other European ‘young’ cinemas and the New Waves of the 1960s and thus the filmmakers failed to establish themselves as a serious cinematic movement.¹¹⁹ The introduction of state funding in 1981, however, conveniently coincided with the emergence of a new language of Austrian filmmaking. As von Dassanowsky comments, ‘the new possibilities of federal funding boosted the film industry somewhat, allowing for the entry of new talent, a few larger production budgets, and for minor promotion outside of Austria, but the innovation in the art had already developed without any government-led campaign.’¹²⁰ This combination of artistic innovation and government funding saw the industry experience a slow but steady revival. As von Dassanowsky continues, ‘eight Austrian feature films were produced in 1980, followed by thirteen in 1981, ten in 1982, thirteen in 1983 and fourteen in 1984. Production would hover at this number for the decade, the healthiest amounts since the early 1960s.’¹²¹ During this period, Austrian filmmakers began, once again, to reconnect with their cinematic history, re-appropriating the *Heimatfilm* genre and ultimately recasting it as a form of critical response to the contemporary socio-political conditions of the Second Republic.

Marking the beginning of the ‘Waldheim Affair,’ the 1980s signalled an era of belated critical retrospection of Austria’s National

¹¹⁸ Thomas Elsaesser, ‘Austria,’ in *The BFI Companion to German Cinema*, ed. by Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p. 29.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History*, p. 210.

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 211.

Socialist past. Following the end of the Second World War, as Josef Haslinger notes, the allies officially defined Austria as ‘das erste freie Land, das der hitlerschen Aggression zum Opfer gefallen ist.’¹²² This ‘victim-thesis’ not only prevented the Austrian nation from coming to terms with its past, resulting in a process of repression and externalisation but it also, as Heidemarie Uhl informs, led to the nation’s failed denazification.¹²³ According to Uhl, immediately following the end of the war, ‘far-reaching denazification measures were implemented in the occupied territories in Germany and Austria which reflected the desire of the victorious powers and the new political elites, who were mostly former opponents of the Nazi regime, to punish those who were responsible for the war and the Nazi crimes.’¹²⁴ However, 90% of Austrian National Socialists pleaded mitigating circumstances to their crimes and by 1949 the process of denazification was completely abandoned.¹²⁵ The controversial revelation in 1986 that the Austrian presidential candidate, Kurt Waldheim, had past affiliations with the Nazis as a junior *Wehrmacht* officer further fuelled this period of discontent. Belated state funding thus coincided with a period of belated *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, initiating the emergence of what is now regarded as New Austrian Film.

This problematic period triggered what von Dassanowsky terms a ‘coming-to-terms-with-the-past’ within Austrian film, in which filmmakers

¹²² Josef Haslinger, *Politik der Gefühle* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1995), p. 60.

¹²³ See Heidemarie Uhl, ‘The Politics of Memory’, in *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity*, ed. by Günter Linter Bischof and Anton Pelinka (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997), pp. 64-94.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

often adapted the narratives of Austria's anti-*Heimat* literature.¹²⁶ Franz Novotny's *Die Ausgesperrten* (1982), Fritz Lehner's *Schöne Tage* (1982) and Xaver Schwarzenberger's *Der stille Ozean* (1983), for example, were all literary adaptations of post-war Austrian anti-*Heimat* novels, thus signalling Austrian film's revisitation of the *Heimatfilm* genre.¹²⁷ Von Dassanowsky notes that in light of the Waldheim affair, an emergent generation of Austrian filmmakers had begun to reconnect with Austria's cinematic legacy, 'rediscovering film traditions and redefining the filmic vocabulary to make these images both reflexive and critical.'¹²⁸ In a similar manner to filmmakers of the New German Cinema, a number of New Austrian Filmmakers paid homage to the look of the *Heimatfilm*, yet critically adapted its syntax to engage with the moral and social questions that the 1980s engendered. Austrian cinema, therefore, as von Dassanowsky remarks, 'found its "new wave" in a re-vision of the most mainstream of its genres'¹²⁹ – the *Heimatfilm*.

The new Austrian *Heimatfilm* makers of the 1980s, which include Christian Berger, Wolfram Paulus, Peter Patzak, Leopold Huber, and Wolfgang Glück, in a manner similar to their literary and New German Cinema predecessors, attempted to subvert generic *Heimatfilm* conventions with the ultimate aim of exposing post-war Austrian society as fascist and oppressive. Set in the same majestic mountainous or idyllic rural backdrop as their 1950s forerunners, the New *Heimatfilm* contrarily uncovered the

¹²⁶ Von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History*, p. 211.

¹²⁷ See Catriona Firth, *Modern Austrian Literature through the Lens of Adaptation* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2012).

¹²⁸ Robert von Dassanowsky, 'Going Home Again? Ruzowitzky's *Die Siebtelbauern* and the New Austrian *Heimatfilm*', *The Germanic Review*, 78: 2 (2003), p. 134.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p.135.

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Figure 5: Undoing the majestic mountainous setting in Wolfram Paulus' *Heidenlöcher* (1986). DVD Capture

brutality of pastoral life, constituting filmic critiques of the religious values, traditions, and historical revisionism that the 1950s *Heimatfilm* notoriously perpetuated. On these films, Thomas Elsaesser comments: 'the Alpine idylls of summer tourists and skiing instructors peel away to reveal still-lives of brutalising everyday existence in the provinces.'¹³⁰ Wolfram Paulus' *Heidenlöcher* (1985), for example, goes back to the 1940s Austrian Alpine wilderness to demonstrate how the Austrian rural community co-operated with the Nazis, once again challenging Austria's 'victim thesis.' Furthermore, the film was aesthetically, stylistically and thematically in dialogue with the West German anti-*Heimatfilme* of the 1960s, using local non-actors, presenting the pastoral idyll in black and white with sparse use of non-diegetic sound, and representing rural existence as an oppressive life of unending servitude.

¹³⁰ Elsaesser, 'Austria', p. 30.

Contemporary Engagements with *Heimat* in Post-Unification German Cinema

Sarah Wüst, in her article ‘Young German *Heimatfilm*: Negotiations of a Powerful Myth,’ successfully captures the recent shift in *Heimat* discourse achieved by contemporary German filmmakers. *Heimat*, she argues has ‘moved far beyond the productions labelled as *Heimatfilme*,’ and the only thing that recent cinematic engagements with *Heimat* have in common, she argues, is that this engagement ‘is highly diverse.’¹³¹ Recent filmic narratives of *Heimat*, provided by filmmakers of native German and migrant-background, she argues, deal precisely with the ‘ambiguous, uncertain condition,’ that characterises modern life.¹³²

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the mobility this momentous historical event precipitated, a number of post-unification German films tended to draw on the *Heimatfilm* mode in order to probe issues of space, place, identity and dislocation following the collapse of the former DDR. As Nick Hodgkin notes, ‘German unification has provided many of the country’s filmmakers with a much needed focus, resulting in an intriguing audiovisual index of recent German history and contemporary society.’¹³³ Immediately following the fall of the wall, post-unification German *Heimatfilm*, according to Leonie Naughton, tended to mirror that of its 1950s antecedents, as films including Vadim Glowna’s *Der Brocken* (1992) and Peter Timm’s *Go Trabi Go* (1991) tended to romanticise life on

¹³¹ Sarah Wüst, ‘Young German *Heimatfilm*: Negotiations of a Powerful Myth’, *Austausch*, 1:1 (2011), p. 81.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Nick Hodgkin, *Screening the East: Heimat, Memory and Nostalgia in German Film since 1989* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), p. 3.

the road and utilised the *Heimat* mode in order to offer their audiences a reassuring portrayal of a ‘stable cultural identity that otherwise eluded many of them as they confronted the disarray brought by unification.’¹³⁴ Although von Moltke disagrees with Naughton’s claims that these films ‘amount to a full-scale “reappropriation” and “restoration” of the *Heimatfilm*,’¹³⁵ he does agree that the films use clichés that can be associated with the *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s, and also that these ‘bland and provincial, ultimately harmless appearance of post-wall German cinema’ echoes the films of the 1950s, in their ‘desire for “normalisation” at the expense of historical retrospection.’¹³⁶

The cinematic output of this immediate post-unification period, as Sabine Hake notes, tended to accommodate the audience’s ‘desire [...] for less complicated narratives of Germanness.’¹³⁷ Thus, in its avoidance of politically sensitive issues, and its lack of a critical voice, the cinema of this period became known as the ‘cinema of consensus,’ a term made famous by Eric Rentschler.¹³⁸ However, as Christina Kraenzle, notes, in contrast to the ‘cinema of consensus’, which was seen as a clear break from the New German Cinema which preceded it, ‘politically-engaged, socially-

¹³⁴ Leonie Naughton, *That Was the Wild East: Film Culture, Unification, and the ‘New’ Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 125.

¹³⁵ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 232.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 179-192.

¹³⁸ See Eric Rentschler, ‘From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus’, in *Cinema and Nation*, ed. by Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie (Routledge: London, 2000), pp. 260-277.

purposeful films' were being made in Germany by filmmakers of a Turkish-German origin.¹³⁹

In contrast to the so-called cinema of consensus, during the 1990s, a number of Turkish-German filmmakers emerged, who became known for creating stylistically innovative and thematically critical films. These filmmakers, as Kraenzle argues, can thus be seen as the 'heir' to the New German Cinema of the 1960s and 70s.¹⁴⁰ The hyphenated *Heimatfilme* of these migrant filmmakers, as Alexandra Ludewig refers to them, 'are no longer necessarily set in the Alps or even in Bavaria' and feature protagonists not named Barble or Liesl but 'Jo, or even Fariba or Siamek.'¹⁴¹ Furthermore, as Ludewig continues, these works express 'a yearning for grounding, refuge, and a place like home [...] by those who feel insecure, ostracised, or rejected in German society.'¹⁴² Like in the critical *Heimatfilme* of Fassbinder, which critically probed the themes of identity and belonging from the perspective of the ethnic 'other,' these contemporary *Heimatfilme* demonstrate a commitment to explore notions of *Heimat* within the context of the nation's multicultural population. However, their treatment of the ethnic 'other,' differs significantly from the ostensibly patronising portrayal of migrants typical of the New German Cinema.

¹³⁹ Christina Kraenzle, 'At Home in the New Germany?: Local Stories and Global Concerns in Yüksel Yavuz's *Aprilkinder* and *Kleine Freiheit*', in *Imagaries out of Place: Cinema, Transnationalism and Turkey*, ed. by Gökçen Karanfil and Serkan Şavk (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), pp. 132-133.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁴¹ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 390.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Indeed, during the 1960s and 70s, the filmmakers of the New German Cinema relied heavily on public funding, which often tended to promote a patronising portrayal of migrants as victims.¹⁴³ As Angelica Fenner criticises, although a number of filmmakers of the New German Cinema have addressed the topic of migration in their work, ‘these films have often been driven by a commitment to social justice wedded to an overly pedantic directorial imagination exhibiting a torpid fixation with tragedy and victimisation.’¹⁴⁴ This *Gastarbeiterkino*, as Rob Burns brands it, did however pave the way for new cinematic representations of Germany’s ethnic minorities by filmmakers of an ethnic minority background throughout the 1980s.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, as Deniz Göktürk suggests in agreement with Fenner, the featured protagonists once again only appeared on German cinema screens as ‘prisoners of a patronising culture of compassion.’¹⁴⁶ Assuming the title, ‘a cinema of the affected,’¹⁴⁷ this phase of cinema reflected an eagerness to dwell on the suffering and oppression of migrants, particularly Turks, in Germany. In films including Tevfik Başer’s 1986 film, *Vierzig Quadratmeter Deutschland* and Hark Bohm’s 1986 film *Yasemin*, for instance, migrant women are typically represented as ‘double others’ who are repressed by tyrannical fathers, brothers or husbands and tend to appear in confined, claustrophobic spaces,

¹⁴³ See Göktürk, ‘Turkish Women on German Streets’, p. 67.

¹⁴⁴ Angelica Fenner, ‘Traversing the Screen Politics of Migration: Xavier Koller’s Journey of Hope’, in *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities*, ed. by Eva Rueschmann (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2006), p. 25.

¹⁴⁵ Burns, ‘Turkish-German Cinema’, p. 133.

¹⁴⁶ Deniz Göktürk, ‘Beyond Paternalism: Turkish German Traffic in Cinema’, in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk (London: British Film Institute, 2002), p. 249.

¹⁴⁷ The term was coined by Rob Burns and is an analogy from a trend in German literature of the 1980s known as *Literatur der Betroffenen*. See Rob Burns, ‘Towards a Cinema of Cultural Hybridity: Turkish-German Filmmakers and the Representation of Alterity’, *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 15:1 (2007), p. 4.

suffering various scenarios and degrees of imprisonment. Meanwhile, migrant men are often typecast as, ‘the legendary mute’ or the ‘the lecherous *Gastarbeiter*.’¹⁴⁸

Since the 1990s, however, as Göktürk highlights, ‘films have begun to challenge the parameters of a paternalist discourse.’¹⁴⁹ Sinan Çetin’s 1993 film, *Berlin in Berlin*, for example transcends the patronising productions of the 1980s with its ‘celebrations of mobility and mutual exposure, rather than victimisation and closure.’¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, films including Hussi Kutlucan’s *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (1998) and Züli Aladag’s *Wut* (2006), according to Göktürk, show ‘that a film about migrants in Germany can also be a film about Germany,’¹⁵¹ with their success at the German box office proving, according to Ludewig, that ‘movie-going audiences were happy to engage with new stories about and from Germany, rethinking *Heimat* as a transnational and transcultural space and place.’¹⁵² Announcing ‘der neue “deutsche” Film ist “türkisch”’ in an article for *Filmforum* in 1999,¹⁵³ Tuncay Kulaoglu, according to Daniela Bergahahn, successfully highlighted ‘the increased fervour’ with which the Young German-Turkish Cinema was being promoted.¹⁵⁴

One of the key representatives of this new phase in German cinema, and this new articulation of *Heimat*, is Hamburg-born Turkish-German

¹⁴⁸ See Göktürk, ‘Turkish Women on German Streets’, pp. 64-67.

¹⁴⁹ Göktürk, ‘Beyond Paternalism’, p. 248.

¹⁵⁰ Göktürk, ‘Turkish Women on German Streets’, p. 252.

¹⁵¹ Göktürk, ‘Beyond Paternalism’, p. 253.

¹⁵² Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 390.

¹⁵³ Tuncay Kulaoglu, ‘Der neue “deutsche” Film ist “türkisch”? Eine neue Generation bringt Leben in die Filmlandschaft’, *Filmforum*, 16, (1999), pp. 8-11.

¹⁵⁴ Daniela Bergahahn, ‘No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecomings in the Films of Fatih Akin’, *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 4:3 (2006), p. 141.

filmmaker Fatih Akin. Akin probes notions of *Heimat* in his films in various ways. Earlier films, including *Kurz und schmerzlos* (1998), *Solino* (2002) and *Gegen die Wand* (2004), concern themselves with an underlying theme of rootlessness and displacement, of a clash of cultures, and of migrants trapped between two worlds. Furthermore, these films often culminate in their protagonists' attempted journeys back to their place of origin, all in the quest of their *Heimat*.¹⁵⁵ More recently however, Akin's 2009 work *Soul Kitchen*, which he has been known to refer to in interviews as 'an audacious dirty *Heimatfilm*,' marks a departure from this more regressive articulation of *Heimat* observed in his earlier works, which was explored through the themes of homecomings, rootlessness and displacement.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, in *Soul Kitchen*, not only does Akin's Greek-German protagonist Zinos remain in his hometown of Hamburg at the film's conclusion, but Akin also deterritorialises *Heimat* by presenting the concept as a conglomeration of aspects that constitute his protagonist's identity, which include a love of music, a hobby, and an affinity with a particular group of people. Thus, as a number of scholars including Wüst, Ludewig and Paul Cooke note, Akin simultaneously deterritorialises *Heimat* from a specifically German sense of space and from a spatial context in general, allowing the migrant population to have access to a *Heimat* and to form an identity of their own that is not necessarily inextricably linked to a territorially defined space or place.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ For a thorough account of *Heimat* motifs in Akin's earlier films see Berghahn, 'No Place Like Home?', pp. 141-157.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Bodey, 'Change in Menu as Akin Serves Laughs', *The Australian*, 28 April 2010, p.15.

¹⁵⁷ See Paul Cooke, *Contemporary German Cinema* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 260-62; Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*; Wüst, 'Young German *Heimatfilm*', pp. 88-89.

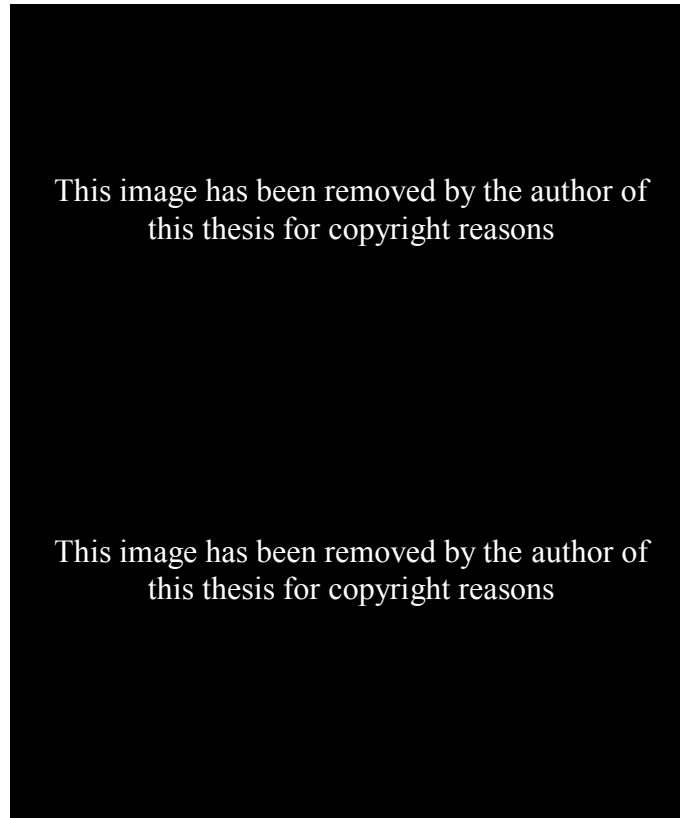


Figure 6: A multi-cultural, bacchanalian, urban *Heimat* that welcomes people of all walks of life in Fatih Akin's *Soul Kitchen* (2009) DVD Capture.

Filling the Void: Contemporary Engagements with *Heimat* in Post-1990s New Austrian Film

While there exists a plethora of scholarship exploring the changing notions of *Heimat* within contemporary German film – works by scholars including Sarah Wüst, Yvonne Franke, Daniela Berghahn, Alexandra Ludewig, and Paul Cooke, as engaged with above, support this assertion – the re-visitation of the *Heimatfilm* genre in contemporary Austrian film remains a particularly understudied topic. Notable exceptions include Robert von Dassanowsky and Rachel Palfreyman's stimulating articles on New

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Figure 7: New Austrian Film redeploys the critical-*Heimatfilm* mode in Stefan Ruzowitzky's *Die Siebtelbauern* (1998) DVD Capture

Austrian Filmmaker, Stefan Ruzowitzky's revisitation of the critical *Heimatfilm* mode in his 1998 work, *Die Siebtelbauern*, which Palfreyman sees as a 'direct answer to' Volker Schöndorff's anti-*Heimatfilm*, *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute vom Kombach*.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, as both Palfreyman and von Dassanowsky illuminate, the film draws on the semantics and syntax of the critical-*Heimatfilm* genre to offer a filmic critique of provincial life in the First Republic, which was predicated on the repression of the working class under Austrofascism. However, these scholars fail to place Ruzowitzky's work within the wider context of a number of New Austrian Films, which I will argue, also revisit and renegotiate the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre. Indeed, as the

¹⁵⁸ von Dassanowsky, 'Going Home Again?', pp. 133-147. Also see Rachel Palfreyman, 'Once Upon a Time in the Critical Heimat Film: *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute vom Kombach* and *Die Siebtelbauern*', in *Local/Global Narratives*, ed. by Renate Rechten and Karoline von Oppen (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 39-61.

following chapters aim to demonstrate, New Austrian filmmakers are continuing to draw on the enduring legacy of the *Heimatfilm* genre in order to probe issues of place, space, identity and belonging within the context of an increasingly globalised and multicultural Austria, Europe and Western world. Works by Houchang Allahyari (chapter two), Florian Flicker (chapter three) and Barbara Albert (chapter four), I will argue, all successfully represent and encapsulate this emerging trend within New Austrian Film, in their employment and adaption of the genre in response to contemporary societal issues and challenges. In a manner similar to the ‘hyphenated *Heimatfilme*’ that have emerged in post-unification German cinema since the 1990s, New Austrian Filmmakers are continuing to deterritorialise *Heimat* from the realms of a quintessentially German-speaking rubric, reimagining *Heimat* as a transnational and transcultural concept.

Chapter 2: Constructing *Heimat* in the Works of Houchang Allahyari

Introduction

Houchang Allahyari was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1941 and migrated to Vienna at the age of eighteen to study film.¹ He is, as Shirin Hakimzadeh highlights, representative of a wider movement of young Iranians who left Iran for Europe and North America during the 1950s ‘as a means of ensuring socioeconomic security’ during Iran’s slow economic recovery after the Second World War.² Although Allahyari only intended to study in Vienna on a temporary basis for educational purposes, today he continues to live and work as an internationally acclaimed filmmaker in the Austrian capital.³ Allahyari is now considered one of the key proponents of New Austrian Film, with scholars including Robert von Dassanowsky regarding him as ‘one of the [most] significant Austrian filmmakers of the final decade of the twentieth century.’⁴ But, despite Allahyari’s current critical success, he did not make his first feature-length film in Austria until he was forty years of age. Indeed, not dissimilar to the experiences of many

¹ Anon, ‘Filmemacher Allahyari wird 70’, *ORF.at*, 26 November 2013 <<http://volksgruppen1.orf.at/diversitaet/aktuell/stories/141719.html>> [accessed 22/04/2014]. ‘1941 in Teheran geboren, kam Allahyari als Jugendlischer nach Österreich, um seine “Faszination für Film und Theater weiterzuentwickeln”, wie er selbst sagt.’
² Shirin Hakimzadeh, ‘Iran: A Vast Diaspora Abroad and Millions of Refugees at Home’, *The Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*, 1 September 2006 <<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/iran-vast-diaspora-abroad-and-millions-refugees-home>> [accessed 07/08/14].

³ See Anon, ‘Filmemacher Allahyari wird 70.’ In this interview Allahyari proclaims, ‘Dieses Land ist meine Heimat geworden.’

⁴ Robert von Dassanowsky, ‘A Wave Over Boundaries: New Austrian Film’, *Film International*, 6:31 (2008), p. 38. Also see Nikhil Sathe who describes Allahyari as Austria’s ‘principal transcultural filmmaker’ in Nikhil Sathe, ‘The Spaces of the Other Vienna in New Austrian Film’, in *World Film Locations Vienna*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (Bristol: Intellect, 2013), p. 107.

migrants who attempt to establish a career for themselves as a successful filmmaker in their host country, Allahyari had to pursue another career in Austria before turning self-taught, and for the most part, self-funded, to filmmaking.⁵

Although Allahyari moved to Vienna at the age of eighteen in order to study *Filmwissenschaft und Theaterwissenschaft*, his parents objected to his proposed field of study. Subsequently, upon his arrival in Vienna, Allahyari attended medical school, where he studied psychiatry and neurology.⁶ Following his studies, Allahyari then went on to practise psychiatry and worked within the Viennese prison system for over twenty years. However, while Allahyari was unable to attend film school, he nevertheless continued to pursue a career in film alongside his psychiatric profession. As he explains in an interview with Antonia Kreppel, he would incorporate filmmaking into his psychiatric procedure by collaborating with his patients to create their own films as part of their therapy:

Wir waren ein Team mit sehr vielen Psychologen, auch praktische Ärzte, und ich habe versucht dort mit Jugendlichen Filmgruppentherapie [zu] Machen [...] unser Ziel war Filme zu machen, und dann hat jeder in der

⁵ See Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 47, who argues that accented filmmakers ‘often have to invest in their own films or work in technical or routine capacities in the entertainment industries and ethnic media to raise funds.’ Naficy also argues that it is common for migrant filmmakers to have other careers before/alongside filmmaking. E.g. Argentinian exilic filmmaker, Perónist Solanas, who has ‘a dual-track career as politician and filmmaker.’ (p. 107). Also see Heinrich Mis, ‘Für mich war zuerst der Film: Houchang Allahyari und seine Filme’, in *Gegenschuss: 16 Regisseure aus Österreich*, ed. by Peter Illetschko (Vienna: Wespennest, 1995), p. 19 where Allahyari explains that he has regularly had to fund his own films.

⁶ See Anon, ‘Filmemacher Allahyari wird 70.’

Gruppe seine Stelle gehabt: Der eine hat Drehbuch geschrieben, der andere hat Musik gemacht, der andere hat versucht mir zu helfen.⁷

Towards the end of the 1970s Allahyari began to make his own experimental and avant-garde short films. These works, which include *Wahrheit* (1978), *Trotz alledem* (1982), *Das Leben im Tod* (1983) and *Thing 84* (1984), not only provided Allahyari with vital filmmaking experience, however, they also attracted critical success for the self-taught filmmaker, securing a number of awards from the Verband Österreichischer Film-Autoren (VÖFA).⁸

In the late 1980s Allahyari first collaborated with the Austrian production company, *Epo-Film*, which has over the years enabled him to write and direct a number of nationally and internationally successful feature-length works.⁹ A number of these films, including the so-called 'Prison Trilogie,' which comprises *Borderline* (1988), *Fleischwolf* (1990) and *Höhenangst* (1994),¹⁰ critically examine the Viennese prison system through the sympathetic portrayal of criminal protagonists. As scholars, including Hamid Naficy and von Dassanowsky testify, these works are informed by the experiences Allahyari gained throughout his psychiatric

⁷ Antonia Kreppel, 'Von Teheran nach Wien und zurück: Antonia Kreppel im Gespräch mit dem Psychiater und Filmemacher Houchang Allahyari', *SWR2*, 15 May 2015 <<http://www.swr.de/swr2/programm/sendungen/tandem/swr2-tandem-von-teheran-nach-wien-und-zurueck/-/id=8986864/did=15313012/nid=8986864/1071v9j/index.html>> [accessed 22 May 2015]. Also see Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 207, where he argues that Allahyari would film his patients and use the footage to create a series of 16mm short films.

⁸ Other early short films by Allahyari include *I Like to be in America* (1981), *Der Schritt* (1982), *Harmony and Understanding* (1983), *Vollendung* (1985), and *Imago* (1985).

⁹ See Houchang Allahyari, 'Films for Entertainment and Reflection: An Interview with Houchang Allahyari', in *After Postmodernism: Austrian Literature and Film in Transition*, ed. by Willy Riemer (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 2000), p. 89.

¹⁰ Mis, 'Für mich war zuerst der Film', p. 11.

career.¹¹ Meanwhile, in the 1990s, in response to the increasingly negative discourse surrounding ‘foreigners’ that prevailed at the time, the Iranian-born Austrian filmmaker shifted his focus from the depiction of prisoners in Vienna to the representation of the nation’s migrant population.¹² Works such as the hit comedies *I Love Vienna* (1991) and *Geboren in Absurdistan* (1999), and the social-realist drama *Rocco* (2002), for example, sympathetically examine the problems faced by migrant families as they attempt to find or nurture a *Heimat* in a hostile and inhospitable Vienna. In more recent years Allahyari has continued to engage with the theme of migration. His documentary film *Bock for President* (2010), and the subsequent follow-up docu-fiction film *Die verrückte Welt der Ute Bock* (2010), for instance, follow Austrian human rights activist and Allahyari’s former sister-in-law, Ute Bock, and depict her humanitarian work providing accommodation, shelter and protection for homeless and ostracised refugees in Austria.

While the theme of migration and the critical examination of the nation’s prison system tend to dominate Allahyari’s oeuvre, other feature and documentary films, including *Pasolini inszeniert seinen Tod* (1985), *Black Flamingos – Sie lieben euch zu Tode* (1998), *Rumi – Poesie des Islam* (2007), *Robert Tarantino* (2013) and *Der letzte Tanz* (2014), touch upon a range of different subjects and adopt a variety of different genres and

¹¹ See See Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 207. Also see Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: Mc Farland & Co., 2005), p. 230.

¹² See Anon, ‘Filmemacher Allahyari wird 70.’ In this interview Allahyari comments that his films which feature migrants offer a counter representation of foreigners to the images propagated by the FPÖ.

styles.¹³ As Allahyari explains in an interview with Claus Philipp, his works are intentionally multifarious and thus demonstrate the discrepancies and ambivalences that characterise his identity as an Iranian-born filmmaker living and working in Austria:

Diese Diskrepanzen und Ambivalenzen, sowohl formal, wie auch hinsichtlich der Themenbezogenheit, das ist der Allahyari. So bin ich! Ich bin niemand, der nur Schnitzel isst, niemand, der nur einen Weg geht. Mein Leben bedeutet ständige Veränderung.¹⁴

However, although ostensibly diverse in focus, genre, and form, what all of Allahyari's films have in common, as von Dassanowsky observes, is that they all focus 'on the experiences of the social outsider,' a position which, as von Dassanowsky adds, 'the director can no doubt relate to as a foreigner in Austria and as a behavioural scientist.'¹⁵ As I will demonstrate below, his films repeatedly focus on the experiences of the disenfranchised, the stigmatised and the estranged, thereby reflecting, as Heinrich Mis notes, the filmmaker's status as an 'Außenseiter.'¹⁶

¹³ *Pasolini inszeniert seinen Tod* (1985) is regarded as an avant-garde film and is inspired by the filmmaking of Pier Paolo Pasolini; *Black Flamingos – Sie lieben euch zu Tode* (1998) is a feature length film which follows a news reporter who is investigating the death of a local mayor; *Rumi – Poesie des Islam* (2007) and *Robert Tarantino* (2013) are documentary films which explore the lives and works of a Persian poet and a young filmmaker respectively; and *Der letzte Tanz* (2014) is a feature film which is set in a geriatric hospital and explores the relationship between an old woman and her young male nurse.

¹⁴ Stadtkino, *Der Letzte Tanz*, 2015

<http://stadtkinowien.at/media/uploads/filme/717/presseheft_dlt_stadtkino.pdf> [accessed 13 September 2015].

¹⁵ Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History*, p. 230.

¹⁶ Mis, 'Für mich war zuerst der Film', p. 11.

Subjectivity and Autobiography in the (Accented) Films of Allahyari

In an interview with Willy Riemer, Allahyari echoes von Dassanowsky and Mis' evaluations when he explains that the ideas behind his films stem from his own experiences, not only as a migrant living and working in a country other than his place of birth, but also from his experience as a prison therapist:

First of all I should say that I derive the themes of my films from an environment that I know well, from the experiences that every day brings anew [...]. This detailed and intimate knowledge gives me the courage to make these films and to know that they are right.¹⁷

Allahyari's work is thus typical of migrant and diasporic cinema, which, as Hamid Naficy and Alexandra Ludewig acknowledge, are often heavily indebted to the filmmakers' own biographical experiences of dislocation and displacement. In his seminal work on the *Accented Film*, Naficy, for instance, argues that films made by migrant, exilic and diasporic (accented) filmmakers are typically 'personal and unique, like fingerprints, because they are both authorial and autobiographical.'¹⁸ Ludewig also recognises the extent to which works by migrant and diasporic filmmakers are often informed by 'the director's personal plea and quest for a place in life, their personal points of view, and their confusion.'¹⁹ Although Allahyari's films do not offer autobiographical accounts of his own migration to Vienna and do not attempt to represent the filmmaker's everyday life as an immigrant

¹⁷ Allahyari, 'Films for Entertainment and Reflection', p. 90.

¹⁸ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 34.

¹⁹ Alexandra Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia: 100 Years of German Heimat Film* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011), p. 399.

living and working in the Austrian capital, his experiences and liminality are nevertheless, as is typical of migrant and diasporic film, ‘woven into’ his films in a number of ways.²⁰

Firstly, as Naficy points out, a number of accented filmmakers regularly inscribe themselves into their work by casting themselves in their films ‘either as themselves or as fictional characters.’²¹ In doing so, these filmmakers, as Naficy argues, tend to turn their films ‘into personal and autobiographical’ accounts of their own migration and displacement.²² Not only does Allahyari inscribe himself into his films through self-casting, playing small cameos in films including *I Love Vienna*, *Höhenangst*, and *Geboren in Absurdistan* but he further inscribes himself into his works by collaborating with family members on the production and performance of his films. His son Tom-Dariusch Allahyari, for example, has co-written and co-directed a number of films with his father including *Fleischwolf*, *Höhenangst*, *Geboren in Absurdistan* and *Bock for President*, and has co-directed and played a minor role in the 2002 film *Rocco*.²³ Furthermore, *I Love Vienna*, which I will offer a thorough examination of later in this chapter, is not only co-written by Tom-Dariusch but also features Allahyari’s daughter, Marjam Petra Allahyari, who plays a character with the same name in the film. Elisabeth Scharang acknowledges the importance of familial participation in Allahyari’s films when she writes, ‘die Allahyaris arbeiten als Familienbetrieb. Wenn gedreht wird, ist die ganze

²⁰ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 277.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid, p. 116.

²³ Aside from co-directing and co-writing films with his father, Tom Dariusch Allahyari has also created a number of programmes for *ORF* which explore topics including second generation migrants and the influence of Iranian culture on Austria.

Familie involviert – vor und hinter der Kamera.²⁴ By collaborating with his family on the production and the performance of his films, Allahyari is able to save money in an industrial environment where funds are extremely limited.²⁵ More to the point, however, the inclusion of himself and his family within his films, on both an authorial and a performative level, reveals the act of filmmaking to be a deeply personal and subjective process for Allahyari.²⁶

Drawing on Naficy's work on the *Accented Film*, in addition to the ideas presented by scholars including Thomas Elsaesser, Sujata Moorti and Homi Bhabha, this chapter will demonstrate the many ways in which Allahyari inscribes his own biographical and social dislocation into his works.²⁷ As Allahyari is representative of what Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg term a 'first-generation filmmaker,'²⁸ whose migration to Vienna was a journey of choice rather than of necessity, his experience of (dis)location is spared the 'trauma, rupture and coercion,' with which a number of exilic and, to some extent, diasporic, filmmakers' journeys are

²⁴ Elisabeth Scharang, 'Zwischen den Fronten', *ORF*, 5 January 2011 <<http://fm4.orf.at/stories/1672659/>> [accessed 2 February 2015].

²⁵ Mariagiulia Grassilli argues that migrant filmmakers regularly assume many roles in their films and involve family and friends in the production and performance of their films 'to keep the costs down.' See Mariagiulia Grassilli, 'Migrant Cinema: Transcultural and Guerrilla Practices of Film Production and Representation', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34:8 (2008), p. 1245.

²⁶ Also see Stella Hockenhull, *Aesthetics and Neo-Romanticism in Film: Landscapes in Contemporary British Cinema* (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2014), p.198. Hockenhull writes, 'A frequent salient feature of the accented film is in the casting, where the filmmaker draws on family members.'

²⁷ See Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 4.

²⁸ Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, 'Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe', in *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, ed. by Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 16.

often associated.²⁹ His films are therefore devoid of the ‘potent return narratives’ and the ‘utopian prelapsarian chronotope[s] of the homeland’ that, as Naficy argues, frequently characterise the cinematic works of exilic and diasporic filmmakers.³⁰ However, as a filmmaker living and working in a country other than his country of origin, Allahyari’s films are nevertheless ‘accented’ and can thus, as Berghahn argues, ‘be understood as an aesthetic response’ to the filmmaker’s own ‘experience of displacement and deterritorialisation.’³¹ As I shall shortly demonstrate in my analysis of three of Allahyari’s works, whether they deal directly with the topic of migration or not, they continue to articulate a transformative space wherein the binaries of home/away, dislocation/relocation, and deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation are in constant negotiation. His works, as I shall conclude, thus reflect the multifocality of Allahyari’s own hyphenated identity.

Throughout this chapter I will also examine the manner in which Allahyari draws on and renegotiates the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre, destabilising the notions of home, identity and belonging in his films. More specifically, by examining Allahyari’s use of space within his films, and by investigating the filmmaker’s representation of transformative familial constellations, non-spatial renderings of home, and, ultimately, cross-cultural acceptance and embracing, this chapter aims to place Allahyari within the field of contemporary *Heimat* discourse, which,

²⁹ Hamid Naficy, ‘Situating Accented Cinema’, in *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, ed. by Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 114.

³⁰ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 12 and p. 152.

³¹ Daniela Berghahn, ‘No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecomings in the Films of Fatih Akin’, *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 4:3 (2006), p. 145.

as this thesis will ultimately determine, attempts to promote an inclusive, constructive and de-essentialised idea of *Heimat* in correspondence with an evolving and increasingly globalised and multicultural world.

I will begin with a short analysis of the third part of Allahyari's so-called prison-trilogy, *Höhenangst*, which depicts a former prisoner who, after being released from prison, attempts to escape the life of crime which awaits him in his hometown of Vienna in favour of a new life in the Austrian provinces. The film, I argue, draws on the semantic aesthetics and the syntactic codes of the *Heimatfilm* mode in order to probe contemporary issues of homelessness and alienation within an iconic, provincial Austrian setting. While the film differs from the other works by Allahyari that I will discuss in this chapter, as it represents the process of *Heimsuchung* from the point of view of the native Austrian protagonist, Allahyari's own personal experiences of migration and dis-/re-location are nevertheless inscribed into the film through his sympathetic portrayal of a socially stigmatised protagonist who attempts to construct a new *Heimat* for himself in an unfamiliar and disorientating space.

I will then offer a brief examination of Allahyari's 2002 feature comedy, *Geboren in Absurdistan*, which follows a Turkish-born couple who now consider Vienna to be their *Heimat*. Despite residing in Austria for a number of years the couple are deported back to their birth country of Turkey with their new-born baby as a result of a bureaucratic error. In a manner typical of contemporary *Heimatfilme*, as Daniela Berghahn points out, *Geboren in Absurdistan* thus depicts the 'protagonists' journeys back

to their cultural roots.³² However, this so-called home-coming journey, which is state-enforced rather than voluntary, is neither redemptive nor utopian. Indeed, after settling in Austria, the couple return to a Turkish *Heimat* that has now become foreign. As I shall demonstrate in my analysis of the film, the couple's failed home-coming journey represents the socially constructed nature of *Heimat* and thus challenges traditional, parochial readings of the term which tend to define it in relation to an originary and organic homeland. Furthermore, as I shall conclude, the couple's ability to create a new all-encompassing *Heimat* for themselves in Vienna, which is regained at the film's conclusion, reflects Allahyari's own postnational position as a 'Wahlösterreicher.'³³

Finally, I will offer a comprehensive analysis of Allahyari's 1991 film, *I Love Vienna*, which follows a family from Iran which emigrates to Vienna in order to escape political tensions in their homeland. Throughout my analysis I will demonstrate the manner in which Allahyari simultaneously deploys common Viennese and Iranian stereotypes in order to initially represent an apparent clash between the two cultures. These stereotypes however, like the national identities that they supposedly represent, are challenged by Allahyari, who ultimately unites the two conflicting cultures by drawing attention to shared customs, longings and beliefs which transcend the discourse of difference and incompatibility that was being propagated by a number of media outlets at the time. Indeed, as I shall conclude, Allahyari's migrant protagonists, despite their initial culture-shock on arrival in Vienna, learn to inhabit what Homi Bhabha has termed

³² Ibid, p. 143.

³³ See Mis, 'Für mich war zuerst der Film', p. 11.

‘a third space;’ an interstitial and liminal space wherein new identities and new *Heimaten* are able to emerge.³⁴ This visual representation of successful integration, cross-cultural embracing and identity construction, I will argue, offers viewers a positive example of transnational co-habitation which transcends geographical, religious and symbolic boundaries. Furthermore, the transcendental community of displaced misfits that the film follows, which consists of a variety of different people from numerous walks of life and various former homelands, is representative of Allahyari’s own constructed *Heimat* in Vienna, which, as Allahyari highlights in an interview with Beate Firlinger and Ina Zwerger, is formulated around a number of vital relationships with his family in Iran, his family in Austria, his work colleagues and his multicultural Viennese community.³⁵

A Return to the Rural in *Höhenangst* (1994)

Winner of the Max Öphuls Prize at Saarbrücken Film Festival in 1995, Allahyari’s *Höhenangst* attracted national and international success and confirmed Allahyari’s status as a multi-award winning filmmaker following the unprecedented success of *I Love Vienna* in 1991. The film follows a young Austrian criminal named Mario, who, after a long spell in prison,

³⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-5.

³⁵ Beate Firlinger and Ina Zwerger, ‘I Love Absurdistan,’ *Die Tageszeitung*, 25 July 1995.

attempts to reintegrate himself back into Austrian society.³⁶ Unable to find permanent and safe accommodation in the Austrian capital, and after receiving a hostile reception upon his return to his parents' home, where he suffered sexual, physical and emotional abuse as a child, Mario leaves the city in search of a new beginning in the Austrian countryside. Mario travels to a small village in the provinces and is taken in by an old farmer and his middle-aged daughter, Elfe. Although he is initially met with suspicion by the local inhabitants, and struggles to acclimatise to his new life in the country, Mario is ultimately welcomed into his new surroundings by the rest of his community after he leads a campaign against the planned development of a new road in the area. Just when it seems that Mario has successfully forged a new life for himself in the Austrian provinces, forming a loving relationship with the farmer's daughter, Mario's father appears and threatens to send him back to prison if he does not return to his family home in Vienna. As Mario's past comes back to haunt him, with the truth about his criminal history threatening to destroy his new existence, he considers suicide. In the film's final scene, Mario scales the local power station with the intention of ending his life. The film then culminates in a final image of Mario clinging to the ledge of the power station whilst Elfe attempts to coax him down.

According to scholars including Alexandra Ludewig and Robert von Dassanowsky, Allahyari's film 'successfully adapt[s] the old plot structures'

³⁶ Interestingly, Naficy argues that the 'prison chronotope' is a common feature of the accented film, particularly those made by Turkish-German filmmakers. The prison setting serves to highlight the 'liminal panic' and 'retrenchment' of accented filmmakers in 'the face of what is perceived to be a foreign, often hostile host culture [...]'. See Hamid Naficy, 'Phobic Spaces and Liminal Panics: Independent Transnational Film Genre', in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, ed. by Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanyake (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 131.

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Figure 8: Mario leaves the city to find a new life in the Austrian provinces in Houchang Allahyari's *Höhenangst* (1994). DVD Capture

of the *Heimatfilm* in order to probe contemporary questions of identity and belonging.³⁷ Indeed, the depiction of a homeless and socially alienated protagonist from the city,³⁸ who finds refuge, love and a *Heimat* in the Austrian provinces, is a prototypical narrative of the 1950s *Heimatfilm*.³⁹ Furthermore, not only does Allahyari draw on the generic dichotomy of the liberating, remedial, rural idyll versus the stifling and alienating, urban metropolis but he also emphasises his protagonist's initial outsider status by placing him in the stock role of the Silesian refugee, who, as I highlighted in

³⁷ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 73. Also see von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History*, pp. 230-231.

³⁸ See Bastian Heinsohn, 'Beyond the *Heimatfilm* Genre: Criticising the 1950s Urban Reconstruction in Germany in Ottomar Domnick's *Jonas* (1957)', in *Cultural Perspectives on Film, Literature and Language: Selected Proceedings of the 19th Southeast Conference on Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Film*, ed. by Will Lehman and Margit Grieb (Boca Raton, FL: Brown Walker Press, 2010), p. 147.

³⁹ Mario's status as an ex-convict in this context is also important. As Boa and Palfreyman explain in the 1950s *Heimatfilm* 'prisoners of war scarcely figure directly, but men regularly return from many years abroad often to be absolved or cleared of some accusation.' See Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat - A German Dream*, pp. 91-92.

chapter one, became a generic convention of the *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s.⁴⁰ Indeed, in a manner similar to the expellee in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, Mario enters the rural idyll as a mysterious stranger; the community is not only unaware of his origins but also has no knowledge of his traumatic past. Furthermore, Mario's successful rehabilitation into his new environment depends not only on his ability to demonstrate his commitment to the preservation of his new natural surroundings (which is proven when he spearheads the campaign against the development of a new road which would no doubt threaten the local flora and fauna) but also his ability to deal with and overcome the traumas of his past.⁴¹ Although Mario is neither a refugee nor an immigrant in the film, as a former criminal he is nevertheless, as Allahyari highlights in an interview with Catherine Holzer, representative of yet another stigmatised and socially alienated 'Subkultur' within contemporary Austrian society.⁴² Allahyari thus attributes the generic stock role of the refugee to Mario in his contemporary *Heimatfilm* in order to successfully emphasise his protagonist's status as a social outsider.

While the representation of refugees in the 1950s *Heimatfilm* offered viewers a visual illustration of successful rehabilitation in light of the nation's individual and collective experiences of loss, dislocation and homelessness following the end of the Second World War, Allahyari's film

⁴⁰ See for instance von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, pp. 135-169.

⁴¹ In Alfons Stummer's *Echo der Berge* (1954), Hubert, a former refugee, proves his love for his new *Heimat* by protecting the local forest. Furthermore, in Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide*, the Silesian refugee, Lüder Lüdersen, must overcome his habit of illegal poaching before he can be accepted into his new *Heimat*.

⁴² In interviews Allahyari regularly discusses the mistreatment of youth offenders in the Austrian prison system and argues that through their incarceration they form a subculture. See Houchang Allahyari, 'Format unterliegt Inhalt: Gespräch mit Claus Philipp', *Filmarchiv Austria*, 23 February 1991. Also see Catherine Holzer, 'Verbrechen verführt: Interview mit Houchang Allahyari zu Rocco', *Skip*, February 2003 <<http://www.skip.at/interview/312/>> [accessed 2 February 2014].

on the other hand does not offer the viewer any form of resolution nor an iconic ‘happy ending.’ Indeed, in a similar manner to a number of critical-/anti-*Heimatfilme*, *Höhenangst* culminates in an open ending.⁴³ Thus, as Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler illuminate, Allahyari’s film renounces ‘a solution to the problem presented’ and therefore ‘leave[s] the audience to think the film through to a conclusion.’⁴⁴ The gulf that separates Mario from the rest of the world, as he teeters on the edge of the power station, could indeed symbolise the unsurmountable obstacles that hinder his successful rehabilitation into Austrian society. On the other hand, Elfe’s presence at the top of the power station with Mario, despite her fear of heights, may contrarily indicate that their relationship can transcend seemingly irreconcilable differences and external pressures. This open ending not only encourages the viewer to critically assess contemporary society’s treatment of Mario, reflecting Allahyari’s wider critique of the country’s justice system, but it also, in its lack of resolution, serves to stress the instability and unpredictability that is symptomatic of the protagonist’s liminal existence.

Although Allahyari does not directly deal with the topic of transnational migration in *Höhenangst*, he is nevertheless able to indirectly

⁴³ See Inga Scharf, *Nation and Identity in the New German Cinema: Homeless at Home* (New York; London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 122-133.

⁴⁴ Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany. The New German Film. Origins and Present Situation. With A Section on GDR Cinema. A Handbook* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1993), p. 11.

reflect upon his own multifocality.⁴⁵ Firstly, by casting himself in the minor role of a truck driver, Allahyari physically inscribes his own mobile and transient status into his film. Furthermore, the *Heimsuchung* that is undertaken by Mario in *Höhenangst* also echoes Allahyari's own migratory journey. For instance, Mario's struggle to adjust to a new way of life in a foreign and unfamiliar setting in the Austrian provinces reflects Allahyari's own initial culture-shock upon his arrival in the Austrian capital in 1958.⁴⁶ In addition, the transformative power given to Mario's unlikely relationship with Elfe in the film, who, against all odds, offers him the key to successful rehabilitation into his new *Heimat*, is indicative of the important role Allahyari's first wife (who is the daughter of a Nazi collaborator) played in his successful integration into Austrian society.⁴⁷ As I will demonstrate in my analysis of *I Love Vienna* and *Geboren in Absurdistan*, autobiography constitutes a strong motif in Allahyari's cinematic works, which allows Allahyari to explore the themes of displacement, social alienation and rehabilitation in his films from a very intimate and personal perspective.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Allahyari is also one of a number of migrant filmmakers who chooses to make films that do not deal with migration. Leif Ove Larson argues: 'not all migrant filmmakers make films about migration or minority cultures, or only about such topics. Some prefer to tell other stories – and would resist being classified as ethnic or cultural filmmakers.' See Leif Ove Larson, 'New Voices, New Stories: Migrant Cinema and Television in Norway', in *European Cinema and Television: Cultural Policy and Everyday Life*, ed. by Ib Bondebjerg, Eva Novrup Redvall, and Andrew Higson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 171.

⁴⁶ See Anon, 'Sie kamen von weit her', *In Wien*, 8 January 2016 <<https://inwien.at/Sie-kamen-von-weit-her-Teil-3-Houchang-Allahyari-und-Abdoulla-Zangana.42401.0.html>> [accessed 7 February 2016]. In this article Allahyari explains that he felt 'wahnsinnig fremd' upon his arrival in Vienna.

⁴⁷ See Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 207, who argues that 'human companionship' is one of the solutions to Mario's fear and anxiety within the film.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

Impossible Homecomings in *Geboren in Absurdistan* (2002)

In 2002, the same year in which *Geboren in Absurdistan* was released, the Austrian governmental coalition, the ÖVP-FPÖ, had begun to initiate a major overhaul of existing immigration legislation. The passing of the so-called ‘Integration Agreement’ in 2002, which stipulated that a number of migrant groups must pass a language proficiency test or risk deportation, was the first in a series of stricter immigration legislation changes that were imposed throughout the decade, as outlined in my introduction.⁴⁹ *Geboren in Absurdistan* actively engages with this political climate and the film, as Nikhil Sathe points out, ‘was inspired by reports of foreigners being deported on trivial grounds to a homeland that for many had become foreign.’⁵⁰ The ‘Absurdistan’ to which the film’s title refers is thus a pseudonym for Austria, as Allahyari reveals in an interview with Beate Firlinger and Ina Zwerger:

Absurdistan ist für mich, wenn ein Mensch hier geboren ist, keine Staatsbürgerschaft hat, und ins Ausland fahren muss, um eine Aufenthaltserlaubnis zu bekommen. Oder ein achtzehn jähriger, der wegen einer Kleinigkeit in U-Haft sitzt und deswegen in die Türkei abgeschoben wird. Das finde ich wirklich absurd.⁵¹

Drawing on these deportation cases, Allahyari offers a comedic yet critical examination of his host society through the depiction of a Turkish-born couple and their new-born child, who are deported back to their place of

⁴⁹ See Michał Krzyzanowsky and Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Exclusion: Debating Migration in Austria* (New Brunswick; London: Transaction, 2009), pp. 31-54.

⁵⁰ Nikhil Sathe, ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Film at the Turn of the Century: Flicker, Allahyari, Albert’, in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Berghahn, 2011), p. 232.

⁵¹ Firlinger and Ina Zwerger, ‘I Love Absurdistan.’

birth following a bureaucratic error. The film's opening scene, which takes place on the Austrian border, immediately sets up Allahyari's critique by visually juxtaposing the Austrian Bundesminister's visit to the newly renovated border checkpoint, which is accompanied by the diegetic sound of an orchestral string ensemble, against the simultaneous arrest and deportation of migrants attempting to cross the border illegally.⁵² This tension between Austrian bureaucracy and migration is constantly at play in Allahyari's film, with the Austrian immigration officer Stefan Strohmeyer and his wife Marion representing the former, and the Turkish-born couple, Emre and Emine Dönmez, representing the latter. The two couples come into direct contact with each other towards the beginning of the film when they are both expecting the arrival of their babies in a Viennese hospital. Tensions between the two couples begin to surface and, after an altercation between the two men, Stefan threatens to evict the Dönmezs from their shared ward; a threat that reflects his wider powers as an immigration official. In order to teach the two couples a lesson in tolerance and cross-cultural acceptance, a nurse swaps the baby boys and, unbeknownst to the two couples, sends each family home with the wrong child. Later on in the film the two couples come into contact once more when the Dönmezs approach Stefan in his office in order to clear up a bureaucratic error regarding their rights to remain in the country. As a result of Stefan's incompetence, however, the error remains unresolved and the Dönmezs are deported back to their country of birth with the Austrian couple's child.

⁵² See Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Film', p. 233 for a comprehensive analysis of this scene.

Drawing on the theme of return typical of contemporary *Heimatfilme*, as Daniela Berghahn highlights, Allahyari's film represents the impossibility of a homecoming for a couple who have created a *Heimat* for themselves elsewhere.⁵³ As Berghahn elaborates, 'in most cases it is impossible for the film's protagonist to regain the certainty of secure roots, which has become replaced by the complex contingencies of transnational routes.'⁵⁴ Allahyari successfully reflects the impossibility of return through the deployment of closed chronotopes in his representation of the Dönmezs' former homeland. Indeed, as Naficy highlights, in films which depict real or imagined homecoming journeys, the filmmakers tend to deploy open chronotopes 'of the imagined homeland,' which comprise images of 'nature, landscape, landmarks, and ancient monuments.' These images, as Claudia Kotte argues, tend to suggest 'boundlessness and timelessness.'⁵⁵ In Allahyari's portrayal of the Dönmezs' return to Turkey, however, he juxtaposes the initial open chronotope depicting the vast Turkish countryside with a series of closed chronotopes, which depict the inside of dark, dingy, derelict buildings and narrow, dusty, neglected streets. These closed chronotopes which, as Kotte argues, are often used to depict life in exile and diaspora and tend to 'stress claustrophobia and panic,' are contrarily deployed by Allahyari as a means to represent the couple's originary homeland.⁵⁶ In doing so, Allahyari successfully represents the

⁵³ Berghahn, 'No Place Like Home?', p. 145.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 146. Also see Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 232 who argues that 'return is rarely the grand homecoming' that the filmmakers desire.

⁵⁵ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 152. Also see Claudia Kotte, 'Zero Degrees of Separation: Post Exilic Return in Denis Villeneuve's *Incendies*', in *Cinematic Homecomings: Exile and Return in Transnational Cinema*, ed. by Rebecca Prime (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 293.


⁵⁶ Claudia Kotte, 'Zero Degrees of Separation', p. 293.

couple's alienation and dislocation from their supposed *Heimat*. This dislocation is further reinforced by Emine Dönmez during a conversation with Marion Strohmeier, which takes place after the Austrian couple travel to Turkey to take back their child. During the conversation between the two women, Emine reveals that she no longer feels at home in Turkey and that her original homeland now feels more like a prison. Allahyari thus utilises closed chronotopes in his representation of the couple's original homeland as a visual means to reflect the fact that the Dönmezs' place of birth no longer constitutes their *Heimat*. As Sathe summarises, the couple 'counteract the notion of *Heimat* that exists in Austrian legal discourse regarding foreigners: the law proscribes that they be returned to their *Heimat*, which for the Dönmezs has now become Austria.'⁵⁷

Geboren in Absurdistan culminates in what Robert von Dassanowsky considers a 'utopian ending,' wherein both couples travel back to Austria to raise their young children together.⁵⁸ Although it is revealed to the viewer at the film's conclusion that the nurse did not in fact swap the babies at birth, the oblivious couples nevertheless eschew ethnic and cultural differences by rejecting a paternity test and choosing to embrace both children as their own. This ending not only promotes an image of a contemporary, cross-cultural, multi-layered familial constellation which challenges the traditional image of the Austrian nuclear family but it also reinforces the limitations of cultural roots. Firstly, by leaving their former homeland of Turkey in order to reclaim their chosen *Heimat* in Vienna, the Dönmezs promote a more flexible and heterogeneous

⁵⁷ Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Film', p. 234.

⁵⁸ Robert von Dassanowsky, 'A Wave Over Boundaries', p. 38.



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Figure 9: The Dönmezs and the Strohmeysers eschew ethnic and cultural differences by rejecting a paternity test and choosing to embrace both children together in Houchang Allahyari's *Geboren in Absurdistan* (2002). DVD Capture

understanding of *Heimat* as a socially constructed notion of identity and belonging rather than an organic, sacred birthright. Furthermore, by rejecting their own respective ethnically-homogenous family set-ups in favour of what Sathe terms 'an idealised multicultural community',⁵⁹ both couples offer viewers a utopian image of intercultural acceptance and cross-cultural embracing and therefore dissolve the ethnic, cultural and religious differences that divided them at the film's beginning. Indeed, in the final scene, which depicts both families walking together down a typical Viennese street with a string quartet playing Johann Strauss II's Blue Danube following behind them, Allahyari once again reinforces this idealised image of multicultural harmony as a means to counter the

⁵⁹ See Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Film', p. 235.

discourse of Austrian purity that was being propagated by the FPÖ at the time.

The positive image of multicultural harmony and intercultural co-habitation that concludes *Geboren in Absurdistan* is a typical feature of Allahyari's works which deal with the theme of migration. Indeed, as I shall shortly demonstrate in my analysis of *I Love Vienna*, Allahyari approaches the problematic topic from a light-hearted and optimistic approach as a means to counteract the 'hate' and 'aggression' which he argues characterises the image of foreigners in the media.⁶⁰ Also, by taking a light-hearted approach to a serious subject matter, Allahyari is able to disseminate his societal critique to a wider audience, as he outlines below:

Meine Filme sind nicht hart, wenn auch die Themen sehr hart sind. Also ich finde immer Poesie und Humor sehr wichtig ist, dass man versucht, so Leute ins Kino zu bringen und dass sie sich konfrontieren mit solchen Themen.⁶¹

More importantly, however, Allahyari's positive representation of migration in his films, and his inclination to unite cultures in his films rather than stress contemporary anxieties and antagonisms, is indicative of the filmmaker's own eternal optimism, which he revealed in an interview with Antonia Kreppel:

Ich bin jemand, der sehr positiv ist und sehr viel Hoffnung hat. Es mag sein, dass das zu kitschig ist, oder zu utopisch ist manchmal. Aber diese Hoffnung

⁶⁰ Allahyari, 'Films for Entertainment and Reflection', p. 91.

⁶¹ Kreppel, 'Von Teheran nach Wien und zurück'

hab ich nie aufgegeben, und diese Hoffnung zeige ich auch in alle meine Filme.⁶²

This optimistic and at times utopian approach to migration in his films is undoubtedly influenced by his own positive experience of migration. Indeed, the acceptance and tolerance that characterises the unlikely Dönmez-Strohmeyer alliance at the conclusion of *Geboren in Absurdistan*, for instance, echoes Allahyari's own atypical familial set-up in Vienna.⁶³ As he outlines in an interview with Barbara Petsch, he is part of 'eine Großfamilie,' in the Austrian capital, which incorporates his first wife, who was the daughter of an Austrian Nazi collaborator, her family, their children, and also his second wife, who was born in Iran but grew up in America.⁶⁴ This extended multicultural family along with the multiple friendships and alliances that he has formed during his psychiatric and filmic career in the Austrian capital, according to Allahyari, have deterred him from returning to Iran or seeking a career in America. Indeed, as he reveals in an interview with Heinrich Mis, over the years, and as a result of the multicultural community that he has built for himself in Vienna, the Austrian capital has now become his *Heimat*.⁶⁵

Ich fühle mich sehr an meine Tradition und an meine persische Mentalität gebunden. Aber andererseits könnte ich auch nirgendwo in der Welt leben

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ In an interview with Beate Firlinger and Ina Zwerger, Allahyari also highlights that when he arrived in Vienna he was welcomed by the Austrian population and was not subjected to racism or xenophobia. See Firlinger and Ina Zwerger, 'I Love Absurdistan.'

⁶⁴ Barbara Petsch, 'Allahyari: "Wusste nicht, dass ich Moslem bin"', *Die Presse*, 26 February 2011 <http://diepresse.com/home/leben/mensch/637691/Allahyari_Wusste-nicht-dass-ich-Moslem-bin> [accessed 20 April 2014].

⁶⁵ Anon, 'Houchang Allahyari feiert 75. Geburtstag', *ORF*, 1 February 2016 <<http://wien.orf.at/news/stories/2755283/>> [accessed 13 February 2016]. In this interview Allahyari states: 'Österreich ist meine Heimat geworden.'

außer in Österreich. Mit Österreichern komme ich sehr gut aus, ob es meine Patienten sind, Filmleute oder mein Freundeskreis. Meine besten Freunde hier sind Österreicher und nicht Perser [...] Ich hatte immer wieder Tendenzen, zurück nach Persien zu gehen. Nachdem ich aber hier verheiratet war, die Kinder da waren, habe ich es zunehmend interessanter und auch lustiger gefunden, mich mit Politik in Österreich zu befassen, als mit der in meinem Land. Österreich ist mir immer wichtiger geworden.⁶⁶

The multicultural relationships that have aided Allahyari's own successful integration into Austrian society, and which provide *Geboren in Absurdistan* with its utopian conclusion, also form a vital trope in Allahyari's 1991 film, *I Love Vienna*, as I shall now demonstrate.

Constructing *Heimat* in *I Love Vienna* (1991)

Although *I Love Vienna* was awarded both the *Preis der Österreichischen Filmtage* in 1992 for being the most successful Austrian film of the year and subsequently put forward as the nation's official entry for the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 64th Academy Awards, scholarship on the film remains remarkably sparse. The few critics and scholars who have approached the film tend to discuss it in terms of its representation of culture-clashes and intercultural relationships. Jutta Landa, for example, who offers the only comprehensive English-language analysis of the film, discusses the film in relation to two other Austrian films which appeared around the same time: Anton Peschke's *Zeit der Rache* (1990) and

⁶⁶ Mis, 'Für mich war zuerst der Film', p. 15.

Paul Harather's *Indien* (1993).⁶⁷ According to Landa, all three films (released at a time in which 'Fremdenhaß' and 'Ausländerfeindlichkeit' were 'on the rise in Vienna') can be considered 'humanistic projects that aim to replace the discourse of exclusion with gestures of cross-cultural embracing.'⁶⁸ While Landa ultimately criticises Allahyari's film's adoption of a binary model – which she argues, 'assert[s] the lead culture's dominance over the immigrant culture' – Arno Rußegger, on the other hand, in his German-language discussion of the film, looks at the transformative potential of the polarised stereotypes being deployed by Allahyari.⁶⁹ Indeed, in his analysis of *I Love Vienna*, Rußegger analyses the manner in which Allahyari depicts a transcultural, deterritorialised space in which cross-cultural relationships are granted the power to transcend geographical and religious barriers.⁷⁰

By developing the findings presented by Landa and Rußegger, I will demonstrate the numerous ways Allahyari's film can be seen as a vital contribution to contemporary *Heimat* discourse. In its portrayal of multicultural relationships, cross-cultural embracing, and identity negotiation, the film, I will argue, in a similar manner to *Geboren in Absurdistan*, represents the limitations of cultural roots in a world which is dominated by transnational migration and globalisation. However, unlike *Geboren in Absurdistan* (which depicts a couple who, after becoming

⁶⁷ See Jutta Landa, 'Loveable Foreigners: Gestures of Cross-Cultural Embracing in Austrian Film' in *After Posmodernism: Austrian Literature and Film in Transition*, ed. by Willy Riemer (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 2000), pp. 94-105.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 95.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Arno Rußegger, 'Migration und Film: Am Beispiel von Houchang Allahyari', in *Und (k)ein Wort Deutsch: Literaturen der Minderheiten und MigrantInnen in Österreich*, ed. by Nicola Mitterer and Werner Wintersteiner (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2009), pp. 91-105.

alienated from their original homeland of Turkey, are able to successfully construct a new *Heimat* for themselves in Vienna), *I Love Vienna*, on the other hand, fails to represent Vienna as a secure and rehabilitative geographical space. Indeed, as I shall conclude, in a world where transnational migration is increasing and access to a politically and economically stable geographical space is decreasing, there is, as Yvonne Franke argues, ‘no home in place.’⁷¹ Multicultural relationships and a transcendental community of diverse individuals, I will conclude, are therefore put forward by Allahyari as viable alternatives to geographical ties and cultural roots in this contemporary *Heimatfilm*.

Culture Clashes in *I Love Vienna*

I Love Vienna follows Ali Mohammed, an Iranian German-teacher who travels from Iran to Vienna with his sister and son in order to escape political tensions in their homeland. The political tensions that fuel the family’s journey in the film are left intentionally vague by Allahyari who, as Jutta Landa argues, ‘tries to avoid the denunciation of his home country’ in his film.⁷² During an interview with a corrupt lawyer named Dr Borsodi, for example, Ali Mohammed reveals that he has migrated to Vienna in order to

⁷¹ Yvonne Franke, ‘Papas Kino Lebt! – Travelling *Heimat* in Wim Wenders’ *Im Lauf der Zeit* and Fatih Akin’s *Auf der Anderen Seite*’, in *Heimat goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, ed. by Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 201.

⁷² Landa, ‘Loveable Foreigners’, p. 96.

avoid the likelihood of his son being drafted for war.⁷³ When Dr Borsodi stresses that the family's chance of acquiring a visa from the state will increase exponentially if they are perceived to be victims of religious or political persecution, (Angst allein ist doch kein Grund, um Asyl zu bekommen,' he explains), Allahyari once more refuses Dr Borsodi's help and seeks advice elsewhere. By merely alluding to the Iranian Revolution through the brief mention of impending warfare, and by featuring a protagonist who desperately wants to leave Iran yet refuses to claim political or religious asylum, Allahyari avoids direct criticism of his Iranian homeland. This careful and tentative approach to the representation of Iran onscreen is relatively typical of Iranian and Iranian émigré filmmakers, who as Azadeh Farahmand highlights, 'have been led to refrain from making confrontational and socially critical films for fear of being held accountable for anti-system or anti-establishment statements through their work.'⁷⁴ Filmmakers whose works can be seen to actively take an anti-Islamic stance, for instance, often face severe sanctions including arrest, imprisonment or even violence, as Annabelle Sreberny explains.⁷⁵ The Iranian-American filmmaker Cyrus Nowrasteh, for instance, whose 'anti-Islamic' *Veiled Threat* (1989) was ultimately withdrawn from its own premiere in Los Angeles as a result of a bomb threat, is a prime example of

⁷³ Ali Mohammed's insistence that his son will not be drafted for war could indeed be linked to Mohammed Ali's refusal to go to war in Vietnam. Indeed, Ali Mohammed does get referred to as Mohammed Ali by Mr Swoboda when he first enters the Hotel Praterstern.

⁷⁴ Azadeh Farahmand, 'Perspectives on Recent (International Acclaim for) Iranian Cinema', in *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity*, ed. by Richard Tapper (London; New York: IB Taurus, 2002), p. 91.

⁷⁵ See Annabelle Sreberny, 'Thirty-Plus Years of the Iranian Revolution: Culture in Contestation', in *Cultural Revolution in Iran: Contemporary Popular Culture in the Islamic Republic*, ed. by Annabelle Sreberny and Massoumeh Torfeh (London; New York: IB Taurus, 2013), pp. 1-12.

the personal and political risks that abide in the critical representation of the Iranian homeland.⁷⁶

Allahyari's decision to avoid direct criticism of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his film is, he argues, a result of his own physical and symbolic detachment from his former homeland. The Iranian born-filmmaker, in a number of interviews, for example, refuses to pass comment on the political situation in his homeland on the grounds that, 'Ich lebe nicht dort, daher möchte ich mich nicht äußern.'⁷⁷ However, as Antonia Kreppel indicates during an interview with the filmmaker, Allahyari's self-imposed silence is in fact prompted by fear:

Auch wenn wir mitten in Europa sitzen ist ein offenes Gespräch im Radio über die politischen Verhältnisse im Iran und die Einschätzung der Lage für einen gebürtigen Perser nicht möglich; spürbare Angst vor einer allgegenwärtigen Bedrohung.⁷⁸

Allahyari's fears are of course not unfounded. Indeed, the actor who plays the role of Ali Mohammed in the film, Fereydoun Farrokhzad, who was forced into exile from Iran in 1979, was found maimed and killed in his Bonn apartment only a year after the film's release.⁷⁹ Although nobody has been convicted for the actor's brutal assassination, his murder is widely believed to have been perpetrated by Islamic fundamentalists who actively opposed Farrokhzad's public criticism of the Khomeiny regime.⁸⁰ Despite

⁷⁶ See Hamid Naficy, 'Between Rocks and Hard Places: The Interstitial Mode of Production in Exilic Cinema', in *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. by Hamid Naficy (New York; London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 142-143.

⁷⁷ Petsch, 'Allahyari: "Wusste nicht, dass ich Moslem bin."'

⁷⁸ Kreppel, 'Von Teheran nach Wien und zurück.'

⁷⁹ See Scharang, 'Zwischen den Fronten.'

⁸⁰ See Landa, 'Loveable Foreigners', p. 104.

Allahyari's inclination to avoid the direct denunciation of his homeland in the narrative of his film, his decision to cast Farrokhzad, a prominent voice of opposition to the Islamic regime in Iran, in the role of his Iranian protagonist does perhaps indicate Allahyari's own critical stance.⁸¹ Allahyari, however, has continued to maintain that his film is equally critical of both Austrian and Iranian society, as he highlights in an interview with Renate Wagner when he states: 'I hope that it is one of the strengths of the film that I critically deal not only with the Viennese, but also with my protagonist, who is made to do some learning.'⁸²

Focusing on 'the faults of the Austrians and the Iranians alike,' in his film, as Landa argues, Allahyari immediately sets up a culture clash between the Viennese and Austrian characters through the deployment of conflicting stereotypes.⁸³ Indeed, from the outset, Allahyari sets up the binary model of a sexually promiscuous and secularised Austrian society versus a strict, orthodox Muslim family. These binary oppositions are immediately introduced to the viewer at the film's beginning, which opens on an extreme close-up of a pair of female eyes that are framed by a black veil. A follow-up medium shot soon reveals that the face behind the veil belongs to Ali Mohammed's sister, Marjam, who is situated in Vienna's *Hauptbahnhof* with her brother Ali and his fifteen year old son, Kouros. The family is awaiting Ali Mohammed's nephew, Djamjid, who is due to meet them at the train station and transport them to their temporary

⁸¹ See Ruth Rybarski, 'Wien ist anders', *Profil*, 23 September 1991. Landa argues that Rybarski reads the film as 'a corroboration of [her] own wholesale rejection of Islamic traditions.' See Landa, 'Loveable Foreigners', p. 97.

⁸² Renate Wagner, 'Ich kann nichts machen, was ich nicht selbst erlebt habe', *Salzburger Nachrichten* 5 October 1991, p. 11, cited in Landa, 'Loveable Foreigners', p. 97.

⁸³ Landa, 'Loveable Foreigners', p. 98.

accommodation in Vienna's Second District. When Djamjid arrives at the train station he is accompanied by his friend Karol Tarnovsky, a Polish asylum-seeker who immediately takes a liking to the young Iranian woman. Karol introduces himself to Marjam by offering her his hand but is immediately told not to touch the young woman as 'das ist nicht üblich unter Muslimen.' The family then arrive at the *Hotel Praterstern*, their accommodation in Vienna, and are immediately confronted by a group of scantily-clad Austrian prostitutes who occupy a brothel named the 'Love Club' in a building across the road. Throughout the film, these Austrian sex workers attempt to entice Ali Mohammed and his son by heckling them from across the street.

By immediately presenting viewers with the contrasting images of Islamic orthodoxy, which is signified by the veiled and voiceless Marjam, and a sexually liberated West, embodied by a particularly lewd group of female sex workers, Allahyari problematically deploys an exaggerated representation of the two cultures, which serves to stress their difference and incompatibility.⁸⁴ As Landa notes, Allahyari's film 'fails to escape the pitfalls of stereotyping,' and thus, she argues, ultimately propagates a discourse of 'exclusion.'⁸⁵ However, as I will now demonstrate, in contrast to the discourse of exclusion, which Landa argues pervades the film, the stereotypes that are presented in the film's opening credits are ultimately challenged by Allahyari, who demonstrates the flexibility and changeability

⁸⁴ See Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Zed Books, 1999), p. 138 where she argues that the stereotype that dominates the representation of women living under strict Islamic regimes is that of 'veiled, secluded, ever-passive [...] mute, immobile and obedient creatures.'

⁸⁵ Landa, 'Loveable Foreigners', p. 95.

of supposedly polarised cultures. Indeed, the Iranian and the Austrian characters alike are seen to negotiate their respective cultural identities throughout the course of the film and formulate their own individual identity which corresponds to the needs of a changing, heterogeneous and diverse society. Thus, by deploying cultural stereotypes and then deconstructing them, Allahyari is able to transform a film that is concerned initially with a culture clash into a film that represents the possibility of cross-cultural embracing.

The discernible shift from culture clash to multicultural harmony that takes place in the film is by no means instantaneous nor is it depicted as a problem-free process. In fact, Allahyari utilises the situations that arise from the confrontation of these diverse cultures for comedic affect. The comedy genre is a popular mode of expression for depicting the religious and ethnic differences among host and home societies, as a number of scholars including Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig, Daniela Berghahn and Isolina Ballesteros acknowledge.⁸⁶ Certainly, ‘the lightness of the genre’ as Ballesteros highlights, which is ‘established through comic situations and prototypical characters,’ offers viewers an accessible and easily-digestible image of ‘the tensions and complexities of diasporic relations.’⁸⁷ These tensions and complexities, arising from the coming together of different and ethnic and religious practices, are mostly explored through the flirtatious relationship between Ali Mohammed and Marianne Swoboda, who is still

⁸⁶ See Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig, ‘Introduction’, in *Hybrid Humour: Comedy in Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. by Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 7-35; Isolina Ballesteros, *Immigration Cinema in the New Europe* (Bristol: Intellect, 2015), p. 21; Daniela Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film: The Diasporic Family in Contemporary European Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 167-168.

⁸⁷ Ballesteros, *Immigration Cinema*, p. 21.

married to, but currently separated from, the owner of the *Hotel Praterstern* where Ali Mohammed and his family reside. Their mutual attraction is evident from the start when Marianne offers to clean up some soup that has been accidentally spilt down Ali Mohammed's trouser-leg. Thrust into an intimate and compromising situation – where Marianne is furiously scrubbing at Ali Mohammed's crotch with a damp cloth – an uncomfortable but grateful Ali Mohammed thanks Marianne for her hospitality and her 'freundlichkeit' – a reaction which prompts Marianne to burst out laughing.

As the plot develops the pair become more and more aware of their cultural differences, which leads to yet more comedic situations. Marianne, for example, decides to seduce Ali Mohammed when he is alone in his hotel room. As she enters the room and takes off her night gown in order to reveal a red lace negligee, a shocked and half-naked Ali Mohammed conceals his dignity by covering himself up with a newspaper before diving onto his bed and hiding beneath his bedsheets. He repeatedly asks Marianne to leave as her actions are not only 'verboten' but they are also a 'Sünde.' Marianne, however, continues to pursue him regardless, reassuring him that she is separated from the hotel owner, Mr Swoboda, and is now a single woman. When she begins to lose patience and gets up to leave the room, a frantic Ali Mohammed devises a solution to their predicament. He proposes that they get married to each other through the informal performance of a three day ritual in the comfort of his hotel room, which would allow the couple to sleep together without committing a sin. This three day informal Islamic marriage, which is a rare occurrence and is usually only performed as a means to provide legitimate status to a prospective child, offers Ali

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Figure 10: A three-day informal Islamic marriage ceremony allows Ali Mohammed and Marianne to meet in the middle in Houchang Allahyari's *I Love Vienna* (1991). DVD Capture

Mohammed the chance to give in to his carnal temptations without going against his strict Muslim beliefs. This mock-marriage between Marianne and Ali Mohammed thus acts as a bridge between East and West in the film, allowing for the pair to form a compromise between their respective, beliefs, customs and traditions.

These comedic performances of cultural hybridity and cross-cultural acceptance and embracing reflect what Thomas Elsaesser terms, the 'double occupancy' of the film's protagonists. 'Double occupancy' is a term coined by Elsaesser to refer to the multiple affiliations and allegiances that characterise 'hyphenated identities' in contemporary Europe, as he summarises below.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See Thomas Elsaesser, 'Double Occupancy and Small Adjustments: Space, Place and Policy in the New European Cinema since the 1990s', in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), pp. 108-130.

The state of double occupancy applies to every part of Europe, and to all of us: our identities are multiply defined, multiply experienced, and can be multiply assigned to us, at every point in our lives, and this increasingly so – hopefully to the point where the very notion of national identity will fade from our vocabulary, and be replaced by other kinds of belonging, relating and being. Blood and soil, land and possession, occupation and liberation have to give way to a more symbolic or narrative way of negotiating contested ownership of both place and time.⁸⁹

Throughout his study, Elsaesser reveals that the state of double occupancy can apply to a range of different societal groups. For instance, on a supra-state level, ‘cosmopolitan elites’ including businessmen, financiers, politicians, artists and intellectuals are doubly occupied in the sense that their success is often determined by their ability to operate and function transnationally.⁹⁰ ‘The hyphenation of identity produced by immigration, migration, and exile,’ on a sub-state level, however, as Elsaesser adds, ‘appears in stark contrast’ to the hyphenated identities of the cosmopolitan elites.⁹¹ Indeed, as is demonstrated in the representation of Ali Mohammed, ‘double occupancy,’ from a sub-state perspective, can often reveal itself in terms of ‘a divided allegiance’ between the host and home society, a position which, as Elsaesser points out, has ‘tragic, comic and utopian’ dimensions:⁹²

I want the term to be understood as at once tragic, comic and utopian.

Tragic, because the reality of feeling oneself invaded, imposed upon,

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 109.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 118.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

deprived of the space and security one thinks one needs, is [...] a state of pathos, disempowerment and self-torment. Comic, in the way one considers mistaken identities as comic that is, revealing ironies and contradictions in the fabric of language and its signifiers. And utopian, insofar as under certain conditions, I shall suggest, it opens up ways of sharing the same space while not infringing on the other's claims.⁹³

The tragic dimensions of Ali Mohammed's double occupancy, I would argue, can be seen in his relentless search for a safe, stable and nurturing *Heimat* for himself and his family in Vienna, which is continually put in jeopardy by the immigration legislation which determines that they could, at any given moment, be deported back to their place of birth.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Allahyari explores the comedic dimension of the hyphenation of identity through the comic relief that the clash of Iranian and Austrian cultures and practices engenders. More importantly, however, Allahyari's film promotes the utopian quality of double occupancy by highlighting how, over time, the two contrasting cultures can learn to acknowledge, accept and embrace one another, as I shall now demonstrate.

Cross-Cultural Embracing

The cross-cultural acceptance and embracing that occurs throughout Allahyari's film is mostly represented through the portrayal of multicultural

⁹³ Ibid, pp. 110-111.

⁹⁴ Indeed the tragic dimensions of double occupancy are also revealed by the assassination of Farrokhzad in 1992. In a similar manner, Elsaesser argues that 'that the murder of the filmmaker, Theo Van Gogh, who was also assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists, represents the tragic dimension of double occupancy. See Elsaesser, 'Double Occupancy and Small Adjustments', p. 112.

relationships. Although Marianne and Ali Mohammed's relationship is fraught with difficulties from the start, with their conflicts comprising the majority of the film's comic sequences, at the film's conclusion the pair are ultimately able to put aside their differences and commit to spending their lives together. This filmic union between a Muslim man and a white Western woman in texts dealing with the topic of migration and diaspora is relatively common.⁹⁵ Indeed, a number of migrant and diasporic films, and post-unification hyphenated *Heimatfilme*, including the Turkish-German filmmaker, Sinan Akkus' *Evet, ich will!* (2008), for instance, portray the interethnic romance between Turks and Germans as a means to 'deflate the perceived threat of Muslim Otherness,' as Daniela Berghahn explains.⁹⁶ However, in order to represent a successful union between a strict Muslim man and a sexually liberated and secularised Western woman in his film, Allahyari problematically forces his Iranian male protagonist to undergo a process of 'recuperation' and 'rehabilitation' which, as Berghahn illuminates, often 'necessitates that he is divested of the most conspicuous markers of his alterity – authoritarian power and religious dogmatism.'⁹⁷

Ali Mohammed's authoritarian power and religious dogmatism are revealed to the viewer from the film's outset: he forbids Kouros and Marjam from listening to Western music, he lambasts Marianne, calling her a 'Hure' for publicly displaying her sexuality and femininity as she performs a belly dance at a party, and he initially refuses to attend the wedding of Marjam and Karol Tarnovsky at the film's conclusion. However, at the end of the

⁹⁵ See Ballesteros, *Immigration Cinema*, p. 35.

⁹⁶ Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, p. 167.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 147.

film, Ali Mohammed makes a belated appearance at the wedding, and even joins Marianne on stage to perform a belly dance with her. As such, he is seen to readdress his orthodox views and construct an identity and faith for himself which allows for his ‘minority culture’ and Marianne’s ‘majority culture’ to ‘comfortably meet.’⁹⁸

The problematic ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘recuperation’ of Ali Mohammed in Allahyari’s film does, to some extent, hark back to the Turkish-German ‘cinema of the affected’ from the 1970s, which, as I outlined in chapter one, tended to reinforce ‘the dichotomy of a liberal and liberating Western culture versus an oppressive, backward [...] Muslim culture.’⁹⁹ However, unlike the so-called ‘cinema of the affected,’ far from constituting antidotes to Muslim patriarchal authority and control, the Austrian men in Allahyari’s film are also employed as objects of critique. Mr Swoboda for example, the owner of the *Hotel Praterstern* and the ex-husband of Marianne, frequently displays a racist and misogynist attitude towards his employees and customers. In two separate scenes for instance, Swoboda is seen to grope his young Austrian waitress and can be witnessed telling the Polish asylum seeker, Karol, to go back to the East.¹⁰⁰ A number of other Austrian male characters in the film, including antagonistic policemen, corrupt lawyers and money-hungry doctors, further reinforce the film’s critical representation of Austrian male masculinity, reflecting Allahyari’s clear attempt to offer an impartial and balanced critical representation of both cultures.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 149.

⁹⁹ Berghahn, ‘No Place Like Home?’, p. 142.


¹⁰⁰ Interestingly Mr Swoboda’s surname is of Slavic origin and means ‘freedom’ in Polish.

While the ‘cinema of the affected’ tended to emphasise a binary model featuring, as Rob Burns notes, ‘formidable barriers’ which ‘tend to be fixed, static and frequently impenetrable,’ in Allahyari’s film, these boundaries are ‘either easily removable obstructions or liminal, transitional spheres where new identities can or indeed have to be constructed.’¹⁰¹ As Arno Rußegger illuminates: ‘Kultur erscheint hier nicht mehr als stabiles System, sondern als veränderlicher Prozess des fortgesetzten Aushandelns dessen, was in einer Gesellschaft von Belang sein soll.’¹⁰² Certainly, it is not only Ali Mohammed who undergoes this process of identity construction in Allahyari’s film. His sister, Marjam, and her Polish partner, Karol, for example, must also renegotiate their own religious and cultural beliefs and customs in order to form a successful and lasting relationship. Marjam, in a similar manner to her brother, undergoes a process of westernisation. Far from the veiled, mute woman we are presented with at the beginning of the film, at the film’s conclusion Marjam has removed her veil, wears bright-coloured make-up and has formed a loving relationship with a Polish man against the wishes of her protective Muslim brother. In doing so she has removed herself from the stereotypical role of the victimised Muslim woman who is a regular feature in earlier German hyphenated *Heimatfilme*, and with agency, has formed an identity of her own.¹⁰³ This new, more western identity, however, does not reject Islam. Indeed, while her outward appearance may have changed, she nevertheless continues to practise and respect her Muslim faith by refraining from cohabiting with her new partner

¹⁰¹ Rob Burns, ‘On the Streets and on the Road: Identity in Transit in Turkish-German Travelogues on Screen’, *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 1 (2009), p. 25.

¹⁰² Rußegger, ‘Migration und Film’, pp. 99-100.

¹⁰³ Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, p. 165.



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Figure 11: Karol Tarnovsky and Marjam marry in a ceremony that incorporates both cultures in Houchang Allahyari's *I Love Vienna* (1991). DVD Capture

and by requesting that he convert to Islam before they undergo an Islamic wedding ceremony. While Marjam and Ali Mohammed's apparent westernisation in the film could be said to advocate an assimilationist approach to double occupancy and multiculturalism, Karol Tarnovsky's conversion to Islam in the film can be seen as an attempt to offer a balanced and fair representation of cross-cultural embracing and reciprocal identity construction. In order to be with Marjam he must marry her and in order for that wedding to take place he must first convert to Islam. This of course also necessitates that he must undergo what is seen in Western eyes as Islam's 'most alien' and 'embarrassing ritual practice: circumcision.'¹⁰⁴ These procedures however do not faze Karol and he and his friend Djamjid propose a new name to complement his new hyphenated identity: Abdullah Karol Tarnovsky. Both cultures are thus seen to undergo extensive

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 167.

renegotiations in Allahyari's film proving that the supposedly irreconcilable differences between the Islamic and the Western world, as proposed by Samuel Huntington in his controversial study, *The Clash of Civilisations*, are in fact reconcilable after all.¹⁰⁵

Thanks to its visual and symbolic power to unite people of all ages, races, religions and walks of life, the wedding ceremony can now be regarded as a popular cinematic convention; a claim that can be substantiated by the emergence of the 'wedding film' genre in the 1990s.¹⁰⁶ For this same reason, it also forms a vital trope in both the classical *Heimatfilm* and in the migrant and diasporic film, acting as a visual union of people that compensates for the real societal and individual divisions that war, migration and intercultural tensions can often engender.¹⁰⁷ The Tarnovsky-Mohammed wedding not only cements the union of a Christian Polish man and a Muslim Iranian woman within a Western Austrian setting (promoting a transnational and transcultural relationship that transcends geographical, religious and ethnic boundaries) but the spectacle of the ceremony and the successive wedding reception also provides a visual illustration of the newlyweds' newly hyphenated identities and the cross-cultural social sphere that they are about to inhabit. Although scholars including Daniela Berghahn and Özgür Yaren argue that weddings in migrant and diasporic film often function as 'a metaphor for the homeland,' and serve to 'crystallise the Otherness of diasporic cultures,' the Tarnovsky-

¹⁰⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations: And the Remaking of World Order* (London: Touchstone, 1998).

¹⁰⁶ Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, p. 153.

¹⁰⁷ See Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 202; and Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 89.

Mohammed wedding draws on the customs and traditions of both cultures.¹⁰⁸ Initially the wedding can be seen to take the form of a traditional Islamic ceremony: the couple are seated on separate stools, the bride is veiled and an Iman reads out scriptures from the Quran. Not familiar with the tradition, Karol is unaware that he must be asked three times before he is required to vocally accept Marjam's hand in marriage. When he inadvertently answers yes after only the first time of being asked, he prompts a roar of laughter from the crowd, once again highlighting what Elsaesser considers the 'comic' dimension of double occupancy. While the wedding takes the form of an Islamic ceremony, and they are both married into the Islamic faith, a number of ostensibly Western elements are simultaneously incorporated into the service. For instance, both couple eschew traditional Islamic dress and wear visibly Western wedding attire. Karol is seen to don a navy blue suit and tie, while Marjam is wearing a lavish white wedding dress.

The wedding reception, which takes place in the hotel dining room, is a similarly cross-cultural affair. While wine flows freely, the guests are treated to a typically Persian banquet. Similarly, a mixture of Persian and Austrian music is performed by different entertainers to the jovial, multicultural crowd. It is during the wedding ceremony and the subsequent wedding reception that the 'pleasures of hybridity' most visibly emerge.¹⁰⁹

Indeed, the multicultural hotel guests from all walks of life have formed a

¹⁰⁸ See Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, p. 154. Also see Yaren Özgür, 'Wedding Scenes as Metaphors for Homeland' in *Imaginaries Out of Place: Cinema, Transnationalism and Turkey*, ed. by Gökçen Karanfil and Serkan Şavk (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 161.

¹⁰⁹ See Sarita Malik, 'Beyond "the Cinema of Duty"? The Pleasures of Hybridity: Black British film of the 1980s and 1990s', in *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema*, ed. by Andrew Higson (London: Cassell, 1996), pp. 202-215.

transcendental community, putting aside their ethnic, cultural and religious differences in order to celebrate the couple's cross-cultural union. It is here, in this positive representation of cross-cultural embracing and identity negotiation, that Allahyari most explicitly reveals the 'utopian dimension' of double occupancy, or at least its potential. Indeed, he successfully creates this representation by drawing on what Sujata Moorti terms, 'the diasporic optic,' which is a visual grammar of diasporic subjects which seeks to express the duality of hyphenated identities without 'foreground[ing] an opposition between' host and home cultures.'¹¹⁰ As Moorti explains:

Marking the paradigmatic shift entailed by the technology of the camera, Benjamin (1968) has theorized that it made possible a new optic. The camera's ability to zoom in and out, to enlarge, the use of slow motion and other technical capabilities allow the viewer to see images that escape natural vision. This optic makes visible a new structural formation of the subject. I use this insight to forward a diasporic optic, a way of seeing that underscores the interstice, the spaces that are and fall between the cracks of the national and the transnational as well as other social formations. If the community imagined by the diaspora is transnational in scope and produces a subject position that lays claim to and negotiates between multiple affiliations, the diasporic optic seeks to reveal this desire for multiple homes through specific representational strategies.¹¹¹

The most significant of these 'representational strategies,' is what Moorti terms a 'sideways glance,' which she outlines below:

¹¹⁰ Sujata Moorti, 'Desperately Seeking an Identity: Diasporic Cinema and the Articulation of Transnational Kinship', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6:3 (2003), p. 364.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

Visually, this desire to inhabit many places is captured as a sideways glance rather than as a backwards look [...]. It looks constantly at two or more different worlds and moves in two different directions at once. It enables a representational archive that is simultaneously familiar, alien, domestic, national and transnational. This formulation goes beyond a new way of seeing and underscores how the crosscutting forces of transnational capital and media produce subjects and publics that are no longer confined within the representational politics of a single geographic nation.¹¹²

Although the diasporic optic is utopian in the sense that it ‘facilitates the inscription of a transnational community of sentiment,’ it does however continue to capture ‘the dislocation, disruption and ambivalence’ that characterises hyphenated identities through its engagement with a form of reflective nostalgia.¹¹³ Indeed, while Ali Mohammed is able to ‘glance sideways’ between his home and host culture, and has learnt to traverse the space between the two as opposed to polarising them into irreconcilable binaries, he nevertheless remains nostalgic for the identity he has lost. During the wedding ceremony for instance, when the guests are feasting on the lavish banquet, Ali Mohammed looks longingly at Marianne and says: ‘Wien hat uns übergerollt. Mariam ist ganz anders geworden und Kouros auch.’ Marianne then reminds him that he has changed too.

The constantly evolving, hyphenated identities that Allahyari’s film portrays are not representative of the ‘divided mind’, the ‘irrevocably split personality,’ or the ‘paralysis between two cultures or nations,’ that the

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, pp. 358-362.

hyphen can often imply.¹¹⁴ The characters in Allahyari's film can be seen to inhabit what Homi Bhabha deems a 'third space' in which 'the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.'¹¹⁵ As Bhabha elaborates, this 'third space' acts as a 'stairwell;' a 'liminal space in-between the designations of identity,' which 'prevents identities from settling into primordial polarities.'¹¹⁶ By focusing on the interstice, the liminal, and the inbetween, Bhabha acknowledges the changeability of identity in a global age, which is becoming more and more defined by mobility and transnational connections. He is able to 'locate' identities that transcend geographic and national boundaries, registering the identities of those hyphenated and displaced persons who do not share an allegiance or an alliance with a particular national or geographical space.

Vienna as Liminal Space

Ali Mohammed and his son, Kouros, in Allahyari's film can be seen to successfully inhabit this 'third space.' Indeed, the geographical spaces of both the host and home lands, as I shall now demonstrate, no longer provide the characters with stable markers of identification and thus they must inhabit a symbolic and physical 'third space.' Vienna, for instance, is presented as a transit zone throughout the film, offering temporary stability for Ali Mohammed and his son but never a *Heimat*. For example, upon their

¹¹⁴ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 15.

¹¹⁵ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 2-5.

arrival in the city, Ali Mohammed and his family are seen to masquerade as tourists in the film: they occupy transitional spaces including hotels and guest houses, they visit iconic Viennese tourist attractions like the Schönbrunn Palace and the Prater, and, furthermore, they are only able to remain in the country on a temporary basis under the strict requirements of a tourist visa. Their liminal status within the city is further inscribed into the film by the presence of an automotive repair garage which sits opposite the *Hotel Praterstern*: the cars situated on the streets outside may once have acted as signifiers of mobility and freedom in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*. However, the various mechanical faults render these vehicles motionless; stuck in limbo, like Ali Mohammed at the film's conclusion.

Indeed, at the end of the film, Allahyari offers the viewer no indication of whether his protagonists will remain in Austria, whether they will reach their dream *Heimat* of America or whether they will be deported back to their original homeland of Iran. For instance, Ali Mohammed, Kouros and Marianne have all obtained plane tickets and temporary visas to enable them to travel to America. However, after being struck down with appendicitis and forced to get bedrest by his doctor, Ali Mohammed is situated in bed at the film's conclusion, rendered immobile. Thus, the viewer is left unaware of the family's ultimate destination.

In this closing scene, as the invalid, Ali Mohammed, lies in his sick-bed, the film draws the viewer's gaze over to a book that is situated in Ali Mohammed's hand. From the text and illustration on the book's front cover we are able to determine that he is reading about the Empress Sissi. Indeed, Ali Mohammed's interest in Sissi was revealed to the viewer near the start

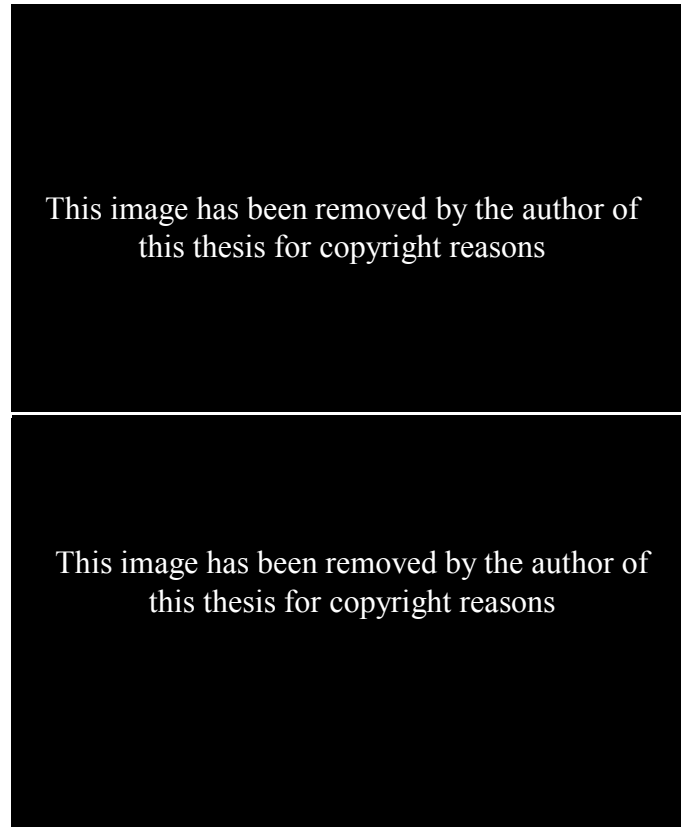


Figure 12: Ali Mohammed and his family traverse the Austrian landscape as ‘tourists’ in Houchang Allahyari’s *I Love Vienna* (1991). DVD Capture

of the film when he confesses to having watched Ernst Marischka’s *Sissi* films several times. In fact, the films, Ali Mohammed reveals, were the reason why he wanted to come to Vienna in the first place. However, as Marianne enters the room to discuss the future of their relationship, she reminds Ali Mohammed that they are not the Emperor and Empress of Austria: ‘Du bist kein Franz Joseph und ich keine Sissi.’ Thus, the multicultural *Heimat* that Ernst Marischka’s film notoriously propagated in the 1950s is demythologised by Allahyari, who exposes the Vienna that Ali Mohammed grew to love on film for the virtual, cinematic propagation of multicultural reconciliation that it is. Nevertheless, although Vienna may

not provide Ali Mohammed and Marianne with a permanent space in which to play out their relationship, as the pair agrees to stay together at the film's ending, no matter where in the world that may be, geographical space is given little importance.

Conclusion

The variety of relationships that have been formed within the characters' transient existence in *I Love Vienna*, and the hyphenated identities that have been constructed within this liminal space, transcend the necessity for cultural roots and national belonging. This 'Weltgesellschaft' that is constructed in Allayari's film, which visually exhibits cross-cultural embracing and identity negotiation within a liminal Viennese setting, not only echoes Allayari's own experiences of migration and displacement but it also promotes an articulation of *Heimat* that transcends national and geographic boundaries. Indeed, the title of the film, *I Love Vienna*, which is frequently repeated by Ali Mohammed and Kouros as a declaration of their love to the city at the beginning of the film, is revealed to be steeped in irony by the film's conclusion.¹¹⁷ The city that Ali Mohammed fell in love with through the consumption of a *Heimatfilm* does not exist. The protagonists must therefore learn to transfer this love from a mythologised love of a geographical space to a tangible love of a person or multiple

¹¹⁷Interestingly, as Allyson Fiddler notes, the almost identical phrase 'Ich liebe diese Land' is used by a migrant protagonist in Peter Turrini's play, *Ich liebe dieses Land* (2002). See Allyson Fiddler, 'Shifting Boundaries: Responses to Multiculturalism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century' in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House; Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), p. 273.

people, which has the power to unite cultures and provide the characters with the stability, identity and sense of belonging that they desire.

Although diverse, each of the three films examined in this chapter all attest a *Heimat* that is constructed via personal affiliations between people. The unlikely relationship between Mario and Elfe in *Höhenangst*, the utopian union of the Dönmezs and the Strohmeys in *Geboren in Absurdistan*, and the fraught but loving relationship between Marianne and Ali Mohammed in *I Love Vienna*, for example, transcend the need for political and geographical stability. Thus, in a world where exclusionary borders continue to exist, Allahyari promotes transcendental and multicultural relationships as an antidote to contemporary alienation and dislocation.

Chapter 3: Desperately Seeking *Heimat* in the Works of Florian Flicker

Introduction

Since his death in August 2014 after a short battle with cancer, critics and journalists from Austria and around the world have returned to Salzburg-born Florian Flicker's films with renewed interest.¹ Looking back on Flicker's career, a number of critics, including Martin Schweighofer and Bundesminister, Josef Ostermayer, pay tribute to the diverse and multifaceted nature of Flicker's oeuvre, arguing that his various works, which include experimental short films, documentary films and hybrid-genre feature films, successfully reflect 'die Vielseitigkeit und Kreativität des österreichischen Filmes.'² His hybrid-genre feature films in particular – which include the sci-fi/*Heimatfilm*, *Halbe Welt* (1993), the *Heimatfilm*/road movie, *Suzie Washington* (1998), the *Austrokomödie*/psychological drama, *Der Überfall* (2000), and the western/*Heimatfilm*, *Grenzgänger* (2012) – as Martin Keuschnigg agrees, demonstrate Flicker's inclination to transgress generic boundaries in order to create new and innovative modes of

¹ Flicker's films have also attracted recent publicity in the year following his death. The Austrian public broadcaster, ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk), aired three of the director's films in the week after his death was publicly announced: *Grenzgänger* (2012), *Der Überfall* (2000) and *No Name City* (2006). Furthermore, a number of his films have also been screened in commemoration of the director at national film festivals. For instance, the *Viennale* (2014) screened *Halbe Welt* alongside three of his experimental short films. *Kino unter den Sternen* (2015) screened *Der Überfall* alongside three of his experimental short films. And the *Diagonale* (2015) screened *Suzie Washington* (1998).

² See Martin Schweighofer, 'Introduction', *Austrian Films Review 2014* (Vienna: Austrian Film Commission, 2014), p. 6; Josef Ostermayer, 'Bundesminister Ostermayer zum Ableben von Florian Flicker', *Bundeskanzleramt Österreich*, 24 August 2014 <https://www.bka.gv.at/site/cob_56755/currentpage_2/7952/default.aspx> [accessed 7 September 2014].

storytelling;³ an approach to filmmaking which film theorist, Drehli Robnik, attributes to Flicker's lack of formal filmmaking education.⁴

Having never attended the Vienna Film Academy,⁵ Flicker, as Robnik states, was 'ein passionierter Autodidakt, der am meistens durchs Ausprobieren gelernt hat.'⁶ Flicker first developed an interest in filmmaking while working in theatre and advertising during the 1980s, but it was not until the latter half of the decade that he began to experiment with film. He joined various experimental filmmaking collectives in Austria and Germany, including the Expanded-Cinema groups *Pension Export* (Vienna) and *Keine Einigung* (Hamburg), where he created a series of experimental short films.⁷ However, after realising that there was no audience for experimental film, in 1993 Flicker began to write and direct his own documentary and feature films.⁸ His solo feature film debut *Halbe Welt* (1993) brought Flicker his first taste of success. Winning a number of awards including the award for best first feature at the Gérardmer Film Festival (1994), the *Prix du Coeur* in Valenciennes, (1994) and the *Preis des Filmkunstfests Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* at the Schwerin film festival in Germany (1994), the film, as scholar Stefan Grisseman writes, 'etablierte

³ Martin Keuschnigg, 'Florian Flicker: Er Blickte über die Grenze', *Die Presse*, 24 August 2014 <http://diepresse.com/home/kultur/film/3859278/Florian-Flicker_Er-blickte-uber-die-Grenze> [accessed 23 September 2014].

⁴ Drehli Robnik, 'Leben im Licht: Florian Flicker und seine Filme', in *Gegenschuss: 16 Regisseure aus Österreich* (Vienna: Wespennest. 1995), p. 44.

⁵ Although Flicker never attended the Vienna Film Academy as a student, he did teach there as a *Dozent* in his later years.

⁶ Robnik, 'Leben im Licht: Florian Flicker und seine Filme', p. 44.

⁷ Early experimental films include: *Lebenslauf* (1986), *Landscape oder 50 Schläger dem Salzkammergut* (1986) and *Berliner Skizzen* (1986), *Kopf an Kopf – Tete à Tete* (1988), *Komposition ohne Ton* (1990). For more information on Flicker's experimental films see Robnik, 'Leben im Licht: Florian Flicker und seine Filme', pp. 41-57.

⁸ Flicker's documentary films include *Attwengerfilm* (1996) and *No Name City* (2006).

ihn [...] als Hoffnungsträger des jungen Austro-Kinos.’⁹ However, it was his second feature film, *Suzie Washington* (1998), that, as journalist Roman Scheiber remarks, situated Flicker alongside fellow New Austrian Filmmaker, Barbara Albert, as ‘eine fixe Größe des heimischen Filmschaffens.’¹⁰ Considered the ‘Durchbruch’ of Flicker’s film career,¹¹ *Suzie Washington* went on to win the *Großer Diagonale-Preis* for the best Austrian film of the year at the inaugural Diagonale film festival in Graz in 1998, along with numerous other awards and nominations at film festivals around the world, including the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival in the US and the Max Ophüls Festival in Saarbrücken.¹²

‘Das ICH ist jener Punkt in ständiger bewegung’ – Mobility and the Search for Self in the Feature Films of Florian Flicker.¹³

While many critics and journalists are quick to acknowledge the diverse and multifaceted nature of Flicker’s oeuvre, others tend to identify a recurring theme that dominates his cinematic works. In his analysis of the late filmmaker’s works, critic Michael Pekler, for example, correctly asserts that Flicker’s films ‘erzählen [sie] von Wünschen und Sehnsüchten von Menschen, die mit entsprechendem physischem und emotionalem

⁹ Stefan Grisseemann, ‘Nachruf auf Florian Flicker (1965-2014)’, *Profil*, 25 August 2014 <<http://www.profil.at/gesellschaft/nachruf-florian-flicker-1965-2014-377596>> [accessed 26 September 2014].

¹⁰ Roman Scheiber, ‘(GR)AU Zone’, *Ray* (2011/2012) <<http://www.ray-magazin.at/magazin/2012/11/grenzgaenger-forian-flicker-ueber-den-neuen-film->> [accessed 10 February 2014].

¹¹ See Anon, ‘Regisseur Florian Flicker 49-jährig verstorben’, *Die Presse*, 24 August 2014.

¹² Actress Birgit Doll was awarded the Critics’ Choice Award for her performance as Nana Iaschwilli at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival in 1998 and film editor Monika Willi won the Femina Film Award at the Max Öphuls Festival in the same year.

¹³ Quote by Daniel del Guidice, cited in Florian Flicker, *Suzie Washington: Drehbuch und Notizen zum Film* (Weitra: Bibliothek der Provinz, 1999), p. 104.

Kraftaufwand versuchen, ihr Ziel zu erreichen.’¹⁴ The protagonists in Flicker’s films are therefore, as Pekler continues, ‘ständig in Bewegung.’¹⁵ Flicker also acknowledges this recurring motif in his films when, in an interview for *Suzie Washington*, he states: ‘letztlich geht es bei allen Figuren meines Films um eine Art von Einsamkeit. Sie haben den Boden unter ihren Füßen verloren, fühlen sich allein und fremdeln mit der Welt.’¹⁶ His three feature films, *Halbe Welt*, *Grenzgänger* and *Suzie Washington*, as this chapter shall demonstrate, all feature protagonists who, for a variety of different reasons, find themselves physically or symbolically *heimatlos*. These films follow their characters as they embark on an active quest for a sense of identity and belonging that exists outside of their immediate surroundings and thus continue to reimagine the realisation of *Heimat* as a constructive process in a global society characterised by mobility, displacement and relocation.¹⁷

In this chapter I will begin with a brief analysis of Flicker’s feature film debut, *Halbe Welt* (1993), and his most recent feature film, *Grenzgänger* (2012), before embarking on an in-depth analysis of his 1998 feature film *Suzie Washington*. In these respective analyses, I will highlight the ways in which Flicker draws on and renegotiates the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre in order to successfully represent the various

¹⁴ Michael Pekler, ‘Einsamkeit macht Sehnsucht’, *Falter*, 14 November 2012 <https://www.falter.at/archiv/FALTER_201211141522580055/einsamkeit-macht-sehnsucht?selectyco> [accessed 9 September 2014].

¹⁵ Michael Pekler, ‘Getrieben vom Wunsch nach Freiheit’, *Falter*, 27 August 2014 <https://www.falter.at/archiv/FALTER_20140827E62245F0A6/getrieben-vom-wunsch-nach-freiheit?selectyco> [accessed 9 September 2014].

¹⁶ Flicker, *Suzie Washington: Drehbuch und Notizen zum Film*, p. 102.

¹⁷ Also see Flicker’s 1986 short experimental film *Lebenslauf*, which engages with the theme of mobility quite literally. For instance, for the entire duration of the two minutes and twenty seconds of footage, the super-8 camera looks down on a pair of running feet.

personal and physical journeys of *Heimsuchung* that his protagonists must undertake in his films. However, as I will demonstrate, in these films Flicker, who is renowned for transcending generic boundaries and is considered by Robert von Dassanowsky as part of a ‘generation of filmmakers specialising in postmodern hybrid genre-work,’ does not merely revisit the *Heimatfilm* genre but hybridises the *Heimatfilm* with various other genres, including the science-fiction film and the quintessentially American genres of the road movie and the western.¹⁸ By hybridising the *Heimatfilm* genre with the science-fiction film, the road movie and the western – genres that are also frequently connected with questions of (temporal and physical-) travel, mobility and identity, Flicker is able to offer new and innovative engagements with *Heimat* within the context of globalisation.

As *Heimat* emerges outside of spatial confinements, so too does it transgress genre boundaries. As Yvonne Franke highlights in her dissertation, which looks at the relationship between home and travel within the context of a number of contemporary German films, ‘it seems that *Heimat* has to be discovered more and more through movement, which in audio-visual culture is currently expressed through genre hybridity.’¹⁹ As a product of mixing, these hybrid-*Heimatfilme* continue to participate in the destabilisation of the *Heimatfilm* genre, symbolically representing *Heimat* as a malleable, deterritorialised concept which is capable of being located in various settings and under numerous different guises. As Ira Jaffa

¹⁸ Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History* (Jefferson, N. C.; London: McFarland & Co, 2005), p. 238.

¹⁹ Yvonne Franke, ‘The Genres of Europeanization - Moving Towards the New *Heimatfilm*’ (unpublished PhD, The University of Pittsburgh, 2013).p. 5.

highlights, hybrid-genre films ‘are inherently subversive, since in mingling genres and styles instead of keeping them separate, these films choose heterogeneity over homogeneity, contamination over purity.’²⁰ Thus, by hybridising the *Heimatfilm*, Flicker continues to reimagine both the film genre and the concept of *Heimat* itself as changeable and evolving entities.

In my analysis of Flicker’s solo feature film debut, *Halbe Welt*, I will analyse the manner in which Flicker engages with the generic formulae of the science-fiction film and the *Heimatfilm* in order to represent the loss of *Heimat* as a result of climate change. Critically engaging with questions of ecology and conservationism, issues central to both *Heimat* discourse and numerous science-fiction narratives, I argue that Flicker’s film, which is set in a dystopian future, looks back nostalgically on a lost *Heimat*, which its protagonists go to deadly extremes to return to. Although the film’s final scene depicts two characters’ *Heimkehr* into death, a trope typical of the Nazi-*Heimatfilme* of the 1930s and 40s, I will showcase how Flicker eschews any nationalist connotations of a mythological connection to the homeland, and instead adapts the generic syntax to offer a wider reflection on the obstacles facing those who embark on a quest for a *Heimat* elsewhere.

I then proceed to offer a brief analysis of *Grenzgänger* (2012) followed by a comprehensive examination of *Suzie Washington* (1999). Both of these films, as I will demonstrate, draw on the *Heimatfilm* genre as a means to critically explore contemporary migratory movements and

²⁰ Ira Jaffer, *Hollywood Hybrids: Mixing Genres in Contemporary Films* (Lanham, US; Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), p. 6.

societal shifts. Although they invest in the image of a future, yet-to-be-gained *Heimat*, rather than a regressive notion of a *Heimat* irrevocably lost, as depicted in *Halbe Welt*, they nevertheless represent the search for *Heimat* as one that is still fraught with danger, particularly for those who are both physically and legally excluded from the *Heimat* they seek. In these films I suggest that Flicker continues to challenge the static notion of space associated with conservative readings of *Heimat* in his films and thus rejects, as Gabriele Eichmanns writes, ‘the [...] rather anachronistic elements of the traditional *Heimat* idea.’²¹ However, I will conclude that, despite engaging with a more fluid conception of *Heimat*, Flicker challenges the utopian ideas of inclusivity and freedom with which these more mobile renderings of *Heimat* are often associated. Indeed, as *Grenzgänger* and *Suzie Washington* demonstrate, in a Europe that, as Yosefa Loshitzky states, ‘has become a site for voluntary travel (tourists, travellers, pilgrims, occupational transnationals) as well as involuntary travel (refugees, asylum seekers, displaced populations, transferred populations resulting from “ethnic cleansing,” foreign workers, the homeless, undocumented migrants),’ it nevertheless, as Loshitzky adds, ‘increasingly erects racial, ethnic and religious boundaries [...] defining and closing its borders to the “others.”’²² As I will outline in my analysis of *Suzie Washington*, and to a certain degree in *Grenzgänger*, the successful search for *Heimat* is therefore

²¹ Gabriele Eichmanns, ‘Introduction: *Heimat* in the Age of Globalisation’, in *Heimat Goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, ed. by Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 2-6.

²² Yosefa Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 2.

dependent on what Doreen Massey has termed ‘power geometry’;²³ a concept she coined to refer to, as Peter Nyers highlights, ‘the unequal forms of power and privilege involved in one’s relation to flows and movement.’²⁴ Flicker thus rejects a utopian representation of postmodern nomadism which, as Eichmanns argues, ‘favours *Ortslosigkeit* over rootedness,’ in favour of a more critical portrayal of the legal and social exclusionary barriers that prevent those migrants from having access to a *Heimat* at all.²⁵ I will conclude that Flicker’s films work with and at the same time stand in opposition to the generic formulae of the *Heimatfilm*, revealing the Janus-faced nature of the Austrian *Heimat*; which at once welcomes wealthy Western tourists and simultaneously rejects desperate refugees. In their respective engagements with the binaries of *Heimat* and *Fremde*, mobility and stasis, and inclusion and exclusion, these films look to other generic modes to assist in their contemporary representations. While *Grenzgänger* hybridises the *Heimatfilm* genre with the classical western, transforming the rural locale into a dangerous frontier for potential migrants, *Suzie Washington* draws on the generic conventions of the road movie, charting a migrant’s relentless quest for a *Heimat* as she illegally traverses the Austrian landscape in a desperate bid to escape border enforcers and reach her dream *Heimat* of America.

Halbe Welt (1993) and the Hei-Sci-fi

²³ Doreen Massey, ‘Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place’, in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. by Jon Bird, Marry Curtis, Tim Putnam, George Robertson and Lisa Tickner (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 59-69.

²⁴ Peter Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency* (New York; London: Routledge, 2006), p. ix.

²⁵ Eichmanns, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

As Alexander Horwath, film critic and director of the Austrian Film Museum, points out, with *Halbe Welt* Flicker ‘[hat] das Science-Fiction-Genre für das Alpenland neu erfunden.’²⁶ The film, while set in an unmistakably science-fiction film setting, nevertheless draws on the generic tropes of the *Heimatfilm*, adopting the formulae of both genres to successfully represent the loss of *Heimat* as a result of future climate change.²⁷ Although Flicker denies that his film engages in environmental activism, in its portrayal of the devastating loss of natural life as a result of ecological disaster, *Halbe Welt* could be read as a critical engagement with contemporary debates on climate change and global warming.²⁸ While in Austrian film environmental concerns are frequently addressed in the documentary mode, there are very few Austrian feature films that foreground questions of ecology.²⁹ Hence, in a similar manner to the German film industry, as Rachel Palfreyman highlights, ‘no specifically green genre has emerged in feature films.’³⁰ Palfreyman attributes this lack of a green genre in German-language film to the salience of the *Heimatfilm* genre throughout German-speaking film history and its ability to offer a visual platform to probe environmental concerns. As Palfreyman notes, ‘ecological dilemmas and debates have often been expressed through the

²⁶ Alexander Horwath, ‘*Halbe Welt*’, *Der Standard*, 3 October 2007

<<http://derstandard.at/3058860/Halbe-Welt>> [accessed 22 September 2014].

²⁷ Other films that have successfully hybridised the *Heimatfilm* and the science-fiction film include Martin Faltermeyer’s *Zombies from Outer Space* (2012) and Julian Roman Pölsler’s *Die Wand* (2012).

²⁸ Robnik, ‘Leben im Licht: Florian Flicker und seine Filme’, p. 46.

²⁹ Debates on climate change and global warming have been critically explored by New Austrian Filmmakers, particularly in documentary films. Documentary films include Udo Maurer’s *Über Wasser* (2007), Ernst Gossner’s *Global Warning* (2011) and Markus Imhoof’s *More Than Honey* (2012).

³⁰ Rachel Palfreyman, ‘Green Strands on the Silver Screen? Heimat and Environment in the German Cinema’, in *The Culture of German Environmentalism: Anxieties, Visions, Realities*, ed. by Axel Goodbody (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 171.

medium of the genre of the *Heimat* film, which has as one of its core concerns the interaction between human community and spatial location.³¹ In her article on German-language film's engagement with *Heimat* and the environment, Palfreyman looks back on the enduring history of the *Heimatfilm* genre, from the *Bergfilme* of Trenker, Fanck and Reifenstahl to the critical West German *Heimatfilme* of Werner Herzog, Edgar Reitz and Herbert Achternbusch, and then to the more recent work of Tom Tykwer, to highlight how the *Heimat* mode has acted and continues to act as an 'important vehicle for examining the social context of interaction between people and sensitive environments.'³²

Although, as Palfreyman argues, the *Heimatfilm* registers environmental concerns, it rarely foregrounds them. In the 1970s and 80s for example, when, as Palfreyman highlights, 'environmental issues were at the centre of political debates in West Germany,' and, as Sabine Hake adds, 'widespread disillusionment with traditional politics added to the appeal of alternative movements,'³³ many filmmakers engaged with *Heimat* and the environment to offer a critical reflection on the political present and, by proxy, the National Socialist past.³⁴ A number of West German critical *Heimatfilme*, particularly the works of Achternbusch, for example, portray the loss of the *Heimat* as a result of ecological disaster, which fed into the

³¹ Ibid, p. 185.

³² Ibid, p. 184.

³³ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 164.

³⁴ Like in West Germany, the late 1970s and 80s also signalled a rise in green politics in Austria and the emergence of the Austrian Green Party (die Grünen Österreich). However, after the introduction of state film funding in November 1980 and the subsequent slow rebirth of Austrian film, by the mid-1980s, propelled by the Waldheim era, Austrian filmmakers began to directly examine the nation's fascist past. See von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Film: A History*, p. 214.

filmmakers' wider criticisms of political mechanisms of power.³⁵ For instance, in his 1977 film, *Servus Bayern*, one scene depicts an interview between a poet and a journalist wherein the poet discloses his opinions on his home state of Bavaria, describing how it is trapped under a glacier. Inga Scharf interprets the protagonist's views as 'highly culturally pessimistic or even fatalistic,' with the metaphor of the glacier, she argues, signifying a 'natural disaster' that 'renders the state of Bavaria/West Germany a catastrophe brought about by destructive forces and thus implying that its condition is beyond the control of its inhabitants.'³⁶ Achternbusch thus, according to Scharf, directly links ecological disaster with political power, portraying 'society as a victim, which has been put in a deathlike position by evil forces.'³⁷ In a similar manner, Achternbusch's iconoclastic film, *Wanderkrebs* (1984), also depicts ecological disaster as a result of political maltreatment, this time portraying the mass deforestation of the Bavarian forest, which has been replaced by a forest of cancer-causing plastic trees. Ecological disaster is therefore once again equated with the loss of human life, with the film culminating in the suicide of its protagonist and his partner amongst the devastated ruins of the forest. Although Flicker lacks the radical left-wing activism that spurs Achternbusch's filmmaking, *Halbe Welt* nevertheless revisits the themes of ecological disaster, political power and the loss of human life, drawing on these thematic concerns to visually

³⁵ Achternbusch's critical representation of the loss of the Bavarian *Heimat* in *Wanderkrebs* feeds into his wider work, including the film *Das Gespenst* (1983), which is 'harshly critical of the German past and of continuing xenophobia and prejudice.' See Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 15.

³⁶ Inga Scharf, *Nation and Identity in the New German Cinema: Homeless at Home* (New York; London: Routledge, 2008), p. 52.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

reflect contemporary issues of repression, longing and the quest for freedom.

Setting his film in an unspecified dystopian future and in an arid, barren landscape – a temporal and spatial setting emblematic of the science-fiction film – Flicker portrays a community of people who long for a past, undamaged, natural world. Prolonged exposure to sunlight proves fatal for the film's characters, who must therefore resume their lives at night time under the strict surveillance of the governmental organisation, Luna. Dissatisfied with their bleak surroundings, a number of characters artificially recreate the past spaces of a bygone era by mentally transporting themselves back to their lost natural environment through the consumption of forbidden digital and physical images.³⁸ Although Luna has placed a ban on these nostalgic activities, destroying any postcard, video or photograph that they discover, Flicker's characters go to great lengths to preserve them. One character, Repro, for example, dedicates his life to the creation of new technological devices such as the *Gernsehe*, which is a small television-shaped gadget that visually transports the handler, if only for a brief moment, back to their lost surroundings by displaying digital reproductions of old postcard images depicting a pure and unspoiled way of life.³⁹ For

³⁸ See Jean P. Retzinger, 'Speculative Visions and Imaginary Meals: Food and the Environment in (Post-Apocalyptic) Science Fiction Films, in *Cultural Studies and Environment, Revisited*, ed. by Phaedra C. Pezzullo (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 12, who argues that in the science-fiction film 'the chief mode of science fiction is not prophecy but nostalgia.'

³⁹ This can of course be read as a critical allusion to the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, which, as von Moltke notes, offered 'a colourful flight' from the trauma and struggles experienced by the postwar German and Austrian population who were suffering from broken homes, missing fathers and husbands, and mass migration. See Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), p. 5. Also, Repro is played by Serbian-born New Austrian Filmmaker, Goran Rebić.

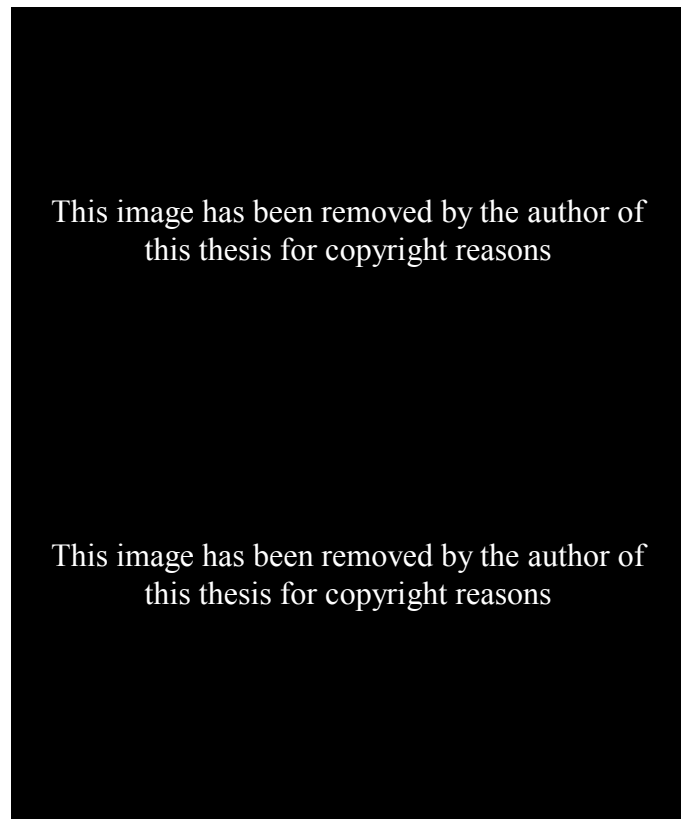


Figure 13: Herzog mentally transports himself back to the nation's lost natural surroundings using the *Gernsehe* in Florian Flicker's *Halbe Welt* (1993). DVD capture

other characters, however, their longings are no longer satisfied by visual means. These characters thus embark on dangerous and deadly journeys outside of their underground milieu in search of the freedom that these images evoke; journeys which either result in capture by Luna or death by the sun's deadly rays.

Following a raid by Luna in the community bar and the destruction of Repro's technological gadgets, Repro and the bar-tender Sunny embark on a physical yet deadly journey back to the lost *Heimat*. In the film's final scene these characters come across an abandoned convertible car, which, may, in a similar manner to the convertible automobile that became a

common feature of the classical 1950s *Heimatfilm*, grant the characters freedom to escape from their repressed and bleak, day-to-day lives, but it also exposes them to the sun's deadly rays thus leading them to their inevitable deaths. For these characters, the search for the natural, unspoiled *Heimat* is thus equated with death. This theme of death as *Heimkehr* forms a vital trope throughout the enduring legacy of the *Heimatfilm* genre, not only in the critical West German *Heimatfilme* of the 70s and 80s, but also in the narratives of the Nazi-*Heimatfilme* of the 1930s and 40s.⁴⁰ As Boa and Palfreyman highlight, 'as nature from which man came and to which he must return Mother Earth is life-giving yet death-dealing, so that the longing to return to the *Heimat* can take on a regressive and deadly aspect.'⁴¹ In Veit Harlan's *Die goldene Stadt* (1942) for instance, as Johannes von Moltke highlights, 'the homecoming of the prodigal daughter [...] ends with her suicide.'⁴² This trope is possibly best exemplified in Leni Riefenstahl's *Bergfilm, Das blaue Licht* (1932), which also evokes a woman's *Heimkehr* through death.⁴³ The film follows Junta, a gypsy living in a mountain village, who is alienated from her community and considered a threat to the local villagers. Junta regularly climbs a nearby mountain that gives off a mysterious blue light and is often followed by numerous men, who are not familiar with the mountain like Junta, and therefore ultimately fall to their

⁴⁰ For a concise evaluation of the Nazi *Heimatfilme* see Alexandra Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia: 100 Years of German Heimat Film* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011), pp. 133-174.

⁴¹ Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream*, p. 27.

⁴² Johannes von Moltke, 'Convertible Provincialism: *Heimat* and Mobility in the 1950s', in *The Cosmopolitan Screen: German Cinema and the Global Imaginary, 1945 to the Present*, ed. by Stephan K. Schindler and Lutz Koepnik (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 40.

⁴³ Other *Bergfilme* that also depict *Heimkehr* as death/suicide include Arnold Fanck and G.W. Pabst's *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü* (1929) and more recently Tom Tykwer's *Winterschlüfer* (1997).

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Figure 14: Repro and Sunny embark on a *Heimkehr* into death in Florian Flicker's *Halbe Welt* (1993). DVD capture

deaths. One night an artist from a neighbouring city, Vigo, successfully follows Junta to the mountain peak and discovers that this mystical blue light is generated by the moonlight reflecting off a constellation of precious crystals. Vigo returns to the village to inform the villagers of his findings resulting in their quick return to the mountain to ravage the natural wonder, much to Junta's dismay. As Junta climbs the mountain, observing the destruction that stands in her wake, she slips and falls to her death. The destruction of this natural wonder thus symbolises the simultaneous destruction of Junta. As Alexandra Ludewig highlights, 'Junta becomes eternally one with the mountain when she is buried at its base.'⁴⁴

In these Nazi-*Heimatfilme*, the deaths of these characters, often women,⁴⁵ was used ultimately to nourish the Nazi's *Blut und Boden*

⁴⁴ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 87.

⁴⁵ For more information on the representation of women in *Bergfilme*, see Palfreyman, 'Green Strands on the Silver Screen?', pp. 173-175.

ideology, not only connoting a fascistic mythological connection to the homeland but also offering visual examples of ‘self-sacrifice for the greater good’ of the nation.⁴⁶ For example, in *Das blaue Licht*, as Claudia Sandberg writes, ‘Junta’s death as sacrifice for the village’s prosperity prefigure[s] the amalgam of modernity and romanticism of the Nazi *Heimat* genre.’⁴⁷ In a similar manner, in Harlan’s *Die goldene Stadt*, Anna’s return to the *Heimat* is also depicted as a sacrifice for the greater good of her community. As she submerges herself and her unborn child in a nearby swamp, where her mother also killed herself when Anna was a child, Anna can once again return to Mother Nature. In the process, Anna’s tragic death forces her stubborn patriarchal father, Jobst, as von Moltke explains to ‘pass the baton of patriarchal tradition to Anna’s erstwhile suitor, Thomas.’ Von Moltke continues, ‘In the sacrificial logic of this film, both women have to commit suicide for Jobst to learn that tradition requires change.’⁴⁸ Thus, Anna and her mother’s suicides prompt their village to undergo a series of vital transformations, which are symbolised by the draining of the swamp to make way for cornfields and agricultural regeneration.⁴⁹

Although Flicker’s film, in a similar manner to these Nazi *Heimatfilme*, portrays death as *Heimkehr*, this journey into death is far removed from any fascistic *Blut und Boden* ideology. Not only does the film take place in a borderless, unnamed, unrecognisable location, thus eschewing any nationalistic undertones, the characters’ deaths bear no

⁴⁶ Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, p. 133. For more information of the Nazi-*Heimatfilme* and the sacrifice of women see p. 90.

⁴⁷ Claudia Sandberg, ‘The Blue Light’, in *Directory of World Cinema: Germany*, ed. by Michelle Langford (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012), p. 78.

⁴⁸ von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 66.

⁴⁹ von Moltke argues that the Nazi-*Heimatfilme* concern themselves with ‘a reconciliation between tradition and technology.’ See *Ibid*, pp. 66-67.

significance on the progression of their community and their surroundings. Furthermore, although Flicker engages with the themes of ecological disaster and social criticism typical of the West German critical *Heimatfilme* of the 70s and 80s, and his film, as he concedes in an interview ‘geht [...] um wirtschaftliche Macht,’ it nonetheless lacks the critical leftist fervour with which these critical *Heimatfilme* are often associated.⁵⁰ Thus, Flicker may draw on the semantics of *Heimkehr* and death inherent in the Nazi-*Heimatfilm*, and equate the loss of the natural landscape with the loss of human life in a manner similar to a number of critical West German *Heimatfilme* of the 70s and 80s, but the syntax has been updated. In *Halbe Welt*, Repro and Sunny’s defiant homecoming journey into death fundamentally connotes a final, desperate bid for freedom, away from the entrapment and alienation that characterises their life in their repressive, dank, underground milieu. As critic Michael Pekler in his introduction to the film sums up, ‘alle Menschen hier [suchen] das, was ihnen seit dem ersten Bild verwehrt ist – die Freiheit. Der Morgen gilt zu Recht als die schönste Zeit des Tages. Auch wenn man weiß, was dieser mit sich bringt.’⁵¹ Aware of the risks involved, Repro and Sunny embark on a journey towards freedom, back to the innocent and trouble-free past that is depicted in the *Naturbilder* they obsessively consume. *Halbe Welt* therefore, though devoid of fascist connotations and lacking radical leftist activism, continues to engage with the enduring and often contradictory legacy of the *Heimatfilm* genre by continuing to depict *Heimsuchung* as a dangerous and often deadly quest, a theme that Flicker revisits in his later films, *Suzie Washington*

⁵⁰ Robnik, ‘Leben im Licht: Florian Flicker und seine Filme’, p. 46.

⁵¹ Michael Pekler, ‘Open Your Eyes’, *Der Standard*, 4 October 2007
<<http://derstandard.at/3060859/Open-Your-Eyes>> [accessed 9 September 2014].

(1998) and *Grenzgänger* (2012), when engaging with the issue of illegal immigration.

***Grenzgänger* (2012) and the *Heimat*-Western**

Flicker's most recent film, *Grenzgänger*, is based on the Austrian author Karl Schönherr's play, *Der Weibsteufel* (1914). Flicker relocates the story from the Austrian Alps to the Austrian-Slovakian border to correspond with the more contemporary issues of cross-border migration and illegal trafficking that took place in the area up until Slovakia entered the Schengen zone in 2007.⁵² Set in 2001, the film follows a couple, Hans and Jana, who own a guest house on the marshlands separating East and West; a business which is revealed to be a front for the illegal trafficking of Eastern migrants across the Morava River.⁵³ The couple's ostensibly comfortable lifestyle in their serene and tranquil surroundings is disrupted when a border guard, Ronnie, is sent to patrol the area and uncovers the couple's illegal people-smuggling business. The outsider's arrival into the rural idyll, a characteristic typical of the classical *Heimatfilm*, threatens to disrupt the equilibrium of the established community, not only exposing the instability of Hans and Jana's relationship when a love triangle between the three protagonists ensues, but also revealing the disturbing history that lurks beneath the picture-perfect exterior of the film's setting.

⁵² The play has also been adapted into film by other Austrian filmmakers: Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Heimatfilm, Der Weibsteufel* (1951) and Georg Tressler, *Der Weibsteufel* (1966).

⁵³ The area was also the film setting in Georg Lhotsky's *Moos auf den Steinen* (1968).

The stunning rural marshland in which the film is set is immediately presented to the viewer as an idyll. For instance, just minutes into the film the camera locks in on a longshot of an old guest house standing alone in secluded woodland, illuminated by the sun's rays. However, the textual insert that precedes this sequence immediately unsettles the tranquillity that the idyllic setting evokes by suggesting that the area has a turbulent history. The insert, which is accompanied by the soothing diegetic sound of chirping crickets and tall grass rustling in the gentle breeze, reads: 'Es gab eine Zeit, da war die Ostgrenze Österreichs eine Grenze zwischen Ost und West. Bis 2004 bewachte das Österreichische Militär diesen Grenzverlauf. Heute wächst Gras über die Geschichten von damals.' *Grenzgänger* thus takes the viewer back in time in order to expose the area's history, which, as Flicker highlights in an interview for the film, remains largely unknown:

Was mich dann erstaunt hat bei den Recherchen, ist, dass diese Gegend trotz ihrer politisch-historischen Bedeutung so garnicht verankert ist in unserem Bewusstsein. Das weiß doch kein Mensch, was sich da bis vor 10 Jahren so abgespielt hat. Wir starren auf die Flüchtlingsboote auf Lampedusa und wissen nicht, dass bei uns ums Eck jährlich dutzende Flüchtlinge ertrunken sind, dass man beim Sonntagsausflug an die March ging und gehen konnte, um „Neger zu zählen“, die ertrunkenen Flüchtlinge. Jahrelang war das eine Gegend der Gewalt. Schmuggler, Schlepper und Flüchtlinge standen schlecht ausgerüsteten, jungen Soldaten gegenüber. Zusätzliche Gefahr brachte die ständige Möglichkeit eines Hochwassers, viele Flüchtlinge

ertranken, viele junge Soldaten kamen mit dem psychischen Druck nicht zurecht.⁵⁴

In order to successfully expose the ostensibly idyllic area's history as a dangerous frontier, Flicker draws on the generic conventions of the *Heimatfilm* and the western; two film genres which, as a number of scholars including Anton Kaes have acknowledged, share a number of commonalities.⁵⁵ In recent years however, the western, in a similar manner to the *Heimatfilm*, has been appropriated by a number of contemporary filmmakers to respond to contemporary issues of cross-border migration and recent societal shifts,⁵⁶ despite having been denounced previously as a tool for the cinematic perpetuation of an imperialist myth.⁵⁷ It is precisely the genre's controversial history that, as Jim Kitses argues, gifts the genre its future credibility and revolutionary potential. As Kitses notes, 'the long illustrious history of the traditional western [...] provides contemporary filmmakers a readymade canvas for correcting the sins of our fathers, for inscribing other genders, other races, other sexualities.'⁵⁸ Furthermore, as Nikhil Sathe notes, 'the classical western has an inherent concern with the entry into, and to varying degree, the mastery over a new, uncharted space

⁵⁴ Prisma Film, *Grenzgänger*, 2012
<http://www.austrianfilm.at/assets/Grenzgaenger/Presseheft_Grenzgaenger_web.pdf>
[accessed 18 July 2015].

⁵⁵ See Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 15. Kaes argues that both genres depict 'imaginary spaces, pure movie lives, and a strong moral undercurrent.'

⁵⁶ See Olivia Khoo, 'Bad Jokes, Bad English, Good Copy: Sukiyaki Western Django, or How the West Was Won', *Asian Studies Review*, 37:1 (2013), pp. 80-95.

⁵⁷ See Matthew Carter, *Myth of the Western: New Perspectives on Hollywood's Frontier Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 1

⁵⁸ Jim Kitses, 'Introduction: Post-Modernism and The Western', in *The Western Reader*, ed. by Jim Kitses and Gregg Rickman (New York: Limelight Editions, 1998), p. 21.

[...].⁵⁹ Thus, as a ‘recently globalised genre,’ Sathe continues, ‘the western has been adopted frequently because of its ability to speak to conditions of uncertainty and instability.’⁶⁰ Flicker successfully engages with this recent development of the western genre in his contemporary representation of postwall illegal immigration, drawing on and adapting each of the four basic elements that define the genre which are outlined as follows by Alan Lovell:

1. A structure drawn from nineteenth-century popular melodramatic literature, involving a virtuous hero and wicked villain who menaces a virginal heroine;
2. An action story, composed of violence, chases and crimes appropriate to a place like the American West in the nineteenth century;
3. The introduction of the history of the migration westwards and the opening of the frontier signalled in such films as *The Covered Wagon* (1924) and *The Iron Horse* (1924); and
4. The revenge structure, which was present by the time of *Billy the Kid* in 1930.⁶¹

Although his film is far removed both spatially and temporally from nineteenth century America, Flicker nevertheless renegotiates the above tropes in his film to critically explore contemporary East-West migration. For instance, set six years before Slovakia entered the Schengen Zone, his film takes place on the cusp of EU expansion when the border separating East and West was still an area in flux. As in the classical western, this

⁵⁹ Nikhil Sathe, ‘Just in Time: Erwin Wagenhofer’s Appropriation of the Classical Western Genre in *Black Brown White* (2011)’, *Journal of Austrian Studies*, 47:4 (2014), p. 43.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 58.

⁶¹ Alan Lovell, ‘The Western’, *Screen Education*, 41 (1967), p. 97.

borderland is presented to the viewer both as a dangerous, uninhabitable space and as a potential site for future settlement.⁶² For example, the location for the film's Western protagonist, Hans, connotes economic potential, as he discloses his plans to tame the rural wilderness by developing a golf course and hotel in the area. However, it simultaneously remains deadly for those migrants from the East whose attempted border crossings provide the film with the 'action,' 'violence,' 'chases' and 'crimes' which Lovell outlines in point three of his definition. Although the border-crossers and people-smuggling are mostly kept off-screen, the viewer is nevertheless made aware of these attempted migrations by the frequent diegetic sounds of gunshots from the patrolling border guards and Hans' failed "fishing trips", which serve as a euphemism for the drowned migrants who were unable to reach the other side of the river. The borderland is thus Janus-faced; lucrative for Western inhabitants who are able to earn a living from the area's instability, yet potentially deadly for those Eastern migrants who continue to be legally and socially excluded from it.

At many points in the film *Flicker* draws the viewers' attention to the area's liminality. The lush green marsh area, typical of the classical *Heimatfilm*, for example, is regularly exposed as a dangerous frontier space, typical of the classical western. In one particular scene, *Flicker* successfully conveys this spatial tension. On one of his fishing trips, for instance, Hans stares out across the river towards the East, the camera following his gaze across the sparkling blue water. The stillness of the shot is soon interrupted

⁶² See Nikhil Sathe, 'Fortress Europe as Frontier: Adaptation of the Western Genre in Austrian Cinema' (Unpublished article provided by kind permission of author), pp. 1-13.

when a body, which was lying still on the Eastern side of the riverbed, emerges from the marshlands and scrambles into the water. Hans attempts to reach the drowning migrant but he is forced to retreat back to his home when the gunshots of the border guards can be heard. The river is therefore quickly transformed from a source of life for Hans (income from the fishing and people-smuggling trade) into a source of death for the migrant. In a similar manner, Hans and Jana's *Gasthaus* also evokes this tension. Like in the classical *Heimatfilm*, the building accommodates local villagers and tourists within a secluded rural setting. However, on closer inspection, the ostensibly Germanic *Gasthaus* also features a wooden veranda, a rocking-chair and saloon-style swing-doors. The *Gasthaus* is thus equated with the classical western genre's saloon, a space where outlaws, cowboys and law enforcers, or in this case, smugglers, migrants, and border guards violently clash over who can and cannot occupy the land. By employing the semantic elements of the western genre, a conscious decision as disclosed in interviews with the filmmaker, Flicker is able to transform the idyllic rural location into a perilous frontier where the questions over settlement remain fraught.⁶³

While the Austrian-Slovakian border in *Grenzgänger* is successfully conveyed as a dangerous frontier through Flicker's employment of the generic tropes of the western film genre, the film undoubtedly engages with the *Heimatfilm* genre as a number of critics including Bert Rebhandl

⁶³In interviews Flicker regularly discusses his conscious decision to draw on the generic elements of the Western. See Scheiber, '(GR)AU Zone.'

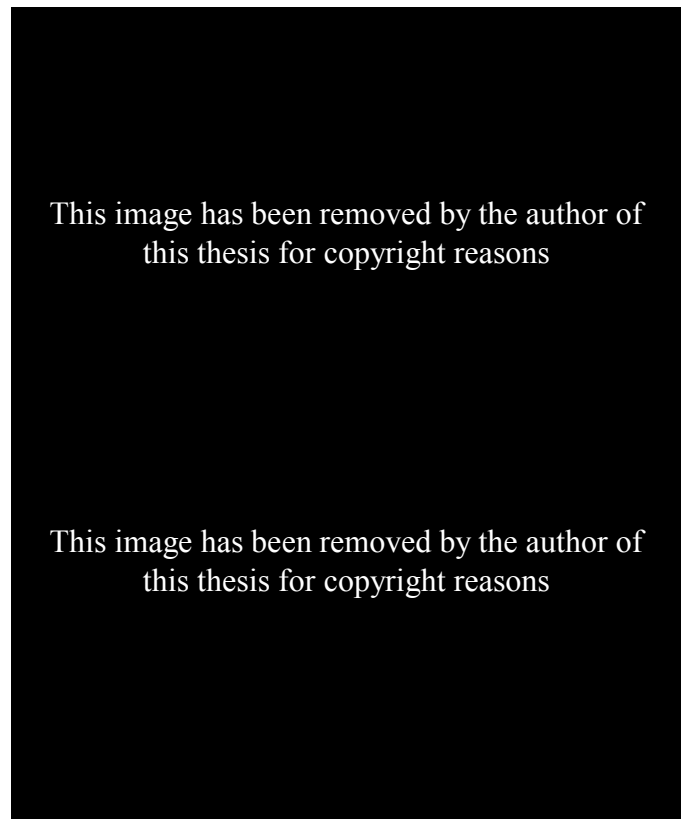


Figure 15: The *Gasthaus-cum-western* saloon in Florian Flicker’s *Grenzgänger* (2012). DVD Capture.

agree.⁶⁴ Before *Grenzgänger*, Schönherr’s play was indeed adapted into a *Heimatfilm* by Wolfgang Liebeneiner (1951) and was one of a number of 1950s Austrian and West German *Heimatfilme* to engage with the theme of people-smuggling.⁶⁵ Regarded by von Dassanowsky as a ‘moralistic, even reactionary *Heimatfilm*,’ Liebeneiner’s *Der Weibsteufel* follows the same narrative formula as Flicker’s adaptation up until the film’s ending. In Liebeneiner’s film, the ending depicts the murder of the husband by the

⁶⁴ Bert Rebhandl, “‘Grenzgänger’: Auch der Ortskundige übersieht manchmal etwas’, *Der Standard*, 15 November 2012 <<http://derstandard.at/1350261521919/Auch-der-Ortskundige-uebersieht-manchmal-etwas>> [accessed 17 October 2013].

⁶⁵ Other films include Luis Trenker’s *Duell in den Bergen* (1951) Harry Hasso’s *Die Tochter vom Grenzbauernhof* (1951), and Walter Janssen and Franz Antel’s *Die Alm an der Grenze* (1951). See Gertraud Steiner, *Die Heimat-Macher*, p. 104.

border guard and the suicide of the smuggler's wife.⁶⁶ In *Grenzgänger* however, the border guard is killed by Hans, and Hans and Jana remain alive at the film's conclusion. The film culminates in Jana's departure, as a static medium shot depicts her walking away from the *Gasthaus* and the life she has built with Hans. This deviation from Liebeneiner's plot is crucial to Flicker's adaptation of Liebeneiner's *Heimatfilm* as it allows Flicker to successfully depict the relentless and often impossible search for a new *Heimat* as an illegal Eastern migrant in a legally and socially exclusive Western land, as symbolised by Jana's departure, as I will now demonstrate.

Indeed, it is not just the trafficked migrants who are often killed or captured on their journeys to the West, who offer poignant examples of this hazardous quest for a safe *Heimat*. Jana herself, who appears to live a peaceful and comfortable life on the Western side of the river with Hans, is also revealed to be an illegal migrant and thus struggles to maintain a sense of belonging and stability in the West. Her insecure and transient status in the West is reinforced when, during a quarrel, Hans shouts, 'ohne mich bist du nichts,' to which she replies, 'mit dir bin ich aber auch nicht viel.' Not only does Ronnie's appearance at the beginning of the film force Jana to question her relationship with Hans, threatening the very thing that secures her successful stay in Austria, it also risks exposing her status as an illegal immigrant, a revelation that could result in her forced deportation. Jana's life on the Western side of the river thus appears to be transitory; a notion that is confirmed to the viewer when, after Hans murders Ronnie at the film's conclusion, Jana leaves Hans and the *Gasthaus* with no

⁶⁶ Von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History*, p. 142.

documentation, no companionship and no home. Not only does this ending draw on the themes of the love triangle and the revenge plot outlined in Lovell's definition of the classical western, but it also uncovers the cruel and bitter reality of life within this 'Niemandsländ zwischen Ost und West,'⁶⁷ prompting critic Bert Rebhandl to read the film as an anti-*Heimatfilm* when he writes: '*Grenzgänger* ist das Gegenteil eines *Heimatfilms*, aber er löst die Hoffnungen, die sich auf dieses verrufene Genre richteten, kritisch ein.'⁶⁸ Indeed, as Rebhandl argues, Flicker critically inverts the utopian hopes of the 'vormodern' *Heimatfilm* in his twenty-first century adaptation. As is also the case in Flicker's 1998 film *Suzie Washington*, *Grenzgänger* foregrounds images of *Heimatlosigkeit* against an idyllic Austrian rural backdrop, utterly subverting the rehabilitatory and reconciliatory power of the *Heimat*-esque locale, which, in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, as von Moltke explains, provided 'an imaginary equivalent of return [and] a promise of settlement,' for the millions of displaced Eastern expellees in the aftermath of the Second World War.⁶⁹

***Suzie Washington* (1998) - The *Heimat*-Road-movie**

Despite the national and international success and the publicity it gained as the opening film for the inaugural Diagonale film festival back in 1998, *Suzie Washington* attracted relatively little scholarly attention. The film, which follows an illegal immigrant from the former Eastern Bloc who

⁶⁷ Prisma Film, *Grenzgänger*.

⁶⁸ Bert Rebhandl, "'Grenzgänger'"

⁶⁹ Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, p. 6.

travels across the Austrian landscape to make her way to her dream *Heimat* of America, has however fed into recent English-language scholarship concerning Austria's immigration policies and the rise of right-wing anti-foreigner rhetoric in the country around the turn of the millennium. Notable examples of this scholarship include analyses of the film by Gundolf Graml, Allyson Fiddler and Nikhil Sathe, who all, despite their different angle and focus, discuss the representation of space and national identity in Flicker's film vis-à-vis the nation's increasingly multicultural population.

Fiddler, for instance, discusses Flicker's film in the context of a number of Austrian literary and cinematic works from the late 1990s and early 2000s. She argues that literary works by Austrian writers including Peter Henisch, Lillian Faschinger and Peter Turrini, in addition to filmic works including Flicker's *Suzie Washington* and Ulrich Seidl, Barbara Albert, Michael Sturminger and Michael Glawogger's joint documentary film, *Zur Lage* (2002), attempt to 'shift psychological boundaries and perceptions of contemporary Austrian identity.'⁷⁰ In a similar manner to Fiddler, questions of shifting national identities and geographical borders are also central to Sathe's analysis. In his article for Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck's edited volume, *New Austrian Film*, Sathe analyses the way in which a number of New Austrian Films, including *Suzie Washington* (1998), Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999), Houchang Allahyari's *Geboren im Absurdistan* (1999) and Jörg Kalt's *Crash Test Dummies* (2005) 'interrogate' Austrian national identity and 'the country's

⁷⁰ Allyson Fiddler, 'Shifting Boundaries: Responses to Multiculturalism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century' in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House; Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), pp. 265-289, quote taken from p. 266.

response to increased migration.’⁷¹ In his examination of these films, Sathe pays particular attention to the representation of borders and claims that, though physically permeable, as highlighted by the illegal cross-border movements with which these films engage, the boundaries separating those who have access to a *Heimat* in the prosperous West and those who are legally and socially excluded from it remain symbolically rigid. In his brief analysis of *Suzie Washington*, Sathe correctly identifies that Flicker employs certain generic tropes of the 1950s *Heimatfilm* to highlight this tension, drawing on the film’s archetypal Alpine *Heimatfilm* locations in order to ‘undermine both the narrative configurations associated with them and also their illusory gestures toward integration and acceptance.’⁷² In my analysis of the film I will develop Sathe’s findings to examine the manner in which Flicker adapts the genre to correspond with the Austrian nation’s ‘shifting self-definitions in response to post-1989 transformations of the European landscape.’⁷³

In a similar manner to the films discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Flicker also looks to the generic conventions of another film genre to assist in his representation. In his article in von Dassanowsky and Speck’s edited volume, Gundolf Graml agrees with Sathe and Fiddler’s readings of the film when he asserts that Flicker deploys a series of narrative and formal techniques as a means to destabilise monolithic and purist notions of

⁷¹ Nikhil Sathe, ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema at the Turn of the Century: Flicker, Allahyari, Albert’ in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Berghahn, 2011), pp. 227-228.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

⁷³ Nikhil Sathe, ‘Trapped Behind the “Golden Curtain”: Labouring Relationships in Barbara Gräffner’s *Mein Russland* and Ruth Mader’s *Struggle*, *Seminar*, XLVII:4 (2011) p. 372.

national identity.⁷⁴ In his assessment, Graml examines the manner in which *Suzie Washington* both draws on and subverts the semantic elements of the road movie to explore these shifting definitions, arguing that Flicker's film, portrays the protagonist both as a 'resourceful and resilient agent' and 'a helpless victim of the collaboration between the tourism industry and state bureaucracy.'⁷⁵ Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the expansion of the EU, filmmakers have often simultaneously drawn on generic tropes associated with both the *Heimatfilm* and the road-movie to engage with contemporary debates surrounding increased cross-border migration and globalisation. Even though, as Yvonne Franke highlights, '*Heimat-Fremde*, local-global, and home-travel constitute binary opposites with each former component traditionally associated with the *Heimatfilm* genre, and with each latter as a classical element of the road film,' a number of films she continues 'combine elements from both sides of the oppositional pairs.' Thus, in a world characterised by movement, as Franke argues, 'the *Heimatfilm* has been permeated by the road film genre, contributing to visual representations of transnational aesthetic discourse.'⁷⁶

Socio-political context

⁷⁴ Gundolf Graml, 'Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies: Mobilising Constructions of Place and Identity in Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington*,' in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), pp. 251-262.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁷⁶ Yvonne Franke, 'Papas Kino Lebt! – Travelling Heimat in Wim Wenders' *Im Lauf der Zeit* and Fatih Akin's *Auf der Anderen Seite*', in *Heimat goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, ed. by Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 197.

Setting *Suzie Washington* in an undisclosed year during the 1990s, Flicker's film follows Nana Iaschwili, a migrant from an unspecified former Soviet state, who embarks on a journey across the Austrian Alpine landscape in order to ultimately reach her dream *Heimat* of America. In choosing to omit concrete information regarding Nana's past from the film's narrative, including her nationality and her reasons for migration, Flicker is not only able to offer a more universal representation of migration that can be applied to a range of different forms of migratory movements of that time, but he is also, on a more symbolic level, able to successfully represent the nation's – and in extension, Western Europe's – prejudices towards a generalised Eastern 'other.'⁷⁷ When reviewing the film, critics often disagree on the origin of Flicker's protagonist. For instance, Nikhil Sathe and David Rooney agree that Nana is from 'an unspecified former Soviet homeland,' while some critics, including Thorsten Krüger and Georg Seeslen, believe that she is Russian, and others, including Allyson Fiddler and Gundolf Graml, argue that she is simply from the former Soviet state of Georgia.⁷⁸ This discrepancy in opinion on Nana's country of origin is illustrative of the difficulties scholars face when addressing post-Soviet states and the increasing tendency to homogenise all migrants from these former separate regions under the umbrella term 'Eastern European.' Phillip

⁷⁷ See Flicker, *Suzie Washington: Drehbuch und Notizen zum Film*, p. 101.

⁷⁸ See Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema', p. 230; David Rooney 'Review: Suzie Washington', *Variety*, 5 October 1998 <<http://variety.com/1998/film/reviews/suzie-washington-1117913463/>> [accessed 7 December 2014]; Thorsten Krüger, 'Suzie Washington', *Artechock* (1998) <<http://www.artechock.de/film/text/kritik/s/suwash.htm>> [accessed 7 December 2014]; Georg Seeslen, 'Alpenwestern mit großem Gefühl', *Der Freitag*, 5 March 1999; Fiddler, 'Shifting Boundaries', p. 276; and Graml, 'Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies', p. 251.

Longworth, in his study titled, *The Making of Eastern Europe*, successfully represents this tension when he writes:

Particularists will insist that, since each of the region's constituent nations is visibly and audibly distinct, it is unreasonable to treat them as a unit. How can Poland be compared to Bulgaria, or Hungary to Russia? [...] These objections have force and the national differences are undeniable. But so are the features, and historical tendencies, that these countries share.⁷⁹

Despite registering the individual regions and their particularities, Longworth concludes that 'Eastern Europe is an entity, albeit rather a loose one, on account of the powerful Slavic and Byzantine influences upon it, its distinctive social structures, and because of its consistent lateness of development, politically and culturally, as well as economically.'⁸⁰ Longworth therefore, as Gudrun Alyce Willett argues, exemplifies an 'orientalist' approach to Eastern Europe, where 'differences between "Eastern European" regions [are] ignored in the effort to define differences between it as a complete entity in opposition to Western Europe.'⁸¹

This homogenisation of the former Soviet States and the subsequent polarisation of East and West that it engenders, as Ruth Wodak highlights, is often perpetuated by right-wing populist rhetoric, which 'attempts to merge all foreigners into one homogeneous group, which is subsequently

⁷⁹ Phillip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe: From Pre-History to Post-Communism*, Second Edition (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 5.

⁸⁰ Phillip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 301.

⁸¹ Gudrun Alyce Willett, *Crises of Self and Other: Russian Speaking Migrants in the Netherlands and the European Union* (Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest, 2007), p. 11.

stigmatised as a negative “other.”⁸² Examples of these discriminatory generalisations and stigmatisations can be seen in the increasingly negative discourse that accompanied the rise in East-West migration following the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. As Wodak explains:

The public discussion about foreigners, beginning in 1989, initially yielded a discourse of sympathy for those freeing themselves from the communist yoke. This discourse then developed into what I have termed a discourse of tutelage, and in the end evolved into an aggressive discourse of defensive self-justification.⁸³

As highlighted by Wodak, discourse surrounding Eastern European migrants in Austria changed from a discourse of sympathy and tutelage to a discourse of defensive self-justification, which, as Wodak goes on to argue, involved ‘the use of strategies of positive self-presentation and negative presentation of others.’⁸⁴ The use of these strategies can clearly be observed in Haider’s overtly xenophobic *Österreich zuerst* campaign from 1991-1992, which fought to protect a ‘unique’ Austrian legacy and heritage from the increased crime, abuse of national social welfare, and the high unemployment rate that increased East-West migration had supposedly elicited.⁸⁵ In his sympathetic and compassionate portrayal of Nana, who is initially presented to the viewer without a specified heritage and thus as ‘just another Eastern European migrant,’ Flicker actively engages with this

⁸² Ruth Wodak, “‘Us’ and ‘Them’”: Inclusion and Exclusion – Discrimination via Discourse’, in *Identity, Belonging and Migration*, ed. by Gerald Delanty, Ruth Wodak and Paul Jones (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), p. 57.

⁸³ Ruth Wodak, ‘The Development and Forms of Racist Discourse in Austria since 1989’, in *Language in a Changing Europe*, ed. by David Graddol and Stephen Thomas (Avon: British Association for Applied Linguistics, 1995), p. 6.

⁸⁴ Wodak, “‘Us’ and ‘Them’”, p. 62.

⁸⁵ See Albert Kraler and Karin Sohler, ‘Austria’, in *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 28-29.

problematic discourse in a bid to debunk the negative generalisations and stigmatisations afflicting the Eastern European ‘other’ that were being overtly propagated by the right-wing rhetoric and public discourse of the 1990s.

Although Flicker’s film does not explicitly state Nana’s country of origin or her reasons for migration, through an analysis of the information that Nana does provide to staff on arrival at her stop-over of Vienna International Airport at the beginning of the film one can deduce that Flicker’s protagonist has arrived in Austria from the former Soviet Republic of Georgia (which is confirmed by Flicker in his book to accompany the film).⁸⁶ For instance, as Nana approaches the gate and engages in conversation with the stewardess, when asked if she is Russian, Nana replies, ‘No. My country became independent.’ A short time later, when Nana is in the airport interrogation booth, we learn more about her circumstances: Nana states that she is a teacher of French and Russian and that her parents owned a bakery ‘before the war.’ We also learn that she ‘was married’ and that her husband ‘disappeared in the civil war three years ago.’ Though her reasons for leaving her home country remain ambiguous, particularly as she continues to insist that she is not planning on illegally emigrating to the USA but, rather, is visiting her uncle who lives in Los Angeles, it soon becomes apparent that, as Nikhil Sathe agrees, Nana is

⁸⁶ See Flicker, *Suzie Washington: Drehbuch und Notizen zum Film*, pp. 9-10 where he confirms that, after watching Serbian-born Austrian filmmaker, Goran Rebić’s, documentary on Georgia’s independence in 1991 and the civil war that followed in 1992, he decided to centre his film on a female teacher from the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Flicker also did research on the subject by reading books and watching films recommended by Rebić and Serbian-born, Austrian actor, Merab Ninidze (who both feature as actors in *Suzie Washington* and in *Halbe Welt*), and by interviewing immigration workers at the airport. See pp. 10-12.

fleeing from ‘dire straits.’⁸⁷ This is confirmed to the viewer when, during her interrogation, Nana is told: ‘you are not going to be killed if you go back home,’ and Nana replies with the question ‘are you sure about that?’ The personal information that is revealed by Nana throughout her interrogation, which includes details about the civil war, the disappearance of her husband, and the need to escape possible danger, correspond well with the turbulent socio-political climate of the former Soviet state of Georgia at the beginning of the 1990s. In 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, as Stephen Jones summarises: ‘independence came, but it was a painful and bloody experience for Georgians, characterised by interethnic conflict, civil war, terror, economic collapse, and war with neighbouring Russia.’⁸⁸ This period of social, political and economic strife led a number of Georgians to seek economic stability and/or refuge in the neighbouring West.⁸⁹ Nana can thus be positioned within this particular context, and can be seen as one of a number of natives from the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, who, in the 1990s, and for personal-safety reasons, wished to find a new beginning and a new *Heimat* in the newly supposedly ‘accessible’ West.

The Road to Nowhere: Closing Open Spaces in *Suzie Washington*

As highlighted in my introduction, although as Mirjana Morokvasik states, ‘the end of the bi-polar world and the collapse of communist regimes

⁸⁷ See Sathe, ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema,’ p. 231.

⁸⁸ Stephen Jones, *Georgia: A Political History Since Independence* (London; New York: IB Tauris, 2015), p. xxii.

⁸⁹ See Claire Wallace and Kathryn Vincent, ‘Recent Migration from the New European Borderlands’, in *Migration and Mobility in Europe: Trends, Patterns and Control*, ed. by Heinz Fassmann, Max Haller and David Lane (Cheltenham; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2009), p. 146.

triggered an unprecedented mobility of persons and heralded a new phase in European migrations,⁹⁰ it also prompted the militarisation of Austria's national borders and the introduction of new exclusionary immigration laws.⁹¹ Nana's turbulent journey to the West, as depicted in Flicker's film, successfully highlights this tension. Indeed, while Flicker's film follows Nana as she boards various modes of transport, including a plane, a coach, a boat, a car, a lorry, a ski-lift, a golf-buggy and a train, as she traverses the Austrian landscape, from the capital's airport to the picturesque Salzkammergut region, the freedom and mobility with which these vehicles and locations are often associated is undercut significantly by the various legal and social obstacles that Nana faces during the course of her journey. I will now highlight how Flicker, in his critical examination of the nation's exclusive immigration policies and the mistreatment of its Eastern European 'others,' draws on and renegotiates the generic formulae of both the American and the European road-movie.

Suzie Washington follows Nana as she allegedly attempts to visit her uncle in Los Angeles. As she arrives in Vienna for her layover, Nana is revealed to be an illegal traveller with falsified documentation and is thus forced by immigration officials to remain in the airport transit zone until she can be deported back to her homeland. Through a stroke of luck, Nana is able to escape from this heavily guarded area when, during a hostage situation with another desperate migrant, she is able to sneak through a door

⁹⁰ Mirjana Morokvasik, "'Settled in Mobility": Engendering Post-Wall Migration in Europe', *Feminist Review*, 77 (2004), p. 8.

⁹¹ See Michael Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Exclusion: Debating Migration in Austria* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 57.

unnoticed into an area for airport personnel. This in turn leads to her successful escape out of the airport and on to a bus of American tourists which is headed for the Salzkammergut region, where she adopts the alter-ego of an American tourist named Suzie Washington. Throughout the duration of the film, the viewer observes Nana move from one place to the next until she successfully makes her way over the Austrian-German border at the film's conclusion. By depicting Nana's journey, as she escapes both her former life in her former Soviet state and the law enforcers who seek to arrest and deport her, critics and reviewers of the film, including David Rooney and Thorsten Krüger, often categorise *Suzie Washington* as a road movie.⁹²

Although, as Andrés Laguna Tapia and Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli note, the road movie has American roots, and is classically typified by David Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969), the genre has transcended its 'original nationality and its first language' and therefore as Tapia adds, 'almost every cinematic tradition has its own road movies.'⁹³ As a genre 'whose identity is always already in flux,' as Neil Archer continues, the road movie has the 'ability to cross borders (both literal and imaginary)' and thus 'functions across cultural contexts not as a marker of any specific culture, but as a marker of its possible disruption and transgression.'⁹⁴ In its innate ability to transcend both generic and national boundaries, the road-

⁹² See Krüger, 'Suzie Washington'; and Rooney, 'Review: Suzie Washington.'

⁹³ Andrés Laguna Tapia, 'Bolivian Road Movies, Travel Chronicles', in *Small Cinemas in Global Markets: Genres, Identities, Narratives*, ed. by Lenuta Giukin, Janina Falkowska and David Desser (London; New York: Lexington, 2015), p. 89; and Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli, *Crossing New Europe: Postmodern Travel and the European Road Movie* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), p. 4.

⁹⁴ Neil Archer, *The French Road Movie: Space, Mobility, Identity* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), pp. 4-6.

movie has subsequently infiltrated into recent filmic negotiations of *Heimat*, particularly in films which document post-Wall Germany and in extension, Europe. For instance, Peter Timm's *Go Trabi Go* (1991) is representative of a number of post-unification German films which successfully hybridise the *Heimatfilm* and the road movie. Timm's film, which follows German teacher Udo Struutz and his family as they embark on a vacation to the West following the Fall of the Wall, along with a number of other films from this era, as Leonie Naughton highlights, offered escapism to a post-wall public by drawing on the generic tropes of the *Heimatfilm* and its stunning rural landscapes to probe the recently reunified nation's shifting identities.⁹⁵ These films, as Nick Hodgkin notes, simultaneously drew on the generic semantics of the road movie, which, in addition to the *Heimatfilm*, 'quickly established itself as a useful template for unification narratives.'⁹⁶ *Go Trabi Go* for example, as Hodgkin adds, 'made use of the genre,' with the narrative of 'escape and (self-) discovery' in Timm's film 'conforming to certain comic road-movie conventions.'⁹⁷

While the road movie has frequently been adopted by a number of international film industries, numerous critics, including Mazierska and Rascaroli, Graml and David Laderman, note key differences between the classical American road movie and its European counterpart. While Laderman and Mazierska and Rascaroli agree that the road movie, wherever in the world it is filmed, 'use[s] the motif of the journey as a vehicle for

⁹⁵ Leonie Naughton, *That Was the Wild East: Film Culture, Unification, and the 'New' Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), p. 129.

⁹⁶ Nick Hodgkin, *Screening the East: Heimat, Memory and Nostalgia in German Film since 1989* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), p. 106.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

investigating metaphysical questions on the meaning and purpose of life,' they also acknowledge a number of fundamental differences between the American road movie and the European road movie.⁹⁸ As Laderman illuminates:

Generally speaking, European road movies seem less interested than their American counterparts in following the desperately rambling criminal exploits of an outlaw couple; or, in romanticising the freedom of the road as a political alternative expressing youth rebellion. Rather, the exploration of psychological, emotional and spiritual states becomes more important to the Continental drive.⁹⁹

Mazierska and Rascaroli agree with Laderman when they argue that the European road movie lacks 'the open spaces of North America, with their straight, boundless highways,' and instead represent the European landscape as a 'mosaic of nations, cultures, languages and roads, which are separated by geographical, political and economic boundaries and customs.'¹⁰⁰ They note further differences, arguing that the 'private car' and the 'motorbike' is the choice mode of transport in the American road movie, while travel in its European counterpart is often characterised by 'public transport (trains, buses), if not hitchhiking or travelling on foot.'¹⁰¹ Another fundamental difference, on which Mazierska and Rascaroli and Laderman agree, lies in the people who are doing the travelling. As Laderman comments, characters

⁹⁸ Mazierska and Rascaroli, *Crossing New Europe*, p. 4; and David Laderman, *Driving Visions: Exploring the Road Movie* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), p. 1.

⁹⁹ Laderman, *Driving Visions*, p. 248.

¹⁰⁰ Mazierska and Rascaroli, *Crossing New Europe*, p. 5. Also see Michael Gott, 'Under Eastern Eyes: Displacement, Placelessness and the Exilic Optic in Emmanuel Finkiel's *Nulle part terre promise*', in *Open Roads: Closed Borders: The Contemporary French Language Road Movie*, ed. by Michael Gott and Thibaut Schilt (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2013), pp. 137-154.

¹⁰¹ Mazierska and Rascaroli, *Crossing New Europe*, p. 5.

in the European road movie are ‘on the road out of necessity rather than choice, seeking work, family or a home;’¹⁰² a view which is echoed by Mazierska and Rascaroli when they write, ‘whereas in American films the travellers tend to be outcasts and rebels looking for freedom or escape, in Europe it is rather the “ordinary citizen” who is on the move, often for practical reasons (for work, immigration, commuting or holiday-making).’¹⁰³

Although Flicker’s *Heimat*-road-movie, as I will shortly demonstrate, clearly employs a European road-movie template, the director also engages with a fundamental trope of its American counterpart. As an illegal immigrant, Nana is technically a criminal on the run and is thus a stock character of the American road movie. As she trespasses on Austrian land without a verified visa, Nana defies the nation’s immigration laws and is, as Sathe notes, an ‘illegal alien.’¹⁰⁴ The American road movie regularly features characters who are, as Jason Wood writes ‘disenfranchised from society’ and who engage in illegal and often dangerous activities.¹⁰⁵ The protagonists in Arthur Penn’s *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and Dennis Hopper’s *Easy Rider*, for example, are bank robbers and drug dealers respectively, and their journeys are determined by their illicit activities and by their need to escape law enforcement. By depicting Nana, in legislative terms, as a criminal, with Nana’s journey also being determined by the avoidance of law enforcement, Flicker draws on the theme of criminalisation inherent in the American road-movie. However, despite

¹⁰² Laderman, *Driving Visions*, p. 248.

¹⁰³ Mazierska and Rascaroli, *Crossing New Europe*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Sathe, ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema’, p. 230.

¹⁰⁵ Jason Wood, *100 Road Movies* (London: BFI, 2007), p. xv.

being featured in the local newspaper as a wanted criminal, with her picture situated next to a picture of the man who was involved in the hostage situation at the airport, Nana is portrayed by Flicker as a victim of the law rather than someone who sets out to defy it. Throughout the film, Nana is often heard uttering the words ‘I am not a criminal, I am a tourist,’ reinforcing the harsh truth that the freedom of travel is a luxury that only those born in the prosperous West can enjoy. As Krüger argues, the film portrays a ‘pervertierte Gesellschaft, deren Mitglieder nur durch einen gültigen Ausweis definiert sind.’ As Krüger continues, ‘alle anderen sind demnach kriminell.’¹⁰⁶ Flicker thus revisits yet also renegotiates this semantic element in order to depict how an ‘ordinary’ woman who embarks on a quest for a better life in the West is unfairly subsumed under the title, criminal.

Despite critically engaging with the stock fugitive character typical of the American road movie, inscribing it with new, contemporary and complex connotations that correspond well with recent questions relating to post-Wall European politics, Flicker’s film mostly conforms to the generic formulae of the European road movie as outlined by Laderman, Mazierska and Rascaroli. Firstly, Nana’s journey across the Austrian landscape is solely facilitated by the use of public transport. As a stranger in a foreign land, with no documentation and no local currency, Nana lacks the finances, the paperwork and possibly the skills to drive a car and thus she must take advantage of a variety of modes of public transport, including a bus, a boat, a ski-lift and a train, in order to get from one place to the next. Secondly, as

¹⁰⁶ Krüger, ‘Suzie Washington’.

was alluded to at the beginning of the film during her interrogation by immigration officials, Nana's journey is one which is based on necessity rather than choice. Although we are led to believe that Nana has embarked on a vacation to visit her uncle in LA – a ploy which is crucial to her stay in Austria and which is maintained by Nana throughout the duration of the film (she continues to write postcards to her uncle) – and we observe Nana go to extreme lengths to avoid deportation back to her homeland, even accompanying an armed criminal on the run as she attempts to locate the German-Austrian border up in the Austrian mountains, we are nevertheless made aware of the desperate situation that she must be escaping back in her homeland.

Finally, and most importantly, by actively registering the geographical, political and economic boundaries that separate Western and Eastern European nations, Flicker's film critically inverts the 'open road' and the sense of boundless freedom with which the American road movie is typically associated. Indeed, Flicker cross-examines the Eastward expansion of the EU and the subsequent opening of borders against the contradictory impulses of the Austrian nation which, at a time when many European countries were opening doors, sought to further restrict its immigration legislation. As Graml, in his analysis of the film, successfully recognises, the spaces depicted in Flicker's film hold a 'double function,' symbolising 'unlimited mobility and freedom' for some and an 'unsurmountable barrier' for others.¹⁰⁷ As I shall now demonstrate, in a number of scenes Flicker situates his protagonist within a range of vast, open spaces and on board a

¹⁰⁷ Graml, 'Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies', p. 252.

variety of different modes of transport, all of which, in the American road movie and in the classic 1950s *Heimatfilm*, connote freedom, mobility and boundless possibility. However, the sense of confinement that pervades these sequences, through Flicker's use of *mise en scène* and framing, renders these spaces claustrophobic, thus reflecting Nana's lack of freedom as an Eastern European migrant in a supposedly unified Europe.¹⁰⁸

In the film's opening sequence the camera locks in on a medium shot of Nana seated on the plane as it is due to land in Vienna. The camera then cuts to a birds-eye panning shot of the Austrian capital, then back to Nana who fastens her seat belt and looks out of the window anxiously. This is then followed by an extreme close-up shot of Nana's face as she closes her eyes and nervously awaits the plane's landing. The light from the small, oval aeroplane window illuminates the left-hand side of her face, leaving the rest of her face and body in darkness. This still, closed-frame, close-up shot of Nana's face, which is juxtaposed with the panning, birds-eye-view shot of the Viennese cityscape shown only moments earlier, immediately evokes a sense of claustrophobia and confinement for Flicker's protagonist. Not only does the close proximity between the camera, Nana, and the wall of the aeroplane successfully symbolise the immobility which characterises Nana's problematic journey throughout the duration of the film, but also her seatbelt, which physically constricts Nana to the aeroplane seat, symbolically reinforces Nana's state of stasis. As Hamid Naficy illuminates, in films by exilic and diasporic filmmakers, or films dealing with the topics

¹⁰⁸ See Hamid Naficy, 'Phobic Spaces and Liminal Panics: Independent Transnational Film Genre', in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, ed. by Rob Wilson and Wimal Dassanayake (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 131.

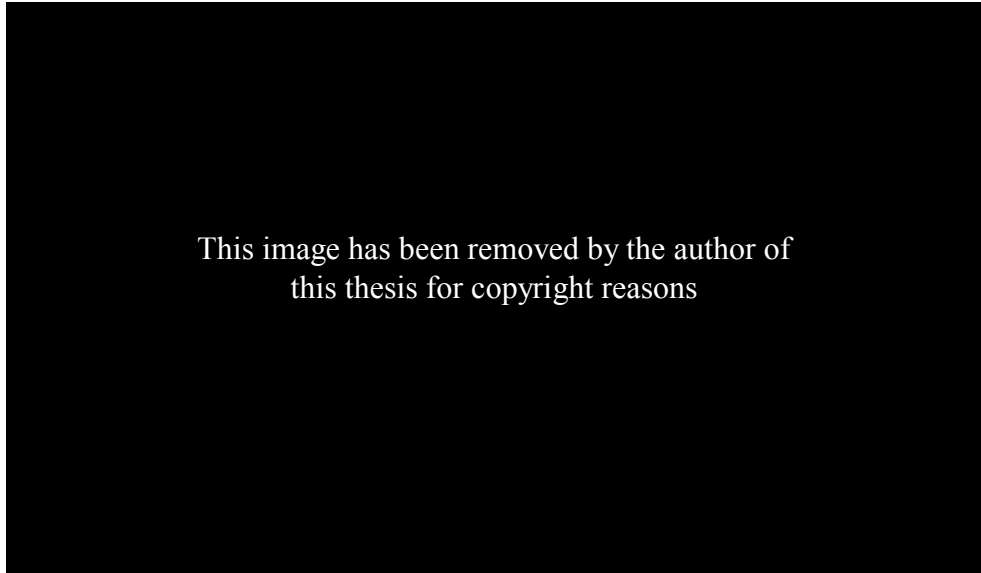


Figure 16: Claustrophobic close-up shot of Nana's face on board an aircraft connotes Nana's immobility as an illegal immigrant in Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington* (1998). DVD Capture

of migration and displacement, 'mobile spaces' such as buses, trains and aeroplanes are often imbued with contradictory connotations. As he elaborates, although 'vehicles provide not only empirical links to geographic places and social groupings but also metaphorical reworkings of notions of traveling, homing and identity,' scenes featuring modes of transport are often pervaded by a sense of claustrophobia. Naficy continues, 'since these vehicles travel through countryside and wide-open spaces and between countries, there is always a dialectical relationship [...] between the inside closed spaces of the vehicle and the outside open spaces of nature and nation.'¹⁰⁹ Through his use of framing, editing and mise en scène in scenes depicting mobile spaces within his film, whether Nana is situated on a bus, a plane or in a car, Flicker successfully represents this dialectical relationship between stasis and mobility. By engaging with this tried and tested mode of

¹⁰⁹ Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 257.

representation, which is typical of films dealing with issues of migration, exile and displacement as Naficy highlights, Flicker is able to critically reflect the contradictory nature of travel in post-Wall Europe, which offers unlimited freedom for those in the West and endless social, political, and geographical restrictions for those in the East.

Flicker also conveys this dialectical relationship between stasis and mobility in scenes which are set in vast landscapes and open rural spaces. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope, a term that, as Naficy highlights, refers to 'certain specific temporal and spatial settings in which stories unfold,' Naficy argues that films dealing with exile and diaspora utilise a number of different chronotopes to successfully reflect the liminal subjectivity of the film's characters and often the filmmaker him-/herself. For instance, 'open chronotopes,' which are usually featured in representations of the lost homeland, tend to be depicted via the representation of vast, open natural landscapes, which ultimately connote freedom 'intimacy' and 'familiarity.'¹¹⁰ 'Closed chronotopes' on the other hand, which are regularly featured in films set in the host society and which depict enclosed, claustrophobic spaces, are, as Naficy continues, 'driven by panic and fear narratives, in essence, a form of [...] claustrophobia, in which the plot centres on pursuit entrapment and escape.'¹¹¹ While Naficy concludes that films dealing with migration and displacement often 'contain both forms,' it would seem that Flicker merges these chronotopes to

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 153-155.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 153.

construct what I will term an ‘open/closed chronotope.’¹¹² Indeed, on a number of occasions, Flicker’s film features the open natural spaces typically associated with Naficy’s conceptualisation of the ‘open chronotope’, yet Flicker imbues these spaces with the feelings of entrapment, claustrophobia and unfamiliarity that are typically associated with the ‘closed chronotope.’

This tension is particularly evident in the scene which depicts Nana riding a ski-lift which carries her, another illegal immigrant (played by Goran Rebić) and a bank robber up into the mountains to the Austrian-German border. While the scene depicts Nana and her companions being elevated into the Austrian mountain range, Flicker chooses to focus his camera on a series of medium and close-up shots of Nana and the two men, and therefore neglects to represent the site’s stunning scenery.¹¹³ For instance, the camera cuts from a medium shot of all three characters sat together on the ski-lift, to an extreme close-up shot of one of the male characters’ hand peeling an apple. The camera then cuts back to another medium shot of all three characters sitting fidgeting nervously on the lift, which is quickly followed by a blurred point of view tracking shot of the ground beneath Nana’s feet. At no point during this sequence does the camera offer an establishing long shot of this vast natural, picturesque setting nor do the characters gaze out at the mountainous landscape that lies in front of them. Hence, in this scene, Flicker refuses to represent this

¹¹² Lucia Saks offers a similar interpretation of Naficy’s framework in reference to South African cinema. See Lucia Saks, *Cinema in a Democratic South Africa: The Race for Representation* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indian University Press, 2010), p. 150.

¹¹³ On the symbolic importance of the mountain in migrant and diasporic film, see Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 160.

iconic Austrian mountainous location from the point of view of what John Urry famously terms the ‘tourist’ gaze,’ in favour of a more critically conscious representation of the landscape from the point of view of what Yosefa Loshitzky has termed ‘the refugee gaze.’¹¹⁴

The tourist gaze, as John Urry informs,

is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary [...] People linger over such a gaze which is then normally visually objectified or captured through photographs, postcards, films, models and so on. These enable the gaze to be endlessly reproduced and recaptured.¹¹⁵

This gaze, as Urry elaborates, is ‘paradigmatically captured through the still camera,’ often evoking tourist snapshots, brochure pictures, or postcards.¹¹⁶

The Austrian mountainous landscape has typically been represented from the point of view of this ‘tourist gaze’ in the classical *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s, which as Tim Bergfelder highlights ‘responded to and accelerated the development of mass tourism.’¹¹⁷ Some films, including Alfons Stummer’s *Echo der Berge* (1954), as Bergfelder continues, were even ‘financially supported by the Austrian tourist authorities with the explicit agenda to advertise Austrian holiday resorts,’ and thus their representation of the Austrian landscape was dominated by static long shots of the

¹¹⁴ See John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2001); and Yosefa Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 28.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹¹⁷ Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 43.

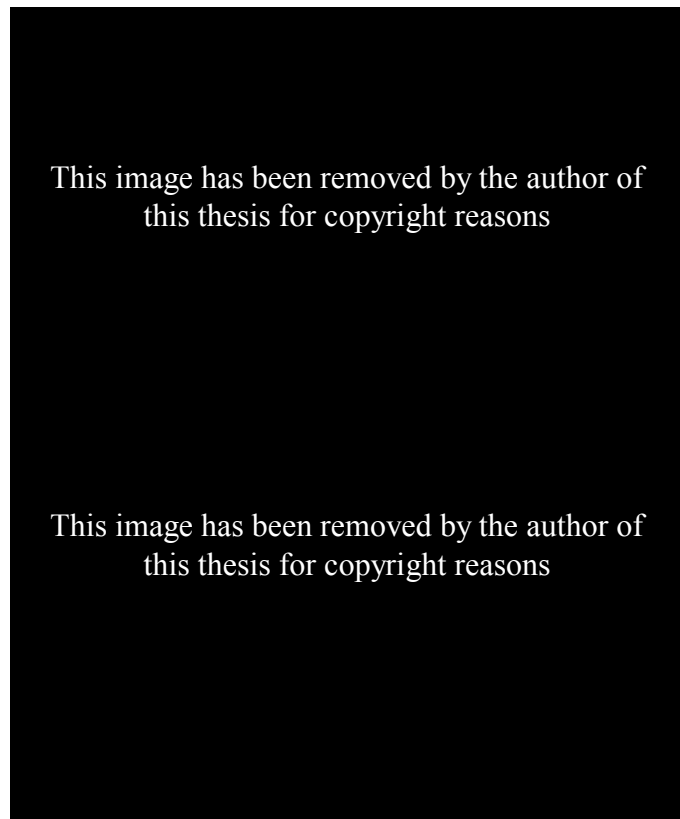


Figure 17: Closing open chronotopes: The camera focuses on the protagonists' behaviour as they board a ski-lift and thus fails to depict the stunning mountain scenery in which they traverse in Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington* (1998). DVD Capture

picturesque flora and fauna.¹¹⁸ In refusing to display the mountain landscape in this scene, Flicker categorically rejects this economically driven representation which is ultimately, as Loshitzky argues, mediated by 'a consuming gaze driven by the pleasure principle.'¹¹⁹

The 'refugee gaze' on the other hand, as Loshitzky continues, 'is indifferent to the spectacular landscape,' and far from offering visual pleasure, the landscape, as Loshitzky adds, 'is an enemy to be overcome.'¹²⁰ Flicker therefore rejects the 'tourist gaze' in favour of the 'refugee gaze' in

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 28.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

his (non-) representation of the Austrian Salzkammergut landscape. By focussing his camera on the body language of his anxious protagonist and her equally anxious companions, and simultaneously disregarding the sublime mountain setting that constitutes their backdrop, Flicker subverts the notions of freedom with which, throughout film history, these open spaces have typically been associated and thus once again reinforces the limitations and restrictions that Nana faces as an Eastern illegal immigrant in search of a *Heimat* in the West.

Flicker, as I have highlighted above, subverts the idea of the ‘open road’ typical of the American road movie and thus adopts the semantics and syntax of the genre’s European counterpart, which frequently registers the closed borders and their debilitating implications for refugees and asylum-seekers from the Eastern side of the continent. Equally, in deploying a range of formative devices and techniques, closing open chronotopes and representing iconic Austrian landscapes from the survival-seeking gaze of the Eastern refugee rather than the pleasure-seeking gaze of the Western tourist, Flicker is able to critically reflect the contradictory nature of post-Wall European travel.

Tourist Haven/Migrant Hell: Undoing the Austrian *Heimat*

In his analysis of the film, Graml argues that Nana’s perilous journey across the Austrian landscape and the warrant for her arrest issued by the nation’s border enforcement, ‘illustrates the significant change in attitude that Austria began to exhibit towards foreigners, especially when compared to

Austrians' willingness to support refugees from Eastern bloc countries at crucial points during the era after the Second World War.¹²¹ Austria was indeed a welcoming host country to hundreds of thousands of *Heimatvertriebene* and other displaced persons following the end of the Second World War. As Michael Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak note, 'between 1945 and 1950 about 460,000 ethnic Germans and 140,000 other refugees and displaced persons from Eastern Europe stayed in Austria and were integrated.'¹²² As discussed in chapter one of this thesis, the Austrian film industry registered these societal shifts and the nation's negotiation with its newly acquired Eastern neighbours through the *Heimatfilm* genre, which, as Robert G Moeller notes, 'focused on the successful integration of expellees into a new *Heimat*.'¹²³ Flicker's film, as I will now argue, draws on the semantic elements and the narrative tropes of displacement that characterise the classical 1950s *Heimatfilm*, yet, as Nikhil Sathe argues, he emphatically subverts the 'narrative configurations' that are associated with the genre and its 'illusory gestures toward integration and acceptance.'¹²⁴

From the outset, Nana is presented to the viewer as an unwanted and unwelcome 'other.' This is immediately made clear to the viewer when, in the first five minutes of screenplay, Nana is rejected by immigration officials at Vienna International Airport and is due to be deported back to

¹²¹ Graml, 'Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies', p. 253.

¹²² Krzyzanowski and Wodak, *The Politics of Exclusion*, p. 55.

¹²³ Robert G. Moeller, 'Winning the Peace at the Movies: Suffering, Loss, and Redemption in Postwar German Cinema', in *Conflict, Catastrophe and Continuity: Essays on Modern German History*, ed. by Frank Biess, Mark Roseman and Hanna Schissler (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), pp. 145-146.

¹²⁴ Sathe 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema', pp. 231-232.

her homeland against her will.¹²⁵ Although Nana is able to escape the airport's transit zone, and is able to board a bus to the Austrian Lake District, the legislative measures that are put in place to curb illegal immigration continue to reappear at every step of her journey. For instance, her status as an unwelcome 'other' is reinforced to the viewer as soon as Nana boards the coach awaiting a group of American tourists at the airport. The tourist representative for the coach company is initially welcoming to Nana, offering her a guidebook and some *Mozartkugeln* as she takes a seat on the bus. However, his friendly and welcoming demeanour soon disappears when she is unable to provide him with her documentation and a valid ticket. This disingenuous behaviour also characterises the treatment of Nana by the Austrian public once she makes her way to the *Gasthof Seewirt* in Austria's lakeside holiday resort. The hotel owner for example, in between welcoming Nana as a hotel guest, frequently pursues her for her passport. Graml describes these characters in Flicker's film as 'double agents' who combine 'the welcoming of guests with the demand to see their passport.'¹²⁶ However, it is not only these tourist representatives that reject Nana on account of her Eastern European heritage. Indeed, as Nana approaches the lakeside resort, she is accompanied by a German tourist, Herbert, who allows her to travel in his boat to the guesthouse. Herbert takes a liking to Nana and invites her to dinner at the *Gasthaus* restaurant that evening, only to reject her once she discloses that she is in fact an illegal immigrant. Thus, as a 'guest' without valid documentation, Nana remains in Austria illegally and is accordingly undesirable and unwelcome.

¹²⁵ This is also implied when Nana finds a plastic toy alien in the woods. The toy alien reinforces her position as an 'illegal alien' in Flicker's film.

¹²⁶ Graml, 'Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies', p. 252.

Due to the hostile reception that Nana receives in the Austrian idyll, and as a result of her lack of integration and rehabilitation, critics including Sathe and Flicker himself view *Suzie Washington* as a critical reinterpretation of the 1950s *Heimatfilm*. As disclosed in an interview on the film, Flicker wanted to portray the Austria of the 1990s, and the landscape in which he was born and raised, ‘mit den Augen eines Fremden.’¹²⁷ By drawing on the semantics of displacement and homelessness within a contemporary Austrian context, and by inverting the integrative and inclusionary syntactic message of the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, thus offering a critical representation of the nation’s treatment towards its Eastern neighbours, *Suzie Washington* is, for Flicker, ‘ein *Heimatfilm*, im wörtlichen Sinn.’¹²⁸ But, although the film, as Sathe correctly identifies, ‘undoes *Heimatfilm* conventions,’ it also, as I will now demonstrate, reemploys one of the key tropes of the classical 1950s *Heimatfilm* to correspond with contemporary discourse on identity construction.¹²⁹ Indeed, as Nana adopts the alter-ego of an American tourist, Suzie Washington, who she meets on the bus at the beginning of the film, and later adopts the identity of a French tourist, Jacqueline Duron, whose passport she steals at an inn in the Austrian mountains, Flicker engages with the theme of identity performance as a means to not only facilitate his criticism of Austria’s contradictory and exclusionary immigration laws, but also to represent the constructed nature

¹²⁷ Allegro-Film, *Suzie Washington*, 1998

<<http://www.votivkino.at/textlang/316press.htm#Top>> [accessed 8 February 2014].

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Sathe, ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema’, p. 232.

of identity, which as Naficy argues, ‘is now recognised as socially produced.’¹³⁰

As I have outlined in my analysis of the *Heimatfilm* genre in chapter one, a close analysis of a number of Austrian and German *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s reveals that the genre was overwhelmingly concerned with questions of identity. As a means to probe the Austrian and West German nations’ new positions in a reconfigured Europe, the *Heimatfilm* explored these questions of identity in its portrayal of mistaken identities and through the deployment of the theme of identity performance. A good case in point was Alfred Stöger’s *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut* (1948), which, in its portrayal of Fritzi, showcased how the adoption of a new identity could create new and exciting possibilities. As we witness Fritzi acquire a husband, a job and a *Heimat* at the film’s conclusion by initially masquerading as a waitress, a change in identity is given a positive emphasis.

Nana’s performance as a Western tourist in Flicker’s film does indeed provide her with the possibility of love, employment and money that characters like Fritzi were rewarded with in the postwar *Heimatfilm*. Towards the end of the film for example, Nana becomes acquainted with a mountain innkeeper who not only offers her a job as a maid at his *Gasthaus* but also begins to fall in love with her. However, while Nana temporarily enjoys the benefits that her performance as an American tourist provides, there is no romantic resolution for Nana and the innkeeper as she wishes neither to stay nor settle in a hostile and unwelcoming Austria. Thus, Nana

¹³⁰ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 269.

rejects the innkeeper's advances and places all her effort and determination into reaching Germany, where she will then continue on to America, which, as Fiddler argues, represents, 'a far-away utopian space.'¹³¹

Whereas in postwar *Heimatfilme* characters tend to reveal their true identities in the closing scenes – which, as Marc Silberman notes, provided an 'imaginary strategy for dealing with the difficult relation to the "other" – Nana is essentially trapped in her performance as a tourist so that she can remain in the West.¹³² Indeed, in order to successfully evade law enforcement and continue on her quest for a *Heimat* in America, Nana must adapt her original story (that she is a tourist who has embarked on a journey to visit her uncle in LA) to the new story; that of an American tourist who has come to visit Austria. Although it is never confirmed to the viewer whether or not her uncle in LA actually exists, the postcards that Nana writes to him allow her to successfully maintain her performance as a tourist, enabling her to 'inscribe' herself into the social spaces of tourism, as Graml acknowledges.¹³³ Furthermore, these postcards also provide Flicker's protagonist with her own personal diary monologue, a practice that, as Graml adds, 'helps her to maintain an idea of agency.'¹³⁴ For instance, although Nana's journey across the Austrian landscape is one of necessity, as she flees border enforcement to prevent her forced expulsion back to her homeland, in her postcards Nana reinterprets this traumatic experience into that of a voluntary excursion. For example, as she sits on the American tour

¹³¹ Fiddler, 'Shifting Boundaries', p. 276.

¹³² Marc Silberman, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 120.

¹³³ Graml, 'Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies', p. 256.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

bus as it takes her away from the airport, the location of her dramatic escape, the postcard to her uncle reads:

Dear uncle, everything changed. I decided to make a little trip to the countryside. There was so much excitement over the last few days. I need some time to relax. So I will travel around a little bit, take a deep breath and...you know...'

Through these postcards, Nana reimagines her journey from the point of view of a tourist. Later postcards offer details on what she terms, her 'first holiday' since her honeymoon,' in which she describes the weather, the people, and the thirty-two television channels that she is able to view on her hotel television. By actively partaking in these tourist activities, Nana is reimagining herself as a Western tourist. Thus, her performance is not only a façade to fool the nation's border enforcement but a way of probing and indeed reconstructing her own identity. This theme of identity performance is not only a vital trope of the 1950s *Heimatfilm* but also a recurring theme in contemporary films dealing with migration, exile and diaspora.¹³⁵ Hamid Naficy, for instance, comments on the manner in which these 'accented' films engage with the themes of identity construction, reconstruction, deconstruction and performance as a means to reflect contemporary societal shifts, when he writes:

¹³⁵ The Austrian road movie, *Blue Moon* (2002) by Andrea Maria Dusl also deals with the theme of identity performance in a post-wall Europe. The female protagonist for instance assumes three separate identities, Jana, Dana, and Shirley, which, as Yvonne Franke argues, 'stand in for tensions within this changing Europe' and reflect the 'broader questions concerning identity and belonging after the old binary oppositions East-West and communism-capitalism no longer serve as reliable coordinates for *Heimat*.' See Franke, 'The Genres of Europeanization', pp. 164-165.

Accented films embody the constructedness of identity by inscribing characters who are partial, or split, or who perform their identities [...]. By so engaging in the politics and poetics of identity, they cover up or manipulate their essential incompleteness, fragmentation and instability.¹³⁶

Through Nana and her successful performance as a tourist, Flicker, as Graml agrees, is able to highlight the socially and constructed nature of identity positions.¹³⁷ As a teacher of French, and with the ability to speak the global *lingua franca*, English, which, as Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn notes, is the ‘default language of mobility in Europe,’ Nana is able to pass as the French tourist, Jacqueline Duron, whose passport she stole at the mountain inn.¹³⁸ As a result of Nana’s French-language proficiency and sharing similar aesthetic qualities to the French tourist, Nana is able to successfully cross the Austrian border into Germany and board a train to an unknown destination. Whether or not Nana is successful in her bid to reach her dream *Heimat* of America, a question Flicker purposefully leaves open, her success will depend on her ability to maintain her performance as Jacqueline. In the final postcard that Nana writes to her uncle in the film’s closing moments, Nana signs off with the new signature, ‘a bientôt, Jacqueline Duron.’ The film’s ending therefore not only continues to deliberately confuse national identity formations, portraying an Austrian actress cast as an Eastern European refugee masquerading as a French

¹³⁶ Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, p. 272.

¹³⁷ Graml, ‘Trapped Bodies, Roaming Fantasies’, p. 253. Another example of Flicker’s critical reassessment of national identities can be witnessed in the scene which depicts Nana and Herbert having dinner at the hotel restaurant. As he eats his dessert, Herbert comments how it is ‘ein österreichisches Spezialität aus Ungarn.’

¹³⁸ Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn, ‘The Impact of Global English on Language Policy for the Media: The Case of Iceland’, in *Globalisation in English Studies*, ed. by Maria Georgieva and Allan James (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p. 3.

tourist on a German train headed for the USA, but also continues to reinforce the fundamental message of Flicker's film that this iconic Austrian landscape no longer provides a safe haven for its Eastern European neighbours.¹³⁹ Thus, by suggesting that, in order to reach her *Heimat*, Nana must permanently perform as a Western tourist, Flicker continues to adopt the trope of identity performance integral to a number of postwar *Heimatfilme* but he critically adapts it, turning it into a means to successfully engage with contemporary discourse on the 'uneven distribution of resources in the globalised world.'¹⁴⁰

As we observe Nana traverse the Austrian Alpine landscape and ascend into the hills on her quest for America, we are visually transported back to the von Trapp family's ultimate escape into freedom in Robert Wise's Hollywood *Heimatfilm*, *The Sound of Music* (1965).¹⁴¹ Indeed, as Flicker notes in an interview for the film, the hills which provide both films their locations continue to provide an escape route into the 'neue Welt.'¹⁴² His film, he argues, is the 'granddaughter' of Wise's film, which continues to register the Austrian Alpine landscape's unstable position as borderland.¹⁴³ By intertextually referencing Wise's film, Flicker critically interrogates the internationally perpetuated image of Austria that tourists

¹³⁹ As an Austrian actress performing as an Eastern European refugee, Birgit Doll's performance can be considered 'ethnic drag.' See Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Sexuality in West Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Globalisation: The Key Concepts* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007), p. 101.

¹⁴¹ See Robert von Dassanowsky, 'An Unclaimed Country: The Austrian Image in American Film and the Sociopolitics of *The Sound of Music*', *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 31 July 2003 <<http://brightlightsfilm.com/an-unclaimed-country-the-austrian-image-in-american-film-and-the-sociopolitics-of-the-sound-of-music/#.V-1BTvkrLIU>> [accessed 7 February 2013].

¹⁴² Flicker, *Suzie Washington: Drehbuch und Notizen zum Film*, p. 102.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

continue to engage with. Indeed, as we observe Nana board a tourist minibus (which operates under the heading, ‘The Sound of Music Tours’) to take her to this escape route, Flicker contemporises the film’s iconic setting, exposing its continued liminality to those illegal immigrants who continue to be excluded from it.

Conclusion

By drawing on the tropes of the *Heimatfilm* and the road movie, renegotiating them to correspond with a contemporary post-wall European setting, Flicker is able to successfully represent the social, political, geographical and economic obstacles that continue to remain in a supposedly ‘unified’ Europe. The collapse of the Soviet Union from 1989-1991 triggered a mass movement of peoples as citizens from former Soviet states sought new lives and new beginnings in the prosperous West. However, while these major political and geographical shifts opened up new opportunities and offered new beginnings for some, they erected more physical, economic and social barriers for others. As Peter Nyers notes:

Globalisation may have spurred some to proclaim the onset of an unprecedented condition of “time-space compression,” however the question of how different people experience and are affected by this disruption to their received spatiotemporal orientations is still one that needs to be explored.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees*, p. ix.

The enhanced mobility that the events of 1989 engendered, as Nyers continues, means one thing for Western tourists and business class travellers and another for Eastern European migrants and displaced persons.¹⁴⁵ A number of scholars, including Zygmunt Bauman and Tim Cresswell, refer to these two types of contemporary figures as the ‘tourist’ and the ‘vagabond.’¹⁴⁶ The vagabond, according to Bauman, ‘move[s] because they find the world within their reach unbearably inhospitable.’ The tourist, on the other hand, ‘move[s] because they find the world within their reach irresistibly attractive.’¹⁴⁷ Moving out of necessity rather than choice, the vagabond, as Nyers adds, ‘constitute[s] a class of moving people who occupy the lower rungs’ of what Doreen Massey has termed ‘power geometry.’¹⁴⁸ Indeed, as Massey argues:

Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don’t; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.¹⁴⁹

Flicker’s hybrid *Heimat*-road movie critically engages with this discourse. By featuring an Eastern European refugee (vagabond) who must impersonate a Western tourist in order to successfully find a safe *Heimat* in the West, Flicker draws on the semantics of identity performance and

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, ‘Tourists and Vagabonds: Or, living in Postmodern Times’, in *Identity and Social Change*, ed. by Joseph E. Davis (New Brunswick; London: Transaction Publishers, 2000), pp. 13-26; Tim Cresswell, ‘The Vagrant/Vagabond: The Curious Career of a Mobile Subject’, in *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects*, ed. by Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 239-254.

¹⁴⁷ Bauman, ‘Tourists and Vagabonds’, p. 23.

¹⁴⁸ Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees*, p. ix.

¹⁴⁹ Doreen Massey, ‘“A Global Sense of Place”: From Space, Place, and Gender (1994)’, in *The Cultural Geography Reader*, ed. by Timothy S. Oakes and Patricia L. Price (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 259.

mistaken identities typical of the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, and of recent migrant and diasporic cinema, in order to both critically question essentialist readings of national identity and, as Sathe notes, to ‘expose the contradiction between Austria’s restrictive policies and its tourism industry.’¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, in depicting an unfairly criminalised ‘other’ as she embarks on a physical and metaphysical journey across the Austrian landscape in search of a new beginning, Flicker’s film adopts the semantics of the American and the European road movie in order to offer a sympathetic and personal representation of East-West migration following the fall of the Eastern Bloc in 1989 and the subsequent anti-foreigner rhetoric that followed. While Flicker may adopt the semantic tropes of these respective genres to allow him to visually represent the search for *Heimat* in an increasingly globalised world, he nevertheless critically inverts their positive syntactic messages. Indeed, for an Eastern European migrant in 1990s Austria, the roads are closed and the Austrian idyll is uninhabitable. Flicker thus adapts the generic syntax of both genres to offer a critical response to the unfair and uneven distribution of global flows and resources between East and West. In Flicker’s contemporary *Heimat*-road movie, *Heimat* may be deterritorialised from an originary homeland, however, as we observe Nana go to extreme lengths to reach her utopia of America, *Heimat* for Nana still appears out of reach. As a vagabond who most likely will be unable to reach her desired *Heimat* of America, and as a refugee who cannot and will not return to her original *Heimat* of Georgia, Nana, the film suggests, will inevitably remain *heimatlos*.

¹⁵⁰ Sathe ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema’, p. 231.

Chapter 4: Deterritorialising *Heimat* in the Works of Barbara Albert

Introduction

Born in Vienna in 1970, Barbara Albert began her studies in directing and scriptwriting at the Vienna Film Academy in 1991. She first gained international success with her short film *Die Frucht deines Leibes* (1994) following its premiere at the Venice Film Festival in 1996, however it was not until the release of her first full length feature film *Nordrand* in 1999 that Albert attracted considerable global attention. As Karl Markovics writes, ‘der Film katapultierte die junge österreichische Regisseurin Barbara Albert in die Reihen der europäischen Autorenfilmer.’¹ Not only did the 1999 release of *Nordrand* signal Albert’s newfound position as an internationally recognised and critically acclaimed filmmaker, it also, as Robert von Dassanowsky notes, signalled a ‘kind of caesura in Austrian film,’² reinforcing the idea posed by Hollywood Reporter journalist, Susan Lakida, that ‘Austrian film was ready to take on an international profile.’³ Although *Nordrand* did not go on to win the Golden Lion in Venice, its nomination alone, as von Dassanowsky claims, marked ‘a new era’ in Austrian cinema, as ‘no Austrian film had competed in Venice in decades.’⁴ The film also went on to secure the Fipresci Jury prize at the festival, and

¹ Karl Markovics, ‘Der österreichische Filmsommer’, *ORF*, 16 August 2012 <<http://tv.orf.at/orf3/stories/2545719/>> [accessed 20/08/2013].

² Robert von Dassanowsky, ‘Austria Hungry: The Return of a Film Nation’, *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 51, February (2006) <<http://brightlightsfilm.com/51/51austria.php#.Ui90x8asiSo>> [accessed 12/02/2013].

³ Ibid.

⁴ Robert von Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History* (McFarland: Jefferson, 2005), p. 259.

the Austrian-born actress Nina Proll was awarded the prestigious Marcello Mastroianni Prize for her performance as Jasmin. Following its success in Venice, *Nordrand* continued to triumph at festivals in Austria and abroad. The film won the Thomas-Pluch Film Script Prize at the Diagonale in Graz and The Vienna Film Prize at the Viennale in Vienna. Meanwhile, further afield, *Nordrand* was awarded the prize for the Best First Feature at the International Stockholm Film Festival and the Prize for the Best Long Film at the Max-Ophüls Prize Film Festival in Saarbrücken.

Due to the unprecedented international success of the film and its regular appearances at film festivals all over the globe, *Nordrand* has received an ample amount of scholarly attention.⁵ The film is often discussed in articles featured in English-language anthologies on contemporary Austrian film and culture, and in studies on migrant and diasporic cinema more generally. Notable examples include articles by Dagmar Lorenz, Nikhil Sathe and Mary Wauchope in Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck's 2011 edited volume on New Austrian Film, wherein Lorenz explores the film through the lens of gender, while Sathe and Wauchope focus on Albert's representation of Austrian space within the context of a number of New Austrian Films.⁶ Comprehensive

⁵ Appearances at film festivals include: Toronto Film Festival (1999), Chicago International Film Festival (1999), Thessaloniki International Film Festival (1999), European Film Week (1999), Singapore International Film Festival (2000), Hong Kong International Film Festival (2000) and Mar del Plata Film Festival (2001).

⁶ See Dagmar Lorenz, 'A New Community of Women: Barbara Albert's *Nordrand*', in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Bergahn, 2011), pp. 81-93; Nikhil Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema at the Turn of the Century: Flicker, Allahyari, Albert', in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Bergahn, 2011), pp. 227-228; and Mary Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Bergahn, 2011), pp. 108-121.

discussions of the film also feature in Yosefa Loshitzky's 2010 study on migrant and diasporic cinema, *Screening Strangers*, and in Domnica Radulescu's chapter in the 2004 edited volume on Western representations of Eastern European women, edited by herself and Valentina Glajar, titled, *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons*. These analyses once again draw on Albert's cinematic deployment of space and gender respectively, only this time within the broader context of Western film.⁷ These notable examples of English-language scholarship on *Nordrand* are particularly interesting as their scope – from gender studies in the works of Albert (Lorenz) and in Western cinema (Radulescu), to studies of space and place in New Austrian Film (Wauchope, Sathe), and representations of the city in contemporary migrant and diasporic European cinema (Loshitzky) – represent the breadth of interdisciplinary scholarship that the film has attracted. While all of these scholars and their respective works offer valuable readings of the film, analyses that I will engage with and draw on further in this chapter, each one of these scholars fails to acknowledge the extent to which Albert's film actively engages with contemporary *Heimat* discourse.

Before embarking on an analysis of *Nordrand* and the ways in which the film renegotiates and deterritorialises notions of *Heimat* vis-à-vis contemporary social developments and challenges, it is first important to briefly outline how the director has frequently engaged with notions of *Heimat* throughout her film career. As Wauchope's article successfully

⁷ See Yosefa Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 45-53; and Domnica Radulescu, 'Eastern Women in Western Chronotopes: The Representation of East European Women in Western Films after 1989', in *Vampirettes, Wretches, and Amazons: Western Representations of East European Women*, ed. by Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 162- 185.

identifies, Albert has consistently ‘problematise[d] concepts of geographical space and belonging, of home and nation, and of insider versus outsider status,’ in her filmic oeuvre.⁸ By critically engaging with and reworking these concepts throughout her films, Albert, this chapter will argue, actively seeks to challenge conservative and monolithic interpretations of *Heimat* within the context of globalisation.

Renegotiating *Heimat* in the Works of Barbara Albert

Although Albert’s films are relatively diverse, they all, as Heidi Schlipphacke observes, ‘dramatise the claustrophobia endemic to a [...] globalising Austria’ and tend to ‘depict an intense longing for escape’ away from the Austrian *Heimat*.⁹ Imke Meyer agrees with Schlipphacke’s interpretation when she argues that ‘nostalgic and politically regressive notions of Austria as a postimperial, postfascist, newly harmless and cosy alpine homeland have been banished’ from her works.¹⁰ Albert’s films thus typically draw on the anti/critical-*Heimat* mode, representing the impossibility of a native Austrian *Heimat*, and contrarily promote the possibility or indeed the necessity of seeking a *Heimat* elsewhere, as I will now demonstrate in my analysis of her works. While *Böse Zellen* (2003) and *Fallen* (2006) follow a variety of native Austrian characters who become

⁸ Wauchope, ‘Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert’s Feature Films’, p. 109.

⁹ Heidi M. Schlipphacke, *Nostalgia After Nazism: History, Home and Affect in German and Austrian Literature and Film* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2010), p.35. She writes this in reference to Albert’s *Böse Zellen* as well as a number of contemporary German and Austrian cinematic works including Hans Weingartner’s *Das weiße Rauschen* (2001) and Oliver Hirschbiegel’s *Das Experiment* (2001).

¹⁰ Imke Meyer, ‘Metonymic Visions: Globalisation, Consumer Culture, and Mediated Affect in Barbara Albert’s *Böse Zellen*’, in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Bergahn, 2011), p. 96.

alienated from a *Heimat* which fails to provide the security, stability and sense of community that they all crave, *Zur Lage* (2002) and *Nordrand* (1999), meanwhile, draw attention to Austria's multicultural population and probe the social, political and economic barriers that prevent these characters from having access to a *Heimat* at all.

Homeless at Home: *Böse Zellen* (2003)

Böse Zellen follows a group of diverse characters who all live in the same suburb of Vienna and are united by a tragic accident when Manu, a mother, wife, sister and friend dies in a car accident. The film explores the various ways in which each of the characters, all united by the repercussions of this tragic event, attempts and ultimately fails to find a sense of belonging and purpose in their globalised Viennese society. As Imke Meyer correctly points out, the characters all experience feelings of 'disorientation' and 'transcendental homelessness' in their native Austrian homeland; feelings which, she argues, are compounded by the characters' alienating physical environment.¹¹ Indeed, in *Böse Zellen*, Albert represents Vienna as an unfamiliar 'non space;' a site which, as social anthropologist Marc Augé theorised, no longer evokes notions of national identity or national history, but is an unremarkable, interchangeable space which lies in constant reference to the global space which surrounds it.¹² Albert's choice of a faceless, urban Viennese setting, which is represented via tracking shots of

¹¹ See Meyer, 'Metonymic Visions', p. 103.

¹² Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London, New York: Verso, 1995).

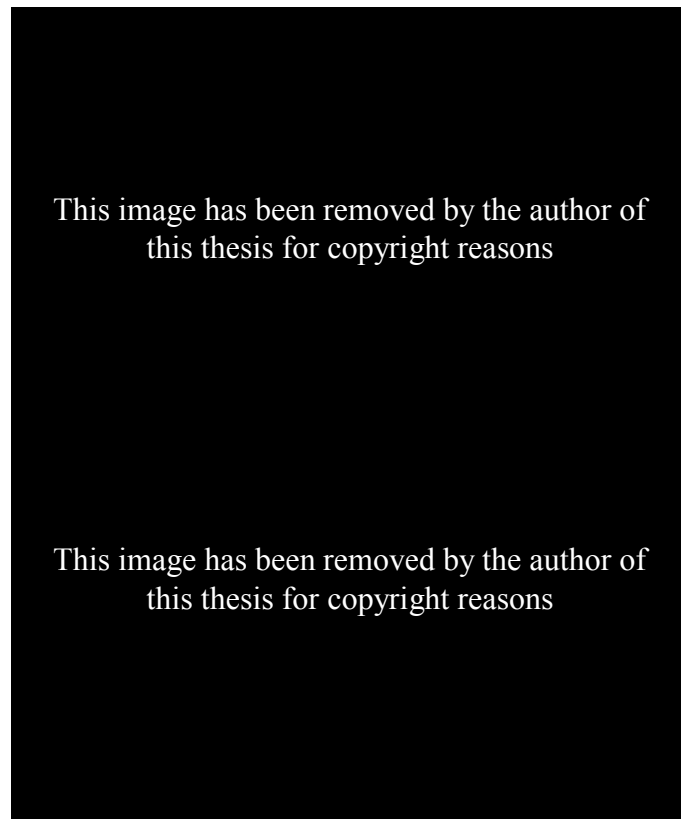


Figure 18: Manu and Sandra dream of a life elsewhere in Barbara Albert's *Böse Zellen* (2003). DVD capture

bleak housing blocks, characterless shopping centres and global chain stores, eschews typical cinematic images of Austria as a rural alpine idyll, or of Vienna as a heavily mythologised city of high culture and classical music. The Vienna in *Böse Zellen* is instead, as Meyer remarks, indistinguishable from the images of Rio de Janeiro where the film's opening is set.¹³ The metonymic links which are made between Vienna and the outside world – which comprise aesthetic and aural allusions to international cities and countries including Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, New Orleans and Tanzania – are set in contrast to the sense of entrapment that the majority of the characters experience. This is emphasised by Albert

¹³ Meyer, 'Metonymic Visions', p. 96.

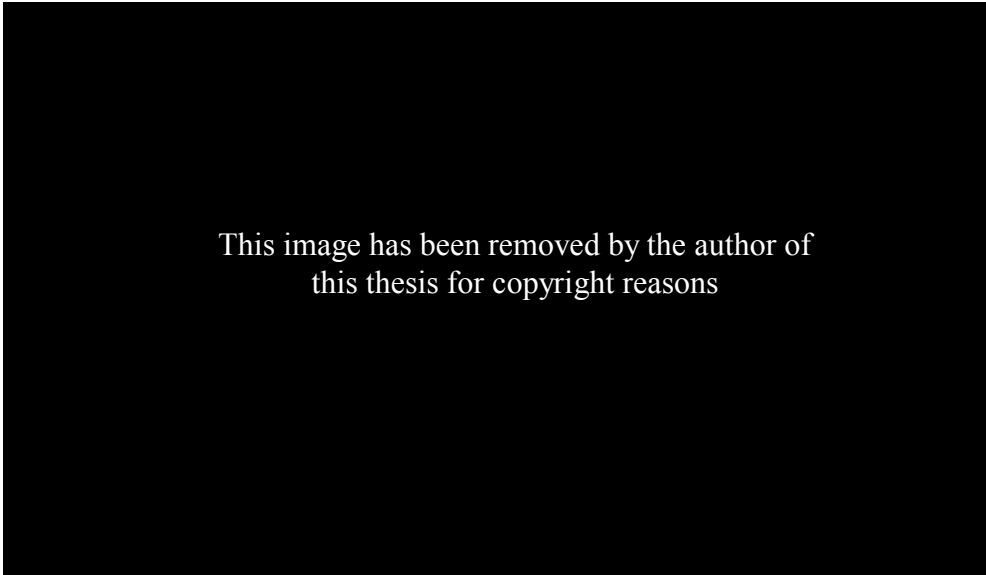
through her inclusion of a number of characters who suffer from physical disabilities which ultimately render them immobile: Gabi is paralysed from the neck down; Josef is an amputee and Belinda, following a suicide attempt, is reliant on crutches. Despite their respective wishes to escape their immediate surroundings, the characters are trapped in loveless relationships, unsatisfactory jobs, and mortgaged houses, situated within an alienating urban environment. The characters thus all suffer a sense of *Heimatlosigkeit*, despite their being physically at ‘home.’

Heimat as Utopia: *Fallen* (2006)

Albert’s following feature film *Fallen* meanwhile draws on more traditional notions of *Heimat*, evoking *Heimat* as an unobtainable utopia, a childhood dream, or as Daniela Berghahn terms it, a ‘no-place.’¹⁴ The film follows a group of women who reunite in their hometown to attend the funeral of a former school teacher whose death also symbolises the loss of the women’s childhood hopes and dreams. Although the reunion may physically reunite the five former school friends in their familiar native surroundings, this unexpected homecoming compels each of the characters to individually reassess their own life choices, reigniting a longing for a past which they nostalgically and somewhat falsely associate with the utopian notions of wholeness, family and community.¹⁵

¹⁴ Daniela Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film: The Diasporic Family in Contemporary European Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 59.

¹⁵ See Wauchope, ‘Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert’s Feature Films’, pp. 108-121.



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Figure 19: The rural meadow shrouded in nostalgia in Barbara Albert's *Fallen* (2006). DVD capture

Albert's representation of the small Austrian town in which the women were born and raised is initially void of images which signify any personal affiliation. Albert for example fails to include the characters' former homes or families in her representation of their homecoming. However, a space which continues to appear throughout the duration of the film is that of the Austrian rural meadow, which is first introduced to the viewer at the beginning of the film via a black and white long shot. The use of black and white in the film's opening immediately suggests that the space holds a certain degree of emotional or symbolic importance for the characters. Later in the film, when the women are reminiscing about their childhood, the viewer discovers the significance of this space as it becomes clear that as children these women had dreamed of building a house together on this land. Thus, instead of representing the women's actual childhood homes, Albert depicts a sense of home which never existed and still does not exist.

The reunion therefore, in light of the women's dissatisfaction with the present realities of their adult lives, reignites their utopian yearning for a sense of stability and belonging which is still predicated on a childhood dream. This articulation of *Heimat* in *Fallen*, as an intangible longing for a space which does not exist, echoes New German Cinema filmmaker, Edgar Reitz's definition of *Heimat* in relation to his television chronicle *Heimat* (1984):

The word is always linked to strong feeling, mostly remembrances and longing. "*Heimat*" always evokes in me the feeling of something lost or very far away, something which one cannot easily find or find again [...] "*Heimat*" is such that if one would go closer and closer to it, one would discover that at the moment of arrival it is gone, it has dissolved into nothingness. It seems to me that one has a more precise idea of "*Heimat*" the further one is away from it.¹⁶

Reitz's conclusion that *Heimat* for him is 'fiction' echoes Albert's engagement with the concept in her cinematic works. Indeed, throughout her corpus of films, Albert's protagonists, the majority of which are female, constantly long for a *Heimat* that is exposed as unobtainable in their native Austrian environment – a vital trope of the anti-/critical *Heimat* mode.¹⁷ Although this reading of Albert's films and their engagement with *Heimat* suggests a rather pessimistic outlook, her films, as a number of scholars acknowledge, are not devoid of hope.¹⁸ Instead, as my analysis of *Nordrand* will demonstrate, Albert's films promote change over tradition, ultimately

¹⁶ Edgar Reitz cited in Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 59.

¹⁷ See Schlipphacke, *Nostalgia after Nazism*.

¹⁸ See Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', pp. 120-121 and Lorenz, 'A New Community of Women', p. 88.

attesting to new modes of belonging which reside outside of geographical, biological, cultural, familial and gendered boundaries.

Towards a Multicultural Heimat: *Zur Lage: Österreich in sechs Kapiteln* (2002)

While the feature films *Böse Zellen* and *Fallen*, which followed *Nordrand*, successfully demonstrate the impossibility of an organic Austrian *Heimat* in the context of a globalised Austrian society, it is Albert's first full-length feature film, *Nordrand*, and her involvement with the 2002 feature-length documentary film, *Zur Lage: Österreich in sechs Kapiteln*, which best reflect her attitudes towards *Heimat* in the context of Austria's multicultural demographic. *Zur Lage* critically explores the Austrian nation's diverse views on issues including *Heimat*, Haider, national identity and immigration in light of the appointment of the neo-conservative government coalition in 1999.¹⁹ The documentary film both aimed to uncover a latent fascism that can be seen as a continuation of the historical fascism of Austria's Nazi past and simultaneously sought to dispel misinformed cultural stereotypes regarding Austria's multicultural population.²⁰ In her contribution to the documentary, which focuses on eight women, Albert cleverly edits her segments so that the xenophobic attitudes of some interviewees are

¹⁹ For an in-depth analysis of *Zur Lage*..., see Allyson Fiddler, 'Shifting Boundaries: Responses to Multiculturalism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century', in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House; Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), pp. 274-276.

²⁰ Albert's most recent film *Die Lebenden* (2012) engages with Austria's Nazi past directly exploring the familial history of Sita, an Austro-Romanian woman living in Berlin. Sita discovers that her grandfather may have a connection with the SS and thus travels through Vienna, Romania and Poland to seek the extent of his involvement in the Nazi atrocities of the Holocaust. Albert's interest in this topic could indeed derive from her own discovery of her grandfather's involvement in the Holocaust.

contradicted by the positive actions of others. In one scene for example, a middle-class Viennese housewife ironically snipes that ‘foreigners’ should be forced to work. The film then cuts to an image of an Austrian woman of a Turkish-migrant background situated in her place of work at a computer factory. These cuts, as Allyson Fiddler highlights, aim to ‘bring out thought-provoking juxtapositions and ironies,’ ultimately forcing the viewer to reassess the common cultural stereotypes and monolithic modes of national identity propagated by populist right-wing politics.²¹

In a similar manner to her contribution in *Zur Lage*, and as demonstrated in the feature films discussed previously in this chapter, *Nordrand* categorically rejects the notion of an organic *Heimat* that is rooted in outdated and conservative interpretations of Austrian space and place. Albert, this chapter will argue, seeks to re-articulate the Austrian capital as an ethnoscape; a term coined by social anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai, to refer to ‘the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals.’²² Since our contemporary world is increasingly shaped by the movements and ‘flows’ of products and of people, Appadurai argues that spaces which were once seen as ethnically and culturally homogenous are increasingly being inhabited by various people of differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds.²³ Albert’s film registers this demographic shift, demonstrating that Vienna has been, and continues

²¹ Fiddler, ‘Shifting Boundaries’, p. 276.

²² Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1996), p. 33.

²³ See Ib Bondebjerg, ‘The European Imaginary: Media Fictions, Democracy and Cultural Identities’, in *Media, Democracy and European Culture*, ed. by Ib Bondebjerg and Peter Madsen (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), pp. 215-236.

to be, as Loshitzky writes, ‘a multicultural territory rather than a “pure” Germanic nation state.’²⁴ In order to successfully demonstrate the manner in which Albert successfully deterritorialises the Austrian capital, I will firstly assess Albert’s representation of Austrian space. Developing on the ideas presented by Nikhil Sathe, Mary Wauchope, and Yosefa Loshitzky in their analyses of the film, I will argue that Albert’s subversive representation of iconic Viennese spaces and her use of inserts within the film serve to disrupt the national significance and specificity of the nation’s capital. By stripping Vienna of its national connotations, replacing pictures of iconic Viennese buildings and traditional Viennese people with images of impermanence, nondescription and multiculturalism, Albert attempts to rearticulate the nation’s capital as a globalised, multicultural city.

While Vienna is successfully rearticulated as an ethnoscape in Albert’s film, the Austrian capital does not and will not constitute a *Heimat* for Albert’s characters. Indeed, as Daniela Berghahn highlights, in such ‘deterritorialised, mobile communities,’ *Heimat* can no longer be linked to territory. Rather, as Berghahn expands, notions of identity and belonging are more likely to be realised via new ‘affiliations between people,’ which ‘transcend national belonging, race, and religion.’²⁵ Albert’s film, as I will demonstrate, thus deterritorialises *Heimat* by advocating new, non-spatial modes of belonging which cut across ethnic, geographical and heteronormative boundaries. Drawing on the ideas presented by Dagmar Lorenz, I will argue that Albert engages with the anti-*Heimat* discourse demonstrated by her literary feminist colleagues by dismantling traditional

²⁴ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 47.

²⁵ Berghahn, *Far-Flung Families in Film*, p. 28.

modes of belonging. By substituting ancestry, the nuclear family, heterosexual relationships and traditional gender roles – themes typical of the classical *Heimatfilme* – with more contemporary constellations predicated on mobility, hybridity, gender fluidity and above all, female solidarity, *Nordrand*, this chapter will conclude, proposes an antidote to contemporary physical dislocation and social alienation.

Deterritorialising *Heimat* in *Nordrand* (1999)

Nordrand portrays the interweaving narratives of native-Austrian characters and characters of various migrant backgrounds as they attempt to carve a life for themselves in a socially hostile and politically volatile Vienna. The film tells the story of two women, Tamara (Edita Malovic) and Jasmin (Nina Proll), who attended the same primary school together and are reunited years later at an abortion clinic. The film follows the two very different women as they go about their everyday lives in Vienna; a city which has recently become ‘home’ to a variety of people from various ethnic backgrounds following the increase of legal and illegal migration due to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the Balkan War. Set in 1995 against the backdrop of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and the ensuing Balkan War, Albert has drawn on the information gathered from interviews conducted in the same year with refugees from Sarajevo, which she combines with her own experiences as a native Viennese, to offer a contemporary filmic portrayal of a Vienna that is representative of the various cultures, ethnicities, religions and languages that form a vital part of

the city and its contemporary identity. In an interview conducted by one of the film's production companies, the Zurich-based *Fama Film*, Albert states: 'Wenn man in Wien mit der U-Bahn oder der Straßenbahn fährt, kann man viele verschiedene Sprachen hören. Ich wollte diese Sprachenvielfalt im Film um die Atmosphäre so nahe als möglich an der Realität zu halten.'²⁶ Albert, who is openly proud of Vienna's 'Sprachengemisch,' wanted to rectify what she saw as a lack of protagonists with a migrant background within Austrian film, and thus went about creating a feature film that might successfully reflect the evolving demographic of Vienna.

In order to successfully represent the 'Sprachengemisch' that she believes makes up Austria's identity, Albert needed to look no further than the (then-) current socio-political climate for inspiration. She began writing the script for *Nordrand* in 1995, the same year that the Balkan War finally ended, and throughout the consequent years of filming and up until its premiere in 1999, *Nordrand*, and the issues with which it engages continued to gain political, cultural and sociological significance. Firstly, following the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the conflict that ensued during the Balkan War, Austria saw a dramatic increase in the number of refugees from the former Yugoslavia seeking asylum, particularly in its capital Vienna. The film not only registers this contemporary wave of migration by featuring a Bosnian Serb named Senad, who has deserted his position in the military and is featured illegally crossing over the border into Austria, but also

²⁶ Barbara Albert, 'Interview mit der Regisseurin Barbara Albert zu Nordrand,' *Fama Film AG* (1999) <<http://www.famafilm.ch/filme/nordrand/interview-mit-regisseurin-barbara-albert-zu-nordrand/>> [accessed 26/04/2014].

engages with the topics of loss and trauma that the war engendered through the inclusion of an Austro-Serbian character named Tamara. Tamara, who was born and raised in Vienna, has family members who continue to reside in Sarajevo and are therefore directly affected by the conflict throughout the course of the film. Furthermore, the initial tension that can be observed between Senad and Tamara when they first meet successfully reflects the ‘ethnic differences’ that separate them, which as Mary Wauchope notes, ‘have been compounded by’ the war.²⁷ Albert’s use of actual news footage of the war, which she frequently interweaves into the fictional narrative, further places her film within this specific socio-temporal context.

Nordrand also engages with other waves of migration that have affected Austria since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. The Romanian salesman, Valentin, and the Polish bar-tender, Yola, for example, are representative of the rise in Eastern European migrants following the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the opening of Austria’s eastern borders. The film’s ensemble of characters of differing ethnic/cultural backgrounds and various socio-political circumstances, who all speak a range of different languages, successfully ‘reflects these migrations,’ as Wauchope rightly notes.²⁸ Throughout the course of the film, no fewer than six languages can be heard; Jasmin can only speak German; Tamara speaks German with Jasmin, her Austrian boyfriend, Roman, and her nursing colleagues, but speaks Serbo-Croat with her family and with Senad; Valentin speaks Romanian with his elderly grandmother, Russian with a customer, and

²⁷ Wauchope, ‘Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert’s Feature Films’, p. 112.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 109.

German with Tamara; Yola speaks German with her customers and Polish; and Senad, who cannot speak German, speaks in broken English with Jasmin and Serbo-Croat with Tamara. This amalgamation of languages reflects a shift in the manner in which ‘foreigners’ are represented in German-language film. As Christine Heiss illuminates: ‘protagonists with migration backgrounds are no longer characterised through grammatically or phonetically incorrect speech, but rather through entire passages of dialogue in their respective language, subtitled for the audience.’²⁹ By featuring a number of characters fluently speaking a second or a third language in addition to their own ‘mother tongue’ in the film, Albert not only avoids depicting the clichéd, stereotypical, and often derogatory representation of the ‘foreigner’ who speaks in ‘foreign talk’ – a type of speech that is associated with ‘incorrect syntax, pronunciation, [and] inadequate lexical use’ – but she also successfully depicts Vienna as a multicultural, multilingual urban space.³⁰

It is not only the multilingual, multicultural cast which reflects the socio-political timeframe in which the film is set. The hostile environment which greets these migrant characters as they attempt to better their lives in Vienna is also reminiscent of the growing animosity towards ‘foreigners’ and the subsequent rise of Jörg Haider’s far-right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) which could be observed throughout the course of the 1990s. As Jutta Landa notes: ‘in the nineties *Fremdenhass* and *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* were

²⁹ Christine Heiss, ‘Multilingual Films and Integration? What Role Does Film Translation Play’, in *Media and Translation: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. by Dror Abend-David (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

on the rise in Austria, particularly in Vienna.’³¹ The increase in migrants along with a number of economic setbacks affecting Austria at the time precipitated a fear of foreigners amongst the Austrian population, which was ultimately capitalised on and exploited by Haider and his political campaign. Although Albert began writing her film over four years prior to the FPÖ’s unprecedented success in the 1999 national election, her film registers Haider’s rise to power throughout the 1990s and, in particular, the momentum they were gaining throughout the duration of the filmmaking process.³² Interestingly, the film’s premiere took place only a number of weeks after the FPÖ’s election success and, incidentally, Austria’s newly appointed centre-right government directly affected the manner in which the film was received internationally. For instance, it was rumoured that a group of Jewish Academy members were threatening to boycott the proposed screenings of *Nordrand* in Los Angeles as a protest against the right-wing party coming into political power. Although, as Alex Horwath illustrates, ‘the boycott did not take place (except maybe on an individual basis),’ and the US screenings went on as planned, this international condemnation of contemporary Austrian politics via the proposed boycott of Albert’s film successfully reflects the close proximity between Albert’s film and the volatile socio-political context with which it engages.³³ Furthermore, Albert’s public participation in the numerous protests and demonstrations

³¹ Jutta Landa, ‘Loveable Foreigners: Gestures of Cross-Cultural Embracing in Austrian Film’, in *After Postmodernism: Austrian Literature and Film in Transition*, ed. by Willy Riemer (Riverside; California: Ariadne Press, 2000), p. 95.

³² For more information on the FPÖs rise to power throughout the 1990s see Ruth Wodak and Anton Pelinka *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 2002).

³³ Alexander Horwath, ‘“Northern Skirts” Raises Austrian Politics and Artist’s Concerns in the Age of Haider’, *Indiewire*, 28 March 2000
<http://www.indiewire.com/article/ndnf_northern_skirts_raises_austrian_politics_and_artists_concerns_in_the_a> [accessed 02/03/2011].

that took place in Vienna following the formation of the coalition in 2000 successfully reflects her condemnation of the FPÖ and its right-wing policies regarding Austrian national identity, immigration and *Heimat* – a political stance which can be observed in *Nordrand* and the way in which it reconceptualises the Austrian capital as a multicultural, multilingual, global ethnoscape.³⁴

During the FPÖ's political campaign, Haider and his party drew on the political potential of the term *Heimat* and exploited its emotional resonance among the Austrian population. By redeploing *Heimat* as a nationalist term which connoted cultural purity and national homogeneity, the FPÖ unashamedly returned to the dark history of *Heimat* discourse, undoing decades of positive reappropriation.³⁵ In *Nordrand*, Albert challenges this xenophobic, ethnically exclusive conception of *Heimat* and calls into question notions of national identity and belonging in the context of Austria's evolving demographic and geo-political landscape. In order to successfully assess the manner in which Albert's film counters the FPÖs extreme anti-immigration rhetoric by deterritorialising the concept of *Heimat*, I firstly examine Albert's subversive representation of Viennese space.

³⁴ For more information on the protests that the new coalition engendered see Frederick Baker and Elisabeth Boyer, *Wiener Wandertage: Eine Dokumentation* (Klagenfurt: Wieser Verlag, 2002).

³⁵ See Kaes for an analysis of *Heimat* discourse's National Socialist history, Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, pp. 164-166.

Towards a Global Vienna

Albert attempts to dissolve the image of a homogenous Austrian *Heimat* by presenting its capital Vienna as a contemporary, multicultural space. This re-articulation of Austrian space is successfully exemplified by the multiple meanings that the title of the film, *Nordrand*, embodies, referring on the one hand to the northern outskirts of Vienna, and on the other to the geographical location of Austria as borderland. Both of these interpretations require further unravelling. Firstly, *Nordrand* refers directly to the working-class, multicultural district of Vienna located near to the Danube, which is both Albert's place of birth and the area which provides the film with its geographical location. This area of Vienna, which Loshitzky describes as 'brutal' and 'unappealing,' plays a vital role in the cinematic re-representation of Austrian space.³⁶ By locating the majority of the action against a backdrop of drab, rundown apartment blocks and on generic city streets, Albert offers a counter representation to the typical image of Vienna perpetuated by the tourist industry and thus 'eschews images which might suggest the mythic Austria of many earlier films.'³⁷ Films made at home and abroad including Marischka's Imperial *Sissi* trilogy and Robert Wise's Hollywood *Heimatfilm*, *The Sound of Music* (1965), helped to inscribe Austria in the filmic imaginary as a mythical space; either as a picturesque, rural idyll or as a 'fantasy based on the imperial city it was until 1918.'³⁸ By

³⁶ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 47.

³⁷ Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', p. 111.

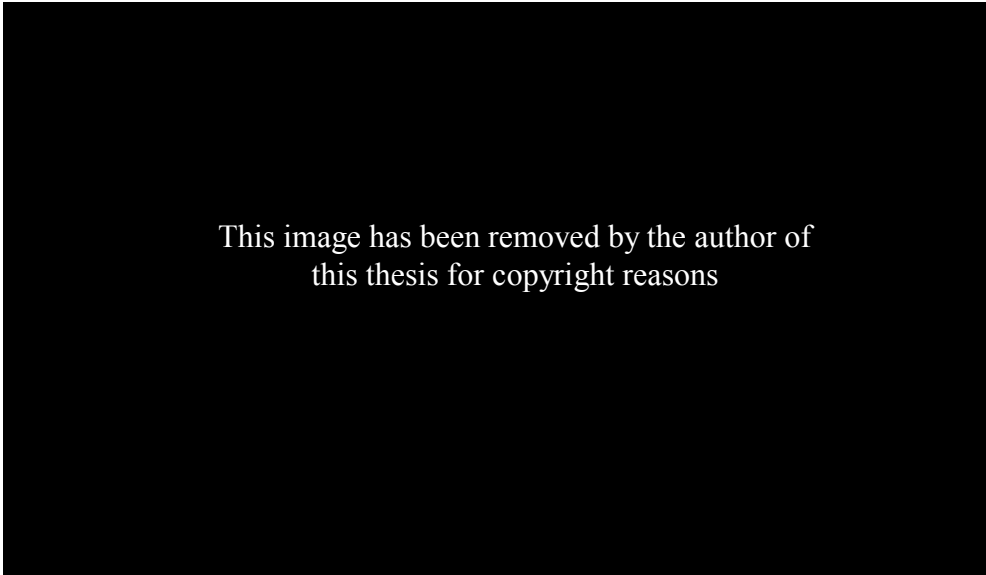
³⁸ Robert von Dassanowsky, 'Introduction', in *World Film Locations: Vienna*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), p. 5.

locating most of her screenplay in the ‘other Vienna,’³⁹ as Nikhil Sathe puts it, and thus far away from the luminous, green rolling hills of the provinces and out of sight of the city’s imperial palaces, Albert fervently subverts the way the city has been propagated throughout Western film history. Michael Burri, when discussing Vienna’s history as a film location, describes the city and its famous landmarks, which include St. Stephen’s Cathedral and the Schönbrunn Palace, as ‘a global brand,’ based on ‘a vast aggregation of artefacts, emotional associations and histories – monarchy, Mozart, [...] Blue Danube.’⁴⁰ By offering an alternative image of Vienna, in which the city could be mistaken for any other urban city, Albert substitutes myth, glory and grandeur for authenticity, austerity and struggle, providing a contemporary, realist, global Vienna for the viewer to identify with.

This ‘other Vienna,’ which, as Sathe notes, registers Austria’s recent waves of immigration, is initially introduced to the viewer in the film’s opening credits. Albert opens *Nordrand* with a series of flashbacks to Jasmin and Tamara’s childhoods, tracing the protagonists’ stories back to when they attended primary school together. Following an initial sequence which takes place inside the young girls’ classroom, where the school children can be heard reciting the Austrian national anthem, the film then cuts to an outdoor scene in which the young Jasmin is featured flying a kite on an abandoned area of grassland, which is situated in front of a backdrop of derelict apartment blocks. During these opening credits, Albert

³⁹ Nikhil Sathe, ‘The Spaces of the Other Vienna in New Austrian Film’, in *World Film Locations: Vienna*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), p. 106.

⁴⁰ Micheal Burri, ‘Vienna: City of Imagination,’ in *World Film Locations: Vienna*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), p.6.



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Figure 20: The dilapidated ‘other Vienna’ in Barbara Albert’s *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

immediately contrasts the tourist image of Austria, articulated through the lyrics of the national anthem as a place ‘begnadet für das Schöne,’ with the harsh reality of its capital city’s outskirts. The internationally perpetuated image of the nation as ‘Land der Berge, Land am Strome, Land der Äcker, Land der Dome,’ that is celebrated in the country’s national anthem, is thus immediately subverted by Albert’s cinematic representation. Indeed, upon viewing the opening credits, there are no establishing shots of famous landmarks, tourist attractions, or other obvious visible cues to the film’s geographical location. The viewer’s visual identification with the film’s setting is further obscured by the non-diegetic, Serbian-language track, *Modrice*, which accompanies the action onscreen. *Modrice*, which translates in English as *Bruises*, is a song by the Belgrade-based band *Zana* and is one of a number of foreign-language songs which feature in the film’s varied,

multilingual soundtrack.⁴¹ By combining a faceless urban setting with a foreign-language soundtrack in her film's opening, Albert immediately disrupts the national significance and specificity of the film's location.

Although Albert chooses to place most of the film's action in the northern skirts of Vienna, away from the central business district and the city's famous tourist attractions, Albert does not dismiss Vienna's iconic landmarks in their entirety. Rather, she employs quintessential Viennese locations and traditions only to imbue them with new contemporary connotations. When the characters do approach iconic Viennese spaces, which include St. Stephens Cathedral and its square, the banks of the river Danube, and the Viennese café, the national significance and idiosyncrasy of these spaces is obscured. The film's representation of the Viennese café is particularly interesting as Albert successfully removes the national quality and imperial grandeur typically associated with this quintessential Viennese institution. The Austrian tourist board for instance continues to promote the city's *Kaffee und Kuchen* culture as a lavish tourist experience, describing the Viennese coffee shop in terms of 'an oasis of *Gemütlichkeit*.'⁴² *Rough Guides*, one of the leading worldwide travel and reference publishers, also features the Viennese *Kaffee und Kuchen* experience in its list of '1000 Ultimate Travel Experiences,' claiming that drinking coffee and eating cake

⁴¹ The eclectic, multi-lingual soundtrack comprises: English-language tracks including Youssou N'dour and Neneh Cherry's *Seven Seconds*, Leila K's *Electric*, Ace of Base's *All That She Wants*; Serbian-language tracks including Zana's *Modrice*, Beat Street's *Oslobodi Me*, Dr Iggy's *Navika*, and Luna's *Sestra*; Romanian-language tracks including three tracks from Romanian rap-group *Paraziții* and Romanian-Romani group, Taraf de Haïdouks' *Geamparale*; Austrian hip-hop band Texta's *3:10h*, and the Austrian, Johan Strauss' *An der schönen Blauen Donau*.

⁴² See 'Viennese Cafes', *Wien Tourismus*, <<http://www.wien.info/en/shopping-wining-dining/coffeehouses>> [accessed 03/03/2014].

in a Viennese *Kaffeehaus* is ‘as much a cultural as a culinary experience.’⁴³ Furthermore, in 2011 the Viennese *Kaffeehauskultur* was included in the UNESCO National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Clearly, the institution’s cultural significance cannot be underestimated. The Viennese coffee shop plays a vital role in Albert’s cinematic re-articulation of Vienna, as the *Aida* coffee shop and patisserie where the Viennese protagonist Jasmin works is far removed from the image of an ‘oasis of *Gemütlichkeit*’ perpetuated by the tourism industry. Indeed, as Loshitzky notes, in the film the *Kaffeehaus* is stripped of its ‘classical Viennesism.’⁴⁴ For instance, in one particular scene towards the beginning of the film, the camera locks in on a series of close-up shots which reveal the mass-production process that takes place behind the scenes of this typical Viennese coffee shop.⁴⁵ A quick succession of images, together with the diegetic sounds typical of an industrial environment, depict a factory-like setting in which the ‘luxurious’ Sacher Torte, the Black Forest Gateaux and the famous Viennese Cream Schnitt cakes are mechanically produced and finished in bulk by state of the art machinery. These images not only help to subvert the glamour and decadence with which these delicacies are traditionally associated, but this industrialised production process, which could take place in any other factory situated anywhere in the Western world, further strips these typically

⁴³ Keith Drew and AnneLise Sorensen, *Make the Most of Your Time on Earth: 1000 Ultimate Travel Experiences* (London: Rough Guides Ltd, 2010), p. 56.

⁴⁴ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 165.

⁴⁵ Albert’s choice of coffee shop is interesting. Although it brands itself as a Viennese institution dating back to 1883, *Aida* has become part of a large chain of cafes around Austria and worldwide and is known for its ‘dodgy décor.’ See Rob Humphreys, *The Rough Guide to Vienna* (London: Rough Guides Ltd, 2001), p. 312.

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Figure 21: Jasmin and her manager stand before an industrialised setting where the internationally celebrated ‘local’ patisseries are produced in Barbara Albert’s *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

Viennese delicacies of their national, cultural specificity.⁴⁶

By stripping the Viennese *Kaffeehaus* of its national specificity, presenting the typically Viennese tradition of *Kaffee und Kuchen* as a culinary experience that could take place in any city, anywhere in the Western world, Albert attempts to deterritorialise this iconic Viennese institution. This process of deterritorialisation is also achieved in the film’s representation of St. Stephen’s Square and St. Stephen’s Cathedral which are featured in the scene depicting the New Year’s Eve celebrations. As Sathe informs, ‘St. Stephen’s Square is the premier central Austrian space and is laden with cultural significance as the national centre.’⁴⁷ Sathe’s statement is particularly valid with regards to Austria’s internationally

⁴⁶ Also see Jörg Kalt’s *Crash Test Dummies* (2005), another New Austrian Film which features migrants, and which uses the Viennese café in a similarly subversive manner.

⁴⁷ Sathe, ‘Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema’, p. 238.

renowned New Year's Eve celebrations which are held annually at the site. In the hours leading up to midnight, crowds gather around the cathedral to celebrate the beginning of the New Year by waltzing to Johann Strauss II's iconic Austrian waltz, *An der schönen blauen Donau*. Albert's representation of this iconic site during this public celebration however once again dissolves the landmark of its national significance. Firstly, instead of offering the viewer an initial establishing shot of the square and the cathedral with which to identify, Albert chooses to leave the majority of the building out of shot, focussing instead on the characters which surround it. Secondly, as Jasmin, Tamara, Valentin and Senad put aside their personal, ethnic and religious differences to bring in the New Year by waltzing together around the perimeters of the cathedral, this iconic Austrian space is re-articulated as a central hub for the coming together of people from all walks of life. Albert thus, as Sathe notes, 'overwrites the locale's national significance,' featuring the famous Viennese landmark as a utopian site which unites conflicting cultures, religions and ethnicities.⁴⁸ Furthermore, by featuring the multicultural cast being physically united through their celebratory performance of the Viennese waltz, a prototypical Viennese dance that immediately evokes connotations of the city's high-culture and classical music reputation, Albert once again transcends the national significance of the iconic Viennese practice, applying it to a contemporary, multicultural, global context and imbuing it with positive, revolutionary

⁴⁸ Sathe, 'The Spaces of the Other Vienna', p. 107.

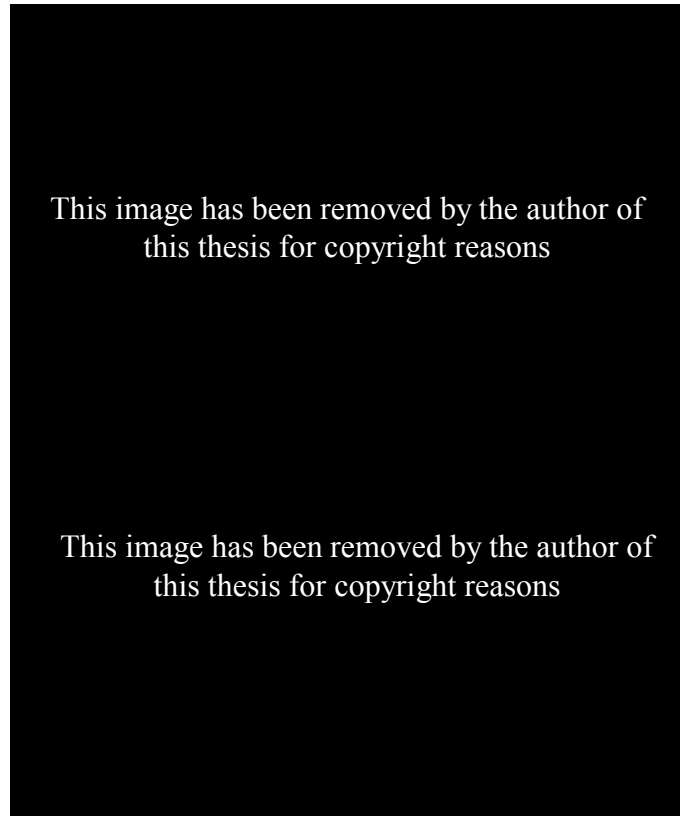


Figure 22: Jasmin, Tamara, Valentin and Senad put aside their personal, ethnic and religious differences to bring in the New Year by waltzing together to Johan Strauss II's *An der schönen blauen Donau* around the perimeters of the St. Stephen's Cathedral in Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

potential.⁴⁹ Albert's depiction of St. Stephen's Square thus echoes Phillip V. Bohlman's contemporary reading of this site which he describes in terms of a 'centre for Mitteleuropa.'⁵⁰ Bohlman argues that the famous landmark

⁴⁹ Also see Heide Kunzelmann and Elisabeth Mayerhofer, 'Viennese Inertia: Cultural and Political Deceleration and Local Identity Construction', in *Inert Cities: Globalisation, Mobility and Suspension in Visual Culture*, ed. by Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and Christopher Lindner (London: I.B. Taurus, 2014), pp. 129-152. Particularly p. 132 when they write, "'Waltzing in Vienna" today still forms an important part of the city's marketing concept, as a short video clip entitled *Alles Walzer* on Vienna's official 2013 marketing website illustrates (Wien Tourismus, 2013). Short impressions of dancing partners of mixed ethnic background [...] are complemented by a soundtrack that inconspicuously hints at the famous versions of Johann Strauss's waltzes ...'

⁵⁰ Philip Vilas Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Santa Barbara, CA.: ABC-CLIO, 2004), p. 162.

continues to embody the ‘multiculturalism of Habsburg Central Europe,’ when he writes:

With the massive gothic towers of St. Stephen’s Cathedral at its centre, the square itself lies at the confluence of many roads, pedestrian walkways, and mass transit arteries, all of them figuratively the spokes gathering the hub of a wheel. Metaphorically, these spokes extend from St. Stephen’s to the farthest reaches of the former empire, penetrating the lands of Central Europe. Even today, that metaphor is still credible for St. Stephen’s Square is filled with musical and cultural activities that juxtapose the symbolic centre – the cathedral and its ritual repertoires of sacred European art music – and the multicultural diversity of the street music that fills the square and the streets that empty on to it.⁵¹

Bohlman’s interpretation of St. Stephen’s Square as a symbol of *Mittleuropa* is echoed by a number of scholars, including Loshitzky, von Dassanowsky, and Wauchope, who read Albert’s multicultural representation of the famous Viennese landmark as an aesthetic allusion to Austria’s history as ‘a hub for polyglot Central Europe.’⁵² As Loshitzky notes, the cathedral and its square, which are ‘marked’ by the migrant characters in the film, serve to invoke a sense of nostalgia ‘toward the past glory of Mittleuropa.’⁵³ Indeed, while the film’s title, *Nordrand*, on the one hand refers directly to the internationally unrecognisable, poverty-stricken outskirts of Austria’s capital, where the majority of the film is set, it also, as Wauchope highlights, ‘points to a long-held image of Austria as a border-

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See Robert von Dassanowsky, ‘A Wave Over Boundaries: New Austrian Film,’ *Film International*, 6:31 (2008), p. 32; and Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 48.

⁵³ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 48.

land, outpost and bridge,' to Eastern Europe.⁵⁴ Albert's film successfully draws on Austria's historical position within the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a bridge between East and West, and applies it to a contemporary global-age setting, showcasing how, once again, Vienna has become 'home' to a variety of people from a multitude of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. By linking Austria's multicultural present back to the nation's naturally multicultural past, Albert actively counters the FPÖ's propagation of an ethnically pure notion of Austrian national identity. Furthermore, in 'marking' these famous Viennese spaces with images of multicultural cohabitation, thereby deterritorialising the nation's capital from an exclusively Austrian sense of space, Albert refers back to Austria's polyglot past, reminding the viewer that the city was and still is a multicultural, multi-ethnic territory.

A further tool used by Albert to obscure the national specificity of the film's location is her use of inserts, which appear throughout the film in the form of actual news footage. These inserts are often deployed by Albert as a means to dissolve the physical and symbolic boundaries that separate Austria and its neighbouring Balkan states. At the beginning of the film, for instance, the viewer is exposed to images of the Balkan War via a news report which is being shown on a television screen situated in a Viennese hospital waiting room. The footage depicts soldiers in uniform, military tanks, fighter jets and deceased Bosnian-Muslims. Albert then immediately follows this sequence with an insert depicting news footage of a military

⁵⁴ Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', p. 109.

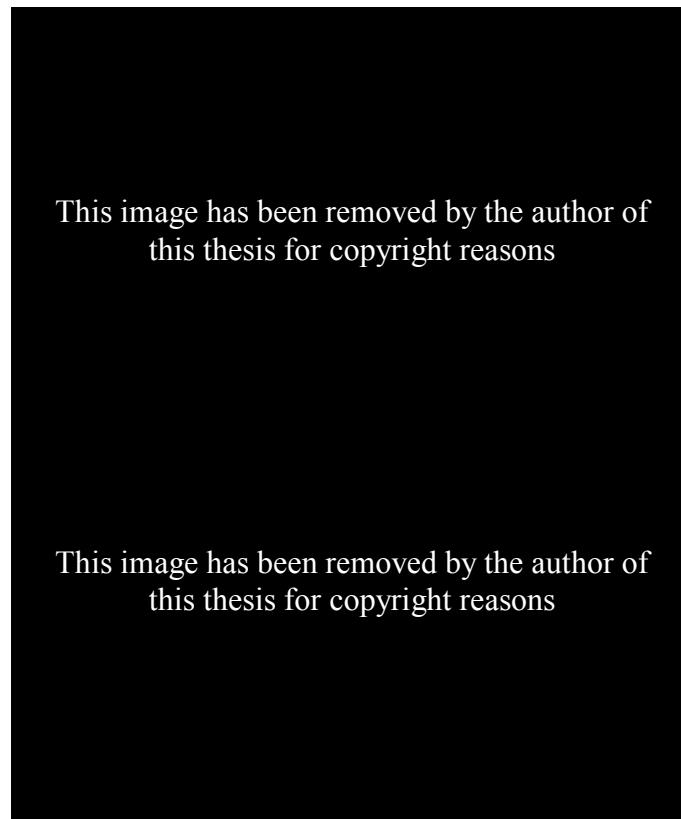


Figure 23: The inserts of actual news footage depicting the Bosnian War and inserts of footage representing an Austrian military parade, featured in direct succession, serve to dissolve the boundaries separating Austria from its neighbouring Balkan states in Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

parade taking place on the streets of Vienna. The viewer relies on the accompanying diegetic news report to determine the footage's Austrian location. By featuring actual news footage of the military presence in the Balkans alongside actual news footage of an Austrian military parade, Albert not only alludes to a 'private war' taking place on Austrian soil – a theme which will be explored later in this chapter – but she also initially makes it difficult for the viewer to identify whether or not the action on

screen is taking place in Vienna or Sarajevo.⁵⁵ The viewer's confusion therefore allows for the geographical and symbolic boundaries separating Austria and its neighbouring Balkan states to become blurred. Indeed, without the aural cues of the respective news reporters, the two cities appear almost indistinguishable.⁵⁶ The national specificity of the Austrian capital is thus obscured.

Transient Spaces, Transient People

Albert's film may present Vienna as an ethnoscape, depicting a variety of people of different ethnic backgrounds traversing the Viennese landscape, however, the Austrian capital is never represented as a stable or nurturing *Heimat*. Indeed, as Loshitzky rightly observes, the Vienna portrayed in *Nordrand* 'is a place of transit, not a fixed home.'⁵⁷ Albert's representation of the Viennese landscape and the characters who occupy it both substantiate this assertion. Firstly, the Austrian capital is successfully represented as a transitional space through Albert's use of tracking shots. On a number of occasions, the film will cut to a tracking shot taken through the window of a moving, train, tram, car or bus. As a result, the city skyline and the suburban backdrop are often distorted by passing objects, steamed-up windows, and the reflection of the light from inside of the cabin. These moving and often blurred images of the Viennese cityscape are captured

⁵⁵ Also see Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema', p. 236 and Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', p. 110. Both Wauchope and Sathe offer other insights into Albert's use of inserts.

⁵⁶ The confusion between news footage and onscreen action is also a technique used by Austrian filmmaker, Michael Haneke.

⁵⁷ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 50.

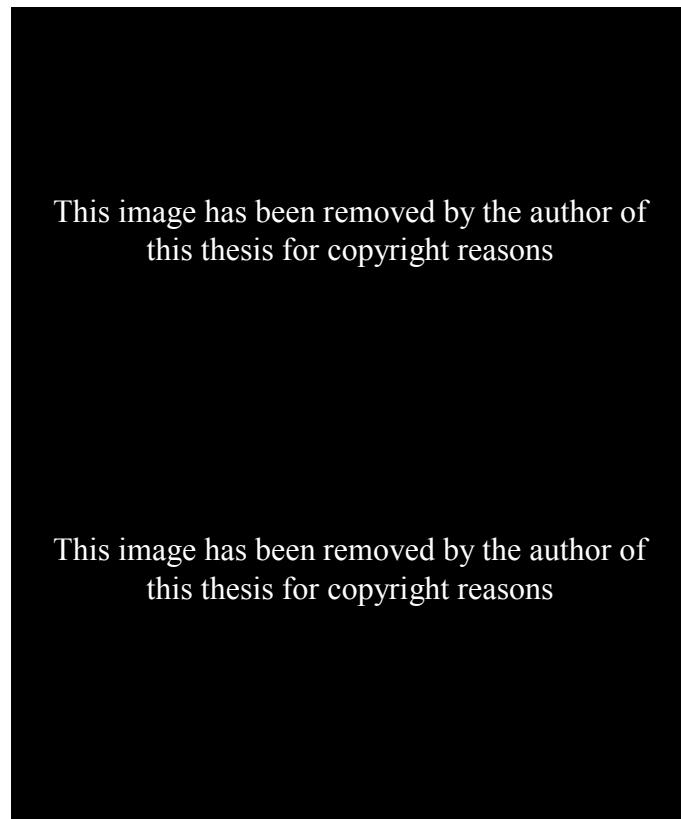


Figure 24: The Viennese landscape is obscured by steamed windows and public transport in Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

from the point of view of the four main characters, Jasmin, Tamara, Valentin and Senad, who all look out at the city from various modes of transport. As Vienna – their current city of residence – literally passes them by, Albert draws attention to their respective transient statuses.

Firstly, Tamara, the daughter of a Yugoslavian Serbian family born and raised in Vienna, is regularly depicted on or around various modes of transport throughout the course of Albert's film.⁵⁸ On a number of occasions the camera observes Tamara as she loiters in and around the periphery of Vienna's *International Busterminal*, waiting for her on-off boyfriend

⁵⁸ The actress who plays Tamara, Edita Malovčić, was also born in Vienna to Serbian parents.

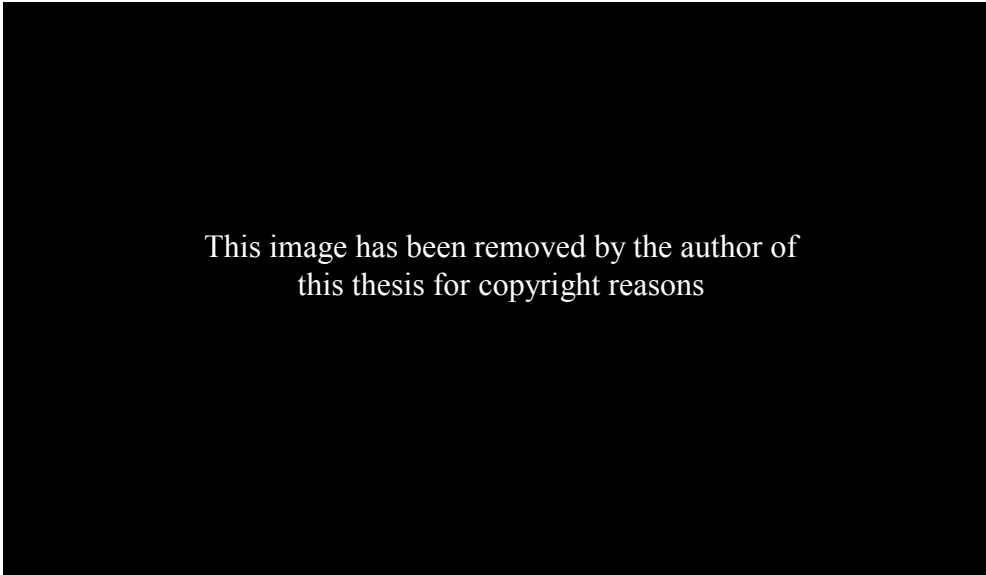
Roman to return from his military duty, and gazing longingly at the list of departure destinations on the wall. Although, in comparison to the other three protagonists, Tamara appears to live a stable and comfortable life in the Austrian capital, working as a nurse at the city hospital and occupying a cosy semi-detached house in the Viennese suburbs, her frequent position on board trains, buses and trams (along with the posters of mountain ranges and sailing ships which adorn her bedroom wall) allude to her clear desire to be elsewhere. In his work on the *accented film*, Hamid Naficy argues that certain modes of transport, namely buses and trains, make regular appearances in films dealing with migrants. As Naficy explains, by boarding these various vehicles, the migrant characters are able to renegotiate ‘notions of travelling, homing and identity.’⁵⁹ This is clearly the case for Tamara. Following her brother’s death in Sarajevo and her family’s return to Yugoslavia, Vienna no longer provides the comfort and stability that Tamara desires. She therefore boards buses, trains and trams as a means of teasing out the tensions between home and away, between *Heimat* and *Ferne*. As she stares out at the Viennese landscape which passes her by at great speed, her city of birth becomes blurred and distorted. Hence, these tracking shots not only indicate Tamara’s ostensible wish to escape Vienna, but also her increasing alienation from her own home.

The Romanian illegal immigrant Valentin’s transient position is also indicated by images of transport and mobility. Despite his seemingly stable

⁵⁹ Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 257. Naficy also adds that representations of modes of transport frequently display a dialectical relationship ‘between the inside closed spaces of the vehicles and the outside open spaces of nature and nation.’ The various scenes involving Tamara on a variety of modes of transport could therefore also allude to her wish to escape Austria.

home set-up with his elderly grandmother in her Viennese apartment, her old age and regular trips to the hospital's accident and emergency department suggest that he will not be able to rely on her for much longer. Furthermore, as an illegal immigrant, Valentin is unable to secure a stable career for himself in Vienna and must make an income through the informal trading of second-hand goods from the back of his vehicle. His van thus constitutes both his place of work and his living quarters, reinforcing his insecure status as an illegal immigrant. Unhappy with his life in Vienna, Valentin dreams of emigrating to America – a dream which is reflected by the American flag mural which spans the perimeter of his van. Valentin's van therefore not only symbolises his transient and insecure status as an illegal immigrant in Austria but also reflects his visible desire to leave Austria for America.

Like in Houchang Allahyari's *I Love Vienna* and Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington*, America once again constitutes the migrant characters' desired destination, while Vienna is once more relegated to the position of transit zone. Furthermore, in a similar manner to *I Love Vienna* and *Suzie Washington*, it appears highly unlikely that Valentin will actually reach his dream destination, and thus America appears yet again as a utopia. As Valentin boards a bus to an unknown destination at the film's conclusion, his final destination is never actually confirmed to the viewer. However, as Albert cuts to an image of a woman waiting by a bus stop in an unspecified rural location (the same woman who is depicted watching a Romanian news report at the beginning of the film) it is implied, but never confirmed, that



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Figure 25: Valentin's desire to leave Austria for America is reflected by the American flag which adorns his van in Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

Valentin is returning to Romania to be with a former lover and his newborn child. Furthermore, after failing to obtain a counterfeit passport, Valentin lacks the appropriate documentation to feasibly be able to travel to America. Hence, as Loshitzky notes in her analysis of a number of migrant and diasporic films, America is 'presented as a phantom structure, an absent centre of the immigrant's escape fantasy.'⁶⁰ Valentin's apparent inability to reach America is reinforced by Albert in the scene where Valentin is made aware that the counterfeit passport that he has paid for does not actually exist. As he discovers that Rocco, another illegal immigrant who deals in counterfeit passports and visas, has taken his money and run, Valentin is depicted crying in a scrapyard, situated in front of a stack of scrap vehicles. The car, once a signifier of hope, mobility and endless possibility in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, is now stripped of its tyres and engine, constituting an

⁶⁰ Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 49.

analogy for his sudden immobility and, in extension, his probable inability to reach his dream destination.⁶¹

Jasmin, the native Austrian protagonist, is similarly represented in various scenes of transience and mobility. As a result of her turbulent home-life, she is seen to drift from one apartment block to another until she ultimately finds domicile in Tamara's home. That Jasmin is of native-Austrian origin and is seen to experience a similar degree of homelessness to her migrant companions is highly significant, as Albert once again destabilises the boundaries separating native Austrian and migrant characters within the film. As a number of scholars including Wauchope, Lorenz, Loshitzky and Heiss all observe, Jasmin is homeless at home, indicating that homelessness and displacement are conditions which are by no means exclusive to people of a migrant background.⁶² While Heiss argues that it is the underprivileged Austrians 'who are the real marginalised characters in the film,'⁶³ Loshitzky recognises the 'gewisse *Heimatlosigkeit*' with which Albert's film engages, acknowledging that all four of the film's protagonists, Tamara, Jasmin, Valentin and Senad, have all escaped their homes or homelands due to public (political) or private (domestic) war.⁶⁴ Where Tamara, Valentin and Senad have sought domicile in Vienna due to their physical displacement engendered by war, or economic or political uncertainty in their original homelands, Jasmin actively attempts to leave

⁶¹ The desire to escape a hostile Germany/Austria for the USA is a recurring motif of the anti-*Heimatfilm* mode. See for instance Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* (1984), Volker Schlöndorff's *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) and more recently, Stefan Ruzowitzky's *Die Siebtelbauern* (1998).

⁶² See Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', p. 112; and Lorenz, 'A New Community of Women', p. 81.

⁶³ Heiss, 'Multilingual Films and Integration?', p. 210.

⁶⁴ See Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 50.

her Viennese home and family in response to the domestic war which rages in her household at the hands of her abusive father. Indeed, referring back to Albert's use of inserts, which serve to link contemporary Austrian society to the war raging just over the border in Sarajevo, in her representation of the Austrian nuclear family, and in particular her depiction of Austrian men, Albert demonstrates that there is a private war taking place in Austria within the domestic home; one which Jasmin seeks exile from throughout the course of the film. Images of border crossings and escape are therefore not exclusive to characters of a migrant background. For instance, whereas Senad is depicted leaving Yugoslavia and illegally crossing the border into Austria, Jasmin can be seen escaping from the confines of her bedroom, climbing out of the first-floor window and landing on the ground below. Stories of border crossings, the search for identity, and the longing for *Heimat* are thus represented as human experiences; not necessarily migrant ones.

The Warzone at Home

Albert's symbolic representation of the Austrian home as a warzone in the film is, as Dagmar Lorenz writes, 'informed by feminist theory and an awareness of the ideas feminist intellectuals and artists advocated in the 1970s and 1980s.'⁶⁵ While Albert does not 'instil activism,' and 'lacks the leftist fervour of the 1960s and 1970s,' she does, as Lorenz continues, 'integrate feminist concerns with issues at the forefront of Austrian turn-of-

⁶⁵ Lorenz, 'A New Community of Women', p. 81.

the-millennium debates,' ultimately reinstating 'a fundamental message of the earlier feminist movement for the new global situation shaped by war, radicalised nationalism and misogyny.'⁶⁶ Her critical representation of domestic abuse in her film echoes the manner in which the Austrian nuclear family was attacked in the works of her feminist literary colleagues. As Elizabeth Snyder Hook, Mattias Konzett, Jacqueline Vasant and Heidi Schlipphacke all observe, much of the postwar anti-*Heimat* literary works of so-called *Nestbeschmutzers*, such as Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek, Ingeborg Bachmann and Elizabeth Reichart, reflect critically on the authors' native Austria through the *unheimlich* image of the family home and in particular through the representation of disrupted gender dynamics.⁶⁷

Works by the female writers, Jelinek, Bachmann and Reichart in particular, attempted to unmask the 'everyday fascism' and oppressive patriarchal structures that continued to remain in Austrian society following the end of the Holocaust and the Second World War in 1945. They exposed a private war between the sexes within Austrian households; a site where both Bachmann and Jelinek have openly stated that they believe the origins of fascism to originate. In an interview in (1973) Bachmann for example famously announced:

Ich habe schon vorher darüber nachgedacht, wo fängt der Faschismus an. Er fängt nicht an mit den ersten Bomben, die geworfen wurden, er fängt nicht

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 81-91.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Snyder Hook, *Family Secrets and the Contemporary German Novel: Literary Explorations in the Aftermath of the Third Reich* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2001); Schlipphacke, *Nostalgia After Nazism*; Mattias Konzett, *The Rhetoric of National Dissent in Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, and Elfriede Jelinek* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House; Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000); Jacqueline Vasant, *Against the Horizon: Feminism and Postwar Austrian Women Writers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

an mit dem Terror, über den man schreiben kann, in jeder Zeitung. Er fängt an in Beziehungen zwischen Menschen. Der Faschismus ist das erste in der Beziehung zwischen einem Mann und einer Frau.⁶⁸

The ideas brought forward by Bachmann in this brief excerpt resonate strongly with Albert's representation of the Austrian family and in particular with her depiction of abusive Austrian men. Indeed, the majority of Austrian males featured in Albert's film are represented as aggressive and abusive: a sentiment which is once again ironically contrasted with the diegetic sound of school children singing the national anthem at the film's beginning: 'Land der Hämmer, zukunftsreich!/ Heimat bist du großer Söhne/ Volk, begnadet für das Schöne/ vielgerühmtes Österreich/ vielgerühmtes Österreich!' The aggression and abusive nature that characterises the Austrian men in the film is seen in direct relation to the political climate and the images of war to which the viewer is exposed. As Lorenz highlights, 'the male realm is visually and acoustically associated with aggression, war and the military.'⁶⁹ For instance, in one particular scene, Albert cuts from longshots of the city's military parade to close-up shots of the crowds, which are dominated by Austrian men supporting their troops in an aggressive and antagonistic manner. Once the parade is over, the viewer then observes Jasmin's on-off boyfriend Wolfi rape Jasmin in an alleyway following an evening of drinking. These cuts aim to draw parallels between the nation's military and its male population, suggesting that although these men are not

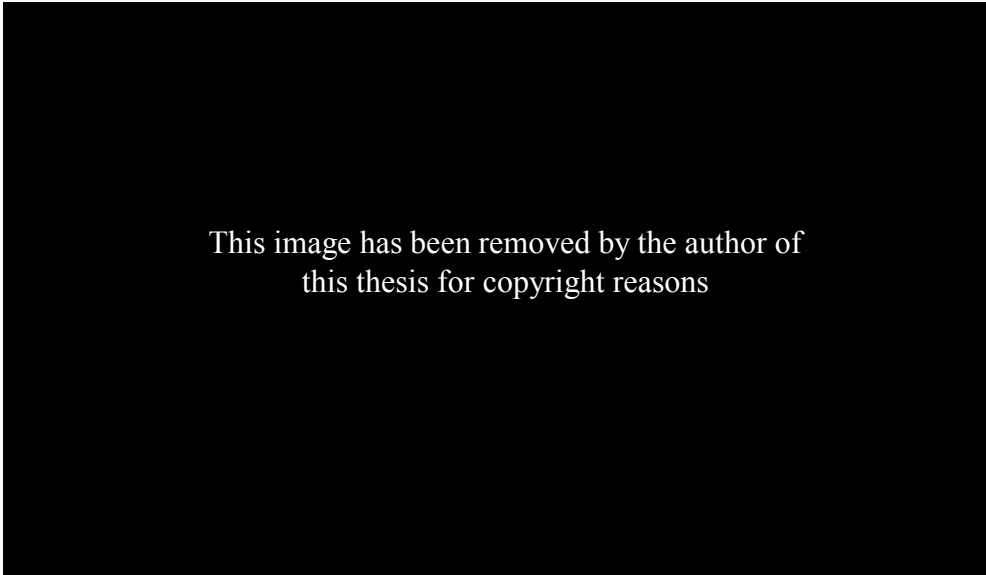
⁶⁸ Ingeborg Bachmann, *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden: Gespräche und Interviews* (Munich: Piper, 1983), p. 144.

⁶⁹ Lorenz, 'A New Community of Women', p. 90.

fighting in the political war in the former Yugoslavia, they continue to perpetuate a private war in their own homes. The flashes of light and the loud bangs that can be seen and heard during the New Year's Eve firework display outside St. Stephen's Cathedral momentarily display Vienna as a warzone, further alluding to the 'hidden' domestic war which continues to rage within Austrian households.

This private, domestic war between the sexes can most clearly be observed in Albert's representation of Jasmin, who is represented in the film as a victim of an abusive, patriarchal Austria. Her abuse begins at home in the small flat that she shares with her father, mother, and a number of younger siblings in the dilapidated northern outskirts of Vienna. Throughout the film her father can be seen to physically and sexually abuse Jasmin and her younger sister. One harrowing scene, for instance, depicts Jasmin's younger sister being forced to perform a sex act on her father, while Jasmin, who shares a room with her sister, covers her ears and closes her eyes to momentarily escape from the abuse that her sister is being subjected to. In these scenes of domestic and incestuous abuse, Albert categorically destroys the redemptive power of the Austrian nuclear family, revealing that an escape from the family home is the only option.⁷⁰ Unfortunately for Jasmin, however, abuse is not exclusive to the confines of her household as yet more abuse awaits her at the hands of Wolfi and his friends. When she becomes pregnant with Wolfi's child at the beginning of the film, the only option for Jasmin

⁷⁰ Depictions of incest and sexual abuse within the family is also a common trope in recent anti-*Heimatfilme*. See Michael Haneke's *Das weiße Band* (2009) and Hans Sebastian Steinbichler's *Hierankl* (2003), for example.



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Figure 26: Jasmin escapes the abuse and neglect of the family home in search of a *Heimat* elsewhere in Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

is to abort the child to avoid the inevitability of having to bring up the baby in a physically, sexually and emotionally abusive environment. Abortion thus functions as a redemptive act within Albert's film, liberating Jasmin from an undoubtedly abusive and unfulfilling future with Wolfi which would repeat the cycle of abuse that characterises her own traumatic upbringing.

It is only when Jasmin is rejected by Wolfi, following yet more acts of sexual and physical violence and humiliation, that she may finally find comfort and affection in the arms of the Bosnian refugee Senad. The image of Austrian abusive patriarchy is thus counterpointed against the male immigrants, who act as positive representatives of masculinity in the film, thereby compelling the viewer to critically assess the xenophobic climate to which the film responds. The migrant men, Senad

and Valentin, are both dealt with sympathetically by the director, ultimately reinforcing that the abusive patriarchy as demonstrated in Albert's film is a specifically Austrian tradition. Senad for instance, who is introduced to the viewer when illegally crossing the Austrian border, risks being caught by border officials when he rescues Jasmin from inevitable hypothermia after she has been abandoned on the banks of the river Danube by Wolfi's friends following a night of heavy drinking. As Senad assists Jasmin, placing his pair of gloves beneath her head to stop her face from touching the icy ground, he proceeds to remove her purse from her pocket in order to identify her. As he rifles through Jasmin's purse, the viewer may initially identify with the stereotypical image of migrants as perpetrators of crime (as observed in much of the post-1990 German-migrant cinema) and assume that he is about to steal from her.⁷¹ However, it soon becomes clear that Albert deploys these negative stereotypes with the intention of challenging them. Indeed, when Jasmin is discharged from hospital and Senad returns Jasmin's purse to her with all the cash and contents still present inside, Albert wholly subverts the image as propagated by Haider's Freedom Party's 'Austria First' initiative in 1992, that immigrants were responsible for the increase of crime in Austria at the beginning of 1990s.⁷²

Not only does Senad rescue Jasmin from inevitable hypothermia but, during their brief but meaningful relationship together, he also offers

⁷¹ See Rob Burns, 'Towards a Cinema of Cultural Hybridity: Turkish-German Filmmakers and the Representation of Alterity', *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 15:1 (2007), p. 7.

⁷² Terri E. Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 37-38.

Jasmin the romance, compassion and affection that was wholly absent from her previous sexual relations with Austrian men. For instance, while Jasmin's sexual partners immediately leave following (often violent) sexual activity, Senad not only refuses Jasmin's sexual advances but, as he leaves for work one morning, he places a gift for her on her pillow. The brief relationship between Valentin and Tamara in the film similarly offers the viewer a positive image of sensitive masculinity and sexual intimacy. Towards the end of the film, the viewer observes Valentin and Tamara engaged in a warm embrace following sexual intercourse, which is heavily contrasted with the scenes of sexual abuse portrayed between Jasmin and the Austrian men at the beginning of the film.

Albert's positive representation of possible multicultural relationships as a counterpoint to abusive Austrian relationships once again contributes to her filmic deterritorialisation of *Heimat*. Subverting biological essentialism, the film suggests that its female protagonists can only find love, companionship and stability once they reject a culturally homogenous way of life in Austria and seek new modes of belonging that exist outside of ethnic and cultural boundaries. These new modes of belonging, as I shall now demonstrate, also extend to new formations of the family. Indeed, although the migrant men offer the women brief moments of affection, romance and stability, at the film's conclusion the women choose to continue their lives without the men in favour of an all-female environment. Living within the same household and planning to raise Jasmin's baby together following another unexpected pregnancy,

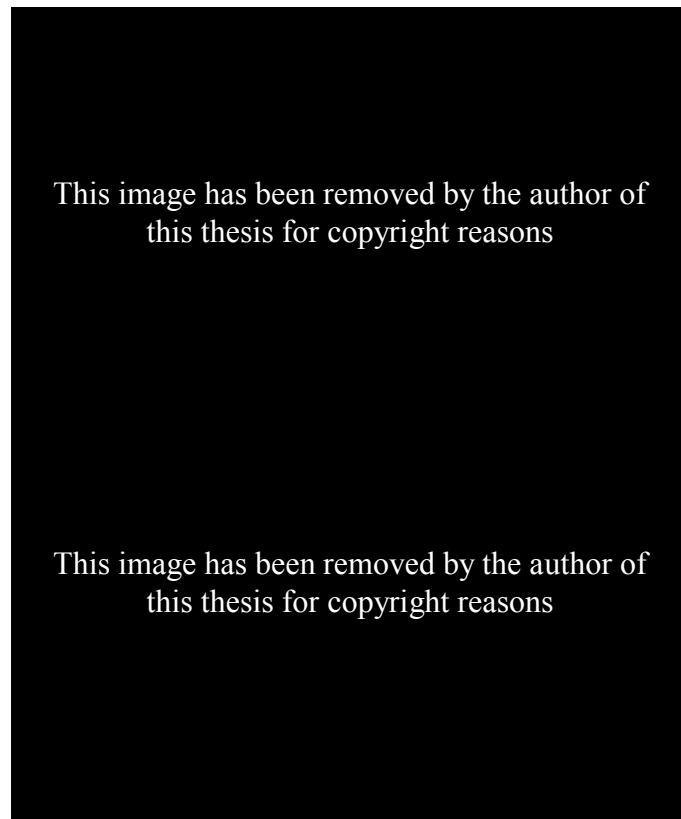


Figure 27: Abusive Austrian males and the ‘private war’ in the home in Barbara Albert’s *Nordrand* (1999). DVD capture

Tamara and Jasmin’s all-female domestic set-up, as Lorenz argues, thus ‘represents a paradigm for a subtle power shift and potential social transformation.’⁷³ Their rejection of traditional modes of belonging, including heterosexual relationships, marriage and the nuclear family, in favour of a transcendental ‘new sisterhood’ that is formed on the basis of gender segregation, is viewed by Lorenz as radical.⁷⁴ Indeed *Nordrand*’s conclusion resonates strongly with the ideas posed by the more radical feminist works of Austrian female writers, including Bachmann and Jelinek, which resolutely destroy the image of the nuclear family and of heteronormative relations. In reference to these literary works, Vasant

⁷³ Lorenz, ‘A New Community of Women’, p. 92.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 83-91.

writes, ‘only when the women cease to centre their world around men, when they cultivate independence and develop a more affirmative opinion of the female sex, is a basis for lasting friendship and political solidarity imaginable.’⁷⁵ Thus, in a similar manner to her feminist colleagues, Albert promotes female solidarity and new, all-female familial set-ups as an antidote to the hostile environment that characterises contemporary Austrian life.

Conclusion

Albert may offer a bleak representation of contemporary Austrian society that lives up to New Austrian Film’s ‘feel-bad’ reputation, yet it is not devoid of hope. In a globalised world characterised by movement, dislocation, and migration, the search for a *Heimat* is a complicated one, however Albert accordingly offers her viewers positive images of new, redemptive modes of belonging which defy spatial, ethnic and gendered boundaries.

The confusion that is generated at the end of the film regarding each of the characters’ ultimate geographical location seeks to posit the

⁷⁵ Vasant, *Against the Horizon*, p.113. Also see Allyson Fiddler, ‘Demythologising the Austrian “Heimat”: Elfriede Jelinek as “Nestbeschmutzer”’, in *From High Priests to Desecrators: Contemporary Austrian Writers*, ed. by Ricarda Schmidt and Moray McGowan (Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 25-44.

protagonists in physical and symbolic states of transition.⁷⁶ For Valentin and Senad, for instance, Vienna no longer provides economic prosperity or refuge for its Eastern neighbours. Thus, whether these characters return to their original homelands or embark on a quest for a new *Heimat* elsewhere – fates which are purposefully left open to interpretation by Albert as the characters are depicted on unspecified modes of transport at the film's conclusion – they are nevertheless compelled to seek a new life away from a hostile and unwelcoming Vienna. Tamara and Jasmin on the other hand are situated in similar states of transition. However, their journey, the film suggests, is more of a psychological journey rather than that of a physical homecoming. Indeed, following a conversation in which both of the women agree to bring up Jasmin's child together, both characters are once again seen to traverse the Viennese landscape by foot (Jasmin) and by train (Tamara). Only this time the two women smile out at the landscape in front of them, liberated by their new constructed family constellation which defies traditional, culturally homogenous and heteronormative values. As the viewer witnesses a jubilant Jasmin running from one side of a bridge to the other (away from a group of Austrian men who are verbally antagonising her), she is seen to experience a metaphysical journey, marking a shift from a life of abuse and patriarchal servitude to a new life based on intercultural acceptance and female solidarity. Furthermore, by rejecting a previous abusive,

⁷⁶ For instance, Wauchope believes that Valentin embarks on a journey to America, while Sathe and Loshitzky believe that he is returning to his ex-lover in Romania; Wauchope and Sathe believe that Tamara is onboard a train to visit her family in Sarajevo but Lorenz believes that she is staying in Vienna to raise a child with Jasmin. See Lorenz, 'A New Community of Women', p. 92; Wauchope, 'Place and Space of Contemporary Austria in Barbara Albert's Feature Films', p. 112; Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers*, p. 49; and Sathe, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema', p. 237.

culturally homogenous and heteronormative way of life, and in forming new bonds outside of cultural, traditional and heteronormative boundaries, Jasmin, as Deborah Chambers argues, ‘prioritises the assertion of personal values over biological ties’ and thus ‘undermine[s] claims to racial and ethnic purity.’⁷⁷

In *Nordrand*, Albert ultimately promotes change over tradition, mobility over stasis and hybridity over homogeneity in a bid to remind her Austrian (and international) viewers that there is no such thing as a purely Austrian national identity or geographical space. Her film can thus be read as a criticism of, and a counter image to, the right-wing discourse that was finding political prominence at the time of filming. Valentin and Senad’s inability to find a *Heimat* in Vienna at the film’s conclusion, and the difficulty that both characters will no doubt face in seeking a suitable *Heimat* elsewhere, stands as a critical representation of the political and geographical barriers that prevent asylum seekers and economic migrants from having access to a safe and economically stable place to call home. However, while Senad and Valentin are unsuccessful in their bid for a ‘place’ to call home, Jasmin and Tamara seek modes of belonging that defy geographical and spatial boundaries. *Heimat* for them has thus been deterritorialised from a nationally specific sense of space. In a world where geographical and political barriers are erected as quickly as they are abolished, Albert offers images of non-spatial modes of belonging centred on the notions of female solidarity and intercultural relationships

⁷⁷ Deborah Chambers, *Representing the Family* (London: Sage, 2001), p. 149.

as antidotes to contemporary physical and social dislocation and alienation.

Conclusion

By exploring a number of New Austrian Films from a semantic/syntactic approach as outlined by Rick Altman, and in viewing the *Heimatfilm* genre as part of an evolving and dynamic process, we are able to determine that these films and their filmmakers can be seen to actively engage with the enduring legacy of the *Heimatfilm* genre. Indeed, while the films explored in this thesis may, on the surface, appear to lack the semantic iconography of the classical 1950s *Heimatfilm*, the period at which the genre is commonly considered to have reached its zenith, by exploring the multifaceted history of the *Heimatfilm*, and the various socio-political conditions to which these films respond, we are able to determine that these New Austrian Films should be considered an integral and fruitful development of the genre.

Certainly, as chapter one successfully demonstrated, an in-depth analysis into the multifaceted and often contradictory history of the *Heimatfilm*, from its inception in the 1920s up until the present day, reveals what Paul Cooke considers to be ‘the impossible heterogeneity’ of the genre.¹ This ostensible heterogeneity is of course rooted in the difficulty one faces when attempting to define the term *Heimat* itself. As I outlined in my introduction, *Heimat* has not only survived the various geographical, political, social, and cultural transformations that the German-speaking lands have experienced over the past three centuries but the term has also

¹ Paul Cooke, ‘The Heimat Film in the Twenty-First Century: Negotiating the New German Cinema to Return to Papas Kino’, in *Generic Histories of German Cinema: Genre and its Deviations* (Rochester, N.Y; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2013), p. 224.

been appropriated across a wide spectrum of political fields and cultural registers. Even when the term seemed invalid, obsolete and redundant, it was reinvented in often contradictory ways making it, particularly today, virtually impossible to be conveyed by a single English word. The incongruity of the term is further exacerbated by the binary oppositions that *Heimat* discourse naturally generates. The seemingly opposing yet mutually exclusive concepts of the local and the national, tradition and modernity and *Heimat* and *Fremde*, for example, as outlined in my introduction, are just a few examples of the numerous contradictions that the field of *Heimat* embodies. Instead of simply viewing these terms as binary oppositions, we should, as numerous scholars including Boa and Palfreyman, Paul Cooke and Johannes von Moltke acknowledge, examine the ways in which these apparent polarities are being negotiated and thus acknowledge the extent to which they are, as rightfully recognised by von Moltke, ‘mutually contingent on one another.’²

The manner in which these ostensibly opposing concepts undergo a process of negotiation is particularly evident when we look to the *Heimatfilm* genre and its legacy throughout German and Austrian film history. When *Heimat* emerged onto cinema screens via the *Bergfilme* of the 1920s and 30s, for instance, the term had absorbed the National Socialist ideology and pitted *Heimat* and *Fremde* in diametric opposition to each other. Films including Luis Trenker’s *Der verlorene Sohn* (1934), for example, acknowledged the exotic appeal of faraway places, yet ultimately reaffirmed a pure Germanic *Heimat*, which stood as an exclusive and

² Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), p. 33.

exclusionary sanctuary away from the chaos and evils of foreign peoples and places. *Heimat* in these films referred to an organic Germanic homeland. *Heimat* therefore could not be claimed elsewhere but could be reclaimed only upon return to the original Germanic place of birth.

In the 1950s, however, *Heimat* experienced a remarkable rejuvenation. No longer was it associated with the *Blut und Boden* ideology of the Nazi period, but the term was reinvented and pluralised to not only register the lost *Heimat* of the Eastern expellees but also to introduce the possibility of a new *Heimat* elsewhere. Films including Alfons Stümmer's *Echo der Berge* and Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide*, for example, adopted the stock character of the Silesian expellee in order to offer a visual representation of successful reintegration into a West German or Austrian *Heimat* following their forced expulsion from their original homeland. A number of these classical 1950s *Heimatfilme* also incorporated the processes of mobility, technologisation and modernisation into what, on the surface, appeared to be a 'pure and untouched' rural idyll.³ Indeed, as films including *Echo der Berge* and Alfred Stöger's *Rendezvous im Salzkammergut* (1948) reveal, these processes no longer constituted a threat to the rural *Heimat* but could be negotiated within the West German and Austrian rural terrain.

Although these classical 1950s *Heimatfilme* were famously dubbed 'the quintessential "bad object"' of German-language film historiography by Johannes von Moltke due to the genre's failure to critically engage with the

³ See Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 43.

nations' National Socialist pasts, these films did however, nevertheless, overtly engage with the dislocation and national identity crises that characterised these postwar years.⁴ Indeed, as my analysis of a number of 1950s *Heimatfilme* reveals, not only did refugees and displaced persons become the semantic iconography of this era, but mobility and identity negotiation were also inscribed into the films' syntax. These films can thus be seen to actively engage with the *Fremde*, offering viewers a positive image of relocation and rehabilitation which overwrites the expellees' and refugees' initial 'otherness.'

The New Austrian Films studied in this thesis draw on the semantics of dislocation and displacement that formed a vital trope in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*. However, as my case study chapters reveal, their deployment of this semantic component is highly diverse. Indeed, Houchang Allahyari, Florian Flicker and Barbara Albert all engage with Austria's 'others' in their films, yet they reconfigure the generic syntax of the 1950s *Heimatfilm* by refusing to offer viewers a positive image of successful relocation on Austrian soil. Indeed, while the 1950s *Heimatfilm* successfully renegotiated *Heimat* in order to show that one person can lose one *Heimat* and gain another (thus removing the term from a nationalist, ancestral dimension), these films nevertheless still tied *Heimat* to territory. The titles of a number of 1950s *Heimatfilme*, for instance, are overwhelmingly linked to Austrian and German locations, including the Lüneberg Heath (*Grün ist die Heide*), the Salzkammergut (*Rendezvous im Salzkammergut*), the Silver Forest (*Der*

⁴ Johannes von Moltke, 'Evergreens: The Heimat Genre', in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk (London: British Film Institute, 2002), p. 18.

Förster vom Silberwald), the Black Forest (*Schwarzwaldmädel*) and the Loibnerhof (*Der Loibnerbauer*). These Austrian and German locations, as Fritsche notes, were featured in these various film titles as a means to ‘assure the audience that *Heimat* is a “real” existing place that can be found on the map.’⁵ Thus, the German-speaking lands are propagated in these films as the new *Heimat* – a real, functioning transcendental space which can provide a new homeland to those who have been expelled or alienated from their original homeland.

While the New Austrian Films discussed in this thesis do indeed directly reference real locations in their titles, their engagements with space and place is, on the otherhand, highly ambivalent. Allahyari’s *I Love Vienna*, for example, on the surface, could be read as a proclamation of love for the Austrian capital. However, Allahyari’s film exposes Vienna, which has been repeatedly propagated by Austria’s film and tourist industries, as a myth. Indeed, unlike the Vienna of Marischka’s *Sissi* trilogy, which buttresses a multicultural identity beneath all of its imperial grandeur, the Vienna that Ali Mohammed and his family are confronted with upon their arrival in the city is exposed as a liminal, antagonistic, exclusionary Austrian space. Furthermore, unlike the Austrian locations depicted in the 1950s *Heimatfilm*, Allahyari’s Austria categorically rejects the world’s desperate refugees and refuses them a safe and stable home. Albert’s *Nordrand*, which could also be seen to specifically reference the Austrian capital in its title, similarly presents Vienna as a hostile and uninviting space which fails to offer a *Heimat* to both the film’s native Austrian and migrant

⁵ Maria Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre and Masculinity* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), p. 104.

characters. Both of these films can therefore be seen to refer to real, functioning Austrian spaces, like in the classical *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s, yet they seek to undo the positive images of Austrian spaces that the 1950s *Heimatfilme* previously portrayed.

What is also interesting about the manner in which the three New Austrian Films studied in this thesis register place in their titles, is that they all indicate the international dimension of the Austrian spaces in which the films are set. *Nordrand*, for example, as discussed in chapter four of this thesis, not only refers to the northern skirts of Vienna but also to Austria's historical and current position as an inter-determinate borderland, where, as Nikhil Sathé writes, 'numerous cultures already appear in dialogue and flux.'⁶ Albert's film's title thus not only states the film's physical location – the northern skirts of the capital city – but it also implicitly reminds viewers of the Austrian nation's geographical position in the centre of Europe.

Florian Flicker's *Suzie Washington*, meanwhile, explicitly references an American tourist in its title (whose surname is also the name of an American city and state.) As discussed throughout this thesis, America has not only stood as a clear point of reference in a number of *Heimatfilme* since the genre's inception in the 1920s but the location also features heavily in the narrative trajectory of all three of the films studied in this thesis. Indeed, *I Love Vienna*, *Suzie Washington* and *Nordrand* all continue to reference America in their plot and aesthetics, deploying the country as a target destination for a number of their migrant characters. However, while

⁶ Nikhil Sathé, 'Crossing Borders in Austrian Cinema at the Turn of the Century: Flicker, Allahyari, Albert', in *New Austrian Film*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck (New York: Berghahn, 2011), p. 238.

the films may on the surface seem to relocate *Heimat* from Austria to America in all three of the films, the filmmakers intentionally culminate their works with an open-ending; refusing to reveal to the viewer if their protagonists reach their desired destination. America thus, as in a number of migrant and diasporic films (and in a number of the critical-/anti *Heimatfilme* of the 1960s and 70s), functions as a ‘no place;’ as an unobtainable utopia for these migrant characters.

By deploying America as a fantasy destination in their films, Allahyari, Flicker and Albert firstly emphasise the abstract, psychological nature of *Heimat* and its physical, geographical limitations. The dream *Heimat* of America does not exist as a physical, tangible, real geographic location in these films but instead represents a fantasy space; a utopia which stands for the senses of freedom, unity, safety, identity and belonging which the films’ *heimatlos* characters go to such extreme lengths to obtain. More importantly, however, by representing America as a utopia, these filmmakers reinforce the migrant characters’ liminal existence in a globalised world which is nevertheless only traversable for just some of the global populace.⁷ As ‘vagabonds;’ as migrants and refugees from the ‘wrong’ side of the East/West border, America, which of course is a real, existing geographic location, is relegated to the realms of fantasy for these migrant characters.

While each of the films’ engagements with space is highly diverse, all of the films do indeed reveal the limitations of territorial ties and

⁷ See Yosefa Loshitzky, *Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 2.

geographic boundaries. Indeed, what each of the films have in common, is that they all reveal that in a contemporary world which is characterised by displacement and migration, movements of people that are precipitated by a variety of different factors, the static conception of *Heimat* as an originary birthplace and birth-right no longer exists. Furthermore, by taking into account the discrepancy in access to global flows and movements, and in bearing in mind the racial, ethnic and religious boundaries that are continuing to be erected while other borders fall, these films prove that we must look to new, alternate, non-geographical modes of belonging if we want to feel ‘at home’ in the world. Indeed, as Morley and Robins conclude, ‘in this world, there is no longer any place like *Heimat*.’⁸ Certainly, as demonstrated in the New Austrian Films discussed in this thesis, the concept of *Heimat* no longer needs to be tied to territory. This does not however mean that we should abandon the concept altogether. Rather, as scholars including Heike Henderson agree, while ‘there can be no recovery of an authentic cultural homeland, nor is there any place for absolutism of the pure and authentic [...] *Heimat* does not necessarily have to be stable and absolute.’⁹ Thus, just as *Heimat* has, time and time again proven, as Alon Confino observes, that it ‘is capable of adapting symbolically to historical circumstance,’¹⁰ the term, as evidenced in these works, is once again evolving in correspondence with current contemporary, social issues and challenges. As Henderson continues, ‘because of the genuine emotional

⁸ David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 103-104.

⁹ Heike Henderson, ‘Re-Thinking and Re-Writing *Heimat*: Turkish Women Writers in Germany’, *Women in German Yearbook*, 13 (1997), p. 229.

¹⁰ Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 81.

need that most people experience for some form of *Heimat*, it may be more fruitful to re-think and re-write *Heimat* rather than to abandon the concept totally.¹¹

The films featured in this thesis do indeed re-think and re-write *Heimat*. While Flicker may indicate the futility of *Heimsuchung* for his migrant protagonist in his film, Allahyari and Albert on the other hand propose new, non-spatial modes of belonging to counteract these contemporary political, social and geographic boundaries. Allahyari, for instance, highlights the constructed nature of *Heimat*, which is linked to his own personal experience of relocation in Vienna. As Allahyari's *I Love Vienna* demonstrates, Ali Mohammed is able to forge a home and an identity for himself based on his newly acquired multicultural family, regardless of where in the world they may ultimately reside. Like Allahyari, Ali Mohammed's *Heimat* is therefore made up of a conglomeration of relationships which offer emotional stability, transcending the need for geographical and political stability. Albert, in a similar manner to Allahyari, also promotes modes of belonging that defy geographic and spatial boundaries. As we witness Albert's native Austrian protagonist, Jasmin, reject her heteronormative, culturally homogenous nuclear family (which was nevertheless predicated on a cycle of physical, emotional and sexual abuse), for a multicultural, all-female family set-up (founded on values of difference, acceptance and mobility), we are once more reminded that there is far more to our identity and our own sense of self than where in the world we are born and where in the world we ultimately reside. Looking back on

¹¹ Henderson, 'Re-Thinking and Re-Writing *Heimat*', p. 229.

the three films studied in this thesis, *Heimat* has therefore been deterritorialised from a nationally specific sense of space. In a world where geographical and political barriers are erected as quickly as they are abolished, as Flicker's *Suzie Washington* makes clear, Albert and Allahyari offer images of non-spatial modes of belonging as antidotes to these contemporary conditions of physical, psychological and social dislocation and alienation.

Certainly, the works covered in this thesis are by no means the only New Austrian Films which can be seen to have reinterpreted and renegotiated the *Heimatfilm* genre over the past three decades. A closer examination of a number of New Austrian Films since 1990 proves that a number of New Austrian Filmmakers, like the three studied in this thesis, have continued to draw on the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre to assist in their own story-telling. Fruitful reinterpretations of the genre, particularly its critical-/anti-*Heimatfilm* variant, can be found in a number of works by New Austrian Filmmakers including Michael Haneke, Andreas Prochaska, Wolfgang Murnberger and Markus Blunder, whose films *Das weiße Band* (2009), *Das Finstere Tal* (2014), *Der Knochenmann* (2009) and *Autumn Blood* (2013), respectively, can be seen to re-employ and reconfigure the critical-/anti-*Heimatfilm* genre's semantics and syntax in a number of exciting and challenging ways. Similarly, the *Bergfilm* of the 1920s can be seen to provide an appropriate framework for recent works by filmmakers including Reinhold Bilgeri (*Der Atem des Himmels* (2010)), Ernst Gossner (*Der stille Berg* (2014)), Valentin Hitz (*Kaltfront* (2003)), Phillip Stözl (*Nordwand* (2007)) and Julian Pölsler (*Die Wand* (2012)) who,

once again, utilise Austria and Germany's sublime Alpine landscapes to drive their narratives, in a similar manner to their 1920s/1930s predecessors (only without their underlying Nazi ideology).

In more recent years, a number of other New Austrian Filmmakers have emerged who, like Allahyari, Flicker and Albert, continue to probe the concept of *Heimat* in response to the nation's multicultural population. Since 2010, a number of New Austrian Filmmakers from a second-generation migrant background have appeared, who offer fresh and innovative articulations of *Heimat* in response to their own experiences of being born in Western Europe to parents of a migrant background. Works by Umut Dağ and Hüseyin Tabak, for example, who were both born to Kurdish parents in Vienna and the German town of Bad Salzuflen respectively, both probe the cultural, social and political barriers that prevent children from migrant parents from forging a *Heimat* for themselves in their own Austrian homelands in their respective works, *Kuma* (2013) and *Deine Schönheit ist nichts wert* (2012).

As this thesis and indeed the works discussed in this thesis attest, in times of political, social and cultural change, the *Heimatfilm* genre provides an appropriate ready-made framework with which to tease out and negotiate the issues, pressures and challenges that these shifts so often engender. In light of this conclusion, it will of course be interesting to observe how recent events, namely the rise of right-wing populism in the UK, the Netherlands and France, along with 'Brexit,' the Trump presidency and the so-called 'migrant crisis,' inspire new and refreshed critical engagements with the genre. If, like Allahyari, Flicker and Albert, prospective New

Austrian Filmmakers choose to draw on and reconfigure the semantics and syntax of the *Heimatfilm* genre to critically explore these monumental global shifts, we can expect exciting, innovative and critically informed *Heimatfilme* for many years to come.

Filmography

Am Rande der Welt, dir. by Goran Rebić (Lotus Film, 1992)

Angst essen Seele auf, dir. by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Tango Film, 1974)

Attwengerfilm, dir. by Florian Flicker, Wolfgang Murnberger, Bernhard Weirather, Hans Peter Falkner and Markus Binder (Lotus Film, 1996)

Billy the Kid, dir. by King Vidor (Warner Home Video, 1930)

Black Brown White, dir. by Erwin Wagenhofer (Filmladen, 2011)

Blue Moon dir. by Andrea Maria Dusl (Hoanzl, 2002)

Bock for President, dir. by Houchang Allahyari (Hoanzl, 2010)

Bonnie and Clyde, dir. by Arthur Penn (Warner Bros., 1967)

Borderline, dir. by Houchang Allahyari (Epo-Film, 1988)

Böse Zellen, dir. by Barbara Albert (Hoanzl, 2003)

Ceija Stojka dir. by Karin Berger (Navigator Film, 1999)

Crash Test Dummies, dire.by Jörg Kalt (Autlook Filmsales, 2005)

Das blaue Licht, dir. by Leni Riefenstahl (ArtHaus, 1932)

Das Experiment, dir. by Oliver Hirschbiegel (Senator Film, 2001)

Das Gespenst, dir. by Herbert Achternbusch (Alive AG, 1983)

Das weiße Band, dir. by Michael Haneke (Artificial Eye, 2009)

Das weiße Rauschen, dir. by Hans Weingartner (X Verleih AG, 2001)

Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach, dir. by Volker Schlöndorff (Arthaus, 1971)

Der Überfall, dir. by Florian Flicker (Hoanzl, 2000)

Der verlorene Sohn, dir. by Luis Trenker (International Historic Films, 1934)

Der Weibsteufel, dir. by Georg Tressler (Westdeustcher Rundfunk, 1966)

Der Weibsteufel, dir. by Wolfgang Liebeneiner (Super-Film, 1951)

Die Alm an der Grenze, dir. by Franz Antel (1951)

Die Ameisenstraße, dir. by Michael Glawogger (Hoanzl, 1995)

Die Frucht deines Leibes, dir. by Barbara Albert (Sixpack Film, 1994)

Die goldene Stadt, dir. by Veit Harlan (Black Hill, 1942)

Die Lebenden, dir. by Barbara Albert (Polyfilm, 2012)

Die Siebtelbauern, dir. by Stefan Ruzowitzky (Hoanzl, 1998)

Die Tochter vom Grenzbauernhof, dir. by Harry Hasso (Siegel Monopofilm, 1951)

Die verrückte Welt der Ute Bock, dir. by Houchang Allahyari (Hoanzl, 2010)

Die Wand, dir. by Julian Roman Pölsler (ArtHaus, 2012)

Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü, dir. by Arnold Fanck and G.W. Pabst (ArtHaus, 1929)

Donau, Duna, Dunaj, Dunav, Dunarea, dir. by Goran Rebić (Filmladen, 2003)

Duell in den Bergen, dir. by Luis Trenker (EMS, 1951)

Easy Rider, dir. by David Hopper (Columbia/Tristar, 1969)

Echo der Berge, dir. by Alfons Stummer (Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 1954)

Eva erbt das Paradies, dir. by Franz Antel (Icestorm Entertainment, 1951)

Evet, ich will!, dir. by Sinan Akkus (Cultmovies, 2008)

- Fallen*, dir. by Barbara Albert (Hoanzl, 2006)
- Fleischwolf*, dir. by Houchang Allahyari (Hoanzl, 1990)
- Geboren im Absurdistan*, dir. by Houchang Allahyari and Tom-Dariusch Allahyari (Filmladen, 1999)
- Waldwinter: Glocken der Heimat*, dir. by Wolfgang Liebeneiner's (Polyband, 1956)
- Global Warning*, dir. by Ernst Gossner (Lena Film, 2011)
- Good News*, dir. by Ulrich Seidl (Hoanzl, 1991)
- Go Trabi Go*, dir. by Peter Timm (EuroVideo, 1991)
- Grenzgänger*, dir. by Florian Flicker (Prisma Film, 2012)
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