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**OPPOSITIONAL SPACES: AN
EVALUATION OF POST-NATIONALIST
FILM THEORY USING THE WORK OF
MIGRANT, EXILIC AND DIASPORIC
FILMMAKERS**

Philip John Hodgson

PhD

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the requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis evaluates the usefulness of post-nationalist theory in developing and understanding existing debates around national cinemas in film studies. Whilst a great deal of research has focused on the significance and importance of national cinemas, changes in the international landscape have offered challenges to the value of national cinema as a concept. To date, these challenges have been primarily addressed within discussion of transnational cinema which, although useful, has yet to fully interrogate the power relationships between nations. The importance of post-nationalist theory in this regard is that it deliberately seeks out texts which explore these power structures and often focuses on contact zones in which the dominant nationalism, and therefore national cinema, is being overtly opposed and undermined.

The central question addressed by this thesis is 'How can post-nationalist theory advance cinematic debates concerning national and transnational cinemas?' In order to address this, the films of several migrant, exilic and diasporic filmmakers will be discussed as case studies. This is because their hyphenated identities offer access to a greater number of nationalisms, and also highlight a state of rootlessness in which oppositional positions can be more easily adopted. The filmmakers discussed are: Fatih Akin, whose work offers representations of migrant figures and literal border crossings; Ferzan Ozpetek, who expands these migrant representations to include issues of sexuality and class as non-official nationalisms; Atom Egoyan, whose cinematic style opposes cinematic forms, conventions and nations; Michael Haneke, whose films engage in an overtly oppositional style; and Gurinder Chadha, as a filmmaker who not only uses gender to advance these debates, but also enters them into discussion with mainstream cinema. The thesis will apply close textual analysis to each of the directors' work in order to illustrate how post-nationalist theory can be used to understand the oppositional spaces they create in relation to nations and national cinemas. This will demonstrate not only the relevance of post-nationalist theory to cinema, but also develop current understanding of the strengths and limitations of the conceptual and theoretical work associated with national and transnational cinemas.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Name: Philip John Hodgson

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Date:

Introduction

In their introduction to *Diaspora and Hybridity*, Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk (2005) state that the significance of the time period between their text's 'conception and its context of publication is large' (2005, p.1). The events of this period, which include the September the 11th attack on the World Trade Centre and the response to it, mean that the original intention of the work, which included a 'real expectation' that 'the advent of hybrid forms of culture, working at the point of cultural translation ... were going to disturb the settled formations of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (Kalra *et al*, 2005, p.1), was no longer as relevant. It was instead replaced by a context which 'remade a world in which boundaries and borders are even more vigorously policed, the activities of diasporic peoples have been seriously curtailed, and a once applauded hybrid creativity seems meek and mild in the face of an aggressive neo-liberal conservatism' (p.1). Such a sentiment contains two clear statements; firstly that contemporary borders and the contact between nations are politicised and caught up in broader power structures, and secondly that previous attempts to understand this space must be updated to appreciate this. It is both of these points that post-nationalist theory looks to address.

Within the discipline of film studies, this 'point of cultural translation' (Kalra *et al*, 2005, p.1) is populated by debates of national and transnational cinemas. Every student or scholar of film studies will, at some point, be required to deal with concepts of national cinema – from the descriptive categories which define academic modules or collections of essays, to the vast theoretical literature which has been developed on the subject. As such, any study of the subject must negotiate an intimidating weight of discursive material, both on the specificity of individual national cinemas (for example Hayward, 1993; O'Reagan, 1996, Sorlin, 1996; Street, 1997; Zhang, 2004; Hake 2008) and the general theoretical concepts which underpin them (Higson, 1989, 2000; Crofts, 1998; Hill, 2008). Yet it is also a body of work which is

already aware of the need to update and remake itself as the social and political landscape around it develops. As nations themselves change, so too must the body of literature on national cinemas. As such, the context of globalisation and late capitalism, with its frequent border crossings of migration and global communication in a social sense, and the use of international genres and internet fandom in a cinematic sense, suggests the current issues faced by both nations and national cinemas.

The response to such issues has been broadly framed in relation to a loosely defined concept of transnational cinemas. This has involved a focus on areas in which national cinemas come into contact with each other or cross borders, whether this be within film itself (international internet fandom, for example) or as a reflection of social and political changes (such as migrant cinema). However, this regularly follows the approach to hybridity challenged by Kalra *et al* (2005) in that transnational studies of cinema are too often a reflection of the contact between nations and cinemas, rather than an interrogation of it. Thus, transnational critics themselves have drawn the conclusion that ‘the concept of ‘transnational cinema’ cannot be merely descriptive because all border-crossings are necessarily fraught with issues of power’ (Higbee and Lim, 2010, p.18). As such, although debates of transnational cinema have helped to engage with some of the issues arising from contemporary social and political changes within film, they have struggled to fully engage with the complexities of notions of the national within cinema as debates of national cinema have.

It is precisely the issue of the power structures in the contact between nations which is addressed by post-nationalist theory. Using the works of Rowe (2000a) and Kearney (1997) as a definition, it deliberately focuses on the contact zone between nations as a ‘semiotic site where exchanges may occur from both (or more) sides, even when the configurations of

power are inequitable (as they usually are)' (Rowe, 2000b, p.28). It both suggests that there is always a binary opposition between the hegemon (or figure of the dominant nationalism) and other in this contact, and deliberately highlights the methods by which figures of otherness can undermine the dominant myths and symbols of the nation. It introduces a number of tools for understanding this process, and also uses a multi-disciplinary approach to find a variety of non-official nationalisms (such as gender, sexuality and class) which can also carry this out from within the nation itself. While many of the aspects of this theory relate closely to transnational cinema, they are particularly useful as they set out to not only interrogate the contact between nations, but also provide a political focus which captures the conflicts highlighted by Kalra *et al* (2005). As such, the necessity to introduce post-nationalist theory to debates of cinema is one which can benefit debates around national cinema, transnational cinema, and an understanding of how this literature relates to the contemporary political and social landscape.

Yet, it is not only a gap in the existing film literature which can be addressed by this introduction, but also one within post-nationalist theory itself. While both Rowe (2000a) and Kearney (1997) draw reference to a number of concepts which can be related to cinema, and the obvious quality of film as a commercial, cultural enterprise which can 'manufacture consent' (Trend, 1997) to help imagine the communities of nations (Anderson, 1983), its actual presence in the literature is surprisingly limited. In fact, aside from the use of an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* to illustrate the use of national symbols in the contact between groups within Mailloux's (2000) discussion of cross-border communication, and Mechling's (2000) use of the Christmas film as an example of how cinema can include narrative resolution to override the contradictions of society, the use of visual media as an example of these processes is almost totally absent. In fact to date, aside from Tcheuyap's (2011) *Postnationalist African Cinemas*, there is little literature examining the impact of film on such theories. Therefore, while the use of post-nationalist theory in film studies can

benefit the existing literature, this process will be mutual. It can both highlight the existence of cinematic concepts within the theory itself, and illustrate relevant aspects of film theory which can help develop post-nationalist concepts.

My first contact with post-nationalist theory in this form occurred during my Master's dissertation. Having been introduced to the theory in general discussion, I decided to apply it to a group of films which could benefit from its concepts – the film remake. The rationale for this was twofold. Firstly, as a body of films which often highlight the literal contact between nations and cinemas, the cross-cultural remake would allow direct comparisons between multiple texts in the same contact zone. Secondly, the almost universally pejorative discussions of remakes would grant the opportunity for the theory to help reclaim some interest in the films. It became clear that not only did remakes exist in the contact zones between nations, they closely resembled Mailloux's (2000) post-nationalist discussion of cross-border communication as a process of ethnocentric hermeneutic explanation.

Discussed throughout this thesis, this concept refers to the way in which the communication of the other is received by the hegemon and interpreted into its own myths and symbols, thus altering the meaning to reinforce its own position. In the majority of cases, rather than granting a post-nationalist reading, most film remakes endorsed, rather than opposed this process; the remaking nation (often the hegemonic force of Hollywood) altered the original film and remade it to explain away its otherness and reinforce the dominant position of its own national cinema.

An example of this process was the Japanese film, *Ringu* (1998), and its American remake, *The Ring* (2002). The original film focused on a form of haunted videotape which contained a series of abstract, unexplained images. A week after seeing the tape, the victim would be visited by Sadako (Rie Ino'o), a traditional Japanese 'onryou, or vengeful ghost' (Mes and

Sharp, 2005, p.261), who would then kill them. Although following largely the same plot, the videotape of *The Ring* contained a series of literal images which could then be investigated by the protagonist as part of the narrative. Similarly, Sadako was replaced by Samara (Daveigh Chase) – renamed as a more Middle-Eastern figure (Samara is located in Iraq), and no longer the silent, faceless figure of tradition but a vocal, abused child with a fully developed psychological justification for her monstrosity. As such, rather than offering a form of cross-border communication which highlighted the similarities between nations, the difference, or otherness, was instead explained away, investigated and remade in the image of the dominant conventions of the hegemonic cinema. This process existed throughout the vast majority of remakes, most of which were American or Hollywood interpretations of foreign language cinema, again suggesting the politicised nature of the contact zones between national cinemas.

A rare occurrence in which this process was absent, however, was also one in which the usual journey made by the text was reversed. *De battre mon coeur s'est arrêté* (2005), a French-language remake of the American film, *Fingers* (1978), was one in which the changes helped to reclaim some power for the cinematic other. Here, the process was driven primarily by transnational, rather than national, representations. Not only was the original clearly influenced by elements of the French *nouvelle-vague*, but the remake also revelled in the trappings of the *Mafioso* film. Opposition could be found, however, in both films' use of music, which acted as a central theme to both pieces. The original used the influences of classical music (defined as European) and popular music (defined as African American) to highlight the protagonist's development. The remake, however, used a collection of European Electro artists and, most notably, a French cover of *The Locomotion* to accompany a violent attack to invert the national representations of the original. Thus, by reversing the typical journey of the remake from France to America, *De battre mon coeur*

s'est arête provided one text in which the process was undermined, and in which figures of otherness could deliberately use and deconstruct the original.

Having considered the remake, and found it as an endorsement of the dominant myths and symbols rather than a challenge to it, it became necessary to identify a body of films which could illustrate the relevance of post-nationalist theory to film. Migrant cinema offers this as its figures have access to, and often an interest in, the contact zones between nations which they inhabit. Equally, studies of migration have also highlighted a rootless quality in the position which allows its members to stand outside of the imagined communities to which they relate, and thus comment on them (Chambers, 1994). Within post-colonial literature, this marginal or interstitial position has been identified as one which has the power to actually define the nation (Bhabha, 2004), while within cinema it has also been praised for its ability to be counter-hegemonic and challenge national cinemas (Naficy, 2001). As such, its significance for a study of post-nationalist theory in cinema is clear. Its films and filmmakers not only have access to, and an interest in, the contact zones between the imagined communities of nations, but the rootless quality of this position brings with it great discursive weight. It can be seen as oppositional and counter-hegemonic, and also holding the possibility to inform, challenge and help define nations themselves.

A case-study approach will be used to address this as it will allow discussion of the nuance of the relationship between post-nationalist theory and migrant cinema. This will include both the relevance of the theory to this subject, but also its limitations and changing use over a period of time and within a variety of settings. The deliberate limitation of this approach – to discuss a finite number of films related only to certain filmmakers – will facilitate this rather than searching for a diverse range of migrant texts to find those which endorse the position. Also, the filmmakers (Fatih Akin, Ferzan Ozpetek, Atom Egoyan, Michael Haneke and

Gurinder Chadha) have each been selected to highlight a broad range of post-nationalist themes and issues. These include specific aspects of the theory itself, individual political and social issues related to migration, and cinematic concepts which can help to develop post-nationalist debates in the future. With these case studies complete, the relevance of post-nationalist theory to national and transnational cinemas will be evident, along with a greater understanding of migrant cinema and an illustration of how film can be used to develop post-nationalist theory. Primarily though, they will assist an understanding of the political nature of the contact zones between nations in contemporary society, and how this manifests itself in film.

There are, however, several dangers to this approach. Firstly, it is important not to homogenise migrant experience or generalise in any way which overlooks the individual diversity and specificity of the case studies themselves. Also, it is important to acknowledge that as this thesis will be the first to introduce post-nationalist theory into film studies, it will act purely as a starting point for debate and can in no way exhaustively identify all texts which relate to the subject. As such, it is appropriate to recognise the work of other filmmakers not discussed here – Mira Nair, Thomas Arslan, Fernando Solanas and many others – whose films can assist an understanding of the subject and could be discussed in the future. Crucially, it is also important to acknowledge the diverse and varied work which already exists within studies of national and transnational cinema. Both will obviously remain key aspects of the future of film studies, and the introduction of post-nationalist theory is intended to add rigour to the existing debates and help develop and shape their future. While many of the films here will be shown to oppose and deconstruct the myths and symbols of the nation, there are others outside the scope of this thesis which reinforce these structures, or ignore them entirely, and they too should not be excluded from future debates.

This is not to overlook the importance of post-nationalist theory in cinema. Its focus on the power structures that exist between and within films and cinemas means it can help understand the changing political nature of these contact zones. By identifying the ways in which the dominant conventions or the hegemonic structures of films are being deconstructed, post-nationalist theory allows film studies to better understand and identify the importance of otherness in imagining the nation. It aids an understanding of migrant cinema, and can simultaneously be informed by it, and this relationship can help this body of films be recognised for its full worth in shaping and remaking aspects of film studies. An analysis and discussion of the oppositional space which is created within this will mean that national and transnational cinemas will better understand the oppositions which exist in film studies and society in general. It will allow the figures and films to step out of the margins and acknowledge their role in defining the nations to which they belong.

Chapter One: Literature Review and Methodology

Literature Review

This chapter outlines the existing literature within film studies relating to issues of nations and nationalism. This includes a summary of the established key issues within debates about national cinemas. This literature provides not only a detailed understanding of the subject of nations and national cinemas, but is also often underpinned by awareness of the limitations of such theories (for example, the difficulty in clearly defining each nation within its national cinema) and their progress through a changing historical landscape. As a result of such changes, theories of transnational cinema have arisen and these will also be discussed. Although useful, the topics of transnational cinemas however have yet to fully interrogate the power structures occurring in this move from national to transnational cinema and often display a paradoxical approach to the existing literature in that it both opposes and endorses the position of the dominant nationalism. In order to address this gap in the understanding of the power structures present in the contact zones between national cinemas, post-nationalist theory will then be outlined as a tool which will assist in providing an analysis of the complex relationship between national cinemas.

This will be followed by a discussion of existing literature on migration and migrant cinema to illustrate its relevance for a study of the issues outlined above. This is useful because migrant filmmakers often highlight literal contact between nations in their films, and also challenge traditional notions of national cinemas. Migration itself will also be discussed as providing marginal figures with a privileged position to sit outside of, and thus comment on, representations of the dominant nationalism. As a result, migrant cinema will be shown as being relevant to a study of both national and transnational cinemas, and also to post-nationalist theory itself.

National and Transnational Cinemas

National cinema acts as a term which encompasses a wide range of debates on how film itself relates to, and helps define, nations. It has progressed from acting as a 'descriptive category and as a means of systemising an emerging university curriculum' (Hjort and McKenzie, 2000b, p.2) to a detailed discussion of how countries are depicted on screen, produced by nations, and received within nations themselves. While many of these debates are driven by a specific focus on individual nations themselves – including diverse histories and landscapes such as Australia (O'Regan, 1996), Britain (Street, 1997), China (Zhang, 2004), France (Hayward, 1993), Germany (Hake, 2008) and Italy (Sorlin, 1996), amongst others – much of this literature is underpinned by a common and transferable theoretical approach to the subject. While each study is concerned with the historical, political and geographical aspects of each specific nation, they also remain focused on broader themes of how nations are created and maintained discursively.

Within this theoretical approach to the subject, Hill's work on British cinema defines national cinema using three categories – representation, production and audience. The first of these, representation, involved films which 'have evolved an aesthetic and a way of telling stories which clearly display a national-allegorical import' (Hill, 2008, p.18). Production refers to how films relate economically to the nation, both in terms of their funding, location and international marketing strategy. Audience, meanwhile, focuses on films which are popular and widely viewed within nations, regardless of their content or production. A similar approach has been taken by Crofts (1998), who offers eight subdefinitions of the term: production, audiences, discourses, textuality, national-cultural specificity, the cultural specificity of genres and nation-state movements, the role of the state and the global range of nation-state cinemas. These categories resonate throughout much of the literature, as discussed below, but even in isolation immediately draw attention to some of the paradoxes of the subject. For example, it remains difficult to define what a nation is, through landscape,

production company and so on, consistently throughout all three categories. Also, the categories themselves can be used to contradict each other as, for example, a film with strong national representation may be more popular outside of its setting than at home. Equally, international representations, co-productions and international marketing strategies make it increasingly difficult to view national cinemas in such fixed terms.

The most common, yet potentially the most complex, of these definitions is representation. Hjort (2000) has described national cinemas as containing films which are thematically defined by a frequent concern with banal nationalism on screen, particularly by depicting the nation's landscape, figures and everyday concerns. Similarly, Rosen (2006) has suggested that national identity can be a readable, discursive aspect of the text itself. However, as Hayward (2000) has argued, while such potential representations may be easily identified, an understanding of their relevance remains complex as it is difficult to define what can accurately be considered a national representation, and therefore part of a national cinema (Hayward, 2000). Thus, analysis of these representations have become increasingly abstract, leading to critics such as Higson defining them as resulting from a tension between 'home' and 'away' or as an attempt to 'transform the facts of dispersal, variegation and homelessness into the experience of rooted community' (Higson, 2000, p.64). Therefore, rather than simply being a system of categorisation, representation highlights a number of issues which foreground the complexities of the national, rather than clearly define national cinemas.

Instead of focusing on straightforward representations within national cinemas, critics have increasingly discussed the social and political underpinnings of these representations and the meanings attached to them. Rather than reflecting the nations which the films seek to represent, national cinemas can be seen as a critical construct:

'Filmic narration calls upon the available discourses and myths of its own culture. It is evident that these cultural, nationalistic myths are not pure and simple reflections of history, but a transformation of history' (Hayward, 1993, p.15).

An example of this construction, again from within a British context, is illustrated by Higson's (1993) work on the heritage film. This collection of films, such as *A Room with a View* (1985) and *Chariots of Fire* (1981), is often discussed in terms of its overt, textual representations of a certain form of British-ness. However, their 'traditional conservative pastoral Englishness' (p.112) and status as tourist films which use the cinematic representation of the past as a museum, was viewed in such a pejorative light for their construction of a politically-motivated national landscape that their relevance to the contemporary nation was called into question (Woollen, 2001). In this sense, national cinemas are not seen purely as films which represent the nation, but those in which the nation is constructed for positive and progressive reasons, described by Jarvie (2000) as the 'cultural defence argument.'

Meanwhile, within discussions of national cinema as popular films in specific nations, a great deal of attention is placed on the reasons why and how films are viewed, such as increased home viewership, declining cinema attendance and international marketing strategies (Hill, 2008). The most powerful force here is the relationship between each national cinema and Hollywood. Crofts (2006) suggests that national cinemas are forged not by their production, representation and audience in isolation, but rather through a series of conflicts – most notably involving pressure from Hollywood. This is echoed by Hedetoft (2000), who argues that the importance of American culture, both from a textual and critical perspective, has significant impact on how films are viewed and, therefore, how national cinemas are defined. This makes it difficult to purely define national cinemas in terms of audience popularity as the process of viewing is often mediated by a wide range of different issues, most notably commercial pressures of other (including Hollywood) cinemas.

Similarly, definitions of national cinema based around production have become increasingly complex as theoretical debates have progressed. The most notable factor here is the growth of international coproductions. Willeman (2006) has argued that not only does cinematic production vary between contexts, but also that the increasing presence of trans- or international co-productions has further blurred the definitions of national cinemas. Bergfelder (2000) has also suggested that since the 1950s increased international co-productions, and the development of transnational genres, has complicated our understanding of national cinemas. Thus, whilst issues of production can be helpful in defining national cinemas, it is rare to find a cinematic text which is untouched by the influence of multiple nations. An example of this would include Higson's discussion of the British heritage films, such as *Howard's End* (1992) and *The Remains of the Day* (1993), which featured an overt, political representation of the nation, despite certain texts being 'produced by an Indian, scripted by a Pole, directed by an American, and funded with British, American and Japanese money' (Higson, 1993, p.248).

It becomes apparent, therefore, that even within this summary of the debates currently associated with national cinemas, several recurrent problems emerge. Hill's (2008) categories, although useful as an overview and framework, often help to highlight the growing complications and paradoxes of the discussions more than they resolve the issues. Not only can the categories themselves be used to criticise and undermine each other, they are also each exposed to a number of factors which make defining national cinema difficult. The first of these, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, is the growth of international practices or influences. For example, even within the national cinema literature, critics are often forced to acknowledge the complexities brought about by the

changing international landscape. In fact, Hjort and McKenzie have argued that discourses of national cinema have been clouded by a

‘New set of terms: ‘hybridity’, ‘multiculturalism’, ‘transnationalism’, ‘nationalism’, ‘internationalism’, ‘globalisation’, ‘cosmopolitanism’, ‘exile’, ‘postcolonialism’, to mention but some of the most salient terms’ (2000b, p.1).

While these issues have not left national cinemas outmoded, they offer a number of diverse ways in which the contemporary social and political landscape can challenge traditional notions of the national.

The most significant difficulty within debates about national cinemas, however, remains precisely how the nation itself is defined. Often, studies use broad definitions which are primarily descriptive – summarised by Kearney as ‘territory’, ‘state’ and ‘ethnicity’ (1997, pp. 2-3). Here, the term ‘state’ is taken as the formation of a legal entity which is recognised by other nations and controls its own government. ‘Territory’ concerns geography, and must include the entire national territory. Finally, ‘ethnicity’ is taken as a reference to blood and ‘common roots’, rather than law. However, to many critics, it is the construction of nations which plays a crucial role in definitions of national cinemas, resulting in them drawing on other critical discourses to help negotiate these issues. For example, Schlesinger (2000) uses social communication theory to define the nation as a process in which multiple voices and narratives are woven into a singular centre. Meanwhile, Smith (2000) uses art-history theory to highlight cinema’s often historicist vision of the national. Renan, however, defines the nation in more discursive terms as a ‘moral consciousness’ which will continue to exist as long as it

‘gives proof of its sacrifices which demand the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community’ (Renan, 1990, p.20).

This position changes slightly when considering definitions of nationalism, rather than nations. Crucial here is the construction of the national, as discussed by Anderson. Within his *Imagined Communities* (1983), he argues that nations use nationalist discourses to draw their boundaries not from political ideology, but the cultural forces which both propel and hinder them. This process, thus, uses factors such as print journalism and media to imagine, as its members will never completely meet and know the whole, the nation as limited (because it can never truly overtake all other nations), sovereign (to highlight its significance in relation to religion) and a community (in order for its horizontal comradeship to override issues of inequality) (Anderson, 1983, p.7-8). As such, nationalism becomes the method for which, through texts such as films, nation states 'manufacture consent' (Trend, 1997) for their myths and symbols whilst constructing these imagined communities of nations.

Similarly, from a post-colonial perspective, nations are seen as a 'symbolic force' in which the nationalist and international co-exist and compete through politics, culture and narrative (Bhabha, 1990b, p.2). This means that rather than being fixed concepts that can be easily defined, national identity lies both across national borders and also within internal borders, as

'by living on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender ... we are in a position to translate the differences between them into a kind of solidarity' (Bhabha, 1990c, p.320).

Here again, the nation is depicted as a powerful, but constructed, force which cannot simply be reflected by national cinemas. Instead, the media can help construct the symbols of these imagined communities as their relationships and conflicts with other nations, and transnational relationships, continue to both define and develop them.

These tensions within the definition of nations mean that for

'some scholars, nations are enduring, primordial entities that can be expressed in art, while others assume that nations are constructed in a process of myth-making linked to the needs of the modern, industrial state' (Hjort and McKenzie, 2000b, p.1).

While there is no clear resolution to these debates, they provide a useful and evolving body of critical work which helps our understanding of both national cinemas and nations themselves. That such issues remain a key focus of film studies as an academic discipline is no surprise, but increasingly they do not appear in isolation. Transnational and post-nationalist discourses, amongst others, continue to challenge these themes and develop the issues that lie within them. However, like nations themselves, this does not mean that national cinemas have been superseded or made redundant. They remain a crucial part of the critical landscape and are central to any approach to issues of nationalism within film.

The term transnational is often used interchangeably with multinational and international, but is most frequently used when examining the consequences and impacts of migration, for example in the work of Schiller *et al* (1995) and Levitt (2001). It can also be found in work on management practice (Kostova, 1999), social and political studies (Overbeek, 2000), and elsewhere. All of these areas are concerned with the issues that arise when people, organisations and systems cross borders, and how this impacts on both departing and arriving locations. In film studies, however, it has become the term almost solely used to discuss films which move across national boundaries, in any or all of the contexts of representation, production and audience. As such, literature on transnational cinemas is both closely linked to national cinemas and able to highlight the strengths and weaknesses within the existing debates. Not only does an understanding of this relationship between the national and the transnational develop arguments long entrenched in studies of cinema, it

also helps critical debates evolve to mirror and encompass greater societal changes, such as global capitalism, increased migration and developments in international communication.

Much of the existing literature on transnational cinemas actually holds its origins in the understanding of the limitations of national cinema, listed above. In his essay *The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema*, Higson argues that the term national cinema is one which can be seen as 'fetishising the national rather than merely describing it' while erecting 'boundaries between films produced in different nation-states although they may still have much in common' (Higson, 2000, p.64). Using Anderson's concept of Imagined Communities, he goes on to stress the multiple transnational factors which can be seen to develop cinema – such as the reach of, particularly Hollywood, cinema, and the diversity of contemporary cinematic production and reception (Higson, 2000, p.66-68). As such, he also suggests that while issues of national cinemas are still useful, the imagined communities created by cinema should be more readily thought of as 'local or transnational', as a purely national approach ignores the 'cultural diversity and cultural specificity' of many films (Higson, 2000, p.73).

Even within this differing approach, however, much of the literature included within collections on transnational cinema still uses Hill's (2008) representation, audience and production sub-definitions of national cinemas as a framework. For example, within representation, Murphy (2006) has argued that the significance of Western capital has altered the national depictions of Africa in African texts in that it has encouraged Westernisation which has limited the national relevance of the films themselves. Similarly, Desai (2006) has argued that Bollywood cinema has become increasingly interested in 'wooing overseas markets' with depictions of 'the reunified family and heteronormative romance' (Desai, 2006, p.67) and, as a result, films which provide alternative narratives are

ignored internationally. Negra (2006) has also advanced debates around the British heritage film by moving the term from focusing solely on historical narratives to discussing contemporary tourist romances which help reinforce the relationships between nations and the construction of transnational communities.

An important subsection of literature on transnational cinema (discussed in greater detail later), which relates closely to Hill's (2008) discussion of national representations, focuses on migrant cinema. Here, depictions of migrant characters, such as Gokturk's work on German-Turkish cinema (1999) and Higbee's (2007) discussion of Algerian directors working in France, and the existence of such filmmakers within national cinemas, are used to both celebrate the cultural diversity of national cinema and also to highlight the importance of such diversity within transnational cinema. Migrant depictions include a move beyond literal representations of migrant figures and border crossings to include a form of 'physiological, social and narratological hybridity, as well as the interstitial spaces from which such hybrids emerge' (McRoy, 2005, p.176) within discussions of migration cinema.

Within work on the aspects of production and audience, literature on transnational cinema has attempted to reflect the impact of issues such as technology and global capitalism on film. Examples of this include the instantaneous worldwide release, in which digital technology has facilitated immediate audience consumption of texts across the globe (Davis, 2006). Similarly, the internet and participatory fandom has been described as affecting not only the ways that films are viewed, but also how they are constructed and the power relationships which develop through this process (Shefrin, 2006; Gonzalez, 2003). Once again, migrant cinema also appears here as another aspect of transnational cinema which is funded, produced and consumed by multiple nations (Naficy, 2001). As such, the literature can be clearly seen to have progressed beyond simply reflecting the development of

international co-productions and the use of genres in multiple nations. Instead, it often interrogates the relationship between cinematic production and consumption, and highlights the impact of new technologies and global trends, such as the use of the internet within film production and distribution.

However, perhaps due to its relatively recent development within academic debates, transnational film literature remains relatively underdeveloped when considered in comparison to its national counterpart. While many of the above studies help to identify the impact of transnational developments within cinema, this has yet to be interrogated to the extent of similar national issues. Higbee and Lim have argued that such literature tends to be limited to a Eurocentric 'shorthand for an international and supranational mode of film production whose impact and reach lies beyond the bounds of the national' (2010, p.10). Using the case studies of diasporic, post-colonial and Chinese and East Asian cinemas, they suggest that focus should instead be placed on the relationships between nations, as 'the concept of 'transnational cinema' cannot be merely descriptive because all border-crossings are necessarily fraught with issues of power' (p.18). While such issues are evident in some of the literature, particularly Naficy's (2001) work on migrant directors, it is missing elsewhere. Thus, although the body of work on transnational cinemas continues to develop, it too often acts merely as an umbrella term which lacks the specific focus required to truly develop the debate. This remains a significant limitation when considering the literature as a whole.

As a result, not only is much of the literature on transnational cinema hindered by similar difficulties in defining nations as its national counterpart, it also contains a lack of focus on the impacts and power dynamics at play when these imagined communities come into contact with each other. This is particularly the case in discussion of audience and

production, where the presence of mainstream, Hollywood cinema creates an imbalance of power which demands greater scrutiny. With this in mind, instantaneous worldwide releasing and participatory fandom, discussed above, can be seen as a transnational practice or the facilitation of the continued international hegemonic domination of the market leader, in this case the 'nightmare scenario of the Hollywood invasion' (Street, 1997, p.26), which defines lesser cinemas via subordination. This process, in which the universal can be recognised as a euphemism for the 'commercial' (Chute, 2003, p.C3), is one in which marginal or interstitial groups are not integrated, but simply manipulated like any other. While this vision of a transnational Hollywood can successfully include economic migrant film-makers in the commercial cinema system and the 'success of non-western films' (Ezra and Rowden, 2006b, p.2-3), these examples bear little, if any, similarity to the transnational cinema of migrant or exilic groups, for example. The former, as discussed earlier, too often reflects the Westernising impact of the power of mainstream cinema, while the latter is often seen as adopting a more oppositional position in relation to such dominant forms (as will be discussed in more detail later).

Similarly, definitions of transnational cinema also appear to currently have a contradictory relationship with those of national cinema. Again, the lack of consistent interrogation of the contact between nations has resulted in a paradoxical position whereby within the literature 'it may be necessary to challenge the homogenising myths of national cinema discourse; in others it may be necessary to support them' (Higson, 2006, p.23). Accordingly, to a transnational theorist, 'nationalism is a canny dialogical partner whose voice often seems to be growing stronger at the very moment that its substance is fading away' (Ezra and Rowden, 2006b, p.4). Although such complicated relationships between national and transnational debates in cinema are evident, their contradictions must be addressed to understand the power structures in the contact zones between national cinemas. This means that collections of transnational literature often include texts which at once celebrate

the dominance of certain cinemas, most notably the Westernisation of Hollywood discussed above, alongside those which overtly oppose it, such as migrant cinema, Third cinema and post-colonial theory. Without dealing with and fully investigating the tension between these films, transnational cinema literature remains unable to truly advance debates of national cinema in line with the changing political landscape.

It would be useful for national and transnational film theorists to look to closely related discourses in an attempt to identify the necessary tools to progress this debate and develop this investigation. One key example of this is post-nationalist theory, which is discussed in much greater detail in the Methodology section. In *Post-Nationalist American Studies*, Brinson-Curiel *et al* (2000) argue that the power relationships between nations in contact with each other should be the main focus of study of nations and nationalism, and use Mary-Louise Pratt's (1977; 1991; 1992) concept of a 'contact zone' to describe a 'semiotic site where exchanges may occur from both (or more) sides, even when the configurations of power are inequitable (as they usually are)' (Rowe, 2000b, p.28). As a consequence, not only does post-nationalist theory display a more overt concern with the same contact zones between nations than transnational film theory, but it also makes the power relationships in these spaces a specific concern – something which is currently under-developed in film criticism. Cinema also remains an under-discussed topic within much of the post-nationalist literature, particularly when considered in relation to cinema's increasingly transnational focus and role in helping to (re)imagine the nation (as discussed above).

Thus, national cinema remains a key field within film studies, and the literature itself demonstrates an awareness of the limitations associated with that field. This includes the difficulties in defining the very nations it focuses on, but also how transnational issues suggest that the nation is no longer necessarily imagined in isolation. While the concept of

transnational cinemas holds the potential to develop these issues in relation to the existing literature, its inconsistent and paradoxical relationship with the national continues to limit its development. It provides valuable reflection on, and understanding of, the impact of transnational and global issues in film, yet fails to fully interrogate the power structures at play. That these areas are the specific focus of post-nationalist theory makes it an ideal tool to help develop such issues. Introducing this theory into the debate can give an understanding of how notions of national cinemas can be challenged, and evolve in response to these challenges, which is currently lacking within much of the transnational film literature. As such, an understanding of these international contact zones and the power dynamics they contain is crucial to the development of such debates in cinema.

Migrant Cinema

One aspect of the literature on transnational cinemas that is particularly useful to an understanding of post-nationalist theory in film is that of migrant cinema. This is because, as discussed above, the body of work on such films highlights not only its literal relevance for the relationship between nations, in that they often include migrant figures, literal border crossings and multiple national landscapes, but also often features a discursive position which sits between imagined communities and adopts a critical position to them. Thus, a discussion of the literature on this subject not only emphasises the key relationship between migrant, national and transnational cinemas, it also links closely with many of the concepts of post-nationalist theory which will be used throughout this thesis.

Like nations themselves, migration remains a difficult and discursive concept to define. Although its literal interpretation – of groups and individuals who cross national borders for a variety of reasons – is in itself relevant to study of the relationship between nations, a more

discursive approach to the subject is crucial here. Said has suggested that such movement has more than just literal qualities, in that 'Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience' (1990, p.365). Similarly, Chambers has suggested 'The migrant's sense of being rootless, of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated present, is perhaps the most fitting metaphor for this (post)modern condition' (1994, p.27). Thus, studies of migration become increasingly relevant for a critical understanding of nations and the transnational as discussed above. They provide both the literal border crossing found in much of the work on transnational cinemas, but also suggest a discursive movement of groups and thought which facilitates a better understanding of the relationships between imagined communities.

This movement also contains power structures which are illustrative of the difficulties faced by transnational theory. In his discussion of how Islam is covered within the media, Said argues that a number of strategies are used to maintain a sense of otherness in the depictions of certain groups. They include a lack of detailed understanding of these groups which means 'Their very *thereness* is something of a risk to "us"', the fact that they become 'abstractions against which the formerly established world powers are now arrayed' and that 'they disrupt because all they are and can be as a group is inversely equal and opposite to "us"' (Said, 1997, p.38). These divisions, between hegemonic and other figures in the contact zones between groups, echo many of the divisions of Orientalism, also discussed by Said, via the creation of a 'flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand' (2003, p.7). Such power relationships, particularly those which marginalise migrant experience in relation to the dominant position of the host nation, immediately highlight a key area that fails to be addressed in much of the critical literature associated with the transnational. The literature on the subject should not merely identify and reflect such issues, but make an understanding of this power structure central to the debate.

Discussions of migration and migrant groups often interpret the marginal position of such figures as one which can be oppositional to nationalisms. Gilroy has described this as a form of 'double consciousness' in which the duality of migrant existence allows members of its imagined community to highlight the 'unhappy symbiosis between three modes of thinking, being and seeing' in society (1993, p.127). This hybrid status, therefore, places them in an 'unsteady location simultaneously inside and outside convention' which grants them a critical power (Gilroy, 1993, p.73). As a result of this, Gilroy has also argued that migrant identity, and the art and culture it produces, creates both a critical stance in relation to the dominant myths and symbols and also horizontal links across and outside nations with other, similar imagined communities (2002, p.267). Thus, while often depicted as marginal figures, there remains the possibility that migrant figures can 'step outside' (Gilroy, 2002, p.298) the nation state to find a critical position in relation to the dominant nationalism.

Chambers has argued that migrant landscapes are made up of cultures which are

'de-territorialised and de-colonised, re-situating, re-citing and re-presenting common signs in the circuits between speech, image and oblivion, a constant struggling into sense and history is pieced together' (1994, p.15).

This instability is seen as running throughout migrant narratives, in which the plurality of existence extends to the replacement of a singular truth with 'a potential vortex of voices' which move across 'language, myth and metaphor' to find new connections (1994, p.26). Chambers, therefore, argues that migration produces a 'sense of being rootless, of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated present' meaning 'the previous margins now fold in on the centre' (p.1994). This not only has an impact on the dominant nationalism of the host nation, which is actively being reflected upon, but also the home nation itself becomes equally unstable. As a result, not only does the rootlessness of

migration create an image of the host nation as being remade, it also makes a true homecoming impossible. This position, and its ability to facilitate oppositional spaces, is ideal for a study of post-nationalist theory.

Such interpretations of migration have been applied to cinema by figures such as Naficy (2001), who has suggested this position of rootlessness is one which can create an 'Accented Cinema'. He suggests that exilic and diasporic filmmakers can be seen as "situated but universal", allowing them to work in the interstices of social formations and cinematic practices' (Naficy, 2001, p.10). This position, he argues, is crucial to an understanding of the nationalisms involved as

'However marginalised they are within the center, their ability to access the means of *reproduction* may prove to be as empowering to the marginalia of the postindustrial era as the capturing of the means of *production* would have been to subalterns of the industrial era' (Naficy, 2001, p.11).

Thus, in this context, the duality of migration is seen as providing the texts it produces with an accent – a method of delivery which can be interpreted as being from a variety of different national contexts. This not only emphasises the potential significance of the contact zones between nations, but also the ability of the accented style of migrant filmmakers to illustrate this.

Naficy (2001) goes on to illustrate the possible stylistic components of migrant cinema. The first is the use of cinema as a form of accented address which can be used to undermine the dominant form of communication – in this case, mainstream filmmaking (although this does not always have to be oppositional). Also, echoing the arguments of Said (1997) and Gilroy (1993), Naficy (2001) argues that Accented filmmakers include structures of simultaneity which undermine the myths and symbols of the home and host nations by stressing

connections across and beyond borders. Meanwhile, notions of duality are created by a number of tendencies which distance and undermine aspects of unaccented cinema, particularly the tactile optic (non-linear structures which highlight the existence of multiple spaces) and border crossings (both literal crossings and epistolary narratives). However, these concerns are not just limited to cinematic style, and Naficy argues that many Accented films illustrate and overtly represent the issues of migration. Thus, while not homogenising a diverse group of filmmakers, the concept of an Accented Cinema helps to illustrate how migrant cinema can be used as an example of texts which openly engage with issues of nationalism and how the power structures of the contact zones between imagined communities can be undermined.

Naficy (2001) also extends these debates to issues of production, suggesting that interstitial and artisanal modes of production often help to facilitate this duality of Accented texts. As such, it becomes increasingly difficult for the work of migrant filmmakers to sit within the literature of transnational cinema in which they are usually found. The rootless position of many of the texts allows them to differentiate themselves and develops a critical understanding of aspects of transnational cinema – particularly issues of participatory fandom (Sheffrin, 2006) or instantaneous worldwide releasing (Davis, 2006). As such, a better understanding of migrant cinema, and particularly its Accented style, is crucial to the development of transnational cinema literature. It provides the most suitable group of films to explore and interrogate the relationships between nations and imagined communities. The critical position it provides its filmmakers with does more than simply reflect the developing international landscape in that it is actively engaged with how these debates are re-imagining the communities involved.

Therefore, while it remains important not to homogenise the diverse experiences of migration in any study of the subject, the concept of a migrant cinema remains crucial to any discussion of national and transnational cinemas. As highlighted by the literature on the

subject, migration not only challenges the dominant myths and symbols of the nation via the literal border crossings of individuals, but it also creates a discursive position which is rootless and therefore more able to overtly criticise these relationships. Not only does this differ from other aspects of the literature on transnational cinemas, which can reinforce this position, but it also relates closely to many of the core concepts of post-nationalist theory. As such, a study of migrant cinema offers the ideal background for an understanding of post-nationalist theory and its relationship with existing debates in film.

Research Questions

The research will address two primary questions. They are:

- How can the use of post-nationalist theory benefit and advance cinematic debates (particularly those relating to national and transnational cinemas)?
- What role do migrant and exilic filmmakers play in illustrating the relevance of post-nationalist theory to cinema?

To answer these questions I will use close textual analysis of the films of the selected filmmakers to highlight the significance of post-nationalist theory to film studies. A case-study approach will be used to outline the breadth and nuance of the relationship between post-nationalist theory, migrant cinema and transnational and national cinemas. In addition to this, several subsidiary questions will be addressed. They include:

- How appropriate are post-nationalist readings of these films in comparison with readings generated by national or transnational approaches?
- Which of the existing theories in cinema / migrant cinema can be used to develop post-nationalist theory?

- To what extent is it appropriate to draw the discourses of non-official nationalisms (i.e. those of gender, race, sexuality, etc) under the heading of post-nationalism?
- How useful are the existing labels applied to these texts (particularly in relation to the term 'migrant cinema')?
- In what ways is post-nationalist theory still reliant on nationalist myths and what are the consequences of this for the research?

Methodology

Post-nationalist Theory

To fully answer these questions, it is first necessary to have a detailed understanding of the concepts and concerns of post-nationalist theory, and how this can be applied to migrant cinema and cinema in general. In order to do this, two key texts on the area will be considered and compared; *Post-nationalist American Studies* (2000), edited by John Carlos Rowe, and Patrick Kearney's *Post-nationalist Ireland* (1997). The former uses the setting of American studies to argue that national studies should be comparative and multi-disciplinary in order to understand the processes and relationships that help develop nations. The latter provides a more practical focus in re-imagining Ireland during a period of political change, both internally and internationally. With this understanding in place, it will then be possible to determine which concepts of post-nationalist theory are most relevant to filmic debates. These concepts will then be used to inform and drive the discussion in the remaining chapters.

Firstly, within *Post-nationalist American Studies*, Brinson-Curiel *et al* (2000) outline a very clear approach to issues of the national which is currently lacking in transnational cinema debates. They state that post-nationalist theory looks to 'critique the limits and exclusions of nationalism without forgetting to differentiate the difference between nationalisms or throwing

all nationalisms into the trash-can of history'. It also seeks to 'distinguish between nationalisms which are aligned with the nation-state and those who challenge "official" nationalism'. In doing this, it is believed that a study of the national can move beyond a more traditional approach, defined by them with the term myth-and-symbols, and become 'less insular and parochial, and more internationalist and comparative' (Brinson Curiel *et al*, 2000, p.2). The consequence of this is an argument that critics should look to move beyond concepts and theories which endorse the myths and symbols used to construct nations, and instead focus on non-official nationalisms (including issues of race, gender, sexuality, class and so on) which oppose and undermine these themes. This immediately provides a framework to an understanding of the relationships between nations which is lacking in much of the literature on transnational cinema. This is because it displays an overt concern with the power relationships at play, and also emphasises the potential for these to be undermined and opposed when imagining the nation.

In order to investigate this, as discussed earlier, Rowe (2000b) suggests particular attention should be placed on the contact zones which exist where two or more nationalisms come into contact with each other. This concept draws heavily on the work of Mary Louise Pratt who, within the area of language and literacy, introduced the concept of the contact zone as the

'social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in the contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today' (1991, p.33).

Thus, when placed in the context of the relationships between cultures, the concept of the contact zone also illustrates that

'While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what the dominant culture visits upon them, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, how they use it, and what they make it mean' (1992, pg. 7).

However, unlike Pratt (whose work focused on the power structures at play in classrooms involving migrant children), Rowe's introduction of contact zones into broader debates of nationalism alters the concept slightly. In this sense, post-nationalist contact zones are not only made up of clashes between national cultures, but also those of gender, class, race, etc. As such, similar contact zones can be found throughout debates associated with transnational cinema, in which the issues of representation, production and audience all highlight the relationships between nations.

Another aspect of *Post-nationalist American Studies* which appears to be closely related to the debates around national and transnational cinemas is Sanchez's discussion of the power structures which exist in multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism (Sanchez, 2000). This suggests that post-nationalist theory allows us to examine and challenge the relationships between dominant and lesser cinemas (such as the 'Hollywood invasion' feared by Street (1997, p.26)), rather than purely reflecting their development. It has been argued elsewhere that

'multiculturalism is not "multi" or concerned with many groups, but "binary," concerned with two groups, the hegemon (bad) and "the Other" (good) or the oppressor and the oppressed' (Fonte, 2002, p.4).

Sanchez suggests that post-nationalist critics should not attempt to overlook this relationship, but generate academic debate by seeking out instances where this conflict is in evidence. This focus on the hegemon and other within contact zones in cinema means a post-nationalist approach can help to progress transnational film studies, whilst also identifying texts in which this binary relationship of the hegemon and other is undermined in order to challenge the dominant position.

This is discussed further by Mechling (2000), who suggests that by failing to discuss such power relationships critics are in danger of continuing to manufacture consent for the dominant myths and symbols. This is particularly the case in cinema where narrative

solutions within texts are used to manufacture and maintain consent for the dominant nationalism. He argues that the status quo is maintained within the nation by the continued functioning of three spheres within liberal democracy – the state, the market and the civil society –each of which maintain checks on the other to guarantee this functioning. Within this, cinema (characterised here as ‘the mass-media entertainment industry’) functions as part of the civil, public sphere (Mechling, 2000, p.74). This position enables it to ‘provide possible narrative solutions to the felt contradictions between materialism and morality’ (Mechling, 2000, p.77). Thus, the avoidance of these narrative solutions within cinema can be seen as post-nationalist to the extent that they can highlight concerns and conflicts within nationalism, but refuse to offer potential solutions to them.

Post-nationalist American Studies also provides critical commentary on the communication which occurs in contact zones. Mailloux uses the process of hermeneutic ethnocentric explanation to outline how the area of translation and interpretation can often lead to meaning and understanding being either lost (on a micro level) between cultures or suppressed (on a macro level) by dominant ideologies. Within the field of communication it is asserted that it is

‘uncontroversial to acknowledge that any identification preceding or during an interpretive act necessarily involves power relations among interpreting agents and between interpreters and the subjects interpreted’ (Mailloux, 2000, p.113).

As a result, cross-border communication becomes almost an ‘intellectual conflict’ with ‘economic and political stakes’ between ‘relativism and absolutism’ (Mailloux, 2000, p.115). This is significant for film studies as it provides a useful concept within an analysis of the key subject of cross-border communication and interpretation, and also illustrates how texts, including films themselves but also other national narratives and myths, can be manipulated to reinforce hegemonic positions. Instances where meaning is lost or deliberately altered are therefore key aspects of the dominant nationalism maintaining its status, as discussed

earlier in relation to the Westernisation of national cinemas within transnational film literature.

Meanwhile, *Post-nationalist American Studies* also offers a number of concepts in relation to identity which are applicable to on screen depictions of migration. The clearest example of this is Yu's discussion of migrant identity and ethnicity. Yu states that migrant and multi-ethnic populations are often seen as those most clearly depicting post-nationalist theory's concepts, as they significantly occupy the contact zones between states and offer the most overt challenges to the hegemonic position of the dominant nationalism. Thus, importance is given not only to texts which challenge this power imbalance on a social level, but also on an individual one. Therefore,

'as languages that have served as shorthands for national origin and for who belonged and who did not, definitions of race and culture have always been based upon transnational comparisons and connections' (Yu, 2000, p.242).

Accordingly, post-nationalist theory cannot merely be concerned with reflecting migrant identities, as this could continue to be a commodification of culture which endorses the dominant myths and symbols. Instead, it must examine the ways this identity opposes and challenges the hegemonic structures of contact zones.

However, just as Pratt's (1977; 1991; 1992) original concept of the contact zone is moved into a broader discussion of a number of non-official nationalisms by *Post-nationalist American Studies*, issues of identity are also moved beyond migration and ethnicity and into gender by Kinney (2000). She examines the ways in which representations of patriarchal societies and conflicts can be undermined by switching from connections between fathers and sons to those of mothers and daughters, or perhaps more crucially between sisters.

Kinney uses two images of the American war in the Pacific to illustrate how nationalisms are traditionally defined in terms of gender – firstly Joe Rosenthal’s 1945 photograph of the flag raising on Iwo Jima and secondly a Betty Grable pinup from the same period. The former highlights the significance of male space (international war) in making and preserving the national symbolic, while the latter represents the wives, mothers, girlfriends and daughters left behind in the domestic space they are protecting and fighting for. Texts which oppose this myth-making of patriarchal nations, then, are those which discuss a female space breaking beyond domestic confines and female characters who ‘refuse to stay comfortably at home’ (Kinney, 2000, p.104).

Kearney’s *Post-nationalist Ireland* (1997), however, uses a different context to explore a number of these key themes. By focusing on Ireland in the late 1990s, he is able to identify a nation actually undergoing a shift from nationalism to post-nationalism. In an international context, Ireland is shown to be both a community historically rooted in a British-Irish contact zone, and on the verge of a transnational contact zone with Europe as a whole. Meanwhile, internally, the dominant nationalism is shown to be constantly challenged by issues of republicanism and religion. Although this specific context does not provide the broad scope that much of the academic focus of *Post-nationalist American Studies* does, Kearney’s work still provides many valuable insights. As such, many of these similarities and differences become crucial to our understanding of what post-nationalist theory is, and how it can be applied to cinema.

Firstly, Kearney (1997) echoes the work of Brinson-Curiel *et al* (2000) in stating that a post-nationalist approach should not be equated with ‘anti-nationalism’ (Kearney, 1997, p.58). In fact, he states that a variety of forms of nationalism have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the development of nations. The contrasts of these nationalisms also seem to

imply a sense of contact zones in statements such as the necessity to define nations and nationalism using

‘a need to discriminate between different nationalism – civic and ethnocentric, resistant and hegemonic, those that emancipate and those that incarcerate, those that affirm a community’s genuine right to self identification and those that degenerate into ideological closure, xenophobia and bigotry’ (Kearney, 1997, p.57).

This concept, which echoes both the notions of the contact zone and the binary oppositions contained within, remains a key aspect of post-nationalist theory to be considered within film. The contact which occurs both within films on screen and between films in national and transnational cinemas becomes a key site for discussions of how nationalisms are being constructed and deconstructed. As such, this also becomes a key indicator of structures of power within national and transnational cinema.

The specific focus and context of Kearney’s work, however, offers a different post-nationalist theory. Rather than comparative national studies, Kearney instead focuses on a movement ‘beyond the ‘modern’ alternatives of national independence and multinational dependence’ to a ‘postnational model of interdependence’, offered here by a ‘pan-European federation’ (1997, p.60-61). Whilst this differs slightly from Mechling’s (2000) notions of refusing to identify a narrative solution to the felt contradictions of society, it does highlight a different approach on this issue. It suggests not a clear solution to the conflicts of nationalism, but a need for ‘dissemination of sovereignty beyond the frontiers of the nation state and within it’ (Kearney, 1997, p.68), evoking a series of texts which occupy an unfixed space within nations to critique the fixed position of the dominant myths and symbols. Therefore, while this model of interdependence suggests a potential resolution to the tensions of society opposed by Mechling (2000), it still offers the potential for post-nationalist theory to continue re-imagining the communities of nations.

Away from this specific context, however, Kearney does offer a more general model a re-imagining of the nation. He suggests that a globalisation of local culture (in this case the internationalisation of Irish art or the increased use of international communications) has decentralised or undermined the nation's dominant power. The result of this is 'a more global understanding of identity' which requires 'a countervailing move to retrieve a sense of local belonging' (Kearney, 1997, p.102). This 'cultural pluralism' (Kearney, 1997, p.107), in which a link between the local and the global is used to circumvent the dominant nationalism, is another concept which can have an impact within cinema. It can help provide a better understanding of texts which highlight issues of the nation, and yet avoid the typical traditions of national cinema in favour of cultural pluralism. While in a specifically Irish context this holds wide political and social implications, in film it is another sphere of representation which can enter into contact zones with the dominant nationalism.

Kearney also offers a useful insight into representations of the nation, particularly the myths of the motherland which help to maintain its hegemonic status. He argues that 'most contemporary nations and states invoke indigenous myths which provide a sense of 'original identity' for their 'people' and offer 'figures of motherland (and fatherland)' which become symbols of the nation's tradition and power (Kearney, 1997, p.108). While Kearney's specific example of this is Ireland's mythology of martyrdom as expressed in poetry, these concepts closely relate to the diverse representations of national cinemas found throughout film studies literature. Once again, however, Kearney places significance, from a post-nationalist perspective, on texts which continue to demythologise the nation. To do this, he suggests that such images should maintain 'dialogue with history' to constantly keep 'inventing and reinventing its mythic imaginary' (Kearney, 1997, p.121). When relating these concepts to film theory, it is important for critics to not only consider the myths and figures of

the motherland on screen, but also the ways in which history can be used to undermine or challenge them.

Kearney also uses Irish poetry to develop overt links between myths and the national. He argues that, in many cases, ideological (the 'complex of myths and images which serve to maintain the status quo') and utopian ('the deployment of myths and images to challenge and transform') uses of myth are a key strategy in constructing the discourses of nations (1997, p.123). Thus, not only should the myths of the nation be repossessed for oppositional means from an ideological perspective, but post-nationalist theory should also attempt to identify critical utopian visions. This process involves techniques such as the substitution of the public meanings of myths for personal ones, the deconstruction or parody of the stereotypes of collective memory and the use of cosmopolitan idioms to deterritorialise national sovereignty. Once again, many of these concepts can easily relate to national and transnational cinemas and their debates. Not only should the dominant conventions be undermined and reclaimed, but their uses can also be subverted and parodied from an oppositional and critical utopian perspective.

Outside the literature on post-nationalist theory, however, many of these concepts resonate with the debates around nations and culture as discussed earlier. While oppositions to the dominant nationalism can clearly be applied to many of the definitions of a nation – as territory, state and ethnicity – they are most closely linked to Anderson's concept of imagined communities. Post-nationalist theory's vision of nations being made, and remade, by a competing dialogue between official and non-official nationalisms is one which echoes many of Anderson's concepts. Also, by providing an overt focus on nationalism, rather than nations themselves, post-nationalist theory is engaging with the construction and sustainability of the dominant myths and symbols. Thus, when combined with a focus on

cinema – a contemporary form of mass media communication which can be linked to the role of ‘print-as-commodity’ (Anderson, 1983, p.37) which helps to imagine the nation – an overt link can be made between post-nationalist perspectives on cinema and the concept of nations as imagined communities.

Similarly, the stance taken by post-nationalist theory that dominant nationalisms can be deconstructed and undermined by the role of the other, in relation to the hegemon, also relates closely to the work of post-colonial theorists, such as Bhabha (2004). Not only does this empowerment of marginal figures echo his argument that the definition of the nation can be found by examining its interstitial groups and narratives, but the unfixed position taken by post-nationalist theory on narrative solutions and gender also relates closely to his concept of a ‘Third Space’ (Bhabha, 2004, p.53). Here, Bhabha argues that the space between the You and I in any communication offers the true location of culture. It is not based on ‘the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity’ (Bhabha, 2004, p.56). Thus, a study of this Space allows critics to engage with the ‘non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures’ through an experience of the ‘tension peculiar to borderline existences’ (Bhabha, 2004, p.53). The unfixed, oppositional spaces of contact zones studied by post-nationalist theory seem to be closely related to this, and an understanding of how this can be applied to cinema is particularly valuable.

Therefore, in summary, Rowe (2000a) and Kearney’s (1997) perspectives on post-nationalist theory include a number of tools and concepts which are applicable to existing debates within film studies. They include:

- An analysis of the contact zones which exist between (official nationalisms) and within (non-official nationalism) the imagined communities of nations, and how this can be used to undermine the dominant myths and symbols.
- An understanding of the binary oppositions and power structures that exist within these contact zones (most notably the role of hegemon and other).
- The refusal to identify narrative solutions to the felt contradictions of society.
- The process of interpretation that occurs when groups come into contact with each other, particularly the use of ethnocentric hermeneutic explanation which can lose or suppress the original meaning.
- How issues of identity can be used to undermine the dominant myths and symbols. Within issues of race and migrant identity this includes the refusal to accept the commodification of identity, and within gender this can include female figures that break out of the domestic space to remake their identity.
- The use of a cultural pluralism which allows the local and international to circumvent issues of the national.
- The use of history to undermine the myths of the nation, allowing it to be reclaimed and re-imagined from an oppositional perspective.
- The use of critical utopian imagery which deconstructs and parodies myths and, thus, undermines the status quo.

To date, the contribution of this theory to film studies remains limited. Similar to Kearney's (1997) approach to Ireland, Tcheuyap (2011) uses African cinemas to identify a national context in which traditional and national representations can be seen to be constantly remade by the changing cultural landscape. Here, African cinemas are discussed as being 'systematically dominated by cultural, historical and political considerations that are dated and have become somewhat obsolete' within the literature (pg. 1). However, both political and cultural change in a broad sense, and changes to film and television production in a

specific sense, have allowed these traditional and outdated representations to be undermined and remade by contemporary filmmakers. The reasons for this are varied, but primarily highlight the increased 'cinematic modes intended to interrogate unstable new social constructs and shifting identities' found in the area (pg. 28). This interrogation takes the form of social representations, such as (un)masked sexuality, and the use of cinematic forms and genre such as comedy, dance and the depiction of myth on screen. It results in the identification of a balanced reconstruction of postcolonial relations via a 'middle space' between the nationalist and oppositional forms traditionally found in politically constructed African cinemas (pg. 237). This helps to provide both a theoretical context for a study of this theory in relation to migrant cinema, but also gives a strong political contrast to many of the national cinemas discussed here.

Although the relationship between the concepts of post-nationalist theory and film studies has not been overtly drawn in the literature, its relevance is immediately apparent. All of these concepts can be used to interrogate the gaps which currently exist within transnational film criticism – most notably a lack of understanding of the power structures and spaces which exist when nations come into contact with each other in terms of representation, production and audience. Post-nationalist theory, however, highlights a number of critical tools which can be used to examine and analyse these power structures and spaces. Similarly, its limitations will also help to inform where national and transnational readings remain most relevant. Accordingly, the introduction of post-nationalist theory in this sense has the potential to transform the fields of national and transnational cinemas.

Thesis Structure

To address the relevance of post-nationalist theory to cinema, and vice versa, the work of migrant, exilic and diasporic filmmakers will be discussed as they are often considered to be

a group that has greater, and wider, access to the contact zones between and within the imagined communities of the home and host nations. A case-study approach discussing a limited number of film-makers will be used for the following reasons. Firstly, as this study will be one of the first to attempt to overtly introduce post-nationalist theory into film theory, a pragmatic approach which acknowledges the discussions as a starting point for future debate is required. Secondly, a case study approach will allow the inclusion of films which highlight both the relevance and limitations of the theory in order to give a better insight into its true value (rather than limiting the selection of texts to those which can be seen as solely endorsing the position). And, finally, a case-study approach will limit the possibility of homogenising the diverse and varied backgrounds and experiences of migrant filmmakers.

The filmmakers selected for discussion are used to highlight the key issues included in the subject. They are: Fatih Akin, Ferzan Ozpetek, Atom Egoyan, Michael Haneke and Gurinder Chadha. A detailed rationale for these particular directors is included in the outline of chapter structure below.

The first filmmaker to be considered is Fatih Akin. Born in Germany to parents of Turkish ethnicity, Akin has made a number of films which not only depict the lives of migrant characters, but also overtly engage with the social and political issues that relate to the subject. His films themselves have received a great deal of international recognition, leading to his success being claimed by the cinemas of the home, host and migrant communities to which he is related. In fact, such is his success that his own citizenship has been claimed by both Turkish and German cinemas. As such, he is a useful figure to provide an introduction on the key relationship between post-nationalist theory and migrant cinema. The migrant representations of his films, most notably *Kurz und schmerzlos* (1998) and *Gegen die Wand* (2004), are considered as depictions of 'abject subjects' (Elsaesser, 2006, p.655-656) who,

rather than crossing borders freely, are trapped within their host nation without narrative resolutions to their conflicts and contradictions. This, however, is immediately contrasted in the director's work by *Im Juli* (2000) and *Solino* (2002) – two films which attempt to deliberately suppress these tensions in favour of comedy which freely crosses literal borders in the former, and family drama which idealises the motherland of Turkey in the latter. This section concludes with *Auf der anderen Seite* (2007), which undermines the structures of the network film (Silvey, 2009) to stress the disparity and difference in modern society on a broad, political scale, whilst also drawing issues of Turkey's move into the European Union into focus.

This is then followed by a discussion of the films of Ferzan Ozpetek, a filmmaker born in Turkey, but who has worked primarily in Italy. Ozpetek's films echo many of the key themes and issues of migration found in Akin's work, but they differ in the crucial respect that their focus is often on sexuality, particularly homosexuality. This helps to advance the discussion by broadening its impact to include a range of non-official nationalisms (beyond race alone) which can be seen to oppose or undermine the dominant nationalism. Firstly, *La Fate ignorati* (2001) will be used to introduce the concept of 'masking' (Duncan, 2006), in which homosexual discourses can be revealed and hidden, and how this relates to the non-official nationalisms of post-nationalist theory. Following this, *Hamam* (1997) will be discussed in terms of the ways in which gender and sexuality can be used to create oppositional spaces within the home, host and migrant communities. Both *Harem Suare* (1999) and *Le Finestre di fronte* (2003) will introduce history into this debate, particularly its impact on contemporary narratives. This will be developed further by a discussion of *Cuore Sacro* (2005), which will be used to illustrate how such oppositions can extend to issues of religion. Finally, *Saturno contro* (2007) will be used to highlight how such debates do not always undermine the dominant conventions, but instead attempt to re-imagine the nation in a manner which

questions the ability of post-nationalist theory to unmask such a wide range of non-official nationalisms.

The next filmmaker to be discussed will be Atom Egoyan, who was born in Egypt to Armenian parents and has made his films primarily in Canada (although he has also worked in the USA and UK). Although many of his films contain representations of migration and contact zones between nations, they are primarily known for their complexity and 'self-reflexivity' (Tschofen and Burwell, 2007b). As such, they will be used to advance the debate by illustrating ways in which cinematic structures and forms can be used to create oppositional spaces particular to genre. Firstly, the ways in which technology (notably video and then the internet) can be used to undermine notions of the family will be discussed in *Family Viewing* (1988) and *Adoration* (2008). The cinematic representation of home nations and homecomings will then be examined in relation to *Calendar* (1993) and *Ararat* (2002). Then, the possibility of nationalist readings of the gendered gaze (Mulvey, 1975), will be discussed in relation to *Next of Kin* (1984) and *Felicia's Journey* (1999). Once again, the section will be concluded with a discussion of films in which nationalist issues are not overtly utilised to assess the limitations of such readings. In this case it will include an analysis of voyeurism and sexuality in *Speaking Parts* (1989) and *Exotica* (1994), and the possibility of allegory and the use of trauma in *The Adjuster* (1991) and *The Sweet Hereafter* (1997).

This will be followed by an analysis of the films of Michael Haneke, who differs from the others discussed here on the grounds that his cinematic migration (from Austria to France, the USA and Germany) is elective. As such, the director's overt concern with issues of nationalism will be discussed as being deliberately oppositional to the nations and national cinemas concerned. The section will begin with an analysis of Haneke's Austrian films – the self-termed glaciation trilogy – to highlight the national implications of texts in which figures

of otherness are almost completely absent. The introduction of otherness, which coincides with Haneke's movement from Austria to France, will then be considered in terms of the creation of oppositional contact zones in *Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages* (2000). This will be developed further in relation to *Caché* (2005), in which national conflict is extended beyond the representations on screen to include the film's relationship with other films, cinematic genre and its viewing audience. This will be followed by a discussion of *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte* (2009), in which the director's oppositional style will both draw attention to national contact zones, but also refuse to offer any solutions to its conflicts. The section will conclude with a discussion of films which do not overtly engage with nationalism - *La Pianiste* (2001) (set in Austria), *Le temps du loup* (2003) and *Funny Games* (1997) and its US remake *Funny Games US* (2007) – to highlight the ways in which post-nationalist theory can still inform debates of the director's work as a whole.

The final case study will discuss the films of Gurinder Chadha, a director born in Kenya to Indian migrant workers who has worked in Great Britain, India and the USA. Chadha's films are particularly relevant for two reasons. Firstly, they introduce the issues of gender into the existing debates discussed above, which has implications when considering both representation and genre. Secondly, her films overtly relate to migrant and mainstream filmmaking, allowing them to illustrate the potential limitations and future of post-nationalist theory within film. The section begins with a discussion of *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), in which conventions of host and migrant nationalism are opposed by the use of gender. *What's Cooking* (2000) is then used to illustrate how the dominant nationalism of the family and the American national holiday of Thanksgiving can be undermined. This is followed with a discussion of how the dominant conventions of the sports film are deconstructed by issues of race and gender in *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002), particularly through the use of restrictive domestic space. Then, gender, genre and race will be considered in *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) as the text enters into contact zones with Bollywood cinema, the Hollywood musical

and a canonical text of English literature. The section concludes with a discussion of how Chadha's films can be seen to relate post-nationalist theory to mainstream and British cinema in general in an attempt to highlight the limitations of post-nationalist theory within the context of film.

The conclusion section will summarise these arguments and highlight the relevance and limitations of post-nationalist theory to film theory. It will discuss the particular importance of migrant cinema to post-nationalist theory, and vice versa. Suggestions for future research will also be highlighted.

Chapter Two: Cinematic Contact Zones – The Films of Fatih Akin

Introduction: Fatih Akin, National Cinema(s) and Hyphenated Identity

A key figure in an understanding of the relationship between migrant cinema and post-nationalist theory is Fatih Akin. His films represent migrant characters and the social and political concerns of migration, and display an overt concern with issues of nationalism in cinema. He has enjoyed success in his career and this has also led to debates within film studies itself over the national ownership of his films. An analysis of these films, therefore, can highlight both the relevance of post-nationalist theory to film studies and also the impact issues of nationalism have had on critical responses to the director's work. As such, they provide a crucial starting point for discussion of the topic.

Fatih Akin was born in Hamburg in 1973. His parents had emigrated from Turkey to Germany in the 1960s following the bilateral agreement between the two nations that Turkey would supply short-term labour, known as *Gastarbeiters* ("guest workers"), to aid German economic expansion (Jurgens, 2001, p.95-6). Many Turkish migrants remained, with the number of people of Turkish descent living in Germany recently standing at 2.5 million. Within this group, 600,000 hold German citizenship, making it 'by far the largest group of foreigners in Germany' (Fischer, 2004, pg.2). Meanwhile, the relationship between the two nations is also seen as crucial for Turkey, particularly as Germany provides a link with Western Europe during Turkey's ongoing accession to the European Union, despite its contradictory impulses to relate to both East and West (Erdogan, 2009, p.29). Beginning with *Kurz und schmerzlos*, Fatih Akin has made several films which have achieved commercial and critical success both within Germany and internationally. This culminated with *Gegen die Wand* which, despite being an international co-production set in both Turkey and Germany and featuring primarily Turkish-German migrant characters, was proclaimed to

be the first German (not Turkish or Turkish-German) film to win the Golden Bear at the International Film Festival in Berlin in 2004 (Erdogan, 2009, p.27).

What is important to the work of Fatih Akin in relation to post-nationalist theory, however, is not merely the fact that he can be seen as a celebrated migrant filmmaker, but that his films often overtly focus on 'the problems faced by first-, second- and third- generation Turkish immigrants living in Germany' (Wilkinson, 2006, p.757). Not only do they primarily, but not exclusively, feature protagonists from migrant groups who share the director's hyphenated identity, but this is often represented as a source of conflict, tension and opposition within the contact zones between host and home nations. Trapped in their host nation and longing for an idealised return to the home nation, they are shown as being held in 'some form of transit between two cultures, unable ever to arrive in the static idyll' (Berghahn, 2006, p.156) of either nation. His films therefore reinforce the argument that 'the political resonance of a discourse predicated on notions of host (country) and guest (worker)' means that 'the institutions of neither 'house' emerge with much credit' (Burns, 2009, p.19). Equally, these figures often move from nation to nation within the films themselves, allowing the use of geography, landscape, border representations and domestic spaces to further bring the power structures of these nations to the foreground.

Akin's relationship with nations, and national cinemas, is not one which is solely limited to Germany and Turkey; it is also related to cinematic debates which discuss influences which move across more than just their geographical locations. Beyond the myths and symbols of the nations which are literally on screen, Akin's films are also often 'positioned, transnationally, across Turkish, German and English influences' (Bennett, 2005, p.500) and contain an 'eclectic mix of generic templates ranging from Italian-American gangster movies, European heritage cinema and the Turkish arabesk tradition', highlighting their 'cultural

hybridity' (Beghahn, 2006, p.143). This not only includes the use of genre or cinematic intertextuality, but also the use of traditional and popular music and self-reflexivity within Akin's work as a whole. Therefore, the contact zones discussed should not be limited to only those of the representations on screen but also include generic intertextuality. Such references to other generic templates or transnational themes can be used to oppose the dominant structures, particularly when discussing issues of national cinemas.

However, beyond the texts themselves, Akin is also a particularly significant figure due to the critical response to his work. Critics have suggested that his success as a migrant filmmaker has made him 'the new poster boy for European cinema' due to the very fact that his films appeal to 'all three imagined communities' (Petek, 2007, p.179) to which they relate – the host nation (Germany), the homeland (Turkey) and the diasporic communities in transit between the two. Furthermore, it has even been suggested that 'Young German-Turkish Cinema is being promoted with increasing fervour with the slogan 'The New German Cinema is Turkish'' and that figures like Akin and Thomas Arslan 'are perceived as the next wave of auteur who will once again help German cinema to reach' international acclaim (Beghahn, 2006, p.141). As such, there are not only significant contact zones within Akin's films, but the debates surrounding the texts also draw national cinemas into contact zones with each other. As a result, the extent to which it is appropriate to elevate Akin's work to the forefront of German, or Turkish, cinema will need to be considered, along with whether or not it is appropriate for his films to be categorised on the grounds of nation or nationalism at all.

In order to full investigate these debates, the following topics will be discussed in detail. Firstly, Akin's debut feature, *Kurz und schmerzlos* (1998), will be used to highlight how the protagonists are depicted as 'object subjects' (Elsaesser, 2006, p.655-656) incapable of idealised homecomings and how this is used to undermine both host and home nations.

This debate will then be advanced in a discussion of Akin's *Gegen die Wand* (2004), in which migrant identity is further shown to be an interstitial state which helps to create interstitial narratives. This will be complicated, however, by a discussion of *Im Juli* (2000) and *Solino* (2002), in which a number of potentially post-nationalist themes – such as border-crossing in the former and representations of homecomings in the latter – are instead used to highlight potential solutions to the tensions of the films discussed previously. The chapter will culminate in a discussion of *Auf der anderen Seite* (2007), in which a number of these issues are used within a 'hyperlink narrative' (Silvey, 2009) to illustrate the complexity of migrant identity and the relationship between contemporary Germany and Turkey.

An understanding of these issues will not only help us better understand how Akin's films use figures of migrant and hyphenated identity to illustrate characters trapped in a space between conflicting cultures and nations, but also how this state can be used to oppose the dominant myths and symbols of the nationalisms concerned. Equally, the critical response to these issues, and debates surrounding Akin's relevance to German, Turkish and migrant cinemas, will also help highlight the director's work has had a particular impact on German and Turkish national cinemas. As such, the films of Fatih Akin will act not only as an introduction to post-nationalist theory within film, but they will also provide the foundation for an understanding of the diverse issues raised by the work of the filmmakers discussed in the subsequent sections.

Interstitial Figures and Interstitial Narratives: *Kurz und schmerzlos*

Depictions of Turkish-German hyphenated identity, and their relevance to post-nationalist theory, are immediately apparent in Fatih Akin's first film, *Kurz und schmerzlos*. What is noticeable, however, is not merely the presence of such representations, but the ways in

which they highlight societal and cinematic tensions within nations and national cinemas. Rather than sitting comfortably within the domestic spaces of the film, migrant figures are shown to be in frequent, damaging contact with it. Equally, while longing for the solution of a homecoming to the imagined community of the homeland, the film leaves its figures trapped in a space between nations. As such, it immediately highlights the relevance of post-nationalist theory when reading the director's work – particularly in its representations of migrant figures as 'abject subjects' (Elsaesser, 2006, p.655), which allow the film to highlight the tensions of nations and yet avoid offering narrative solutions (Mechling, 2000) to them.

Kurz und schmerzlos begins with the release of its protagonist, Gabriel (Mehmet Kurtulus) – a second-generation Turk based in Hamburg – from prison. Determined not to be tempted back to a life of crime by his friends Bobby (Aleksander Jovanovic) and Costa (Adam Bousdoukos), both of whom are also defined as migrants (as a Serb and Greek respectively), he begins to work as a taxi driver. Bobby, however, is attempting to progress amongst a group of Albanian gangsters, again defined by their migrant status, and Costa would appear to be following him despite Gabriel's advice. Not only does Bobby's behaviour alienate his girlfriend, Alice (Regula Grauwiler) – who then begins a relationship with Gabriel – but eventually his criminal failings lead to him and Costa being killed by the Albanians. Trapped between his desire to go straight with Alice, and his desire for revenge, Gabriel gains violent retribution from the Albanians and buys a one-way ticket back to Turkey. The film concludes before he takes the trip, however, and he is left praying with his father in their small Hamburg flat in the final scene.

The narrative of *Kurz und schmerzlos* immediately depicts figures of hyphenated identity as being both trapped by the dominant nationalism of the host nation whilst simultaneously longing for an idealised homecoming to the home nation. The fact that Gabriel is denied

such a journey, and the film concludes without a clear resolution to its conflicts, reinforces the post-nationalist concept of texts failing to offer narrative solutions to the contradictions of society (Mechling, 2000). By denying the viewer a solution which neither endorses Gabriel's position in Germany nor allows his safe journey to Turkey, *Kurz und schmerzlos* is able to adopt an oppositional position to both nations. The denial of such internal or external journeys suggests the film's migrant figures are incapable of voyages into 'a liberating space' (Fachinger, 2007, p.257) of the home nation, but are instead trapped in the displacement brought about by a hyphenated identity in the host nation. As such, they become illustrations of the many tensions within the contact zones of migration, and their lack of narrative resolution allows them to avoid endorsing any dominant nationalism.

An inability to return home leaves Gabriel as a migrant figure, an 'abject subject' who has 'been vacated, even by their oppressors, and the space they occupy has been declared a blank' (Elsaesser, 2006, p.655-656). As a protagonist, he is unable to access any 'circuit of exchange or interaction' (Elsaesser, 2006, p.655), particularly any identification with his home or host nations. He is neither trapped in Germany nor at home in Turkey, but rather situated in an unresolved state between the two nations. He holds the narrative power to act out his will (although only through violent exchanges), but is unable to do so with the ability to bring about satisfactory resolution. Racially, he is a migrant figure neither defined as fully foreign nor integrated into his host nation. Instead, he is trapped in transit in the interstices of the contact zones involved; in the Third Space between each competing group. Although meaning around him is collapsing (Kristeva, 2003, p.93), this is not depicted in such a pejorative manner as is usually associated with the abjection of horror cinema (Kristeva, 1982). He is simultaneously recognisable as a figure found in all three imagined communities of host, home and hyphenated identities, but his (and the film's) inability to find meaning in any of these spaces leaves him on the margins of each. Gabriel is, as such, 'familiar' but 'radically separate' from the groups to which he relates (Kristeva, 2003, p.93).

Yet it is not just the lack of narrative resolution which is used to create oppositional spaces in *Kurz und Schmerzlos*, as this extends to representations of nationalism on screen. Firstly, what is noticeable about the contact zones the figures inhabit is that the common and dominant element, Germany as the host nation, is almost completely absent. Although set in Hamburg, the film is populated by figures defined by racial otherness – the protagonists are given captions defining their race when they are first introduced and the narrative centres on the involvement of Albanian gangsters. Even marginal characters like Gabriel's sister Ceyda's (Idil Uner) new boyfriend are given potentially non-German names, in this case the Scandinavian-sounding Sven (Marc Hosemann). Meanwhile, the three protagonists are not governed by one specific racial identity, but a personal friendship that crosses racial boundaries. Therefore, even though the narrative takes place in Hamburg, and each character's hyphenated identity places them in a contact zone with Germany as the host nation (normally the dominant force), it is noticeable that this imagined community itself is stripped of much of its importance. Although defined as a German film, and despite Akin's perceived importance as a German director, *Kurz und Schmerzlos* provides a depiction of a nation of figures inhabiting a migrant or Third, rather than a nationalist, Space between nations.

Germany's only noticeable presence is that of a key domestic space, and this is also one which is not displayed positively. After his release from prison, Gabriel is forced to return to his family home and is shown as having literally outgrown it – he regularly needs to stoop to avoid the low ceilings and sleeps in a bed clearly too small for him (Fachinger, 2007, p.258). This claustrophobia is echoed when Gabriel speaks of prison in national rather than personal terms, stating that Germany is a prison he was 'alone' in and a setting where he was constantly told 'what to do'. Turkey, meanwhile, remains idealised (he states 'In Turkey, you're never alone. Everybody knows each other, there are relatives, it's hot, it's full of

life...'). Critics have suggested that prison is a 'key chronotope' in migrant cinema (Naficy, 2001, p.191) in that it is a key site which links 'the inherited space-time of the homeland to the constructed space-time of the exile and diaspora' (Naficy, 2001, p.152). This is crucial here as the 'complex social history of emigration, division, and reception' between Turkey and Germany 'informs the claustrophobic and dystopic structures of feeling of Turkish accented films made in Germany' (Naficy, 2001, p.193). Indeed, the fact that Germany is both shown as a claustrophobic space and overtly compared to prison, while Turkey remains an idealised home nation, further emphasises the overtly critical approach to the host nation in *Kurz und schmerzlos*.

One potential escape for the migrant figures of *Kurz und schmerzlos* is a transnational one – that being cinematic intertextuality – yet this too does not offer narrative solutions to the problems of the nation. The text itself recalls a number of films from nations other than Germany, most notably *Mean Streets* (1973) in its depiction of criminal life, and *La haine* (1995) in its everyday use of racially-defined protagonists. In *Bobby* it provides us with a character whose hyphenated identity is at least partially occupied by an obsession with the machismo of American films. In one key sequence he reveals that he is determined to rent *Scarface* (1983) regularly as 'Pacino is king!' and 'cool' with 'balls as big as dinosaurs'. Yet this transnational show of machismo is simply another group of meanings to which these characters have no access. Bobby's masculinity collapses first when he beats his girlfriend (in a display of domestic violence which recalls another American film, *Raging Bull* (1980)) and then is undermined in an arms deal, which resembles the plot of a traditional crime film, ultimately leading to his death. Thus, while the home nation is further marginalised in *Kurz und schmerzlos* through the film's references to other, transnational cinemas these films remain another set of meanings which the characters cannot successfully access.

The national representation of the host nation also impacts on the depiction of migrant life within the text. As stated previously, the Germany inhabited by these figures is one which echoes many of the recurrent themes of Naficy's *Accented Cinema* (2001) – the claustrophobic domestic space, the representation of the host nation as prison, the imagined homecoming, and figures inhabiting the interstitial spaces between imagined communities. Not only does this denial of access to meaning in the home nation and unfulfilled longing for a homecoming place the film's figures in a position which closely resembles much of the rootlessness (Chambers, 1994) discussed in the migration literature, it also offers a depiction of the imagined community of migration which is far from positive. This imagined community, therefore, is equally culpable in the creation of the abjection of its subjects, and also helps perpetuate the lack of meaning in their interstitial position. As a result, it is undermined in much the same way that the dominant nationalism of the host nation is. Accordingly, *Kurz und schmerzlos* is not only refusing to find solutions to the felt contradictions of German society, it is also extending this view to the tensions of its migrant community.

This depiction of hyphenated identities also serves the purpose of undermining the 'binary of dominant-racism', which habitually casts marginal and minority figures as 'cultural outsiders and perpetual victims' (Fachinger, 2007, p.255). Instead, they have become the 'perpetrators' (Burns, 2009, p.13). Gabriel is not forced into his interstitial position because of agents of the dominant nationalism, but because of his own actions and those of other, diverse migrant groups (particularly Bobby). The only figure of the dominant nationalism he encounters is Alice, and his final dilemma whether to seek vengeance for his friends and flee to Turkey or stay in Germany with his love interest highlights his contradictory impulses of integration into the host nation and an idealised return to the home. These nationalist longings are again complicated by the representation of Alice. She is not defined as overtly German but instead owns a store selling Eastern-influenced jewellery called "Kismet", a

word of Turkish origin (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 2009), suggesting further double occupancy. Gabriel remains the only figure given the ability and narrative power to make the above decision, moving him outside another 'circuit of exchange and interaction' – that of perpetrator and victim (Elsaesser, 2006, p.655). That he chooses to act as perpetrator, and that this results in an ambiguous conclusion, results in this becoming another group of meanings that he is unable to access.

The imagined community of the home nation, meanwhile, plays a slightly different role. Not only does it permeate throughout the film's many migrant characters – through family events, businesses and aspects of identity – but its most significant impact is in offering the possibility for escape to Gabriel. In the film's early stages, Gabriel's dreams of a homecoming serve to illustrate his displacement in the host society, yet in the later stages the denial of his journey suggests its impossibility. That he is left with only a meeting with his father (who states "Like a film, life ends eventually") and prayer in the same restrictive space he was originally confined within highlights his lack of narrative power and lack of access to potential resolution. The imagined community of home, therefore, remains an ideal within the film – its presence only suggesting one form of resolution which cannot be delivered to Gabriel and the text itself.

What *Kurz und schmerzlos* offers, therefore, is an illustration of the potential resolutions available to its interstitial figures and a depiction of how they are denied them. Germany, as host nation, is shown to be a setting populated only by figures of double occupancy who cannot access its solutions. Instead it is a prison, a claustrophobic space, and a cinematic narrative which further pushes its protagonists into the margins of society. The imagined community of migration, meanwhile, further perpetuates this state, and the longing for an idealised homecoming only exacerbates this abject position. Similarly, as such a journey is

denied its main protagonist, adequate resolution remains an impossibility. This state is also illustrated by the cinematic forms of the film itself. Its intertextual, transnational references to other films, its generic elements as a crime film and, most significantly, its lack of resolution, allow the film to not only highlight the tensions of its characters but deny these characters and the text itself narrative solutions. Thus, not only does Gabriel remain an abject subject, but this also allows *Kurz und schmerzlos* to place him and the film itself in an oppositional space which undermines the many imagined communities with which it comes into contact.

Thus, Fatih Akin's first feature, *Kurz und schmerzlos*, offers great potential for post-nationalist readings. Its protagonists illustrate many of the concerns highlighted within the literature on migration and migrant cinema, while its lack of any resolution allows this to develop an oppositional national space. The imagined communities of migration and home and host nations are all shown to be a cause of tension, and the film's ambiguous conclusion allows it to avoid endorsing one nationalism over the other. Instead, it not only highlights the contradictions faced by interstitial figures, but also uses these to create an interstitial narrative which remains rootless in a Third Space between the texts and nations to which it relates. In this sense, it clearly endorses the notion of a post-nationalist text which uses an absence of narrative solution to highlight the contradictions of societies and oppose any and all national representations on screen.

Unhappy Homecomings: *Gegen die Wand*

Many of these themes and representations are returned to in one of Akin's most critically successful films – *Gegen die Wand*. It once again offers migrant protagonists who are denied access to the meaning of nationalisms as abject subjects (Elsaesser, 2006), and denies its narrative a solution to the tension on screen. Yet, there are several key

differences which further develop the relationship between the director's work and post-nationalist theory. Crucially, in this instance its protagonists are allowed the opportunity to complete a homecoming to Turkey. This allows them, and the film, direct access to the imagined community of home, and the fact that this is also a pejorative representation further exemplifies the text's oppositional status. Thus, *Gegen die Wand* not only reinforces many of the post-nationalist aspects of *Kurz und Schmerzlos*, but it also advances them.

Gegen die Wand focuses on two second-generation Turkish migrants in Hamburg, Cahit (Birol Unel) and Sibel (Sibel Kekilli). The pair meets in a mental hospital following suicide attempts – Sibel is rebelling against her conservative family and Cahit crashes his car into a wall in the film's opening for never overtly established reasons. They agree to marry so Sibel can be free from her family to experience sexual fulfilment with a variety of men. The relationship progresses beyond this, however, and when it is suggested they are falling in love, Cahit accidentally kills one of Sibel's former lovers in a bar fight. Whilst he is in prison, Sibel moves to Istanbul where she works for a short period before returning to her previously nihilistic ways – at which point she is raped and almost killed when provoking a group of men. On his release, Cahit returns to Turkey to look for her, and although briefly united and arranging to leave Sibel's new family (she has a husband and child) together, she never arrives and Cahit takes a bus to Mersin (his home town) alone instead. As with Gabriel, we never see Cahit arrive and the final scene sees him staring blankly into space as the bus leaves.

Once again, like Gabriel, Cahit and Sibel are immediately defined by their marginal status within the text. Not only are they migrant figures, but meet following separate suicide attempts in a mental hospital, Cahit having just engaged in a bar fight during his lowly-paid work collecting empty glasses (from which he steals the dregs), Sibel to rebel against her

conservative family. However, this hyphenated identity does facilitate their identification with each other – Sibel's first contact with Cahit is to ask him if he is a 'Turk' so they can be married, and this conceit acts as the basis for their relationship. Despite this, neither is shown as being comfortable with the migrant community. It is precisely that from which Sibel is looking to rebel for sexual fulfilment, and Cahit appears disinterested, or even displeased, with his heritage (when he is asked why he cannot speak Turkish by Sibel's family, he claims he 'threw' the language 'away'). Thus, rather than directly opposing the host nation with the Third Space of its characters, *Gegen die Wand* would seem to be more concerned with the home and migrant nations.

However, unlike Gabriel, *Gegen die Wand* does offer its migrant protagonists the opportunity for a homecoming. Yet, this is far from idealised - Cahit's return to Mersin is depicted in an ambiguous manner and Sibel also stays in Istanbul with her new family 'at the cost of personal happiness' as she seeks 'redemption in domestic security and motherhood' (Burns, 2009, p.16). In fact, the representation of Turkey as home nation is frequently a pejorative one throughout the film. Firstly, Sibel's family are depicted as the 'primary locus of Turkish tradition ... represented in exclusively negative terms, as irredeemably oppressive, inexorably patriarchal, and nothing short of fanatical at that' (Petek, 2007, p.181). Secondly, when Sibel arrives in Turkey, its representation 'eschews the cliché of a romanticized Orient' (Berghahn, 2006, p.154) by reiterating such negative traditions. Sibel is forced into lowly-paid labour, raped, almost beaten to death by a group of men, and faced with equal restrictions of personal freedom and the same sense of claustrophobia that Germany offered. Like Gabriel, she also uses prison as a metaphor for nationhood, although this time for her home nation, stating in a letter to Cahit that 'You got the harder lot, but prison is the only thing I can think of if I think of my life here.' This sense of displacement in figures of hyphenated identity, from both home and host nations, is also in evidence when Cahit and

Sibel meet in Turkey – it is far from a romantic reunion and they separate as part of this film's ambiguous conclusion.

Similarly, the representation of Germany as host nation also remains a negative one. As discussed previously, Cahit and Sibel are clearly defined as marginal figures, both as a result of their hyphenated identity and their social status. Cahit is a lowly paid worker, casually engaging in violence and living in another claustrophobic domestic space – in this case a small flat. Sibel, meanwhile, is marginalised as a result of her gender within a patriarchal migrant family. In fact, her plot to marry Cahit to escape this clearly echoes Kinney's (2000) discussion of post-nationalist gender narratives being those in which female characters refuse to stay in the comfortable domestic space of home and instead break out to help remake their role. Meanwhile, Germany is also shown in a pejorative light in terms of landscape or location. For Cahit and Sibel it is again made up of mental hospitals, prisons and highly restrictive spaces. Thus, once again, *Gegen die Wand* provides a text in which the migrant protagonists facilitate an oppositional representation of both the imagined communities of home and host nations.

While Gabriel is denied narrative control within a crime-thriller structure, Cahit's situation is much more difficult to define and sympathise with. Gabriel overtly dreams of escaping the criminal world to which he is connected, while Cahit displays self-destruction which is never clearly explained. This is most clearly illustrated by his suicide attempt which begins the film, and his refusal to discuss it when in hospital after he survives. It also plays a key role in the frequent bursts of violence which result in him being imprisoned and the ambivalence of his final journey to Mersin, which is neither hopeful nor negative, as he stares blankly into space as his bus journey begins. This makes him a more oppositional figure than Gabriel in that his actions are psychologically unexplained by the text, and actively complicate the

narrative in that they add barriers to the love story. His actions not only highlight the oppositional nature of his position in society, but the lack of explanation for these actions also helps to create an opposition to the film's narrative and the audience's response to it.

Sibel, meanwhile, provides a figure that is more clearly illustrative of post-nationalist representations. As stated above, as the female protagonist of the film, many of her tensions relate directly to her refusal to accept a life of comfortable domestic space (Kinney, 2000). In the first instance, her suicide attempt, rejection of her traditional migrant family, and her plot to marry Cahit, all act as a direct refusal to remain comfortably at home. The space she moves into, however, is one which is unstable as her sexual relationships not only isolate Cahit but also help to undermine the possibility of a love story between the two. Simultaneously, her attempt to recreate this space in Turkey leads to her being violently attacked and beaten. Thus, although the possibility for her to move into an uncomfortable international space is made available again at the film's conclusion, she actively returns to the comfortable domestic space of her family, precisely the situation she was rebelling against in the first place. As such, her narrative not only highlights the oppositional spaces of gender in the film, but her inability to maintain a position in uncomfortable, non-domestic space suggest the impossibility of such resolutions for female migrant figures.

One of the main mechanisms through which Cahit and Sibel are forced into this marginal position in the film is the use of language. Mailloux (2000) has suggested that whenever two groups are placed in a contact zone, the power relationships are often defined by language as the meaning of the other must be reinterpreted (and perhaps changed) by the dominant hegemon as part of a process of hermeneutic ethnocentric explanation. It is Cahit who is forced into such positions and it is his use of language which defines such cross-border communication. Not only does his language fail him when trying to convince Sibel's family of

his appropriateness / Turkishness as a husband, this process is also repeated when he is released from prison and searching for Sibel in Turkey. Here, both languages of his double occupancy are of no use to him and he is forced to, uncomfortably, adopt a third language – English. This is one of only two occasions when he speaks English, and the other is to reinforce the external, other influences on his life when he proclaims ‘Punk is not dead!’ Both of these moments highlight the difficult relationship Cahit seems to hold with his hyphenated identity, as it appears as if language itself is forcing him into an oppositional space.

These oppositions also extend to *Gegen die Wand*'s use of music. The most notable aspect of this is the ‘six-piece Turkish band that features as a chorus to the story’ and intermittently acts as an insert throughout the narrative (Thomson, 2005). Whilst the presence of these musical inserts would seem to superficially increase the film’s ‘authentic’ Turkish’ nature (the sequences are shot on the banks of the Bosphorus), on closer inspection they are not actually traditionally Turkish musicians playing traditionally Turkish songs, but a ‘band of Romany musicians headed by the famous Gypsy artist Selim Sesler’ (Petek, 2007, p.182). The deliberately nomadic nature of these sequences is reinforced by the extent to which the true commentary on the narrative is generated by Cahit’s Western, punk influences. His recovery from therapy is triggered by the doctor quoting the band The The to him (‘If you can’t change the world, change your world’) while comparisons between the displacement of Cahit’s suicide attempt and Sibel’s rape in Turkey are made by the use of the Depeche Mode song *I Feel You* in each scene (Petek, 2007, p.183). Thus, while the use of traditional music is implied throughout the film, this does not endorse the significance of any nation. In fact, it is not only nomadic in nature, but also leaves Western alternative music to provide commentary on the characters.

Crucial throughout *Gegen die Wand*, however, is the extent to which the oppositions on screen and the creation of these abject subjects (Elsaesser, 2006) are particular to the migrant community between Germany and Turkey. Defined by a racial otherness within Germany, the tensions faced by both Cahit and Sibel derive from their inability or refusal to sit within the traditions of Turkey in their new nation. Cahit has not only thrown his language away, but he also refuses to acknowledge his hyphenated identity whenever he is asked about it. He knows little about his home town of Mersin and doesn't even seem to be aware of the Turkish meaning of his name. Sibel, meanwhile, refuses to accept the values of her more traditional migrant family, and then attempts to find a similarly oppositional space in Turkey. Following being attacked, however, she eventually submits and becomes the wife and mother she hoped to avoid. Therefore, Cahit and Sibel's otherness in Germany, and their inability to accept the imagined community of migration that exists within it, provides a specific national space from which oppositions can be created in *Gegen die Wand*.

Thus, *Gegen die Wand* extends many of *Kurz und schmerzlos*' themes to reinforce the ways both texts create oppositional spaces in relation to the imagined communities of home, host and migrant nations. On screen, it features migrant protagonists who are held as abject subjects (Elsaesser, 2006) between nations, denied access to meaning through their gender, class and language, alongside their racial identity. Simultaneously, the host nation is depicted negatively – as a prison of claustrophobic spaces restricting their free will – while the home nation remains an unattainable ideal which is either absent or equally damaging. As a result, the space in between these communities, usually occupied by figures of migration or the Third Space, becomes a purely oppositional one. It does not offer the figures, or the texts, any form of narrative resolution, but instead allows them to sit critically on the margins of each while undermining the myths and symbols of the centre.

Free Border Crossings: *Im Juli* and *Solino*

Two of Akin's other films, *Im Juli* and *Solino*, offer a different approach to migrant figures and the relationships between nations. Once again, both texts outline the difficulties of hyphenated identity and how this can be used to create a space between the imagined communities which they come into contact with, but unlike *Kurz und schmerzlos* and *Gegen die Wand* their approach is much less oppositional. *Im Juli* shows migrant figures in a constant state of movement across borders as part of its road-movie structure, but deliberately overlooks the tensions of such journeys in favour of a romantic-comedy structure. *Solino*, meanwhile, uses its depiction of a migrant family to facilitate, rather than deny, an idealised homecoming. Despite this, even though the texts do not maintain an oppositional space in the way Akin's other films do, they still utilise similar themes and issues within comedic and melodramatic settings.

Im Juli focuses on another migrant protagonist in Daniel (Moritz Bleibtreu), a Hamburg teacher who, at the beginning of school summer holidays, buys a ring featuring a sun symbol from Juli (Christiane Paul). She tells him that the ring will lead him to find the woman of dreams, as she secretly owns the ring's counterpart as a symbol of her love. However, at a party that evening, Daniel meets Melek (İdil Üner), who is dressed in a sun t-shirt and he becomes convinced she is the woman Juli spoke of. Melek is merely passing through as she is about to return to Istanbul, but tells Daniel she will be under the bridge of the Bosphorus on her return. Daniel decides to pursue her, and coincidentally picks up a hitchhiking Juli when leaving (she is leaving Hamburg following his rejection), with whom he travels through a number of countries on his way to Turkey. The journey, however, is fraught with many obstacles, but as Daniel and Juli travel together they begin to fall in love. Eventually it is they who are reunited by the Bosphorus.

Im Juli's Daniel, rather than being marginalised, is defined clearly as a different migrant protagonist to Gabriel and Cahit, in that he is instead a figure of the dominant nationalism. His official status is clearly shown through his role (teacher), his actions (staying in Hamburg for the summer), his attire (pressed, clean shirts) and his ability to control the progress of the narrative (it is his own decision to take the road trip). Similarly, Germany itself is not the claustrophobic domestic space of *Kurz und schmerzlos* and *Gegen die Wand*, but is instead shown as a key part of the school holiday, filled with sunny days and communal parties. However, the process of Daniel's journey strips him of some of this status in that he goes on to lose his glasses, watch and car, his appearance becomes dirtier, he symbolically loses his passport and he smokes marijuana. Yet this process is shown to be beneficial, in that 'each successive material loss entails a corresponding existential gain' (Burns, 2009, p.21) within his relationship with Juli. Thus, although not the oppositional figure of the abject subjects of the other films, Daniel is still a figure of the dominant nationalism who is remade by his journey. The more transnational a figure he becomes, the more he is changed for the better, and this is clearly one part of the film's happy resolution, a resolution categorically denied either Gabriel or Cahit.

Border crossing itself is, meanwhile, also stripped of much of its tension, culminating in the film's 'nimble approach to border crossing' (Park, 2001). Daniel and Juli appear to drift across borders with ease; the most troubling crossing they have occurs when Daniel's passport is stolen, and even then they are able to stage a 'mock wedding ceremony' (Burns, 2009, p.22) when standing in different nations. Any tension which is created during these border crossings is not political but personal, most notably Daniel's distress when his mathematical knowledge fails him in an attempt to drive his car over a jump into another nation. In fact, national representations pass easily in the film, particularly the 'use of a

photo-travel diary featuring slightly blurred images of quotidian rural and urban settings and canted stills of Romanian historical landmarks' which attempt to give the journey 'the veneer of authenticity' (Burns, 2009, p.23). Even agents of the dominant nationalism (Akin himself cameos as a corrupt Romanian guard) who look to exploit the protagonists are not portrayed in a particularly negative light and at one point the pair simply agree to just not travel through any country in a state of war. While this does not emphasise the oppositional relationship between nations, it does create an 'idealised picture of Europe' (Burns, 2009, p.22) with 'all the political strife stowed away off-screen' (Burr, 2003) and where 'political and cultural divisions survive as occasions for comedy' (Scott, 2001) in keeping with Kearney's suggestion of a post-nationalist 'pan-European federation' (1997, p.60-61).

One possible reason for this lack of opposition is *Im Juli*'s use of genre. The film is clearly a romantic comedy in genre, recalling other texts, such as *It Happened One Night* (1934) (Fox, 2009). We are immediately told by one of Daniel's students that "school is out", suggesting a suspension of the usual social themes of Akin's work in favour of something more frivolous. Yet this comedy is often derived from transnational issues. For example, on his journey Daniel encounters Isa (played by the same actor, Mehmet Kurtulus, who portrays Gabriel in *Kurz und schmerzlos*) a migrant figure who is attempting to smuggle a dead body across the border in the boot of his car. Although this immediately suggests a criminal subplot in relation to the director's previous films, it is revealed to be innocent when Isa confesses it is the body of an elderly relative he is returning home. Equally, when the pair are faced with prison as a result of this, it is not the same restrictive national space but one from which Daniel can escape in an almost flippant manner, as a guard simply fortuitously forgets to lock the door (Burns, 2009, p.25). Therefore, although oppositional spaces may be absent in *Im Juli*, it is still noticeable that their existence and subversion are a key source of the film's comedy.

Solino follows the migration of an Italian family, the Amatos, from the agricultural town of Solino to the industrial Duisburg. Father Romano (Gigi Savoia) works in a mine, mother Rosa (Antonella Attili) fails to settle and dreams of a return home, while sons Giancarlo (Moritz Bleibtreu) and Gigi (Barnaby Metschurat) follow differing paths: the former a life of petty crime while the latter dreams of being a filmmaker. The family settle, however, when they open a pizzeria, also named Solino. As the business expands, Gigi makes a short film featuring his girlfriend, Jo (Patrycia Ziolkowska). Rosa then finds her husband cheating on her and is diagnosed with leukaemia. She decides to return home, taking Gigi with her as support. He is desperate to return however, but when Giancarlo fails to arrive to replace him, it is revealed that he has both taken the acclaim for his brother's film and begun a relationship with Jo. Gigi then returns to Solino for good, where he falls in love with childhood friend, Ada (Tiziana Lodato). The pair marry and although Romano doesn't leave the family business to attend, Giancarlo (who now makes documentaries for television) does. As part of the festivities, Gigi shows his second short film in the town square.

There a crucial difference between *Solino* and Akin's other work in that it does not focus on a Turkish migrant family, but an Italian one and once again the national representations are not as negative as elsewhere. At first glance, Germany would seem to appear in a pejorative light in that 'Duisburg is presented as a cold, dirty and inhospitable place' (Beghahn, 2006, p.149) with dark industrial landscapes and claustrophobic work spaces that Romano is forced into as a miner. Rosa, as literal mother and metaphorical figure of the motherland, seems most closely tied to a longing for a return home, and comments on the lack of beauty of the city and the enforced boundaries created by language. Also, this representation is once again tied to images of prison, when Gigi is caught stealing a camera. However, this representation does not force the Amato family into the position of abject

subjects as it did Gabriel and Cahit. They regularly encounter friendly, benevolent figures of the dominant nationalism; Gigi befriends the owner of a photography shop as a young boy, and its owner essentially subsidises his early interest, while figures such as Jo offer romantic interest and support. In fact, even Gigi's encounter with the law offers neither trauma nor epiphany, but he is merely released and given a disciplinary slap by his disapproving father. Thus, although there are negative representations of the host nation in *Solino*, it is in no way treated in as much of an oppositional manner as elsewhere in Akin's films.

Italy, meanwhile, is shown almost completely in a positive light. In comparison to the industrial landscapes of Duisburg, Solino is rural and beautiful, 'sun-drenched' and with 'provincial charm' (Beghahn, 2006, p.149) making it more likely to 'emphasize visual fetishes of homeland and the past' (Naficy, 2001, p.24). This offers an idealised homecoming to both Gigi and, particularly, Rosa. She is both openly opposed to life in Germany and also diagnosed with an illness while there, yet seems fully recovered in Italy, suggesting 'her fatal illness was ... identified as 'nostalgia' – an unfulfilled yearning and melancholia to return to one's *Heimat*' (Beghahn, 2006, p.149). As such, while Gabriel is denied a return home, and Cahit and Sibel are left as abject subjects in the homeland, 'return to Solino turns out to be anything but a sacrifice: it brings complete fulfilment to mother and son' (Beghahn, 2006, p.149). This makes it difficult to find any opposition to the myths and symbols of the home nation in *Solino*.

This division between home and host nation draws clear reference to many of the issues within an Accented Cinema (Naficy, 2001), to which the film relates as a text itself and also through Gigi's work as a filmmaker on screen. Photos and films are said to be 'some of the ethnic, exilic, and epistollic objects and fetishes' of accented cinema which reinforce a longing for the homeland (Naficy, 2001, p.120). This would certainly seem to be the case in

Solino, where Gigi takes a small viewfinder containing images of home with him when he departs, and significantly shares it with his mother on the train journey. It is also emphasised by his short films. The first is an award-winning German short showing industrial landscapes, the second is an Italian comedy on the subject of unchanging homeland which is shown at his wedding. Both are well-received in their own nation, yet his German film is received with apathy in Italy, suggesting the differences between both states. While this highlights a potential oppositional space between the two, Gigi's lack of conflict in Italy means that the films serve as micronarratives designed to reflect a change in feelings of belonging.

Therefore, to conclude, it is clear that *Im Juli* and *Solino* do not offer the same oppositional spaces found in *Kurz und schmerzlos* and *Gegen die Wand*. However, not only do they still feature many similar issues as the other texts, but they also often use, reference and subvert these to progress their own narratives. *Im Juli* can clearly be defined as a romantic comedy which ignores many of the tensions of border crossing, but it still raises many of the aspects of post-nationalist theory found elsewhere before undermining them as a source of comedy. Similarly, the migrant drama of *Solino* contains both a more positive representation of the host nation and an idealised return to the home nation, but utilises many of the aspects of Accented Cinema (Naficy, 2001) to highlight the impact of such a journey. Thus, although these films do not offer the same post-nationalist readings as those discussed previously, nationalism still acts as a key aspect of their content which can be used and subverted.

The Complexity of Oppositional Space: *Auf der anderen Seite*

Auf der anderen Seite draws many of the director's previous works' themes and concerns together. Using the multiple narratives of the hyperlink movie, the text highlights 'all the

major references of the day, from immigration to terrorism to fundamentalism' (Ansen, 2008) whilst still maintaining a 'searingly personal' (Hornaday, 2008) level of focus in terms of character and individual freedom. Its portrayal of interconnected stories, all involving border crossings between Germany and Turkey, is therefore significant on both political and familial levels. Its characters are taken from both dominant and marginal positions within Turkey and Germany, and both nations appear as landscapes on screen. This allows the film to create a complex series of oppositions and unresolved tensions which tie many of the key aspects of post-nationalist theory to the representations of contemporary nations on screen.

Auf der anderen Seite acts a hyperlink movie in that it features a number of seemingly unrelated narrative threads, which are gradually drawn together throughout the film. The first features Nejat (Baki Davrak), the son of a Turkish migrant now working as a lecturer in German literature in Hamburg. He is disapproving of his father Ali's (Tunsil Kurtiz) decision to employ Yeter (Nursel Köse), a prostitute, as his live-in companion. During a scuffle in which Ali is drunk, he accidentally kills Yeter and is sent to prison. In order to make amends for his father, Nejat travels to Istanbul to find Yeter's daughter and pass on the news. The film then moves to Turkey, in which a political protester who is also Yeter's daughter, Ayten (Nurgül Yesilçay), takes a police officer's gun during a scuffle. Wanted by the police, she flees, illegally, to Hamburg and is befriended by student Lotte (Patrycia Ziolkowska) on a university campus. Lotte sympathises with her political views and invites her to stay with her, despite the protests of her traditional mother, Susanne (Hanna Schygulla). When Ayten is discovered by police, she is deported and Lotte follows her to help with her fight. However, when Ayten asks Lotte to find the gun she stole, it is again taken from Lotte and she is accidentally shot and killed. Susanne takes Lotte's place in Istanbul, having travelled previously in her youth, and begins staying with Nejat (who now owns a bookstore Lotte used there) as she continues her daughter's support of Ayten. Her relationship with Nejat

influences him to find his father (who is now also in Turkey), and the film ends with the conclusion of his journey as he awaits his father's return from fishing.

Before examining the film as a whole, it is crucial to consider the structures of the hyperlink movie, and its significance in relation to Fatih Akin's work. Although not necessarily linear, the texts discussed previously have all contained one narrative involving clearly defined protagonists, and the distancing techniques employed have all been utilised within the text (captions, musical choruses, self-reflexivity) rather than as part of its structure. In this sense, by creating a hyperlink movie, *Auf der anderen Seite* is a departure in that 'these films use cognitive mapping as a tool for totalisation, divulging narratives of smoother-out differences and equalised circumstances' to 'present the world as a web or system of interconnections' in texts which 'jumble up chronology and track the lives of multiple characters' (Silvey, 2009). Cognitive mapping, or 'the ambition "to think the impossible totality of the contemporary world system" and to understand its interconnections and those of the individual's place in the world' (Jameson, 1991, cited in Silvey, 2009), allows the director to explore multiple themes on both political and personal levels. Thus, although it is possible for this process to reinforce national stereotypes by totalising the text and its representations to the extent that it could reduce 'diversity to simplicity' (Silvey, 2009), it could also be counter hegemonic or oppositional in that it 'challenges the authority of classical realist films' (Naficy, 2001, p.5) by removing the power from any one, single protagonist and replacing it with depictions of simultaneity.

Thus, by focusing on two narratives, Nejat's search for forgiveness following the accidental murder of a prostitute by his father and Lotte's pursuit of freedom for a political prisoner despite the protests of her mother, and their connections to each other, Akin is not only able to avoid giving the power of the position of protagonist to one figure, but he is also able to

further suggest the insignificance of national boundaries. These are characters from a mixture of positions, including those of the dominant nationalism, marginalised figures, and figures with hyphenated identity, and they regularly exchange positions and roles in a fluid manner. This undermining of narrative power, and particularly the diminished significance of border crossing, has led some critics to suggest that *Auf der anderen Seite*'s main suggestion is that 'the world is unravelling – or, at least, the old ways are' (Gleiberman, 2008). This allows the structure of the hyperlink movie to undermine the dominant conventions of cinema (in terms of narrative structure) and the myths and symbols of the nation (by allowing characters of mixed identities and status the freedom to exchange role and positions and nations).

The film both acknowledges and utilises the totalising nature of the genre, and its reliance on stereotypes, to further emphasise its oppositional content. In one sequence, Susanne (clearly a figure of the dominant nationalism at this stage as mother, home-owner and protector of Lotte) challenges Ayten (a member of an illegal political organisation in Turkey and illegal immigrant in Germany) over her political beliefs. The scene is charged with political significance and metaphors which verge on stereotype (Neumaier, 2008). Susanne expects patience until Turkey joins the European Union, while Ayten demands immediate action and offers distrust of the Western control of European politics. As Ayten becomes increasingly agitated and verbose, she is told by Susanne, her hands stained red from pitting cherries, not to behave like that in her house, a defence of domestic and national spaces which becomes 'Europe's Turkey problem and Turkey's Europe problem shrewdly distilled to a problem of etiquette' (Morris, 2008). The appropriateness of such symbols become more complex as the text progresses; we learn that Susanne had a similar border-crossing experience as Lotte in her youth, and Ayten's political stance softens following personal tragedy. Thus, although the text would appear to use stereotypes to create political points

on a macro level, it then complicates these and leaves them unresolved via a series of character representations on a micro level.

Representations are equally complicated when examining the other characters, most notably Nejat. His hyphenated identity should leave him in a similar position to that of Gabriel, Sibel or Cahit, in that he would appear to be a second-generation migrant who should be governed by a longing for home. However, if his hyphenated identity is absent, it is not because he is trapped in the transit of the Third Space, but instead because he is 'a model of assimilation, teaching the classics, comfortable with his Turkishness but too bourgeois to make any political waves' (Morris, 2008). It has even been suggested that 'only once does he seem utterly at home, when he enters a bookshop and smiles with delight' (Lane, 2008), suggesting not necessarily a tie with Germany as a nation, but more a source of literature. So, even without making the journey that Daniel faces in *Im Juli*, or cherishing a longing for the home nation as Gabriel and Gigi do in *Solino*, Nejat seems to be a character simultaneously inside and outside of the dominant nationalism. He is equally as capable of continuing his assimilated life as he is of abandoning it in favour of beginning a life elsewhere. As a result, it is no longer possible to view these characters in terms of national representation as their positions are not fixed or permanent, both in terms of nationality and political ideology.

This fluidity of representation also further complicates the use of generational conflict in *Auf der anderen Seite*. In previous texts, the relationship between national and generational conflicts has not been consistent – Romano's patriarchal attitude was in contrast to the idealised homecoming in *Solino*, while the conservative views of Sibel's family were played out in her fate in Istanbul in *Gegen die Wand*. Here these representations shift as the narratives progress. Firstly, Nejat responds to the behaviour of his father, far from the

assimilated model of his son, with condemnation, essentially excluding him from his life and seeking to make amends for his actions. This changes, however, not through his return to their shared home nation, but through his relationship with Susanne, following Lotte's death. Equally, Susanne is at first vilified by Lotte and Ayten for failing to empathise with their political anger, but this again diminishes following tragedy and finally Susanne and Ayten are united. Thus, the film's title *Auf der anderen Seite* (On the Other Side) would suggest a merging of generational and political conflicts. Just as Germany and Turkey must acknowledge the contradictory arguments of each nation, so must fathers and sons and mothers and daughters. This political 'optimism' (Wheatley, 2008) suggests not the absence of conflict included in *Im Juli*, or the significance of personal freedom over national freedom in *Kurz und schmerzlos* and *Gegen die Wand*, but that political, national and personal conflicts are essentially linked and complex, and therefore to undermine one is to undermine the others.

Similarly, the representation of political themes is not one which is fixed in *Auf der anderen Seite*, to the extent that it is unclear whether the text is endorsing one dominant nationalism or the other (or none). This is first apparent during the scene in which Ayten sees her fellow group members being arrested by the Turkish police, which is applauded by the watching crowd. What is unclear is who the crowd are actually cheering (Lane, 2008) in that it could be a sign of solidarity with either the prisoners or the police. Equally, when Yeter is forced into no longer working in the brothel by two passing 'menacing enforcers of Islamic morality' (Scott, 2008) it is unclear the extent to which this attitude is tied to nationhood, religion or personal values (Ayten also flees the same characters when they attempt to limit her individual power). This ambiguity, combined with the counter hegemonic structures and use of generational tension, again suggests a move away from traditional nationalisms in *Auf der anderen Seite*. Although broad nationalist and political concerns are referenced, Akin

appears determined to avoid endorsing either side, whilst constantly stressing the personal and individual complexity of the film.

It is also appropriate to discuss the film's use of captions, as their appearance as a distancing technique is more significant here than in previous texts. What is important is that, unlike the musical chorus of *Gegen die Wand* or the captions of *Kurz und schmerzlos*, these scene titles are much more narrative-based. The opening two, "Yeter's Death" and "Lotte's Death", would appear to have the clear purpose of undermining the the potential dramatic tension that follows. Both events are not predicted in the text elsewhere as Yeter dies unexpectedly during a scuffle with Ali and Lotte is shot by playing children as an unfortunate and surprise accident. As a result, it could be suggested that these captions serve a similar purpose to the movie's hyperlink structure in that they too undermine the hegemony of narrative structures, in this case the creation of dramatic tension. Thus, rather than merely robbing the narrative of its impact, they help to prevent this distracting from the social and political messages of the film.

Another technique which is repeated from Akin's earlier work and seems to serve the dual purpose of distancing the film from dominant narrative structures and also endorsing an interconnected vision of cultures and peoples, is the use of coincidence or fate. Coincidence clearly has a key role to play in all hyperlink movies as it is required to highlight the totalising view on screen, and it was also clearly in evidence throughout *Im Juli* as a further symbol of connections beyond borders. By using coincidence here, the film not only represents the relationships between cultures, but also denies this the power of resolution; Nejat is unaware that Ayten was sleeping in one of his lectures, just as Lotte is unaware that it is Yeter's daughter who Nejat is looking for, none of which is resolved before the text ends. Thus, while coincidence may undermine the realism of the text, it does not reduce its post-

nationalist possibilities. Such events acknowledge the tense relationship between characters and themes, but their lack of resolution stops short of offering them as narrative solutions to the problems.

Another key theme which is repeated from Akin's earlier work in *Auf der anderen Seite* is that of miscommunication and language. Just as Cahit struggled with language in terms of his identity, in two key sequences Ayten is faced with similar dilemmas. Firstly, whilst in prison, she is approached by Lotte who offers to "help" her. Although this could be interpreted as an offer of legal assistance (we see Lotte reading books on Turkish law in Nejat's shop), Ayten seems to accept this as an offer of political help for her organisation, a misunderstanding that leads to Lotte's accidental death. When Susanne appears to literally take Lotte's place the same offer is made, although this time in English. The repetition of the same phrase, although this time in a third language outside of the national boundaries at play, would appear to be a moment of epiphany and Ayten repents, much to the condemnation of her political peers. As such, language remains one of the true markers of nationalist difference in the text. Ayten, Susanne and Lotte have had the freedom to physically move between nations and positions, but it is the difference of language which has triggered both the tragedy of the narrative and the change in political alignment.

Yet perhaps the key moment of the narrative in relation to post-nationalism, and Akin's work as a whole, is the final scene. Here, Nejat makes a literal homecoming to find his father and possibly offer him forgiveness. But, just as *Gegen die Wand* stops short of offering us Cahit's journey, we are left here with the image of Nejat awaiting his father's return. It remains unclear what sort of relationship they will form, just as Susanne and Lotte are only given contact through a diary which hints at their potential to see each other's perspective. This results in the figures, both those of the dominant nationalism and those with

hyphenated identity, being left in transit (Berghahn, 2006) or the Third Space. However, these are no longer entirely the spaces between cultures; Nejat is left in transit in relation not to Germany and Turkey, but to his father. In this sense, the Third Space is no longer one which exists between two cultures, but between two perspectives and two generations. Just as Nejat seemed to feel at home in a book store, he also seems to journey home not to his home nation as landscape or territory, but to his father.

As a result, *Auf der anderen Seite* not only re-emphasises a number of post-nationalist issues but also develops them further. It offers a number of migrant figures, border crossings and contact zones between nations, all of which are sources of tension that remain unresolved in the final scenes. Simultaneously, the nationalisms on screen are all undermined, although not through the traditional structures of a binary opposition of hegemon and other, but through changing and fluid representations. Its hyperlink structure and captions play a key role in this as they not only undermine dramatic and traditional structures in film, but highlight the complex political relationships of the film. The cumulative result is a text which both features many of the oppositional spaces of post-nationalist theory and simultaneously highlights the complexity of such spaces. Generations, individuals and nations are all opposed internally and externally, and the film's lack of resolution highlights the difficulties and importance of such tensions.

Conclusion: The National Identity of the Films of Fatih Akin

The films of Fatih Akin discussed above hold a close relationship with the issues of post-nationalist theory which, in turn, makes them relevant within debates of national and transnational cinemas. Several offer a depiction of migrant characters as abject subjects (Elsaesser, 2006), who use this position between nations to oppose the dominant

nationalisms which marginalise them. They often adopt a similar position in the Third Space which allows them to highlight the tensions between nations without offering a narrative solution to these problems. However, this position is not a fixed one, and other films use and subvert these issues to endorse either a nationalism or help develop generic structures. Yet, on the whole, the director's relationship with national and transnational cinemas, and post-nationalist theory, makes him an ideal figure within migrant cinema to highlight the relationship and relevance of such theories to cinemas as a whole.

This often oppositional position developed via post-nationalist themes has not stopped Akin's work being 'embraced by the popular masses and the academic circles in all three imagined communities ... Germany, Turkey and the Turkish diaspora in Germany' (Petek, 2007, p.179). Despite the fact that Akin's texts contain a wide range of ambiguous depictions of both Germany and Turkey, are often funded by multiple nations, have received international rewards and, perhaps most crucially, the director himself is regularly termed to have a hyphenated identity, in that he is 'Turkish-German', and has been claimed by all of the transnational and national cinemas to which he relates. He has been described as a key figure in 'New German Cinema', which has in turn been declared as Turkish (Beghahn, 2006, pg.141), whilst also being seen as the 'the new poster boy for European cinema' (Petek, 2007, p.179) as a whole. Thus, not only are his films linked to national debates within the texts themselves, but also their international success and critical response ties the director further to these issues.

There are many possible reasons for such conflicting national claims. On one hand it is clearly important for German national cinema to acknowledge the voice of marginal groups who may have been previously ignored (Wilkinson, 2006, p.757), and such a multicultural view of Europe holds obvious political capital, while for Turkey it allows a nation on the

borders of Europe to lay claim to an apparently significant cultural figure (Erdogan, 2009). It has even been argued that this hyphenated identity is specifically what makes Akin a celebrated film-maker as his Turkish heritage provides German film with a 'new kind of creative energy' (Fachinger, 2007).

On a textual level, the films do often enter into a contact zone with German national cinema. Two spheres of cinema to which the director's work has often been related are the *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s and, particularly in their representations of the social problems faced by Turkish migrants, the cinema of the affected (Berghahn, 2006), both of which are closely tied with national cinema and the transnational representations of accented cinema (Naficy, 2001). Both the *Heimatfilm*, which 'behind the facade of trivia entertainment actually demonstrates an acute awareness of social problems and post-war trauma' (Berghahn, 2006, p.146), and accented cinema are concerned with issues of longing for a homeland, identity and displacement, all issues clearly evident in Akin's work. However, as discussed previously, with rare exceptions, these longings are left unfulfilled in Akin's work, and replaced by a perennial sense of transit which leaves his protagonists in an oppositional Third Space. Meanwhile, the cinema of the affected often uses a focus on migrant groups to highlight social concerns and tensions surrounding these groups. While this is still the case in Akin's work, such concerns are not overwhelming. Often, all positions are left undermined and opposed in the texts' denial of any resolutions. Thus, although there are comparisons to be made between these films and Akin's work, particularly in the ways in which he uses and undermines their concerns, they do not suggest a consistent lineage any more than they would for a number of other film-makers.

Akin's films also display a transnational relationship of intertextuality with a number of other films from around the world. Within Germany, this includes the work of Rainer Werner

Fassbinder, particularly the influence of *Angst essen Seele auf* (1974). This is a comparison with which Akin is seemingly comfortable, particularly in the casting of Hanna Schygulla, a regular Fassbinder collaborator, as Susanne in *Auf der anderen Seite*. Internationally, as discussed earlier, each text also contains reference points to European, English-language, American and / or Hollywood cinema. *Kurz und schmerzlos* recalls the work of Martin Scorsese and *La haine*, *Im Juli* shared more with numerous Hollywood road comedies than German national cinema, and *Auf der anderen Seite*'s hyperlink structure is similar to that of *Babel* (2006), *Magnolia* (1999) and *Short Cuts* (1993), amongst many others. That these transnational cinematic relationships are present, and often opposed, develops a contact zone particular to film within the director's work.

Crucial to a study of post-nationalist theory in cinema, however, is how often these contact zones with national and transnational cinemas are used to create oppositional spaces. Throughout the films, the home and host nations are often shown in a purely negative manner, whether as the claustrophobic prisons of the host nation or unfulfilled longing of a return to the home nation. As such, the state of migration Akin's protagonists populate is not merely a contact zone between two nations, but instead ruled by a power structure in which figures of otherness are left as abject subjects (Elsaesser, 2006) unable to access meaning. This leaves both these figures and their texts in an oppositional Third Space in which their concerns and tensions undermine the dominant myths and symbols of the imagined communities to which they relate. This position endorses the relevance of post-nationalist theory to an understanding of the films, as many of these oppositions are generated by concepts outlined in that body of literature (the denial of narrative solutions, the suppression of meaning in linguistic interpretation, the significance of a pan-European federation, and so on).

This position is not fixed however, and in *Im Juli* and *Solino* Akin's work offers two texts in which oppositional spaces are minimised or subverted for humour and nostalgia. That these themes remain, albeit diminished, further stresses their relevance to migrant cinema. It suggests that a post-nationalist perspective cannot be dogmatically linked to those of migrant filmmakers. It is instead a viewpoint which is available within these contact zones, as it can be introduced where required but may be subverted for a number of reasons. These can include the use of genre (such as the comedic structures of *Im Juli*) or changes in political perspective (such as the softening of the political oppositions, in favour of personal similarity, in *Auf der anderen Seite* which coincide with debates surrounding Turkey's move into the EU). Yet, even when they are not placed in the foreground, these concerns remain a crucial aspect of Akin's work. Contact zones and potentially oppositional spaces permeate the director's work and are crucial to our understanding of it.

The relationship between the films of Fatih Akin and post-nationalist theory is a clear one. When examining the director's work as a whole, it provides a framework for understanding the way in which the texts depict marginal figures and narratives, and how the tension this creates relates more broadly to political themes of nations and migration. Within transnational debates of cinema, however, they exemplify the difficulties of the power relationships found when nations enter into contact zones in film. The oppositional spaces they create highlight how post-nationalist theory can be used to understand the ways in which texts and imagined communities relate, and the possibility that such spaces are being deliberately used to undermine national and transnational cinemas. This does not give them a fixed post-nationalist quality as the oppositional spaces remain flexible and open to be used as best fits the content of each individual film. The presence of post-nationalist issues throughout the director's work, however, does stress its importance within migrant cinema, and how this can be used in turn to undermine the dominant myths and symbols of the

imagined community of home and host nations, and the migration that occurs between the two.

Chapter Three: Non-Official Nationalisms – The Films of Ferzan Ozpetek

Introduction: Ferzan Ozpetek, Gender, Class and Sexuality

The oppositional spaces of post-nationalist theory are not limited to literal representations of hyphenated identity and border crossings within migrant cinema. They extend to include contact zones within the nation which can be used to undermine the dominant myths and symbols of nationalism. A key figure here is Ferzan Ozpetek, a filmmaker whose work not only echoes many of the political concerns found in Fatih Akin's films, but also incorporates the non-official nationalism of gender, class and, particularly, sexuality, to create a position of otherness which deconstructs hegemonic representations. With this in mind, this section will discuss the director's work to illustrate the ways in which migrant cinema can create oppositional spaces both between and within nations. This will provide further evidence to support the themes found in Fatih Akin's work, while also extending it to highlight the possibility for the use of non-official nationalisms to help reimagine the nation.

Although born in Turkey, Ferzan Ozpetek has worked primarily in Italy throughout his career. His films echo those of Fatih Akin by often featuring migrant figures and border crossing. However, they are not primarily defined in this manner as the director's concern with homosexuality often dominates critical debates on his work. This remains a prevalent theme throughout the films, particularly *Hamam* (1997), *La Fate ignorati* (2001) and *Le Finestre di fronte* (2003), all of which feature presumed heterosexual characters who are revealed to be homosexual or bisexual. This has not prevented Ozpetek from challenging the importance of this classification, however, through the absence or reduced importance of homosexuality in his later films, and the director's own assertion that his 'dream is one day not to have a "gay" section' (van Maanen, 2008). Despite this, he remains a filmmaker often classified as

both gay and migrant (van Maanen, 2008), which allows a number of opportunities for the creation of oppositional spaces within issues of race, nation and sexuality.

As discussed previously, *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (Brinson Curiel *et al*, 2000) suggests that the dominant structures of nations can be undermined not only by the creation of contact zones between nations, but also the undermining of binary relationships within the nation. As such, a contact zone between heterosexual and homosexual figures would still be aligned within the role of the hegemon being taken by the former and the other taken by the latter. This point has been emphasised elsewhere, where it has been suggested that “‘Foreignness” can sometimes be a matter of nationality, but in other cases also a matter of class, of gender, of race, or ethnicity’ (Morley, 1999, p.159). This makes Ozpetek an ideal figure to be discussed, as his films not only feature many of the debates of nationality found in Fatih Akin’s work, they often extend these to create oppositions using sexuality (and, to a lesser extent, class and gender). Thus, in order to fully understand how oppositional spaces are created in migrant cinema, and how they deconstruct the dominant nationalism, detailed discussions of his films are required.

This is given added importance by Ozpetek’s particular cultural background as a gay filmmaker working in Italy. Debates on Italian national cinema have identified a perceived lack of ‘gay-centred cinema’ and that the recent increase in inclusiveness in mainstream Italian representations has failed to ‘affect cinema as either apparatus or institution’ (Duncan, 2005, p.102). Instead, this representation has been masked by a dominant view of Italian masculinity as being ‘the sexual masculine ideal of Western civilization’ (Bondanella, 2004a, p.vii). In fact, even when this vision is positively challenged it is often on the grounds of epitomising the ‘instability of Italian masculinity through the cultural configuration of the Italian schlemiel or anti-hero’ (Bondanella, 2004a, p.6) rather than on the grounds of

marginal sexualities. Similarly, discussions of homosexuality in cinema in general often suggest an oppositional nature. Queer cinema has been discursively articulated as a concept in three key ways: firstly it is 'mobilized as a stand-in for the partnering of lesbian and gay', secondly it is used 'as a collective term for a wide range of marginalized sexual desires, formations and subjects' and finally it 'highlights its theoretical and analytic opposition to both the heterosexual and homosexual mainstream' (Gammon and Isgro, 2006, p.172-173). As such, the absence of such issues in Italian national cinema, and the potential for oppositions that they contain, makes Ozpetek's films crucial to an understanding of how non-official nationalisms can create oppositional spaces in cinema.

To examine these debates, the following issues will be discussed. Firstly, *La Fate ignorati* will be used to highlight how homosexual representations and themes are used to undermine national issues. Then *Hamam* will be discussed to illustrate how these debates can be extended to the home, host and migrant imagined communities. Both *Harem Suare* (1999) and *Le Finestre di fronte* will be used to discuss how these issues can be related to history, particularly the use of gender in Turkey in the former and the use of sexuality in Italy in the latter. *Cuore Sacro* (2005) will then be discussed to show how similar themes can be used to undermine issues of religion and class. Finally, *Saturno contro* (2007) will be used to highlight and discuss how such oppositions are not present throughout all the films.

Throughout this section it will remain important to not only highlight the way in which non-official nationalisms can be used to create oppositional spaces, but also how appropriate it is to apply these diverse debates to national issues. Unlike discussion of Fatih Akin's films, which often displayed an overt concern with issues of nations, the non-official nationalisms of Ferzan Ozpetek's films, such as class, gender and sexuality, do not automatically draw such comparisons and often bring with them a number of related debates. Their mere

presence in the films, therefore, is not enough to generate post-nationalist spaces, and thus an analysis of whether it is appropriate to draw such terms under the umbrella of non-official nationalisms will be equally relevant as a discussion of more overtly national themes.

Un-masking Oppositional Space: *La Fate ignorati*

Arguably Ferzan Ozpetek's most famous film, *La Fate ignorati* immediately highlights how oppositional spaces can be created by non-official nationalisms within the nation. Although the most crucial of these is sexuality, as the film includes several homosexual figures that enter into contact zones with the heterosexual protagonist, they also extend to consider gender, race and class. Thus, it is not only significant how homosexuality and bisexuality are un-masked within the film but also how they relate to a number of issues in a way which highlights their importance to discourses of the nation. By considering these issues, we can examine how the use of sexuality in *La Fate ignorati* undermines dominant representations of heterosexuality, and how this can be extended to issues such as the heteronormative gaze and the depiction of Italian society as a whole. With this in mind, the non-official nationalist debates of the text move beyond the relationships on screen and into a more oppositional national space.

The film follows Antonia (Margherita Buy), a middle-class doctor working in a HIV clinic and living with her husband, Massimo (Andrea Renzi). They appear to be happily married, until Massimo is killed in a road-traffic accident and Antonia finds evidence of his infidelity written on the reverse of some artwork in their home. Suspecting he has been seeing another woman, Antonia traces the painting, only to find her husband had been secretly bisexual and seeing a man, Michele (Stefano Accorsi). Although their original confrontation is tense, Antonia continues to visit Michele in an attempt to better understand her husband's life.

Michele lives a communal life with a large group of friends in an apartment building, including HIV-sufferer Ernesto (Gabriel Garko), whom Antonia begins to help care for. While Michele begins to grow fond of Antonia, she begins to re-assess her life and decides to leave Italy and begin travelling alone. Michele is left behind as Antonia leaves in the final scene, and he deliberately drops a glass (the film contains the saying that to break a glass symbolises the departure of someone you love). It doesn't break.

The key aspect of the narrative then is both the fact that it contains homosexuality and that this is un-masked (Duncan, 2006) within a mainstream, heterosexual Italian relationship. This term 'masking' is commonly used in discussions of homosexuality to highlight the ways in which homosexuality can be highlighted without 'outright revelation or confession' (Duncan, 2006, p.6). In *La Fate ignorati*, the revelation of Massimo's bisexuality works to surprise both his wife and the audience, highlighting the expectation for, and normality of, heterosexual relationships within Italian cinema. Equally, the process of masking can also be applied to the other non-official nationalisms of the text, as their appearance on a micro level within the text is not given a national significance on a macro level until they are placed in this specific context. However, this process also creates the possibility of re-masking the discourses of non-official nationalisms by placing them under the umbrella of national issues when they are primarily intended to remain on the micro level and exist in isolation and on their own merit.

As discussed previously, the presence of homosexuality in Italian cinema is seen as oppositional as such figures are usually isolated or marginalised. In fact, it has been argued that 'Italian cinema has tended to represent the figure of the homosexual as primarily an isolated, marginal, as well as corrupt, figure' (Duncan, 2005, p.110). The representation in *La Fate ignorati* is therefore the opposite of this process; following Massimo's death, Antonia

is not only thrust into a group of figures of non-official nationalisms, but this experience is portrayed to be a positive one. In fact, her move into this community is shown to be one which supersedes the crossing of national boundaries when Serra (Serra Yilmaz), a Turkish migrant within the group, says, 'her 'real journey' ... was not from Turkey to Italy; sometimes all you need to do is climb the stairs' (Duncan, 2005, p.110). This reversal of the traditional depictions of heterosexuality and homosexuality is further emphasised by the representation of Antonia's life at home, which is without friends and can be defined as 'anti-social' (Duncan, 2005, p.110) as she has been 'content to live in' the 'shadow' of her dominant husband (Thomas, 2002).

In *La Fate ignorati*, it is important that it is not only debates of homosexuality that enter into contact zones with the dominant nationalism. Bisexual issues and representations are also key. Massimo's bisexuality aligns the text with oppositional issues as 'bisexual epistemologies have the capacity to reframe regimes and regions of desire by deframing in porous, nonexclusive ways' (Pramaggiore and May, 1996, p.3, cited in Anderlini-D'Onofrio, 2004). Equally, they occupy a slightly different position to homosexuality as 'bisexuals are simultaneously constructed as 'non-existent', 'foreign', 'unrecognizable' and 'interlopers' within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community', and to group every individual under this one term only 'serves to homogenize the socio-historic and psycho-social specificity of these complex identities' (Gurevich *et al*, 2007, p.217). Thus, the relationship between Massimo, Andrea and Michele undermines the binary opposites of hegemon and other by stressing the complex possibility that a husband can love both his wife and another man. That this creates a bond between both wife and lover, illustrated by their shared love of Hikmet (himself a poet who lived in exile and attempted to undermine the dominant nationalism), further illustrates that such individual relationships can undermine the dominant norms.

However, it is not only sexuality which acts as a non-official nationalism in the film, as gender is also used to create an oppositional space. Following the death of her husband, when Antonia is forced into a contact zone with Michele's diverse community, it is she who adopts the role of hegemon (as a figure of the white, heterosexual, middle class and wife of the 'dashing Latin lover type' (Thomas, 2002)), despite being a woman. This serves to simultaneously force a male figure (albeit a homosexual one) into the role of the other, while reversing the trend defined by feminist critics which places cinema as a 'male world' with its own 'methods and solutions' (Welsch, 2001, p.257) and considers the framing of female characters by cinematic representation as a masculine process (de Lauretis, 1987, p.114). Antonia's story also reflects the post-nationalist representations of gender that identify narratives in which female figures refuse to stay comfortably at home (Kinney, 2000). This occurs throughout *La Fate ignorati*, where the female protagonist leaves the comfortable domestic space of her marriage after the death of her husband to seek out the community of his lover, and then in the film's final scenes where she rejects a relationship with this group in favour of travelling alone. This process also reinforces post-nationalist themes in the creation of an ambivalent ending for Michele – he is left alone and fails to smash a glass symbolising the loss of a loved one – which avoids the identification of narrative solutions to the text's contradictions.

Antonia's placement as the agent of narrative also has consequences for the oppositions of the text. One of the dominant debates which run throughout cinema theory is that surrounding the gendered gaze (Mulvey, 1975; Mulvey, 1989). Although oft-criticised, this theory remains highly influential and centres on the notion that within cinema a 'determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly' (Mulvey, 1975). In these texts, this notion is undermined in that the predominant gaze is actually a

heteronormative rather than male one (Duncan, 2005, p.109). As Massimo's secret life is revealed, the narrative, and the camera, often follows Antonia's gaze to identify his potential lover, picking out and searching for female figures within the crowd. That this assumption is incorrect, and misses the male figure she is searching for, acts to undermine this gaze. This situation continues throughout the film, as the camera continues to follow 'Antonia's eyes as she discovers what gay life is about – the eyes of a woman whose only contact with gay men is when she tests them for HIV' (Thomas, 2002). That this process could see Antonia unmask her husband holds the traditional assumption that in 'a great deal of lesbian / gay discourse, there is an implied pressure to "come out" – to state one's sexuality clearly and precisely – as if there is a responsibility to the self and "the community"' and this has often been reflected throughout mainstream cinema (Cover, 2000, p.81). However, this is also subverted along with the heteronormative gaze in that Antonia's failure to see her husband's lover shows 'that sexuality-based identities are not only contingent constructs but also normalisational regimes that can be resisted' (Cover, 2000, p.87).

Alongside gender and sexuality, *La Fate ignorati* also uses social class as a non-official nationalism which undermines the dominant nationalism. The binary opposition of Antonia and Michele's group is further reinforced by such issues; Antonia's successful life and career in *La Fate ignorati* is clearly contrasted with those of her new friends. Michele's apartment is situated in a rundown apartment block overlooking a gasometer, and his elected family are made up of lowly paid workers, such as supermarket cashier Luisella (Rosaria De Cicco). Rather than being portrayed negatively, however, this results in further opposition through 'everyday acts of resistance' in which those of low social status can undermine the hegemon (Duncan, 2005, p.108). Luisella, for example, passes only certain items through the checkout in the supermarket. Thus, Antonia is made to re-evaluate her position as a member of the dominant nationalism through the representation of class as well as the representation of sexuality and gender in the film. Whilst still marginalised, figures of low

social class are both shown in a positive light and given the ability to undermine the dominant structures of the nation in an everyday manner.

Simultaneously, the community offered by Michele offers an alternative to the dominant nationalism which is shown in a wholly positive light. On one hand, the group represents a diversity featuring 'a male-to female transsexual from Southern Italy, an ailing gay man, an older woman from Turkey who fits the type of the fag hag, a younger woman from Naples who may be described as an 'ethical slut', and a number of not otherwise descript members' (Anderlini-D' Onofrio, 2004, p.164) which, when compared to Antonia's life, suggests 'two parallel universes within the same city' (Rooney, 2001). The political significance of this point is further emphasised when the group is peacefully joined, without explanation, by a figure dressed as a priest. Such an official figure, obviously relevant given the fact that the text was filmed alongside Rome's hosting of World Gay Pride (and, simultaneously, the Catholic Church's Jubilee) (Duncan, 2005, p.101), overtly draws attention to the possibility of an alternate Italian family. Here, Ozpetek hints at a more idealised space where other sexualities, genders and races are un-masked as viable alternatives to an idealised patriarchy which never actually existed.

Therefore, the post-nationalist oppositions created by *La Fate ignorati* differ from many of those found in Fatih Akin's films as they do not necessarily focus solely on issues of nations. Instead, they incorporate a variety of non-official nationalisms, primarily sexuality but also gender and class, which help to remake the traditional images on screen. Rather than an Italy which is filled with male, heterosexual figures, the film instead features an alternative and vibrant society of wives, bisexuality and the mundane resistance of the lower social classes. Equally, in *Antonia* it features a female character that rejects the comfortable domesticity of home in favour of a move into a more international space which leaves her relationship with Michele and the narrative as a whole unresolved. These oppositions not

only help to remake Antonia's view of her husband, and the world in general, but also extend into discussions of Italian cinema. Homosexual figures are introduced into this predominantly heterosexual landscape and, in turn, given the power to help re-imagine it.

Sexuality and National Domestic Space: *Hamam*

Many of these themes are also evident in Ferzan Ozpetek's first feature film, *Hamam*. Once again, this features an apparently heterosexual figure whose bisexuality is un-masked by a female who then takes the role of protagonist. However, unlike *La Fate ignorati*, within *Hamam* these representations are placed in an overtly national setting as the text moves between Italy and Turkey. Such representations also relate specifically to depictions of nations which can occur within the domestic spaces of both countries. Yet these oppositions do not remain constant, and by aligning homosexual issues with depictions of a return to Turkey, the film has also been accused of containing an 'Orientalist vision' (Girelli, 2007, p.32) of the director's home nation. In this way it acts as a text in which non-official nationalisms help to re-imagine the nation, but by placing these debates in an overt national context, and moving them out of one imagined community and into another, the film provides an interesting point of contrast to *La Fate ignorati*.

The film follows Francesco (Alessandro Gassman) who, along with his wife Marta (Francesca d'Aloja), runs a successful interior-design company in Italy. Their life is not a happy one, however, and they are regularly seen to argue. Following a death in the family, Francesco is left a bath house, or hamam, in Turkey and travels there with the intention of immediately selling it, leaving Marta behind. However, as he spends more time in the house, and discovers a number of his deceased Aunt's possessions, he becomes reluctant to sell, despite the pressures of a developer. He decides to renovate and reopen the

hamam, and Marta joins him to oversee the process. While there, however, she discovers he has begun a homosexual affair with Mehmet (Mehmet Günsür), and attempts to leave after confronting him with her own affair with their colleague Paolo (Alberto Molinari). However, the pair actually seem to grow closer as a result of events, and Marta decides to stay. Before they are reunited, Francesco is stabbed and killed in an attempt to force the sale of the building. Following his death, Marta decides not to return home, and stays to complete Francesco's work in the hamam.

Hamam not only reinforces the representation of sexual un-masking found in *La Fate ignorati*, but also illustrates this as a wholly positive win/win process of development. It has been argued that *Hamam* deliberately uses a bisexual space to illustrate issues surrounding non-competitive game theory (that win/win games, or those which are designed to allow all participants to benefit, aid development (Huizinga, 1977)) as a 'bisexual game is the interaction that ensues from a situatedness in which three people are attracted to each other erotically, but are not, or at least not yet, envisioning themselves as bisexual and / or polyamorous' (Anderlini-D'Onofrio, 2004, p.169). The bisexual space which Francesco discovers in Istanbul is one in which he can simultaneously love / desire both Marta and Mehmet, and be given the flexibility to find emotional satisfaction. Similarly, when confronted with this bisexual space in Turkey, Marta at first displays the same confusion as Antonia, but becomes more supportive, leading to her rejecting a return to a heterosexual relationship in Italy in favour of remaining in the bisexual space of the hamam. Thus, we immediately see the importance of bisexual space, as the boundaries implied by a dominant nationalist space (which is usually categorised as heterosexual) does not supply this freedom or the win/win game Francesco needs to develop.

It is also significant once again that, like *La Fate ignorati*, *Hamam* does not use homosexuality to create oppositional spaces, but more specifically bisexuality. As stated previously, bisexuality offers an unfixed, marginal position which questions the boundaries of related terms by not only differing from representations of heterosexuality, but also from solely homosexuality representations (Pramaggiore and May, cited in Anderlini-D'Onofrio, 2004; Gurevich *et al*, 2007). This is clearly the case in *Hamam*, in which the unhappy couple of Francesco and Marta are shown as being emotionally closer following his homosexual relationship within Turkey, rather than reinforcing traditional depictions of the cheating husband. Thus, while such bisexual win/win games, in which figures are able to switch between hetero- and homo-sexuality and back again whilst being supported by those around them, are not oppositional within the relationships on screen, they do aid the creation of an oppositional space in relation to traditional representations of the family on screen. Bisexual characters clearly act as figures of otherness in the texts, but Ozpetek works to undermine the usual binary oppositions found in such contact zones by showing this otherness as something which can benefit heterosexual figures.

Once again, this un-masking of bisexuality also serves the purpose of reversing the gender roles within the text. Francesco's journey to Turkey is not only one related to his sexuality, but also his status as a member of the middle class and a businessman. His decision is made to sell his family's hamam and return to his interior-design business before he even leaves. However, his relationship with Marta changes when his sexuality is discovered, meaning that when he is killed, she must accept both his position in the business and also as an agent of narrative throughout the rest of the film. This change in focus, which occurs much later in the film than Antonia's re-positioning in *La Fate ignorati*, works once again to help re-imagine figures of the dominant nationalism as no longer solely male ones. Equally, Marta's refusal to return home and her preference to stay in the international space of the hamam (despite having no direct familial connection with it following Francesco's death)

represents her post-nationalist refusal to sit in the comfortable domestic space of home as she attempts to rebuild the bathhouse as a business.

However, unlike *La Fate ignorati*, the oppositions created in *Hamam* are given an openly national representation by the text's use of figures in both Italy and Turkey. The film opens with shots of two opposing homes; Francesco and Marta's in Rome, and the Perran family's in Istanbul (Anderlini-D'onofrio, 2004, p.168). The contrast is striking in that the Italian home is clear, uncluttered and clearly more affluent, while the Turkish home is much more welcoming and populated. This is further exaggerated by the representation of the hamam itself, which simultaneously acts as a national symbol of difference and a symbol of the sexual temptations that his voyage brings about in Francesco due to its seductive design and open concern for the flesh (Anderlini-D'onofrio, 2004, p.168). The building itself is not only a centre for the family, but for the community as a whole as we find that its fate alone is likely to dictate the success of business developers looking to modernise the area. This creates a tension between representations of Francesco's home in Italy, defined as modern and Western, and Turkey, defined as traditional, communal and homosexual, while also tying this to the tensions of the narrative. Francesco is placed under great pressure (including from Marta) to modernise and sell the symbolic hamam for commercial gain and, when he refuses to do this, such pressures lead to his murder.

These oppositions are further tied to national issues via the film's representation of domestic space. Firstly, Italy is depicted not only as the middle class, business / home of Marta and Francesco, but is 'always seen through the ribbon-windows of the modern house on the hill' where they live, suggesting it is a venue they can 'overlook but not possess' (Zambenedetti, 2006, p.110). This is clearly contrasted with the traditional and communal space of the hamam, which is not only tied to the community as a whole, but also filled with sensory

pleasure (singing, warmth and naked flesh). Simultaneously, it is linked to notions of the family. The hamam was left to Francesco by his aunt and is filled with members of his extended family. This link to his family, and therefore ethnic, background is made overt by the number of possessions and letters he finds belonging to his aunt in the building. At first, Marta sees them only as something extra to sell, encouraging him to keep only a few mementos, but these seem to act to convince Francesco to stay in Turkey and help rebuild the business.

This connection between Francesco's current life and his past home nation and ethnic identity is further emphasised by the epistolarity of the narrative. Epistolarity is regularly identified as a core component in the work of migrant and exilic film-makers, and as part of their Accented style (Naficy, 2001). It is taken to mean 'acts and events of sending and receiving, losing and finding, and writing and reading letters' as well as 'the acts, events, and institutions that facilitate, hinder, inhibit, or prohibit such acts and events' (Naficy, 2001, p.101). This is often thought to be significant in migrant cinema as migration facilitates greater cross-border communication, along with a sense of unfulfilled longing for the home and the past. It is also often considered to be oppositional as it 'challenges the authority of classical realist films and their omniscient narrator and narrative system by its multivocal, multiauthorial, calligraphic, and free indirect discourses' (Naficy, 2001, p.5). Within *Hamam*, images of epistolarity occur throughout; the film begins with the production of official letters (all created by modern technology) informing Francesco of a death in the family and features regular communication across borders. However, this role is most crucially filled by the letters of Francesco's aunt which are discovered, and regularly read, by both Francesco and Marta. They frequently act as commentary on the events, and persuade firstly Francesco to stay in Turkey and rebuild the business, and then Marta to do the same despite both her husband's infidelity and the contemporary Westernising pressures to sell the building.

However, while these oppositions can help to re-imagine representations of Italy, the alignment of Turkey with a homosexual space has been seen as an Orientalist one (Duncan, 2005; Girelli, 2007). This term obviously has many complex connotations but, taken broadly, is dependent on a representation 'resting on Western notions of Oriental difference, antiquity, seduction, and alternative lifestyle' (Girelli, 2007, p.27) and is often viewed in pejorative terms. Within Ozpetek's migrant cinema, such an Orientalist vision 'may be articulating a desire not only for a Turkey of the past, but also for a 'lost' Italy of an equally mythical bygone era' (Girelli, 2007, p.32), while including a nostalgia that 'springs from capitulation, resigning oneself to the irretrievable loss of familiar objects and well-liked faces, the bonds of friendship, shared learning and languages' (Seed, 1999, p.91). In *Hamam*, such representations fail to find an oppositional space in the home nation as is found in the host nation. The film problematically endorses a view of the other which is exotic and seductive, rather than undermining such views, as would be suggested within post-nationalist theory. As such, although filled with a number of opposition spaces in relation to the dominant position of Italy in the text, *Hamam* fails to find such spaces in its exotic and traditional view of Turkey as the home nation.

Thus, although it does not find oppositional spaces as frequently as *La Fate ignorati*, *Hamam* still highlights the ways in which the work of Ferzan Ozpetek uses sexuality as a non-official nationalism to undermine the dominant position of heterosexuality in Italian cinema. Within this film, the tensions are not identified within one society, but used in a more international space of two nations. It uses domestic space and epistolarity to further emphasise the reversal of the binary oppositions in which hegemonic structures are given power over figures of otherness. Francesco, and then Marta, both use their border crossing to discover a domestic space which offers them alternative, yet beneficial, forms of sexuality,

family and community, and reject the pressures of Westernisation in favour of history. However, in doing so, the film cannot maintain these oppositional structures within its representation of the imagined community of home, as the depiction of Turkey is one which is too often Orientalist in nature. Although this means that such win/win structures are not ideal for post-nationalist theory, *Hamam* still offers a number of oppositional spaces within migrant cinema which help illustrate the importance of sexuality as a non-official nationalism in cinema.

Non-official Histories: *Harem Suare*

Oppositional spaces are also found in Ferzan Ozpetek's films on a national level in *Harem Suare*. Here, however, the non-official nationalisms of sexuality, gender and class are not depicted in an everyday and mundane manner but applied directly to national history, namely the fall of the Ottoman Empire. This film introduces a great deal of comparisons between the director's work and historical narratives, such as the heritage film, which are absent elsewhere. As such films both hold a great deal of relevance when studying the nation, and are often tied to the recurrent themes in the director's work (such as the use of sexuality, gender and the domestic space), this makes *Harem Suare* increasingly significant when considering the post-nationalist aspects of his films. Thus, by considering this film's representation of national history, and how this relates to the non-official nationalisms found elsewhere, *Harem Suare* becomes important to our understanding of how historical narratives can be used to move the oppositions of non-official nationalisms into an overtly national space.

Harem suare uses multiple strands of narration to tell one central story – that being the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Rather than focus on the historical events connected to the Sultan

(Haluk Bilginer), it instead follows Safiye (Chara Colizzi), a new concubine at the palace. Safiye is introduced to life in the harem, in which the other concubines all compete for the Sultan's affection. Whilst there she begins to develop friendships with servant Gulifdan (Serra Yilmaz) and Nadir (Alex Descas), a eunuch. As the empire begins to fall, Safiye both rises within the harem until she becomes an official wife to the Sultan, and also begins an affair with Nadir. Eventually, the Sultan flees and the palace falls, leaving the concubines, wives and servants behind. This narrative is told through two story-telling structures. The first is Gulifdan telling the members of the harem the story of an older Safiye's (Lucia Bose) meeting with a fellow passenger (Valeria Golino) at a train station, years in the future. The second is the older Safiye recounting her tale herself.

What is immediately striking about *Harem Suare* is its historical narrative, which has led to it being compared to the traditional representations of history found in the heritage film (Girelli, 2007). Not only does the text literally contain a historical narrative, but its focus on period detail (particularly lavish interiors) and conservative directorial style also align it with such films. Although these films often hold an overt connection with national representations that would benefit a study of post-nationalist theory, it has also been argued such films' 'nostalgia has been convincingly linked to conservatism and national stereotypes' (Girelli, 2007, p.26) and their focus on interiors leads to a privileging of domestic over narrative space (Higson, 1993, p.117). As such, this in itself does not create oppositional spaces with history, as related films are often accused of conservative representations of history which reinforce politicised, conservative constructions of the nation. That *Harem Suare* avoids this position, and instead looks for an alternative history which can challenge such constructions, reinforces its importance in illustrating how historical narratives can be used to create oppositional, post-nationalist spaces.

The most overt manner in which the film undermines the representation of history on screen is the way in which it removes figures of the dominant nationalism and instead privileges marginal figures. Thus, the fall of the Ottoman Empire is not depicted within the palace from the perspective of the stately figures of the court, but rather through the interaction of wives, servants and eunuchs who lack the power to influence history. Meanwhile, the film's primary narrator, Gulfidan, is similarly not a figure of political power, but another servant. This alternative community, which is much like that of Michele in *La Fate ignorati* in its diverse mixture of marginal figures in terms of race, gender and sexuality, suggests an immediate distance to traditional notions of the heritage film. Although the setting is clearly historical, along with the narrative it is depicting, history itself is reduced to the background and the lives of marginal figures are privileged over those of the dominant nationalism.

The most striking aspect of this alternative depiction of history in *Harem suare* is its representation of femininity. The environment we are shown, the harem itself, is primarily one run by, and made up of, women, despite it being for the benefit of a single man. Female figures teach, tell stories, undermine and train a version of femininity in each individual for the presumed benefit of a nationalist figure in the Sultan. Many of these instructions take the form of traditional etiquette, but it is noticeable the extent to which femininity is turned into a commodity which is used to attract the attention of the dominant nationalism. While traits such as good dining habits and personal appearance are encouraged, great importance is placed on abilities such as language and translation skills (particularly important from a post-nationalist perspective) and musicality as new wives are each required to audition their femininity. That this environment of constructed femininity is one which leads to child murder, mental breakdown and, finally, a political collapse on a large scale further reinforces the opposition to official history in the text.

Similarly, while the film's use of domestic space recalls many aspects of the heritage film, this too is not a straightforward endorsement of a traditional view of history. Within debates of national domestic space, such locations have been seen as depictions of 'boundary maintenance and boundary transgression' (Morley, 1999, p.152). On one hand, *Harem suare* endorses conservative views of the nation in its domestic space by overtly focusing on the lavish nature of its interiors. At one crucial point the camera pans along one ornate mantelpiece as an interlude to a love scene between Safiye and Nadir. Yet this domestic space also reinforces the alternative history being shown. The scenes at the palace tend to avoid the official rooms in which history is being played out in favour of store rooms filled with unused decoration and the small quarters of wives and servants. The camera, meanwhile, lingers not only on the lavish decoration, but also the hidden alcoves populated by the unspeaking servants and marginal figures privileged in its alternative narrative. Therefore, while aspects of the film's use of domestic space highlight its links with the heritage film, this is again more oppositional in its representation as it facilitates the movement of the narrative from official history to that of the marginal figures of the palace.

Epistolarity also plays a role in highlighting the difficulties in communication between the female protagonist, who is of lowly social status, and the Sultan. Rather than speak to each other about the problems contained in the narrative, Safiye chooses instead to place them in letters. The consequences of this representation are shown as multiple and counter-hegemonic. Again, this emphasises the flaws in more common models of cross-border communication as we are unsure whether the pair do not speak to each other because it is a boundary they cannot be seen to cross or whether such a method of communication would fail to transfer meaning. Perhaps more crucial, however, is the fact that this gives Safiye a privileged position in that it is she who is given the role of protagonist in this strand of the narrative. Thus, even though the narrative superficially portrays the fall of a political empire

on a macro level, on a micro level what we are actually receiving is from the position of a minor and marginal figure, pushing the portrayal of history further into the background.

However, once again the representations of *Harem suare* suggest a vision which can be seen as Orientalist. Its alternative reading of history is one which portrayed as exotic and seductive. Yet while this depiction of the nation can create 'a nostalgic reconstruction of the last days of the harem at the imperial palace before the demise of the Ottoman Empire' (Postma, 1999, p.82), it is significant that the film contains no exteriors or scenery, and this stops the nation itself from ever being literally present. Equally, Safiye herself regularly disobeys or misinterprets the rules of the Palace to provide a more personal, benevolent vision of femininity than the one required by the harem itself. This is further emphasised when history finally arrives within the Palace in the form of the army's attempts to empty the harem. Here the response is not one of compliance, but they are told instead that "The law can wait outside", giving the impression that history can only resume once the tale has been told. Thus, while exotic and containing elements of Orientalism (it is noticeable that Turkey itself only prominently features in Ferzan Ozpetek films which centre on a hamam and harem), the overtly national representation of history in *Harem suare* is one which is regularly opposed by the film's focus on alternative and marginal characters and communities.

A final critical difference between *Harem suare* and both its historical narrative and the traditional representation of such issues in cinema is the layering narrative techniques used by the film. Not only is history not in the foreground of the text, but it is actually a tale told firstly by Gulfidan to the wives, then by Old Safiye to Anita, and finally as a flashback narrative. This layering of narrative contributes to the text's overall epistolarity and distances its meaning from an omniscient, cinematic narrator, as is found throughout the Accented Cinema of migration (Naficy, 2001). This combination of narrative layers, femininity as performance and sense of construction and artifice clearly highlights the comparison

between *Harem suare* and the traditional Turkish text, *Arabian Nights: Tales from the Thousand and One Nights*, in which stories are also used to delay the events of history. It also illustrates the processes in which such texts help to imagine the communities in which they are celebrated, particularly when Gulfidan states that the purpose of such narratives is to help manufacture a view of the subject within the audience.

This distancing not only has an impact on the representation of history within the film, but it also extends to the potential for post-nationalist readings within the text. The use of this narrative layering not only helps to undermine the dominance of cinematic narration, but the film's resolution – in which Gulfidan leaves the audience with three apples from Allah, one for the teller, one for the listener and one for the heroes of the tale – is one which allows the conclusion of the text to avoid finding narrative solutions to the problems of history. These multiple strands, and a conclusion which only serves to highlight their artifice, has been described as 'convoluted' by some critics (Rooney, 2001), but actually serves the greater purpose of distancing the historical implications of the text in favour of more general female concerns. The story of the *Harem Nights* is performed throughout the film; by Gulfidan to the wives of the harem, as part of a travelling troupe by Safiye in one narrative, and again by Old Safiye in the train station. However in the final of these performances, in the train station, it is only the listener who appears in the mirror in the cafe in these sequences, further emphasising the constructed nature of the narrative and the importance of it being heard by the listener. As such, the film itself, defined by its many female characters, is one which refuses to stay in the comfortable domestic spaces of the heritage film and has instead broken into more oppositional spaces which highlight the construction of history in such national texts.

This means that while the national spaces occupied by *Harem suare* suggest both the conservative representations of the heritage film and the Orientalist vision of Turkey found in *Hamam*, this film actually undermines a number of these issues to oppose the dominant

nationalism. While its overtly national and historical focus immediately places the text in a contact zone with representations of history, these issues are stripped of their importance and replaced by the concerns of marginal, often female figures. This distance undermines the traditional representation of history, and creates an oppositional historical space within the text. This oppositional space is given a specific cinematic quality by the film's multiple narrative structures, which serve to highlight how national historical narratives are always constructions laden with political issues. Thus, the film is both a historical narrative, a retelling of a classic tale and deconstruction of how these two narrative forms often work together to manufacture consent within the imagined communities of nations.

Historical and Contemporary Non-Official Nationalisms: *Le Finestre di fronte*

History also plays a key role in the oppositional spaces created by another of Ferzan Ozpetek's films – *Le Finestre di fronte*. However, in this case it is not a historical narrative depicting the director's home nation, but a contemporary narrative which draws comparisons between Italy's current society and that of the Second World War. The comparison is both political and personal, in which the representation of Italy's complicity with the Nazis and its own fascist government is linked directly to contemporary issues of forbidden love. As such, it differs from the director's previous work in that it reduces the overt importance of the non-official nationalisms of gender, sexuality and class by replacing them with universal themes which link current society to a hidden past. Once again, this produces a series of national oppositions which undermine the dominant nationalism, and suggests a barely hidden history which is not part of myths and symbols of Italy.

The film follows a working-class family, headed by Giovanna (Giovanna Mezzogiorno) and Filippo (Filippo Nigro). The pair encounters an elderly man, later revealed to be Davide (Massimo Girotti), who appears to be in distress and suffering from amnesia, although we, as viewers, see a series of his hallucinations and remembrances from the war in Italy as

flashbacks. The pair helps the stranger, only to find the official process of discovering the man's identity slow and uncaring, meaning they take Davide into their home. This is a source of tension in the relationship. Giovanna is already unhappy in her job working in a chicken factory and secretly lusts for Lorenzo (Raoul Bova), a neighbour who can be seen through the facing window of the apartment block where they live. As she investigates Davide's identity, she encounters Lorenzo and the pair's relationship develops. Davide is found to be both a pastry chef and a survivor of the Nazi death camps, having been one of a number of Italians who were betrayed by their neighbours and then imprisoned due to their homosexuality. However, Giovanna does not begin an affair with Lorenzo as she sees her own family through the window while in his apartment, and instead leaves her job to begin a career in a pastry shop herself. Lorenzo leaves, meaning Giovanni can only communicate her emotions by responding to a letter Davide sent to his secret lover 50 years ago.

Le Finestre di fronte is primarily driven by comparisons between the frustrations felt by its contemporary female protagonists and the gradual revelation of Davide's historical narrative. This representation of history is an important one to post-nationalist readings of the text as it deals with Italian Fascism's alliance with the Nazis during the 1940s and the information given by Italian citizens to the authorities that led to their neighbours being imprisoned in concentration camps. This clearly oppositional narrative is seen in flashbacks and hallucinations alongside the development of a contemporary narrative. The lingering effect of fascism, and the marks it has left on Italian society, are constantly emphasised by Davide's presence, including the bloody handprint which fades from view at the conclusion of the opening sequence, the constant, ghostly appearance of tortured figures from the past on the streets of modern-day Rome, and the marks of the camps left on his body. Thus, it can be argued that it is not Davide's sexuality which is un-masked in the text, but the guilt of the society which led to his imprisonment – and the death of his lover.

This representation of history is not only one which undermines the dominant nationalism in its content, but also in how it is constructed on screen. Primarily, this takes the form of flashback sequences which Davide experiences on the streets of Rome to immediately imply a comparison between Fascist and contemporary Italy, but it is also noticeable the extent to which the narrative is reliant on coincidence to progress. Giovanna and Filippo first stumble on Davide when they happen to pass him on the street, while Giovanna and Lorenzo also seem to be thrust together when he happens to be at the same bar Giovanna bakes for and Davide happens to stop at his car when still in his state of amnesia – all of which add up to a text which contains an ‘improbable story’ (Holden, 2004). Such narrative techniques are particularly striking when dealing with a text whose focus is on Italian history and society, as this area is most regularly compared to the canonical Italian films which made up the Neo-Realist movement which is often credited with being a ‘cinema of “fact” and “reconstituted reportage” which contained a message of fundamental human solidarity fostered by the anti-Fascist Resistance’ (Bondanella, 2004b, p.31). Thus, *La Finestre di fronte* opposes the dominant nationalism not only in its use of a historical narrative which reminds the viewer of Italy’s fascist past but also through a cinematic form which rejects many of the traits of one form of Italian national cinema.

The representation of contemporary Italy, meanwhile, is still a progressive one which recalls many of Ozpetek’s previous films. Although sexuality does not play a significant role here, class, gender and race are instead used to create a group of figures who do not represent the dominant nationalism. Giovanna and Filippo live in an apartment block and also work in menial and insecure jobs, and the former acts as another female protagonist who refuses to stay in the comfortable domestic space of home. In this case she dreams not only of running her own business, but also considers leaving her marriage for her neighbour. Similarly, *La Finestre di fronte* is one of many Ozpetek films to feature *extracomunitari* (non-European Union immigrant) figures (often played by Serra Yilmaz). Such figures echo the

potential for mundane resistance discussed earlier in relation to social class. This is particularly evident here when Emine (Serra Yilmaz) uses the perception of casual racism to encourage her African husband, Giambo (Billo Thierno), to assist her in a petty dispute with a neighbour and also highlights the accepted use of illegal migrant workers in the factory where she works. Thus, once again, this film offers another text which is not filled with figures of the dominant nationalism, but instead features marginal figures, along with the political and social tensions they encounter.

As with *Hamam* and *Harem suare*, *La Finestre di fronte* also uses domestic space to illustrate the oppositions of non-official nationalism. This is most notably the case in the use of apartment blocks as the homes of marginal, interstitial groups. These are often used as a 'metaphor for a nation in search of unity' (Duncan, 2005, p.109) as they provide a clear opportunity for a depiction of many diverse groups being forced to live together in a confined space. However, when opposed to the isolated spaces of the dominant nationalism in Ozpetek's work, this environment becomes one of communal support as groups of mixed races, religions, sexualities, and so on, interact as an elective family. However, this is not without tensions or imposed boundaries. Rather, such buildings also offer a fragmented and divided existence, one framed by the structures around us. This is most clearly the case in *Le Finestre di fronte*, the title of which (translated as Facing Windows) references this framing structure. Here, the framing is both literal and metaphorical, as the windows through which the protagonist gazes at her forbidden love, Lorenzo, not only stop any immediate, actual contact but also 'symbolize the barriers faced by so many of history's great lovers' (Meyer, 2004, p.E-7). As such, apartment blocks act as both communal structures and symbols of the boundaries encountered in working-class existence in the films.

The connection between history and contemporary society is made overt by a recurrent theme in both Ozpetek's and Accented Cinema – epistolarity. The letters within *La Finestre di fronte* are obviously only of significance to the senders, as neither is ever received by their intended target. The first is one written by Davide and intended for Simone (Ivan Bacchi), his lover, but it is never received as the pair are separated by history, more specifically the Fascist military state that punishes homosexual relationships. Its response is not from Simone, but from Giovanna, sent years later after Davide's death and detailing her current motivations and feelings. Again, this serves multiple purposes, further emphasising the common boundaries faced by forbidden love spanning more than 50 years. Equally, that Giovanna chooses to respond with a letter that will never be answered, or read, again highlights the flaws in the other communication options available to her. Just as Davide's letter would never reach its target because of the boundaries of his society, so will Giovanna's. She has a will or longing to communicate, but the structures of contemporary Italy, such as her family, friends, work colleagues, are unable to support this.

It is made further evident by the use of another theme found throughout the literature on migration, the use of food as a sense memory. It has been argued that 'Since "home" is not a real place ... feeling at home is, in essence, a personal and culturally specific link to the imaginary' (Morse, 1999, p.63) which can be facilitated through the senses and food in particular. Here, however, this takes the form of not only food, but cooking, as Davide and Giovanna are tied together via their links to forbidden love and their abilities as pastry chefs. Cooking plays a further role in the connection between the two as Davide often uses his advice in this field to offer more diverse guidance. The uses of senses which lack an 'autonomous system of categorization' (such as taste and smell in this case) are often identified with the 'emotional investment in the body' which facilitates the 'management of sympathy' and 'the ability to identify with others' (Morse, 1999, p.64-65). Accordingly, the use of taste and smell in cooking passed from Davide to Giovanna continually evokes the

relationship between the present and the past or between the contemporary and the memory. Thus, the sequences in which cookery appears further emphasise the forbidden love of Davide and now Giovanna, and the relationship between Fascist and contemporary Italy.

However, this oppositional space created by the comparison of contemporary and historical Italy is not maintained throughout the conclusion of the film. Giovanna declines, with regret, her opportunity to be with Lorenzo and, instead, confronts her husband about her unhappiness. With his support, she begins her new career as a pastry chef and the text concludes with her leaving a letter for Davide detailing her current successes and emotional frustrations. This is, essentially, a narrative solution to the contradictions of her society and has been described elsewhere as 'conveniently pat, almost self-congratulatory' (Groen, 2004). It undermines many of the historical comparisons made throughout the rest of the film. The link between Davide and Giovanna's narratives is undermined when she is given a beneficial resolution which would have been clearly denied him. Such a comparison, between the forbidden love of a married woman in the early 2000s and the forbidden love of two homosexual men leading to their imprisonment in death camps during the 1940s, seems to trivialise the latter and a suggestion of a potential resolution would seem to reinforce nationalist symbols, rather than oppose them. It 'runs the risk of seduction into sentimentality and mythologies of family romance' (Morse, 1999, p.65), rather than maintaining the oppositional spaces which the historical narrative has created.

Therefore, to conclude, *La Finestre di fronte* creates overtly oppositional spaces by drawing comparisons between the non-official nationalisms of contemporary Italy and its fascist past. In doing so it both highlights a broad national narrative, but also the links between marginal, non-official nationalisms of both periods through the use of depictions of forbidden love,

sense memories and epistolarity. As a result, it is not homosexuality which is un-masked but the contemporary relevance of a historical narrative which would usually be excluded from the dominant myths and symbols of the nation. However, these comparisons are not maintained throughout the text's conclusion, and Giovanna's decision to return to the comfortable domestic space, and the early success of her career, suggest a narrative resolution which could not have been found in her historical counterpart. That aside, the text does manage to link the non-official narratives of contemporary society to those of a historical and national narrative which undermines the dominant nationalism.

The Body as Oppositional Domestic Space: *Cuore Sacro*

A final film in the director's work which continues to find oppositional spaces in relation to the nation is *Cuore Sacro*. This is also a text which moves away from the everyday representations of non-official nationalisms, but again uses the recurring themes of epistolarity and domestic space (extended here to include the body) to create another female protagonist who refuses to stay in Italy's comfortable domestic space. This oppositional space, however, is not one between nations but is internal and generates a tension within Italian society by drawing capitalism and Catholicism into contact with each other. As a result, the film continues to diversify the oppositional spaces found by the director. Not only has his previous use of non-official nationalism undermined the myths and symbols of Italy, but within *Cuore Sacro* further internal oppositions are found in relation to contemporary capitalism and Catholicism.

The film follows successful businesswoman, Irene (Barbora Bobulova), whose career is ascending alongside her aunt Eleonora (Lisa Gastoni) when two of her friends and colleagues commit suicide. Simultaneously, she is attempting to renovate and sell the

building which held her late mother, who was detained on grounds of mental health. While there, she encounters child thief Benny (Camille Dugay Comencini), who is caught stealing her wallet. Rather than punish her, Irene and Benny become friends and it is revealed that much of her crime is used to finance benevolent actions in the community. However, when Benny is killed in a road traffic accident, Irene begins to experience a series of ghostly visions. She begins to withdraw from her career, in which her company is shown to exploit the poor, and begins a great deal of charity work. Eleonora fears her mental health is fading, as Irene begins to find more connections between herself and her mother. Yet, as her charity work becomes more extreme, and yet more in line with martyrdom or the cult of the Sacred Heart itself, figures of capitalism and Catholicism reject her. In the final scenes, Irene strips naked on public transport to give away all her worldly possessions, only to be institutionalised.

Although not as much in the foreground as elsewhere, *Cuore Sacro* still uses representations of gender and class to create an oppositional space. Firstly, it again contains a female protagonist who refuses to stay in the comfortable domestic space, although in this case Irene's movement from the head of a large corporation to modern saint has implications for depictions of both gender and class. In fact, the catalyst for this change in her character is, as elsewhere, increased exposure to marginal figures in Italian society, including child thief Benny and members of the homeless. Secondly, the lessons Irene learns from Benny are derived from her acts of mundane resistance, in which figures on the margins of society are able to momentarily exploit the dominant nationalism for their gain. Thus, as is found elsewhere, *Cuore Sacro* offers another film in which the traditional vision of the nation is undermined by being forced into an oppositional contact zone with figures on the margins of society, as this often leads to them being re-imagined by these groups.

However, where this film differs is in the absence of sexuality being used to create such oppositions. Although there are issues which centre on the use of the gaze on screen (discussed later), for the majority of the narrative sexuality is missing, particularly when considering the representation of marginalised sexualities. Even when sexual threat is suggested, through the unstable figure of Giancarlo (Andrea Di Stefano), actual threat never materialises and is instead resolved in a manner which visually recalls another of the themes at play, religion, as Irene nurses him in a manner similar to that often used in Madonna imagery. This provides a strong contrast to the images of Turkey in *Hamam* and *Harem suare*, which are often sexualised and erotic, and the representation of Italy in *La Fate ignorati* and *Le Finestre di fronte*, both of which constantly imply a need for the dominant nationalism to negotiate with groups marginalised because of their sexuality.

One area of representation which remains consistent with Ozpetek's work as a whole in *Cuore Sacro* is its use of domestic space. Here, like *Hamam*, the protagonist is left a building following the death of a relative, again suggesting the links between domestic space and the family / past. Similarly, like Francesco, Irene's first impulse is to renovate and sell the building, highlighting the contemporary impulse of Western society to commercially profit from such traditional links. Finally, the films are also both linked by their representation of domestic space's epistolary quality, although here this is not entirely from the possessions of the previous owner but the seemingly alien language which has been scrawled on the walls (again misunderstood by contemporary society as a symbol of madness). As such, the domestic space of both films acts oppositionally as it draws its contemporary protagonists into a contact zone with their history and family, which in turn forces them to reassess their attitude towards it.

The episolarity of *Cuore Sacro*'s domestic space is explained in two key sequences. The first, between Irene and Benny, is obviously light-hearted with the pair pretending to interpret the symbols written on the wall by Irene's mother as messages endorsing their own opinions to create advice for the other (although this is complicated by the conclusion of the film, which suggests some form of connection between Benny and Irene's mother). However, when viewed later, actual language in these symbols is revealed as they morph into readable Italian in a shot either from Irene's point of view or our own. Such a revelation exemplifies the debate surrounding the protagonist's mental health in that it could either be a hallucination and symbol of her madness or a further realisation of her chosen status as part of the cult of the Sacred Heart. Again, however, meaning is personalised rather than being an innate quality of the narrative – figures must earn the right to understand the symbols of the past, here literally written on the wall, and they can only be interpreted and understood by figures of otherness, rather than undergoing a process of explanation which is controlled by the hegemon of the contact zone.

A further representation of the home / household, and therefore domestic space, of interest here is the notion of the body as home. It has been argued that the body is one area of the home which is rarely studied despite the fact that 'we experience our bodies as our home (where we live in transparent ease and comfort), our house (in which we reside, by choice or constraint), and a prison-house (to which we are condemned)' (Sobchack, 1999, p.46). However, it seems fair to suggest that an understanding of this concept is crucial when considering one key sequence in *Cuore Sacro*, which resultantly then informs our understanding of the text as a whole. Here, the protagonist, Irene, has attempted to devote her life to charity, but faced opposition through figures of capitalism and Catholicism (Eleonora and Padre Carras (Massimo Poggio)). She finally attempts to give all of her belongings away to the faceless, passing mob of a Rome train station. Her actions are at

first met with confusion and scepticism, but as she finally begins to hand her clothes over, their view changes and she is institutionalised.

This clearly echoes many of the debates surrounding the 'cult of the Sacred Heart' in that, while proving a 'call for 'the chosen' people' (in this case, Irene) the reaction of society recalls 'theological fears by evoking in believers improper reifications of earthly, passionate and popular sentiments rather than 'appropriate' teaching about Christ's humanity' (Napolitano, 2007, p.80). Here, the protagonist's clear intention is an expression of benevolence in keeping with martyrdom, but the communal response of condemnation is one in which 'consciousness is eviscerated and evicted from its home-body' (Sobchack, 1999, p.53). This eviction of personal meaning from the body is carried out in purely visual terms, with the 'epidermalizing gaze' (which objectifies all actions by their visual quality), and by society as a whole, as exemplified by the busy throngs of the Rome streets with 'its empirical and therefore symbolic mass' (Sobchack, 1999, p.54-57). Thus, when the action of the protagonist requires the crossing of personal and domestic boundaries, it is visually objectified and rejected by the passing general public. Having previously been rejected by major social structures (the church and capitalism), Irene is defined as insane and this final expression of the home-body is condemned by society as a whole.

Thus, *Cuore Sacro* creates oppositional spaces in relation to both contemporary capitalism and Catholicism in Italy by suggesting neither is able to support the saintly actions of its protagonist. Equally, from a post-nationalist perspective, it is interesting that this change in Irene's state is depicted as deriving from her increased contact with figures of otherness and non-official nationalism, and manifests itself both through the interpretation of epistolary messages and representation of domestic space (here extended to Irene's body). The result is also an unresolved narrative, in that neither capitalist nor Catholic figures in the text can

support this change and instead suggest that such a spiritual change is brought about by a mental illness, which cannot be resolved. As such, the film maintains an oppositional space to two key aspects of contemporary Italian society, suggesting that neither capitalism nor Catholicism can support saintly behaviour and instead force it to the margins of society alongside other non-official nationalisms.

Conclusion: Un-masking and Re-masking the Impulses of Conformity and Resistance in the Films of Ferzan Ozpetek

The films of Ferzan Ozpetek both reinforce many of the oppositional concepts found in Fatih Akin's work, and diversify them to illustrate the ways in which non-official nationalisms can be introduced to undermine and re-imagine the dominant nationalism. As such, rather than use literal contact zones between nations and national figures, they prioritise internal contact zones in which issues of sexuality, but also gender, race and class, help redefine society from its boundaries. While this creates additional contact zones which can be used to generate oppositions, it also complicates the process as such discourses are not always tied to national debates, and their inconsistent use (which was also found in Akin's work) highlights this. This results in post-nationalist readings of the texts not only having to negotiate the process of un-masking non-official nationalisms, but also the impulses of conformity and resistance which drive their political implications.

An example of this is the films' use of sexuality, a key theme which often defines the director's work. A clear source of national oppositions in many of the texts, notably *La Fate ignorati* and *Hamam*, in others it is wholly reduced or absent. A clear example of this is another of the director's films, *Saturno Contro*, in which homosexual figures are present but deliberately distanced from the creation of potentially oppositional national spaces. The film

centres on a group of friends, including gay couple Davide (Pierfrancesco Favino) and Sergio (Ennio Fantastichini), who are forced to deal with the death of one of their group. However, rather than being a source of tension in the film's contact zones, their presence is almost unnoticed and depicted with little difference to those of the heterosexual couples. As such, this film supports Ozpetek's own claims that his 'dream is one day not to have a "gay" section' in cinema (van Maanen, 2008). Sexuality, although present as a non-official nationalism, is reduced in its political importance and a part of the dominant nationalism.

This change in representation reinforces the notion of contradictory impulses of conformity and resistance within migrant populations in the films. Here, oppositional spaces remain open to the director, and the characters he portrays, but this does not mean that they are always filled within the texts. A key example of this occurs in *La Fate ignorati*, in which Mara (Lucrezia Valia), a transsexual, is unsure of whether to return to a family funeral as a woman or a man, whether to conform or resist. This means that the space occupied by the filmmakers discussed here is not fixed as oppositional, but instead offers the opportunity to oppose and deconstruct the hegemonic structures of the nation. Where this space is overtly defined as national, this process is easier to identify. However, where this is reliant on the creation of non-official nationalisms, it is dependent on other factors which can un-mask it as post-nationalist in intent.

Even with this notion of an oppositional space which is unfixed, it is noticeable the extent to which Ferzan Ozpetek's films still elect to enter and create oppositional spaces through non-official nationalisms. In Ozpetek's early work, sexuality plays a key role in this process, as it forces hegemonic figures of the dominant nationalism (defined as heterosexual) to re-evaluate and change their position after being forced into contact with marginal figures. Antonia in *La Fate ignorati*, Francesco and Marta in *Hamam* and Giovanna in *Le Finestre di*

fronte all undergo this process in a manner which suggests that the dominant nationalism is being re-made and re-imagined. While this holds the potential to oppose the dominant position of Italy as host nation, it is more problematic when used within depictions of Turkey as host nation as this tends to reinforce the Orientalist view of its otherness by making it a seductive and sexualised landscape. Equally, just as the processes of un-masking such debates as national is crucial to post-nationalist theory, it is also important not to re-mask them as national when the director's intention in the later films is clearly to reduce their resistance and increase their conformity.

It is not only sexuality which plays a role as a non-official nationalism in the films, but also gender and class are crucial to their oppositions. Class particularly acts in conjunction with sexuality in creating diverse groups of marginal figures who form vibrant and beneficial communities, which are then used to contrast members of the dominant nationalism who are often depicted as isolated and lonely figures before being forced into their contact zones. From a post-nationalist perspective, the films' representation of gender is also significant. Female figures are often forced into the role of the hegemon by the narratives when this space is vacated by male figures. Thus, when they enter into a contact zone with these non-official nationalisms, the change this creates often manifests itself in their refusal to remain in a comfortable domestic space, and they often break out of this in a manner which cannot be resolved by the narrative. These non-official nationalisms are also entered into a contact zone with historical narratives in *Harem suare* and *Le Finestre di fronte*, and this creates an oppositional space by offering an alternative view to traditional views of Turkish and Italian history.

These oppositions are often communicated with a cinematic style which has been described as typical for migrant filmmakers (Naficy, 2001). Significant here is the use of both domestic

space and epistolarity. The former is used to define national space in which the dominant nationalism is depicted as affluent, yet commercial, and environments of otherness are communal and tied to notions of family and history. The latter is used to highlight the boundaries in communication between groups, and history and the present, and often gives the power of narration to previously marginal characters. Epistolarity is also used to distance the narratives from notions of realism, which have previously been used to define the key aspects of Italian national cinema (Bondanella, 2004b), and instead foreground how historical narratives are used to construct, rather than reflect, nationalisms. Thus, it is not only Ozpetek's access to a number of contact zones between official and non-official nationalisms that make him a key figure, but also his Accented Style (Naficy, 2001).

Therefore, the films of Ferzan Ozpetek illustrate the ways in which sexuality, gender and class act as non-official nationalisms which can oppose the dominant myths and symbols of nations in much the way that the contact zones of hyphenated identity did in the work of Fatih Akin. Although not overtly used on a national level, non-official nationalisms often force figures of the dominant nationalism into positions of tension and create narratives which illustrate unresolved social tensions. However, because these depictions are not always tied to national issues, but are instead depicted on an individual scale, and can be influenced by the conflicting impulses of resistance and conformity found in migration, their presence alone is not enough to create oppositional spaces. As such, it is important to examine each individual use of non-official nationalisms to avoid re-masking occasions in which these discourses are not tied to post-nationalist, oppositional spaces. Although this flexibility was also found in the national representations of Fatih Akin's work (when resistance was diminished in light of Turkey's move into the European Union), it is more frequently found within the uses of sexuality in Ozpetek's films. It illustrates that although multiple contact zones are available to migrant filmmakers, their response is flexible and oppositional spaces are only used when deemed necessary in each individual case.

Chapter Four: Cinematic Oppositional Space – The Films of Atom Egoyan

Introduction: Atom Egoyan and the Accented Cinema of Migrant Filmmakers

Whilst the films of Fatih Akin and Ferzan Ozpetek highlight the oppositional spaces found within and between nations through their use of social issues such as race, sexuality and gender, the filmmaker Atom Egoyan develops these spaces by not only privileging such non-official nationalisms within his films but by making oppositions an important aspect of his formal style. Similar to the works of other directors of hyphenated identity, his films include many of the representations and ideologies discussed previously, yet these are often depicted in a much more reflexive manner which challenges cinematic meanings and structures within their deconstructions of nationalisms. Along with issues of literal border crossings, epistolarity and language, his films include recurrent themes of technology, desire and cameras / recording which challenge how meaning is constructed and viewed within national cinemas and cinematic depictions of history and identity. As such, he is a crucial figure in our understanding of the relationship between cinema and post-nationalist theory as his work not only challenges the dominant nationalism on screen, but also deconstructs how this is particularly created within cinema. His self-reflexive style, therefore, not only creates oppositional spaces on screen, but also beyond the cinematic frame and in relation to the audience itself.

Atom Egoyan was born in Cairo to Armenian parents, and then relocated to Canada, where he has been primarily based since, when he was three (Wilson, 2009, p.2). Many discussions of his work tend to place significance on his biography, often recounting that his family spoke only Armenian until his grandmother left and he was then allowed to assimilate himself into Canadian society through language by learning English. This has led critics to highlight the recurrence of 'being outside and attempting to move in and understand the

other' (Wilson, 2009, p.3) in his films, immediately suggesting the possibility of oppositional spaces within the texts. That Egoyan's films also feature representations of a number of nations (Canada, Armenia, the USA, Great Britain and others) and their migrant groups further emphasises their relevance.

However, what makes Egoyan's films particularly relevant is their complexity. While, like those of the directors discussed earlier, his films contain social and political themes of migrant populations and their journeys, they differ slightly in the fact that such issues are tightly related to and interwoven with their cinematic form. Along with issues of migration, his most frequent concerns are with technology, cinematic viewing and media, and these are used to 'show the frame' of the text and thus allow a 'self-reflexivity that mobilizes viewing subjects and forces them to seek out new forms of involvement with representations' (Tschofen and Burwell, 2007b, p.10). This complexity, which ties the overtly social and political issues of post-nationalist theory to the cinematic theories of the gaze, self-reflexivity, narration and others, means Egoyan has 'practically created his own genre' (Romney, 1995, p.8), and also makes his work ideally placed to advance the debate here beyond the political and social representations of migrant filmmakers into a more cinematic landscape. Therefore, it is not the issues being represented that become the sole concern, but equally important is how they are constructed and undermined on screen.

This approach, which represents the issues of figures of hyphenated identity and ties such ideologies to their cinematic form, has been used by Naficy (2001) to describe Egoyan (and other migrant filmmakers) as 'Accented'. They are seen as "'situated but universal" figures who work in the interstices of social formations and cinematic practices' and are thus 'more prone to the tensions of marginality and difference' (Naficy, 2001, p.10). Although not a homogenous group or movement, Naficy provides numerous practices which make up this

Accented Style. These include: adopting an exilic position between home and host nations, the use of linguistic accents or foreign languages in voice over / narration, embedded criticism (both through the text and its mode of production), representations of accented emotions (such as loneliness, alienation and longing for impossible homecoming), tactile optics (including video), border crossing, epistolarity and autobiography. Although relevant in the work of Ozpetek and Akin, this particularly allows the films of Atom Egoyan to represent the themes and concerns of migrant groups in a way which adapts the cinematic style of the text to further emphasise their conflicts. In many instances, this process is seen as counter-hegemonic in that by applying an accent to their style they are opening up an additional space in which a cinematic / aesthetic opposition can be found to other, hegemonic forms of cinema.

Although this Accented Cinema is not without its criticisms, particularly in its inclusion of themes found in other, non-exilic works of world cinema (Suner, 2006), its relevance to Egoyan's work and post-nationalist theory is clear. This Accented style opens up oppositional spaces to filmmakers, and its social and stylistic themes and their overwhelming reflexivity can be used to advance or evaluate those of post-nationalist theory. With this in mind, just as the non-official nationalisms of race, gender and sexuality have been discussed previously, Egoyan's films can be used to see the extent to which an Accented style can act as a non-official nationalism in cinema and as counter-hegemonic to dominant forms in film. This assists in an understanding of Egoyan's work in relation to other filmmakers, and illustrates the specific links between cinema and post-nationalist theory. Thus, rather than sitting in isolation, it will help these issues be located within the wider, cinematic landscape. Therefore, it is important to consider both the representations and themes of the texts and how they specifically relate to cinema in their communication. Rather than separate the two recurring themes in critical responses to Egoyan's work, the social and political (representations of family, nationality, history and so on) and the technological

(representations of video and its alienating quality), it is necessary to examine the coexistence of the two in contact zones with the dominant nationalism.

Whilst discussing these issues, it will be important to consider several other theories which relate closely to the work of Atom Egoyan and post-nationalist theory. The first is that of trauma (Kaplan, 2005) and 'postmemory' (Hirsch, 1997; Hirsch, 2008). These films are often filled with representations of trauma, both on a national and personal (direct) or secondary (family) scale (Kaplan, 2005, p.4). They also consider the consequences of these events as a 'shattering of psychic memory' (Kristeva, 1989, p.222) and the forces of media technology which 'make "real"' such events (Kaplan, 2005, pg.2). Postmemory is crucial here as it reflects a 'moment of looking backward rather than ahead and of defining the present in relation to a troubled past rather than initiating new paradigms' (Hirsch, 2008, p.106). As such, it is possible to discuss the potential relationship between the traumas of the texts and Egoyan's representation of history, particularly the Armenian genocide. Similarly, Egoyan's Accented style and its counter-hegemonic ambiguities will also be considered in relation to the 'projective gaze' (Metz, 1985) and its ability to suggest meaning which is open to the interpretation of the viewer and, thus, undermines the dominant authority of the narrator.

The following questions will be discussed. Firstly, video technology and its impact on the family and family trauma will be analysed in relation to *Family Viewing* (1988) and *Adoration* (2008). Particular attention here will be paid to how technology can be seen to undermine or reinforce family values, and how this has changed as technology has developed. *Calendar* (1993) and *Ararat* (2002) will then be discussed in terms of their representations of the home and host nations, and their cinematic treatments of history and representations of homecomings. The oppositions to, and of, the gendered gaze will then be considered in relation to *Next of Kin* (1984) and *Felicia's Journey* (1999). This will be followed by a

discussion of Egoyan's other films, in which national representations are largely absent, in order to assess how their Accented style still creates oppositional spaces, and to what purpose. Throughout each section it will be important to consider the political and social representations of the texts, the oppositional nature of their cinematic style and how the films relate to national and transnational cinema in general.

Therefore, it is important to consider the films of Atom Egoyan in relation to post-nationalist theory as they not only use social and political themes to create oppositional spaces, but they also hold a complexity which creates a cinematic style that emphasises this process. By considering the films and how they relate to theories of cinema, it will be possible to both highlight the importance of post-nationalist theory to film and also the specific relevance of cinema to post-nationalist theory. As such, it will be easier to see the ways in which Egoyan uses an Accented style to reflect the migrant experience on screen, whilst simultaneously challenging the dominant positions of cinema itself, and how this style can be used to inform his work even when such representations are absent. Thus, having discussed potential non-official nationalism from social and political areas in relation to Fatih Akin and Ferzan Ozpetek, Atom Egoyan's films open up the possibilities of contact zones between cinematic styles and form as sources of oppositional spaces.

Technology and Familial Oppositions: *Family Viewing* and *Adoration*

The relationship between social and political issues and technology runs throughout Egoyan's films, but is most clearly evident in *Family Viewing* and *Adoration*. Both texts illustrate the relationship between the institution of the family and technology (video in *Family Viewing*, mobile and internet communication in *Adoration*), and how this is used as a constant struggle for power. These relationships are made increasingly important, however,

by their implications for the films as a whole in that they can often be seen as opening up counter-hegemonic spaces in which meaning is left ambiguous and narratives left unresolved. Thus, to fully understand the relevance of the family and technology to post-nationalist theory in these films, we must not only consider their impact on the social themes highlighted, but also on the meaning for the text as a whole.

Egoyan's second feature film, *Family Viewing* focuses on Van (Aidan Tierney), the teenage son of patriarch Stan (David Hemblen). Van discovers that his father is recording over family home movies from his childhood with his current sexual activity with his new girlfriend, Sandra (Gabrielle Rose), with whom Van is also having a potentially sexual relationship. These tapes previously featured Van's absent mother (Rose Sarkisyan) and maternal grandmother, Armen (Jeanne Sabourin), both of whom are shown to be migrants. Whilst caring for Armen in a substandard care home, Van befriends Aline (Arsinee Khanjian), the daughter of the resident in the neighbouring bed. He decides to swap and keep the tapes and remove Armen from his father's care by swapping her identity with Aline's mother when she passes away. Van and Aline begin to care for Armen and when Stan finds that his son has left with the tapes (which include both family memories and violent sexual activity by Stan against his wife) he hires a private detective to find them. He locates them too late, however, as Van hides Armen's identity by releasing her to a homeless shelter, and in his furious search Stan collapses with a heart attack. This leaves Van and Aline to be reunited with Armen and, surprisingly, Van's mother, in a homeless shelter.

The relationship between the family and technology here is clearly evident. Van, Stan and Sandra make up 'a perverse nuclear family; they take on roles in a game played out in the film's white condominium spaces' (Wilson, 2009, p.23), and part of this game is Stan's erasure of his son's ethnic identity by recording over the videos. When Van discovers this,

he rebels against his father's dominant patriarchy and instead discovers his own 'cultural decision and a matriarchal ideal' (Romney, 2003, p.53). The film's resolution, with Stan's death, sees 'patriarchy defeated and the nuclear family replaced by a feminised alternative one' (Romney, 2003, p.53). This has obvious nationalist connotations, not only is Stan a figure of the white patriarchy attempting to erase memories of exploitation, but these acts have been carried out against clearly migrant figures. Armen, meanwhile, is a representation of diaspora in that she is constantly silent, displaced, restricted by the institution she is forced to inhabit, made to adopt a new identity to survive and only offered a vision of a true homeland through the tapes which Van brings her (Baronian, 2005, p.154). Thus, technology acts as a mechanism for control of the familial contact zones between home and host nations, and as this moves from Stan to Van it allows the dominant white, patriarchal nuclear family to be replaced by a migrant, matriarchal one.

This opposition does not appear solely within the representation of technology in the narrative, but also in the stylistic aspects which run throughout it. The opening sequences of the film, which focus on Van's nuclear family, are filmed in a conservative style, complete with slow camera movements from a static position which highlights the use of a set, closer to that of television. This is knowingly conveyed to the audience as the dialogue between Van and Sandra is interspersed by canned laughter from the TV, even though the volume has been turned down. Equally, we are given footage from a wide range of different media – home movie footage, sex tapes, TV programming (primarily nature documentaries), TV movies, CCTV footage and surveillance footage – each of which has its own stylistic quality. As the conflict grows, the relationship between these images becomes more unstable. Rather than recorded footage from within the narrative, the home movies become Van's memory footage, creeping onto the screen. This instability continues to the point where, as Stan lies dying on the floor (having just appeared on his own surveillance footage), his wife's face appears on the screen. Stylistically it appears as the previous home video footage has

done, yet the implication is that it is a hallucinatory image, symbolising the guilt of the dominant nationalism, returning to meet his final gaze.

This deliberate instability of images and their forms culminates in the film's final scene where Van, his mother and Armen are reunited. At first glance, this can appear to be a resolution to the conflicts of the text and a further symbol of Van's victory over his father. However, the earlier flood of images (home videos, scenes from TV, moments from earlier in the film rewound and replayed) suggests that 'the interweaving of media means that there is no stable viewpoint from which we can discern what is real' (Romney, 2003, p.56). Thus, while it is possible to suggest that this conclusion offers an idealised victory for the imagined community of the migrant family, there is the equal possibility that we are seeing a further fragment of Van's projected psychology. This is emphasised by the fact that there is no reaction from either Van's mother or Armen; they merely meet his gaze in the way that the TV hallucination met Stan's. That this meeting takes place in a homeless shelter also suggests further isolation, marginality and transience. Thus, we are possibly left with the much more ambiguous conclusion to Van's and Armen's relationship from the earlier, more reliable scenes of the film; he hands her over to the police as homeless rather than have Stan find her (Romney, 2003). Thus, by using an Accented form to create oppositional spaces, Egoyan is able to add an extra layer of ambiguity to his text, and avoid endorsing any nationalism over another.

Released 20 years later, *Adoration* offers an update of these themes both in terms of style and social and political content. Simon (Devon Bostick) is left as a young orphan following the death of his Caucasian mother, Rachel (Rachel Blanchard), and migrant father, Sami (Noam Jenkins), in a car crash, the cause of which is unknown. Before his death, Simon's maternal grandfather, Morris (Kenneth Welsh), has told Simon that Sami deliberately killed

his mother, a conversation Simon records on his videophone. Then, following a translation exercise in his French class, Simon is encouraged by his teacher, Sabine (Arsinee Khanjian), to elaborate on a story he creates stating that his father was a terrorist who had planted a bomb on his unknowing, pregnant mother. Controversy surrounding the story escalates through internet discussion groups until Simon's lie is revealed. Sabine, who loses her job, attempts to explain the situation to Simon's uncle and guardian, Tom (Scott Speedman), and reveals she is in fact Sami's first wife. Simon, meanwhile, returns to his grandfather's home and burns both the Nativity scene made by his grandparents and the videophone containing the clip, before returning home. There, he is told of Sabine's background, and decides to learn about his father from her.

Although *Adoration* does not offer a version of the nuclear family as *Family Viewing* does, it still offers another family in which home and host national identities are competing for power. Here, it is Simon's grandfather whose prejudice drives this tension. It is his early monologue about Sami which provokes the central conflict. Again, he is a clear figure of the dominant nationalism in much the same way as Stan. He is male, Caucasian, affluent and, most crucially, attempting to overwrite the memories of the family. Simon's reaction, however, differs from Van's. It is driven by global and political themes in its echoing of post September 11th fears of terrorism, and uses technology (namely the internet) to spread the lie, rather than reclaim it. Resolution does come, however, when Simon finally rejects his grandfather's beliefs and burns the Nativity scene which he created, a symbol both of 'Christian identity' and 'the deceptive ideal of the perfect family' (Romney, 2010, p.52). Thus, *Adoration* updates and echoes many of the themes of *Family Viewing* by offering another figure of the dominant nationalism attempting to compete for, and losing, control of the family through the creation and manipulation of identity, again via technology.

Within a post-nationalist context, however, it is the creation of the lie which holds the most relevance. Although developed by Simon, in essence, to extend his grandfather's prejudices about Sami, its conception in a linguistic exercise holds equal importance. Sabine reads the news story to her students in French and asks them to translate it when Simon then chooses to make it about his own parents. When pushed on why he did it, he says that he was told to "translate it as it came to us naturally". Thus it is the process of linguistic translation which causes him to interpret the story in relation to his own experience, life and background, resulting in him losing its true meaning. This echoes Mailloux's (2000) discussion of hermeneutic ethnocentric explanation, in which cross cultural communication causes information to be translated into the myths and symbols of the receiving nation, and where an uneven power balance can cause meaning to be lost and opposition reduced. Thus, the creation, and then rejection, of Simon's grandfather's lie is clearly a significant one for post-nationalist readings of the film. Simon's deliberate act of misinterpretation is both political and linguistic, an opposition to his grandfather's rhetoric and an example of the power structures at play in cross border communication.

Technology remains an important part of this process. Not only does Simon record his grandfather's beliefs on his videophone, but broadcasts fragments via his webcam as evidence for this created truth. The internet chat rooms to which he speaks are also significant. Whereas video footage was a private way in which identity could be defined in *Family Viewing*, internet communication is deliberately public in *Adoration* and allows the lie to spread. While the internet is shown as being as filled with potential truths (including Simon's story), it is however regularly the home of extremism, rhetoric and fragments of misleading evidence (such as the clip of Morris). The contributors to forums on the story often express stronger views than even those of the grandfather. When Simon finally joins them, leading to an emotionally-charged defence of terrorism which claims human life is over-valued, it is the only time when we lose his perspective and he is seen through a

friend's computer screen, rather than recording the message in his own bedroom. This distance between the content of the internet discussions and potential truth is further exemplified when one contributor forces her grandmother to appear and show the number tattooed on her wrist as a survivor of the death camps, only for it to be immediately followed by a Holocaust-denier with "six million lies" tattooed on his. Accordingly, Simon's final act of defiance involves burning not just the video of his grandfather, but also the technology which helped assist it, his videophone.

Although this does not lead to the same level of unstable images as *Family Viewing*, it still allows Egoyan to create oppositional spaces by challenging the authority of the narrative. In keeping with the themes of the film as a whole, *Adoration* includes several sequences in which truth and meaning are ambiguous. The text regularly attempts to recall images of Simon's parents which are either clearly fiction, showing Rachel attempting to board the plane with a bomb, or potentially so in the inclusion of 'gold-tinted scenes of intimate bliss' which 'aren't reliable as flashbacks' (Romney, 2010, p.52). While these sequences aren't coded as different, as the video images of *Family Viewing* are, they are still shot with more of an 'ethereal' quality (Sharkey, 2009). These sequences invite scrutiny as creations of Simon's 'projective gaze' (Metz, 1985). They are his hallucinations of the past as he searches for the truth of his parents' and his own identity. Thus, once again, the use of technology drives the cultural conflicts of the narratives, and also opens up oppositional spaces in the film as a whole by questioning the reliability of what is being shown on screen. He is able to avoid endorsing any of the nationalisms shown by challenging the authority of the narration and leaving meaning open to interpretation.

Both *Family Viewing* and *Adoration* create texts in which technology is one mechanism through which members of the family compete for power and control. In *Family Viewing*, this

is a private struggle in which ethnic and sexual identities are at stake, as Stan and Van begin their Oedipal struggle. In *Adoration*, these themes have become much more public and political. Spread via the internet, the truth of identity is much vaguer, yet tied to dangerous themes of terrorism. In both examples, however, the younger generation win this struggle, Van through his validation of technology in keeping the tapes / memories, Simon through a condemnation of technology when he finally watches his videophone burn. However, what this truly means for the family is never really discussed. Van would seem to desire a migrant, matriarchal group to replace this although we never see it in place, while Simon is left only with another unreliable source of information on his father in Sabine.

However, the use of technology also aids Egoyan in creating ambiguity. In *Family Viewing*, 'the juxtaposition of the cinematic screen with the video and televisual screens upsets the supposed transparency and intelligibility of the technological image' (del Rio, 2007, p.32-33). In *Adoration*, this process is less overt, but as technology and language are used to bring truth into doubt, we are left with a projective gaze which equally questions the reliability of the narrative. It is significant then that both texts end in the same way. Van is faced with a potential projection of his mother and grandmother, and merely passively meets their gaze when faced with them. Meanwhile, Simon's projective gaze looks off screen, only to be returned by his dead parents from their imagined past. Thus, this inability of the images within the text to remain stable enough to be interpreted both by the characters on screen and the audience not only avoids the creation of narrative resolution in the texts, but ties them to discussions of historical trauma which causes both memory and the technology that supports it to become shattered (Kristeva, 1989).

Therefore, to conclude, it is clear that from social and political perspectives *Family Viewing* and *Adoration* highlight the ways in which technology can be manipulated to control or

undermine the family and related issues of identity. However, when examining how this impacts on the styles of the films, this use of technology can also open an oppositional space in which meaning is left ambiguous and the endorsement of any dominant nationalism can be avoided. By including different media within *Family Viewing*, and highlighting the use of a projective gaze in *Adoration*, both films discuss the conflicts in the creation and repression of migrant identities whilst also creating an ambiguous contact zone which fails to offer solutions to these problems. The films both depict key conflicts within them, and their Accented style generates oppositional spaces in terms of cinematic form. By undermining the dominant position of cinematic narrative these films create a counter-hegemonic position in which meaning and truth, both inside and outside the family, is open to debate, conflict and competition.

Identity, History and Cinema: *Calendar* and *Ararat*

This relationship between Egoyan's reflexive style and issues of nation is addressed directly in the two films in which his cultural identity is most overtly depicted, *Calendar* and *Ararat*. Both of these texts appear to be the most autobiographical in Egoyan's work; they deal with visual artists' attempts to chronicle and discuss Armenia. This produces some interesting results. *Calendar* illustrates the difficult issues of identity that diaspora raises, while *Ararat* highlights much broader cinematic concerns about the representation and use of national history. Accordingly, both films investigate issues of nations and nationalism and, on this occasion, examine Egoyan's specific relationship with his home, host and migrant nations, as well as with cinema itself. Therefore, the extent to which these films can be seen to undermine and subvert the dominant nationalisms is clearly relevant here.

Although 'Armenian identity and cultural heritage figure as an enigmatic blank, a hazily defined Other' (Romney, 2003, p.96) in many Egoyan films, it is never in clearer evidence than in *Calendar*. Egoyan himself plays a Photographer of hyphenated identity who is commissioned to return to Armenia, his home nation, to photograph churches for a calendar. His wife, the Translator (played by Egoyan's real-life wife Arsinee Khanjian, also of Armenian descent), accompanies him to act as interpreter. Shown in flashback through a collection of images from both the Photographer's still and video cameras, the trip sees the Translator become increasingly close to the Driver (Ashot Adamyan), who acts as a guide, and in turn, more aware of her ethnic identity. The Photographer, however, does not and, in the present, we learn that the pair has separated and the Translator and Driver have remained in Armenia together. The sequences in the present show the Photographer in the company of numerous escorts who leave to speak on the telephone in (crucially un-subtitled) foreign languages, whilst a number of epistles (letters and phone messages) are left between the Photographer and the Translator, although none are shown as being received.

Although the representation of Soviet Armenia is one of 'ruin' (Hogikyan, 2007, p.204) and isolation in that it is almost entirely lacking in people and shown as a series of old monuments, this is most interesting when considered in relation to the differing responses of the Photographer and Translator to it. The Translator, both through her relationship with the Driver but also her interaction with the monuments being photographed, is shown as a character much more able to accept and adopt a position in the home nation. The Photographer, however, cannot. His disinterest in the culture that surrounds him is most clearly illustrated by his refusal to step in front of the camera. Instead he appears only as a disembodied voice in Armenia. The scenes on his return, however, show the Photographer as a character 'who has been too thoroughly assimilated into North American culture' (Harcourt, 1995, p.11) and is too aware of 'the strangeness of our habit of maintaining one's ancestors' ethnic identities even after being assimilated into a new culture' (Tschofen, 2006,

p.33) to make such an idealised homecoming. Thus, he offers the representation of a character that does not wish for an idealised homecoming, but in fact refuses one in favour of continuing his diasporic identity.

This deliberate displacement is facilitated by a number of factors, the main one of which is language. Whilst in Armenia, the Photographer is continually excluded from communication between the Translator and the Driver because he is unable to speak their language. Whilst this is shown to be one theme through which his relationship with the Translator and his home nation is lost, it is not shown in purely critical terms. When returned to Canada, the Photographer has dinner with a series of paid escorts, all of whom are instructed to leave him and take part in a telephone conversation in an un-subtitled foreign language. This is significant for two primary reasons. Firstly, their 'vocal inflections of 'foreign' sexuality ... give their routines their powerful erotic charge' (Romney, 2003, p.106) and, secondly, the languages spoken (Arabic, Italian, German, Hebrew, Macedonian, Russian, and Hindi) are all 'of countries where Armenians have settled' (Wilson, 2009, p.69). Thus, these sequences suggest a recreation of the Photographer's Armenian experience. Location and landscape is replaced with the emotional and linguistic displacement he encountered, a point which is further emphasised by the fact that it is during these sequences that the Photographer attempts to write to the Translator.

The other factor which contributes to the Photographer's failure to integrate into his home nation is another of Egoyan's recurring themes – technology. This is most obvious during the Armenian scenes, where the Photographer never appears and remains firmly trapped behind his camera. He is thus unable to fully interact with, and touch, his new environment. This is personified by the photography commission itself, through which the Photographer must replace 'experience with cliché-images' (Nelson, 2005, p.137). The impact of

technology, and its link to communication, can be further seen in the failed epistles which make up the present scenes in *Calendar*. The Photographer attempts to write several letters, and fails, while the Translator leaves numerous answer phone messages which are never shown to be received and filled with static and distortion. Thus, 'all two-way communications are doomed in this film' (Naficy, 2001, p.139) and the epistolary mechanisms which replace them fail to bridge the gap between the Photographer and the Translator, Canada and Armenia, and home, host and migrant identities. Thus, the Photographer becomes a figure who rejects, and is displaced from (through language and technology), his home nation. He instead adopts a deliberately displaced position between the home and host nations, even though epistolary technology there fails him, and reduces the possibility of communication with either group. That Egoyan casts himself in this role invites comparisons with his own Accented style, and treatment of Armenia in films such as *Ararat*.

The narrative of *Ararat*, however, is much more layered. It focuses on numerous storylines, the main one being the production of a movie (some sequences of which appear in the film) by an aging director, Edward Sorayan (Charles Aznavour), about the Armenian genocide. Meanwhile, Ani (Arsinee Khanjian), an expert on the life and works of Armenian artist Arshile Gorky (Simon Abkarian), is hired as a consultant on the film. Her stepdaughter, Celia (Marie-Josée Croze), blames Ani for the death / potential suicide of her father and regularly appears to challenge her lectures. Celia, meanwhile, is engaged in a sexual relationship with her stepbrother, Raffi (David Alpay). As production of the movie continues, Ani voices concerns over the movie's historical accuracy, while Raffi, who works as an assistant on set, becomes interested in Armenia's politics and his late father's attempts to murder a Turkish diplomat. When Celia's rage leads her to attempt to deface Gorky's *The Artist and His Mother*, Raffi flees to Armenia. On his return, he is confronted by a border guard, David (Christopher Plummer), who believes the film cans he is carrying contain drugs. Raffi

doesn't know, as he was given the cans in return for being granted access to Mount Ararat, and on hearing his story David chooses to let him go without checking the contents.

Ararat displays an overt concern with the concept of postmemory. Hirsch argues that 'descendants of survivors (of victims as well as of perpetrators) of massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation's remembrances of the past that they need to call that connection memory' (pp.105-106, 2008). Characters in *Ararat* regularly discuss these concepts in relation to the Armenian genocide. Their attachments to past events through art (particularly that of Gorky) and culture, appear to define their identity even though they never directly experienced them. As Hirsch also argues, photography is the most appropriate medium for postmemory due to the 'belief in reference it engenders' and its 'promise to offer an access to the event itself, and its easy assumption of iconic and symbolic power' (p.107, 2008). Thus, *Ararat's* inclusion of the making of a film on the subject (rather than being simply a film on the subject of the genocide) raises intriguingly reflexive and post-nationalist questions, particularly the extent to which cinema can be an appropriate medium to communicate the themes of postmemory and convey the story of the Armenian genocide effectively and truthfully.

The first key aspect of *Ararat's* historical representations is the fact that it simultaneously contains and rejects the traditional cinematic treatment of genocide in both including Saroyan's *Ararat*, and refusing to be it. This film-within-a-film recalls many of the contemporary genocide films which critics seemed to desire and were disappointed not to receive, such as *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Pianist* (2002) (Romney, 2003, p.171). Egoyan's *Ararat*, however, suggests a tension between cinema and the ethical reconstruction of these issues. Saroyan and screenwriter Rouben (Eric Bogosian) regularly look to change and manipulate history, much to the annoyance of consultant Ani even

though she agrees as it will increase awareness of Gorky's work. However, paradoxically, Egoyan himself still includes scenes from Saroyan's film, suggesting that he is also reliant on it for some of his own film's 'didactic content' (Markovitz, 2007, p.237). This conflict is most clearly seen when Ani interrupts filming to complain about historical inaccuracies, only for Martin (Bruce Greenwood), playing Clarence Ussher and mid-scene, to condemn her by listing the atrocities experienced by the characters around him and asking "Who the fuck are you?" His attack carries great rhetorical power, but the lines still come from an actor within the film, and not Ussher, suggesting 'self-righteous film-star narcissism' (Romney, 2003, p.176). Thus, the film subverts narrative cinema's treatment of such traumatic subjects. Although Saroyan's film is still present, we are constantly made aware of such films' many emotional and historical manipulations.

This refusal to cinematically adapt historical events is given additional nationalist weight when considered within the context of the characters making the film. Many are of Armenian descent, and bring with them personal histories which require negotiation, just as the film does. This is most clearly exemplified by the relationship between Celia and Ani, and their debates on the work of Arshile Gorky. Gorky's *The Artist and His Mother* becomes the 'key historic object' (Siraganian, 2007, p.142) of the film in that the debates surrounding it echo those of the representations of genocide found elsewhere. Celia believes Ani's book on the painting and artist, and her interpretation of the work itself, are an apology for forcing the suicide of her father, a claim Ani rejects. When the pair clash on the subject, Ani states she refuses to remember it that way as she doesn't "need to". Thus, we again see the difficulties in the interpretation of art when given greater significance, and the stories the characters need to tell themselves to retain their identities. Celia's need to believe that Ani forced her father to commit suicide is shown as similar to Saroyan's need to depict the genocide in a certain way. That Egoyan's film refuses to do so and foregrounds such debates further emphasises the difficulty in representing historical events in narrative cinema.

However, a crucial character who is often overlooked in discussions of the film is David, the border agent who questions Raffi on his return from Turkey. Not only is he one of the few examples of figures from the dominant Canadian nationalism in the film, in that he is male, with no connections to Armenia or Turkey, and a genuine representative of the state in his role as a border guard, but he is also originally represented as a conservative figure (he uses his religious beliefs to criticise his son's homosexual partner in an early scene). Thus, his exchanges with Raffi are one of the few examples of characters not being bound by their postmemory. That he both listens to and then frees Raffi is crucial; he refuses to look at or show the film, but instead makes his judgement on the story he is told and what Raffi believes himself to be. Thus, it is one of the few judgements in the film that is not mediated by the images being recorded or the manipulations of those who produce them. That such a sympathetic position is taken by a figure of the dominant nationalism is one of the few unmediated endorsements of any form of nationalism within the film.

Therefore, although the themes of trauma run throughout Egoyan's work, particularly in *Ararat*, his Accented style suggests that cinema may not be the most ideal medium for postmemory. Unlike photography, both Saroyan's and Egoyan's *Ararat* shows cinema's inability to carry the same 'belief in reference' (Hirsch, 2008, p.107) when dealing with images of genocide. They are both constructions, and Egoyan's reflexive style (never more in evidence than this text's film-within-a-film structure) is perfectly placed to outline this and highlight the artifices of other texts which fail to do the same. That it fails to be a documentation of events suggests the impossibility of cinematic documentation, and instead privileges texts which enter into a discursive and displaced position in relation to them. Thus, although not always evident throughout his body of work, when national issues do

appear, it is possible to see how Egoyan's style can be used not to reaffirm postmemory, but to help investigate it.

Thus, just as the Photographer's commission failed to capture the ethnic identity available to him in Armenia by focusing on image-cliché in *Calendar*, *Ararat* illustrates Saroyan's (and Egoyan's) inability to capture the Armenian genocide within the language of cinema. Rather than completely exploit and manipulate the tragic events, and therefore somehow become complicit with them (Romney, 2003, p.181) from the other side of the camera, Egoyan is able to adopt a displaced and oppositional position. Thus, it could be suggested that he places himself within *Ararat* in the same location that the Photographer finds himself in within *Calendar*. His film is able to capture the stories of the film (as it does the mediated stories of the Driver) but it cannot place them on screen. That it is dependent on at least elements of Saroyan's film is the same as the landscapes required for the calendar in *Calendar* – they are clichés, but the reason for the project. The emotional distance of this position allows the director to sit outside of the dominant nationalism, illustrated here through both the Translator's response to Armenia itself, and Saroyan's historical film. Thus, both the content of the films and their cinematic form remains oppositional, although in these texts their personal significance begins to hint at the distance being at least partially closed.

Therefore, to conclude, although it would be wrong to ascribe too much biographical significance to these texts, *Calendar* and *Ararat* offer the possibility of Egoyan placing himself in the displaced position of exile and then using this position to deconstruct cinematic representations of history. Within *Calendar*, he highlights the difficulties of migrant identity and, when mediated by a camera, the desire to remain part of migrant culture at the expense of the home and host nations. Within *Ararat*, the film-within-a-film structure goes further than the story-telling of *Harem suare* in distancing the text from history. It creates a text which

steadfastly refuses to endorse nationalism, whilst both acknowledging its importance to figures of hyphenated identity and the importance of postmemory when dealing with issues of genocide. Thus, although the content of these texts have become more personal, Egoyan is able to maintain his reflexive style and subvert and deconstruct both the representations of the text and their cinematic treatment. By applying this style to overt representations of nations on screen makes it a clear illustration of the oppositional spaces possible in cinema.

Opposing the Gaze: *Next of Kin* and *Felicia's Journey*

While the issues of technology and trauma open intriguing oppositional spaces within and between texts, another two films in the director's body of work contain contact zones of nations which recall key aspects of film theory. These films are *Next of Kin*, which focuses on figures of Armenian and Canadian identity, and *Felicia's Journey*, which features an Irish character searching for her lover in England. These narratives raise interesting questions of identity and border crossing, and intriguingly highlight some peculiarly cinematic themes in that both films contain moments in which key characters return the camera's, and thus also the viewers', gaze. Thus, whilst considering the social and political representations of these migrant figures, we must again also consider them in relation to this moment of Egoyan's reflexive style.

Next of Kin focuses on Peter Foster (Patrick Tierney), a WASP, middle-class male living in Canada. Unfulfilled and living at home in a state of preserved adolescence, he is taken by his parents to family therapy. Uncommunicative and dominated by his mother (Margaret Loveys), he appears more interested in the video technology which is recording the session. He returns to the clinic later and poses as a doctor to retrieve other therapy tapes, including that of a migrant family, the Deryans, undergoing similar therapy. This family unit contains a

great deal of tension, between father George (Berj Fazalian) and daughter Azah (Arsinee Khanjian), and longing for their son Bedros, who has been adopted. Peter decides to pose as Bedros and enter the Deryan family as part of his therapy, recording his thoughts via tape recorder (which are then used in voice over). He is immediately accepted, and begins helping to reconcile their differences. He eventually joins the family business with his “father”, and develops a close relationship with his new “sister”. Although his original plan is to return to his real family, he is persuaded to stay with the Deryans, and instead submits the recording of his thoughts to the Foster’s therapy sessions in his place.

The key aspect of this film is Peter’s doubling as Bedros. Both his willingness to adopt a migrant identity, and the Deryans’ acceptance of it despite little supporting evidence, highlights that ‘ethnicity is a cultural construct, a performance’ (Stolar, 2007, p.178). By using the doubling of Peter / Bedros, and thus the doubling of migrant identity, *Next of Kin* draws ‘attention to the ongoing dialogue between the two parts that leads to their inevitable intertwining’ (Stolar, 2007, p.191). Although this obviously has connotations for the representations of the home, host and migrant communities, its acceptance and the resultant resolution of conflict shows the ability of the therapeutic relationship (and its manipulation through the recordings) to translate ‘the raw, painful, and chaotic material of life into legible representation’ (Tschofen, 2002, p.169). Thus, even though we are aware (and possibly the Deryans too) that Bedros’ identity is a purely performed one, it is shown to be acceptable and beneficial to both the family and the individual. The latter is most clearly illustrated by the scenes in which Peter mimes playing the guitar to drown out the arguments of his parents, while later Bedros is shown actually playing the guitar for the gathered Deryans.

The most negative representations of the film are those of the WASP community to which Peter belongs. In the therapy sequences, Peter is shown to be dominated by his mother,

who regularly answers questions on his behalf yet criticises his lack of ambition and motivation. This 'stifling inheritance of the Angloceltic middle classes' (Harcourt, 1995, p.4) is clearly illustrated in the two birthday sequences Peter / Bedros experiences. Within the WASP household this is a cold affair with just his parents in attendance, while the Deryans include a large and joyous collection of friends and extended family. Even Peter's motivations do not escape such a negative representation, as although he hopes to therapeutically assist his new family, his doubling also 'chimes with a western middle-class fantasy of ethnic authenticity' (Romney, 2003, p.26). As a result, *Next of Kin* remains steadfastly opposed to the dominant nationalism of the Western middle-classes. Not only is their cold representation shown as the motivating factor for Peter's change in identity, but even his therapeutic attempts to assist the family are actually those of patronising bourgeois fantasy.

The representation of migrant culture, however, is more complicated. In one sense, the familial relations of the Deryans, complete with their 'emotive warmth, anger, and exuberant acting style' (Wilson, 2009, p.17), are clearly illustrated as a more attractive option than the Fosters. However, the migrant family are never defined in a culturally specific way, and the use of decor, music, accent and performance only gives them 'a generic foreignness, a quality the non-Armenian viewer, like Peter, might find 'exotic'' (Romney, 2003, p.27). This representation is not overtly depicted as an oppositional one, particularly through the film's use of gender. Much is made of the tension between George and Azah, in which the strong patriarch is restricting the freedom of his more Western daughter. Although Bedros challenges him on his misogyny whilst the pair watch an exotic dancer, a series of pranks (in which the family stage a robbery as an April fool, only for George to have / fake a heart attack in reply) illustrates the fact that 'the patriarch has won the upper hand' (Romney, 2003, p.35). Thus, although there is potential resolution in the new family that Bedros

creates, that he and Azah must continue to pretend to be the perfect children to satisfy their patriarchal father suggests an unsatisfactory conclusion to the conflicts of the text.

Felicia's Journey, however, is not a film which deals so openly with issues of migration and identity. It follows a young Irish girl, Felicia (Elaine Cassidy), who has been made pregnant by her lover, Johnny (Peter McDonald). When Johnny joins the British army, and her fiercely republican father (Gerard McSorley) disowns her, Felicia travels to Birmingham to find him. Whilst there, she meets Mr. Hilditch (Bob Hoskins) a catering manager and the former child star of his mother's (Arsinee Khanjian) cookery show. Hilditch at first assists Felicia's search, but is in fact a suspicious character (he fashions a false story about a dying wife and records Felicia from his car). He begins to hinder her search by giving her false information and stealing her money, and eventually persuades Felicia to have an abortion and remain in his care. He drugs her and admits to a desire to murder her, as he has the other girls he has recorded (who we have been seen through a series of mediated flashbacks). However, whilst preparing for the murder, Hilditch is visited by a religious group and begins to break down and confess his crimes. As Felicia attempts to escape, he frees her and commits suicide. Later, we see Felicia now fully integrated into her new community and working in a park, planting flowers.

Again, *Felicia's Journey* contains interesting representations of both home and host nations. Whilst it is true that shifting the focus of the text from the post-colonial comedy of manners of the novel to a study of a potential killer in the film partially reduces its nationalistic significance (St. Peter, 2002), the appearance of Ireland in the text is still striking. It is idealised both visually and orally through the use of landscape, tradition and music (Wilson, 2009), yet the harshly unforgiving political stance of Felicia's father is clearly dogmatic and shown pejoratively in that it drives Felicia from her home. Thus, the Ireland of the text is not

one which offers an idealised homecoming to Felicia. Instead, it is the source of trauma (McIlroy, 2004), both the location of Felicia's abandonment by Johnny and the political landscape of her father which expels her.

The host nation, however, is even more negatively represented. In terms of its visual representation, England is as unforgiving as the politics of Felicia's father. The photography of Birmingham gives it 'a bleak, Antonioni-esque vastness' as the landscape is filled with 'anonymous suburbs ... gas towers, chimneys and vast machinery-filled factory yards' (Romney, 2003, p.146). The score also changes, from the lush, traditional oral tones of Ireland to the staccato, almost industrial noises of Mychael Danna's score. Felicia's experience of England is also a completely transient one (McIlroy, 2004) – she stays in bread and breakfasts and with a religious group before she is finally accepted by Hilditch. The killer, meanwhile, is himself also a 'popular stereotype of the English murderer, a suburban fustpot obsessed with respectability and his dead mother' (Romney, 2003, p.144-145). The result of which is a representation of Birmingham which is both filled with a grim, industrial landscape that towers over Felicia, now a lost, transient figure of exile, and the home to a form of national monster in Mr. Hilditch's peculiarly English killer.

This brings us to the sequences in both films where main characters return the camera's gaze. In *Next of Kin*, this occurs when Bedros is comforted by his new mother, Sonja (Sirvart Fazlian), and his eyes turn to the camera when they embrace. On one level, the fact that 'the audience knows both Sonja's sincerity and Peter's pretence' highlights 'the constructedness of his relationship with her and the voyeuristic relationship of the audience with the film' (Naficy, 2001, p.264). This emphasises the doubling of Peter's actions, and deliberately undermines the resolutions of the family narrative, all the while making us, the audience, complicit in the deception. However, it also echoes with one of the themes of the

narrative, family therapy and the recording of events. Peter's action, to stare at the camera, occurs throughout the opening sequences when he is in therapy within the film. Thus, by repeating this return of the camera's gaze, Peter is highlighting the therapeutic nature of his involvement in a reflexive way. Again, this makes us, the viewers, complicit as the analysts provoking and reflecting upon the role play of the film. Therefore, the returned gaze in *Next of Kin* can be seen as both a reflexive moment which further illustrates the constructed nature of ethnic identity and its implications, but also a challenge to the audience to become the therapists of the text itself.

The use of the gaze in *Felicia's Journey*, however, brings with it a different form of discursive debate. The text itself is a psychological thriller / serial killer movie, and within film criticism this gaze is mostly likely to be read within the context of psychoanalytical theory. A key aspect of Mulvey's (1975) work on this subject focuses on gendered spectatorship in which the 'determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly', a point which clearly echoes Hilditch's recordings of the "lost girls" who he claims to have killed. *Felicia's Journey* also recalls aspects of psychoanalytic film theory through its dissections of Hilditch's psychology (particularly his relationship with his mother) as the reason why he kills, thus allowing us to 'identify with the monster's point of view, and even to sympathize with the childhood traumas which produced his deranged behaviour' (Williams, 1984, p.90) and create 'narcissistic identification' (Modleski, 1986, p.161). This theoretical background moves Hilditch's gaze from the area of ethnic identity and therapy found in *Next of Kin*, into cinematic notions of voyeurism and spectatorship found in genre cinema.

Within this context, Hilditch's return of the camera's gaze is particularly striking. Here, in a scene which deliberately recalls (yet differs from) another potential serial killer film,

Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941) (Romney, 1999), Hilditch prepares cocoa for Felicia, clearly adds drugs, and climbs the stairs whilst carrying it on a tray. He then momentarily pauses, and stares directly at the camera. Although this recalls Hitchcock's film, in which Lina (Joan Fontaine) suspects husband Johnnie (Cary Grant) of being a murderer as he brings a possibly drugged glass of milk to her, it differs greatly. Johnnie's face remains hidden in shadow throughout, reflecting Lina's and the audience's suspicion of her husband. Here, we know Hilditch has drugged the drink, and his returning of the gaze is therefore more reflexive and more monstrous. Again, it implies the audience's complicit nature in the crime and psychological thriller cinema in general, yet challenges both our voyeuristic desire and fetishistic scopophilia (Mulvey, 1975) as spectators of film. Hilditch is clearly identifying and challenging us as spectators. As such, Peter's crime is diminished as, despite his dubious motivations, he is there at least in the pretence of therapy. Hilditch, and the viewer, are there as spectators of trauma.

This moment resonates throughout *Felicia's Journey* as a whole in that Hilditch's challenging gaze acts as a reflexive moment that undermines the dominant narrative structure. As such, he (the monster) collapses, confesses his crime to Felicia, and the religious group who visit his house (who promise the justice of the "Father-Lord"), before suffering a breakdown, freeing the prisoner and committing suicide. The returned gaze has, therefore, displayed a feminisation of the monster and the narrative as a whole. The formerly restrained and contained Hilditch, previously an exploiter of his "lost girls" and, as a respectable catering manager, a figure able to reassert the lost patriarchal power of his childhood over the women in his employ (both through food) (St. Peter, 2002), returns to the child-like figure which appears in flashback. Felicia is therefore given the power of the narrative in Hilditch's stead, as illustrated by her closing epistolary voiceover, as the film concludes with her narration of a letter to Johnny's mother. As such, the fathers and patriarchal figures of the narrative, notably Felicia's father, Johnny, and Hilditch himself, are left completely absent

and the final exchanges are left by and about women (the heroine in the international space, and the restrictive mother left behind in comfortable domestic space). Felicia is free to move on from her transient state of exile, as we finally see her working in a park (literally putting down roots as she plants flowers), directing passersby and returning a lost toy to a child.

Next of Kin and *Felicia's Journey* illustrate the relationship between Atom Egoyan's films and post-nationalist theory. They both contain images of exile and migration in which neither the imagined communities of home or host nation are endorsed. Also, his recurring themes of identity as performance and trauma illustrate intriguing aspects of nationalism. Ethnic identity is performed and therefore open to the power dynamics of any form of interpretation, whilst nationalism itself exiles figures who do not concur with this position. This relates closely to the reflexive moments in the films in which the camera's gaze is returned. In *Next of Kin*, this moment highlights the construction of identity and ethnicity, whilst also making the viewer complicit with and part of its role-playing nature. In *Felicia's Journey*, this moment evokes cinematic notions of the gaze and undermines the patriarchal structures they address in favour of a more feminised narrative. Such reflexive moments not only shatter the reality of the texts, but provide oppositions to traditional constructions of ethnic and gender identity in cinema.

Trauma and Oppositional Spaces in Domestic Cinema: *Speaking Parts*, *Exotica*, *The Adjuster* and *The Sweet Hereafter*

While the reflexivity and complexity of the films of Atom Egoyan can create oppositional post-nationalist spaces when his texts depict contact zones between nations, its presence when such themes are absent is more problematic. Here, the ambiguity created by such structures can still be related to these issues, but also invite a number of other

interpretations. As a result, as discussed in relation to the non-official nationalisms of Ferzan Ozpetek, the danger here is to re-mask issues as national when this is not the intention. Thus, although both *Where the Truth Lies* (2005) (which again evokes aspects of Hitchcock's cinema) and *Chloe* (2009) (which is both a hegemonic cross-border remake and not written by Egoyan, but still contains the monstrous return of the gaze) contain interesting elements, the undermining of desire in *Speaking Parts* (1989) and *Exotica* (1994) and the use of trauma in *The Adjuster* (1991) and *The Sweet Hereafter* (1997) will be considered to show the relevance and limitations of post-nationalist theory to an understanding of the remainder of the director's work.

Speaking Parts and *Exotica* both contain unusual uses of cinematic desire. The former follows struggling actor Lance (Michael McManus), who works in hotel housekeeping as a front for his real job as a gigolo for guests. Fellow housekeeper Lisa (Arsinee Khanjian) is obsessed with him and the movies in which he features as an extra; she rents them just to watch his individual scenes. When Lance is cast in a film detailing a lung transplant due to his likeness to the screenwriter's, Clara (Gabrielle Rose), brother, the film's images become increasingly unstable. Lance's story becomes interchangeable with the images of the film, recordings of Clara's late brother and Lisa's hallucinations of her love. *Exotica*, meanwhile, offers a much more reliable narrative, at least at first glance. It follows the employees and patrons of the Exotica strip club, notably emcee Eric (Elias Koteas), dancer Christina (Mia Kirshner) and patron Francis (Bruce Greenwood). Christina performs a regular dance dressed as a schoolgirl for Francis, who is grieving for his murdered daughter (who was dressed as Christina is during her performances) while paying his niece Tracey (Sarah Polley) to babysit in an empty house whilst at the strip club. There is tension between Eric and Francis, leading to the latter being ejected from the club, yet violence is averted when it is revealed that it was Eric who discovered his daughter's body. The film ends in flashback in which Francis, before his daughter's death, drives a young Christina home after she

babysits for him. The possibility of abuse is raised, but Christina silently enters the family home.

Representations of desire are opposed within *Speaking Parts* in two main ways – technology and the family. The former runs throughout much of the director's work and here the sexual relationships between Lance, Lisa and Clara are all dependent on video and videoconferencing to sustain them, meaning 'sex can only be seen with technological support, as a recorded imagine' (Wilson, 2009, p.41). The latter is much more unusual as the characters who make up a form of love triangle at the film's centre are all similar 'in multiple ways: in the similarities of their names, bodily resemblance, the lung transplant and their relations with one another, including a strong suggestion of incest' (Naficy, 2001, p.252). Thus, the desire on screen takes the form of 'extensive mirroring' (Romney, 2003, p.64) in which motivations are never defined for the audience. Both sex and the family are opposed within the film, as the physical similarity between characters on screen not only suggests a link between them, but also extends to Clara's late brother. Desire is not shown as part of the film's spectacle, but something which suggests further complication and trauma between its protagonists.

The setting of *Exotica*, meanwhile, would also suggest a cinematic representation of desire. The film's title, and that of the name and decor of the strip club, recalls the sexualised environment and Orientalism of *Hamam* and *Harem suare*. As with *Speaking Parts*, however, this is again undermined and, instead, has been described as 'frankly transgressive – paedophilic' (Beard, 2006, p.198) and 'a form of therapy for the characters, who are all driven by some sort of psychological torment' (Russell, 2002, p.325). This is again tied to notions of the family (both the unusual nuclear family of the club and the seemingly normal families that Francis looks to restore) and the cinematic gaze. Touch,

when committed by the wrong figures, acts as crossing the 'boundary from the desiring gaze into child abuse and even murder' (Gruben, 2007, p.261). Thus, desire within the Exotica club is undermined and opposed by the tension between 'seeing-to-control versus seeing-to-touch' (Gruben, 2007, p.250), or between voyeurism (the desire to see and control the forbidden world) and fetishistic scopophilia (the desire to obtain sexual stimulation from, but remain separate to, the visual source) in cinematic looking (Mulvey, 1975; Mulvey, 1989).

In both instances, however, this repression and subversion of desire springs from a vision of an idealised past which has been lost through a traumatic event. In *Speaking Parts* this comes from the loss of Clara's brother and is again mediated by technology. Not only does an idealised vision of her brother appear on screen through her frequent use of video memories of the figure, but it is being recreated again in the film in which Lance stars. *Exotica* is, meanwhile, interspersed with one unreliable flashback which could be the projection of any number of characters – that of the discovery of Francis' daughter. Although this regularly appears to originate from Francis' perspective, it heavily features the beginning of a courtship between Eric and Christina. What is noticeable here is that, despite its morbid source in the search for the body of a murdered child, the green, lush and light landscape appears as an idyllic contrast to the club. Also, the burgeoning relationship it portrays is portrayed as a much simpler introduction than the complicated and unusual positions found between the same characters in the Exotica club. Thus, in both films the origin of the oppositions on screen derives from an idealised vision of history and the trauma which destroyed it, leaving the characters unable to fulfil their desires or function as a family.

Trauma plays a much more explicitly prominent role in Egoyan's *The Adjuster* and *The Sweet Hereafter*. The former follows insurance claims man, Noah (Elias Koteas), who supports people following the traumatic experience of losing their homes in fires by detailing

their possessions and reclaiming their value. He lives in a large show home with what we presume to be his son Simon (Armen Kokorian), wife Hera (Arsinee Khanjian) and her sister Seta (Rose Sarkisyan). However, not everything is not as it seems. Noah's family life is cold and unemotional, he is engaged in several sexual relationships with his clients and even his show home is revealed to be only that, as it is an advertisement for the empty development which in it sits complete with fake books on the shelves. The trauma of *The Sweet Hereafter*, however, is not only more fixed but more arresting – the death of almost all the children of a small town in one bus crash. The film follows Mitchell Stephens (Ian Holm), a lawyer hoping to organise a lawsuit against the school board, town or bus manufacturers following the crash. However, his investigations of the town are not concerned with the cause of the accident but adjusting and maximising the grief of the families to improve the financial weight of the case. He recruits Nicole (Sarah Polley), the sole survivor of the crash, as a witness. However, she changes her story to place blame on the bus driver, Dolores (Gabrielle Rose), thus ruining the case.

As the titular figure of *The Adjuster*, Noah has a key role to play in readings of the film as a symbol of its oppositions. On one hand, he is caring and sympathetic to the victims of the fires he investigates, yet on the other he is cold and distant to his own (ethnic) family, unable to provide them with anything other than a shell of a home. His family's rejection of him in the final scenes, therefore, signifies that he 'recasts his fatherly ministrations into formulas of compassion and then into money' (Beard, 2007a, p.55) for his clients, but ultimately fails as a true father. His decision to accept the offer of Bubba (Maury Chaykin) and Mimi (Gabrielle Rose) to film a movie in his house, and thus displace his family, further emphasises this depiction of a figure divorced from genuine emotion. When faced with both the destruction of his home, and the loss of his family, Noah holds his hand to the warmth of the fire. This sense memory (particularly that of touch) is what provokes the final memory, in which we

see Noah claim Hera, Seta and Simon as his own family during their fire by reaching out to touch them.

Similar oppositions – between a hegemonic father and a family as a figure of otherness – are personified by the tension between Stephens and Nicole in *The Sweet Hereafter*.

Nicole's decision to change her story undermines both her own father (who has been abusing her) and removes her from the victim, child and gender roles Stephens' narrative has created for her and converts her 'girlhood helplessness' into 'childhood power' (Boyd, 2007, p.289). This shift in power also has consequences for the narrative as a whole.

Stephens' lawsuit is designed to reinforce 'the ideology of patriarchy and their construction of narratives which serve male subjectivity, narratives of rescue and control which they assume to be natural, the truth' (Weese, 2002, pg.71). Nicole's rejection of this, therefore, is not only an 'alternative, female narrative' but one which 'provides an alternative to and critique of the classical Hollywood narrative' (Weese, 2002, pg.71). This point is emphasised when Nicole is given the film's final voice over not to recount her information to Stephens' investigation as was the case in previous narration, but to comment on his life after the trial and, thus, grant her narrative power. Therefore, Nicole's act of defiance both undermines the exploitation of Stephens and her father within the film, and shifts narrative power from a dominant patriarchal role to a self-empowered feminine figure.

The Adjuster and *The Sweet Hereafter* both represent communities damaged by trauma, and the male figures of law and patriarchy that attempt to control and exploit them. Within the texts, this position is rejected by the other figures, leaving these patriarchs isolated, powerless and unable to fulfil the roles of their professions. Again, however, Egoyan's style allows this opposition to take place within the form and structure of the films themselves, alongside their on screen representations. The power within these communities and

domestic spaces is tied to the overall power of the narrative, and the failure of these male figures to investigate the truth and control the family narratives of the films results in the shift of narrative control to more ambiguous and feminised areas. In *The Sweet Hereafter*, Nicole overtly takes this control from Stephens during the lawsuit to ruin his and her fathers' attempts to enter events into law, while Noah is gradually stripped of his 'angelic role' within his profession (Harcourt, 1995, p.9) by his created family as *The Adjuster* gradually strips away the facade of his own home. This represents not just a challenge to patriarchy and the law in the texts, but a challenge to conventional narrative structure outside them.

Thus, even when not overtly dealing with the relationship between nations, the films of Atom Egoyan still create oppositions which undermine many of the hegemonic structures of society and the form of cinema – such as the significance of patriarchy in the family and society, and the reliability and control of cinematic narration. However, such is the complexity and ambiguity of such representations it is difficult to ascribe too much post-nationalist significance to them without risking re-masking other possible debates. Therefore, although trauma runs throughout the director's work and impacts on his Accented style, this does not make the traumas of each film necessarily tied to those overtly contained within *Aarat*, and the director's own biography. Their presence here, however, does reinforce their significance in the director's overtly national work, and further illustrates the way in which his complexity, reflexivity and ambiguity can create a variety of oppositions in the style, form, structure and content of his films.

Conclusion: Identifying Post-nationalist Issues within Oppositional Spaces in the films of Atom Egoyan

Atom Egoyan is a filmmaker who both advances and complicates debates about post-nationalist theory and cinema. As with the films of Akin and Ozpetek, Egoyan's hyphenated identity does appear to create an overt interest in migrant figures, border crossings and the contact zones between and within nations. However, his reflexive style also displays a particular concern with technology, cinematic Accent and narrative cinema, allowing him to tie political and social concerns of migration to specific concepts of cinematic form. Thus, whilst themes found in the work of Fatih Akin and Ferzan Ozpetek are of clear relevance here, their stylistic representations are of equal importance. However, this should not be discussed in isolation, as both the nationalist content and representation of the films should be used to further illustrate and understand this reflexivity, and vice versa. That these concerns recur throughout Egoyan's work, and that they often appear in such an ambiguous manner, makes discussion of his films increasingly challenging, and useful.

Oppositional spaces are most evident in Egoyan's films through the representations of migrant families and hegemonic patriarchy. Families are shown to be spaces driven by conflict and competition for power, primarily between figures of patriarchy (fathers and grandfathers) and their offspring. The details of this conflict vary, and encompass themes such as technology (in *Family Viewing* and *Adoration*), role play and therapy or identity as performance (in *Next of Kin*) and overt nationalism (in *Felicia's Journey*), but the representatives of patriarchy are often shown in the same light, as oppressive, restricting figures in terms of gender, age and race, often looking to rewrite or erase history to reinforce their beliefs. Equally important are the potential resolutions to these conflicts. Although many are left ambiguous, and those which are resolved are often subject to the ambiguities of Egoyan's reflexive style, there is a suggestion of a matriarchal replacement being available, especially to figures of the migrant community. Thus, within Egoyan's films there remains a clear suggestion of a corruption of the dominant patriarchy, and its opposition from feminised, migrant figures and structures.

This opposition can be extended to another of Egoyan's recurring themes, that being history and ethnic identity. Although this does not appear in a number of the films, when it does its relevance to post-nationalist theory is clear. In the films themselves, ethnic identity is often shown to be a form of negotiation between home and host nations. Rather than occupy a fixed space, figures like Peter / Bedros in *Next of Kin* and the Photographer in *Calendar* are able to choose their own identity. This is not a stable process however, and the concepts which support identity in this sense (language, epistolary technology) are often unable to sustain it without relationships and connections with nations being lost. With this in mind, when Egoyan's films do face issues on a nationalist scale – primarily in *Ararat* – the process becomes even more complicated. A fixed, national position is never shown as being available to individuals, and instead identity goes through a process of negotiations where truth and meaning constantly shift. In fact, the only figure in Egoyan's films where this does not seem to be the case – Felicia's stridently nationalist father in *Felicia's Journey* – is one of the rare instances where meaning is clear in his overtly pejorative representation. Thus, even when national themes and histories appear in the film, Egoyan remains in an oppositional space on the margins. To the individuals in his films, ethnic identity and nations themselves are constantly shifting and to be negotiated.

However, Egoyan's style does not always make these distinctions clear. For example, his concern with technology, which recurs without exception through his work, remains a contradictory presence. To some figures, it is a liberating way of negotiating these processes of identity (particularly for Peter / Bedros in *Next of Kin*), while to others it is the very cause of their isolation (most notably Clara, Lance and Lisa in *Speaking Parts*). Whilst this is often a key in creating the narrative instability in the text, it is not always given a relevance to post-nationalist theory; its presence is universal and ambiguous. It is not

attributed to one group, but accessible to and dominating for all. Within representations of the family, it is used by Van to undermine his patriarchal father in *Family Viewing*, whilst simultaneously part of Mr. Hilditch's patriarchal domination of his "lost girls" in *Felicia's Journey*. Thus, although Egoyan's political and social themes and his directorial style are linked, there are occasions in which the latter remains ambiguous and unattached to post-nationalist readings.

This returns us the concept of masking (Duncan, 2006, p.7). In relation to Ferzan Ozpetek's films, the inclusion of sexuality as a non-official nationalism, particularly where a link between that subject and the issues of nations was not explicit, could be seen as re-masking the issue as national and thus robbing it of its importance. Here, although the same problem arises, Egoyan's cinema creates a different dynamic. The intention of many of these films would appear to be to create ambiguous spaces within and between the imagined communities on screen and their characters. This can take many forms – the reflexivity of the texts, the unstable images of the projective gaze, the undermining of narrative meaning, and so on. Thus, there are instances where these spaces can be appropriately filled with the discourses of nations and nationalism (including post-nationalist theory), yet there are also occasions when these spaces can be taken by other issues, or are specifically designed to remain blank, which in itself can be counter-hegemonic when considering the traditions of cinematic narration. Thus, rather than look to fill these ambiguities with post-nationalist theory in every instance, it is crucial to consider where these debates are most relevant.

Firstly, it is important to consider Egoyan's reflexive style in general. There are many instances in the films where narrative authority is undermined (the unstable images that conclude *Speaking Parts*, the projective gazes of *Adoration* and so on). In some instances, these seem to serve the purpose of deliberately bringing the authority of the image into

question and to create an ambiguous text in which meaning is to be negotiated by the audience. However, particularly when combined with an overt discussion of patriarchy, through figures such as Mr. Hilditch in *Felicia's Journey*, such reflexivity serves the purpose of deliberately opposing the narrative structure of the film. In many instances, this means that narrative power moves away from male figures and into those of the female characters they are exploiting as victims, in this case Felicia, causing the overall serial killer narrative to collapse. This again makes David's role in *Ararat* a key one in that he provides a rare instance of a male figure, and one of the dominant nationalism, who intentionally grants narrative power to a younger figure. This is possibly because in this text narrative power, particularly that of Saroyan's manipulative film-within-a-film of *Ararat*, has already been questioned from within the text itself.

The reflexivity of Egoyan's style often incorporates uses of and oppositions to issues of the gaze. In *Exotica*, the male gaze is not one of sexual desire, but one which is undermined by trauma and grief. Meanwhile, in *Felicia's Journey*, a monster is guilty of returning and challenging the camera and the audience's gaze, which ultimately results in their capitulation. When combined with cinematic depictions of the Armenian genocide, *Ararat's* use of postmemory further assists its oppositions to narrative cinema's treatments of such events. Yet without this context, the texts do not automatically invite readings which include nationalist discourses of postmemory (for example trauma runs throughout Egoyan's work, but it is not always tied to the trauma of the genocide). While it is possible to highlight how representations of history within cinema can be challenged by the film-within-a-film structure of *Ararat*, or how the projective gaze of *Adoration* can be used to undermine and oppose the construction of ethnic identity, such reflexive structures run throughout Egoyan's films. It is only when they are tied to issues of nationalism that they illustrate many of the oppositional spaces relevant to post-nationalist theory found in the director's work.

Therefore, Atom Egoyan is important to an understanding of the relationship between post-nationalist theory and cinema because not only do his films contain oppositional representations, but these often extend to the structure and style of the films themselves. For example, rather than merely opposing the figures of patriarchy within his films, he instead extends this to oppose their attempts to control cinematic narratives. This includes the use of a number of reflexive cinematic forms, particularly the projective gaze, unstable images and the undermining of narrative authority, which can be used to oppose more dominant forms of cinema in the way that non-official nationalisms have done elsewhere in social and political contexts. Again, however, as was the case previously, these should not be re-masked when found outside of the correct national context. Yet, when applied to issues such as the Armenian genocide or migrant homecomings and identity, it enables Egoyan not only to avoid fully endorsing any official nationalism on screen, but also avoid endorsing their cinematic treatments in film. In these instances the displaced space within cinema Egoyan finds between nations and texts clearly becomes oppositional and invites post-nationalist readings.

Chapter Five: Elective Oppositional Space – The Films of Michael Haneke

Introduction: Michael Haneke's Oppositional Style

Discussions of the films of Michael Haneke often fall into two primary debates; those focusing on his status as a contemporary cinema auteur (Koch, 2010) and those outlining the director's philosophical and cinematic use of ambiguity and mind games (Elsaesser, 2009). What is often overlooked, however, is the importance of the director's national background in these issues. Although not regularly discussed within migrant cinema, due to the director's movement for career rather than political or social reasons, Haneke's films often display an overt concern with figures and issues of migration, themes of nationalism and a reflexive style which recalls the oppositional spaces found in Atom Egoyan's work. When placed in this context, debates within post-nationalist theory can be used to better understand Haneke's oppositional style, while discussions of the director's work help illustrate the peculiar relevance of cinema to post-nationalist theory. Therefore, although from a different background to the directors discussed previously, Michael Haneke's films create a number of cinematic oppositions which can be used to oppose and undermine the dominant myths and symbols of the nations to which his work relates.

Born in Germany, Michael Haneke was raised in Austria and had already established a career in theatre and television in both nations before making his first feature film (*Le Cain*, 2003). He made a total of five features in Austria – his self-termed 'glaciation trilogy' (Sharrett, 2006, p.11) (*Der siebente Kontinent* (1989), *Benny's Video* (1992) and *71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls* (1994)), *Das Schloß* (1997) and *Funny Games* (1997) – each of which gained a degree of critical recognition both nationally and internationally. However, at this stage he took the decision to pursue a career in cinema in

France, and has since made five films in the French language - *Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages* (2000), *La Pianiste* (2001) (set in Austria), *Le temps du loup* (2003), *Caché* (2005) and *Amour* (2012). These films further developed the director's international reputation (including multiple, significant successes at the Cannes International Film Festival). However, his two remaining films – a US-set, English language remake of his own *Funny Games*, *Funny Games US* (2007), and a return to Germany in *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte* (2009) – saw the director again follow a career path leading him to different nations.

While Haneke's career differs from those of the other filmmakers discussed here in that his migration is driven by his cinematic career, rather than political or social issues (although both Atom Egoyan and Gurinder Chadha have made films in other nations for similar reasons to a much lesser extent), it is not this quality alone that makes his work significant here. Much more significant is the director's overtly oppositional style, an approach which has led to his work being described as 'in opposition to all the image industries' (Combs, 2002, p.28). This immediately suggests a relationship with post-nationalist theory in that it offers a critical approach which helps to identify, and analyse, the oppositional spaces within and between films. Therefore, while the other filmmakers in this study offer a number of oppositional spaces through their connections with the imagined community of migration between nations, Haneke's work offers a range of films in which these spaces are more prevalent, exaggerated and varied, often existing not just within the texts themselves or in relation to other films and genres but even extending out to challenge the audience.

This point is further emphasised when considering the critical response to Haneke's work. Although never given one specific term, his films are often seen to be consistently oppositional, being described as the 'cinema of disturbance' (Frey, 2003), 'interrogative

texts' (Walker, 2010) and containing 'matter-of-fact depictions of universal alienation' that 'recall the pessimistic philosophy of Theodor W. Adorno' (Vicari, 2006). Equally, they are also seen to regularly include open and ambiguous narratives designed to interrogate, challenge and interact with the audiences involved (Sorfa, 2006). Similarly, his films create oppositional spaces to cinematic styles, genres and structures, much like Atom Egoyan. However, he uses the structures of mind-game films (Elsaesser, 2009) and an absence of music (Walker, 2010) to challenge the dominance of the genres and styles to which his films relate and the audience's reactions when watching them. While in relation to certain films this oppositional style is viewed in terms of their references to colonial guilt (Celik, 2010; Grossvogel, 2007; Pages, 2010; Silverman, 2007), in others they are seen as attempts by Haneke to challenge traditions of cinema, such as generic structures, on ethical grounds (Coulthard, 2011; Le Cain, 2003; Wheatley, 2009).

References to oppositional spaces can also be found in the literature on Haneke's films when examining the representations of the texts. This is most notably the case in the early films, where Haneke was often seen to be interrogating the dominant position of the bourgeoisie (Sorfa, 2006; Sharrett, 2005). However, after the director's move to France and the increased representation of border crossing and figures of a migrant background, critical focus shifted to representations of domestic space (Sorfa, 2006; Cowan, 2008). A number of critics have also focused on the importance of families, particularly fathers (Falkowska, 2010), and gender (Champagne, 2002; Hutchison, 2003; Van Dijk, 2002) within Haneke's films, and how these themes have been used to open up oppositional spaces with the dominant patriarchy. A final area of concern in the literature on Haneke is the director's restrained style and form, in which horrific events often occur off screen (Saxton, 2007; Lebeau, 2009) and long takes evoke a relationship between Haneke's films and the social and political relevance of the realist tradition (Bingham, 2005; Rhodes, 2006).

Despite this, Haneke's films are also often discussed in relation to their complexity which, like the work of Atom Egoyan, makes it difficult to apply consistent readings throughout. Because of their oppositional quality, particularly in relation to the audience, critics often highlight that these films invite the viewer to 'play his [Haneke's] game of cinematic and intellectual charades' (O'Donoghue, 2005) or use the title of one of the director's films to outline the 'Funny Games' (Justice, 2005) he plays to challenge his audience. This means a great deal of discussion in the critical response to the director's work focuses on his style and representations, but offers an uncertainty as to the overall themes which draw these together. However, when placed within the context of post-nationalist theory and migration, such recurrent themes can be found. Although more exaggerated and confrontational, the elements of the director's style outlined in the literature above recall many of the oppositions found in post-nationalist theory, and offer several additional oppositional spaces. This makes an understanding of such aspects of Michael Haneke's work highly relevant for both scholars of the director's films and those of post-nationalist theory.

The following questions will be addressed to illustrate these points. Firstly, Haneke's 'glaciation trilogy' - *Der siebente Kontinent*, *Benny's Video* and *71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls* – will be considered to illustrate the many oppositions the films hold in relation to the dominant nationalism (as shown via representations of the bourgeoisie) and the absence of figures of otherness present in the director's work at this stage. This will be followed by a discussion of how the introduction of otherness in *Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages* impacts on the dominant nationalism, particularly through the use of domestic space. This will also introduce the significance of genre in creating and illustrating these tensions, particularly in relation to the film's long take style and fractal structure. This will be developed further in relation to *Caché*, in which the structure of the

thriller is used to highlight colonial guilt both on screen and within the audience. Particular attention will be paid to recurrent representations of the bourgeois figures of Georges and Anne and their domestic space. *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte* will then be considered to further advance the nationalist implications of the ambiguities of the texts, particularly in relation to issues of historical guilt and representations of the heritage film. As with the films of Atom Egoyan, Haneke's remaining films in which national issues are not as evident (*La Pianiste*, *Le temps du loup*, and *Funny Games* and *Funny Games US*) will then be considered to illustrate how post-nationalist theory can assist an understanding of the director's work as a whole.

Thus, this section will attempt to better understand the complexities and reflexive nature of Michael Haneke's films by placing them within the context of post-nationalist theory and migrant cinema. Although much of the existing literature on this director's work recalls the issues already discussed here, it is surprising that the prevalent themes have not been previously drawn together in relation to issues of nationalism and post-nationalist theory. Equally, the director's creation of oppositional spaces not only within texts, but also between texts and their watching audience, will help better understand how the critical concepts used to discuss these films can advance discussions of post-nationalist theory within cinema and beyond. Therefore, rather than considering the oppositions of Michael Haneke's films in isolation, applying their debates to those already considered in relation to Fatih Akin, Ferzan Ozpetek and Atom Egoyan, will help illustrate their relevance in a broader context of the oppositions to national and transnational cinemas.

Depicting National Isolation: Haneke's Glaciation Trilogy

Michael Haneke's first three feature films – *Der siebente Kontinent*, *Benny's Video* and *71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls* (described by the director as his glaciations trilogy) – provide oppositional representations of Austria (particularly members of its affluent middle classes) which introduce many of the director's key themes and issues. Each focuses on the alienation felt by the families and individuals on screen, often culminating in brutal violence, murder or suicide. While these negative representations (and the styles which are used to depict them) of the nation are relevant to a study of post-nationalist theory in cinema in their own right, they are also a key starting point for an understanding of Haneke's work and its relationship with the host nations he would encounter in France, the US and Germany. Thus, to fully understand those films and their relevance, it is first necessary to consider Haneke's depictions of Austria, their lack of representations of otherness, and the absence of escape in these films.

Der siebente Kontinent is based on the true story of an affluent and comfortable Austrian family whose bodies were found after they destroyed their possessions and committed suicide. Despite the presence of a suicide note, family and neighbours still demanded a police investigation, which remains unresolved. Haneke's film portrays this through a series of fragmented images of the family's everyday life, often excluding shots of father Georg (Dieter Berner), mother Anna (Birgit Doll) and daughter Evi's (Leni Tanzer) faces. This banal repetition of shoelaces being tied, food preparation and car washes is explained in letters to their family but interspersed with suggestions of trauma (the radio alarm brings disturbing world news each morning, Evi pretends to be blind at school, the family passes a car accident which has killed an adult and child). This style remains throughout the final sequences, where the suicide letter is read as narration over scenes of the family's home being dismantled. The film concludes with the suicide of Evi, Anna and then Georg, as the television (now showing only static) is intercut with brief images of the family's previous activity.

Immediately apparent is the extent to which Anna and Georg can be seen as the 'archetypal bourgeois couple' (Sharrett, 2010) – they are white, middle class, both holding successful careers and speak openly in their first letter about being financially secure. Similarly, Evi is not shown to be a problematic child in that, although she feigns blindness and is chastised by her teacher for scratching in class, she is well-mannered throughout (and even shown happily doing her homework at one stage). This archetypal representation establishes them as figures of the dominant nationalism. Their suicide and the film's fragmented form acts as both a criticism of the dominant nationalism and the 'constricting, anti-humane monstrosity of everyday bourgeois society' (Sharrett, 2010) it endorses. Equally, by denying the audience 'the image of the face' (Lebeau, 2009, p.39) and focusing instead on body parts and their interactions with machines, the film refuses to attempt an emotional explanation for the suicide. Instead, we are left with the alienating distance of bourgeois life as the cause of the traumatic events of the film's conclusion.

Intriguingly for post-nationalist theory, *Der siebente Kontinent* excludes figures of otherness for its protagonists to enter into a contact zone with. The family are almost entirely denied contact with other humans, with the exception of Anna's brother, Alexander (Udo Samel), whose visible grief and emotion at the death of his mother seems unsettling for them. This point is emphasised by the frequent use of letters throughout the film which, rather than recall the epistolarity found in migrant cinema (Naficy, 2001), highlight the lack of contact available to the family in that we see or hear them being written, but never see or hear them being received by the recipient. The possibility of escape is parodied in terms of national representation via the advertisements for Australia which are regularly shown on the side of the carwash the family frequent. These provide a regular insert throughout the film, becoming an unreal landscape which appears, dream-like, as the suicide approaches,

suggesting both the impossibility of actual escape and the inevitability of the death this brings to the family.

Benny's Video, meanwhile, focuses on a similarly affluent Austrian family, again headed by father Georg (Ulrich Mühe) and mother Anna (Angela Winkler), with their daughter Evi (Ingrid Stassner). However, the protagonist is teenage son, Benny (Arno Frisch), who is obsessed with the medium of video, including those of his own making (his favourite is the slaughter of a pig he recorded whilst at a farm with his parents). Left to care for himself when his parents are away, Benny befriends a young girl, known only as Mädchen (Ingrid Stassner), and invites her home. After showing her the pig video, Benny kills her with the same stun gun seen on screen and records the act (although the violence remains off screen). When his parents return, and Benny's crime is discovered, they decide to cover the murder up (fearing accusations of their own neglect) and his father sends the boy on a holiday to Egypt with his mother. On returning, Benny finds that the body has been disposed of and decides to confess to the police, implicating his father and mother in the process.

The most striking aspect of *Benny's Video*, and one which recalls the films of Atom Egoyan, is the introduction of video. Not only does Benny use it to immerse and desensitise himself (through his own violent videos, American horror / action films and atrocities being reported on the news), the tapes and cameras literally encase and reinforce the walls of his room (Frey, 2003). As such, he becomes an "anonymous user", watching a filtered "virtual reality" without being seen himself' (Frey, 2002, p.5). Not only does he not directly confess his murder to his family but instead simply shows them the tape, he also only openly speaks about the crime to his parents by addressing them via the camera whilst on holiday. Thus, Haneke also uses video in *Benny's Video* to stress the alienation caused by technology in modern society. He does not use it to destabilise narrative meaning as Egoyan does, but

rather to highlight the isolation of the modern bourgeoisie. Thus, Benny is so dependent on video he encases himself in a room of tapes and screens, and draws the curtains while watching a TV image of the street outside via a camera.

Yet, while video technology has obviously had a significant impact on Benny in the film, his parents have great relevance for an examination of Austrian society. Not only do they share the same character names as the parents of *Der siebente Kontinent* (these names reappear throughout Haneke's films and will be returned to later), they are also shown as the driving force for Benny's crimes in the film. They both leave their son unattended when the murder occurs, and it is their – particularly Georg's – decision to not take it to the police in case they are accused of neglect. This lack of discipline – Georg lectures Benny about shaving his hair and looking like a 'skinhead' or 'concentration camp inmate' more than he does for killing a girl – acts as one of the causes for Benny's decision to confess as he is more aware of his problems than his parents. In both films it is the father who is most responsible for the tragic events that occur. The Georg of the *Der siebente Kontinent* is most convinced of the need to commit suicide, in *Benny's Video* he is most determined to cover up the crime (Falkowska, 2010). Therefore, as representations of the dominant nationalism, the parents, particularly the father figures, of Haneke's early films are most to blame for the violence found within.

71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls returns Haneke's films to stories drawn from contemporary news, and focuses on the shooting of 3 people in a bank by a student, who then went on to kill himself. The seemingly motiveless attack is delivered to the audience not through the narrative, but a caption that is the first image shown on screen. The film shows the period leading up to the attack through a series of random and fragmented scenes detailing the everyday life of the victims and other people in the bank at the time – a

childless couple considering fostering a child and a security guard with an ill baby amongst others – alongside the killer, Max (Lukas Miko). The final attack remains random and unexplained. Each day is introduced via TV news clips from the time, including the conflict in Bosnia and the trial of Michael Jackson, and the film concludes with the news report from the shooting, which again emphasises the lack of motive.

The key aspect here is the film's 'hyperlink' (Silvey, 2009) or 'fractal' (Everett, 2005) style. By stressing the tenuous connections between the victims and the killer, and the chance occurrence of the event, the film offers 'neither stasis nor closure, but merely ongoing change and progress' (Everett, 2005, p.163). The shooting remains unexplained, but its protagonists are given voice and empathy, unlike the other fragments shown on the news. This is most clearly the case when dealing with the killer, Max. As the film opens with the details of the shooting, Max's activities, which range from the banal (practising table tennis, writing computer puzzles for his studies) to the ominous (buying the revolver used in the shooting, flashes of restrained violence amongst his peers), become increasingly significant and unknowable. The clearest example of this occurs when he and a colleague play Pick-up Sticks with the gun as a prize. This minor game, itself entirely based on chance, is given increasing importance as the viewer already knows what is at stake.

However, unlike *Der siebente Kontinent* (where escape and outside contact is impossible) and *Benny's Video* (where travel is reduced to a temporary hiding place following crime), *71 Fragmente* does offer a figure of otherness in homeless Romanian illegal immigrant, Marian (Gabriel Cosmin Urdes). He is largely forced into the interstices of society in the film, until a TV news report gives him the ability to explain his story. This impacts on childless couple Inge (Anne Bennent) and Paul (Udel Samet), to the extent that they abandon their attempts to foster Austrian child Anni (Corina Eder), with whom they have not been able to

communicate logically, in favour of adopting Marian. As Inge and Paul are the closest figures to the bourgeois families of Georg and Anna, their willingness to accept a child from another nation suggests a more open and accepting society than the previous films, yet their motives are unclear. Before the shooting, Inge is shown teaching Marian German words while travelling to the bank. Thus, the power structures of communication in which she is able to accept a dominant role with Marian, rather than the difficulties she faced with Anni, is more comforting for such figures of the dominant nationalism than the children involved.

While these films are tied together by their themes of alienation, they do offer recurrent issues in terms of national representations. Austria, particularly its bourgeois middle-class families, is depicted as dehumanised, fragmented and lacking in responsibility. Equally, the possibility of escape or external contact is limited. Traumatic, recurrent images come through the news media which plays unnoticed in the background. The family of *Der siebente Kontinent* wake every morning to news stories on the radio, Benny has similar stories playing constantly in his room, and *71 Fragmente* introduces each day and the film's events as a whole as a news story. Thus, although it is seemingly impossible for these national figures to enter into a contact zone with another nation, these spaces filter into their everyday life via the news media. Their inability to deal with this, through the parents in *Der siebente Kontinent* being overwhelmed by it, Benny being desensitised by it, and the characters of *71 Fragmente* being forced into it, makes up a damaging representation of the nation as a whole.

Equally significant is the lack of figures of hyphenated identity in the texts, with the exception of Marian in *71 Fragmente*. However, what is striking is how often the representation of Austria resembles that of exile. The films here are often defined by their small, claustrophobic spaces (Benny's room, the small flats of *Der siebente Kontinent* and *71*

Fragmente), borders (the sequences of *Der siebente Kontinent* regularly feature doors being opened and closed) and lack of opportunities for communication. Equally, the epistolarity of *Der siebente Kontinent* and frequent use of news stories suggest a possible desire for escape, only for these figures there is no imagined community of the home nation to long for. This oppositional representation of the nation, combined with a lack of narrative resolution or explained character development, offers the possibility that these films are opposing not only the dominant nationalism of the Austrian bourgeoisie, but how this is often depicted on screen.

Therefore, to conclude, while these films do not offer the same representations of cinematic contact zones as the other filmmakers discussed here, they do offer important points in understanding the representations of nationalism within the director's work. They depict Austria as an isolating space from which escape is impossible. Its bourgeois families, particularly the parents, are shown as lacking responsibility to the extent that they endorse or generate the crimes around them. Equally, these problems and oppositions are offered without endorsing one imagined community over the other, particularly due to the absence of an alternative. Although these issues are tied to more universal themes in Haneke's work, the representation of Austria provides a valuable starting point for understanding the oppositions, and ambiguities, in the films. That such spaces are found in entirely internal depictions of the nation makes their relevance to texts in which the other is more of a presence a central point of the relationship between Haneke's films and post-nationalist theory.

The Introduction of Otherness: *Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages*

If much of Haneke's glaciation trilogy can be defined by its lack of otherness, the same cannot be said of his first film in France, *Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages*. This film not only takes the director's focus away from the claustrophobic domestic spaces of Austria, but depicts France, and Europe in general, as a society filled with oppositional spaces between nations and communities. In doing so, the film uses a number of forms – the long take associated with neorealism and the structure of a fractal film (Everett, 2005) – to reinforce the film's contemporary social relevance. It creates a series of binary oppositions between domestic and public, transitory spaces to further develop his earlier representations of the oppositional spaces in society. Thus, although Haneke's migration was one of choice rather than due to social or political factors, *Code inconnu* shows the director's immediate intention to engage with, and oppose, the contact zones between nations and nationalisms.

As suggested by the film's title, *Code inconnu* recalls *71 Fragmente*'s focus on a number of unrelated characters and plots. Anne (Juliette Binoche) is an actress living in Paris with her partner, Georges (Thierry Neuvic), a war photographer who is often overseas due to work. Georges' brother, Jean (Alexandre Hamidi), is rebelling against their farmer father (Josef Bierbichler) by attempting to run away. Whilst talking to Anne on the street, Jean disrespectfully throws rubbish at a beggar, Maria (Luminita Gheorghiu), and is asked to apologise by Amadou (Ona Lu Yenke), a music teacher of Malian descent. Following a scuffle, the police are called and Jean is allowed to leave while Amadou is arrested and Maria deported to Romania. The remaining film shows the details and relationships of the characters' lives, including Georges' inability to live in French society following working in war-torn countries, Jean's estranged relationship with his father, Maria's life in Romania and return to France, and Amadou's family life. The film concludes with three short sequences; Maria's rejection when she returns to the same French street to beg, Anne's retreat into her

fortified apartment, and finally Georges' inability to enter after another trip as he no longer knows the entry code required.

Unlike a number of fractal or hyperlink films which draw events together in the text's conclusion, *Code inconnu* begins by showing the contact between groups and then deals with the consequences. The early sequence, in which Jean throws his rubbish at Maria and is stopped by Amadou, is therefore crucial in that it immediately places the text in 'the era of immigration' which holds 'the possibility of intercultural encounters' (Cowan, 2008, p.120). The figures involved, one of the dominant nationalism, an illegal immigrant in Maria and a legal immigrant in Amadou, each illustrate the contact zones occurring in such a society. The events also immediately highlight the oppositions and conflicts as Jean's unkind action is opposed by Amadou, but once the state itself is involved in the form of the police it is the figures of otherness that are punished. Thus, although Jean's action is nowhere near as cruel as those of Haneke's glaciations trilogy, it is clear that the dominant nationalism still cannot be challenged by Amadou or Maria. The resulting injustice serves to illustrate the conflicts that define such contact zones.

What is evident in the remainder of the film's contact zones is an 'ultimate impossibility of communication' (Everett, 2005, p.169). While the police, and Anne, refuse to listen to Amadou's verbal justification in the opening contact, later scenes show an inability to communicate within, rather than between, groups. This is most clearly the case when examining Jean's relationship with his father. Despite their conflicts, the pair never seems to speak to each other and instead conduct their work in long periods of silence. Equally, Anne and Georges' relationship is defined by an inability to communicate. When Georges is asked by friends to discuss his emotions on returning home, Anne ignores the response and talks to another member of the group about her dentist. This communication is not lacking

within the marginal groups, however, as both Amadou's and Maria's families talk openly and at length about their problems. This theme of impossible communication is emphasised by the scenes which bookend the film. In the first a young deaf girl is seen playing charades, but we are never given the answer to what she is saying, and the film concludes with a monologue in sign language without subtitles. Like the contact zones on screen, the audience are left to search for meaning without an explanation being given.

This lack of communication is marked by a failure rather than an absence of opportunity when considering *Code inconnu's* style and structure. Haneke's use of long takes, along with its lack of narration and non-diegetic sound, has meant that many critics have argued *Code inconnu* owes 'thematic as well as formal debts' to films of the neorealist tradition, by looking at 'homelessness, racism, all the abrasions and inequalities of urban existence' (Rhodes, 2006, p.19). Equally, by adopting the structure of a 'fractal' film, Haneke is also seen as articulating 'reality as potential, multiple and fragile' (Everett, 2005, p.160). Thus, while the isolation of Haneke's earlier work can be seen as influencing its oppositional form, *Code inconnu* stresses an attempt to use a form of cinematic realism to evoke more specific national contact zones. Thus, rather than the unexplained fragments of *71 Fragmente*, this film overtly deals with specific border-crossings and contacts. That this text appears at the point where Haneke himself began working in a host nation clearly illustrates the filmmaker's overt concern with nationalist issues.

These issues are most clearly in evidence when considering the public spaces of *Code inconnu*, particularly the street. The public space of the street opens the private spaces of domesticity (often controlled by protected and entrapped figures of the dominant nationalism in Haneke's earlier films) to 'the effects of chance' (Cowan, 2008, p.119). Thus, figures such as Anne are left exposed to contact zones they are unable to control in this transitory space,

as seen in the opening conflict with Amadou on the street, but also extending into restaurants (where Anne sees Amadou again) or public transport (where Anne is confronted by some youths over her bourgeois, aloof nature). Therefore, the street and other public spaces act as facilitators for the contact zones between the figures and their nationalisms. That they are a source of conflict emphasises these oppositional representations, both for Anne (who retreats to her domestic space) and Maria, who is not allowed a place in this setting without being moved on or insulted.

This is further emphasised by the representation of domestic space in the film. Anne and Georges' apartment becomes a 'fortified space' (Cowan, 2008) which is protected from the contact zones of the public space by the titular entry code. Anne's retreat into this space, and the code itself, is relevant on two levels. Within the narrative of the film it represents the need for a figure of the dominant nationalism to hide themselves from the contact zones of the public space they cannot control. More generally, however, this can be seen as a metaphor for the multi-cultural society on screen in that the dominant nationalism itself refuses to enter into a dialogue with the marginal groups around them. Thus, despite the neorealist and fractal structures of the film, *Code inconnu* does not offer a society connected by its setting. Instead it offers a representation of the dominant nationalism refusing to enter into this space, and instead using domestic space to fortify their hegemonic position.

The representation of Mali and Romania in relation to that of France emphasises this opposition. On her deportation back to Romania, much of Maria's time is spent moving into a new home / domestic space that is half-finished. Her community is filled with half-built houses, as shown in one tracking shot when she is being given a lift home by another recently-returned character. This lack of fortified domestic space stresses the increased community in Romania. Not only is Maria given a lift by a passerby, but she attends a local

wedding and is visited by extended family. Equally, when Amadou's father (Djibril Kouyaté) returns home to Mali, he is shown driving through the port whilst repeatedly using his car's horn to negotiate the pedestrians in a process involving much more interaction than Anne allows in the streets of France. Thus, while it can be argued that 'Eastern Europe is represented as a smoky, amorphous, inchoate, undefined place, and Romanians are shown as being less emotionally constipated than white Parisians' (O'Donoghue, 2005) in a number of scenes that approach stereotyping, this also acts as a strong contrast to the representation of public and domestic spaces of France.

This relationship between domestic space and national representations is further emphasised when considering the figures of Anne and Georges in particular. Another of Haneke's bourgeois couples, Anne is constantly defined by her lack of communication and use of domestic space. Not only is she appearing in a film within the film in which she will be trapped in a sealed room and killed, she is also seen making the final retreat into her apartment at the film's end. This space, which she refuses to leave even when faced with the sounds of, and then a note confirming, violence against a child, marks her 'effort to postpone a confrontation with the real' (Coulthard, 2011, p.81). Whenever faced with any oppositional space, Anne simply retreats into her own fortified domestic space and refuses to engage with the other, whether through the violence of her neighbours, or the insults of the youths on public transport. As such, her ability to control the code for the door continues to facilitate her position as hegemon in society.

This is a stark contrast to Georges who, unlike the other male figures in Haneke's films, is associated with a literal ability to cross national borders and escape the domestic space. As a war photographer, Georges speaks openly about the difficulty of returning to a France which he considers more "complicated" than nations undergoing military conflict. Unlike the

characters that frequent the majority of Haneke's work that engage in everyday activities while atrocities play out in the news media that surrounds them, Georges provides a character who engages with international events. As such, it is not surprising that, as the film concludes, he is now denied access to Anne's domestic space; he no longer has the code required to enter. In this sense, he is similar to Maria (whose frequent status as an illegal immigrant leaves her isolated and alone) in that he is excluded by the fortified spaces around him. Thus, although the film highlights the many fractured contact zones of the mixed cultures on the street, its resolution is clearly oppositional. The figures that frequently cross borders are rejected by their own domestic spaces.

Thus, by moving his work to France, *Code inconnu* displays an overt concern with nationalism that was previously only implied in Haneke's films. Using many of the styles associated with, for example, neorealism and the fractal film, the film references the increased contact zones in evidence in modern society. Yet, in figures such as Georges and Anne, and their domestic space, the film creates an oppositional space that suggests that the dominant nationalism still has power to marginalise communities while being protected by a fortress of domestic space from the conflicts around them. By introducing figures and issues of otherness into *Code inconnu*, Haneke is not only able to reflect the movement in his own work across borders, but is also able to incorporate them into the oppositions evident in his glaciation trilogy. Recurrent through these texts are representations of figures of the dominant nationalism that isolate themselves in domestic space to avoid the contact zones that surround them and maintain their hegemonic position.

Hidden Nationalisms: *Caché*

Haneke's *Caché* continues *Code inconnu*'s overt themes of nationalism alongside many of the stylistic touches of his glaciation trilogy. However, while the national representations on screen are themselves significant, as implied by the title, what is equally important is what is hidden and how this relates to the ambiguity found throughout the director's work. The film uses figures of nationalism, representations of guilt and history, the generic style of the thriller and a variety of forms of video image to challenge and implicate its spectators in issues of national history. That it does so without offering a narrative solution to its contradictions and conflicts, and not only contains oppositional spaces on screen but also in relation to its spectators, makes it a key text in the relationship between the director's work and post-nationalist theory. It is also particularly relevant to an understanding of Haneke's films as a whole, particularly *Das weiße Band* which follows.

The film follows another bourgeois family, again headed by Georges (Daniel Auteuil) and Anne (Juliette Binoche). Georges presents a literature programme on TV, Anne works in publishing, and their son, Pierrot (Lester Makedonsky), is a star swimmer. However, their affluent and comfortable existence is challenged by a series of anonymous videotapes and messages. The videotapes feature surveillance images of their home and daily life, while the messages offer childish drawings of a figure coughing up blood and a slaughtered chicken. Although he does not immediately confess it to his family, Georges believes the tapes are being sent by Majid (Maurice Bénichou), the son of his family's Algerian farmhand. Georges' mother had intended to adopt Majid, but Georges admits to sabotaging this process by lying about Majid's health and behaviour towards him. Georges confronts him, and maintains his guilt when Majid denies any part in the messages. He accuses Majid of kidnapping Pierrot when he goes missing, and Majid and his son (Walid Afkir) are arrested. When Pierrot returns safely, Majid asks Georges to meet and commits suicide in front of him. Still unaware of who made the tapes, Georges retreats to bed and the final image is of

Pierrot's school, where the boy can be seen talking to Majid's son, although the content of the conversation remains unknown.

The significance of national symbols in *Caché* is immediately apparent when examining Georges and Majid's relationship. Although apparently reluctant to confess it (Georges hides the truth of the story to a certain degree throughout the film), the text's main protagonist admits to deliberately deceiving his parents as a child in an attempt to stop them adopting Majid. This situation occurred when Majid's parents were killed in the massacre of Algerian protestors in Paris in 1961, thus making Georges' amnesia towards his childhood behaviour a clear metaphor for the collective and historical amnesia seen within the French media and society towards the atrocity (Saxton, 2007). As such, the film taps 'into a whole history of colonial oppression' (Walker, 2010) by drawing reference to the hidden aspects of history and displaying them on screen. Thus, while the narrative of the text is clearly rooted in modern tensions about race and identity, these are brought into closer focus by considering their relation to broader issues of nationhood and history.

As such, the figures of Georges and Anne here, more than any of the others who appear in Haneke's work, become crucial to our understanding of the depiction of the nation. They represent the bourgeois middle class, complete with their restrictive domestic space, and hold a very specific relationship with the media. Their home, complete with an 'architecture of books' which line and fortify the walls (Cowan, 2008, p.125), mimics almost exactly the set of the TV show which Georges presents, creating a sense of official nationalism within both their personal and public spaces. Equally, their home, situated on the aptly-named rue des Iris (Saxton, 2007), is defined by its fortress boundaries as its door is barely visible behind its walls, gates and fences. The tension between the bourgeois parents and their children (evident frequently throughout Haneke's work) is in further evidence here. Their son, Pierrot,

is surly towards his parents (he fails to tell them where he is and accuses his mother of an affair with a colleague) and the domestic space of his room differs greatly from the books of his parents. His walls are lined with figures of counter culture, including US hip-hop star Eminem and French-Algerian football star Zinedine Zidane. Thus, not only does *Caché* offer us figures of the dominant nationalism in Georges and Anne, it uses domestic space to illustrate their oppositions to both the world and the family within.

Georges himself, meanwhile, is a figure of the dominant nationalism in terms of his status as a member of the middle classes and his fame as a TV personality. This relation to the media extends beyond the text itself. Georges not only manipulates the reality of his TV show, but the camera follows him as an agent of narrative (often retracing the steps shown on the videotapes) and we even see his dreams on screen. Georges, therefore, remains a crucial aspect of the national and cinematic representations on screen. He is both a figure of the white middle-classes (whose latent racism is seen not only in relation to Majid, but also a black cyclist with whom he clashes on the street), and also a representation of the media and the thriller narrative of the film. Thus, it is also noticeable that following Majid's suicide, Georges does not visit the police, but the cinema (Saxton, 2007). As such, his guilt, and response to it, becomes increasingly significant in terms of more nationalistic themes.

Georges' role as a representation of the dominant nationalism becomes even more important when his relationship with the other is depicted in the film. This primarily takes the form of his history with Majid, and how he revisits him in the text. Majid is a representation of figures of Algerian identity as victims in that he is passive in his confrontations with Georges to the extent that he chooses to kill himself, and further traumatise, the white, middle-class figure. His son can also be seen as a victim in that we learn nothing about him; not his relationship with his father, his history or his name. However, this is primarily

because of Georges' narrative control in the film. The camera never leaves his presence, and the only contact he has with both figures is to accuse them of terrorising him. That there is no evidence of this, yet that the narrative of the text would appear to at least begin as the investigation of this mystery, means Majid and his son represent the 'stereotyped fears and fantasies of the Algerian buried deep within the French national psyche' (Silverman, 2007, p.246). Long forgotten, their mere presence in the narrative means Georges must assert their guilt to conceal his own. Thus, there is no evidence that Majid or his son is the villain of the piece, and without this Georges' narrative must reduce them to the state of victims.

Alongside these representations, the generic structure of *Caché* also plays an important role in our understanding of its relevance to post-nationalist theory. The film takes the approach of a thriller with a central mystery and much of the early stages of the film attempt to find out who made the videotapes. Just as much of the ambiguity of Haneke's early films allowed the films to adopt an oppositional position in relation to its audience, *Caché* uses the unresolved thriller narrative to do the same. To focus on the source of the tapes – essentially adopting the same position as Georges – allows the viewer to remain in a state of amnesia in relation to the racism at the film's centre. As a result, the implied resolutions of the film, particularly Majid's son and Pierrot perhaps discussing some complicity on the tapes in the film's final shot, and the narrative and name references to another film in which a Laurent family are terrorised by mysterious videotapes, David Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997), offer the audience an escape which ignores the guilt of Georges, and France, in relation to their treatment of Algerian members of society. Thus, *Caché* not only offers ambiguity in terms of explanation of the events on screen, but also in terms of narrative and genre. By refusing to identify the sender of the videotapes, and abandoning this mystery in favour of national oppositions, Haneke is able both to oppose the cinematic thriller and figures (like Georges) who pursue its meaning as another way of 'neutralizing the other' (Silverman, 2007, p.247).

The relationship between Georges' guilt, national guilt, and their cinematic representations in *Caché* is made even more apparent when considering the range of images in the film. The first, and most obvious, of these are the videotapes themselves, which offer largely static surveillance footage from Georges' past. However, crucially they do not differ greatly from the overall style of the rest of the film. At times it is unclear whether or not we are watching a videotape or the film itself. The opening surveillance tape is repeated when Georges and Pierrot leave the house within the film, and another is repeated when Georges goes to visit the location. Georges' dream sequences, however, differ greatly. The first, in which Majid is seen coughing up blood, contains fluid camera movement and ominous lighting, and the second, in which Majid kills a cockerel (itself a national symbol) to threaten Georges, features a number of fast cuts missing in the rest of the film. Thus, when we learn that both scenes are a projection by Georges, their more cinematic quality further highlights the relationship between national amnesia and the generic entertainment of cinema.

This brings us to the ambiguity of the text and the lack of resolution to its mystery narrative. The final two shots of the film, following Georges retiring to bed and claiming to be unwell, feature the removal of a screaming Majid from the farmhouse before being taken to hospital, and the shot of the two boys and their hidden discussion. Immediately apparent is the style of both shots in that they are static surveillance shots taken from a distance, suggesting neither are constructed as Georges' dream. However, neither offers a narrative solution to the film. The first is a representation of the past which has escaped Georges' cinematic control, and clearly shows the trauma forced upon the young Majid. The second alludes to the potential of narrative resolution that Pierrot and Majid's son have been delivering the tapes together, or that they are somehow creating a truce between the two families, yet offers no concrete interpretation. Thus, in this case, Haneke's ambiguity would appear to be

even more oppositional. The viewer can either pursue the narrative and its lack of resolution, or reject it altogether in favour of a discussion of the hidden guilt of Georges, and French history.

Thus, *Caché* provides a text in which many of Haneke's recurring themes and concerns are moved into an overtly nationalist setting. That, in doing so, it creates a text which opens a number of oppositional spaces – to the figure of Georges as a member of the dominant nationalism, to French history, and the entertainment structures of the thriller – highlights its relevance to a study of post-nationalist theory. Its ambiguity and lack of narrative resolution is significant in that the text creates an oppositional space in relation to the spectator. It offers the viewer the possibility of escape by continuing to deny the national past and, like Georges, pursuing the thriller plot. However, it is also possible for the viewer to abandon the entertainment of the genre altogether, and instead interrogate the dominant myths and symbols of the nation, and their relation to cinema itself. As a result, the film itself remains in a flexible, oppositional space between both the nationalisms of the text, and between the thriller on screen and the watching audience.

Interrogating the National Past: *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte*

Haneke continued his overt concern with nationalism in *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte*, although moved his attention from France's recent colonial past to Germany in years approaching World War I. However, by moving the text literally into the past, and discussing history in the first scene (rather than hiding it within the cinematic narrative), its oppositional spaces differ from *Caché* and much of Haneke's other work. Yet there are also many similarities, particularly the use of ambiguity to develop an oppositional space with the spectator. Thus, these issues must still be considered alongside the film's

representation of history and Germany and its families, as well as its relationship with the heritage film and melodrama. When these issues have been discussed, the ways in which Haneke's increasing concern with national issues develops a growing link between the director's work and post-nationalist theory become clearer.

The film is set in the village of Eichwald between 1913 and 1914. Narrated from the perspective of the village school teacher (Christian Friedel), the film focuses on a number of strange occurrences that wracked the community in the run up to World War I. These begin when the doctor's (Rainer Bock) horse is tripped and he is seriously injured. Then, an accident in the local factory causes a death, the yearly crop is sabotaged, the Baron's (Ulrich Tukur) son, Sigi (Fion Mutert), is kidnapped and beaten, while his barn is burnt down, and finally the midwife's (Susanne Lothar) son, Karli (Eddy Grahl), is beaten and nearly blinded. Alongside these events, the teacher tells of his romance with local nanny, Eva (Leonie Benesch). A number of these occurrences (the doctor's fall, the barn burning, the two violent attacks) remain unexplained and growing unease spreads across the village. Also shown is the harsh treatment of many of the village's children, ranging from cruel punishment for misbehaviour to sexual abuse. Increasingly, the children become a ghost-like, threatening presence, particularly the Pastor's (Burghart Klaussner) children, Martin (Leonard Proxauf) and Klara (Maria-Victoria Dragus). This creates suspicion in the schoolteacher, who begins to question the children, and the film ends with the declaration of war in 1914.

The film's nationalist depictions are brought to the foreground almost immediately in *Das weiße Band* via the opening narration. Told from the perspective of the teacher, although obviously years later, his opening statement includes two key points – that the details of the film may be unreliable (which will be discussed later) and that they may explain some of the

historical events that followed. Thus, a number of responses to the film highlighted its relationship to Nazism (Ebert, 2010; La Salle, 2010; O’Hehir, 2010). Accordingly, the presence of the children in the film, who the audience are fully aware will become the generation of Nazism, gives the narrator’s statement even more weight. It immediately draws the importance of nationalism, and the obvious historical oppositions this can create, to our attention. Therefore, rather than being a representation of the time, its conditions and landscape, *Das weiße Band*’s narration deliberately places its national history as a focus for the viewer. Unlike the atrocities hidden by Georges in *Caché*, the historical oppositions of Nazi Germany cannot be escaped here.

As a result, a crucial aspect of *Das weiße Band* is its representation of the village’s children. Many of these figures are sympathetic and offer some of the rare examples of humanity in the film, such as the pastor’s young son offering him a replacement bird he has been nursing when his father’s pet is killed. Yet others, particularly a silent group led by Martin and Klara, are a much more sinister presence, eavesdropping in doorways and lurking on the edges of the village. Their presence has often been described as a source of foreboding in the film, even being compared to *Village of the Damned* (1960) (Corliss, 2009; Hoberman, 2009). Yet, as is often the case in Haneke’s films, this situation is not entirely clear. Of the crimes that are committed in the village, very few are actually shown to be carried out by the children. The attacks on other children, the fire, and the doctor’s fall are all left unexplained. Therefore, similar to the schoolteacher, the narrative leaves us only with suspicion of guilt, a sense informed by our knowledge of future events.

These suspicions are tempered by the representation of adults in the film. The majority of the figures on screen are agents of the state and representations of the dominant patriarchal nationalism – the Pastor, Baron, Doctor, Schoolteacher, Steward (Josef Bierbichler) and so

on. Yet, almost all of these figures are shown to be abusive. The village's children are 'regularly subjected to corporal punishment' (Hoberman 2009), while others suffer sexual abuse and mental cruelty, and one lower class family is cut off by the Baron for sabotaging his crops in retaliation for the loss of their mother due to neglect in his factory, for which he receives no punishment. Thus, it is not simply the children who are shown to be the cause of the rise of Nazism, but also the 'parenting and education' given to them by the dominant nationalism (La Salle, 2010). As such, within the cruel events which occur on screen it is not the children who are the most frequent perpetrators, but the parents and other figures of authority. Yet, of these figures, it is only the schoolteacher, the unreliable narrator, who avoids such treatment, and identifies its potential in the children themselves.

If neither the children nor the figures of the dominant nationalism are proved to be the perpetrators of the unresolved acts of the narrative, there is still a strong relationship between the unexplained events and the role of the children. Throughout the film, the children act as spectators or witnesses to such actions. They are regularly shown watching acts of corporal punishment carried out on their siblings at the dinner table, and, in one instance, are even called to deliberately witness a lashing by one father, the Pastor (yet the violence is hidden from the audience, as often occurs throughout Haneke's work).

Meanwhile, the silent group who patrol the village are seen peering through and at windows to check on the victims of attacks, and listening at doors when the police harshly interrogate suspects. Thus, the white ribbons which are tied to Martin and Klara's arms to symbolise their innocence are redundant. Their innocence has already been lost in such a harsh society as, unlike the film's viewers and even the child of *Funny Games* (whose eyes are covered to protect him from the crimes), they are left as spectators of the cruelty of the adults.

Another way in which the overtly nationalistic focus of *Das weiße Band* differs from Haneke's other films is through its representation of landscape and domestic space. Haneke's previous work often emphasised the importance and restrictive nature of domestic space, particularly in relation to the bourgeoisie. However, here the representation is almost completely the opposite. The film spends a limited amount of time inside, and instead focuses on the landscape outside. This creates an impression of Germany itself, clearly associating the setting with its 'peaceful landscape' (Hoberman, 2009). However, this does not necessarily tie the film to notions of the heritage film as, despite its use of landscape and a clear focus on national history, the film does not include any noticeable historical landmarks or linger on details of the interiors. In fact, the landscape is more relevant in creating a sense of restriction and claustrophobia that was found in the domestic space of Haneke's glaciations trilogy. The village is isolated from the surrounding towns and the only figures of otherness (the Polish labourers) are completely isolated when they are referenced on screen.

Another aspect of the national representations of the text which deserves further attention is its representation of class. Much like *Caché*, the film offers a number of figures from a marginal group (here the lower classes, rather an ethnic group) who are isolated from society, particularly the Fleder family. As the group who lose their wife and mother figure in the factory accident, the family's sons seek retribution (destroying a large section of the yearly cabbage crop), whilst the father refuses to act for fear of reprisal. Their implied guilt, much like that of Majid, is enough to destroy their place in society and, without the support of the Baron's estate, they are left ostracised. Thus, also like Majid, the father figure is left with no choice other than suicide. Both texts suggest that the dominant nationalism has the power to isolate and remove the other (in terms of race or class) from society, leaving marginalised figures with little choice, escape or power.

Another similarity between *Caché* and *Das weiße Band* is its use of an unreliable narrator and cinematic style, although in this case, rather than it being a representation of national amnesia, this ambiguity is brought to the foreground. In this case, the fact that, despite a historical representation on screen, the accuracy of the narrative is called into doubt is counter-hegemonic as it brings a clear interpretation of events by the viewer into doubt. This is again tied to the generic representation of the film as a whole. The teacher, like Georges, is identified as the agent of narrative and narrator of the text, yet much of the film is taken up with his courtly romance with Eva. Thus, by abandoning his position as an agent of narrative for the mystery of the text to take one as a figure in the film's melodramatic narrative, the teacher is the primary cause of the ambiguity and the lack of narrative explanation. His inaction denies the film, and the viewer, the opportunity to understand the events on screen and, perhaps, their historical relevance to Germany. Therefore, like Georges in *Caché*, the teacher acts as a figure of the dominant nationalism who fails in his role as the agent of narrative.

These similarities are emphasised by the film's final scene, in which the village community is seen congregating in church for a service following the declaration of war. The shot is set up to mirror the viewing audience, with the entire village in this case returning the camera's gaze. As a result, the ambiguity of the text – that the seeds of Nazism are implied, but their causes unrevealed – means that this returned gaze suggests a complicity of and challenge to the audience. Accordingly, it has been argued that the film is 'only partly social history. It's a warning that could easily be directed at today's Middle East or, for that matter, at us' (La Salle, 2010). Thus, even though the film itself draws attention to its nationalist content, its ambiguity brings its interpretation into question. Although clear references are made to

specific nations and their histories, Haneke's film again develops a more general oppositional position to societies in general, and the spectators of his audience.

Thus, *Das weiße Band* further develops the relationship between Haneke's films and post-nationalist theory. Here, its perspective on the national is clearly brought to the foreground. The opening narration states this and its historical subject matter brings a great discursive weight. Despite this, the text still maintains ambiguity and a lack of resolution, and it is possible to see the birth of Nazism in the film as being either created by the children, or by the figures of the dominant nationalism. It is even possible to see the film as a more general critique on the roles of parents and teachers in the development of their children. However, once again, what is important is that this oppositional space to the film's nationalist subject matter is created by a series of cinematic forms which are relevant to post-nationalist theory. That this also creates a number of oppositional spaces between the film and its watching audience is significant when considering the relationship between post-nationalist theory and cinema itself.

Interrogative Texts and Oppositional Spaces: *La Pianiste*, *Le temps du loup* and *Funny Games / Funny Games US*

Like Atom Egoyan, Michael Haneke's films maintain a style which is oppositional throughout, but this is often ambiguous and applied to a series of texts in which national representations are not necessarily overt. As such, it is difficult from a post-nationalist perspective to not fill these ambiguities with national debates. This means that four of the director's remaining films – *La Pianiste*, *Le temps du loup* and *Funny Games* and *Funny Games US* – act as interesting counterpoints to the post-nationalist debates in that they highlight the ways in which the director's style creates a series of 'interrogative texts' (Walker, 2010) which may

not necessarily be deliberately oppositional to the nations on screen. Thus, a discussion of this ambiguity can once again help illustrate post-nationalist theory's boundaries in discussions of the director's work.

La Pianiste marked a return to the director's home nation, Austria, although the film itself remains in the French language. An adaptation of Elfriede Jelinek's novel *Die Klavierspielerin*, the film follows Erika Kohut (Isabelle Huppert), a piano teacher at the Vienna music conservatory, who begins an unusual sexual relationship with engineering student and brilliant pianist Walter (Benoit Magimel), much to the displeasure of her domineering mother (Annie Girardot). The nature of this sexual relationship has been the main focus of critical responses to the text, with Erika being described as a Lacanian representation of the 'impossibility of female desire', while her enjoyment of voyeuristic and sadomasochistic activities considered as 'what Freud would term polymorphously perverse' (Champagne, 2002). Although this reflects the text's primary concerns in depicting sexuality and gender, the relationship between Erika and Walter has been given national readings, with the protagonist being described as one who 'offers herself up to be crushed (first in her fantasies, then in real life) by an imagined male figure who could be called, for lack of a better word, Nazi-like — as if by being willing to become a victim one could definitively prove that fascism exists' (Vicari, 2006).

The film's setting also uses national representations and issues to undermine the desire on screen, particularly through its juxtaposition of high culture (Vienna and its history of classical music) and the base (Erika's sadomasochist desires and interest in pornography). This ties to cinematic genre in recalling the classical melodrama in that it is 'the story of a repressed woman in her thirties who meets a handsome stranger and embarks on an affair which will change her world' within 'the closed world of middle-class society' (Wheatley,

2006, p.118), while also it simultaneously ‘frustrates traditional romantic narrative form at every turn’ by representing ‘directly the severe repression of its beleaguered central character’ (Hutchison, 2003). Thus, while the film’s primary focus is its depiction of damaging desire, *La Pianiste* is still reliant on national issues to create this focus. Its Viennese setting, masochist themes and Aryan leading man recalls the relationship between Austria and Germany, and juxtaposes the traditions of classical music and the melodrama with Erika’s base sexual desires to undermine both.

Le temps du loup follows another family led by Georges (Daniel Duval) and Anne (Isabelle Huppert), although this time within greatly differing social circumstances. In the run up to a global event which will signal the breakdown of society, they retreat with their children, Arina (Rona Hartner) and Ben (Lucas Biscombe), to their holiday home, only to find it already occupied by a family who kill Georges to maintain its possession. The remaining members are left to battle on as society breaks down, and eventually settle in a larger group (including the family who killed Georges) which struggles to govern itself in the search for resources. While in general terms this means that the film most closely resembles a number of post-apocalyptic thrillers, within the context of Haneke’s films it exaggerates a number of his attacks on bourgeois society – from the failure of domestic space to protect the family, to the petty, racially-driven prejudices which threaten the new society formed in the aftermath of the event.

While the breakdown of society is shown in a manner which recalls many of the national issues in a number of Haneke’s other films, particularly by forcing the figures of the dominant nationalism in Anne and her family out of their protected domestic spaces and into the public space of the large group, the film’s genre and representations strip it of many of these national issues. While the depiction of the new society is driven by a desire for realism, the

science fiction and post-apocalyptic elements of the narrative distance it from any specific nation. Meanwhile, the lack of recognisable landscapes and the multi-cultural nature of the group to which the family become attached also suggest a more universal commentary on society, rather than on one specific nationalism. Therefore, while *Le temps du loup* seems to exaggerate many of the national oppositions of Haneke's films to create its apocalyptic setting, this in turn distances the text from the possibility of oppositional spaces to specific nations.

Funny Games, and its remake *Funny Games US*, utilises many of the themes found throughout the director's work. In both films, a bourgeois family, father Georg / George (Ulrich Mühe / Tim Roth), mother Anna / Anne (Susanne Lothar / Naomi Watts), and son Schorsch (a nickname for Georg) / Georgie (Stefan Clapzinski / Devon Gearheart), face the nightmare of having their domestic space penetrated by two killers, credited as Peter (Frank Giering / Brady Corbet) and Paul (Arno Frisch / Michael Pitt). The family is tortured and killed, but the attack is given an overtly cinematic nature – the killers regularly exchange names to suggest connections to the media (Tom and Jerry, Beavis and Butthead), offer a range of clichéd explanations for their behaviour, return the viewer's gaze and wink back at the audience to suggest their collusion and, at one point, rewind the frame from within to prevent Anna / Anne escaping. Thus, while the film uses many of the national representations to create the opposition on screen (such as the use of domestic space and the bourgeois figures of Georg and Anne), its focus is 'more a confrontation with the shape of popular film and cinematic genre, rather than a statement on contemporary Austrian society' (Frey, 2003).

However, what is often overlooked is the national relevance for the existence of the film's shot-for-shot remake. Within remakes in general, it has been argued that 'the sociology of

the original versus the remake makes for rich findings regarding the fundamental cultural differences between nations (Forrest and Koos, 2002, p.8), which in turn holds impact for post-nationalist readings of the hermeneutic ethnocentric explanations within such texts (Mailloux, 2000). On the whole, these differences within both *Funny Games* are absent, suggesting the film's success in translating the original without privileging or endorsing the hegemonic position of either film. The differences that do exist, however, are tied to nations. Firstly, the dog in the original film is given a more identifiably national quality – a German shepherd named Rolfi, as opposed to the ironically-named Lucky of the remake. Secondly, and more significantly, is the inclusion of a more recognisable star as Anne, in Naomi Watts. Although this has little impact within the text itself (although her costume is noticeably smaller than that of Susanne Lothar), her appearance is likely to create an even more identifiable or familiar relationship with the audience. These differences remain minor, however, and while the existence of *Funny Games US* may not alter the lack of national depictions of its content, it does negotiate the translation of the text without endorsing either national cinema.

Thus, as was the case with Atom Egoyan, Michael Haneke's oppositional or interrogative style remains in his films, even when not directly related to issues of nationalism.

Throughout these films, the director displays an overt concern with undermining many aspects of cinema, including desire and the melodrama in *La Pianiste*, genre in *Le temps du loup* and cinematic violence in both *Funny Games* films, without linking them closely to the representations of the nations within. Yet, the maintenance of such overtly oppositional spaces within the texts not only illustrates it as a core aspect of the director's style (making it increasingly relevant when nations are present), but also highlights the use of related issues to create this space. Thus, the oppositions to bourgeois figures, the family and domestic space remain as constant concerns in Haneke's films at all times, not only during those concerned with national issues.

Conclusion: Opposing the Audience in the Films of Michael Haneke

While the many ambiguities and oppositional spaces of the films of Michael Haneke often dominate discussions of the director's work, their specific relevance for issues of nations and nationalisms should not be underplayed. Although the director's movement across boundaries is not driven by social or political migration / exile, it has facilitated increased access to the contact zones between the imagined communities of the home, host and migrant nations, and allowed an increased focus on national issues to appear in the texts. That these issues are often tied to the genres employed, and that their frequent use of ambiguity allows the director to maintain oppositional spaces in relation to his audience, suggests that these films provide a number of key texts when examining the relevance of post-nationalist theory and cinema.

In terms of representation, Haneke's films are filled with oppositional depictions of the Western bourgeoisie, usually in the figures of Georg / Georges / George and Anna / Anne. These are figures of the dominant nationalism in terms of their race and class, and are often protected by / trapped within domestic environments from which there is no escape. This lack of escape is clearly important. The structures that surround the bourgeoisie (their domestic spaces, their historical amnesia or their culture) in some way imprison them in representations usually found within figures of migration. This outlook also holds serious implications for the children of such figures. Haneke's films, virtually without exception, highlight the relationship between the abuses of parents, and adults, and their children. There is a clear representation that the Georges and Annes of many nations are failing their children through their inability to engage in the world around them. As a result, virtually all figures of authority and the state – fathers, mothers, teachers, religious figures, the police –

are shown in a pejorative manner. As such, the dominant nationalism is constantly undermined within the films, and often implicated in the violence that occurs within each narrative.

However, these oppositional spaces are not always created by figures of otherness. At times, the absence of otherness seems to question the films' relevance to post-nationalist readings. It is unclear whether the oppositions to the bourgeoisie in Haneke's glaciation trilogy are relevant to a reading of Austrian society or to class as a whole. However, when figures of otherness are present, or the texts are given an overt concern with nationalism, the oppositions become clearer. The figures of otherness of *Code inconnu* seem to drive the dominant nationalism into a fortified domestic space, while the slightest challenge to nationalism by the appearance of hidden atrocities in *Caché* causes the protagonist and narrative to spiral out of control with guilt. Equally, *Das weiße Band* lacks representations of otherness, but instead finds an oppositional space by playing on the viewer's knowledge of the national history. What is lacking, however, is a concrete analysis of this otherness. Too often these figures are reduced to a symbolic presence whose sole purpose appears to be to challenge the dominant nationalism. While this avoids endorsing one imagined community over the other, it also neglects to fully explore the contact zones being formed in the texts. Without a greater understanding of Majid and his son in *Caché*, or more detailed scenes outside of France in *Code inconnu*, figures of otherness remain excluded from the focus of the films and something to be defined against rather than significant in their own right.

Yet, while these representations are interesting in themselves, they are given additional relevance when considered in relationship to the use of genre in Haneke's work. The films often evoke genres and forms – *Code inconnu* draws from the neorealist tradition, *La Pianiste* from melodrama, *Funny Games* from horror and remake, *Caché* from the thriller,

and *Das weiße Band* from the heritage film. However, in each case rather than endorse this form to bring the viewer comfort, Haneke undermines these structures. *Code inconnu* does not use its structure to draw its diverse groups together, but pushes them apart. *La Pianiste* transforms the melodrama's pursuit of courtly love to an examination of its protagonist's unusual sexual desires. *Funny Games* condemns, rather than revels in, cinematic violence, while the remake attempts to move the text across borders whilst interpreting only the language. *Caché* employs the thriller genre to frustrate, rather than investigate, its narrative. And finally *Das weiße Band* highlights both its historical importance and its limitations as a text. Thus, the oppositions within Haneke's films are clearly tied to their cinematic structures and forms. In each case, the texts invite cinematic readings, often tied to nationalism, and then abandon them to create further oppositions.

Crucial to this is the lack of resolution in the films themselves. Post-nationalist theory places great importance on not finding narrative solutions to the social contradictions discussed and, elsewhere, this has resulted in open-ended texts which have left conflict suspended at the film's conclusion. Haneke's films, however, seem to take this further, by evoking cinematic forms to invite a need for resolution, and then failing to deliver it. Thus, *Caché* and *Das weiße Band* create central mysteries (who is creating the videotapes and who is committing the atrocities in the village) and then deliberately fail to deliver a resolution. Equally, in both cases it is the agent of narrative who fails in his task to fully investigate the mystery, Georges in an attempt to maintain his state of national amnesia, the schoolteacher to pursue his romance with Eva. As a result, that a director so closely associated with 'interrogative texts' (Walker, 2010) fails to offer any resolutions to his interrogations is, in itself, relevant for post-nationalist theory.

However, while this lack of resolution is useful in its creation of oppositional spaces for both the characters of the films and the viewers, its ambiguity is also problematic for post-nationalist readings of the text. Post-nationalist theory encourages critics to look beyond purely national representations on screen to include oppositions found within non-official nationalisms inside the nation (such as gender, race and sexuality). However, while elsewhere this creates the danger of re-masking these discourses, as claiming their relevance to nationalism may undermine their power in their own right, here deliberate ambiguity should not be completely filled by post-nationalist issues. Thus, whilst it is possible to argue the use of sexuality in *La Pianiste* evokes issues of fascism in Austrian society, or that a lack of explanation of who made the tapes in *Caché* could suggest the text is overtly dissecting Georges', and France's, collective guilt, their ambiguous nature means these are not the only interpretations. Whilst the ambiguity and lack of resolution is clearly relevant to a post-nationalist reading of the texts, it is, in itself, not the solution missing from the films themselves or the answer to Haneke's constant mind-games. What is important, however, is how such post-nationalist concepts help create this ambiguity.

What makes these issues particularly relevant to cinema, however, is their relationship to the audience. Haneke's films often meet the camera's gaze, mirror the audience or imply some form of complicity between their characters and the viewer. Equally, their ambiguity challenges the viewer to find and justify their own meaning in the text, rather than have it created for them. This moves the oppositions of the films beyond those on screen, and their ambiguity also creates oppositional spaces in relation to the audience as potential readings can themselves be seen to reinforce the atrocities of the films, particularly Georges' pursuit of the thriller narrative in *Caché* or the denial of parental responsibility in *Das weiße Band*. The lack of meaning, but still with the identification of conflict, acts as a challenge to the spectator to engage with and interrogate the content, or, like Georg and Anna, retreat from it into the fortified spaces of home. In this sense, Haneke's access to a greater number of

contact zones – those between the home, host and migrant imagined communities – has also helped to create increased contact zones with his audience. As his films and their representations move from Austria to France, the US, Germany and beyond, the director's interest in nationalism and its relationship to cinematic genres and audiences also seems to grow.

Therefore, although Michael Haneke is not a figure of migrant cinema in the way that Fatih Akin, Ferzan Ozpetek or Atom Egoyan are, his movement across nations seems to be driven by an overt concern with national issues. Equally, that his oppositional and interrogatory style remains throughout means that issues of nations, along with others, remain constantly challenged from text to text, and nation to nation. However, in this case, not only does the lack of narrative solutions in the texts create a flexible position for these oppositions to take place, but they also incorporate the audience into this process. The audience is frequently challenged to deny its complicity with the repression of the dominant nationalisms on screen, and to make their own meaning in an attempt to escape. Without this process, the viewer, like many of the characters on screen, could be left trapped in the hegemonic structures of the dominant nationalism the films attack. These national oppositions, while not the sole answer to the many ambiguities and complexities of Haneke's films, make the relevance of post-nationalist theory crucial to an understanding of the director's work. The films' many oppositions, most notable those which challenge the spectator, make them equally crucial when considering how post-nationalist theory can be employed to readings of cinema.

Chapter Six: Post-nationalist Theory Goes West – The Films of Gurinder Chadha

Introduction: Gurinder Chadha, Gender and Popular Cinema

The final filmmaker discussed here, Gurinder Chadha, is significant for two primary factors – her recurrent use of gender as a non-official nationalism and her status as a female migrant filmmaker who has achieved a great deal of international, commercial success. Like race and sexuality, gender is another issue which is used to oppose and undermine the dominant myths and symbols of nations, and important within an understanding of Chadha's films in that all of her protagonists are female. Meanwhile, these films have often been widely commercially successful, both in their host and home nations, and elsewhere. Thus, while these films can further develop post-nationalist reading of gender in migrant cinema, as has been discussed elsewhere, they are perhaps more significant in that they frequently place the political and social concerns of figures of hyphenated identity in a mainstream setting. Therefore, while it will still remain important to consider the national representations on screen, more attention needs to be paid to the extent to which oppositional spaces can be maintained in mainstream cinema in order to highlight the potential limitations of post-nationalist theory in debates of film.

Born in Kenya to second generation migrant workers of Indian descent, Gurinder Chadha moved to Britain following the 'political turbulence leading up to the independence' (Koshy, 1996, p.148). Following a youth living over a shop in Southall, Chadha began a career in radio journalism before becoming a documentary filmmaker with her debut short *I'm British But...* (1990), which examined the conflicts faced by British-Asians. This was followed by several further shorts, until her debut narrative feature, *Bhaji on the Beach*, which again focused on migrant characters, in this case a fictional female British-Asian group from the

Midlands on a day trip to Blackpool. Despite the positive critical reception to this film, it was 7 years before Chadha's second feature, *What's Cooking?* – set entirely in LA in the aftermath of the riots and a co-production between Britain and America – was released. Although not a massive commercial or critical success, Chadha was to find major popularity, both domestically and internationally, with her next two films, *Bend it Like Beckham* and *Bride and Prejudice*, both of which highlighted an ongoing concern with issues of race and gender. Her continued interest in mainstream entertainment was again displayed in her next features, an adaptation of the successful teen fiction of Louise Rennison, partially funded by Paramount and Nickleodeon studios, *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* (2008) and a return to British comedy with *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* (2010).

Beyond the overt representations of gender and racial contact zones, Chadha's work is also significant when considered within the specific context of British cinema. Firstly, her status as female director of what can be termed 'woman's films' (Bell and Williams, 2010b) opens up a number of oppositional spaces within cinema. Bell and Williams have argued that 'although the woman's film has often been considered a foreign interloper – an 'un-British' genre – it has constituted a significant proportion of British film production' (2010b, pg. 16). Such films' use of theories such as post-feminism, and thematic aspects of the woman's film such as female groups (Bell, 2010) and escape motifs and liminal spaces (Ashby, 2010), illustrate ways in which the dominant position of patriarchy within the context of British cinema and society can be opposed and undermined. Such a focus increases the possibility for the non-official nationalism of gender to be used to oppose and deconstruct representations of the contemporary nation. It also continues to highlight the relevance and significance of the woman's film in developing our understanding of British cinema.

Post-nationalist critics have suggested that gender plays a crucial role in opposing and deconstructing dominant nationalisms through its creation of spaces – both domestic and international (Kinney, 2000). Therefore, it will be important to consider how space is gendered in Chadha's films, and the extent to which her protagonists and these women's films themselves are breaking from their domestic spaces and refusing to sit comfortably at home. This is given additional weight when combined with the use of race within the films. Gurinder Chadha is another film-maker whose identity is given critical significance in that she is often proclaimed as the first non-white female director of a feature film in Britain. Also, much like gender, race is often highlighted by critics as another area of identity which can be used to re-evaluate, criticise and oppose the dominant forms of nationalism in film. Although originally burdened by notions of the 'cinema of duty', modern Black British film has been discussed as raising 'vital questions about ethnic identity and the cultural politics of difference, while also examining notions of 'Britishness' and national cinema' (Malik, 1996, p.202). It is precisely these notions of Britishness and national cinema which will be of relevance to a study of the post-nationalist contact zones between key figures in these films, and how they relate to Black British cinema and British cinema in general.

Gurinder Chadha's work, however, can be argued to have great significance in relation to Black British cinema itself. It has been suggested that the practitioners of this cinema, during its growth in the 1980s, were 'pigeon-holed as 'experimental film-makers' and 'avant-gardists', rejecting Hollywood's story-telling conventions' (Malik, 1996, p.206). Such oppositional stances clearly echo with post-nationalist theories of deliberately avoiding narrative solutions to the felt contradictions of identity and readings of migrant cinema as Accented. A key text from this period to 'cross over' into the mainstream, and one which is a perceived to hold a key influence over the work of Gurinder Chadha (Korte and Sternberg, 2009, p.387), is *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985). Through similar representations to those used in Chadha's work (although substituting sexuality for gender), this film has been

discussed as highly significant in terms of British cinema itself. It was seen to offer a 'post-colonial alternative to historical epics' (Korte and Sternberg, 2009, p.387) of the heritage film genre, deliberately seek to 'problematise the very notion of social identity' (Hill, 1999, p.215) and highlight the myth of consensus found in theories of national cinema (Higson, 1995, p.273). Although whether or not this is truly the case in relation to *My Beautiful Laundrette* is open to debate, it remains a text which provides a great deal of context to an understanding of Chadha's work and the progress of British-Asian cinema.

Yet the critical response to *My Beautiful Laundrette* is not one which can simply be transposed onto the work of Gurinder Chadha. Rather than being a direct reaction to the conservative representations of the heritage film, and the Conservative government of the time, Chadha's films instead sit more closely alongside the Cool Britannia of the New Labour government of the 1990s, and the girl power of post-feminism (Ashby, 2005). As a result, they are largely less 'transgressive' texts than *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Korte and Sternberg, 2009, p.387) in that they show the 'intransigent social and gender problems' of the 1980s being swept away by the positive representations of the political landscape (Ashby, 2010, p.164). This has, in turn, led to them being questioned for not being 'political enough' (Leggott, 2008, p.106). In place of this political opposition, however, the films are often noted for their relationship with mainstream cinema, and are praised as commercially successful crowd pleasers (Korte and Sternberg, 2009). Thus, Chadha's films help develop discussions of the political content of Black British cinema by not only depicting contact zones between groups on screen, but also attempting to move the texts out of the comfortable spaces of their own national cinemas, and into the international sphere of mainstream cinema.

To investigate this further, the following issues will be discussed. Firstly, the representations of the home, host and migrant communities in *Bhaji on the Beach* will be considered, along

with the internal and external tensions highlighted by this women's film. Then the representation of food within the American Thanksgiving Day film *What's Cooking?* will be considered as a symbolic language of the contact zones within the film. *Bend it Like Beckham* will be discussed to illustrate the links between its representation of post-feminism and the mainstream quality of the narrative, particularly in relation to post-nationalist theory. *Bride and Prejudice* will be discussed as creating contact zones between texts by attempting to adapt a canonical text of English Literature, as a Bollywood and Hollywood musical. Also, the power relationships this adaptation creates will highlight any potential post-nationalist issues that arise from this process. Finally, Chadha's work as whole will be considered as illustrating the relationship between mainstream and Black British cinema in an attempt to gauge the extent to which oppositional spaces can be maintained in this setting.

Therefore, this section will use the work of Gurinder Chadha to highlight how race and gender can be used to challenge dominant nationalisms found in both British society and British national cinema. However, this director's work has been chosen not just for this reason, and specific attention will be paid to the apparent mainstream nature of these texts and whether or not this is compatible with post-nationalist theory. Space has been used by post-nationalist theorists to create a binary opposition between domestic or traditionally female space and international or traditionally male space, and in turn suggest that by refusing to sit comfortably at home female figures can challenge the myth-making of male, international space (Kinney, 2000). Thus, while this is clearly the case in some of the textual representations of Chadha's films, particular attention will be paid to whether or not the significant commercial success of the film's mirror this movement from the domestic, Black British woman's films of the director's early work to the international success of *Bend it Like Beckham* and *Bride and Prejudice*.

An Oppositional Day Trip: *Bhaji on the Beach*

Bhaji on the Beach, Gurinder Chadha's first feature film, is her least problematic in relation to post-nationalist theory. Of all her films, it is the one which most closely resembles the work of the other directors discussed here in that it shows the everyday contact zones faced by a group of migrant characters. Representations of the home (India), host (England) and migrant communities are frequent and often highly politicised. However, by focusing on an entirely female group the text creates a number of additional debates surrounding gender issues, representations of domestic space and the women's film in the context of national cinemas. These contact zones (both within and outside of the text itself) should be considered to discuss how gender can act as an unofficial nationalism which challenges the dominant myths and symbols of the nation.

The film focuses on an Asian Woman's Centre group on a daytrip from Birmingham to Blackpool. Organised by group leader and 'ardent feminist' (Sisodia and de Sousa, 1994, p.563), Simi (Shaheen Khan), the group members are sold the trip as an opportunity to escape the male oppression of the home and venture out together. However, the group itself is largely divided and populated by women from a range of diverse backgrounds: grandmother Pushpa (Zohra Segal) is a conservative figure, potential medical student Hashida (Sarita Khajuria) has recently found that she is pregnant to her black boyfriend, and teenagers Ladhu (Nisha Nayar) and Madhu (Renu Kochar) are there to have fun and meet boys. The central tension within the group derives from the presence of Ginder (Kim Vithana), who has left her husband Ranjit (Jimmi Harkishin), much to the condemnation of the older members of the party. Whilst on their trip, the characters enter literal contact zones with a number of representatives of the dominant nationalism, most notably, mother figure Asha's (Lalita Ahmed) encounters with aging lothario and sometime actor Ambrose (Peter Cellier). However, the recurring narrative is of Ranjit's pursuit of his wife, leading to a

confrontation on the pier in which domestic violence is revealed and the group accept Ginder back in for the final journey home.

By focusing solely on female characters, *Bhaji on the Beach* immediately attempts to undermine the 'patriarchical structures' of the film industry which position women purely in 'relation to men and the family' (Bell, 2010, p.108). By removing men (almost) completely, the film is able to display the complexities of femininity, and highlight unease about the social roles of men and women. Yet, this complexity of the female characters acts a great source of tension in the film. Much of its conflict is derived from the generational divide between the traditional / elder members of the group (Pushpa and Asha) and the contemporary issues of younger figures (Ginder's divorce, Hashida's pregnancy). These internal tensions are regularly shown to be driven by the older figures' inability to accept the traditions of their host nation in favour of those of their home nation. Pushpa regularly voices her discontent by comparing events in England to those back in India, even though it is pointed out that it has been years since she has been there. Thus, we immediately see how the issues of gender and race are connected in *Bhaji on the Beach*. This is a group of migrant women, breaking free from the patriarchal structures of the domestic home, but unable to escape the tensions of the contact zones between the migrant and home communities.

This refusal of the older generation to remove itself from the traditions of the home community is most eloquently highlighted through the use of food in the film. Food plays a crucial role in migrant cinema, and even the title of *Bhaji on the Beach* suggests its significance here. Throughout the film, older members of the migrant community either get the traditions of (white) British food wrong, or create conflict by refusing to incorporate them at all. Ladhu and Madhu are told to have some "chips and fish", and Pushpa can't eat the same food without putting curry powder on her chips. Yet all of the younger characters have

no problem accepting their host community through food. In one scene where Ladhu and Madhu are being pursued by two white boys, going for a burger is used to skilfully avoid unwanted advances. This situation reaches its greatest conflict when Pushpa attempts to eat Indian food in a stereotypical British cafe, only for the owner to eject her. This food, which Pushpa had previously been able to eat freely on the beach, is unwanted in a domestic space of the dominant nationalism (a cafe), making it an immediate signifier of the tensions between spaces. That the cafe owner is the only female figure of the dominant nationalism that the group encounter (all the others are men) makes this contact zone even more striking.

This is not to suggest, however, that the host nation's representation is completely lost within this focus on the migrant and home communities. In fact, it has been argued that its 'portrait of Britishness' is 'all the more striking because of, rather than in spite of, the film's primary focus on British Asian culture' (Gabriel, 1996, p.132). Throughout the film the group encounters a disparate and fragmented collection of figures of the dominant (white / male) nationalism. These begin with the casual racism of the delivery man / newspapers in Asha's shop, and includes a group of racist thugs who attack the group at a service station and two workers from an American-style burger bar (Billy Joe's) . What is interesting here is how non-threatening this contact zone is displayed as being. Casual racism is just shrugged off, violent thugs simply driven away from and young suitors described as being just the same as their migrant equivalents. Even the racist graffiti which begins the film is simply erased. Thus, even though the tensions facing migrant communities are implied in this representation, no solution is found and the problem ignored.

The most intriguing and prominent figure of the dominant nationalism is that of Ambrose, who first befriends Asha and then takes her on a tour of Blackpool. He is clearly put forward

as a symbol of the town himself. He is white British, tied closely to Blackpool's theatrical traditions and displays an innate knowledge of the area as an ancient "Blackpudlian". What he also displays, however, is a typically 'ambivalent attitude' towards Englishness itself (Cashmore, 2003, pg 407), which is again expressed in gender terms; he describes Blackpool as "This fallen woman I call home." His romantic intentions towards Asha are tied, in his language, to a pursuit of Indian culture which is pure and traditional, unlike his view of British popular culture. This point is not limited to India, however, as in the film's final montage he is shown in a similar pursuit of more female tourists, again coded as foreign others, but not Indian. Thus, he too is a non-threatening figure of the dominant nationalism, opposed to the contaminating effect of migration on (white) British culture yet paradoxically coveting its otherness.

Another interesting aspect of the film's focus on female characters is the resulting representation of masculinity. The figures of the dominant nationalism, including Ambrose, the burger bar workers and even the thugs, are redundant and powerless to have any impact on the narrative, at any point the female figures can leave them behind. Similarly, Hashida's boyfriend, Oliver (Mo Sesay), is trapped between the militant leanings of his flatmate and the work ethic of his father. The tension in his relationship with Hashida comes from his inability to express himself or identify his own desires, instead relying on his flatmate to tell him what to say. If these are figures of masculinity who have little impact on the female group, the only real threat comes from within the migrant community in Ranjit. Conflicted by the contradictory views of his brothers (one of whom is violent and clearly masculine, dressed in sports clothing, the other apologetic and under the thumb of his wife), his domestic violence is clearly shown as a threat to Ginder. However, in the final sequence, he is left powerless when confronted by the solidarity of the migrant female group, and the brothers are left to squabble and fight amongst themselves. The only male figures not in some form of crisis

aren't even shown to be British, as the group encounters a troupe of male strippers in American military uniform in their final meeting place, Manhattan's bar.

When not tied to gender themes as a "fallen woman" by Ambrose, Blackpool itself illustrates a number of intriguing opportunities to the group in terms of gendered space. It does offer, as Shimi claims, a space which is not domesticated and male but is instead free for the women to find their own space before returning to the group. Also, the diverse activities of the group contrast the small, claustrophobic spaces of the suburban homes and shops of the opening sequence. Blackpool is, therefore, 'a dreamland, a location of facades, make-believe and carnival' (Korte and Sternberg, 2009, p.391) and even a metaphor for the fluid and diverse identities of the group, the sea acting as a 'material and visual manifestation of fluidity' in identity (Eleftheriotis, 2000, p.99). That the group choose to visit a seaside resort also holds a symbolic quality for the nations involved. Blackpool acts as a literal border of the British landscape and also a fluid and ever-changing backdrop to the diverse group of women in the film. The national significance of the location is also cinematic in that the bawdy, seaside humour associated with the town mostly closely recalls the British cinematic traditions of the *Carry On...* films, a point emphasised by the film's conclusion where the group bond following the high drama of Ranjit's return with a breast-shaped "Blackpool or bust" cake.

These issues of gender, racial representations and the cinematic text as a whole merge when examining the dream sequences that appear throughout *Bhaji on the Beach*. Asha claims to the other members of the groups that she gets headaches and "sees things", and we are shown these projections in a series of highly-stylised dream sequences. In each instance they highlight her cultural concerns of being unable to move out of the powerless contact zone in which she is trapped, both through professional frustration and a fear of

Westernisation. These sequences are illustrated through Asha's perspective in a much more flamboyant, Bollywood style than the rest of the film. Crucially, in one sequence in which romantic feelings for Ambrose are raised and dismissed, he pursues her in a traditional, Bollywood style, only for the rain to make his makeup horrifically run and reveal his ethnic identity and romantic leading man status role as false. Thus, it is noticeable in these scenes the extent to which the depictions of race and gender are tied to the cinemas of Britain and India.

Therefore, although the comedic structures of *Bhaji on the Beach* make it difficult for it to sustain oppositional spaces throughout, the film still uses the contact zones between the imagined communities involved to challenge their traditional representations. The film shows a migrant female group move out of their domestic space, and into an oppositional, masculine environment, and the narrative refuses to find solutions to the felt contradictions of migrant contact zones. However, the generic use of comedy allows the text to highlight and then simply walk away from such tensions. While genre is used successfully to highlight these concerns, and even incorporate instances of popular international cinemas, there still remains a sense that a compromise or happy ending will be found. Thus, it is not just the movement of the female group out of a space of sitting comfortably at home which is relevant to post-nationalist theory, but a sense that the space into which they move is uncomfortable for the dominant patriarchy is also essential to challenge the hegemonic structures in society.

Remaking Thanksgiving: *What's Cooking?*

Bhaji on the Beach's fleeting glimpses of American influence – through Billy Joe's burger bar and the male strippers of Manhattan's bar – are taken to new levels with *What's Cooking?*,

the only Chadha film to be set solely in America. It again depicts migrant or other families during a period of great national symbolism, Thanksgiving dinner. By focusing on the preparation of dinner, it is clearly set in a domestic space coded as female, and once again examines the generational, ethnic and gender conflicts which beset the families involved. Also, it again uses many of the same themes of *Bhaji on the Beach* to illustrate these points, most notably food. How it differs to *Bhaji on the Beach*, however, may indicate not only the different representations of America and Britain in these films but also highlight Chadha's own movement into a more international cinema.

The film focuses on 4 families – one African American, one Vietnamese, one Jewish, and one Latino – during their preparations for and eating of Thanksgiving dinner in Los Angeles. Each family struggles to deal with its own issues: the Williams family are recovering from father Ronald's (Dennis Haysbert) affair and the absence of son Michael (Eric George), the Nguyen family argue over the western influences of sex and violence on their daughter Jenny (Kristy Wu) and son Gary (Jimmy Pham) respectively, the Seelig family are dealing with their daughter Rachel's (Kyra Sedgwick) homosexuality and the Avila family face the return of estranged father Javier (Victor Rivers) after his affair. Whilst these tensions play out through the course of the day, each coming to a head over the dinner itself, there is little suggestion of connections between the families aside from the secret relationship between Gina Avila (Isidra Vega) and Jimmy Nguyen (Will Yun Lee). However, the final sequences, in which a gun is accidentally fired, reveal that the four families are neighbours.

As indicated by the title, the most significant aspect of *What's Cooking?* is its representation of food. As discussed earlier, food is a key aspect of migrant representations in that its sense memories evoke a sense of the past, home and nostalgia. This is given increased national significance here in that each family remakes the dishes of Thanksgiving within their

own traditions. The film is filled with sequences highlighting the contrasting preparation and serving of food, most eloquently through one montage in which we see mashed potatoes being prepared in four differing ways by the four differing families. Thus, “ethnic” foods remain a marker of cultural difference, branding immigrants ... and their non-immigrant children and grandchildren, as inexorably foreign, other and “ethnic” (Chan, 2005, p.2). That these ethnic foods are being highlighted in relation to such a national holiday as Thanksgiving further emphasises the status of otherness of the families within the film.

The use of food, however, holds a counter-hegemonic quality when viewed in this context. Whilst discussing language, Mailloux suggests that processes of interpretation can be used to reinforce the power structures of contact zones, often with the hegemon re-interpreting, and therefore changing, the meaning of the other to endorse its own myths and symbols (2000). Within this film, meals appear to be undergoing this process, but in reverse as traditional, national dishes are being remade and reinterpreted by migrant families. Thus, when Jenny Nguyen asks her grandmother (Kieu Chinh) why she is making the turkey taste “the same as everything else we eat”, she can reply “Why do you want everything to taste like McDonalds?” Thus, the preparation of these dishes both evokes sense memories of the past and the home nation, and is an active statement by migrant families to remake a national holiday in keeping with traditions of their choosing.

The use of domestic space extends this counter-hegemonic representation of food. As discussed previously, post-nationalist theories of gender expect the female figures to move from sitting comfortably at home into a more challenging, expansive space (Kinney, 2000). This is virtually impossible in a film about the preparation of food, but what is noticeable is the extent to which domestic space as a whole is determined by control of the kitchen. Male figures are almost entirely excluded from this preparation, and their attempts to control it are

rejected. A noticeable example occurs when Tony Avila (Douglas Spain) demands another beer from his sister, and is flatly refused one. This is further emphasised in the Williams house, where mother Audrey (Alfre Woodard) and grandmother Grace (Ann Weldon) battle for control of the family, domestic space and day as a whole via their control of the food being prepared in the kitchen. Thus, although it is impossible for this particular text to break out of the domestic space within its representations, its female protagonists can at least control this space, the preparation of food and therefore the national holiday itself.

As with *Bhaji on the Beach*, internal conflict in migrant cultures in *What's Cooking?* is derived from issues of identity, most notably age and gender. This is most notably the case in the Nguyen family, where Jenny and Gary are constantly opposed by their parents, Trinh (Joan Chen) and Duc (Francois Chau) for their Westernised beliefs. This is again highlighted by food when the turkey is burned and their youngest son, Joey (Brennan Louie), is overjoyed to eat Kentucky Fried Chicken instead. These tensions are at their most political, however, in the Williams household, where Michael has covered his father's employer, the "bigot" Governor, with paint. These tensions may seem solely political, but are given a generational significance when he is supported by guest Monica (Marriam Paris), who is the same age as him. However, in the Avila household, gender is the cause of tension, as the battle for control of the family is clearly shown to be male against female in relation to Lizzy and Javier.

What this results in is a representation of Thanksgiving, and therefore, by extension America, which is much more externally-focused than the traditional representations would suggest. This is most clearly illustrated by the film's opening sequence. It begins with the American national anthem, and a picture of the typically (white) American family enjoying their Thanksgiving turkey. This, however, is revealed to be an advertisement on the side of

a bus filled with characters of hyphenated identity, a change reflected by a move to a much more racially eclectic score. The following montage shows a Thanksgiving school play and, once again, the audience and cast are filled with individuals of diverse backgrounds. This sequence concludes when we see the same advert, for the same American holiday, in Spanish language and featuring a less clearly racially defined family in the photograph. Thus, that we are seeing a Thanksgiving Day which is almost entirely populated by figures of hyphenated identity can be seen as undermining the dominant myths and symbols of American nationalism.

This is emphasised by the film's conclusion, in which it is revealed that the four families are much more closely situated than previously thought. Up to this point, *What's Cooking?* had not appeared to be a 'hyperlink movie' (Silvey, 2009) and the four families, and therefore migrant cultures, appeared to be relatively unconnected. Instead, the film's final scenes reveal not only connections between the families, but also their shared domestic space. This differs from the representation of Britain in *Bhaji on the Beach*, where the female group have to venture out into a completely different space to access such contact zones. Thus, when the Nguyen family repair the house window through which the bullet was accidentally fired, the suggestion is that the conflict here could spill over and impact on any of the other families and groups. This differs greatly from the ability to simply move away from conflict in *Bhaji on the Beach*.

However, that is not to say that *What's Cooking?* does not contain a positive outlook, in the way that *Bhaji on the Beach* similarly 'worked through and resolved' the conflicts of migrant female identity (King, 1996). The threat of violence spilling out onto the streets is not only one which is portrayed as unfocused and accidental, but also no-one is harmed and, if anything, the shot fired brings the community closer together (they all leave their isolated

houses to help). At this point, any tensions between migrant communities are again reduced to comedy; aged Uncle David (Ralph Manza) tells the Seeligs that soon they'll have a "triad war" on their doorstep. Thus, the conflict which is originally predicted in the relationship between Gina Avila and Jimmy Nguyen (he is going to her house for Thanksgiving and hiding his mixed-relationship from his family) simply never materialises; they end up sitting down together as families. This resolution of a potentially damaging contact zone is most clearly expressed in their use of language. Both the Avila and Nguyen families attempt to speak about their guests in their own language, but only to praise them. The guests, after all, are perfectly willing to eat their hosts' food.

Thus, although not overtly oppositional, *What's Cooking?* highlights some of the contact zones in contemporary American society. Firstly, it is a Thanksgiving Day movie populated entirely by figures of hyphenated identity, in terms of race, religion, sexuality and gender. Also, these households are effectively remaking the American holiday in their own traditions and language, and, at least within their own domestic spaces, they have the power to do so freely. Finally, although once again the final sequences seem to suggest a more positive outlook, there are tensions between the traditions of the older generation and the new influences of the younger figures. Thus, although the text and its matriarchs are not breaking out from their comfortable domestic space, they are at least shown as being masters of it. As a result, the dominant symbols may not be completely opposed, but at least *What's Cooking?* offers an alternative to the Thanksgiving Day meal advertised on the side of buses.

Substituting Betty Grable with David Beckham: *Bend it like Beckham*

Racial, gender and generational tensions continue to resonate throughout Gurinder Chadha's next feature film, *Bend it Like Beckham*. Here, the main protagonist, Jess / Jessminder (Parminder Nagra), hopes to break out of a domestic space which is simultaneously female and traditional, but wants to do so to access a clearly masculine, international space (that of football). Once again, the film uses many of the same themes as Chadha's earlier works to illustrate the tensions of this move (particularly food) and these need to be discussed to examine the extent to which Jess is really remaking her own space, and placing the film itself in an oppositional position. Also, this film is one of Chadha's works which found a great deal of commercial success, and accordingly could be used to analyse the relationship between mainstream cinema and post-nationalist theories.

The narrative of *Bend it Like Beckham* differs greatly from both *Bhaji on the Beach* and *What's Cooking?* in that it is the first to not focus on a group of female characters, but a lone protagonist, Jess, who dreams of playing professional football like her idol, David Beckham. This meets opposition from her conservative parents, particularly her mother (Shaheen Khan), as they feel it will bring disgrace on their family in light of her sister Pinky's (Archie Panjabi) upcoming marriage. Jess continues to play in secret however, with the support of her coach, Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), and gifted teammate Jules (Keira Knightley). Both Jules and Jess dream of being spotted by a scout for an American college, where it is possible to play professionally (unlike the chauvinist systems of English women's football). Both also compete for the affections of their coach. Banned by her family from playing, Jess is allowed to play in the cup final by her father (Anupam Kher), having to leave her sister's wedding to do so. She comes on as a substitute, scores the winning goal and gains a scholarship to Santa Clara, with Jess. Her parents grant her permission to go, and the film concludes with her and Jess at the airport, leaving her family and Joe (who has just declared his love for her) behind.

The most immediately noticeable aspect of this film in relation to post-nationalist theory is the extent to which Jess' movement is defined in national terms. The family, who hold her back from her aspirations, are defined as more traditional and Indian; Jess complains when that anything she does "isn't Indian enough" for them. Meanwhile, Jess' success is also viewed on a national level as she is regularly told that she is good enough to play for England and, when she misses a penalty on a tour of Germany, is told that this is an English tradition. England, however, is not the idealised goal of the dominant nationalism. Its football traditions are too entrenched in gender terms to which Jess can never relate. She cannot play professionally there, while peers of her friend Tony (Ameet Chana) regularly mock and sexualise the women's game. In fact, the idealised nation which offers solutions to these tensions is not even one which Jess and the text has access to. Both she and Jules dream of playing in America, where the gender boundaries of football are less restrictive. Thus, although the representation of sport in the film is clearly coded as a national one, the home and host nations are not idealised as a solution to their own problems; America is.

The representation of the home and migrant communities, however, are those which dominate domestic space. Living in a suburban house, underneath the flight path for Heathrow airport (domestic scenes are regularly introduced with establishing shots of aeroplanes flying over and away from the house), Jess' home is a small, claustrophobic space, particularly during family gatherings. Her mother is the dominant conservative influence, regularly opposing Jess' interest in football and David Beckham from the kitchen. Her father, however, is a much more political figure. His distrust of English sport comes from the racism he encountered in cricket following his migration from Kenya. He also represents a space that is international in that he works at Heathrow, and is regularly seen wearing his uniform around the house. As a result, it is he who eventually allows Jess to play in the final

and go to America on the grounds that he cannot stand to see her unhappy. Thus, although the representation of the home and migrant nations is seen as being restrictive, this is only truly the case when this space is gendered as female. In fact, it is the patriarch who facilitates Jess' move into a more expansive international space.

Once again, the tension between the home and host nations is displayed in terms of food. Jess' mother regularly uses food to express her discontent with her daughter, saying that she should know how to cook traditional dishes rather than play football. Yet it is precisely this tension from which Jess wants to break, even stating "Anyone can cook *aloo gobi*, but who can bend a ball like Beckham?" The film is full of instances where sport (as an expansive space) is opposed by food (as a domestic space); Jess attempts to practice football with a lettuce and is chastised by her mother, she plays in the garden only to be given a plate of samosas to pass around. Yet, this tension is not just that of the home nation. In fact, Jess is equally opposed by the domestic spaces of the host nation in having burnt her leg trying to make the typically English dish of beans on toast as a girl. Thus, it is not just the traditions of the home nation which hinder Jess' movement in the film; all domestic spaces seem to oppose her goals.

Bend it Like Beckham also differs from *Bhaji on the Beach* and *What's Cooking?* by focusing on one protagonist, rather than a group of women. Whereas previously using a female group helped to oppose the patriarchal structures of film, here making Jess an individual undermines collective structures of the home nation. It has been argued that 'compared to British culture, collectivistic characteristics are more dominant in Indian culture' (Yin Gee Lui, 2008, p.59) and that is reflected in the text whenever Jess is asked to give up football by thinking of her family or her sister's impending wedding. However, this does not mean that she is being more British as she stands apart from all cultures other than football. This is

illustrated when she is discussing arranged marriages with her teammates and says that they make as little sense as the Western tradition of sleeping around with numerous boys. This is again reflected in the narrative of the film where, unlike most sports films, the final goal is not the success of the team, but Jess and Jules' individual successes in winning a scholarship. As such, Jess is acting as an individual who can critically sit outside of the home, host and migrant communities and, thus, comment on all three.

Such individualistic concerns are also evident when examining the role of Jules within the film. Although she differs from Jess on grounds of her race, and is therefore 'the Everygirl mainstream conservatives seem willing to accept as athletes' (Giardina, 2003, p.75), she still faces opposition from the restrictive domestic spaces of home. Like Jess, Jules' mother (Juliet Stephenson) opposes her playing football, although this is on the grounds of sexuality (she thinks it will encourage her to become a lesbian) and it is also her father (Frank Harper) who facilitates this escape into an international space. Thus, although not bound by collective concerns in her family and culture, a figure of the dominant (white) nationalism is still depicted as having to pursue individual concerns to break out of their domestic, female space.

However, the representation of the dominant nationalism in *Bend it Like Beckham* does not differ greatly from that of *Bhaji on the Beach*. Jules' mother's prejudices and casual racism are the most defining aspects of the contact zone between migrant and host communities. She regularly patronises Jess on the grounds of her culture, although this is casually dismissed by the younger generation as her "embarrassing herself". Her views on sexuality are equally conservative, but again merely a source of humour, as following her distress at the thought of having a lesbian daughter she claims to be more accepting (again through sport) as she cheered for Martina Navratilova. This again spills into a representation of food

in one sequence where the offside rule is explained to her using French mustard and teriyaki sauce bottles.

This tension, which does not necessarily lie in the contact zones between communities but between mothers and their daughters, has been described as caused by the differences between pre- and post-feminist figures (Ashby, 2010). Regardless of race, both mothers within this film are 'coded as laughably prefeminist' (Ashby, 2005, p.130) and, as a result, are 'more sexist than any of the men in the film' in that they 'simply do not understand their post-feminist daughters' (Ashby, 2010, p.164). This raises a problem for post-nationalist readings of the text in that it clearly offers a solution to these contradictions. In both cases, Jules' and Jess' mother happily accept their daughter's freedom and even share a tissue together as they watch them depart. That post-feminism essentially wins this conflict is therefore problematic in that it endorses the political environment of the period (i.e. the New Labour government) and, from an ideological perspective, avoids creating any oppositional spaces by offering a solution to the potential tensions.

This is most notably highlighted in one of the film's closing sequences, in which Pinky's wedding is intercut with Jess' cup final. By juxtaposing both scenes and tying them to the same piece of music, the text inevitably draws comparisons between the two – the domestic and traditional space of the wedding, the individual and international space of the match. In fact, it has been suggested that, in doing so, Chadha's intention was to make the 'players look like dancers too', highlighting the performance of each space (Guarracino, 2009, p.384). The resolution, however, is clear. Jess is given the opportunity to score the winning goal via a free kick, much like her hero David Beckham, and the defensive wall momentarily becomes the female figures of the wedding. Jess scores, the team wins, a scholarship is offered and then she makes it back to her sister's wedding without the conflict ever arising.

As a result, we can see immediately the ways in which, despite the tension of the early stages of the film, Jess can simply act as an individual and her family will, eventually, follow.

This makes *Bend it Like Beckham* relevant to post-nationalist theory in two contradictory ways. Firstly, its use of domestic and international space to oppose the depiction of gender in the film clearly relates to Kinney's (2000) discussion of the subject. Just as novels of America's conflict in the Pacific used the male image of soldiers forming the nation and a pinup of Betty Grable to symbolise the femininity they were protecting, here the roles are completely reversed. Jess' team become the female figures able to enter an international space and remake their nation, and the pinup who acts as their inspiration, David Beckham, is now male. However, this oppositional space is not maintained throughout the film's conclusion. In fact a number of narrative solutions to Jess' felt contradictions are offered. Her father simply allows her to both play in the final and accept the scholarship, both she and Jules succeed in the game, her family do not notice her absence at the wedding, and her relationship with Joe neither alienates Jules or hinders her progress as an international player. Thus, once again, while gender is used to create an oppositional space in the film, its resolution suggests that Jess may have broken out of her domestic space but the international space she finds is far from uncomfortable.

Thus, Jess, and to a lesser extent, Jules, may break out of the collective traditions of home as individuals in an oppositional manner, but this move does not maintain a challenge to the dominant myths and symbols of the nation. While they dream of an idealised escape, that this is to America (often seen as the home of mainstream cinema) again suggests that there are narrative solutions available to the characters of these films, and to the films themselves. Also, it is noticeable that these solutions lie outside of the imagined communities of the home and host nations, and the migration that exists between the two. While, on one level,

it is acceptable to view this in purely depoliticized terms, it is also possible to suggest that this endorsement of dominant conventions is a conscious one. *Bend it like Beckham*, and its resulting international commercial success, suggests that narrative solutions to the problems of gender and race found in a British context are available, and can be found in America.

Leaving Comfortable Domestic Cinema: *Bride and Prejudice*

Whilst sport in *Bend it Like Beckham* is coded in terms of nation, Chadha's next film, *Bride and Prejudice* took another aspect of English culture, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and moved it into the contact zones of hyphenated identity. This film foregrounds the movement of its female characters and protagonists whilst simultaneously highlighting the movement of the source text as a whole, as it takes a key work from the English literary canon and applies it to Hollywood musicals, Bollywood and the heritage film. *Bride and Prejudice*'s commercial success also suggests the importance of this movement of a canonical text of English literature into a number of foreign national cinemas to an understanding of post-nationalist theory's relationship with mainstream or commercial cinema. Thus, by examining its gender roles, particularly in relation to the film's contact zones with other cinematic genres, a discussion of *Bride and Prejudice* can further highlight the complex and contradictory relationship between Gurinder Chadha's films and post-nationalist theory.

In updating *Pride and Prejudice*, this film focuses on the Bakshi family, particularly Lalita (Aishwariya Rai). Her parents, Manorama (Nadira Babbar) and Chaman (Anupam Kher), attempt to find her and her sisters husbands to secure the family's financial future. She encounters William Darcy (Martin Henderson), an aloof, rich American hotelier, who at first appears disinterested in Lalita's hometown of Amritsar and by extension India itself. Despite

her suitors, Lalita remains strong-willed and independent, much to the displeasure of her mother. She begins a relationship of sorts with the English Johnny Wickham (Daniel Gillies) who has had previous unhappy dealings with the Darcy family. Things turn sour when the marriage of Lalita's sister to Balraj (Naveen Andrews) falls through and Wickham elopes with her younger sister Lakhi (Peeya Rai Chowdhary). However, Wickham's villainous past is revealed, and Darcy joins Lalita in finding her sister and protecting the family's honour. This allows the happy resolution of the narrative as Lalita and Darcy, and Balraj and Jaya (Namrata Shirodkar), are married in a large public ceremony.

Due to its links with the source text, *Bride and Prejudice* offers its female protagonist little opportunity to break out from her domestic space. Lalita, although depicted as having strong will and political opinions, is still defined by her need to find a husband. Yet, she is not a figure of domestic space. She is rarely seen to be working in the house, but instead supports her father on the family farm. She is, however, a clear figure of the home nation in that not only does she work in the picturesque landscape, but she frequently defends India's position against the Westernising forces of Darcy. This point is further emphasised when considering she is played by a recognisable Bollywood star, Aishwariya Rai, yet not as the traditional heroine of Indian cinema. Rai is more readily known as the 'demure, sari-clad, conventional Indian heroine who is untouched by any "anti-national" western influence in dress, behaviour or ideas' (Mathur, 2007), making her appearance here as the jean-wearing, tractor-riding modern (almost Western) woman a departure from audience expectations. This is reinforced by her role in the musical numbers, where her performance of crossover song and dance routines makes her 'body the ultimate 'contact zone', the place where the many different resonances of the film coalesce' (Guarracino, 2009, p.387). This change, characterised by Guarracino (2009) as the move from the pride of the original to the bride of the movie (that being the foregrounding of an international star above the themes of the

book), helps to begin the process of distancing the film from more traditional readings of the source novel and move it into readings of international cinema.

While Lalita is an international symbol of India, Darcy represents America and the tensions of their relationship reflect the conflict of their contact zone. Initially, Darcy is shown to be the film's version of an 'ugly American' in the international contact zones on screen (Claydon, 2009) in that he is unable to understand the cultural traditions of India or see their purpose. This, at first, divides him from Lalita, who objects to the commercialisation of India by external (American) forces. America is itself tied to commerce when the Bakshi family head to LA. The opening montage of the city is accompanied by the song *Ride Wit Me*, which repeats the phrase "It must be the money." Yet this relationship between the nations inevitably thaws as Darcy comes to understand the traditions of India, illustrated when he refuses to buy a hotel near Amristar, even though it costs his company financially. Lalita also seems more accepting of America when the pair is shown in a 'montage of fountain dances and beach walks complete with gospel choir and singing surfers' in LA (Claydon, 2009, p.56). Thus, although there is some tension in the contact zone between America and India, this again is resolved. Darcy simply refuses to exploit the economic potential of India, allowing Lalita to embrace the wealth offered by his country and family.

The true ugly American of the film is not one who is actually a representative of that culture, but a figure of hyphenated identity in Mr. Kohli (Nitin Ganatra). Updating Mr. Collins from the original text, Mr. Kohli acts as a comedic figure and symbol of the corruption of traditional Indian values by American influence. He is a figure of fun to Lalita, his table manners are bad and his use of both languages is incorrect, as shown when he incorrectly refers to Mrs. Bakshi as "Mamaji" and calls America "Amrika" (Claydon, 2009, p.55). This is most noticeable during one of the film's musical numbers, *No Life Without Wife*, in which he is

seen sprawling unattractively in stars and stripes underwear in front of a KHOLIWOOD/HOLLYWOOD sign. Again, it is commercialism that seems to deter Lalita the most, particularly when she mocks his love of money by referring him to a story of excess about a man with access to three swimming pools told by her father earlier. This pejorative representation of migrant cultures is not sustained throughout the film, however, as when married and settled in Los Angeles, Mr. Kohli is shown to be a welcoming host and close professional associate of Darcy. However, he does still draw the most criticism from the film in his role as the migrant whose national identity has been consumed by the wealth of America.

Bride and Prejudice also provides a number of contact zones which are much more oppositional, the first of which is the film's relationship with the source novel. Aside from minor differences (for example, Darcy's name being changed from Fitzwilliam to William, a change which now suggests the American's money has come from legitimate sources (Claydon, 2009, p.49)) the overall move of the canonical text to Bollywood musical is often seen as a form of post-colonial 'cheekiness' which 'undermines the seriousness accorded to the Austen text' (Mathur, 2007). The representation of Englishness reaffirms this. The Bakshi family are forced to stay in small, claustrophobic domestic spaces whilst there, in comparison with the space of Los Angeles, and the change of Darcy's nationality leaves Wickham, the villain, as its sole English figure. Thus, although the montage of London on the family's arrival there includes a temple, suggesting multicultural integration, it is still elitist and aristocratic when Kiran (Indira Virma) looks out of her window at Buckingham Palace and notes the Queen is at home. In this sense, it is not the Britain of *My Beautiful Laundrette* opposed on screen, but that of the cinematic adaptation most usually associated with *Pride and Prejudice*, the heritage film.

What *Bride and Prejudice* most openly resembles, however, is the Bollywood family drama, or masala (meaning mixture of spices) (Mooij, 2006), film. This formula is most broadly described as a 'patriotic family romance that combines various elements from distinct Hollywood genres into one coherent narrative pattern' (Mathur, 2007) but actually features 'storylines of epic proportions, often involving the breakup and make-up of extended families. Some six to eight songs and intricate choreography, in which the actors themselves participate, are used to emphasize the story's emotional high points' (Mooij, 2006, p.30). This treatment of a canonical text of English literature obviously holds post-colonial relevance, and can even be seen as opposing the British Raj films of *A Passage to India* (1984) and *Gandhi* (1982) in the way that *My Beautiful Laundrette* was seen to (Hill, 1999). Thus, moving an adaptation of an English literary classic from the heritage film to Bollywood, the national cinema of a former colony, suggests that the myths and symbols of England are being opposed and remade. It allows a text which is usually treated with deference in cinematic adaptations within its home country to be remade and altered within the traditions of country which was previously defined as marginal. As such, it is allowing the process of hermeneutic ethnocentric explanation to translate the novel from a hegemonic position into that of otherness.

Yet it is not to Bollywood alone that *Bride and Prejudice* relates Austen's original novel. It also contains numerous references to the wider crossover appeal of Indian and Bollywood culture in the mainstream and Hollywood. Some of the key concepts of the Hollywood musical – including a focus on the courtship ritual (Altman, 1989) and the generation of a 'utopia through the form of entertainment' (Hayward, 2006, p.274) are apparent here. Also, the music itself is a mix of influences and appears in a varying range of performances, many of which are more reminiscent of Hollywood than Bollywood musicals. This fusion of styles, and its popularity on a global scale, is most clearly expressed when Darcy, Lalita and Wickham attend a party where the main performer is Ashanti, an American pop performer,

who sings a song with clear Indian crossover appeal. Thus, while the move from the heritage film to Bollywood can act as a post-nationalist statement, its use of cultural hybridity and mainstream, commercial structures allows the original text to be opposed by a number of cinematic forms.

Thus, while the conventions of the heritage film and Bollywood musical are challenged, one cinematic contact zone which is untouched is that relating to the Hollywood musical. As stated earlier, the Bollywood masala expects all the main characters to take part in these intricate song and dance routines. Yet, in *Bride and Prejudice*, one figure missing from these sequences is the romantic hero, Darcy. As such, the main American (and Hollywood) representation within the text is spared the parody and pastiche of the musical numbers, and instead left to deliver the romantic resolution of the narrative – striking Wickham in front of a British Bollywood cinema-watching audience, and receiving their literal applause. Thus, once again, it is America which escapes the post-colonial mimicry of the text. When Mr. Kholi claims that America is the new superpower because England is “finished” and India “too corrupt”, Darcy would seem to represent this. He is the Hollywood hero, there to save Lalita and her family from crisis, and to learn about and understand India, but is never asked to wear the stars and stripes underwear of KHOLIWOOD.

Thus, the hybridity of the text both illustrates and contradicts its post-nationalist significance. In terms of India, the text does subvert Bollywood structures to provide a powerful, independent and, arguably, Western role for its leading figure, Aishwarya Rai. Yet, it is also guilty of precisely what Lalita accuses Darcy of – being a tourist and failing to see the “real” India. Lalita talks frequently of the poverty and economic troubles of Amritsar, yet we never see anything other than utopian spectacle on screen. Meanwhile, the original novel is transposed to a foreign space, with foreign cinematic traditions to which it is rarely related,

yet its narrative solutions remain untouched. While its crossover appeal and references to Hollywood musicals help provide a Bollywood accent to the genre, it is the one set of dominant conventions which are never really opposed. Like *Darcy*, the mainstream nature of the text may take a while to understand the structures of India, but it has no problem in transposing them into its own myth and symbols.

Therefore, *Bride and Prejudice* is an ideal film to show how the themes of post-nationalist theory can highlight the contact zones between texts and their genres, and also how Chadha's continued relationship with mainstream cinema generates problems for these readings. By moving *Pride and Prejudice* out of its comfortable domestic setting of the heritage film, and into the uncomfortable international space of the Bollywood crossover film, the text engages in a form of post-colonial mimicry which undermines its source. By infusing its Bollywood narrative with progressive, transnational (even Western) figures, Chadha can also be seen as opposing its traditions and conventions. Despite this, by again offering an idealised American resolution to these national tensions, and essentially providing a Hollywood musical utopia in doing so, the extent to which the space *Bride and Prejudice* occupies can be seen as truly oppositional is limited.

Post-nationalist Theory and Mainstream and National Cinemas: *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* and *It's a Wonderful Afterlife*

Oppositional spaces are almost completely absent in Gurinder Chadha's two most recent films, *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* and *It's a Wonderful Afterlife*. In fact, only the latter even utilises the contact zones between nationalisms as a source of its narrative, as the former removes issues of otherness completely from the text. Both films abandon these representations completely in favour of a form of mainstream entertainment, suggesting the

impossibility that oppositional spaces can be moved into the multiplexes. Thus, they act both as an illustration of the limits of the theory's relevance in cinema, and an indicator of the changing political nature of Chadha's works through extending their contact zones beyond national cinemas (both British national cinema and Black / Asian British cinema) and into the international, mainstream space.

While not dealing with such a canonical text as *Bride and Prejudice*, *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* is an adaptation of a popular literary text, funded by large American studios (Paramount and Nickleodeon) and marketed as a teen version of *Sex and the City* (2008) (Mayer, 2008). The film follows Georgia Nicholson (Georgia Groome), a teenage girl living in Eastbourne and approaching her 16th birthday, negotiating the travails of teenage crushes, her father moving away on business and attempting to find a role at school. Oppositional spaces and social tensions are almost completely absent, as although the major threat of the film is her potential emigration to New Zealand, this is not shown on racial grounds. In focusing on Mrs. Sethi's (Shabana Azmi) attempts to find a suitable husband for her daughter Roopi (Goldy Notay), *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* recalls many of the British Asian themes of Chadha's earlier films, but undermines them with a supernatural and comedic focus by making its protagonist also a serial killer now haunted by the ghosts of her victims until the marriage is complete. As such, although the oppositional spaces of race, class and gender are present, again through the use of food, they are often undermined by humour and countless references to other, mainstream texts. The opening murders are a pastiche of *Se7en* (1995), the engagement party a take on *Carrie* (1976), the ghosts themselves similar to those of *Blithe Spirit* (1945) and so on.

Both films differ from Chadha's other works in that here the move to mainstream tendencies is more overt. Although often used in debates of film, the term mainstream cinema is not

one which has been clearly defined in terms of recurrent formal structures, themes or content. In fact, it remains a term which is used more often used to define other cinemas against (Malik, 1996) than it is overtly discussed in its own right. It has been both defined in a pejorative light for its commercial nature (Wilson, 2000, cited in Giardina, 2003, p.71) and praised for its flexible position which allows it to adapt to and intergrate popular trends to maintain its hegemonic position (Naficy, 2010). Yet, in general terms it can most usefully be seen here as a form of populist and commercial cinema which is produced by large-scale, international film companies. This places such films in a clearly hegemonic position in relation to their more marginal equivalents within migrant cinema, which are often independently produced and discussed within art, as opposed to commercial, cinema. Similarly, from a post-nationalist perspective, such films would more often be seen to lack oppositional spaces and instead help maintain and manufacture consent for forms of dominant nationalisms.

This movement into the mainstream is given more impact when comparing Chadha's work to the body of films to which she would usually apply, Black British or British Asian cinema. It has been argued that black filmmaking is an 'oppositional (cultural) practice' in that should it not merely promote positive black imagery, but this should be combined with the undermining of "'official" race-relations discourse' (Pines, 1996, p.187). This led to many of the filmmakers categorised under this group, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, being 'pigeon-holed as 'experimental film-makers' and 'avant-gardists', rejecting Hollywood's story-telling conventions' (Malik, 1996, p.206). Thus, although Gurinder Chadha's films clearly relate to this tradition, through the director's own hyphenated identity and many of the social and political concerns identified in the texts, they suggest a significant departure from it. While opposing this relationship with Black British cinema by refusing to endorse its political position could be interpreted as a form of post-nationalist intent, that this is done via the films embracing the hegemonic force in cinema (namely the mainstream, Hollywood quality of

many of the narratives and references), clearly reinforces, rather than opposes, the dominant conventions of cinema.

This move to the mainstream is perhaps most damaging to post-nationalist readings of the films when considering their narrative resolutions. As stated previously, post-nationalist theory argues that texts should not offer narrative solutions to the felt contradictions of society, yet throughout Chadha's work such resolutions (often found elsewhere in mainstream cinema) can be found. This is most clearly the case here. In *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* Georgia faces emigration, rejection by her love interest, Robbie (Aaron Johnson), and her friends, and missing out on the birthday party of her dreams. Yet, in the final scenes her dreams are fulfilled and the party is a success, Robbie performs a song for her and her friends and her father is given exactly the same job in the UK. In *It's a Wonderful Afterlife*, Roopi is married to the man of her dreams, her mother is unpunished for her crimes, and the spirits of her victims are allowed into the afterlife. Thus, while the issues of migration and gender are used to create tension and suggest post-nationalist themes in the films, their resolutions mean that it is impossible for such oppositional spaces to be maintained throughout.

This returns us, again, to a common critical perception that Chadha's work is not 'political enough' (Leggott, 2008). It has been argued that 'the cultural promises of diaspora and hybridity' offered 'the beginnings of a transformation in the cultural certainties of the homogenous, autochthonous nation', yet this changed following the 9/11 attacks (Kalra *et al*, 2005, p.1). Thus, with hindsight, it is worth reinforcing Chadha's connections with post-feminism and New Labour's Cool Britannia and the fact that many of her films were made during this period. Rather than merely highlighting a lack of the political content found elsewhere in Black British cinema, Chadha's films and particularly the movement of their

female protagonist into an international space still highlight the ability of the director to 'take questions of identity into the multiplexes' (Blandford, 2007, p.40). While it would be difficult to maintain the oppositional spaces found in the work of the other directors discussed here and maintain such commercial success, this does not mean that the tensions found in other areas of migrant cinema are absent or insignificant in an understanding of the director's work.

Therefore, the absences of truly oppositional spaces or post-nationalist representations in *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* and *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* highlight the inability of mainstream cinema to sustain deconstructions of the dominant myths and symbols of nations. These mainstream structures are also striking when considering the cinematic context of the films, as they endorse many of the hegemonic forms which are usually seen as being undermined within Black British cinema. However, when placed within their political context (they are the first Chadha films to be made and released in the post 9/11 period) this relationship with the mainstream and the recurring themes of post-feminism becomes more complicated for post-nationalist readings. However, while they lack the oppositional spaces found in the work of the other directors discussed here, this absence illustrates both the political climate of their production and the relationship between mainstream cinema and post-nationalist theory.

Conclusion: Losing Oppositional Space in the films of Gurinder Chadha

The works of Gurinder Chadha are clearly significant within a discussion of post-nationalist theory within cinema as she raises a number of issues which are seemingly more problematic than those of the directors discussed previously. Although her use of gender and generational conflicts help to illustrate the felt contradictions of hyphenated identities in

relation to the dominant myths and symbols of nations, these are then tied to contact zones with other, more mainstream cinemas, as reflected by many of the films' significant international commercial successes. It is this relationship which is most difficult to integrate into post-nationalist theory, yet simultaneously what makes her films most striking. It is precisely the lack of political content and 'art-house seriousness' (Blandford, 2007, p.40) found in the other case studies which can help define the usefulness of post-nationalist theory. Its absence in many of the key aspects of these texts will help to define where its own boundaries lie.

The most obvious post-nationalist tension in the films of Gurinder Chadha is that of generations. Older figures in her work are often portrayed as restrictive figures of the traditional, home nation. They are also (particularly through the use of food and kitchens) representatives of a limiting domestic space from which the heroines must break free to access a more expansive and empowering space. It is obviously significant then that these figures are often pre-feminist mothers who are unable to understand their post-feminist daughters. Male figures, often symbols of the dominant patriarchy are, instead, those who facilitate this move into the national and international space. However, these challenges are never shown to be things which cannot be overcome. With only a few exceptions, the female figures in Gurinder Chadha's work are all able to break out of their domestic spaces and the figures of the traditional, home nation must learn to accept this. Thus, although the tension of this contact zone is apparent throughout the films, it is always resolved in a manner which suggests that conflict can be worked through in favour of youth.

This is not to overlook the relevance of gender in the films. It is significant that Chadha, without exception, uses strong and powerful female figures as her protagonists, thus helping to facilitate their movement beyond the domestic space. Patriarchy is almost completely

placed on the sidelines, with the notable exception of father figures who must limit the pre-feminist mothers of the traditional home nation. These female protagonists appear at first in the form of groups, further helping to illustrate their potential opposition to the patriarchy of cinema, but this shifts slightly to a more individualistic approach in her later work. The later films also suggest a more optimistic outlook which can be tied both to the 'largely depoliticised rhetoric of post-feminism' (Ashby, 2010, pg. 165) and the contemporary popularity of New Labour's Cool Britannia and girl power. However, the result of this change also has implications for post-nationalist theory in that although these figures move out of the comfortable domestic space of home, the space they find, despite being national and international, is far from oppositional to the dominant myths and symbols of the nations concerned.

This lack of oppositional and political spaces is a recurring issue throughout Chadha's films. One reason for this is her films' relationships with mainstream cinema. Despite the ambiguity of the term mainstream cinema, it is usually accepted that texts belonging to this sphere require narrative solutions or happy endings (a point in direct contradiction to that of post-nationalist theory). Thus, it is noticeable that each of the films discussed here offers a happy ending. Contradictions are resolved and the female protagonists are often overwhelmed by being granted everything they desire. However, Chadha's relationship to the mainstream is a complex one. This is most notably clear in *Bride and Prejudice*, a text which creates a number of contact zones between mainstream cinemas (the heritage film, Bollywood and Hollywood) to undermine and mimic each. In this sense, not only do her female protagonists break out from the domestic spaces they face, the films themselves break away from their own national cinemas into a hybrid, international space. However, like her female characters, the work of Gurinder Chadha does not necessarily adopt an oppositional position as a result of this.

The reasons for this lack of opposition are varied, but one potential point of discussion is the use of post-feminism within the texts. Gurinder Chadha's works are often discussed in terms of their post-feminist representations of girl power. Her female characters (particularly Jess, Lalita and Georgia) are often given the power to confront and undermine the patriarchal structures of the communities around them, but do so in an un-oppositional, post-feminist manner. Her heroines readily accept the help of patriarchal figures in their diverse pursuits, such as Jess' hopes to break down the chauvinism of both male-dominated sport and her hyphenated identity, and also win the affections of her white coach. Post-feminism is often defined by both its optimism and its lack of politics, and the latter clearly contradicts post-nationalist theories of oppositional spaces. While such a position does not go so far as to reinforce the hegemonic structures of patriarchy, their potential opposition is undermined by the continued assumption that these are films which lack the political focus found in much of Black British cinema. Yet, although tensions are occasionally absent and often resolved, the films of Gurinder Chadha still highlight the relevance of the oppositional spaces of post-nationalist theory to both migrant cinema and the woman's film, and illustrate their limitations within a mainstream context.

This point is given further relevance when related to the concept of 'masking' (Duncan, 2006). This allowed issues of homosexuality to be discussed without outright confession, and when homosexual themes were then claimed as a non-official nationalism which deconstructed the hegemonic position of heterosexuality, a process of re-masking could possibly, negatively, strip them of their significance. With this in mind, both the mainstream tendencies and post-feminist leanings of Chadha's work provide two concepts which are unable to be re-masked. The post-feminist resolutions of the heroines and the texts' overall optimism and lack of politics directly contradict the core concepts of post-nationalist theory.

In this sense, we can begin to understand the limits of the theory. Its need to find solely oppositional spaces and political contact in all interactions will not be found in every text. Accordingly, its complete absence in *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* is particularly relevant. Unlike the other films, its tensions do not derive from social issues of gender and race, suggesting that it is not in keeping with much of the migrant cinema discussed elsewhere and is instead a more traditional mainstream text.

This lack of politics should not be seen solely in a pejorative light. Just as Fatih Akin's work seemed to suggest that oppositional structures could be broken down by examining the individual nature of such conflicts (particularly in relation to Turkey's involvement in the EU), and Ferzan Ozpetek's films suggest a hopeful move of homosexual discourses into the mainstream, Chadha's post-feminist optimism should not be overlooked as apolitical. In many ways, it still contains many of the oppositional structures of *My Beautiful Laundrette*, particularly in its deconstruction of the British raj films, and although the inclusion of narrative solutions to these problems may be problematic in some ways, it is understandable when placed within the context of the films. Thus, while it is possible to say that post-nationalist theory cannot truly be found within mainstream cinema, the reasons for this, and what is left behind when these films make that journey, is certainly an important aspect of our understanding of how this theory relates specifically to cinema.

The final problem, however, is the relationship between Gurinder Chadha's films and their representations of America. Whilst never completely opposed or undermined, the home and host nations of Britain and India are at least mimicked or moved into the more uncomfortable spaces of the crossover film. America, however, does not face this scrutiny. From the male strippers of *Bhaji on the Beach*, to the idealised, utopian escape offered in *Bend it Like Beckham*, America is shown as almost completely free of oppositions. While there are

oppositional spaces in *What's Cooking?*, it is the only Chadha film in which escape does not play a role. Although fragmented and other, the four American families still rush out to support each when a gunshot is heard. Whilst these representations are undoubtedly tied to notions of mainstream / Hollywood cinema, their links to America as a nation clearly endorse, rather than undermine, the dominant nationalism in this case. In this sense, *What's Cooking?* offers a film in which the tensions of migration are seemingly resolved, and again this occurs only in America.

Therefore, while the escapes of her main protagonists obviously hold nationalist significance, the films of Gurinder Chadha do not abandon the structures of national cinema in favour of international, commercial cinema to endorse a post-nationalist position. Whilst her post-feminist protagonists can find a space outside of comfortable domesticity which is simultaneously expansive and non-oppositional, Chadha's commercial films find a similarly safe international space. Although opening up contact zones between films and film genres, the texts and protagonists do not always use this space in an oppositional manner, but instead offer narrative solutions to the social conflicts they contain. This suggested incompatibility between post-nationalism and the mainstream is interesting for many reasons. Whilst it is easy to criticise Chadha's work for being optimistic and not political enough, the absence of this political content is also relevant here. Not only does it show the borders and limits of post-nationalist theory within cinema, but it also shows what is lost when post-nationalist theory moves out of its own comfortable space.

Conclusions

The research addressed two primary questions. They are:

- How can the use of post-nationalist theory benefit and advance cinematic debates (particularly those of national and transnational cinemas)?
- What role do migrant and exilic filmmakers play in illustrating this?

From this, several subsidiary questions were addressed. They include:

- How appropriate are post-nationalist readings of these texts in comparison to those of national and transnational cinemas?
- Which of the existing theories in cinema / migrant cinema can be used to develop post-nationalist theory?
- To what extent is it appropriate to draw the discourses of non-official nationalisms (i.e. those of gender, race, sexuality, etc) under the heading of post-nationalism?
- How useful are the existing labels applied to these texts (particularly in relation to the term 'migrant cinema')?
- In what ways is post-nationalist theory still reliant on nationalist myths and what are the consequences of this for the research?

Post-nationalist Theory and Cinema

When reviewing the literature on national and transnational cinemas, a noticeable gap appears. While national cinema remains one of the most developed and developing topics within film studies, its dependence on discussions of national issues and films in isolation has resulted in it often overlooking the changing contemporary political and social

landscape, as is acknowledged in many of the debates. Meanwhile, transnational cinema is, currently, less well-defined. Too often it fails to interrogate the contact between nations, which are filled with power structures and politicised interaction, choosing instead to reflect the developments occurring. Post-nationalist theory's discussion of the contact zones between nationalisms, its overt focus that this contact always contains the binary oppositions of the hegemon and the other, and that attention should be given to texts which undermine and oppose the dominant myths and symbols, is one which addresses this gap. It both highlights contact zones where this can be the case, and identifies a series of critical tools which can help illustrate and understand this process.

This thesis has identified a number of key concepts within post-nationalist theory which can be used to critically understand and analyse this gap in the literature. While this includes the core concepts of the binary oppositions of the contact zone, within this context it has specifically included:

- Within the films of Fatih Akin (Chapter Two), this primarily takes the form of the depiction of migrant figures as 'abject subjects' (Elsaesser, 2006). This means that not only are they figures who are denied meaning in the societies around them, but their films are left without narrative solutions to the contradictions they face.
- Within the films of Ferzan Ozpetek (Chapter Three), non-official nationalisms within the nation (such as race and gender, but primarily sexuality) are used to create oppositional spaces. This allows both a deconstruction of patriarchy in society on screen, and of traditional patriarchal representations in Italian cinema in general.
- Within the films of Atom Egoyan (Chapter Four), a complex and reflexive style is used to undermine meaning and understanding of the texts as a whole. Where this is coupled with a focus on national issues, the films challenge both the national

representations within the texts, and the cinematic forms and structures to which they relate.

- Within the films of Michael Haneke (Chapter Five), this complexity and the director's celebrated interrogative style are extended to examine how both national representations and their spectators can be challenged. As such, their ambiguity acts as a challenge to the viewer to negotiate their own reading of the history on screen without endorsing the dominant myths and symbols.
- Within the films of Gurinder Chadha (Chapter Six), gender is used to identify female figures that refuse to sit in the comfortable domestic spaces of home and instead break out into a more challenging international space. This move which is mirrored by the director's commercial success in moving away from the domestic spaces of a national cinema and into an international, mainstream tradition.

As such, these critical concepts of post-nationalist theory (and many others) can become crucial to an understanding of how nationalisms interact in contemporary cinema.

This results in the identification of a number of films which create an oppositional space which focuses on the deconstruction of the imagined communities of home and host nations, and migration. This space recalls the Third Space discussed by Bhabha (2004) in that it is an unfixed, flexible position which allows marginal figures to sit outside, and therefore comment upon, the parties involved. Yet, within the specific context of post-nationalist theory, this position is used solely to deconstruct and undermine the dominant myths and symbols. This means that oppositions must be maintained in relation to all the nationalisms involved, denying the texts meaning in the host nation and idealised homecomings, whilst also depicting the restrictive, claustrophobic spaces of migration. Where this is the case, the films overtly challenge the constructions of national cinemas, and take a politicised position that challenges many of the concepts found within transnational cinema literature. This

provides a noticeable contrast to the work on African cinemas provided by Tcheuyap (2011), where the Third Space identified is more balanced as it exists between the nationalist and oppositional representations of such politicised productions. Without that context, within migrant cinema a more oppositional Third Space is required to begin this process of remaking the dominant nationalisms involved. As such, their post-nationalist representations make them difficult for critics to incorporate them into the existing spheres of literature.

What is noticeable, however, is that much of the literature required to fill this gap already exists within the current context, although this currently lacks an overt focus on nationalism. Many of the debates on migration and migrant cinema used here exist elsewhere, although within studies of film they are currently often placed within transnational cinema literature, alongside many other contradictory concepts. As such, the focus on counter-hegemonic narratives and production modes found in an *Accented Cinema* (2001) and elsewhere provide the framework for an understanding of post-nationalist theory in film. Equally, many of the critical concepts found in each of the case studies, notably the 'abject subjects' (Elsaesser, 2006) of Akin, Ozpetek's use of sexuality to remake the nation, the reflexive and interrogative style of Egoyan and Haneke respectively and the importance of gender in Chadha's films, already exist in cinema literature. They are rarely, however, incorporated into such an overt national context. That such debates are so closely tied to the issues of post-nationalist theory, and when placed together these case studies suggest a number of recurrent themes, suggests the possibility for the necessity of further debate in this field.

Simultaneously, this benefit is reciprocal for post-nationalist theorists. Cinema remains absent in many of the core texts associated with this theory, although its relevance as both a popular medium that crosses international borders and a potential venue for numerous contact zones is clearly apparent. As such, the many oppositional spaces found here echo

the concerns discussed in the literature, and add further weight to their evidence. However, most importantly, the films discussed also add a number of key debates to those already existing in post-nationalist theory. They find oppositional spaces not only in the representations on screen, but also between and within cinemas and genres. Yet, most significantly, several of the films extend this opposition to their spectators, and force the audience into a position in which they must negotiate their own meaning without endorsing the dominant myths and symbols on screen. In this context, the importance of cinema within post-nationalist theory becomes even more crucial in that it can force its spectators to re-imagine the nationalisms on screen.

One significant limitation highlighted in this relationship between cinema and post-nationalist theory, however, is the relevance of mainstream cinema in the work of Gurinder Chadha. Although often loosely defined as something to be related to, rather than a clear set of critical concepts, mainstream cinema remains the dominant form in the field and one most often opposed by migrant cinema. However, Chadha's films enter into this space, and often use the social and political concerns of migration as a source of tension in doing so, alongside gender. Despite this, the films do not maintain an oppositional position. Instead, they use the structures of mainstream cinema, positive representations of America, and a post-feminist outlook to find narrative solutions to these concerns. Although this does not make the films irrelevant to this study as both their lack of politics and use of migrant issues in this setting are important, it does help to highlight the boundaries of post-nationalist theory in cinema. Although oppositional spaces are found throughout these films, this does suggest that they cannot be maintained in such a mainstream context.

Another limitation highlighted by this thesis is the potential to re-mask the issues of non-official nationalisms and therefore overlook their diverse meanings. In a number of the films,

most notably the use of sexuality in the work of Ferzan Ozpetek, non-official nationalisms are used to highlight oppositions within, rather than between, nations. However, by unmasking the national implications of such issues, it is important not to suggest that all representations of homosexuality, gender or class are oppositional. This is exacerbated by the reflexivity and complexity in several of the filmmakers' works. While this can often be used to create ambiguous texts and positions that force the audience into the oppositional position of having to create their own meaning, it can also tempt critics into the position of filling a deliberate ambiguity with post-nationalist concepts. Thus, while both non-official nationalisms and reflexive, ambiguous texts can create oppositional spaces, it is important to recognise that not all non-official nationalist representations and ambiguity is post-nationalist. It is only when this is integrated into an overtly national context that this becomes relevant.

However, although this thesis' case study approach has helped to illustrate these core themes, its limitations should also be acknowledged. Due to the time constraints of this study, the attempt to help develop a relatively new theory within cinema and the necessity to acknowledge potential limitations of the post-nationalist theory in film, a case study approach was used to answer the research questions. It has, however, resulted in the possibility that several key films have been overlooked, along with other concepts that may have been in evidence elsewhere. As such, future studies on the subject could both look beyond the work of the migrant filmmakers discussed here and examine the relevance of post-nationalist theory in other areas of cinema. Although post-nationalist theory is most clearly relevant to a study of national, transnational and migrant cinemas, its concepts could also be valid elsewhere. Simultaneously, other aspects of film criticism beyond those of migrant cinema could also be useful in developing the contribution of film to the developing body of post-nationalist theory literature. This thesis is intended to be a starting point for debate, rather than a complete discussion of all the potentially relevant arguments.

Similarly, the rigour with which the chosen methodology has been used has provided both strengths and limitations in this research. A case study approach which has rigorously examined every film in each director's work was chosen to identify recurrent themes where present and also illustrate the limitations of such themes where absent. However, this has meant that when analysing films of limited relevance to the overall question it has been difficult to maintain a focused argument on the absence of relevant readings in such rich films. While it has helped illustrate the limitations of post-nationalist theory in migrant cinema, the temptation to force such themes on non-opposition films has been in evidence and the need to discuss such absence may have resulted in the inclusion of analysis which has been limited in its use here. An alternative methodology in which only relevant films are discussed is advisable now a more general understanding is in place.

Therefore, the relevance of post-nationalist theory to cinema, and vice versa, should be clearly apparent. It acts as a theory which fills a crucial gap in the existing literature on national and transnational cinemas by addressing both the content and political nature of the contact zones which exist between nations. It provides a number of critical tools to analyse and understand this contact, whilst also privileging films which create oppositional spaces in relation to all nationalisms on screen. Simultaneously, cinema helps to aid the theory's development by not only including texts from such a significant medium, but by highlighting how these oppositions can be specifically created in film, particularly in relation to the viewing audience. Migrant cinema has been used to provide case studies for this, but future debates on the subject should not be limited to such a context. Yet, with this understanding in place, post-nationalist theory can be used to advance debates of national, transnational and migrant cinemas, while cinema can also be used to develop the theory itself.

Migrant Cinema

Migrant cinema has been used as a case study in this thesis for two primary reasons. Firstly, it is an existing element of transnational film criticism which often incorporates the more oppositional elements of debates on the subject. Secondly, as figures of hyphenated identity, the filmmakers discussed here have greater access to a larger number of contact zones between and within the imagined communities involved. As such, the films regularly feature the contact zones of migrant representations and border crossings, as well as a depiction of migration which is shown as oppositional to the dominant myths and symbols. This has meant that the frequency with which nationalisms come into contact with each other is greater in the films discussed here, providing richer evidence for further discussions of post-nationalist theory's relationship with film. That this has coincided with a prevalence of depictions of oppositional spaces in these contact zones has added weight to the relevance of these films to a study of this subject.

However, it is not only this literal definition of migration which has meant the subject is relevant, but it is also important that the state of migration is seen as creating a discursive position which allows the filmmakers to comment on the nationalisms at play. The existing literature on migration (Chambers, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Said, 1990) and post-colonial theories on the subject (Bhabha, 1990a, 2004) have all suggested that it grants individuals a rootless quality which allows them to stand aside from and challenge the dominant myths and symbols. Simultaneously, within film it has developed theories such as those of an *Accented Cinema* (Naficy, 2001) which suggest that such films contain many counter-hegemonic qualities which are absent elsewhere. Therefore, it is not only the literal increased access to the contact zones between nations that makes a study of migrant cinema important within post-nationalist theory. The rootless position it creates is also highly significant in both facilitating and encouraging oppositional spaces to be created.

Concepts of a migrant cinema, however, do raise additional problems. Although existing debates on the subject facilitate an understanding of their oppositional nature, they can often overlook the diverse social and political experiences of individuals in each specific national context. In this thesis, the case studies have been selected to represent a diverse range of personal migrant experiences, and include a wide variety of nations such as Great Britain, Armenia, Turkey, Canada, India and several others. As such, although it is difficult to view each migrant context in great detail, it is important not to suggest that migrant filmmakers offer one homogenous response to such a varied range of national issues. Therefore, while it is possible to state that many of the migrant films discussed here contain the oppositional spaces identified by post-nationalist theory, it would be wrong to suggest that all migrant cinema is post-nationalist and all migrant responses to their individual contexts are oppositional. Although it provides filmmakers with the opportunity to create an oppositional space, their response varies from context to context, and film to film. As such, while it is relevant to stress the importance of migrant cinema to post-nationalist theory, the reverse should not be automatically presumed.

This diversity in migrant cinema is best illustrated by an understanding of the contradictory impulses of conformity and resistance in the films. Several of the filmmakers discussed in this thesis display a changing and flexible concern with certain issues that can be both oppositional and confirming depending on the specific context. Not only do they vary from issue to issue (for example, Fatih Akin's political representations become a lot more relational when Turkey's relationship with the EU is introduced) but also over time (such as Ferzan Ozpetek's depiction of homosexuality as remaking the nation in *La Fate ignorati*, and then being integrated within it in *Saturno Contro*). As the issues of the texts are regularly political, such differing responses to them are often striking and difficult to negotiate.

Accordingly, it is inappropriate to define migrant cinema as having one counter-hegemonic political stance, as it instead reflects the diversity of the filmmakers and their backgrounds with a variety of approaches to a variety of different social tensions. Thus, while the prevalence of the impulse of resistance in the films is relevant for post-nationalist theory, it is inappropriate to overlook and undervalue the importance of conformity in migrant cinema.

These contradictory impulses of migration, however, question the usefulness of the term migrant cinema in this context. While it has been necessary to avoid homogenising migrant experience within a discussion of these films, the case study approach has highlighted precisely how contradictory and diverse the texts are. Although the fact that this shared aspect of identity increases the likelihood of oppositional spaces makes it relevant for post-nationalist theory, it should not be defined by it. This is illustrated by a number of texts which do not belong to migrant cinema, such as *Un prophète* (2009) (which is made by a non-migrant director, yet still uses many of the themes and oppositions of post-nationalist theory in its depictions of migrant figures and the nation), but highlight a relevance for future discussions of post-nationalist theory in cinema. As such, although this thesis has used migrant cinema as a starting point to introduce post-nationalist theory into debates of cinema, it should not be viewed as the only aspect or that this theory completes an understanding of the films.

Therefore, while the use of migrant filmmakers as case studies investigating the relationship between post-nationalist theory and cinema has been useful, it has also raised a number of issues for the body of work itself. Although there are many shared themes within migrant cinema and post-nationalist theory, such as the flexible space which they access in their contact zones with nation, this is not always characterised by the same response. The term migrant cinema should never homogenise the diverse backgrounds of the filmmakers

included, and instead highlight the diverse responses of their work to shared issues and concerns which are found across migrations. Thus, the overtly oppositional nature of post-nationalist theory should not be forced onto every aspect of discussions of migrant cinema, as the contradictory impulses of conformity and resistance play too great a role to ignore. It can, however, help to illustrate these impulses, and therefore provides a framework for understanding this resistance, while also highlighting those of conformity where it is absent.

Summary

Therefore, to summarise, post-nationalist theory can continue to make a contribution to debates of film studies by highlighting the power structures that occur when nations and their cinemas enter into contact zones with each other. They also provide a number of critical tools which can aid our understanding of this contact. This includes the concept of the contact zone itself, the significance of narrative solutions which manufacture consent, the use of non-official nationalism in opposing the dominant myths and symbols from within, the relevance of female figures that break out from the comfortable domestic space of the home nation and the process of hermeneutic ethnocentric explanation which can translate the messages of otherness into hegemonic forms. It has used migrant cinema as an example of many of these tools. The result is the identification of the oppositional spaces which exist within and between texts (similar to Bhabha's Third Space (2004)). Although flexible and unfixed, these spaces act to both empower figures of otherness and help oppose and deconstruct the hegemonic structures and positions. This focus on the power within these contact zones can greatly aid our understanding of national and transnational cinemas.

Meanwhile, cinematic concepts and theories have also been shown as being able to advance our understanding of post-nationalist theory. Despite the close relationship in

evidence between cinema and post-nationalist theory, it is a medium which is relatively absent in much of the literature. Thus, by applying it to the field of migrant cinema, the following debates have been found to hold an oppositional quality worthy of discussion. Firstly, recurrent themes of the Accented style (Naficy, 2001) of migrant filmmakers have been shown to be counter-hegemonic and oppositional. Meanwhile, the films have also been shown to create not just oppositional spaces in the contact zones on screen, but also between texts and genres via their use of intertextuality. The films have also displayed a reflexive style which undermines many of the structures of cinema. These issues have culminated in a depiction of a particularly cinematic form of oppositional space in which it is not only the position of the dominant nationalism on screen which is interrogated, but an additional contact zone is created in order to challenge the audience.

However, the specific implication for the continued development of post-nationalist theory into film for migrant cinema offers complications. The case studies used here have acted to illustrate many of the key aspects of the theory, and a number of oppositional spaces have been identified within the texts. Despite this, they have also highlighted a key difference between the theory and the nature of migrant cinema. While the theory has a specific focus on the oppositions created on screen, the contradictory impulses of conformity and resistance (Duncan, 2006) have been found throughout migrant cinema, allowing the filmmakers to reflect a diverse range of responses to the complex and varied social and political concerns they face. As such, it is difficult to apply the label “migrant cinema” to the post-nationalist texts found here, as this would overlook the importance conformity plays in the films’ responses to their surroundings. This means that while oppositional spaces are regularly found within migrant cinema, it would be incorrect to characterise them as an oppositional body of films. However, post-nationalist theory can still help to illustrate this diversity by discussing how any resistance is formed, and highlighting the conformity which exists in its absence.

Meanwhile, this approach has also highlighted several limitations which can be developed as post-nationalist theories are introduced into discussions of cinema. The most significant of these is the theory's relationship with mainstream or Hollywood cinema. Regularly used as a hegemonic form in several of the texts, mainstream cinematic structures are often undermined by the reflexive style of these films, along with their on screen oppositions. However, although a number of the films discussed attempt to introduce these oppositions into a mainstream setting, this space is not maintained and often narrative solutions are offered within the films to endorse the position of the hegemon. Meanwhile, the ambiguity of the texts and the unfixed and flexible creation of an oppositional space mean it is important not to re-mask the issues of non-official nationalisms with post-nationalist concepts. This is because while it is possible for a range of issues to be used to oppose the dominant myths and symbols, this requires a specific focus on national issues in the texts to avoid stripping individual discourses of their power. Also, as discussed above, the impulses of conformity and resistance found in migrant cinema suggest that oppositional spaces are not necessarily a consistent aspect of the directors' works, but merely selected where appropriate to reflect the political and social concerns of each context. Thus, although a case study approach was necessary to introduce the nuance of post-nationalist theory into film theory, a more general approach could help to identify additional oppositional spaces in cinema in the future now that a general understanding is in place.

Yet, even with these limitations in mind, post-nationalist theory can play a significant role in developing our understanding of cinematic nations in the future. Its analysis of the oppositional spaces used in contact zones between and within nations aids an understanding of how power is distributed and used to define these nations. As such, it develops concepts both of national (how they are opposed and deconstructed from their own

margins) and transnational (by moving beyond a reflection or description of such contact zones to capture their changing political nature) cinemas. It uses a number of critical tools within these contact zones, such as the importance of the denial of narrative solutions, hermeneutic ethnocentric explanation, non-official nationalisms and so on, which can be of use throughout film studies. Equally, theories found within cinema, such as the oppositions to the gaze, the counter-hegemonic forms of the Accented style (Naficy, 2001), the contact zones of intertextuality, and the use of reflexivity to create oppositional spaces in relation to the audience, can be used to develop post-nationalist theory in the future. With this understanding in place it is possible for post-nationalist theory to assist marginal and interstitial texts to oppose and deconstruct the dominant myths and symbols and help re-imagine the communities of nations.

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- A Room with a View* (1985, dir. James Ivory, UK)
- The Adjuster* (1991, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)
- Adoration* (2008, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)
- Amour* (2012, dir. Michael Haneke, FRA / GER / AUT)
- Angst essen Seele auf* (1974, dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, GER)
- Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* (2008, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK / GER / USA)
- Ararat* (2002, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN / FRA)
- Auf der anderen Seite* (2007, dir. Fatih Akin, GER / TUR / ITA)
- Babel* (2006, dir. Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, FRA / USA / MEX)
- De battre mon coeur s'est arrêté* (2005, dir. Jacques Audiard, FRA)
- Bend it Like Beckham* (2002, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK / Ger / USA)
- Bhaji on the Beach* (1993, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK)
- Blithe Spirit* (1945, dir. David Lean, UK)
- Bride and Prejudice* (2004, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK / USA)
- Caché* (2005, dir. Michael Haneke, FRA / AUT / GER / ITA / USA)
- Calendar* (1993, dir. Atom Egoyan, ARM / CAN / GER)
- Carrie* (1976, dir. Brian De Palma, USA)
- Chariots of Fire* (1981, dir. Hugh Hudson, UK)
- Chloe* (2009, dir. Atom Egoyan, USA / CAN / FRA)
- Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages* (2000, dir. Michael Haneke, FRA / GER / ROM)
- Cuore Sacro* (2005, dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, ITA)
- Exotica* (1994, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)
- Family Viewing* (1988, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)

La Fate ignorati (2001, dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, ITA / FRA)
Felicia's Journey (1999, dir. Atom Egoyan, Can / UK)
Le Finestre di fronte (2003, dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, ITA / TUR/ POR / UK)
Fingers (1978, dir. James Toback, USA)
Funny Games (1997, dir. Michael Haneke, AUT)
Funny Games US (2007, dir. Michael Haneke, USA / FRA / AUT / GER / ITA)
Gegen die Wand (2004, dir. Fatih Akin, GER / TUR)
Gandhi (1982, dir. Richard Attenborough, UK / IND)
La haine (1995, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz, FRA)
Hamam (1997, dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, TUR / ITA / SPA)
Harem Suare (1999, dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, TUR / ITA / FRA)
Howard's End (1992, dir. James Ivory, UK / JAP)
I'm British But... (1990, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK)
Im Juli (2000, dir. Fatih Akin, GER)
It Happened One Night (1934, dir. Frank Capra, USA)
It's a Wonderful Afterlife (2010, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK)
Kurz und schmerzlos (1998, dir. Fatih Akin, GER)
Lost Highway (1997, dir. David Lynch, FRA / USA)
Magnolia (1999, dir. Paul Thomas Anderson, USA)
Mean Streets (1973, dir. Martin Scorsese, USA)
My Beautiful Laundrette (1985, dir. Stephen Frears, UK)
Next of Kin (1984, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)
La Pianiste (2001, dir. Michael Haneke, AUT / FRA / GER)
The Pianist (2002, dir. Roman Polanski, FRA / POL / GER / UK)
Un prophète (2009, dir. Jacques Audiard, FRA / ITA)
Raging Bull (1980, dir. Martin Scorsese, USA)
The Remains of the Day (1993, dir. James Ivory, UK / USA)
The Ring (2002, dir. Gore Verbinski, USA / JAP)

Ringu (1998, dir. Hideo Nakata, JAP)

Saturno contro (2007, dir. Ferzan Ozpetek, ITA / FRA / TUR)

Scarface (1983, dir. Brian De Palma, USA)

Schindler's List (1993, dir. Steven Spielberg, USA)

Se7en (1995, dir. David Fincher, USA)

Sex and the City (2008, dir. Michael Patrick King, USA)

Short Cuts (1993, dir. Robert Altman, USA)

Solino (2002, dir. Fatih Akin, GER)

Speaking Parts (1989, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)

Suspicion (1941, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, USA)

The Sweet Hereafter (1997, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN)

Le temps du loup (2003, dir. Michael Haneke, FRA / AUT / GER)

Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte (2009, dir. Michael Haneke, GER / AUT / FRA / ITA)

What's Cooking? (2000, dir. Gurinder Chadha, UK / USA)

Where the Truth Lies (2005, dir. Atom Egoyan, CAN / UK)

Village of the Damned (1960, dir. Wolf Rilla, UK)