

MIKA KAURISMÄKI

THE CINEMA OF MIKA KAURISMÄKI TRANSVERGENT CINESCAPES, EMERGENT IDENTITIES **PIETARI KÄÄPÄ**



The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki

The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki

Transvergent Cinescapes, Emergent Identities

Pietari Kääpä



intellect Bristol, UK / Chicago, USA

First published in the UK in 2011 by
Intellect, The Mill, Parnall Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 3JG, UK

First published in the USA in 2011 by
Intellect, The University of Chicago Press, 1427 E. 60th Street,
Chicago, IL 60637, USA

Copyright © 2011 Intellect Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by
any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or
otherwise, without written permission.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the
British Library.

Cover designer: Holly Rose
Copy-editor: Heather Owen
Typesetting: Mac Style, Beverley, E. Yorkshire

ISBN 978-1-84150-409-4 / EISBN 978-1-84150-452-0

Printed and bound by Gutenberg Press, Malta.

Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction: The (trans)national and the Global in Mika Kaurismäki's Films	9
Chapter 1: The Aki/Mika Syndrome: Cosmopolitan Auteurism and the Search for Cinematic Stability	23
Chapter 2: Cross-genre: Transnational Genre Mutations	41
Chapter 3: Mapping Transnational Space at the Margins of the Global Metropolis: Representations of the City in Kaurismäki's Films	65
Chapter 4: Post-road: Deconstructing the European Road Movie	85
Chapter 5: Auto-ethnography: Merging the Self and 'Other' in Brazilian Music Documentaries	107
Chapter 6: Post-nation: Kaurismäki's Films in a Global Spectrum	135
Chapter 7: The Potential of Post-humanism: Kaurismäki and the Ecological Imagination	153
Chapter 8: The Polyphonicity of Transvergence: The Reception of Kaurismäki's Cinema	165
Conclusion: Beyond the Happy Ending	195
Bibliography	201

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a long fascination with Finnish cinema, specifically with those films that try to find new ways for exploring the transnational and increasingly global scope of this form of cultural production. Many individuals have been instrumental in providing substantial support for the project. Tommy Gustafsson, Kimmo Laine, and others have provided suggestions and feedback on different aspects of my work. Andrew Nestingen and Mette Hjort, Henry Bacon, Claire Thomson and Andrew Higson have been astonishingly supportive of the directions of my academic career. They have provided opportunities for publication and pervasive constructive criticism that constantly shapes my work. Mika Kaurismäki has graciously devoted time amongst his busy schedule to provide interviews and information on his films. Kansallinen Audiovisuaalinen Arkisto's library and publications provided valuable research data for the project as did the online services of Project LUMIERE. My editors at Intellect have been extremely helpful and supportive throughout the writing of this book. Jelena Stanovnik has especially been a constantly and invigoratingly motivating participant in the editing process. Oskar Öflund Stiftelse and the Research Committee at University of Nottingham Ningbo provided the book with generous funding, for which I am very grateful.

This book is dedicated to my family, both Finnish and Chinese, and especially to Yan, for all her enduring support during the production of this work.

Pietari Kääpä
October 2010

Introduction: The (trans)national and the Global in Mika Kaurismäki's Films

In summer 2008, cultural columns of Finnish newspapers were reporting an unusual occurrence – Mika Kaurismäki, one of the most well-known Finnish directors, was starting production on a major new film: *Haarautuvan Rakkauden Talo/The House of Branching Love* (Mika Kaurismäki, 2009). Normally, the start of a new Finnish production would be met with some enthusiasm, but certainly not the type of large-scale interest afforded to Kaurismäki's film. Shortly after this event, on 14 November 2008, the Finnish multiplexes started screening a somewhat unusual film amongst the usual Hollywood Christmas blockbusters and large-scale domestic productions: Kaurismäki's *Kolme Viisasta Miestä/Three Wise Men* (Mika Kaurismäki, 2008). The film, focused on three middle-aged divorced men who meet by chance on Christmas Eve, was a no-budget production that presented a distinctly bleak alternative to all the popcorn-fodder available for vacationing consumers. The reviews for the film were mostly positive, but most of the column space was devoted to Kaurismäki and his return to Finland after years of international co-productions. Yet, the film attracted only 1054 spectators.

How can we explain these contradictory modes of reception for Kaurismäki and his films? What are the reasons for the critics' enthusiasm for Kaurismäki's return and the clear disinterest of the audiences for *Three Wise Men*? Why would the Finnish multiplexes release a distinctly non-commercial film at one of the busiest times of the year? And what is the significance of Kaurismäki's intervention in the topic of Christmas celebrations: a festival seen in Finland as a distinctly family-centred national event? The discourses of national culture, popular entertainment, non-commercial art-house characteristics, and a distinctly bleak view of societal alienation intertwine in Kaurismäki's films and the discourse around his work. The introduction of this work will explore these questions as many of these seemingly banal instances hold a key to unpacking Kaurismäki's complex relationship with Finland. Before we move on to discuss some of the potential implications of Kaurismäki's complex relationship with his native country, we have to explore the implications of 'return' in more depth through a brief retrospective of his career.

Mika Kaurismäki and nation

Kaurismäki's career spans nearly 30 years and involves productions ranging from small-scale Godardian exercises (*Valehtelija/The Liar*, 1981) to multinational commercial productions (*Helsinki-Napoli: All Night Long*, 1987), from Finnish heritage films (*Klaani – Tarina Sammakoiden Suvusta/The Clan – A Tale of the Frogs*, 1984) to documentaries on Brazilian music (*Solar Mirror*, 2007). He completed a degree in film production in Munich Film und Fernsehen Schule, where he produced the Finnish-set *The Liar* as his dissertation project. The film gained positive notices on its release in Finland's Tampere Short Film Festival and moderate success on its commercial release in domestic art-house cinemas. Critics invariably discussed the Godard-inspired work as instigating a 'Finnish New Wave', a conceptualization that both indicates the film's transnational inspirations and its status as something novel and distinct in the annals of Finnish cinema. Working alongside brother Aki (who starred in *The Liar*), Mika Kaurismäki became one of the leading producers of the Finnish New Wave of the 1980s with films such as *Arvottomat/The Worthless* (1982) and *Rosso* (1985).

These films were a response to what Kaurismäki and many of his contemporaries perceived as the stilted, inward-looking state of the Finnish film industry, dominated by lengthy, monumental historical epics and farcical comedies. During the 1970s and the 1980s, few of these 'official' films, reliant on state-subsidies from the Finnish Film Foundation (Suomen Elokuvasäätiö), met with any substantial interest from domestic audiences – despite the occasional 'national' blockbuster such as *Tuntematon Sotilas/The Unknown Soldier*, (Mollberg, 1985) and *Talvisota/The Winter War*, (Parikka, 1989). It was up to independent farces, such as the immensely popular Uuno Turhapuro series, and imported films to cater to domestic cinemagoers. The contemporary situation was a result of far-ranging debates over national cinema in both policy and critical circles, debates which reflected concurrent national cinema rhetoric Europe-wide. The delineation between the artistic (experimental, or more often in Finland's case, 'nationally-relevant' film production) and the populist (sensationalist or farcical films) has a long history, ranging from the high taxation levied on popular cinema in the 1940s and 50s to the Foundation's support for historical epics and politically-engaged, modernist art films in the 1960s and 1970s. Both Foundation-approved and independent productions dealt with the many tumultuous changes Finnish society had gone through in the previous decades. Fast-paced urbanization and the decrease of traditional agrarian lifestyles became collectively known as the 'Great Migration', as thousands vacated the countryside for the city, or moved abroad to Sweden or other neighbouring countries. These ideas were metaphorically reflected in the class divisions and contrasting lifestyles of the protagonists of the historical epics and farcical comedies, but they largely avoided socio-realist discussion of the contemporaneous disappointment and alienation these transformations were causing amongst the population.

Established film-makers such as Mikko Niskanen and Tapio Suominen also took part in chronicling these experiences in distinctly socio-realist terms with the financially and

critically successful youth-oriented productions *Täältä Tullaan Elämä/Right on, Man!* (Suominen, 1980) and *Ajolähtö/Take-off* (Niskanen, 1982). While depictions of alienated and rebellious youth culture are nothing new, productions by middle-aged directors in the 1950s, such as *Kuriton Sukupolvi/The Unruly Generation* (Kassila, 1957), portrayed the youth of the nation as a threat to social order. It was now these young artists that sought to destabilize established conventions with anti-institutional agit-prop theatrical productions like *Pete Q* (1978), where the avoidance of casting these themes in terms of a moral panic fostered understanding of the need to have these previously marginalized and victimized voices heard. Furthermore, punk rock and bands such as Sielun Veljet and Eppu Normaali were engaging in similar modes of protest via popular music that was increasingly a locus of identification for their target-audience groups. Youth culture of the 1980s thus gave voice to the experiences of urbanized, alienated youths, whose decidedly claustrophobic and disillusioned experiences were increasingly vocalized as part of the emerging pop culture scene.

These emergent forms of pop culture often expressed their identity politics in terms antagonistic to the nation, or more accurately, the transforming welfare state. As President Urho Kekkonen vacated his position in 1981, after more than 30 years of autocratic governance, and the more progressive social democrat Koivisto took over, the Finnish welfare state found a new direction. Instead of the careful appeasement politics with the Soviet Union which characterized the Kekkonen era, Finland during the 1980s took a decisive turn for European integration and increasing privatization of the welfare structures of the state. As many commentators note (Toivianen 2002a, Von Bagh 2000), Aki Kaurismäki's *Varjoja Paratiisissa/Shadows in Paradise* (1986) and *Ariel* (1988) captured these societal metamorphoses in minimalist terms, presenting a seemingly-ordinary Finland, where the 'silent majority' fall victim to capitalist restructuring and individualistic heartlessness. These films also chronicle the increasing globalization of Finnish society by focusing on the transnational circulation of cultures and capital and include a pervasive sense of criticism of the gradual metamorphosis of the Finnish welfare-state into a compromised 'information society' infused with neo-liberalist characteristics (Nesting 2004, 2010).

Mika Kaurismäki's films feature a similar set of critical targets and transnational tools for exploring the compromised welfare-state. *The Worthless*, Kaurismäki's first feature-length production, was self-consciously marketed as a breakthrough for 'new' Finnish cinema in its decidedly international approach. But while internationalism is often seen as a key ingredient in Mika Kaurismäki's work, this is also nothing new in Finland. Films such as Teuvo Tulio's *Rakkauden Risti/The Cross of Love* (1948) were filmed in Swedish and Finnish so as to widen their markets. International genre conventions were adapted to the popular farces and melodramas of the Studio-era (roughly 1940s to the end of the 1950s), and directors such as Mikko Niskanen and Risto Jarva adopted the experimentalism of Godard, Truffaut et al. with their 'new wave' films inspecting the contemporary state of the nation from the perspectives of the alienated youth or marginalized socio-economic groups. 'New Waves' are thus nothing new in Finnish cinema, but *The Liar* was a breath of fresh air because

of its transnational approach to cinematic conventions. Instead of localized adaptation of conventions from international art-house cinema, Kaurismäki's debut distinguishes itself from the previous wave, as it now seems the whole world in which the film is set is defined by ideas, ideologies, material elements, and people who have very few clear connections to antecedent forms of national traditionality or belonging. Furthermore, while films such as *Täältä Tullaan Elämä* and *Ajolähtö* had acted as the focus of much critical debate and received significant commercial success, their approach was more or less socio-realist as they focused on the despairing conditions of contemporary youth lost in the tumultuous changes of the Great Migration. They also rely on a distinctly moralizing or outraged tone, targeting both unstable family structures and the fallacies of the welfare state. Kaurismäki's film, in contrast, moves past such socio-realist techniques as it captures the plight of its protagonists in the international genre vernacular of the road movie, an approach novel for its time in Finland. As these disenfranchised (or liberated) youth flee from Helsinki to the lakes of East Finland pursued by a group of gangsters, the open road offers possibilities for visualizing the land through a set of perspectives substantially different from any antecedent social order or traditional vision of social existence.

Many seemingly out-of-place elements distinguish *The Worthless* from its contemporaries and indicates the extent to which Kaurismäki's international approach relies on his cineaste roots. For one, the characters communicate in a manner that is reminiscent of the hard-boiled dialogue of film noir ('the most important thing is leaving,' intones one character). On other occasions, the lines resemble advertising slogans (the main protagonist answers his phone with 'American Express'). The camera work and *mise-en-scène* are more attuned with film noir and the detective thrillers of Jules Dassin and Jean-Pierre Melville than with the conventions of mainstream Finnish cinema as the constantly moving camera follows the overcoat-wearing protagonist Manne (Matti Pellonpää) through the murky streets of Helsinki. A café-bar only serves Calvados instead of the expected beer and spirits. And the characters end up in Paris, which they find to be a similar space of disillusionment as Finland instead of the exciting and even mythical land recreated in the films of Vigo, Melville, Truffaut and Godard. The protagonists of the film are constantly on the move, but there seems to be no direction for this movement. Whereas the young protagonists of *Ajolähtö* strove to move to Sweden in search of employment, there are no such 'lofty' goals in *The Worthless*, no attempt to settle in with the expected conventions of society or to climb the social ladder. For the protagonists of Kaurismäki's film, the most important thing is leaving. The process of transition, of liminality and in-betweeness, is the point of their existence.

According to the funding application submitted to the Finnish Film Foundation, *The Worthless* focuses on 'mythical Finnish melancholy and exploring what is happening to this land and its people' (Toiviainen 2002a: 188). This statement requires unpacking, as it encapsulates Kaurismäki's approach to representing Finnishness. What is meant by this 'mythical' sense of Finnishness? Several critics have suggested that Finnish cinema remains focused on depicting national cultural identity as 'stuck' between the poles of rurality and urbanity (Sihvonen 1999, Toiviainen 2002a). Certainly, nostalgic evocations of the countryside

and the agrarian way of life form frequent topics of both heritage films and the populist comedy productions. These recourses to localization (or nationalization) function as a sort of antidote to increasing internationalism and globalization. Here, eventual accession to the European Union in 1995 and Finland's increasing interconnection in international economic and political networks present challenges to 'imagining' the nation in any traditional terms, challenges which are accordingly met with a resurgence of heritage films and a reinforced emphasis on traditionalism. While such elements are certainly present in the majority of Mika Kaurismäki's films, their manifestation is very different from the heritage genre. In *The Worthless*, Finland is constantly changing – a space where antecedent traditions and their cultural remnants (such as traditional wooden housing and idyllic rural landscapes) exist alongside signs of transnational flow of culture, capital and people. Whereas many heritage films use dichotomous conceptions of rurality and urbanity, Kaurismäki's films are adamant about deconstructing these binaries. In *The Worthless*, we see a sense of reciprocity to this relationship, one which unavoidably alters the constitution of both spheres, and in fact shatters any notion of understanding these ways of life as spherical. The film captures the implications of the Great Migration, where its dynamics of interchange blur such binaries, as the people from the countryside migrate to the cities, and the economic and cultural influence of urbanity becoming submerged in the facades of agrarian communities. Accordingly, we see characters such as Harri, influenced by international forms of pop culture, vacating their countryside habitats for the city. Once the protagonists return to the countryside, they find it is now a space in transition where commercial slogans and logos of multinational corporations are thoroughly immersed in the landscape. The reworking of mythical Finnishness is nowhere more apparent than in the opening titles of the film, under which we observe a helicopter shot which moves from the harbours of Helsinki to its centre, underscored by a re-orchestrated rock version of Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia*. The bird's eye view of the city and the hybrid musical score blur the distinctions between traditional Finnishness and the mindscapes of its emergent generation, indicating the complexities of contemporary nationhood. Kaurismäki's films can be considered historical documents of the transformation of Finnish society, while they simultaneously provide specific versions of that change.

Glocalization and the postnational condition

The local and the global, mythic Finnishness in relation to European mythology, reality and a fantasy world meet in Mika Kaurismäki's films. This is what Kaurismäki's 1980s' films are about: how one can relate to and even preferably include in the same picture the local and the international. The relationship to Finland is consistently contradictory, because it is at the same time mythology and reality. Similarly complex is the relationship to the global, as the impression of Europe is more mythological than realistic. (Aitio 2000: 44)

Tommi Aitio is one of the only historians who has commented on Mika Kaurismäki's work in any sufficient depth. From the above quotation, we get an idea of the level of complexity he affords these films, as any sort of simplistic impression of national homogeneity is compromised by techniques ranging from plays with levels of reality to infusion of cosmopolitan ideology. Aitio's assertions are certainly suggestive in providing a foundation for analysing the complexities of Kaurismäki's cinema, but some of his analytical suggestions need further refinement. For one, the suggestion that Kaurismäki's films go 'against' the mainstream of Finnish culture seems to miss some of the nuances of Kaurismäki's work. While antagonism towards the mainstream is certainly to be detected from his works, understanding them as working on a polemical nexus of abidance and antagonism is unproductive. Thus, the main aim of this work is to interrogate the films' relationship, not only to the nation, but also to the global, and attempt to understand them from a more multifaceted, complex perspective. Focusing on the fissures and disjunctures these films open in the structure of the globalizing Finnish welfare state instigates an ongoing dialogical negotiation with existing conventions of representation. The films situate their protagonists in these vertiginous gaps (such as those discovered by the protagonists of *The Worthless* as they venture into the transforming countryside), which act in the form of black holes where the antecedent matter of traditional national structures ceases to exist in their original form. The characters seek to desperately build some sense of cohesion out of these complex and constantly changing structures, even if this process is ultimately a futile one, as the protagonists of *The Worthless* discover in Paris. From such perspectives, it is impossible for the films to simply affirm or antagonize the national order. Instead, this reorganization constructs portals through which the protagonists enter cosmopolitan ideological spheres inscribed with ambivalence and heterogeneity. We do not know what waits on the other side of these black holes, and it is precisely this uncertainty that is the point of Kaurismäki's films.

Many of the transformations these films represent (and present, of course) emerge as a consequence of cross-border flows of culture, capital, ideologies, and people – societal transformation is thus a direct result of the transnationalization of Finnish society. Transnationalism is here taken to indicate different forms of exchange between national entities, where this interaction results in the metamorphosis of most, if not all, cultural formations involved in the exchange. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden suggest that the 'key to transnationalism is the recognition of the decline of national sovereignty as a regulatory force' (Ezra & Rowden 2005: 1). Increasing cultural and political globalization compresses the spatio-temporal boundaries of the globe, creating transformations of such magnitude that the concept of the nation is fundamentally challenged. This is the starting point for many academic works on transnational cinema, as they understand cinematic production as part of an increasingly interconnected global system where 'transnational cinema transcends the national as an autonomous cultural particularity while respecting it as a powerful symbolic force' (Ezra & Rowden 2005: 2). The national in transnational cinema, then, seems to operate on two levels: both as an essentialist concept challenged by thematic content, production,

distribution, and exhibition factors; and as a means of grounding cultural production to some identifiable socio-cultural contextual matrix that seeks to avoid the homogenizing connotations of globalization.

The identity and cultural politics of Kaurismäki's films clearly emanate from transnational considerations, and transnationalism is a key feature throughout this work. But is transnational cinema the be-all-and-end-all framework for exploring these films? To answer this question, we must pay due attention to the ways the films' emphasize the disembedding – or decentralizing – connotations of globalization. As the protagonists of the films are alienated by state organizations and traditional cultural constellations they barely recognize, they are constantly searching for stability, driven by a desire to settle the internal imbalance by integrating (often temporarily) into a culture they deem suitable. Thus, 'we are... "post" any fixed or essentialist conception of identity' (Hall & Du Gay 1996: 275). This is something we can clearly observe in many of Kaurismäki's cosmopolitan and globalized films, where his protagonists are characterized by movements 'in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain,' as they are 'open to the prospect of a continual return to... their re-elaboration and revision' (Chambers 1994: 3–5). Kaurismäki's relationship with Finnish identity has transcended the confines of national specificity to a level that is somewhere in between cultures, a transnational identity characterized by interstitiality, 'at home only when he is not at home' to use Catherine Russell's description of cosmopolitanism (Russell 1999: 285).

Many of the key themes of Kaurismäki's films – social fragmentation, urbanization, the erasure of identity formations and boundaries, scepticism over representational subjectivity, and the role of increasing globalization in all this – produces a pervasive sense of vertigo, of constant and uncertain transformation. While translocal or transnational culture, according to film theorist Yingjin Zhang, 'seeks pluralism and interculturalism, favors cultural flows in space, and tends to produce syncretism, synthesis, hybridity, and possibly even third cultures' (Zhang: 2002 140), Kaurismäki's films focus on cultural disjunctures and dead-ends. This emphasis on difference and asymmetric patterns requires that we view Mika Kaurismäki's cinema in postnational terms. How do we characterize this type of cinema and what is its unique potential that the transnational is not able to achieve? Political philosophers and sociologists have developed the concept of the postnational to emphasize the ways in which the structures and sovereignty of nation-states are challenged by economic and political neo-liberalism, the complex connectivity of 'global' culture, intergovernmental integration, and the migration of populations across borders. For some, civic identity is part of a larger collectivity, such as the European Union, or social collectivity is more to do with ethnic or religious affiliation than any national designation (Ferry 1991, see also Habermas 2001). Much of this work focuses on the role of immigrants in Europe, whose communal membership is less defined by their judicial belonging to nations, but more by universal conceptions of human rights, as individuals who are more than mere property of the nation-state structure (see Kastoryano 2002, Soysal 1994).

Kaurismäki's films focus on these shifts and permutations in identity and social collectivity. To account for these complexities, they feature protagonists who situate

themselves in antagonistic relationships with hegemonic societal structures, and who exhibit a fundamentally critical stance on the changing nature of that society. What makes this cinema postnational rather than just transnational is the maintenance of a critical, often self-reflexive perspective that interrogates the socio-political implications of potentially homogenizing categories like the EU and 'world' cinema. The postnational thus operates as a way of conceptualizing Kaurismäki's increasingly complex vision of a global society where national designations still prevail, but where individual agents and communal organizations increasingly build their 'complex connectivity' based on other forms of identification outside of the nation, or they find themselves at odds with the ideological roles that nations play in the contemporary social order.

To these ends, Andrew Higson (2000b) has suggested that postnational cinema involves texts which cannot be comfortably equated within the cultural and social body of the nation. He is talking in the context of British cinema, where films such as *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears, 1985) and *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, 1995) challenge the dominant Britishness (or more appropriately, Englishness) of British cinema. While the 'Scottishness' of Boyle's film and Frears' multicultural dialectics seem to suggest cultural pluralism within the wider body of British national cinema. Yet, Higson suggests that restricting the scope of these films to a singular, umbrella-like conception of national cinema can effectively limit these films to merely alternative approaches to dominant Britishness. As a means of enunciating the perspectives of subjects excluded from the homogeneous promises of the cultural and the civic nation – for example, immigrants to the city or those whose ideological perspectives do not match dominant conceptions of civic duty – postnational cinema can point us to new directions in terms of the potential of cinema to work from the basis of the nation, but also address concerns of social belonging that do not necessarily seek assimilation or hybridity. Rather, focusing on moments of uncertainty, indecision, fragmentation and disjuncture – moments which reflect the momentous and tumultuous changes to which individuals are consistently subjected to as part of globalization's momentum – indicates a need to approach the meanings of nation from an intensely critical perspective which 'mere' transnationalism may be too transient a concept to adequately realize.

Postnational cinema can also complicate our conceptual understanding of globalization in relation to Kaurismäki's films. The roles of the global and the local are never as clearly distinct in Kaurismäki's films as they are in protectionist discourses of national cinema. Focusing on the disjunctures and contradictions that characterize the postnational condition provides an alternative critical perspective on the ways the local and the global intertwine. Approaching globalization from the perspective of 'glocalisation' (Robertson 1995) allows us to understand the dynamics of globalization as a complex, reciprocal process involving local interpretations and appropriations of elements and processes with more global implications. The dynamics of glocalization, or of interpreting and navigating the complexities of globalization from individualised, local perspectives, will form a key strand that runs through this work.

Kaurismäki's work often emanates from a strong sense of social justice, where the films depict their marginalized protagonists (the local elements of the glocalization equation) striving to counteract cultural and socio-economic changes larger than their habitats. Yet, many of his films also function as the globalizing influence in this equation of power. This is especially the case with the films he has produced in Latin America (adventure films like *Amazon*, 1990, and music documentaries such as *Brasileirinho*, 2005). These films combine Kaurismäki's dominant outsider perspective with elements of subversive Finnishness, popular culture, marginalization, and a strong sense of social inequality between the developed and the developing nations. As we will see, Kaurismäki's films consciously seek to involve the presence of the author and the spectator in the representational fabric. Through this, they aim to find new and emergent avenues for expressing the complexities of unstable social and cultural identities as they take part in global debates over politics of representation and social injustice. The complex constellations of the films create an impression of globalization as a constantly ongoing and even contradictory process, where spectators are encouraged to question their own involvement in maintaining global inequality and structures of cultural and economic domination.

Transvergent cinescapes

The incomplete, searching identities of the protagonists, the liminal plays with hegemony and marginality, the inwardly-combusting narrative authority, and the self-reflexively critical spectator-positioning provide a 'transvergent' quality to Kaurismäki's cinema. Transvergence, according to architectural theorist Marcos Novak, is a term indicating something unformed, something 'alien' that cannot be adequately discussed by relying on established paradigms of cultural representation and critical thinking. In Novak's view, such paradigms rely on 'epistemologies of continuity and consistency' and maintain antecedent social and epistemological structures (Novak 2002). Transvergence, in contrast to convergent or divergent modes of philosophical inquiry, of which these epistemologies consist, implies 'incompleteness' and the formation of something we cannot yet decipher. Following Novak, I use the concept of transvergence to imply a sense of constant transformation, where cultures, identities and societies are never stable, but always in flux, morphing into ever-changing new formations. Transvergent cultural products that seek to capture this transformation do not necessarily gesture towards any sense of completion or stability, but reveal the very process of transformation, in all its insecurities, as a relevant social condition in its own right. In their persistent foregrounding of transitory moments and unstable social structures, Kaurismäki's transvergent films work from the opposite of the realist discourse which John Fiske famously identifies in mainstream television. Whereas the impression of 'realism resolves the contradictions and does not leave them unsolved and reverberating in the viewer', Kaurismäki's films use contradictions and complexity to leave the viewer with 'discomfort, uncertainty and an active need to think through these contradictions not

only in textual terms but in terms of the reader's social experience' (Fiske 1987: 35). While Fiske suggests that the radical power of these contradictions lies in the readers and not the texts, I argue in this volume that Kaurismäki's transvergence is radical on both levels. As we will see throughout the work, Kaurismäki's films merge different forms of subjectivity into their textual and production features which complicate spectator positioning and resist identification with clearly definable ideological positions.

Transvergence indicates a situation where the goals and the intended outcome of social movements are far from certain. Such movements may result in unpredictable circumstances with no promise of continuity or maintenance of established social paradigms and conventions of order. If there is a transvergent 'condition', it is one that is defined by the circumstances of fluidity and uncertainty. The collision of emergent perspectives and traditional structures in *The Worthless*, and its protagonists' constant need for movement, exemplify this feeling of uncertainty well, as the transvergent perspective captures the moment of transition in all its impermanence. Instead of attempting to provide a comprehensive description of transvergence here, we have to let Kaurismäki's films extrapolate this concept, as it can account for many of the topical and even controversial notions these films explore; notions which range from Eurocentricism of film anthropology to the persistence of national cinema, from generic mutations to depictions of cosmopolitan cityscapes. The purpose of transvergence is to examine how these films formulate new conceptions and perspectives on these much-discussed ideas, situating their rhetorical structures in a sort of critical liminality that avoids any limiting connotations these pre-existing theoretical formulations may have.

A further discussion of Kaurismäki's international career will unpack some of the complexities of cinematic transvergence. By featuring an Italian hit-man as the main protagonist in his first international co-production *Rosso* in 1985, the socio-critical outsider perspective of the New Wave found a new addition – the perspective of the foreign 'other' who explores Finland through a disassociated gaze. Typically for Kaurismäki's unconventional approach, *Rosso*'s title role was performed by frequent collaborator, the Finn Kari Väänänen, in Italian. Never settling for the easy option, such methods complicate any understanding of the film as simply an ethnographic external gaze on this strange Nordic land. The casting and the focus on language and other cultural barriers are part of the film's transvergent identity politics, where the outsider is simultaneously the insider, the insider the outsider. The internationalism that was evident in his early films and that was heightened by *Rosso*'s embodiment of the insider-outsider gaze has been a frequent feature of his works. As Finland is presented through a transvergent lens, so depictions of spaces outside of Finland refuse to be captured in any simplistic touristic sense or through cultural otherness. Kaurismäki's next production, *Helsinki-Napoli All Night Long*, took place in a Berlin divorced from socio-realist cultural confines, where its depiction of West Berlin is a compendium of a fantastical Europe and an ideologically-charged place where capitalism, socialism, cosmopolitanism, and nationalism intertwine, often in precisely transvergent terms. The film presents no conclusions to the many problems and complexities that West Berlin (and the whole of Western Europe) faced in 1987. Rather, the film settles for

a conclusion where all its multinational characters sail down the Rhein on a houseboat. This sort of utopian cosmopolitanism irked many critics as they berated its commercialist impulses which, for them, were incompatible with its cultural politics.

When Kaurismäki left Finland after *Zombie ja Kummitusjuna/Zombie and the Ghost Train* (1991), the impression was of someone pursuing an international career in attempting to discover funding structures and professional collaborators who are more attuned to his vision. Using the loosely-defined industrial framework of commercial entertainment to produce esoteric texts traditionally seen as part of the art-house has been a key direction for Kaurismäki's career since. For example, he produced two films set in the United States, *Condition Red* (1995) and *LA without a Map* (1998). The former a play on film noir, the latter a romantic comedy, neither film met the expectations critics had for the genres. As we will see in the discussion to follow, on genre, these films use genre conventions in transvergent terms, never abiding by expectations, but working to subvert them to the best of their ability. It is this play between commercial expectations (which genres inevitably are) and art-house themes that further characterizes the concept of transvergence. Refusing to abide by the economic imperatives of multinational film production (especially in relation to Hollywood) by including a substantial amount of 'difficult' material from art-house cinema and, conversely, injecting commercial dynamics into the art-house, is something that has often met with vocal confusion or even derision, especially in Finland.

A more favourable reception greeted the three documentaries Kaurismäki produced in Brazil, *Moro no Brasil* (2002), *Brasileirinho* (2005) and *Sonic Mirror* (2007). Yet, these 'Brazilian' music documentaries call into question the role of the Western consumer as a producer/spectator to exoticized, 'other' cultures and the roles that popular culture plays in maintaining unequal balances of economic and cultural power. Through this, they interrogate the very notion of Western cultural consumerism, on which documentaries such as these often rely. When Kaurismäki eventually returned to his 'native' confines in 2008 with *Three Wise Men*, the depiction of Finland was not much different from the bleak world of *Zombie and the Ghost Train* in 1991, as the film follows the by-now familiar patterns of social alienation and claustrophobia.

In many ways, these concerns shape the topics of this book. Key themes, such as auteurism, genre, urbanization and the city, ethnography, environmentalism, and global distribution and reception, are discussed in self-contained chapters. Simultaneously, there is substantial overlap and interaction between the chapters, building on concerns such as transvergence and postnationalism. Thus, the rhetorical direction of this work is organized to be read as an ongoing argument, with each individual piece comprising part of a more complex whole. Chapter 1 discusses Kaurismäki's authorial status as a director pervasively associated with both Finnish cinema and a European sense of auteurism. Mika Kaurismäki is often viewed as the 'little' big brother to his sibling Aki Kaurismäki, a comparison which has both positive and negative influence on his cinematic impact. Notions of auteurism and idiosyncraticity are key factors of Mika Kaurismäki's public persona and extend to the perception of his films in the global markets and reception networks. The initial chapter interrogates these ideas

in relation to Mika Kaurismäki's vision of a transnational Finland, while it makes a case for understanding his work as the product of a postmodern cineaste, combining elements from a range of contexts (national/international, commercial/artistic, to name a few) in unexpected ways. Transvergence, as a way of challenging established canons of knowledge production, is used to interrogate normative confines of auteur theory and its relationship to national canonization.

Transvergent modes of analysis are employed throughout the book, and Chapter 2 utilizes this approach for examining genre theory. Kaurismäki's films are very self-conscious of their genre origins and repeatedly interrogate normative patterns of genre production and their ideological orientation. As is the case with the nation and auteurism, genre is not treated as a way of pre-packaging product for conventional distribution and exhibition channels. Rather, genre synergy and subversion of established generic conventions provide new areas for chronicling the complexities of commercial and art house film production in a transnational framework, which is still largely predicated on national designators and demands for product with clearly delineated modes of distribution and exhibition. As is the case with the national, Kaurismäki's films combine thematic elements, such as political ideology and gender politics, with auteurism and genre conventions to facilitate exploration of emergent ways of conceptualizing problems of socio-cultural community.

Building from this, Chapter 3 explores transvergent conceptualizations of the road movie: a genre which, by definition, works to complicate notions of societal status quo and stable identity. As Kaurismäki's road movies operate transnationally through thoroughly porous, if not translucent, borders, this chapter interrogates the geopolitical use value of national space. Transnationalism takes on complex meanings through a range of films taking place amidst the disappearing, fluid borders of 'New Europe'. Instead of clear notions of hybridity and cultural reciprocity that characterizes most conceptualizations of transnationalism, we are encouraged to focus on contradictory socio- and geopolitical structures and social relationships undergoing constant transformation with no clear (or any) sense of destination. This analysis continues in Chapter 4 with an exploration of 'global cities' as the locus for transnational identity politics. Challenging conventional designations of urban mapping, the transvergent qualities of Kaurismäki's films intentionally subvert the politicized implications of specific urban locations and blur centre and periphery distinctions – the city effectively takes on the transient qualities of the road. Accordingly, these four chapters explore the ways that conventional politicized spaces of cities and nations, and identities and organizations that base their existence on these spatial designations, are challenged in Kaurismäki's cinema.

The first half of this volume is thus concerned with cultural and identity politics in predominantly European (and Eurocentric) spaces. While Kaurismäki's films are distinctly open-ended and multi-layered, their representational scope and underlying ideological assumptions are sometimes problematic (especially in terms of gender and representational power). To explore the global implications of this, the second half of the volume maintains the general framework of transvergent analysis, but the discussion moves to considerations

of global relations of power. Chapter 5 discusses Kaurismäki's cinematic politics in his 'ethnographic' documentary trilogy produced predominantly in Brazil. While these are all seemingly well-intentioned texts, many of them contain highly problematic assertions as to the relationship between the position of the representer and the subjects of the camera's gaze. The focus of the chapter on ethnography starts out from exploring the cultural work of these films in capturing and exporting positive evaluations of multicultural Brazil to world-wide audiences. While the documentaries are certainly in-depth in scope, such modes of representation invariably raise concerns about the Eurocentric tendencies involved in appropriating other cultures and distributing them globally for capital or cultural gain. Having interrogated Kaurismäki's 'Westernizing' gaze, Chapter 6 returns to concerns of nationhood. The transvergent takes on auteurism, genre, the city, the road, and ethnographic representation refuse any examination of nationhood along its traditionalistic paradigms. As Kaurismäki's scope has increasingly 'gone global', this chapter suggests there is reasonable cause to explore these films in a postnational framework. As already established, postnational cinema indicates a socio-critical form of representation/production that challenges spatial and historical designations of national collectivity or more optimistic assertions of global connectivity. The term is equally useful for Finnish-set films such as *Zombie and the Ghost Train*, as even these repeatedly cross national borders and create interconnected global networks. The postnational is a sufficiently powerful indicator of the complex problems of globalization, and poses substantial challenges to normative modes of cinematic representation. Accordingly, a large part of this chapter interrogates prevalent conceptions of transnational cinema to formulate a more comprehensive understanding of cinema's role in constructing and maintaining globalization's discontents.

The preceding chapters have all explored distinct areas of Kaurismäki's transvergent films, which culminates in deconstructing the implications of the nation – the category extraordinaire of social order. In Chapter 7, we explore the environmentalist rhetoric of Kaurismäki's films and its implications for human-centric conceptualizations of the 'natural order'. Incorporating ecophilosophical thinking alongside Kaurismäki's transvergent approach allows us to interrogate how his environmental films challenge the separation of the human from the natural – a distinction which prevails as a means of facilitating exploitation both on individual and corporate levels. But as is the case with the ethnographic tendencies of Kaurismäki's films, this approach is often contradictory. While many of the films are successful in raising awareness of environmental issues and ecological thinking, their approaches are severely limited by their industrial and cultural origins. The chapter concludes with discussion of the ecocritical implications of Kaurismäki's insider-outsider approach. Indeed, it is this insider-outsiderness that is the transvergent centre of Kaurismäki's cinema and the locus of most of its problems.

Each of the chapters presents a different take on the concept of cinematic transvergence (the creation of a perspective which simultaneously criticizes hegemonic socio-cultural structures and presents new avenues for identity politics from inside these structures). Throughout these chapters, a wider picture of the cosmopolitan cinematic entrepreneur will

emerge, of someone who takes as his focus, in his words, the whole world (Kääpä 2010b). While much of this book is focused on thematic discussion of Kaurismäki's films, it is also necessary to practice what we preach – namely, the necessity of taking into account the increasing heterogeneity and polyphonicity of 'global culture'. Accordingly, the final chapter explores both Kaurismäki's industrial and artistic status as well as the ways his films have been distributed and received globally. Much of the chapter discuss Kaurismäki's oscillation between the commercial industry and his esoteric, more critical tendencies. This liminality (in addition to Kaurismäki's conscious mobilization of his cineaste roots and affinity networks) is crucial in allowing the films to gain a semblance of cultural respectability while remaining commercially viable. But trying to have it both ways results in a sort of critical liminality, where combining both the esoteric and the commercial leads to the dilution of both aspects of the films, at least in the view of several of Kaurismäki's critics. The volume culminates in analysis of the Finnish and international reception of Kaurismäki's films to provide a more comprehensive (yet inherently fragmented and contradictory) view of his critical standing in both the global markets and cultural circles. Much of this reception wrestles with, first of all, his association with Aki Kaurismäki, the auteur, and secondly, with their ambiguous synergization of commercial and artistic dynamics.

A key hypothesis of this work is that the protagonists of Kaurismäki's films function as ambiguous and complex metonyms for societal transformation in a global age, metonyms which instigate fundamental rethinking of the hegemonic ideological forms that structure societies. In accounting for this complexity, transvergent approaches produce new analytical imperatives which do not necessarily rely on the formation of a 'thirdspace' (Soja 1996) or conceptualizations like hybrid identity. While both ideas are suggestive in their own way, they also rely on the formation of an 'other' set of cultural or social relations, which seek to posit alternative forms of belonging or communality. Transvergence resembles the interminable road of *The Worthless*, where the most important part is leaving. It does not matter where you are going or why you are leaving. The point of transvergence is the journey or the constantly transforming relationship one has to one's surroundings, whether this be a form of community or an ideological take on society. Kaurismäki's transvergent films do not settle for a singular perspective, as the films include several contesting patterns and perspectives, attesting to the complexity of conceptualizing culture and identity in the wake of globalization in the era of 'late capitalism'.

Chapter 1

The Aki/Mika Syndrome: Cosmopolitan Auteurism and the Search for Cinematic Stability

The name Kaurismäki has become something of a brand in both Finnish and international cinematic circles (Nesting 2010). For cinemagoers well-versed in ‘world cinema’, this can instantly create a set of associations connected to the ‘Kaurismäki-phenomenon’, a phrasing that plays on the title of an early musical documentary collaboratively directed by Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, *Saimaa-ilmio/The Saimaa Phenomenon* (1981). Two prominent articles by well-known Finnish film historians, Sakari Toiviainen’s *Kaurismäki-ilmio/The Kaurismäki-phenomenon* in his work *Levottomat Sukupolvet/Restless Generations* (2002a) and Tytti Soila’s *The Landscape of Memories in the Films of the Kaurismäki Bros* (2003), both discuss the historical collaboration of the brothers and compare and contrast the films to one another in the framework of Finnish national cinema, setting standards and expectations for many analyses of both brothers’ work. Certainly, the Kaurismäkis’ films share many similarities and inhabit a distinctly alternative or marginal position within the normative confines of Finnish cinema. The three early feature films the Kaurismäkis produced in collaboration (*The Liar*, *The Saimaa Phenomenon* and *The Worthless*) form a template for many of their future films. In these early examples, we can observe several of the key thematic preoccupations that characterize Aki and Mika Kaurismäki’s politicized work: for example, a critical focus on the changing notions of the Finnish welfare state; characters who are lost in both the urban cityscapes and the traditional landscapes of the nation; intertextual and thematic internationalism; and an urge to bring such debates to the public sphere via popular culture. These categorizations have since become an apt (and pervasive) description of the types of films Aki Kaurismäki produces and it is an association that also extends to interviews and reviews of his films.

Aki Kaurismäki’s films are very idiosyncratic in their social criticism, and their focus on the transformations of welfare state ideologies into more neo-liberal concerns, which pushes his protagonists outside of the physical and/or cultural borders of nations. He has also worked from this palette outside Finland on numerous occasions, as he has produced films in the UK (*I Hired a Contract Killer*, 1990), France (*La Vie De Bohème*, 1992), and the US (*Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, 1989), all of which tend to feature similar concerns as those he has produced in Finland. The collaborative productions directed by Mika Kaurismäki, *The Liar* and *The Worthless*, feature transnational mindsets and textual and thematic content suggestive of the increasing transnationalisation of the Finnish nation, on which Aki Kaurismäki’s subsequent films expand. These films tend to provide an impression of universal marginalization, a condition best exemplified by a key line of dialogue from *I Hired a Contract Killer*: ‘The working class has no fatherland.’ While nations are still

powerful in Aki Kaurismäki's cinematic world, socio-economic, class-based exclusion seems to be a global condition (Kääpä, 2006).

Many of Mika Kaurismäki's films, such as the comedy *Cha Cha Cha* (1989) and *Zombie and the Ghost Train*, feature similar concerns and are inhabited by 'Kaurismäkian' protagonists. Mika Kaurismäki's interviews also emphasize these qualities as he discusses his socio-political views and expresses criticism of Finland's cultural circles. His international work continues his experimentation with different modes of production in ways that indicate his refusal of categorization. Thus, we see him move from small-scale documentaries on Brazilian culture to epic adventure films taking place in the Amazons, from multinational 'indie'-comedy (*LA without a Map*, 1998) to Eastern European road movies (*Honey Baby*, 2004). Accordingly, labelling his films as part of the Kaurismäki-brand is not the most productive approach for understanding their cultural potency. While there is plenty of incisive commentary to be drawn from such a comparative approach, the scope of 'Kaurismäki-cinema' is very limiting in terms of Mika Kaurismäki's work. Regardless, most of the articles exploring the work of Mika Kaurismäki inevitably mention Aki Kaurismäki, the Oscar-nominated and Cannes Grand Prix-winning director of *Mies Vailla Menneisyttä/The Man without a Past* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2002). Aki Kaurismäki's success in art-house circles is connected not only to the socio-critical structures of his films, but the ways they self-consciously mobilize a form of art-house branding as an idiosyncratic, esoteric, difficult, and specifically, national auteur. For example, Bert Cardullo's interview collection includes Aki Kaurismäki alongside such pre-eminent European auteurs as Renoir, Bergman, Antonioni, and Bresson (Cardullo 2008). Simply put, Aki Kaurismäki's films are more well-known and, as his reputation overshadows that of Mika, this association tends to create critical favouritism for those of Mika Kaurismäki's films which most resemble his brother's.

Mika Kaurismäki's films have sought to problematize the supposed singularity of cultures, preferring to demonstrate how cultures are always a result of cross-border exchange and reciprocity. This is, of course, one of the key themes of most of Aki Kaurismäki's work, and he has collaborated on screenplays for films such as *Rosso*, with its doubled-up auto-ethnographic perspective on representing a globalizing Finland. But the intensity of such themes in Mika Kaurismäki's work has magnified throughout his career. In contrast to Aki Kaurismäki's idiosyncratic perspective, Mika Kaurismäki is more willing to adapt his approach to account for the heterogeneity and polyphonicity of the cultural exchanges the films explore. Even when we are supposedly witnessing ethnically- and nationally-delineated cultures – such as the ones seen in Mika's Brazilian-set documentaries – any homogeneity or singularity of such cultures is problematized by historical transformations and contemporary multiculturalism. How does the notion of auteurism impact these artistic and cultural/political dynamics?

Metteur-en-scène

Aki and Mika Kaurismäki's films are often bipartially divided into a set of opposing categories: Aki Kaurismäki's films are about the nation, whereas Mika is more cosmopolitan in his approach; Aki's films are inherently art-house, whereas Mika traverses the line between art and commerce, Aki focuses on the marginalized of society, Mika on a plethora of different characters, including the so-called upper classes; Aki's work is that of an idiosyncratic Finnish auteur, whereas Mika is more impersonal as his films are often the work of a hired gun. These are, of course, enormous simplifications of the discourses that circulate around the personas and the works of the Kaurismäkis. Regardless, these conceptualizations do exist and they maintain a powerful hold on how the Kaurismäkis' films are discussed. As part of the mission statement of this work is to move beyond such dichotomous conceptualizations, it is also necessary for us to unravel these distinctions, coming to a more complex, multi-faceted picture of not only the individual works of these film-makers and their collaborations, but for the idea of a 'Kaurismäki-image' that still seems to persevere in certain critical circles.

It is not surprising that Aki Kaurismäki is consistently identified as one of the prominent Finnish examples of auteurist film production (Nestingen 2008, Toiviainen 2002a), as he directs, writes, produces and edits his work, and plays a large part in their domestic and international marketing and festival and commercial distribution strategies. In contrast, Mika Kaurismäki continues to explore multiple different avenues for the production and distribution of his films. His roots are in the European art-house mould, acting as one of the main – if not the primary – contributor of the films. He directed, co-wrote, produced and edited much of his early work, much of which was promoted on the basis of his reputation. He also frequently works in commercial Finnish and international genre production, where his auteurist control is less intense. For example, *Condition Red* was 'only' directed and co-edited by him (though the film contains an executive producer credit to his alias Michael Bambihill) and he has relinquished editing of his Brazilian trilogy to other people. Despite working on international co-productions of different ranges, he clearly retains considerable authorial control directing, writing, producing, and editing these films. Yet, many of his critics do not see his contribution in this way.

Finnish film historian Peter Von Bagh (2000) has used the distinction between an auteur and a metteur-en-scène to discuss the differences between the brothers. The auteur suggests a person in charge of most, if not all, aspects of the production; a stamp of individuality that extends to the thematic content and visual appearance of the films. The latter literally means someone who stages a scene from an existing script and directs the movements of the actors, purely a director in the literal sense. While Mika Kaurismäki's cinema is not as aesthetically or thematically coherent as that of his brother, it is not very difficult to find a range of idiosyncracies in his work. Sakari Toiviainen has characterized Aki as an 'introvert' and Mika as an 'extrovert', as Aki has 'focused on internal movements, the ethical choices and conflicts of the individual. Mika Kaurismäki's scale is wider and ranges from intimate relationship comedy to environmental problems on a global scale – he has literally

opened to the world' (Toiviainen 2002a: 60). While Toiviainen acknowledges the similarities in the Kaurismäki's works and touches on some fundamental features of their distinct production methodologies, this conceptual division remains somewhat simplistic. For one, the definition does not take into account the extent to which Aki Kaurismäki's works are inherently transnational as they engage in Finland's globalization (Nesting 2004, Kääpä 2010a). But it also reduces the films of Mika Kaurismäki to large-scale epics and irreverent comedies, an approach which suggests these films neglect the human elements of social representation.

While we can certainly discuss Aki Kaurismäki's formative and narrative techniques and complex character psychologization in a neo-auteurist framework, these films are ultimately shaped by a multitude of contesting forces from their production to their transnational reception (Nesting 2008). Similarly, Mika Kaurismäki's prolific plays with identity politics, genre formations, multiculturalism, synergies of different production and industrial formats, and even different national cinemas, makes it difficult to rely on a simplified (neo)auteurist framework. Yet, it is not difficult to identify a set of key themes in Kaurismäki's work as they appear in different forms from the Finnish 'neo'-Godardian *The Liar* to the Hollywood-set *LA without a Map*, from his most recent Finnish comedy *House of the Branching Love* to the large-scale adventure film *Amazon*. Kaurismäki has also indicated the need to consider his work as that of an auteur, as he insists on having full control of the production and most of his projects originate from him and share the themes with which he is preoccupied (Kääpä 2010b). Clearly, there is room to consider him as something more than a *metteur-en-scène*. Simultaneously, we have to be careful about equating this complex body of work under the homogeneous label of not only 'Kaurismäki' but also that of Mika Kaurismäki – the Finnish director whose preoccupations revolve around exploring multicultural conditions and marginalization. We need to carefully consider the influence of Kaurismäki's authorial presence on not only the production of the films, but also on their reception, as especially the marketing and the publicity of the films often resolves around Kaurismäki's persona and feeds into the production and distribution opportunities his subsequent films receive. The concept of auteurism and its impact on spectatorship is something to which we will return throughout the work

Zombies of the welfare state

To explore the difference and similarities between Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, we return to the ways these film-makers represent the nation and specifically its welfare-state incarnation. *Zombie and the Ghost Train* is a key film in this regard. It was released in 1991 and functions as a distillation of Mika Kaurismäki's socio-critical tendencies as well as the generally pensive mood in early 1990s' Finland on the brink of an economic catastrophe. In the late 1980s, Kaurismäki had examined the high-flying consumerist life-style of Finland's new 'middle-classes' in *Cha Cha Cha* (1989) and *Paperitähti/Paper Star* (1990). These comedies

took a topical critical stance on the socio-economic corruption and moral compromises that had become a dominant talking point in the mid- to late 1980s. This period had seen the increasing privatization of the Finnish welfare-state as increasing international trade with European states became a reality in the wake of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost policies in the Soviet Union. The government of Harri Holkeri embarked on 'structural changes' of the welfare state, which essentially equated to the type of monetarism practised by the Thatcher government in the UK. With the increased influx of finance, the banks decreased their loan rates and people flocked to amass a significant amount of cheap debt. But as the nation's predominant trade partner, the Soviet Union, collapsed and inflation settled in, these individual debts were suddenly insurmountably higher. The uncontrolled gambling with stock markets and fluctuating bank loans that dominated the financial sectors of Finland eventually led to the labelling of the era as one dominated by 'casino-economics', which were a major contributor to the collapse of the national economy and the deep depression that followed. National unemployment rates rose higher than before as approximately a million people out of a population of five million had to seek solace at the unemployment counter. Mika Kaurismäki's *Zombie and the Ghost Train* takes issue with these societal transformations, but before we explore these in depth, we must explain the ways in which his films engage with the politics of the welfare state.

The focus on social outsiders, attempting to find some means of balance in the fluctuating landscape of a socio-economically transforming nation, has been evoked by numerous commentators as one of the key themes of 'Kaurismäki-cinema' (Hèlen 1991, Von Bagh 2000, Toiviainen 2002a, Soila 2003). Andrew Nestingen (2008) suggests Aki Kaurismäki's films function as a forum for emergent cultural-political debates. These are conducted in the public sphere and encourage heterogeneity and new forms of social collectivity as they challenge any continuation of homogeneous national narratives and acceptance of the metamorphosis of the welfare state into a neo-liberalist conglomeration. Nestingen explores 'the containerization' of the welfare-state, whereby the container – the habitat of the main protagonist of *The Man without a Past* (2002) – is read as a 'cipher of neoliberal globalization ... an object of circulation and seriality' (Nesting 2008: 151). The container functions as a suggestive metonym for the humiliating and inhuman treatment of the labour force (human capital as the backbone of the welfare state) and its increasing outsourcing as corporate agents continue searching for ever-expanding profits – the topic of many a contemporary Nordic film. These films need to be understood as politicized contributions to discussions of the Nordic welfare-state, where, for example, the container as a home in *The Man without a Past* calls for a moral response to the type of socio-economic displacement seen in the film, instigating a pervasive demand for solidarity.

The welfare structures of the Finnish state is a part of the 'Nordic model', which is characterized by a strong sense of social-democratic universal equality amongst its citizens provided by a powerful public sector (Jokinen & Saaristo 2002). The welfare state retains a powerful presence, despite the contradictions of 'the controlled structural changes' that became governmental policy in 1987, but which had been instigated earlier in the course of

the 1980s. Even in the information society of the twenty-first century, Finland arguably has the most substantial problems with social marginalization, especially amongst women and youth groups (Normann et al. 2009). Both Kaurismäki's take issue with these contradictions and their films need to be understood in the fluctuating landscape of the welfare state, which is increasingly moving away from any sense of the 'People's Home' into impersonal, uncaring territory. Finland in these films is more appropriately characterized as a 'malware' state, premised on

... the exclusion of a major sector of the population from the benefits of social policy, as well as inefficient allocations of social spending. Seen from the perspective of the poor, the welfare state is absent, or its presence is circumstantial, fragmented and/or limited. This becomes the basis for criticism of the State's presence in guiding social policy. (Bustelo 1992: 125)

The discourse of the malware state is ever-present in both Aki and Mika Kaurismäki's films, as they focus on individuals who are victimized by the bureaucratic structures of the state or alienated by dominant forms of cultural and identity politics. *Zombie and the Ghost Train* captures Finland in the midst of transformation during this testing time in terms similar to Aki Kaurismäki's films *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel*. Yet, whereas many of Aki Kaurismäki's concurrent works feature protagonists who fall into the gaps of the welfare state structure on the basis of socio-economic factors, *Zombie's* liminality is more fundamental. He has no wish, or ability, to participate in social collectivity as a productive member of society. He is repeatedly either rejected by sections of the national establishment or he chooses alcoholic oblivion as a way of coping with the disorienting structures of society. He is forcefully drafted into national service upon his arrival back in Finland, as it seems *Zombie* ventured abroad in a bid to escape this unwelcome state-mandated obligation. Yet even the army cannot cope with him, as he simply does not do anything that is required of him, choosing to sit under a tree smoking instead of participating in the simulated battles. He is eventually relieved of his duty on the basis of insanity, which effectively provides a red stamp on his social security record. Instead of seeking some sort of recuperation with the surrounding society, *Zombie* drives himself further into alcoholic desperation.

Alcoholism becomes the symptom and a sign of social maladjustment, of a society suffocating in its own mores. Whereas alcohol and alcoholism feature in most of Aki Kaurismäki's films – and indeed in Finnish cinema at large – it is often treated as a national cultural element. This extends to his international critical perception – 'Ben Thompson uncovers the truth behind director Aki Kaurismäki's image as a hard-drinking Nordic wastrel', reads the headline of one article from *The Independent* (Thompson 1991). Yet, Mika Kaurismäki's film equates alcoholism with wider existential and social malaise beyond the discourse of national identity. One may drink to overcome the hindrances of the 'traditional' Finnish male – shy, uncommunicative, hostile, or even violent behaviour (Toiviainen 2002a, Ahonen 2002) – but rarely does it reach such existential heights as in *Zombie and the Ghost*

Train. For *Zombie*, alcohol is something that allows him to simultaneously transcend and reject the obligations and ties of his society. It most certainly does not function as a signifier of nationhood or a form of 'thematising' the nation, to use Mette Hjort's term for the ways individual films highlight their belonging to a particular national cinema (Hjort 2000). Rather, if anything, it unthematizes any sense of clear Finnishness from Kaurismäki's film, connoting the disappearance or dissolution of national belonging along any homogeneous lines.

Finland in Mika Kaurismäki's films has long departed from any sense of the People's Home. The privatization and commercialization of most sectors of the society are an indirect cause of *Zombie*'s despair, as most citizens of the nation seem to be suffocating in their anxiety. As *Zombie* attempts to reintegrate with the society, he functions as a worrying metaphor for the ways that the nation's welfare organizations are leaving the ordinary people behind. *Zombie* tries his hand at window cleaning and working as a chef, but both times phobias suddenly emerge and he has to escape from the workplace. These phobias are an extreme physical reaction to becoming one with a society that treats its members in such an inhuman way. And as both jobs are distinctly working class, the physical aversion *Zombie* experiences must be read as a fundamental criticism of socio-economic exploitation. It does not, however, need to be read in terms of essentialist Finnishness, as has so often been the case. Kaurismäki's film is not so much critical of Finland's 'essential' core, but rather its current socio-political manifestation.

Sakari Toiviainen has suggested that since *The Worthless*, Mika Kaurismäki's films have exhibited a thematic strand that 'ponders Finnishness and crosses borders to internationalism' (Toiviainen 2002a: 61). The aversion of essentialist notions of nationhood function as another form of transvergence, through which Kaurismäki's films capture the uncertainty of cosmopolitan mindsets, of returning to Finland and finding very few notions of identification amongst its spaces. *Zombie* cannot be understood as a fully-fledged cosmopolitan, but a transvergent Finn – he is a metonymic representation of Finnish identity lost in its own tumultuous transformations. He is completely alienated: 'a festering tree lost in a sea of alcohol', as he puts it. The 'production of the alien', which characterizes transvergence according to Novak (2002), and in which the film engages, makes strange any sense of social cohesion, belonging or national homogeneity. If anything is emerging from this identity negotiation, it is an increasing sense of pessimism towards the nation-state, the welfare state, any sense of social obligation, and the transparency of belonging.

Zombie is an example of Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subject, as his life seems to consist of 'the affirmation of fluid boundaries, a practice of the intervals, of the interfaces, and the interstices' (Braidotti 1994: 7). This version of the cosmopolitan does not observe national confines through the 'enlightened' gaze of someone who has seen what lies beyond. Instead, this is the gaze of someone who is aware that similar problems persist everywhere and any sort of engagement with social identity politics is subject to similar power relations that govern inside the nations. Two examples illuminate the universality of this desperation. *Zombie* attempts to escape his claustrophobia by sinking into a state of oblivion in a small



Zombie's confused nihilistic vertigo contrasts/merges with the bleak and desolate national landscape.
(Courtesy of Marianna Films)

pub. As he sits drinking, his eyes are drawn to television images of an oil-covered bird struggling for life in a sea of oil. This was, of course, the time of the first Gulf War, and the bird in question is a metonymic reminder of the scope of this cataclysm. The nodal connection of the television set suggests Zombie's problems are wider in scope than that of Finland. In the face of such daunting challenges, individuals are helpless to pull themselves out of this context of exploitation that submerges them. Ghost Train, the eponymous band of the title, provide a potential direction for Zombie. They are a band everyone has heard of, but no one has actually seen perform, haunting the back stages and back roads with their presence. Yet, Zombie encounters them twice on his journey, where their phantom-like liminality captures the only way to exist in this society. The first time, the band's tour bus picks him up on his return journey from the army as he is about to be frozen to death. The second time, the band comes to visit him in hospital where he is fighting for his life after a senseless beating at Helsinki harbour. Both times, the indication is of Zombie's liminality between the borders of life and death as the band carries him back to life.

While these guardian angels pull him back to face his problems, it seems he has another destination beyond dying a senseless death in Finland. Finally, he escapes to Istanbul, a city with similar connotations of liminality as Finland's border-existence between the East (Soviet Union) and the West (Europe, the US). The city seems not much different from Helsinki – captured in gray-hued, bleak terms as Harri comes to retrieve his friend Zombie from his nihilistic plight. There is very little hope, as Zombie has submerged beyond any recoverable state. In the bleak, but hopeful conclusions of Aki Kaurismäki's *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel*, we see the protagonists flee to destinations beyond their immediate national confines. Both escapes are underscored by nostalgic music that indicates longing for the traditional home of the nation and a realization that such conceptualizations are now irrevocably in the past. The future is wide open, as the unlimited potential of endless horizons of the sea stretch out in front of our protagonists. Zombie's destiny is a lot more despondent and pessimistic. There are no hopeful connotations in the song that underscores his passing beyond the realms of society. Instead of 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' that concludes *Ariel*, Zombie has been to the other side of the rainbow and it is no better than what we find inside the world of nations. The optimistic smile that emerges through Aki Kaurismäki's sadness has no room in Zombie's desolate and diseased world – the living dead are not able to smile.

Gendered manifestations

One key way for understanding the differences and similarities of Aki and Mika Kaurismäki's films, and also their different relationships with Finnish traditions, is to explore the role of gender in these films. National literature and film often relied on stereotypical notions of gender drawn from texts such as *Seitsemän Veljestä/Seven Brothers* (Aleksis Kivi 1873) and *Vänrikki Stoolin tarinat/The Tales of Ensign Stål* (Johan Runeberg 1848) and films including *Pohjalaisia/Ostrobothnians* (Karu, 1925) and *Härmästä Poikia Kymmenen/Ten Boys From*

Härmä (Unho, 1950). These texts were instrumental in cultivating an archetypal image of the Finnish male as a stoic, uncommunicative figure, lacking in self-esteem and prone to drinking, but essentially a hard-working character. On the other hand, the characteristics of the Finnish female are often defined on the basis of virtuous, pure qualities, designed more for utopian aspirations rather than a true participant in the 'daily plebiscite' of the nation. Alternatively, they are sidelined as wives and mothers, as the subjugated second sex (Gordon & Lahelma 1998). Such descriptions are, of course, highly caricatured and Finnish cinema is often, appropriately, criticized for its patriarchal and chauvinist tendencies (Ahonen 2003, Toiviainen 2002a). One could suggest that there is some sort of self-reflexive criticism taking place here (Finns are often said to be extremely self-deprecating), although the sheer prevalence of this type of representation, and their consistent success with domestic audiences, necessitates approaching any such view with a measure of critical caution. How do the Kaurismäki's Finnish-set films engage with this distinctly male-centric heritage?

The Kaurismäki's early template films feature all the characteristics of the Finnish male identified above, yet there is something that seems off-kilter about this supposed abidance with stereotypes. While Ville of *The Liar* is 'stereotypical' in his sense of Finnishness, he is also wordy, worldly, highly intelligent, at ease with women, and satisfied of his superiority. These are also characteristics that apply to Matti and Juuso from *The Worthless*, as they resemble the protagonists of Godard and Truffaut's films more than any simplistic stereotype of the male Finn. It almost seems as if these protagonists are overcompensating for what they perceive to be a backwards-looking Finnish mentality by emphasizing their difference from the national norms. The Kaurismäki's interviews highlight a similar type of exasperation with Finland when they talk of the themes of *The Worthless* in the following terms: 'The theme of the film is very Finnish. We wanted to explore national melancholia and that unbelievable phenomenon erroneously called the national mentality/the instinct for self-destruction' (Mika Kaurismäki in Nyrrhinen 1984). Matti, Juuso and Ville all seem to be alienated by what they perceive to be the stagnant society surrounding them. While they persistently consume Calvados in street cafés in downtown Helsinki and call themselves American Express, their relationship with women is not forward-looking, but seems, rather, to look back to the restrictive imbalance found in the majority of Finnish cinema. For Ville, women are just objects he can 'rescue' from the banality and objectification of their lives, despite the fact that he has little means to offer them anything better. In these early Kaurismäki films, women seem to only function as the typical victims of the patriarchal order, as discardable commodities or objects used for masculine self-realization.

While both Mika and Aki Kaurismäki scripted the template films, similar problems persist with Mika's individual productions: *The Clan* (women as wives or mothers) and *Rosso* (women as idealized 'queens'). *Paper Star* is a notable exception in Kaurismäki's career, as it features a central female protagonist, but the ideological direction of the film differs little from the patriarchal frameworks of his previous works. Anna Kejonen is a glamour model, currently in a depressive spiral of alcohol and drug abuse. Furthermore, her destructive relationship with reporter Ilja Kulovaara and dependency on people who are only out to use

her are destroying her life. While the film clearly attempts to criticize the male-centric world of the fashion industry and the oppressive nature of image commodification and patriarchal relations, it never moves beyond these confines. Anna has no agency of her own – she is just thrown around by Ilja and her other suitor Uffe, who abuse and take advantage of her at their whim. We are never asked to identify with her as anything other than a victim, as even the final confrontation between Ilja and Uffe results in the two men shooting one another. Anna is arrested for her part in the violence and Uffe's shady drug business operations, but is ultimately released from prison to her loyal friend Taukka. It seems that only a caring, sensitive man can rescue her from her oppressive existence, she is utterly incapable of doing this on her own – she drifts along according to the whims of the male suitors.

Mika Kaurismäki has suggested that the female characters of his films are stronger than their male counterparts (Kääpä 2010b) and there is certainly ample evidence to support this case. For example, *Cha Cha Cha*'s Sanna is the level-headed party in this story of class politics in late 1980s' society, who observes the unfettered hyper-capitalism and one-upmanship of Matti and Kari with bemused distance. Similarly, *Zombie*'s Marjo is the only solid structure in his life that provides him with some semblance of stability and acts as a brief respite from his societal vertigo. But for the most part, the female characters exist purely to provide solace or moral dilemmas for the masculine protagonists of the films. In *LA without a Map*, the love-stricken protagonist Richard pursues Jane from Scotland to Hollywood. While she acts as the catalyst for the narrative, the film is ultimately about his quest to find meaning for his pointless life. This arc is completed when she eventually follows him back to Scotland to begin their new, contented life. Her dreams of stardom are sidelined in favour of stability under the umbrella of semi-patriarchal family hierarchy. More problematically, *Condition Red* takes place in a female penitentiary where a male guard falls in love with one of his captives. He attempts to free this 'victim' from her oppressed confines, but it turns out she has been cheating him all along as a part of a complex drug deal with her real partner. The coalescence of the woman as both a victim and a femme fatale suggests a problematic othering of women characters that reinforces the need to maintain patriarchal structures in society. In *Condition Red*, it seems that women need to be controlled as, otherwise, they just cannot but try to undermine male authority. Mika Kaurismäki's films are ultimately set in a male-centric world, where the narratives, even in their critical views on patriarchal relations, rely on traditional gender roles.

While the above discussion sketches out some key problems with the films' gender politics, we must remember that masculinity is also under constant crisis in Mika Kaurismäki's films. This is, of course, no excuse for promulgating such patriarchal obsessions, but it does allow us to explore some of the more complex implications of his palette. The crisis of masculinity emanates from a sense of cultural confusion, as many of his protagonists are free-thinking intellectuals (at least in their own minds) who constantly come face to face with the normative framework of masculine (Finnish) stereotypes – a notion which applies equally to his Finnish films as well as international productions such as *Condition Red* and *Honey Baby*. The wanderers of these films try to live according to their ideological outsidership

while they abide with predominant masculine norms. They consistently fail on this account, at least until their situation is vindicated by the potential rescue of women characters. While they try to enforce alternative ways of life beyond the traditional paradigms of the nation, their contradictory adherence to masculine stereotypes indicates their embeddedness in the very systems they strive to criticize. We have already suggested that these films work to subvert normative traditions of the nation while they have to operate in the framework of these traditions to make this subversion a success. The same goes for gender. In order to indicate and rethink the problematic national ‘mentality’ that both the brothers abhor, they have to engage with such issues on the level of this mentality. Working from this point, the normative framework of Finnish masculinity defines the palette of Kaurismäki’s subjective engagements with this very framework.

Andrew Nestingen’s discussion of the role of gender in Aki Kaurismäki’s films allows us to unravel these contradictions. According to him, ‘the films minimize or ignore gender difference within national discourse, at the same time as critics wish to use national discourse to justify the films’ social significance’ (Nesting 2010). On one hand, these films use national traditions and homogeneous, nostalgic images of the past. On the other, these images can only tell us what is seemingly missing from the present. Gendered social inequality is, accordingly, taken for the national norm and as a part of the ‘national narrative’. But the naturalization of the films’ gender representation, and the critics’ verification of this imbalance, is ultimately turned on its head as our critical faculties necessitate that we inspect such inequality from a succinctly critical perspective. While gender politics in these films never truly move beyond this framework, their destructive or pessimistic depiction of masculinity includes self-reflexive potential. As this effectively necessitates that we acknowledge the gender bias of so-called national characteristics and narratives, we are thus asked to interrogate the distinctly problematic implications of national cohesion. While gender is a less-frequently discussed aspect in the reviews for Mika Kaurismäki’s films, similar politics of contradiction can be seen in his films. As the masculinity of the films is consistently in crisis, we are encouraged to question the structures that promulgate and foreground the male odyssey. Working within the structures of the framework, using elements that define the framework, the films can be understood as casting ambiguity over taken-for-granted gender binaries. This self-reflexivity also extends to the reception of the films, as it becomes difficult for us to merely consider these films in patriarchal terms. Accordingly, we will discuss gender at various intervals throughout this journey of Kaurismäki’s work, where patriarchy remains a constant topic of debate, not unquestioning acceptance.

Transvergent marginalization

A further way to think through the Kaurismäki’s different approaches to Finland’s transformations is to explore the type of marginality their protagonists embody. In the films

of both, the characters live on the margins of society or try to negotiate for a means of survival in the face of the uncaring welfare state. Many of Aki Kaurismäki's protagonists are liminal beings undergoing some type of transition. This can take the form of a downward class spiral into the underclasses, as seen in *Shadows in Paradise* or *Ariel*. Alternatively, we are asked to follow the travails of individuals who lose their legal and civic identity amidst restructuring of the state, as happens in *The Man without a Past* and *Laitakaupungin Valot/Lights at the Dusk* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2006). Many of Mika Kaurismäki's protagonists share a similar fate of liminality. Rosso's foreignness in Finland casts him into a situation where familiar structures no longer apply. He acts in a similar manner to the protagonists' of Aki Kaurismäki's films as he tries to cope with the hostile surroundings, even if this leads to engaging in criminality and violence.

While many of Mika Kaurismäki's protagonists are liminalized outsiders, outside of their own free will, protagonists such as *Zombie*, *Ville*, *Matti* and *Juuso* (even Mika Kaurismäki, the narrator/protagonist of *Moro no Brasil*) often find such an ephemeral state a fluent conductor, and a space of opportunity, for their antagonism to mainstream society and its conventional politics of representation. They are, thus, more appropriately characterized as nomads, as people who are not comfortable with the structured existence of their society, or who actively reject its dominant values and wander in search of something more authentic (see Cohen et al. 1987). They are often cosmopolitan subjects with only palimpsest ties to a national identity, or they purposefully reject all values of structured society like *Zombie*, who feels the need to compensate for this perceived lack by indulging in alcohol overconsumption. These characters are often ideological outsiders who view the world through a different and more complex prism than the mainstream, as they can neither abide with the dominant structures of the society nor find adequate answers to its problems – all they can do is keep on searching. They are found wandering through the metropolises of Europe or America in search of their purpose, finding nothing of value as they try to attain some ideal state, which may have never existed.

The inclusion of transnational elements in both Kaurismäki's films may often seem out of place in the diegesis of the films. The cinematic world is thoroughly shaped by the perspectives of the protagonists who see their society as a heterogeneous, transnational space, as a fluid, constantly changing landscape that fosters contesting forms of thought and behaviour. Whereas Aki Kaurismäki's films focus on the schisms that arise between the hegemonic stratas and the marginalized protagonists, the films of Mika Kaurismäki often seem to smooth over these schisms by portraying the world in a thoroughly everyday, 'banal' light. Yet, the quality of the everyday light needs further interrogation as the liminal protagonists of the films inspect the banal routines of society from their nomadic perspectives. These routines and conventions seem, at first, thoroughly ordinary, but they are made strange by situating them in the skewed lifeworlds of the protagonists. In *Rosso* and *Zombie*, simple acts like shopping and travelling have an alienating quality, as the protagonists are unable to carry out these menial tasks. Both have very good reasons for their social maladjustment. Rosso is an outsider to whom Finland seems bleak and nonsensical. As a foreigner, even the

basic things, like language and customs, become impenetrable barriers for communication. Similarly, *Zombie's* absolute refusal to take part in any collective activity forces us to gaze at these taken-for-granted customs, seeing them via the eyes of the outsider. Such methods of representing one's so-called native land make the familiar unwelcome, revealing the constructed nature of the norms and customs on which any sense of national homogeneity is premised. These perspectives work to reveal the manufactured, 'cultivating' nature of these conventions and their relationship with social control and dominant forms of cultural behaviour.

As we will see throughout this work, the alienating gaze of the protagonist has implications for spectator identification. If we are part of the system that causes the alienation of the protagonist, what types of mechanisms do we mobilize to identify with these films? After all, few of the spectators of these distinctly art-house films will be in a position to fully identify with the fundamental otherness of these protagonists. Rather, the pleasures of spectatorship arise from our ability to use the alienation of the protagonists as a way of negotiating our complicity and lack of action against what we clearly perceive as an unfair society. As a form of cinematic therapy, the films allow us to confront the inherent problems involved in art-house patronage of such leftist texts. The problem is, of course, that this can merely lead to a sort of displacement of guilt, of acting as a form of compensatory 'cultural work'. But Kaurismäki's films call for a substantial level of affective identification, which is often achieved through correlating these difficult protagonists with anthropomorphic elements, such as the bird drowning in a sea of oil in *Zombie*, or the bleak, but immersive mirror of the landscape in *Rosso*. The contradiction between alienation and identification creates a transvergent spectator perspective, which constantly keeps the spectator at a distance and disallows either to fully develop. Such positioning calls for critical liminality which seeks to challenge the socializing and normalizing force of dominant norms, or any possibility of taking such ideas for granted.

The transvergent positions of Mika Kaurismäki's films produce complex negotiations on what David Harvey calls 'oppositional culture' (1990). Here, the all-encompassing dominance of hegemonic culture restricts the range of opportunities available for any antagonistic form of cultural expression. Kaurismäki's films seek to find ways of having antagonistic perspectives heard amidst the alternating cacophony and monotony of dominant culture (think of the ways mainstream culture simultaneously pumps out a range of programming to appeal to all demographics, whilst retaining tight reins on what is productively expressed within these parameters). The first step in achieving this is avoiding instant dismissal for being too strange or alien, and speaking in the language of the hegemonic cultural structures being criticized. Any anti-establishment mode of rhetoric faces these problems of alienation or marginalization. Here, one important way in which hegemonic processes work is by 'othering' the antagonistic culture as something dangerous and alien. Thus, even anti-capitalist movements have to work within the framework of capitalist cultural production if they want their voices heard. Accordingly, antagonist modes of culture face the problem of being appropriated, of having 'to be expressed in a commodified mode, thus limiting



Rosso lost in the national heartland. (Courtesy of Villealfa Oy)

the powers of oppositional movements in important ways' (Harvey 1990: 83). Oppositional cinema faces problems of subjugation, first of all, as film production can seldom afford to work as a non-commodified form of production. Thus, the logic of capital dictates production and distribution concerns to different extents and limits the types of antagonism that can be productively expressed. Second, oppositionality has to be enunciated in the dominant vocabulary, which, again, will impact the radicalism desired by oppositional movements. Understanding Kaurismäki's films as merely antagonistic to dominant norms of Finnish cinema would have these films function along the lines of relatively impotent oppositional culture. Yet, conceptualizing these films in transvergent terms provides a much more productive, self-reflexive vantage point for discussing their political implications. Instead of mere opposition, these films are inherently aware of the powerful implications of the dominant cultures. Such self-awareness of one's limitations is instrumental in creating the basis for transvergence as an approach that works with the material that makes up these structures in order to subvert and question the constitution and implications of these structures. This is a notion that applies equally to his approach to nationhood, as it does to other areas of cinematic representation.

Chapter 2

Cross-genre: Transnational Genre Mutations

Genre is a key concept for understanding Mika Kaurismäki's cinema. In Finnish film historian Sakari Toiviainen's view, Kaurismäki's work combines action spiced with comedy; crime interconnected with romance (Toiviainen 2002a: 61). From early on, Kaurismäki's cineaste roots are evident in his films as they contain extensive intertextual plays with genre categorization. For example, *The Liar* and *The Worthless* make frequent allusions to film noir and westerns through their claustrophobic cityscapes, captured in monochromatic, highly stylized ways, and frequent border-crossings between urbanity and the natural environment. This experimentation with genres extends to dystopian sci-fi with *Jackpot 2* (1981) and *Rosso* with its unique take on the road movie, the most American of genres. Hollywood genres are not the only source the films reference as they consciously recreate several pastiche scenes from the films of Jean-Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut. The films of these French New Wave film-makers were, of course, self-reflexive plays on the archetypes and conventions of the Hollywood genres, re-conceptualized in a package that simultaneously paid homage and criticized the tropes of Hollywood cinema. By 'quoting the quotations,' Kaurismäki is effectively creating postmodernist genre mutations, all implanted into the 'suffocating' confines of Finnish cinema at the turn of the 1980s.

While all three films gesture towards international cinema in their genre reformulations, Finnish society lies at the heart of their thematic criticism. The many revealing schisms and disjunctures that emerge in the aesthetic and narrative structures of *The Liar* and *The Worthless* connote the different ways of viewing this increasingly fragmented society, where the mindsets of the emergent generation are at odds with not only the hegemonic socio-political views of the nation but with other cinematic representations of that national culture. Somewhat surprisingly, the dystopian landscapes of the science-fiction film are compatible with the Kaurismäki's vision of Finland. The world of *Jackpot 2*, with its destroyed environments and empty cityscapes controlled by totalitarian forces, is distinctly lacking in human connection and stability, a world where all seems hopeless for the emergent generation.

It is not surprising that many of Kaurismäki's films fall within the genre structures of the road movie, as this genre, by definition, is focused on never-ending searches, featuring protagonists who can find stability only in the very process of the search. These films take place in constantly transforming 'transvergent spaces' of cultural and political significance, which gesture to wider political conditions within the social structures the films explore. Both *The Worthless* and *Rosso* feature outsider perspectives on Finland in the midst of change. In *The Worthless*, we constantly witness spaces where signs of tradition have



Ideological liminality between communism and capitalism in *Jackpot 2* – the dystopian future of contemporary Finland?
(Courtesy of Villealfa Oy)



The transvergent collision of traditionalism, capitalism and the emergent generation in *The Worthless*.
(Courtesy of Villealfa Oy).

disappeared, or are in the process of disappearing. The *mise-en-scène* foregrounds elements that highlight the metamorphosis of the welfare state under neoliberalist globalization, such as bank names with their implications of commercialism and privatization, or signs of multinational corporations such as Esso replacing traditional storefronts. The persistent foregrounding captures the mindscapes of the alienated protagonists as they live in the liminal transformative space. Yet, it would be counterproductive to assume that this sort of juxtaposition indicates a sense of nostalgia. The replacement of traditions means little for the protagonists as they have never lived in the time when such ideas were the conservative norm. Now they are being replaced by signs of another sort, with ideological connotations which these alienated protagonists find equally unappealing.

To capture these changes in the framework of cosmopolitan identity politics, *The Worthless* and *Rosso* adopt the vernacular of the road movie and focus on the exuberant highs and cataclysmic lows of endless searching. The result is a vision of cosmopolitanism that simultaneously celebrates its liberating potential, but also keeps reminding the spectator of its rootlessness. As the protagonist of a road movie, Rosso takes full advantage of his surroundings, bulldozing his way through what should have been delicate moments of cultural interaction. He forces the brother of his former girlfriend Marja (who is now Rosso's target) to guide him, stealing cars and supplies without a moment's hesitation. Rosso's cosmopolitan abilities are questionable, as he is incapable of encountering the problems and difficulties facing him in any sort of constructive attempt at integration. Once his guide is shot, he has to face the realities of being a stranger in a strange land and navigate through this hostile society. The film inverts the cosmopolitan potential of the road movie via a series of tragic-comic instances. Initially, Rosso plays the (stereo)type of the Italian gangster as he robs banks and frequents pizzerias. These activities go smoothly, but soon his car runs out of petrol. As his means of travel expires, he only has his corporeal body and his cosmopolitan mindset as a means of navigation. The film captures his alienation as the Ostrobothnian plains – often depicted as the national heartland – are flooded and only prove an obstacle for his travel. Rosso resorts to sleeping in gutters and guzzling Koskenkorva [vodka], as he is now a drifter for whom the normative confines of society pose a threat. No longer able to take advantage of his cosmopolitanism, or to act as the typical rootless, yet liberated, protagonist of the road movie, the road literally comes to an end at the plains. Rosso is still 'on the road' but this opportunities for travel have ceased, as he is left in a sort of limbo that functions as an inversion of the levity available for the cosmopolitan road-movie protagonist.

The dynamics of the road-movie genre are ideal for exploring the potential and obstacles for intercultural communication. Finland in these films acts as a sort of inverted mirror that reverses the gaze of the outsider back on themselves. With the confidence of the cosmopolitan, cultural traditions and social reality are only momentary glimpses in the rearview mirror. Once the road ends, one has to meet this reality head on and come to some sort of mutually-beneficial relationship with it. Rosso is never able to achieve this, as he is shot dead in a pizzeria called Rosso. It seems this pizzeria-chain has managed to adapt to the cultural and economic landscape of the nation much more effectively than Rosso

the assassin. By inspecting what happens when you veer away from normative structures of the genre, *Rosso's* dead-end play on road movies expands to a critique of the limits of cosmopolitanism. Home of the cosmopolitan lies on the road, yet the genre play of the film reveals that such a condition is fragile and often unsustainable. *Rosso's* miserable end can be read as another instance in which the road movie genre reasserts dominant ideology at the conclusion of a transgressive narrative (Rick Altman, 1999, convincingly suggests this to be the case with much of the genre). As even the natural environment of the nation rejects this hostile element, there is much to support reinterpreting *Rosso* as an anti-cosmopolitan film. This suggestion is reliant on the idea that the nation only appears hostile to this unwanted outsider – it is not the nation that is the target of the film's criticism, but the undeveloped cosmopolitanism of a crass tourist like *Rosso*. Yet, the transvergent perspective of the film counters any sort of abidance with hegemonic ideology as we are inherently aware that the 'foreign' perspective of the film belongs to Finnish cultural producers. As all the major production personnel and the main actor originate from inside the hegemonic structures, we are not invited to identify with its supposed anti-cosmopolitanism. Rather, we are made aware of how one can theoretically belong to the conventions and norms of these structures and still be an ideological outsider. The mimetic qualities of *Rosso's* pseudo-foreignness place the Finnish spectator in a convoluted position where they are forced to ponder their complicity in producing the alien within. Not simply the alienated outsider, the film urges us to consider the implications of identification and strangeness, blurring the difference between these two ideas. Thus, transvergence comes to enunciate the self-reflexive need to ponder one's position within the structures that are being criticized, as well as one's embeddedness in the very system that seeks to maintain these restrictive structures.

***Condition Red* and film noir**

Condition Red (1995) is an important work in Kaurismäki's filmography as it is one of his self-admittedly 'pure' genre productions, referencing 1950s' film noir and, specifically, the works of Sam Fuller as an inspiration (Kääpä 2010b). Of course, many of his early films included substantial homages to noir, such as the ambiguous protagonists of *The Liar* and *The Worthless* and their narratives of criminality. Yet, the ways these films include elements of noir hardly fit in with definition of 'classic' noir, as they are explicitly self-aware of their genre debt. It would also be difficult to label these films neo-noir as their plot structures follow few conventions, and end up more akin to Godardian postmodernist plays with elements from the genre, rather than narratives that would fit in with any definition of that genre. Such blurring of genre distinctions is problematic for the economic viability of a film as *The Worthless*, for example, was conceived as a commercial film aimed at youth audiences, yet it never managed to break out as other contemporaneous examples did. Kaurismäki is well aware of the economic validity of genre as in his view, 'art-house is also a genre, and rather dull one sometimes. It is good to produce pure genre cinema once in a while' (Kaurismäki,

Condition Red DVD, 2008). This comment clarifies the ways he sets out to mobilize art-house associations, which provide his films with a viable means of distribution. But there is also something to be gained from abidance with genre structures that can foster new types of creativity, which his art-house credentials then disseminate to different spectators.

Condition Red focuses on Dan, a lonely troubled guard at a penitentiary in Pennsylvania, reassigned from the male ward to the female side due to his uncontrollable violent outbursts against the prisoners. On the ward, he is drawn to Gidell, a former nightclub singer incarcerated for refusing to inform on her violent boyfriend Cesar. Dan begins an affair with Gidell and ultimately helps her escape. True to the demands of the genre, she has conspired with Cesar to dupe Dan into planning the escape. Cesar attacks Dan and leaves him for dead but he catches the pair at an airport and kills Cesar. She dies in the gunfight, leaving Dan to take off to Mexico alone. While the narrative of the film is typical of the film noir genre, with its conflicted protagonists and femmes fatales, the film's oscillation between genre loyalty and subversion can enlighten some of the ways in which Kaurismäki's films use genre conventions for transvergent purposes. Dan is a typical noir protagonist for whom the roles of the criminal and the law-enforcer blur. As with the hard-boiled detectives or anti-heroes of film noir, his compromised morality contrasts with his seemingly stable exterior, as his aggressive behaviour and willingness to start a relationship with Gidell imply capacity for significant moral compromise. According to Dan, he 'lives between two worlds. One on the inside, the other on the outside. My job is to keep the ones on the inside in'. Kaurismäki states of his protagonists: 'My films have always focused on people cast outside from society. In this film, the outsidersness is even more potent as the protagonists have drifted or been cast outside, but simultaneously, they are constrained inside the rock' (Kaurismäki, *Condition Red* DVD, 2008). The film calls into question simple distinctions between insider and outsidersness, as it is unclear where our protagonist belongs. By mobilizing the typical conventions of the genre to highlight the contested and malleable nature of social categorizations, designations of belonging are made abstract, which, in turn, prods us to question social control and its methods of 'discipline and punishment'.

According to Marc Vernet (1983), the narrative conventions of classic film noir revolve around a character-based triangle of the 'rich old man', femme fatale, and the ambiguous, morally-compromised protagonist. In Kaurismäki's transvergent noir, the rich old man is replaced by an uncaring social system that lacks the capability to control the darker side of humanity. But this is not for the lack of trying and, thus, the film portrays social options in the bleakest terms possible. Dan's home is a drab apartment, a place of solitary confinement, reserved for depression and extreme drunkenness. He is concretely a liminal being, belonging neither to the inside nor the outside. The world outside the prison is as violent and hopeless as the one inside, and we come to understand his desperate desire for human connection through his couplings with Gidell in the toilets and backrooms of the prison. The malfare state does not distinguish between those that supposedly serve its organizational power and those that have been punished for not abiding with its structures. The fallacies of the malfare state manifest in what is an uncharacteristically violent film for Kaurismäki: 'The violence is

my statement on what is happening in the world. It is a specific vision of American society, [whose modes of behaviour] extend all over the world' (Kaurismäki, *Condition Red* DVD, 2008). As was the case with *Zombie and the Ghost Train*, the malfare state extends outside of its immediate territory, as, according to Kaurismäki, the film could have taken place in Paris or Helsinki – this type of antagonistic culture is becoming a reality in most metropolises. While the film resembles a quick genre film on the surface, it provides a fundamentally critical commentary on the state of society as one existing in 'a constant state of alert' (as per the original title of the film: *A Constant State of Alert*).

While most film noirs (especially those of Sam Fuller) have a distinct socio-critical drive, *Condition Red* differs from the films noirs of yesteryear due to its stylistic choices and its denouement. Kaurismäki has suggested that the film works in documentary terms as a 'realist' examination of social alienation. Certainly, the chiaroscuro lighting and deep shadows normally associated with the genre are absent in the film. In their place we find naturalistic lighting and sunlit daylight locations. The prison environment is captured in low-key, mundane terms with the occasional handheld camera punctuating the realism effect for which the film strives. In contrast to Kaurismäki's early films, with their deliberate plays with national continuity, there is very little that seems out of place in *Condition Red*. Only a shot of a cactus, seen at the opening and closure of the film, seems to distance us from this sense of realism. The cactus is, of course, a reference to Mexico and a signifier of Dan's need to escape his suffocating life in Philadelphia. But, as with many of the film's other elements, its inclusion indicates a heightened sense of reality that functions as part of its genre vernacular. In classic film noir such as *Public Enemy* (Wellman, 1933) and neo-noir like *Carlito's Way* (DePalma, 1993), such elements function as representations of the American Dream that are just out of reach for the protagonists. They act as an idealized moral guideline emphasizing that the Dream is only attainable through honest hard work.

Condition Red does not abide with this convention, as Dan is successful in his plan of escaping to Mexico. By aligning himself with the criminal element he is supposed to guard, he is able to break the vicious cycle of his life. Gidell's amoral behaviour shows him the way out, which seems to be only achieved by letting go of the distinctions that characterize his existence, his liminality. By contesting and reinforcing the paradigms that comprise the film noir genre, the film provides a distinctly anti-moralizing tone suggestive of the transforming moral codes of contemporary society. Yet, the film is also critical of the pervasive influence of the cycle of violence in society, while it effectively resorts to solve violence with violence. This is the contradiction and ambiguity of the film, where it simultaneously works in the framework of the genre while striving to move beyond its moral boundaries. Such contradictions need to be understood in transvergent terms, as they work to contradict the optimism of the conclusion by indicating the compromises it takes to achieve easy resolution to the problems of the malfare state.

Furthermore, the conclusion is a play on the enforcement of happy endings in Hollywood cinema – one that has similar connotations to the subversive, multi-levelled conclusions of Douglas Sirk's melodramas that reveal the fabricated nature of the 'dream machine'.

Condition Red's industrial and production history illuminate the social implications of the film's deviation from its genre origins. The film was Kaurismäki's first American production, though it was financed through independent sources. Kaurismäki has continually expressed a clear distaste for the Hollywood industry and the commercial compromises production there necessitates. It was not altogether surprising that he sought help from Jonathan Demme, a director well-known for his independent origins with Roger Corman's American Independent Pictures. The evocation of these two directors, admired for working inside the Hollywood machinery while also maintaining their roots in exploitation and socio-critical film-making, is deliberate for *Condition Red's* contradictory dynamics. It exemplifies Kaurismäki's stance of working within the structures of commercial entertainment while injecting it with subversive material. Kaurismäki adapted the synonym Michael Bambihill for his executive producer credit, though he retains his original name for his directorial card. The moniker is crucial in understanding Kaurismäki's industrial politics, as deer means kauris in Finnish and Bambi is, of course, the name of the title character in Disney's *Bambi* (Hand, 1942). This Anglicization suggests that Kaurismäki's adapted identity in the US is that of a director raised on Hollywood entertainment, now present in the land of this cultural industry to offer his version of its cultural products. As Dan is a liminal subject caught between two worlds, so it seems Michael Bambihill exhibits a similar sense of liminality. He is a predominantly European director, well-versed in the art-house experimentalism that differs substantially from the products of Hollywood. Yet, he is now also a director who works in the US, though still at an independent level. The film can be read as a subversive commentary on some of the dominant conventions of Hollywood cinema, where the film noir conventions (already a subversive genre in its own right) are contrasted with a realistic touch and a fantastical ending. Thus, working with the conventions, whilst subverting their moral and ideological implications, allows Kaurismäki to maintain a position of transvergent industrial liminality between the art-house and the commercial world.

The melodrama and the anti-capitalist imagination

The protagonists of Kaurismäki's road movies and film noirs share a sense of liminality aimed at revisioning the hegemonic structures of society. While *Rosso* focused on the limits of cosmopolitanism and *Condition Red* explored the dynamics of power in society, other films of his use genre for examining gender and class politics. Many of them feature existential journeys similar to those undertaken by the protagonists of the road movie genre, albeit now contextualized to other socio-cultural formations. For example, the protagonists of Kaurismäki's *Cha Cha Cha* and *Paper Star* travel through dominant social classes of the welfare state in their search for some sort of stability. Many critics saw these films as 'irreverent' at the time of their release, but examining *Cha Cha Cha* and *Paper Star* via genre analysis can yield some unexpected results that reveal previously hidden depth to these films. In the case of *Cha Cha Cha*, the genre in question is that of the screwball

comedy, and with *Paper Star*, that of the melodrama. These films provide a politicized take on contemporary Finland through what Anthony Giddens calls 'life-politics' (1991). To put it simply, life-politics concerns the ways in which individuals participate in or contest dominant social formations through their life-style choices. Examples of these issues may include consumer ethics or environmental concerns – issues with moral and/or social implications beyond individual considerations. Giddens' concept of life-politics was, to a large extent, a response to the increasing presence of consumerism and global capitalism in late 1980s' society. Kaurismäki's films, likewise, explore the ways in which individuals make choices that reflect the ways in which consumerism and capitalist individualism are taking over various aspects of social life in late 1980s' Finland.

Cha Cha Cha is an unusual film in Kaurismäki's career as it is his first 'pure' comedy. While most of his earlier films have abundant comedic elements, these were situated in the context of other generic frameworks, with the conventions of these frameworks taking precedence. In *Cha Cha Cha*, Kaurismäki was inspired by the films of Ernst Lubitsch, and he characterizes the film as a farce, but one where the farcical elements are kept in tight constraints (Kaurismäki, *Cha Cha Cha* DVD, 2008). The narrative of *Cha Cha Cha* focuses on former best friends Kari (Väänänen) and Matti (Pellonpää) as Matti receives an inheritance of a million marks from his aunt who lives in New York. He has ambivalent feelings towards her as she is the one who taught this now-derelict alcoholic how to drink. With persuasion from Kari, the two reconcile their acrimonious past (Kari stole his wife from Matti) and set out to rehabilitate Matti as a way of fulfilling the conditions for the inheritance.

The film's narrative explores many of the themes that characterize the screwball and the farce genre. Class criticism is one of the film's key ideas, mobilized by exploring the lifestyles of the upper classes from Matti's perspective. We spend considerable time observing the decoration process of the couple's suburban habitat as they purchase all types of impractical modern design and commodities, including a novelty phone which runs on water. The more 'rehabilitated' this liminal being becomes, the more frivolous and extravagant his expenses get. Kari takes out numerous bank loans to make Matti appear civilized, as it seems it is no trouble getting these substantial loans from the banks. They are, after all, for a 'good' cause – that is, the maintenance of the embourgeois status quo. The film is clearly commenting on the socio-political situation in Finland at the end of the 1980s as mainstream media and political commentators were celebrating the success of the casino-economics and the privatization of the public functions of the welfare state. As with the casino-economics, the plan is initially successful and Matti receives his inheritance. But, as with the unstable and insecure bank loans that characterized the era, it transpires that the costs of embourgeoisment have been so extensive as to amass a significant debt for the pair. As they pay back the loans to the banks and the retailers, the sum spent is more than the million Matti is set to inherit. Thus, Kari has to sell his house and car and move to the homeless community under the bridge. As their plan comes crashing down, the final words from Matti – 'this is authentic life!' – ridicule the lifestyles of the upper classes and the structures of society, where the consumerist ethos of casino-economics is taken as the

norm. Matti's unsustainable and uncontrolled class-ascension and yuppie lifestyle act as metonymic reminders of the inevitable collapse of a society structured on such temporary gains.

Screwball comedies often take place in a world that resembles our own. As with the classics of the genre, such as Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (Capra, 1934) and its exploration of gender and class norms in a New Deal-era America, *Cha Cha Cha* is a product of its socio-historical context. The world of the film is sketched via what I call 'banal realism', in the sense that the film is produced to resemble a slice of everyday life in Finland in 1988. Here, I deliberately evoke the work of Michael Billig, and his concept of banal nationalism, which suggest that the film is 'flagging [the nation] unflaggingly' (Billig 1995: 41). In effect, this would imply that the film validates and reinforces the values and conventions of the state, indicating the immersion of the film's protagonists in the ideological structures of the capitalist welfare state. However, banality is a part of Kaurismäki's transvergent approach, which deconstructs commonly-accepted social mores through ambiguity and irony. It is precisely ambiguity about the future that the the conclusion of *Cha Cha Cha* captures with its banal imagery, depicting the now-bankrupt Kari and Matti settling into life in the homeless community. In defiance of dominant meanings attributed to homelessness in the capitalist welfare state, the protagonists' expressions of content and their classy clothes provide an impression of two social orders coalescing into a picture of irony. Furthermore, the harbours of the city in the background remind us that the film's narrative and, by extension, its thematic focus, is on the effects of global capitalism. The concluding image of the film maintains the transvergent scope of Kaurismäki's films by positioning the protagonists outside the realms of the homogeneous nation and the reach of global capitalism, suggesting that what is often thought of as a transitional state is, in fact, the social idyll to be attained. Banal realism, then, is also a transvergent form of cultural representation, which has the power to contest accepted social structures and their conventional representations. This is precisely why I call this form of realism banal realism – the 'banal' suggests that what we are seeing is a depiction of the state of contemporary society as it is; but at the same time, the imagery has also been carefully selected, composed and framed to give that impression of a realist construction, and to make a political point. They do not simply capture life as it is, since at the same time, they also work to *comment* on that life, that reality.

Banal realism, then, is politically motivated, as it relies on rooting the film firmly in its time and place in order to criticize the contemporary nation and its culture from within. Yet, the temporal connotations of banality are distinctly askew, as the type of everyday 'flagging of the nation' implicit in banal nationalism is nowhere to be seen in Kaurismäki's films. For Gregory Seigworth, 'banality is time off its hinges – no longer passing through the present in a neat linear succession that places the past behind and the future out in front' (Seigworth 2000: 227). If the condition of banality connotes a static form of lifestyle, of simply accepting the state of things and only existing for the present, Kaurismäki's films instigate ambiguity about the past, connoting its constructed nature in contemporary discourses of the nation. And as many of these films end on a decidedly uncertain note, they question any projection

of the future along a linear predetermined path, unravelling antecedent hegemonic narratives of social productivity and collectivity in its wake.

Cha Cha Cha's genre subversion reveals some of the ways in which it problematizes the implications of banal nationalism. Whereas gender relations play a key role in the classical iterations of the screwball genre, the film is not so much concerned with the relationship between the male and female protagonists as it is with homosocial bonding. Transferring the traditional focus of the genre onto the more idiosyncratic level of male identity allows the film to explore alternative avenues for interrogating the status quo. Through its association with the screwball genre, socio-criticism is highlighted as one of the key themes of the film. By situating the stereotypes of the Finnish male in a banal realist framework, where the impression is one of maintaining the ideological potency of these structures, the film's playing with societal norms provides a subversive commentary on how sections of the Finnish population take class divisions and the superiority of upper class lifestyles for granted. The purpose here is to involve the spectator in its structures, and make them aware of their complicity in maintaining these structures. Through this move, the film suggests a more subversive form of spectator identification that moves past surface-based, easily dismissible criticism of the status quo.

The Finnish critical reception of the film underlines the extent to which it was received in 'banal' terms, as a superficial commentary on the status quo. For many of the critics, *Cha Cha Cha* was something of a disappointment, a 'mild and light-hearted film', with only moments of incisive satirical social relevance (Manninen 1989). Certain critics, however, argued for its 'realistic' treatment of social constraints in allowing the film to comment on 'something relevant about today's Finnish reality' (Wettenhovi 1989). The satirical edge of the film was noted by several critics but, even for them, it did not achieve a sufficiently profound level of meaning, either in comparison to Mika Kaurismäki's earlier work (Makkonen 1989), or in terms of finding new aesthetic and narrative means to explore contemporary social dysfunction (Valkola 1989a). There was very little discussion of the film's relevance in the contemporary Finnish context as 'it lacks the lyrical comments on Finnishness incorporated into, for example, *Rosso's* landscape imagery' (Makkonen 1989).

Without using the explicit juxtapositions or alienated perspectives of the earlier films, *Cha Cha Cha* works as a multi-layered allegory of casino-economics-era Finland, revealing the dissonance underneath its supposed harmony. By using banal realism, the film chronicles changes which are perceived in positive terms in dominant conceptions of national socio-politics. Yet its genre allusions and critical take on Finnish masculinity ask us to view it as a reflection of significant disorientation and displacement emerging at the heart of the welfare state. For the most part, critics interpreted the film in its transvergence in convergent terms, enforcing it to become a part of the status quo. This is a wider problem with transvergent cinema in that, if one is too ingrained in the structures one seeks to criticize, the hegemony of such structures can override any sense of criticism one wishes to evoke.

Dolls do not bleed

Paper Star, much like *Cha Cha Cha*, takes place in the contemporary welfare state, criticizing the consumerist and individualist lives of people involved in both perpetration and submission to the commodification of the human body in mainstream media. The film works as a melodrama, featuring the typical protagonist types and narrative structures of the genre. Anna Kelanen is a model whose life is on a downward spiral due to her inability to live alone and her dependency on drugs and alcohol. The men in her life are either uncaring of her needs or abuse her gullibility and weakness to maximum effect. Uffe is an international drug dealer and womanizer who treats her well, but is unwilling to be with her on anything but a temporary basis. Ilja Kulovaara is a tabloid journalist who exploits her weakness for alcohol and moves in with her. He has no regard for Anna's suffering as he takes compromising photos of her and ultimately beats her on many occasions. Ilja sees Anna as an object, a doll, indicating that she is only a commodity. This dehumanization goes as far as his dismay at Anna's wounds after he has beaten her, as, according to him, 'dolls do not bleed'. Anna is a participant in this objectification, as she refers to herself as a mannequin, stating that while she supports women's rights, she is no feminist. Anna is represented as a victim, the second sex incapable of following her own path. She goes to Uffe and begs him to make their relationship official, but Uffe refuses to be 'domesticated'. Uffe eventually seems to follow her requests, but Ilja soon finds them and stabs Uffe to death. Anna, in turn, shoots Ilja, for which she receives a light sentence. When she is released, Taukka, the only constant man in her life, is waiting for her outside the prison gates. As they ride off to a destination unknown, it is clear that the film strives to achieve a sense of liberation, exemplified by the handheld camerawork and grainy imagery. Yet, this liberation is questionable as Anna is yet again occupying the backseat of a man that drives her destiny.

On top of the typical patriarchal trajectory of the film, we also see the welfare state in a distinctly negative light. The 'system' incarcerates Anna without informing her of the charges. The police apparently forget to question her and leave her without food for days. When she is brought to the interrogation room, she only receives condescending comments from the lead officer and is accused of being a prostitute. The state is personified in terms of male subjectivity through the leading officer, as his victimization of Anna is clearly conducted in gendered terms. It turns out that Anna's incarceration is directly related to her life-style, as the internal security division of the state police has been under the threat of termination and they need a famous case to highlight their important role in the maintenance of national security. These two oppressive forces, the state and patriarchy, find resonance in the majority of the public, who support these objectifying and oppressive tendencies by purchasing magazines and voting in favour of legislators, who seek to remodel the structures of the welfare state.

While the film attempts to arouse our sympathy for the dehumanizing treatment that Anna receives, it is inherently complicit in its criticism of patriarchy, if not in its deconstruction of the operations of the state. Yet, analyzing the film as a Sirkian melodrama allows unpacking its



Banal realism in *Paperstar* as Anna's existence is captured in seemingly naturalistic, but increasingly claustrophobic ways. (Courtesy of Marianna Films)

suggestive subversive power in a similar way to that of *Cha Cha Cha*, as *Paper Star*'s seemingly banal abidance with genre and realist conventions deconstructs dominant frameworks from within. Douglas Sirk's melodramas have been famously interpreted as criticizing bourgeois values and the materialism of the American society from the perspective of the émigré intellectual. *Paper Star* is similarly constructed around the general characteristics of the melodrama. We have the simplified roles for the protagonists in the good (Anna) and the bad (Ilja). We are clearly asked to identify with Anna through the persistent framing of female suffering or by editing techniques that show us Ilja's violence in a matter-of-fact style or through the use of shocking jump cuts on her face as she is being beaten. Ilja, meanwhile, is presented in overtly nauseating terms through numerous close-ups of his sweat-stained face as he abuses Anna, and we even see him futilely masturbating naked in a chair, on the brink of unconsciousness from alcohol poisoning.

While the film makes the typical transnational connections that characterize Kaurismäki's cinema (Anna states that she knows Paris as well as Rio), the film is clearly set in the contemporary Finland of the late 1980s. Banal realist techniques are used to capture the downfall of the protagonists in an unflattering light – a notion which contrasts heavily with the supposed glamour of their life-style. Key scenes are scored to the tango music by well-known singer Olavi Virta, and Kaurismäki sets the majority of his external scenes in readily-identifiable places in Helsinki (such as the Central bus station). But beneath this simple surface, the malfare state is made explicit by the criticism of the national mass media and Anna's inhumane treatment at the hands of the police. She even goes so far as to ask her interrogators, when she is held incarcerated without any questioning, whether they have any immigrants to chase. Kaurismäki's deliberately unobtrusive style complements its banal realism, resulting in those moments where style is evident, becoming that much more noticeable. While Kaurismäki consciously avoids too much camera movement, the film injects an excess of style to many individual scenes – for example Anna's incarceration is captured in the aesthetics of film noir. Kaurismäki states that the film's style works on two levels of reality, reflecting the different levels of reality in the characters' daily existence. Banal realism with its unobtrusive techniques is used for the majority of the film to reflect the character's unquestioning vision of their high-flying lifestyles. The irreality of the glamour lifestyle is taken for granted by those on the top echelons of the society and the mass media – it does not seem to occur to them that their lifestyle is unsustainable and part of wider social inequality. When we start to see the fractures appearing in Anna's world, the film's style changes from the banal to the extraordinary as the dark reality is revealed to Anna. As Anna is arrested, the camera captures the interrogation room in dark shadows with a strong beam of white light penetrating the gloom from an open doorway. Shadows inside the police station are exaggerated in an expressionistic manner, connoting the murky morality of the law-keepers of what can only be viewed as the malfare state. Yet, Anna is never allowed to enter the light, suggesting that she is complicit in the moral corruption the film criticizes. Anna is not a particularly virtuous character as she is repeatedly characterized as weak and particularly prone to the oblivion that alcohol provides. Furthermore, as part



Paperstar's film noir aesthetics and the moral murkiness of the malfare state (Courtesy of Marianna Films).
(Courtesy of Marianna Films)

of the glamour industry, she willingly participates and profits from the objectification of the human body, allowing individuals like Ilja to maintain their living standards. There is a sense of hypocrisy in her suffering, as she is repeatedly shown making the wrong decision. Of course, this can be interpreted as a part of the film's problematic gender politics and depictions of 'emotional women,' as it simultaneously critiques patriarchal oppression and re-establishes it with its conclusion. Similarly, as Anna goes to Sweden to seek solace with Uffe, the aesthetics capture vibrant colours, at times resembling the technicolour feasts of Sirk, or the long shadows of the film noir, as in the scene of Uffe's killing. These instances undermine the ideological complicity suggested by banal realism and gesture towards the necessity to read the film on multiple levels.

As with the conclusions of Sirk's melodramas, the viewer is rarely encouraged to believe the happy end (Klinger, 1994). The fabricated eloping of the denouement seems somewhat unsatisfactory in the wider structures of the film and brings to mind the conclusion of *Cha Cha Cha*. It finally positions the protagonists outside the boundaries of conventional society, with Anna's incarceration divesting her of the trappings of glamour. When Anna and Taukka drive off on his motorcycle, the film culminates in a lengthy driving montage. This lengthy sequence again calls attention to its textual features in a way that the earlier banal realist scenes did not. The fluid, hand-held camerawork and the desaturated colours unravel the strict aesthetic structures of banal realism, providing us with a concrete impression of the emancipatory possibilities of the road in opposition to the stagnancy of the malfare state.

Yet, the conclusion sends contradictory messages. On one hand, this sequence re-establishes the patriarchal connotations that the majority of the film's narrative has sought to criticize. Furthermore, the style of the final montage evokes naturalism, which we have been taught to read as connoting reality. While the denouement seems 'happy', its stylized emancipation connotes that this (Taukka driving, Anna driven) is the 'natural' state of the world. Thus, the realism of the conclusion is another instance of the domestication of women into their prescribed roles within the patriarchal structure. On the other hand, all instances of stylistic excess in the film link to Anna's violent oppression, where moments that shatter the inclusivity of banal realism reveal the dark underbelly of the malfare state. Thus, we can interpret the conclusion's excesses as another instance of complicating linear modes of spectatorship. Furthermore, *Paper Star* reverses the gaze of the spectator back on themselves, a notion made clear as we are confronted with Anna's wounded gaze through Ilja's lens as he takes demeaning pictures of her in various stages of undress. This reversal of the gaze points out the spectators' complacency in mainstream cultural politics as well as in the materialist entertainment of which the majority of the Finnish media at the time consisted, including cinema with films such as Lauri Törhönen's *Insiders* (1989). The critical perspective of the film plays along with the rules of the majority, but includes enough irony and scepticism into its structures to allow for the necessary degree of criticism to seep out. The instances of stylization and the celebratory closure fracture the superficial illusions of banal realism, inviting the spectators to witness the social and cultural problems underlying the simplistic consumerist and materialist pleasures of society.

Of course, it is a different matter whether or not the film was successful in conveying this to its audiences. The reviews for *Paper Star* were, for the most part, dismissive of the film along very similar lines to *Cha Cha Cha*. While they acknowledged the critical tendencies of the film, they generally saw it as clichéd and superficial, ‘without social or moral participation’ (Stålhammar 1989). For some critics, the film does not capture ‘wider, moralizing analyses of celebrity cults [nor] the untoward unravelling of an individual’s pain, but balances somewhere in between’ (Valkola 1989b). The in-between quality of the film seemed responsible for much of the critical confusion. The banal realist depiction of a supposedly prosperous Finland, characterized by casino-economics and excessive consumerism – all facets of daily life represented in mainstream media – and the film’s social critique, were, according to the critics, incompatible. Accordingly, *Paper Star* was accused of both shallowness and over-moralization. Whereas Kaurismäki’s previous films exhibited a distinctively complicated art-house structure that allowed for multi-faceted readings, the banal realist structure of *Cha Cha Cha* and *Paper Star* and their genre allusions led to their interpretation as superficial and populist texts. But, as I have suggested above, the banal realist structure is part of their socio-political agenda, as the films criticize accepted notions of the welfare state by working within the structures of that system. The conflicted critical reception of these two films ultimately suggests that the contemporary status quo these films criticize is something so dominant and so extensively mediated in Finnish society that subtly critical texts are re-embedded in the dominant ideological framework.

The Clan and anti-heritage film

Landscape as a mode of spectacle provokes questions of national identity, the material space of the profilmic, and the historicity of the image. (Galt 2006: 27)

Many of Kaurismäki’s films reformulate Finnish culture as a specifically urban phenomenon, with traditional structures functioning as the opposing sphere to modernity. Societal transformation is, of course, predicated on the overlapping, reciprocal relationship of such spheres. Kaurismäki’s transvergence attempts to capture this process of ongoing transformation. The ways the material spaces of the nation are used in these films is key to unpacking these complexities. Thus, Galt’s focus on the significance of landscape allows us to discuss the ways *The Clan – a Tale of the Frogs* mobilizes conventions of the heritage genre to undermine dominant conceptions of nationhood.

The history of the rural melodrama is as long as the history of cinema in Finland. The long-running Niskavuori series (1938–1984), adapted from Hella Wuolijoki’s novels, is perhaps the most iconic incarnation of this trend, focusing on the on-going dynamics of the Niskavuori family and their battles over the ownership of their farm-holdings. The focus on rural lifestyles and iconographic elements associated with Finnish national cinema (expansive forests, hay barns as the locus of romantic interaction, outdoor dancehalls, wide

fields and their haystacks, to name a few of the reoccurring tropes) create an enduring archive of material that is still a source of much inspiration for Finnish film-makers and their audiences. Whereas the Niskavuori films and other similar melodramas ultimately reinforce dominant paradigms of Finnishness, despite occasional thematic and narrative infringements (Koivunen 2003), Kaurismäki's film takes the incompatibility of hegemonic conceptions of national identity as its main focus. *The Clan* is significant in Kaurismäki's oeuvre as it was his second feature film, and much of the contemporary debate circled around the emergent perspective of its director and the film's thematic material. In contrast to expectations of a fresh contribution to the genre, the critics, to their dismay, encountered a film that seeks to deconstruct the foundational myths of the genre. Part of its alternative approach is its instigation of a temporal disruption to 'national time' as the national past and contemporary present coalesce in the narrative of the Sammakko family, a clan of petty criminals, who are in constant friction with law-abiding society. Criminality and marginality – themes that were often reinstated to the hegemonic paradigms of social identity, or othered as something against which hegemony was instilled – are depicted in terms of complexity and moral ambiguity. In contrast to the moral clarity of most heritage melodramas, Kaurismäki's film calls for reorganization of the civic and cultural dimensions of nationhood.

Key to unravelling this complexity is the film's mobilization of fetishized landscape imagery alongside its outsider themes. The use of such imagery in heritage films has a distinct political dimension as they often use such conventions to enforce nationalistic or class-based aims. Andrew Higson's work on British heritage cinema suggests that the picturesque, spectacular landscape imagery emphasized by the films attempts to conceal their problematic reassertions of middle- or upper class hegemony (1995). The films belonging to this genre in Finland are no different as, across the spectrum, we witness similar modes of fetishization that compensates for the schisms and fallacies of the 'imagined community'. For example, the films of Markku Pölönen (e.g. *Onnen Maa/The Land of Happiness*, 1993) and *Kivenpyörittäjän Kylä/The Last Summer*, 1995) use landscape pictorialism to paint a nostalgic image of the nation for the EU-integrating Finland (Kääpä, 2010a).

Landscapes lose their hegemonic value in Kaurismäki's (anti)heritage film. While the spectacular imagery of the genre is certainly ever-present, any hegemonic value to be derived from the landscape is consistently undermined by its juxtaposition with elements with alternative connotations in terms of national belonging (such as the National Guard who pursue the Sammakkos after their escape from prison). In a key scene, Aleksanteri's father, a remnant of 'authentic' Finnishness, gulps neat alcohol directly from an Alko bottle, the state-controlled alcohol shop, during his final meeting with his son, who appropriately drinks Coca Cola. Their habits of consumption not only suggest generational disjunction, but also the ideological divergence of traditionalism and consumerism. To capture this ideological diffusion, the final image of the scene is a long-shot which provides an awkward compromise between a well-known image of traditional Finland (lakeside scenery), the transnational (the cigarette advertisement advocating 'authentic American Kent'), and



The decrepit heritage imagery of The Clan (Courtesy of Villealfa Oy).

emergent re-imagining of the traditional nation (the frozen sparseness of the image instead of the summery depictions of traditional films). Much as the words instigate societal stagnation, the imagery conveys a message distinctly different from the homogeneity and harmony instigated by the mainstream heritage films.

Kaurismäki's critical perspective emerges amidst the dominant paradigms of society and nationhood, which act as the overarching framework in which cultural politics take place. But this umbrella-like formation is consistently pierced from all sides by the perspective of the films' protagonists, which unravel any sense of cohesion that the structure attempts to maintain. The nation as a container, to use a concept developed by Mikko Lehtonen et al (2004), to refer to traditionalist, homogenizing conceptualizations of the nation, is revealed as inadequate and restrictive in scope. By using the material that provides validity for most traditional films (their 'nationess'), Kaurismäki's film seeks to unravel national homogeneity from within. There are two main ways in which this takes place. First of all, the film's focus on gender politics is clearly a part of the 'male odyssey' (Koivunen 2003), but it also continues the tradition of 'Häjäy-films', which focused on certain types of 'authentic Finns' (Ostrobothnians, Härmä-ruffians, lumberjacks, gold diggers and comic folk-heroes). While *The Clan* continues the exploration of these essentialist stereotypes of the Finnish male, and effectively reproduces a 'mythic Ostrobothnianism' (Toiviainen 2002a: 248), it does so in a manner that necessitates reassessment of the Häjäy-genre's traditionalist implications. The picture in *The Clan* is in sharp contrast to the affectionate and nostalgic visions of the 'vejari'-comedies of the 1950s, for example. These films featured similar alcoholic outcasts, but their scoundrel- or rascal-like qualities were the focus of hesitant admiration, through which their transgressive qualities could be assimilated into the conventional maintenance of the social order of the nation.

Kaurismäki notes: 'Our films are always based on the idea of depicting people who live in the extremes of society. Here, it is taken to its extremes' (Kaurismäki in Niiranen 1984). Whereas social rebellion in its genre-antecedents was generally harmless or comical, the protagonists of *The Clan* are ideologically and fundamentally opposed to social order. The film does not invite us to engage in affective identification with the Sammakkos as they wallow in anti-social behaviour, and antagonism seems literally hard-wired to their genetic make-up. Whereas the protagonists of *The Worthless* protested the suffocating norms of contemporary Finland by engaging in transnational identity politics, *The Clan's* protagonists seem to anticipate *Zombie's* nihilism about survival as part of the social order. A striking instance of these tendencies can be observed on the wall in Aleksanteri's cell, where messages by political prisoners in 1943, pledging solidarity and dying for liberty, contrast sharply with the somewhat empty, nihilistic writings of Leevi – 'Leevi Sammakko, 3 years of punishment. Coming from Kakola, going to Kakola.'

According to Kaurismäki, 'the theme of the film is very Finnish. We wanted to explore national melancholia and that unbelievable phenomenon erroneously called the national mentality – the instinct for self-destruction' (Mika Kaurismäki in Nyrhinen 1984). As the genre tropes of Finnish heritage cinema and the politicized landscape are an essential

part in constructing and maintaining this idea of national masculine identity, *The Clan*'s excessive oral- and visual-heritage vocabulary needs to be interpreted in a manner similar to *Paper Star*'s subversive depiction of the status quo of late 1980s' Finland. The film seeks to rework the conventions of Finnish cinema on two paradigmatic levels. First, it moves past the boundaries of rurality and modernity which plague the thematic structure of Finnish cinema, according to media historian Jukka Sihvonen (1999). Instead of persisting with such binaries, it focuses on the ways that tradition and modernity, the national and the transnational, co-exist and intertwine. Second, it undermines its own conventions of traditional narrative framework by injecting instances of over-the-top melodrama into the 'häjy' genre. And as all of this plays out within the general framework of the heritage genre, Kaurismäki is able to suggest the fabricated connotations of such traditional narratives and their unsustainability in contemporary society.

The (ab)use of the heritage genre in *The Clan* can be seen as an anti-thesis of heritage ideology. Historians have discussed the impulses of British heritage cinema as forming an erasure of historical class conflicts and colonialist connotations of the empire. In their view, the films hoist a blanket of spectacle and pictorialism over conflicts, effectively reinforcing and legitimizing upper-class privilege over other more pressing concerns:

Even those films that develop an ironic narrative of the past end up celebrating and legitimating the spectacle of one class and one cultural tradition and identity at the expense of others through the discourse of authenticity and the obsession with the visual splendor of period detail. The pleasures of pictorialism thus block the radical intentions of the narrative. (Higson 1993: 119–20)

While Kaurismäki's film certainly contains its share of pictorialism, it uses the clichés of Finnish cinema and culture in excessive terms, drawing attention to the constructed nature of such taken-for-granted traditionalism. It does not seek to reinforce the connotations of male patriarchy or the traditional image of the Finnish male but, instead, criticizes both the predominance and glorification of such ideas in mainstream culture (the long-running *Uuno Turhapuro* and *Pekka and Pätkä* comedy series are good examples of this). The complicity of the national audiences in supporting such modes is reflected back on them in a decidedly critical way. As a politicized cultural contribution to the debates on Finnish identity in the early 1980s, *The Clan*'s depiction both highlights how traditional narratives of national culture and identity are constructed, but it also undermines them through the inclusion of excess and irony. By including such a rethinking of the meanings of national traditions and the role of cinema in maintaining social power, it can only be understood in transvergent terms as a film that evokes the constantly-changing and multi-perspective nature of national culture.

Genre in Kaurismäki's films has a socio-critical function, which aims to unravel some of the dominant conventions and stagnancies of national cinema. The notion of liminality is useful here as these films can be conceptualized as texts that work with genre conventions, yet

they do not abide by the dominant ideological or cinematic ideas that the genres often seek to uphold. Instead, they work in between these conventions and subvert the conventions to their own purposes. Liminality between these structures and the disallowance of expected generic conclusions necessitate viewing these films as the type of critical, suggestive cinema that characterizes transvergence. The exploration and experimentation with different forms of film-making is a crucial aspect of his idiosyncratic form of cinema as this not only differentiates Kaurismäki from most of his Finnish contemporaries as well as the works of his brother, but it also establishes his style as one that is constantly travelling between different cinematic conventions. Genre subversion ties in with the identity-political considerations of the films' nomadic protagonists, who try to find new ideological ways of existence amidst the hegemonic norms of the society. By focusing on such moments of instability, ambiguity and heterogeneity are installed from within to unravel traditional homogenizing narratives.

Chapter 3

Mapping Transnational Space at the Margins of the Global Metropolis:
Representations of the City in Kaurismäki's Films

In many contemporary forms of 'world cinema', urban spaces have emerged as the locus for capturing the complexities of globalization. Key works on cinematic cities, such as Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice's thought-provoking *Cinema and the City* (2004) and Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli's wide-ranging *From Moscow to Madrid: European Cities, Postmodern Cinema* (2003), discuss the complexities of global city-films. By drawing on Saskia Sassen's (2001) work, the city (or the metropolis) is seen as a fragmented, complex space of division, where economic and ethnic division and the multiple urges of multiculturalism consistently reshape the urban landscape (good examples of this are wide-ranging and divergent films such as *Eastern Promises*, Cronenberg, 2007, or *Cidade de Deus/City of God*, Meirelles, 2001). In other types of film, the city becomes a futuristic collage of temporalities and spatialities, where postmodernist clashes and reworking of cultural signifiers indicate the complexities of the intertwining dynamics of the global and the local in hyper-modernist globalization.

While Kaurismäki's films instigate similar engagements with the complex processes of globalization, I will take a slightly different angle from these well-known works in exploring social power and cultural diversity in the cityscape. The ideological prepositions of Kaurismäki's protagonists need to be considered in a nomadic framework, where their transient liminality and opposition to dominant structures work along the lines of the road movie genre. My suggestion is that this also applies to his 'city-films'. Instead of attempting to construct a depiction of the city as a specific place, the road-movie dynamics and the metonymic protagonists suggest that the cities of Kaurismäki's films become transvergent spaces. Sassen's assertion that 'being in a city becomes synonymous with being in an extremely dense information loop' (Sassen 2001: xx) is certainly an apt description of Kaurismäki's cities. For example, in his early Finnish films, *The Liar* and *The Worthless*, we see the transformation of Helsinki through the eyes of the films' protagonists. Instead of capturing these cities in realist or banal nationalist terms by highlighting places of national significance or iconography with touristic connotations, we see empty side-streets, or the buildings and streets of the city are shot so as to focus on the transforming qualities of these spaces. The traditional types of stone architecture that characterizes most of the buildings clash with signs of multinational corporations, banks, and the protagonists of the films with all their intertextual, transnational connotations. The loops of the city are characterized by a compendium of intertwined factors, as both domestic and global socio-politics, transnational circulation of culture, geo-politics, and internal and external migration, amongst others, shape the cityscape. Instead of capturing the city as the capital of a nation-state, Kaurismäki's films focus on those dense loops that indicate the role of the cityscape as a locus for increasing globalization.

The loops of these early films are often so dense as to become almost indecipherable. They are, after all, engaged with the complex cultural politics and identity-building of a nation state emerging from the calamitous effects of the Great Migration, one which is also facing the homogenizing and dispersing challenges of accelerating globalization. These information loops are cinematically recreated by the intentional blurring or even negation of centre-periphery distinctions. Thus, any sense of realism these texts exude must be taken on a metaphoric level. As the perspective we witness is that of the protagonists, we need to understand the Helsinki of these texts as what Jonathan Raban calls the 'soft city':

a place that does not force its inhabitants to conform to its rules', but 'waits the imprint of identity': For better or worse, it invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live in. Decide who you are, and the city will again assume a fixed form around you. Decide what it is, and your own identity will be revealed, like a position on a map. (Raban 1975: 9–10)

Such cities are integrally intertwined with identity politics of the sort we see in Kaurismäki's films. As less-than-specific places, the cities of the films gesture beyond the social, economic, political and cultural implications of the 'real' cities as Kaurismäki's films subvert and transcend these structures. The nomadic perspectives of the protagonists are successful in navigating its loops precisely because this is a soft city, inherently malleable to suit their perspectives. The soft city of Kaurismäki's early films is thus a place of confusion and opportunity, wide open for reinterpretation.

Yet, there is a more pessimistic side to this sort of projection that is especially present in the life-politics films of the late 1980s. Here, the city is captured in the form of a 'weak city' – 'a place that can easily be submitted to the power of the visitors' gaze and tastes, that has no self-confidence or power of its own, that is like a palimpsest, from which old words can be erased to make room for the new text' (Raban 1975: 232). This is the post-Great Migration city, the city undergoing controlled structural changes, explored alternatively from the liminal perspective of the emergent generation, or the class-ascendant protagonists of *Cha Cha Cha* and *Paper Star*. While the city may conform on a basic level, its wider structures only restrict movement and opportunity as the increasing prevalence of bank logos and hyper-capitalist advertising takes over; it becomes a non-specific locale, neither offering the stability of a national capital, nor the opportunities of a global metropolis. This is a fundamental contradiction in Kaurismäki's films where transnationalism and globalization provide opportunities for the displaced protagonists, while they also contribute to the changes taking part around them – which are, of course, a key factor in the displacement they experience. Such a contradictory take on the identity-political potential of the city is key to Kaurismäki's transvergent approach to globalization. The cities are both places of opportunity and obstacles that complicate stability. What they are not in any case are places that sustain traditions or provide a safe haven from the fluctuations of the road.

Mapping cityscape

Kaurismäki's transvergent depictions of the city can be understood in terms of cinematic cartography, as a way of chronicling (mapping) the metamorphosis of the social landscape. According to Paul Newland's discussion of cinematic representations of London's East End, cinema can work as an archive that chronicles the changes that the city undergoes (Newland 2008). Kaurismäki's films certainly function as cinematic archives, but they are also very selective, subjective versions of visual memory. It is, of course, impossible to visualize the totality of a city, as even the most comprehensive, ambitious city films only form a perspectival collage of it based on subjective experiences, secondhand knowledge, geographical formulations and ideological mobilizations, reminding us of Mazierska and Rascaroli's inquiry: 'What else is a city to us, if not a stratification and a combination of meanings, memories and perceptions, both private and shared, journalistic and fictional, geographical and historical?' (Mazierska & Rascaroli 2003: 135). Classics of city-cinema such as *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt/Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Ruttmann, 1927) and *The Man with the Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929) portray cities which are precisely combinations and accumulations of knowledge, at once complex and subjective.

Instead of capturing the city as a concrete lived-in world, Kaurismäki's films focus on its heterogeneous implications as a transforming and contested space. Instead of the historically-potent world of a film like *Eastern Promises* (Cronenberg, 2007), where London's imperial past meets its multicultural present, Kaurismäki's films are more like the transient spaces seen in films like *Shi Jie/The World* (Jia, 2004). Jia's film takes place in a theme park in Beijing, which is comprised of attractions designed to emulate global iconography such as the Eiffel Tower and Taj Mahal. Focusing not only on this type of globalized simulacrum, but also on the transient lives of the migrant underclasses, who labour there as part of the service industry, the film communicates a picture of Beijing as a space pulling itself apart on a multitude of trajectories. It is entirely appropriate to talk of this film in terms of transvergence, as its intertwined depiction of domestic socio-politics and global circulation of capital and culture captures the idea of uncertain complex transformation. Kaurismäki's films emphasize a similar sense of transience and instability, as the cities in Kaurismäki's films are postmodern transvergent appropriations of the real cities, simultaneously caricatured and complex in their heterogeneity. Indeed, according to Tommi Aitio, *The Worthless* does not concern itself with depicting

the city in documentary terms but rather [it focuses] on a type of urban consciousness, where the real milieu and staged fantasy intermingle naturally: the depiction of Helsinki closes in on reality, but on top of this, Mika Kaurismäki sets his picture of Paris, a staging that is more authentic than the original. *The Worthless* does not depict Helsinki or Paris but the city; a universal state of mind... The city is precisely a filmic city and as such related to the theme park. (Aitio 2000: 47)

Aitio captures some of the complexities in Kaurismäki's depictions of the city, as we certainly need to distinguish the city in these films from their 'real' counterparts. But even with this conceptualization lies the problem of asserting one version of the city over all the other versions – as we established earlier, cities are complexities of meaning. It is thus not productive to insist on the 'realness' of Helsinki in these films. After all, all versions have some relationship to individual verisimilitude and veracity. Thus, it is more conducive to understand Kaurismäki's cities as versions of the culturally- and politically-situated 'real' cities, all the time keeping in mind the fallacies of the concept of the real. For example, *The Worthless* opens with a helicopter drive over Helsinki, arriving from the Baltic Sea, through harbours, and finally entering the centre of the city to the Senate square. All of this is accompanied by a re-orchestrated version of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia*, often seen as the unofficial national anthem. There is no ambiguity here that the city is the capital of the nation, yet the soundtrack provides the images with a transvergent aura that indicates the perspectives of the emergent generation for whom the conventions and norms of nationhood mean very little. Similarly, all of the scenes taking place in the city have an unreal quality about them, as the urban fabric is consistently divorced from any conventional sense of reality by the excessive foregrounding of signifiers of global capitalism and transnationalism that permeate the cityscape.

In contrast to this heightened sense of realism, Kaurismäki's later city films *Cha Cha Cha* and *Paper Star* feature banal realist approaches. This approach seems to capture the city in mundane terms, but hides beneath it the transvergent techniques that provide the films with their antagonistic views of the complicity of contemporary society. Both films have instances where the film draws our attention to the fact that what we see on screen is the city of Helsinki. In *Paper Star*, Ilja and Anna stumble drunkenly in front of the central market and the cinema Bio Rex, while *Cha Cha Cha*'s Matti and Sanna visit the opera house, with both instances providing concrete cultural grounding. Yet, such instances need to be taken in tandem with their banal realist techniques and the focus on non-places such as the bridge, under which the protagonists find themselves at the conclusion of *Cha Cha Cha*. The city in these films is a fragmented, culturally-divided zone, as class divisions segregate the culturally-prestigious places for the elite, while those who question the norms of society find themselves pushed out of the centres into the peripheries. Yet, this distinction between the centre and the periphery is consistently muddled by the types of class fluctuation the protagonists experience in *Paper Star* and *Cha Cha Cha*, and the complex transnational marginalization of the emergent generation in *The Worthless*.

Aitio's suggestion that the films represent a state of mind rather than a real place indicates that Kaurismäki's cinematic city is a soft city that changes its meanings according to who is observing it. This does not necessarily imply that the real cities in which the films are set are in any way 'soft'. Rather, the city as a mindscape indicates that Kaurismäki's films may take place in specific places of the world, but they are not grounded or restricted in their geo- or socio-political reality. The city functions as a metonymic space of contestation for wider ideological and cultural-political debates, where themes may include cosmopolitanism in

Helsinki Napoli and the complexities of the Hollywood culture industries in *LA without a Map*. Furthermore, intertextuality and deliberate plays with spatio-temporality allow these films to exist as Foucauldian heterotopic counterparts of their real-life versions. Foucault talks of heterotopias as alternative spaces that exist within the city – spaces such as cemeteries and libraries – which link to forms of knowledge production other than the contemporary order or gesture towards alternative understandings of its historical societal trajectory (Foucault 1986). The heterotopias of Kaurismäki's films take real spaces and convert them to cinematic heterotopias through plays with temporality, spatiality, audio-visuality and intertextuality. These revisionings are able to contest and invert the dominant epistemological structures of the city as they move past any sense of homogeneity or consensus by challenging the existent body of representations of these particular cities. Thus, any portrayal of the city in these films needs to be understood as being about that city, while they simultaneously contest any taken-for-granted version of that same city.

The city of cosmopolitanism

Kaurismäki's first international co-production *Helsinki Napoli All Night Long* (1987) found the director embarking on the production of a commercial action film. According to film historian Sakari Toiviainen, *Helsinki Napoli* is 'an action film, a crime film, a thriller, and a gangster film that derives its power from the family, cultivates the atmosphere of film noir via interspersed comedy stingers, and ultimately turns into a fairy tale' (Toiviainen 2002a: 65). It merges genre considerations with the more esoteric themes of liminality and marginalization that characterize Kaurismäki's films. The city of Berlin provides an ideal setting for Kaurismäki to explore the changing nature of cosmopolitan identity as, for him, the city is a microcosm of the transformations in political and cultural structures of Europe (Kääpä 2010b). Situating such considerations in West Berlin – a city divided as much by political ideology as by the life-styles of its inhabitants – permitted Kaurismäki to examine wider geopolitical considerations beyond those explored in his earlier Finnish films.

In 1987, the Glasnost policies of the Soviet Union and the increasing prominence of Western capitalism were increasingly undermining the distinction between Western European cosmopolitanism and life behind the Iron Curtain. *Helsinki Napoli* situates itself in this context, where it emphasizes the increasing fluidity of the existing cultural and geographical borders. As the perspectives of the early films shaped Helsinki to suit the mindscapes of their protagonists, so we can observe a similar sense of disconnection with History (that is, the official version of history) in West Berlin, as it is a 'wholly new city, in which the markers of the past bob like jetsam, laying itself open to be remade by young West Germans and others, who sought through this process to remake themselves' (Davis 2008: 249). Similarly, Mika Kaurismäki suggests that Berlin 'is an appropriately unreal environment for the story. Europe in a miniature' (Mika Kaurismäki in Carpelan 1987). Two ideas coalesce in this quote, as he indicates both the appropriate nature of the city

for cosmopolitan exploration and the unreality of this space, and its applicability to more utopian aspirations. Thus, the city we see in *Helsinki Napoli* is re-imagined as a heterotopic version of itself; as a soft city malleable for cosmopolitan identity politics.

Kaurismäki's films have featured cosmopolitan themes from *The Liar* onwards, so it is not surprising that West Berlin, with its central place in ideological struggles over Europe's political direction and its status as a signifier of the division of the continent, is for him 'a perfectly natural environment' (Mika Kaurismäki in Lehtisalo 1987) to explore the complexities of cosmopolitan identity. To capture these complex geopolitical processes, the film's perspective is mediated through a group of cosmopolitan nomads. Kari, a Finn married to the Italian Stella, drives a taxi by night to support his fledgling family. Kari's friend, Igor, is a Russian ex-pat, who lives on a houseboat and seems to spend most of his time consuming Vodka. One night, Kari picks up two French gangsters, who enlist him to drive them to a nightclub. The gangsters are shot by their American counterparts, played by cinematic icons Eddie Constantine and Sam Fuller. Kari dumps the bodies in an empty parking lot, but finds a suitcase full of money on his backseat. The discovery provides him with the chance to escape his current predicament as a gastarbeiter in a city that is not necessarily hostile, but, rather, indifferent to him. As the Americans come looking for him, Kari must rely on his network of friends – Igor, street-wise prostitute Alex, his father-in-law Nino, and a gas station attendant played by Wim Wenders.

I have elsewhere discussed the relationship between *Helsinki Napoli* and other influential depictions of Berlin (Kääpä 2010a). It is worth revisiting some of that discussion here, as this can highlight both the film's cosmopolitan approach as well as its difference from other 'generic' city films. Berlin has had a long history of representation, from its position as the locus of debate for Weimar Germany in the wake of World War I to the many rubble films that captured the downfall of Germany after World War II. In contrast to other 'Berlin films', such as *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Fassbinder, 1980) or *Der Himmel über Berlin/Wings of Desire* (Wenders, 1987), Kaurismäki's film exhibits a curious lack of interest in Berlin's history. This contrast is made clearer by highlighting Wenders' intentions with *Das Himmel Über Berlin* against Kaurismäki's comments about the city as an unreal, specifically European space:

A film in and about Berlin. A film that might convey something of the history of the city since 1945 ... For over twenty years now, visits to this city have given me my only genuine experience of Germany, because the (hi)story that elsewhere in the country is suppressed or denied is physically and emotionally present here ... What I wanted to make was a film about people here in Berlin that considered the one perennial question: how to live? (Wenders 2001: 73–4)

This sense of history permeates *Der Himmel über Berlin* – it is a film chronicling the ways that contemporary Germans deal with their national past and memory. Wenders' film makes this clear through the multiple overlapping voiceovers and the visual collages contrasting sweeping shots of the contemporary city with documentary footage from the past. Kaurismäki's film

seems at first to capture the city in realistic, 'spatializing' terms as we see several establishing overhead shots of the city, yet there is a clear lack of references to Berlin-based or even German history. The 'Berlin discourse' – denoting the vast archive of material representations of the city – is not a concern for Kaurismäki's film. Indeed, there are almost no references to the German setting of the film beyond a few minor characters, who speak English with a German accent, and the city milieu features passing shop and street names in German.

How can we explain the film's lack of abidance with the established canon of the Berlin discourse, especially as we have suggested that Kaurismäki's films are integrally connected with Europe's geopolitical history? Kaurismäki's film is not concerned so much with capturing the diachronic history of Berlin. Rather, the film imagines its version of Berlin as a sort of embodiment of *Western* Europeaness – the city is, crucially, geographically located in the middle of Europe between the southern pole of Naples and the northern capital of Helsinki. For one, all the characters are caricatured according to their original national identities, a method which positions them as metonymic nodes for cosmopolitan interconnectivity. But the city is still integrally connected to geopolitical realities, and it is these realities that function as the framework in which the film operates. As a soft cinematic city, we ought to not strive to understand Kaurismäki's film as a 'Berlin-film', but rather as an examination of urban cosmopolitanism in the Europe of its historical context. For Kaurismäki, 'the borders of Europe are disappearing from all cities. Berlin symbolizes this best. In Berlin, one can hear all kinds of stories in every possible language' (Mika Kaurismäki in Apunen 1987a). The city is thus a locus of cosmopolitan Europeanism, a transvergent space, in the words of Karl Sheffler, 'condemned ever to becoming, never to being' (Sheffler 1910: 267).

Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli identify a set of key features for depictions of Berlin in German films of the 1990s: 'fundamental changes in Berlin's architecture, the disappearance of the old social structures and institutions, resulting in the lack of financial and social security for large groups of people and in the high level of crime' (Mazierska & Rascaroli 2003: 135). According to the authors, the films that take part in these debates very seldom offer any solution to the problems. Similar concerns are evident in most of the films Kaurismäki produced in the 1980s, with *The Worthless* and *Rosso* using the levity of the road movie to explore the transformations of Finland. While many of the films Mazierska and Rascaroli discuss take place in the cosmopolitan postcommunist unified Berlin, *Helsinki Napoli* explores cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism at a time when these were more explicitly contested areas, set as it is in the rupture point of the geopolitical metamorphosis of Europe. Whereas in many German films (*Lola Rennt/Run, Lola, Run*, [Tykwer, 1998] for one), the characters flail desperately against overpowering social forces, helpless to counteract their hegemonic power, the protagonists of Kaurismäki's film actively participate and often succeed in carving out some semblance of community within the vertiginous structures of the transforming city.

To account for the power to control the soft city, the film can be understood in terms of a city-based road movie – after all, it focuses on depicting a rootless cosmopolitan city where characters endlessly search for some sort of ideal state. There are no particular destinations for



The exuberant, but uncertain conclusion of *Helsinki Napoli*. (Courtesy of Villealfa Oy)

these characters – Alex is a taxi driver and Igor lives on a houseboat. Kari's frustration of his parental responsibilities and familial duties results in the endless circular adventures through West Berlin, while Igor's house boat is ever-prepared to embark on another adventure. The battle with the gangsters culminates in Kari's victory, as he and Igor set sail on their houseboat (accompanied by their families), while the gangsters are marooned on the Rhein. The climax is, again, deceptively shallow: the briefcase presents Kari with the opportunity of settling down, having succeeded in re-establishing his masculine credentials. Yet, beneath this happy ending, we are left with a decidedly ambiguous feeling as this family of cosmopolitans sets sail to a destination unknown. There is no future for these people in the liminal city, as their transvergent identities necessitate that they continue their search for something new, something unknown.

Rooted rootlessness

Sakari Toiviainen suggests that, in *Helsinki Napoli*, 'different nationalities meet and clash with one another, but under all this vagrancy, the people carry memories of their homes and longing for a new home' (Toiviainen 2002a: 64). This longing for a new home is a key feature for the protagonists of the road movie. Yet, it is often precisely the never-ending search, which ultimately comes to comprise their sense of home. This borderless existence is suggestive, especially in relation to the pronounced transnationalism and existential angst over nationhood found in Kaurismäki's earlier films. The key to unravelling the dichotomy between movement and stability comes from Mark Shiel's suggestion that the city has superseded the nation as the 'fundamental unit of the new global system' (Shiel & Fitzmaurice 2001: 7). Thus, the film gestures to a conceptualization of cosmopolitanism as a specifically Western European condition that surpasses national designations. Yet it is not an accident that the film's title features the names of national capitals as it acknowledges the persistence of the national even in utopian conceptualizations of 'global citizenship'. Appropriately, the stereotyped identities of the protagonists remind us of this persistence. But, simultaneously, they are also excessive stereotypes and, if anything, Kaurismäki's films never take such simplifications at face-value. By refusing any fixating designations, the space of the city becomes an endlessly-malleable space of cosmopolitanism, an optimistic and simultaneously ambiguous landscape for negotiating the complexities of a divided Europe.

Ultimately, the film works on four different levels of transvergence in its depiction of Berlin – the socio-political, intertextual, cosmopolitan, and genre reworkings of expectations that contribute to the film's intentional unravelling and reorganization of its dense information networks. This is not uncommon in the genre of the city film – if it in fact comprises a genre. As several commentators on city films suggest, the city has traditionally been the locus for unravelling traditional narratives between modernity and traditionalism. Accordingly, Kaurismäki's film captures a sense of reformation of the politicized spaces of Berlin, resituating them into the struggles of the cosmopolitan protagonists, who are afloat in the world as much as the city of the film is distanced from its geopolitical context. Accordingly,

the film de-historicizes (or ‘softens’) the constructed politicized city, transforming it to suit the marginalized perspectives of its protagonists. Through such a process, it argues for the necessity to construct alternative modes of communality built on egalitarianism and the principles of civil society capable of contesting established hegemonies. Yet if these alternative ‘topographies of belonging’ connote any sense of stability, it can only be fleeting and temporal. As we see our protagonists floating down the river, we can only encounter the optimism with guarded reservation and ambiguity. While the conclusion seeks to articulate difference and diversity instead of enforcing dominance and homogeneity, it connotes an inherently-unstable form of existence. Accordingly, it is best to interpret the contested implications of this conclusion as a way of engaging in emergent identity politics, while incorporating the necessary uncertainty that comes with attempting to capture the moments of transformation.

Postmodernity and the city

Is Kaurismäki’s West Berlin a postmodern city? There are many similarities with this city and the quintessential postmodern cityscape of *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) and the heterotopic Madrid of Pedro Almodovar’s films, as it is ‘an access zone, where diverse worlds coexist without transition’ (Fuentes 1995: 160). As we move closer to the depiction of the city in Kaurismäki’s film, we can observe some of its differences from the above examples, but also speculate on certain methodological reasons for this depiction. Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli, for example, suggest that Almodovar’s city remains Madrid ‘despite its internationalization through the “metaphoric” transformation of space (through allusions to specifically Hollywood-type artifice), as well as through the use of music, objects and intertextual quotations referring to a global culture’ (Mazierska & Rascaroli 2003: 32). To them, the city is a ‘city of many pieces’, a ‘stratified’ space that encompasses the urges of the films to oscillate between national traditions and gravitation towards a global society. Similarly, Kaurismäki’s film provides numerous establishing shots of the city, while it focuses on the ‘underground’ inhabitants of the population. Yet, exploring the stratification of the city is not essential to unpacking Kaurismäki’s *modus operandi*. Historical and daytime Berlin is largely absent from the film as it self-consciously combines elements from film noir and action comedy to modify the city according to the logic of the city-based road movie. As the city of the film gains a sense of universalism by avoiding most of the famous landmarks, the connotation is of a city (any-city) in the heart of Europe; an open road which moves beyond the antagonistic cold war divisions of the whole Europe, not just for West Berlin. But simultaneously, we still identify this city as Berlin, which creates a sense of ambivalence about this paradoxical doubled-up space. By situating its cosmopolitan politics in a city instead of the open road, but characterizing the whole of the city as an open road, the film instigates a revisionist take on cultural-political spatiality that allows Kaurismäki’s cinema to foster complex alternative topographies of belonging for capturing the significant changes taking place in these spaces.

A European in LA

Pierre Sorlin (2002) makes an intriguing (if problematic) distinction between European cinema(s) and other ‘international cinemas’ as to how they portray the relationship between the city and its inhabitants. In his view, the protagonists of Hollywood are confronted by the complexities of urban space, which functions as an autonomous entity separate from the protagonists. In European cinemas, the city is the creation of the individuals, around whom the cinematic narrative revolves (a soft city, if you will). While he acknowledges that these categories are a lot more complex than these delineations, and while we certainly need to be wary of such restrictions in relation to Kaurismäki’s transvergent works, there is also a lot that makes sense in Sorlin’s binary structure. *Helsinki Napoli*, for example, has few concrete connections to any authentic sense of Berlinness, as it represents the city as a space where cosmopolitan identity negotiations can fruitfully take place and where elements of national history are bypassed in favour of those elements that connote cosmopolitan solidarity. In a word, the cinematic city of the film is thoroughly created by its inhabitants, and this is precisely what connects the film to a sense of authentic European cinema – at least in Sorlin’s perspective. In contrast, Hollywood films often represent the urban milieu as a threatening war zone through which the films’ protagonists have to navigate. This observation can easily be supported by a large number of LA-set films from the film noir of the 1940s to the ‘urban shock’ films such as *Grand Canyon* (Kasdan, 1990) and *Boyz n the Hood* (Singleton, 1991). Does this sensibility also extend to the films Kaurismäki has produced in the contested cityscapes of Los Angeles?

‘You are not LA enough’

Los Angeles has an even more central position in the history of the cinematic city than Berlin. Hollywood’s epicentric location and its long history of self-representation provide an intriguing foundation for exploring city-based cosmopolitanism. Mazierska and Rascaroli’s suggestion that cities are always represented and stratified constellations, and thus, effectively, imagined forms of community, also filter into discussion of Kaurismäki’s LA. Kaurismäki’s second predominantly US-set production *LA without a Map* (1998) focuses on the lifestyles and industrial operations of Hollywood. Instead of ‘self-representations’ of the city, *LA without a Map* is a European co-production, financed in collaboration with the European Co-Production Fund, BskyB, The Arts Council of England, The National Lottery, and the European Film Development Fund. The contrast between the theme of the film and its funding context correlates with Kaurismäki’s self-confessed need to remain free of commercialist dictation, while simultaneously engaging in topics with commercial interests. Appropriately, the commercial haven of LA is explored via the perspectives of a similar set of marginalized protagonists as *Helsinki Napoli*.

LA without a Map draws an interconnected picture of the ‘Western’ world through its narrative of search for identity and stability. The protagonist of the film, Richard (David

Tennant), grew up in Scotland, but he has lived most of his life in the small city of Bradford. From his description, life in the north of England seems more or less stable (a good job, friends, lifestyle, girlfriend), but he has ‘this feeling that there is something else lined up’. We are invited to question social mores of stability from the establishing shot of the film as we see the cemetery where he works as a caretaker. Cemeteries are one of Foucault’s heterotopic spaces that exist outside the normative linear conceptualizations of society. Here, the sense of permanence, of a history of generations extending back, yet frozen in time, fills Richard with stagnation. The heterotopia of the cemetery simultaneously maintains the sense of social order based on family loyalty and religion while it also reminds society of its mortality. It functions paradoxically as a promise of eternal life and a reminder of the fleeting and corporeal nature of human life. Richard is privy to this slippage in society’s fabric, as his daily life is spent observing and maintaining the conventions that structure the society. Yet, he pines for a release from these strictures as the precarious heterotopic vantage point (of literally being able to see the multiple levels of meaning on which social spaces are built) reveals to him the constructed and fallacious nature of societal order. Indeed, as one of the pallbearers of the funeral in the introductory scene slips, a momentary fracture appears in the ritualistic maintenance of the social order. Yet dignity must be retained and, soon, the funeral proceeds on pace. The high-angle shots capture Richard’s vantage point, revealing his transcendent, but dissatisfied, perspective as one somewhat similar to the angels of Wenders’ *Der Himmel über Berlin*. The cinematic techniques position Richard as a ‘seer’ in the Deleuzian sense, as someone who only observes, incapable of being the agent of the action (Deleuze 1986: 2).

Richard is given a chance to become an active agent in his narrative as he spots Barbara (Fiona Shaw) observing the funeral from a distant hilltop. He insists on showing her the sights of the city, to which she reluctantly agrees. Bradford is introduced to us in the stereotypical manner befitting the North of England: with steep, hilly roads and small terraced houses lining the streets. These shots also include the prevalent ‘view from the hilltop’ that characterizes much of the British kitchen sink film. As the day turns rainy, the pair go to the cinema, where the cosmopolitan sophistication of the city is revealed to us, as the local fleapit is screening not only Jean Vigo’s *L’Atalante* (1934), but also Aki Kaurismäki’s Paris-set *La Vie De Bohème* (1992). Both films are inherently about a bohemian lifestyle, of finding a suitable ideological mode of existence outside the dominant paradigms of society. The inclusion of these films in the narrative has intertextual connotations, not only in terms of the cosmopolitan aspirations of the city of Bradford, but also in terms of finding ideologically-honest companionship and artistic authenticity, in contrast to the commercialism and materialistic lifestyles of Hollywood. The ideological correlations between the Kaurismäki’s films is made clear as we see a fluid match-cut from a scene from Aki Kaurismäki’s protagonists hailing a cab to our protagonists enacting the same movement.

There is a distinctly fantastical quality to this quick romance, a notion underlined by the contrast created between the initial introduction of Bradford as the typical working-class city of kitchen-sink realism and the bohemianism that Richard exudes. Such ambiguity

characterizes the relationship between the couple, as Richard is taken in by Barbara's glamour, imagining her as the typical blonde starlet of Tinseltown. As he communicates with Johnny Depp's character from Jim Jarmusch's subversive reworking of the Western genre, *Dead Man* (1995), levels of reality are further blurred. This creates another set of intertextual associations. Kaurismäki's film moves in a multi-level liminal space between esoteric art-house references and the conventions of the Hollywood romantic comedy as it seeks to create a complex picture of the ways in which the art-house and the multiplex intertwine. As Richard moves to Hollywood to work as a writer, he transforms from a seer to an active agent. This transformation is a part of the film's negotiation between Deleuze's movement-image and time-image cinema (Deleuze 1986). Typically for Kaurismäki, these designations are constantly blurred, as the film uses techniques from both types of 'image-cinema' in a self-reflexive attempt to unravel the paradigms that construct these cinemas. This is another part of the ways in which the films' transvergent positioning aims to provide new possibilities for cinematic expression. Thus, the populist meets the esoteric, the active the passive, the culturally-specific the any-space-whatever, European cinema its Hollywood counterpart.

While the city of Los Angeles is a complex entity, a thirdspace to use Edward Soja's (1996) well-known description of the multilayered city, this is not evident in Kaurismäki's film. *LA without a Map* is not so much about Los Angeles as a real space but, rather, about a cinematic city as a heterotopic road that passes and navigates through this complex territory. The complex realities of this thirdspace are minimized to make room for an exploration of a restricted set of social issues that the city embodies in popular culture. As Richard lands in Los Angeles, the city is revealed in stereotypical terms as a haven of commercialism, governed by billboards advertising Starbucks and other assorted icons of fast-food culture. We also see an advertisement for the Kevin Costner production *The Postman* (1997), one of the most notorious box office disasters of the 1990s. The advertising is focused on the central concept of the film: a restored United States of America and the renovation of society and order following a nuclear disaster. In *LA without a Map*'s intertextual framework, the poster indicates the type of entertainment the film seeks to criticize: a form of cultural nourishment on the level of the Big Macs and the Starbucks' frappuccinos that surround this piece of film advertising. It is also no coincidence that one of the first signs for orientating ourselves in this geographical mosaic is for Sunset Boulevard. Billy Wilder's similarly-titled examination (1950) of the underbelly of Hollywood glitz is another intertextual indicator of the many problems that one may encounter in this city of dreams. The contrast between Richard's fantasized image of the 'dream factory' and Barbara's place in it is crucial for the film's approach. Indeed, it turns out her reality as an actress in Los Angeles involves waiting tables and attempting to attract potential film producers.

The cinematic intertextuality is enhanced by a running commentary on 'californication', emphasized by bumper stickers such as 'This is California, Adjust Attitude' and 'Wine Me, Dine Me and 69 Me'. The superficial and commercialist image of the city is connected to a sense of cultural homogenization. The restaurant where Barbara works is a collage of Chinese

architecture and Japanese Dojo customs with waiters who speak a combination of English and French to customers who work in the business. When Richard tries to break into the film industry, he is informed by his would-be agent to play his cultural card of being an Englishman. That Richard is actually Scottish does not matter in the entertainment industry as the cultural capital of a 'Mr. Bean' image is all he needs. This type of cultural shortsightedness is, of course, a typical charge aimed at Hollywood cinema, where exoticism is often a main concern, with authenticity a distant second. The LA-discourse is further promulgated by the film's emphasis on the casting couch mentality of the city as Barbara has to submit to humiliating photo shoots and frequently to appear with an upstart young director in order to land a role in one of his productions.

The superficiality of Hollywood is certainly done to excess in the film, but this is part of the film's attempts to distance itself from the realities of Los Angeles, as the city of Kaurismäki's film is a cinematic version of the real city. According to a waiter, if you do not work in the business, you do not work at all – the logic being that, if you do not function as part of the industry, you cease to exist. This satire often reaches farcical levels, as when Richard overhears a pair of aspiring film producers drawing inspiration from a dent left by Steven Spielberg on a beach. Richard tries to use Justin Wyatt's *High Concept* (1994) as a means of breaching the language barrier in communicating with the 'ordinary' residents of the city. The problem is that he simultaneously draws inspiration from more 'esteemed' sources, such as a poster of Godard's *A Man and a Woman/Masculin, Féminin* (1965). His attempts to combine the popular and the art-house do not provide a successful means of navigation through the cultural framework of Hollywood – Richard is truly lost without a cultural map that would make sense to him.

The cinematic Los Angeles functions as a heterotopia, reminiscent of Tommi Römpötti's characterization of the heterotopic road as 'a real physical space built and maintained by the social institutions'. But the road is simultaneously 'a transitory space or a temporary phase, a passageway to freedom on a mental level' (Römpötti 2008: 32-40). Römpötti's assertions on the duality of heterotopia make sense in relation to the complex liminality of Kaurismäki's film. Richard's objection to the corrupt practices of the city allows him to gain a sense of transcendence in a similar manner to the sense of liberation the road provides for those who travel it. But he can never assimilate or step off the road due to moral obligations and fundamental ideological differences. This puts him in an awkward position, as it is ultimately Barbara that he seeks, but she wants to leave the road and find success, even if it means abiding by the normative conventions of LA society. Richard is not alone on his travels, as he meets many ideological outsiders along the way, who function as map-readers or signposts to guide him through the confines of the city. Vincent Gallo's Moss becomes Richard's roommate after his car is burgled in the downtrodden neighbourhood of Inglewood. Moss' non-committal, but pacifist approach to interpersonal cultural communication enables Richard to live in this rough neighbourhood and find his first sense of stability. Yet, Inglewood is distinctly outside the borders of the cinematic LA, which acts as a borderland separating the fantasy of Tinseltown from the realities of life in this complex

thirdspace. It is 'a sprawling, radical zone created and populated by the marginalized (Soja 1996: 10), and it is only Richard's marginality that allows him to populate this zone.

The Finnish band Leningrad Cowboys functions as another signpost on Richard's journey. The Cowboys have featured in many of Aki Kaurismäki's films, most famously in the *Leningrad Cowboys* trilogy (1989–1994). They are a peculiar combination of fur-clad Soviet-style folk culture and American Cowboy iconography with their extremely elongated quiffs and boot tips. They appear at a crucial moment in the narrative when it seems that Barbara is finally willing to elope with Richard. The Cowboys are performing at the Mayan Club, where they back Richard in a confrontation with Patterson, the director who wants to 'cast' Barbara in his film. Their mystical appearance and strange theatricality breaks the flow of what has been a relatively-naturalistic scene. As they gaze at the distant stars in an prolonged fashion after their rescue effort, we are once more reminded of the thin veneer between reality and fantasy in this cinematic city. Indeed, the film constantly reminds us of the simulacran nature of the world the protagonists inhabit. A trip to Las Vegas emphasizes the city's stratified nature by focusing on its outskirts instead of the fantasy world of its main streets. The facades of the casinos appear on the horizon, but the pyramids and light spectaculars initially only re-enforce the difference between the protagonists and the city. By initially refusing to immerse in the escapist spectacle that Las Vegas offers, the film highlights the unreality of Richard and Barbara's eventual marriage in one of the quick-fix marriage shops on 'the strip'. As much a mirage as the name of the famous hotel and the bursting volcano we see at the end of the ceremony, the marriage is part of the dream factory of Hollywood, an unreal conclusion to the film's narrative emulation of the romantic comedy formula.

As the protagonists return to Los Angeles, the film switches its focus to class issues in the entertainment industry. It seems that the entire service industry section of the city is populated by desperate aspiring artists who work for a minimum wage in their quest for success. Moss balances between commercial demands and his aspirations for artistic success, but he fails to get a record contract as, according to him, 'only fakes sell million copies'. Yet, his position is contradictory, as he will only have a relationship with someone who lives 27 minutes away on a freeway. He relies on the superficiality and fleeting commercialized relationships of the city because having something more solid and difficult is not worth it in this place, where mobility and transitoriness is an essential asset in the daily battle for survival. The paradoxity of Moss (rejecting superficialism while exploiting it for personal use) is key to unravelling the central complexities of the film. The mobilization of the trappings of commercialism to achieve something more meaningful or artistically honest is further underlined by Johnny Depp's frequent appearances in the film. At this point in his career, Depp was well-known for taking the occasional commercial role in order to finance more challenging productions such as *Dead Man*. Richard has a chance encounter in a graveyard with the 'real' Depp, who explains that the only places in which he feels comfortable are cemeteries and strip joints. The advice, from this successful navigator of the Hollywood system, is to be true to oneself and occupy a similarly heterotopic personal position as cemeteries and strip joints have in

relation to organized society. Yet, when Richard runs into Depp again at an Anouk Aimee mini-festival, it is clear to us, if not to Richard, that the Depp providing him with advice has been imaginary all along or that, as a part of his Hollywood star persona, he has to be seen to be oblivious to his fans. The different Depps make clear the extent to which reality and fantasy blur in the cinematic city of *LA without a Map*, with Richard underlining the point that LA is a state of mind, something that is antithetical to authenticity or reality.

Beneath this obvious criticism of the superficial qualities of LA life we are confronted with the dual layers of Kaurismäki's film as a film about negotiating the commercial-art-house divide. The film frequently correlates shots of the lost protagonist wandering through the empty spaces of the time-image cinema (or the simulacrum of LA) with the goal-oriented protagonist of the movement-image navigating a successful path through the LA framework. In a revealing cameo, Kaurismäki appears as Michael Bambihill working for Disney studios. This pseudonym was first used for his executive producer credit on *Condition Red*, though, here, his appearance is connected to a play on the norms of working within the system. According to Kaurismäki, the synonym is a playful gesture to the blurring distinctions between the art-house and the commercial world as, at the time, the quintessential independent company, Miramax, had been sold to Disney, making auteurs like Quentin Tarantino part of the Disney labour force (Kääpä 2010b). This collaboration between the companies does not necessarily indicate commercial compromise, as, by most accounts, directors like Tarantino benefit from the multi-million marketing and distribution mechanisms of the Disney Corporation, gaining a sense of artistic freedom by the occasional commercial compromise. And as we must consider the role of Kaurismäki acting as a part of the Hollywood machinery, so we must pay attention to Johnny Depp, the film star, offering to do a minimum wage cameo to self-consciously highlight the machinery that allows him to benefit from his profile as an indie darling and a 'movie star'. Such self-reflexivity effectively consolidates his image as an alternative star and reveals to us how he is able to play to different audience demographics.

As part of its self-reflexive structure, the conclusion of the film follows the generic pattern of the romantic comedy as Richard returns to Bradford. Out of the blue, we find out that Barbara has also returned and that Richard has received a production deal for his first novel 'Oozy Suicide'. It turns out that his attempts to kidnap Barbara at a Hollywood party resulted in celebrity fame based on the types of scandals that populate gossip rags the world over. The convenience of the ending is a similar play on fantasy and reality as the rest of the film, as it satisfies the demands of Hollywood in meeting the conventions of the romantic comedy genre. The reunion scene even involves a typical strategy of the mainstream gross-out comedy – the bodily-function gag – increasingly popular at the time due to the success of films like *There's Something About Mary* (Farrelly, 1998). As Richard sees Barbara, he stumbles and the coffin he has been carrying falls to the soil, with the body of a priest inside releasing a loud case of flatulence. This sort of gag is in complete opposition to the majority of the narrative and more in line with the types of commercial cinema the film has criticized throughout. These instances are not to be read in terms of a concession to the demands of

populist film-making but as part of the film's meta-cinematic commentary, which appeals both to art-house sensibilities, while highlighting the necessity of popular film production to 'keep art cinemas going', as Mika Kaurismäki comments (Kääpä 2010b).

To return to Sorlin's (2002) distinction between European and Hollywood cinematic cities, we need to consider the similarities and differences in the protagonists' encounters with their city. In the city of West Berlin, all the protagonists have emigrated to it from outside. But as they still exist within European borders, none of them feel particularly alienated by the city within the cinematic diegesis, and they are able to create their own versions of this cityscape. While most of the characters in LA are from outside, none of them really feels at home in this cinematic city. Whereas the protagonists of *Helsinki Napoli* navigated through the city with barely any ties holding them back (Kari's family is completely willing to float down the river with him), Richard, Barbara and Moss try to fit in with the expectations of LA. Their adaptation eventually results in the types of labour that immigrants are forced to do, such as waiting tables and serving drinks to those who have made it onto the industrial ladder. The film makes an intriguing case for a new type of class politics that is inherently connected to the city of LA (the cinematic city, not the real Los Angeles) and its modes of social identity and industrial production. In Kaurismäki's film, it is not racial or other class-based divisions that divide the protagonists, as is so common with American films dealing with the complex thirdspace of Los Angeles. One's status in society can decrease or increase depending on one's ability to navigate (and willingness to humiliate one's self) through the highly-commercialized structures of the cinematic city, and not on one's social or cultural background. While this ignores the very real problems that exist in the city, it highlights the extent to which Kaurismäki's film operates outside of conventional realism. Los Angeles functions partially alongside Sorlin's assertion of the city as an autonomous entity with which the protagonists are confronted. But Kaurismäki's perspective merges considerations from Sorlin's European and Hollywood cinemas in order to reveal the soft side of the city – the cityscape is not inflexible if you play along with its fantasized cinematic reincarnation. Kaurismäki's film both reaffirms and contests Sorlin's hypothesis, a notion that attests to the film's transvergent position, creating new perspectives from inside existing and still powerful frameworks. Kaurismäki's films thus operate from inside the repertoire of existing conceptualizations of these cities. But by both conforming and contesting these assertions, they become sites of contradiction in which the complexities of cultural and identity politics are performed.

Chapter 4

Post-road: Deconstructing the European Road Movie

Kaurismäki has lived in Brazil since the early 1990s, but he continues to operate world-wide. After his US-set *Condition Red* and *LA. without a Map*, Kaurismäki intermittently returned to Europe to produce a number of road movies in 'East Europe' in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These films use transvergent methodologies to explore the challenges and opportunities facing the countries formerly belonging to the Soviet bloc. Instead of cosmopolitanism in Western Europe or the cultural politics of Hollywood, *Highway Society* (2000) and *Honey Baby* (2004) explore geopolitics and cultural identity in post-communist spaces. These are, again, the transvergent spaces so common in Kaurismäki's cinema, where antecedent or traditional ideological structures are challenged by wider societal and geopolitical metamorphosis. Collision between post-communist systems and European integration is one of the key themes of the films, which are observed through the perspective of nomadic beings with few stable ties to these structures. Instead of conceptualizing post-communist space as the 'cinema of the other Europe', these films focus on the overlapping hybridization involved in conceptualizing contemporary Europe.

Highway Society and *Honey Baby* move beyond Rosso's troubled cosmopolitanism, as cultural collision is no longer a source of anxiety. It is now the norm, but one which also has to exist within still-powerful national structures. *Highway Society* is working within the structures of a 'pure' road movie as much as *Condition Red* was a pure genre picture. It is also a film about road movies as much as *LA without a Map* was a self-reflexive examination of the machinations of film production. The conventions and ideological connotations of the genre are clearly a main theme of the film as cars are our first introduction to its world, with shots of a junkyard filled with these dilapidated material extensions of humanity. The meta-road connotations are even more explicit when the credits come to a close with the noises of a crashing car and engulfing darkness. It seems the road has come to an end even before the narrative has begun. This self-awareness suggests fundamental variations on the heterotopic connotations of the road, calling into question its liberating potential and its socially-constructed nature. The beginning is an indication that what follows will not stick to the conventional structures of the genre – *Highway Society* is more appropriately conceptualized as a post-road movie. But, as with any concept with the prefix 'post', these reconstructive approaches work with the material and the overall framework they seek to deconstruct.

Jack, the main protagonist of the film, is a car mechanic whose job it is to get these broken-down machines back on the road. While he is currently living a stable life with an elderly Korean lady, the road is something that is in his blood. As *Rosso* demonstrated, for certain

nomadic people, the road is the only option, as any deviation from its transient path leads to stagnation. Appropriately, Jack's hideout is soon discovered by a group of vengeful gangsters who give him the option to take the 'one last job', which involves driving a truck full of drugs back from the Finnish-Russian border. Jack's acceptance of the job is a very typical genre convention, and there would be little room for self-reflexivity within this narrative, were it not for Elizabeth, the heiress of a large fortune, entering Jack's plan. Initially, the dynamic between Jack and Elizabeth seems typical for the genre, as Jack is reluctant to rescue her from the banality of her life. The reluctant hero and the princess stereotypes are maintained as she obsessively follows him, and eventually manages to convince him to take her along by pretending to be his abused girlfriend. There is a high degree of self-awareness in these dynamics, and Elizabeth's actions work as a performance of gender stereotypes. Jack is well aware of these conventions, commenting that the roles of abusive boyfriend and victimized femininity 'set the women's liberation movement way back'. Furthermore, comments like 'men don't care where they sleep, they only care about money' get presented with self-reflexive abandon. Stereotyping extends to the wider 'Society' in the film, with Elizabeth's family and their aversion to Jack captured in similarly caricatured tones, dividing society into the villainous upper classes and the heroic lower classes. These roles continue along the typical paradigm of the action genre when Elizabeth is kidnapped by the gangsters. In rescuing her, Jack gets to act out many of the typical actions of the genre, including fist- and gunfights and truck chases. But this type of genre adherence is constantly filtered through self-reflexive irony. For example, as Jack initially takes to the road and distracted by Elizabeth, he crashes his precious Cadillac almost instantly. The scene, captured as a combination of hand-held camera and slow motion, clearly subverts the conventions of the genre, with the soundtrack, featuring a song extolling the virtues of the open road, contrasting with the images of the crash and the abrupt culmination of the journey.

The world of *Highway Society* is an open-ended, transvergent road, a notion made clear in its title. The paradoxical power of the heterotopic road to simultaneously subvert and reinforce dominant social and ideological paradigms needs to be understood in tandem with the film's depiction of an integrating Europe. Whereas earlier films such as *Helsinki Napoli* featured Finnish identity as a central feature of cosmopolitanism, *Highway Society* is largely unconcerned with such designations. The fifteen-year difference between the two films implies that Finnishness is still an integral factor in Kaurismäki's explorations of cosmopolitanism in the 1980s – this also connotes that the nation still plays an integral part in the bipartite division of Europe, as exemplified in the liminal borderspace of West Berlin. The Europe of the early twenty-first century is a significantly different geopolitical space, one where cosmopolitanism is now more commonplace. But this is largely relegated to the 'brave new unified Western Europe', as the space of contestation has moved eastwards. The debate now focuses on the incorporation of the post-communist structures of Eastern European countries into the integrating Europe.

Kaurismäki's films reflect these contemporary debates, but Finland still has a substantial, if very different, part to play in his palette. The chance to examine Finland from abroad, and as

part of unifying Europe, was one of the main attractions for Kaurismäki to produce *Highway Society*. Despite all the subversive techniques used to capture his ‘homeland’, it is still one of the key guiding features in his cinema. Finland captured via the nomadic perspective of the wanderer features in many of Kaurismäki’s earlier films as they recontextualize and unpack elements of ‘ethno-symbolic’ continuity. *Rosso* explored early 1980s’ Finland as a ‘strange land in the north’, filled with uninhabitable landscapes and inhospitable people. Explorations of the nation’s relationship with mainland Europe also features in the cosmopolitanism of Kari in *Helsinki Napoli* and *Zombie*’s disappearance into an Istanbul eerily similar to Finland.

Whereas these films were at least partially funded by Finnish sources, *Highway Society* was produced for the German television entity Nord Rundfunk, allowing for substantial reflexivity in terms of cultural adherence. And whereas normally in Kaurismäki’s films, the protagonists move away from Finland, *Highway Society* traces the journey back. The film’s examination of Finland is highly exotic in its ethno-symbolic visuality, highlighting the snowy landscapes and endless forests that so often feature in canonic representations of the nation. But this is not some stereotypically-exoticized Finland, but a bleak space where ethno-symbolism and societal angst work in tandem. The nation is located on the utmost periphery of Europe: a cold and snowy place filled with empty urbanity and wide roads extending beyond the horizons. As Jack and Elizabeth visit a karaoke bar somewhere near the eastern border, the camera lingers on men who sit on their own, sipping their pints as a solitary singer intones a downbeat, emotionless version of the Finnish song ‘The Sound of Autumn’ (Syksyn Sävel). This is precisely the stereotype of the alcoholic, insular Finnish masculinity depicted in his earlier films. In the world of *Highway Society*, the depiction takes on ironic dimensions due to the heightened, almost surreal way in which these hopelessly depressive incommunicados drink their life away in this bleak bar in the middle of nowhere.

Kaurismäki mentions that what we see in the film is an almost ‘comic-book’-like world that relies on binaries and black-and-white thematization. Thus, it is entirely appropriate that Finland is captured as a simplistic, stereotyped version of the types of representations usually seen in many mainstream films. From this perspective, Finland is a country defined only by its proximity to neighbouring Russia, as the international crime syndicate that forces Jack to work for them sees its borders as permeable enough to conduct illegal drug smuggling through its physical terrain. Such representations of Finland see it as a northern periphery that is actually further north (both in terms of geography and mentality) than has been previously thought possible. The world of the film should not be read in literal terms – a notion which extends to the film’s depiction of Finland as an ambiguous non-place on the edge of Europe, little more than a borderspace of Russia. The refusal to narrate Finland in any complex terms is not so much concerned with the reality of Finland as it is with the idea of nation. For Kaurismäki, it seems the nation has become an empty signifier, a frozen land only used as a means to stabilize one’s displaced geographical coordinates or a means to visualize the borders of an expanding Europe.

The notion of an ever-expanding European society is something that we can see in the majority of Kaurismäki’s films. Finland has been imagined in relation to Europe (or



Desolate, snowy landscapes in *Highway Society*. (Courtesy of Marianna Films)

at least well-known signifiers of a Europe or Europeaness) from the intertextuality of *The Liar* and *The Worthless* to Rosso's identity negotiations. *Highway Society's* depiction of a stereotyped Finland suggests that, in the place of a realistic image of the geopolitical constellation of Europe, we see a map of an 'underground' Europe. Here, criminal networks operate outside the political and legal paradigms of the European Union. Intriguingly, the network operates with similar methods to the EU in its acknowledgment of national borders as nodes of commercial exchange. For the upwardly-mobile elite of Europe, the nations and organizations contained by these borders have little other purpose. *Highway Society's* depiction of contemporary Europe amounts to an inversion of the political and ideological objectives of the EU, as it provides a mirror image that twists and subverts the intergovernmental and 'equalizing' implications of the Union. The road as a heterotopia reveals to us some of the problems emanating from the geopolitical metamorphosis involved in the reorganization of Europe, though this examination does not necessarily equate to an anti-EU statement. Rather, the film is a play on the idea of the whole of society as a heterotopic road – a self-reflexive connotation made explicit by the title *Highway Society* and its genre self-awareness – where the insides (the transient mobility of the road) and the outsides (the frozen and stagnant nation) contrast with one another to cast an ambiguous light over the socio-political project of European unification.

Honey Baby in surreal Europe

Kaurismäki followed *Highway Society's* examination of the diluting borders of an integrating Europe with another metaphoric parable in the road-movie genre: *Honey Baby* (2004). These European road movies were interspersed with documentary projects in Brazil (which the following chapter explores in more depth). Accordingly, every time he returns to film Europe, we can see his perspective transforming. The same goes for his approach to Finland as, by 2004, it seems to have evaporated from his conceptualization of Europe. But as all of Kaurismäki's previous road movies have featured a significant role for Finland, we cannot just ignore its absence. Rather, it is more productive to understand the film as exploring the constantly shifting ideological and geopolitical binary between the East and the West, where Finland has now clearly and permanently been integrated into the Western cultural sphere. As Kaurismäki habitually works in the emergent gaps of the global geopolitical structures, the status quo of contemporary Finland seems to offer him few notions of interest. Instead, the focus of *Honey Baby* is on the situation of East Europe, especially in the now extinct Soviet Union and the Baltic nations.

Honey Baby's main protagonist, Tom Brackett, is an American singer, 'a one-hit wonder back home' in his own words, whose songs initially met with a warm welcome in the European market. Life since is characterized by a series of failed opportunities and unproductive writer's block, and he has not written a new song in four years. He currently performs shows at weddings in a small town called Halle in Germany, dressed in a bizarre

amalgamation of Elvis and cowboy culture, a ghastly combination of the most pervasive stereotypes of American popular culture. Tom frequently complains about the lack of authenticity in the commercialized world of the present day, though it is very clear that he is not helping this situation. In addition to mobilizing two of the most prominent (and kitsch) tropes of Americanized pop culture, he manages an indie rock café, which has to close due to his mismanagement of the place. His manager provides him with a last opportunity to embark on a tour of Eastern Europe to repay his debts. Tom has no option but to take the offer, as this will provide him with the opportunity to finally return home. Tom is a typical Kaurismäki protagonist in that he has drifted to the margins of mainstream society. He is a liminal presence, not unlike Zombie, unable to cope successfully with societal conventions and unwilling to adapt beyond the humiliating surface-based concession of flaunting his American background. Whereas Zombie's displacement was existential in nature, Tom's dilemma is more to do with the demands of the commercial entertainment industry and his ongoing searching for an elusive sense of artistic authenticity. He has hit artistic rock bottom and faces social ostracism: 'You do not know what it is like being forgotten until you have been forgotten in a small town in Germany.'

Tom has been hired to perform at the wedding of Maria, a Russian *gastarbeiter* in Halle, who is due to get married to Karl, a wealthy older businessman. As with Tom's simultaneous rejection and use of commercialism, Maria faces an ideological dilemma. The marriage is one of upward mobility and social stability, but Karl also embodies all the negative sides of capitalism's manipulative tendencies. The destinies of these two ideological liminals intersect as Tom performs a song about 'old men and child brides' while Maria decides to escape. Tom embarks for Kaliningrad as the first stop on his tour of the Baltic, which will lead him up to St. Petersburg in Russia. Maria and Tom's paths collide again as she steals his car, but upon realizing that Tom is a musician, she decides to be his tour manager for the rest of the way. Tom understandably is very reluctant to agree to this, but soon it becomes clear that the liminality they share allows them to confront a changing and commercializing world.

In many ways, Maria and Tom are typical road-movie protagonists as they have no stable home and can only go forth in some vague attempt to realize undefined personal goals. The collision of these two protagonists creates a complex metaphor for the changes of Eastern Europe. The East is visualized as comprised of the iconography and architecture of the old communist powers standing tall against the effects of American cultural imperialism. We see reminders of this battle everywhere as, for example, the pair performs at a market square in Kaliningrad, where their harmonious coupling contrasts with the more difficult-to-reconcile collision of Coca Cola and McDonalds signs against communist iconography which occupies most of the background *mise-en-scène*. While Americanization is both celebrated and denigrated in these post-communist spaces, we are now no longer witness to a context where the 'Americans have colonized our subconscious' (to quote one of the characters of Wim Wenders' *Im Lauf Der Zeit/Kings of the Road*, 1976). These signs are now entrenched as part of the façade of post-communist Europe, yet they have to constantly reassert their supremacy in a socio-political and cultural battle that is far from over. Eastern



Collision of ideological structures in the transforming spaces of Eastern Europe in *Honey Baby*.
(Courtesy of Marianna Films)

Europe is conceptualized as a social space in flux, with no clear order or direction, a truly transvergent and uncertain space, countering any argument for the end of history in Francis Fukuyama's sense.

Honey Baby uses many of the typical tropes of Kaurismäki's road cinema to explore this transvergent condition. Maria and Tom's brief dalliance with a circus troupe provides them a semblance of stability, a sense of emancipation that their meaningless flight is unable to do: 'I don't know where we were or where we were going, but it felt great', intones Tom. Since *The Worthless*, Kaurismäki's films have revolved around the notion of leaving. *Honey Baby* continues this trajectory as Tom evokes another form of this existential principle: 'you always have to look ahead, history does not count'. While history is a key element in Kaurismäki's films, official history is never taken for granted – the relationship between the past and the future is not set, as it is open to transvergent interpretations which seek to make sense of these unformed vertiginous political landscapes. The limitless expansionism of Kaurismäki's previous road movies offer endless opportunities for new identities to develop there seem to be few physical or mental confines for the journeys. This sort of optimism is entirely absent from *Honey Baby*'s New Europe. The pair encounters one such border at the edge of the Baltic Sea, a place where they have the opportunity to leave their confines. Maria even wades into the waters as Tom's hit single plays on the radio. The coalescence of the open sea and cultural affinity seems to offer them the possibility to reclaim past glories, where Tom's music carries Maria beyond her limiting socio-economic situation and Karl's far-extending grip. But, as Tom tries to embrace her, she panics and falls into the sea. True transcendence beyond the structures in which she has lived all her life, no matter how evanescent, prove too much and too uncertain. Even the open road must be located in a space that resembles the socio-cultural and political reality from where the characters originate, as it is only in relation to these that their fragile identities make any sense (even if this relationship is based on aversion to this reality).

Honey Baby is substantially different from Kaurismäki's earlier road movies as it is strongly sceptical of its main protagonists. The characters' uncertainty and aimlessness suggests they are not so much the nomadic antagonists reconfiguring the ideological structures of the status quo. Instead, they seem fundamentally unable to escape their emptiness – they are imperfect beings disillusioned partially by the uncertain structures of the surrounding society. But most of all, their dissatisfaction stems from their existential emptiness, of being permanently unhappy in whatever situation they find themselves. This sense of undulation is evident from Tom's album *Sound in Transit* to the lyrics of songs we hear on the soundtrack, which all focus on motion and restlessness. Furthermore, the use of cinematic techniques emphasizes the film's empty transvergence, of being on a journey to nowhere. As Tom discusses his loser status, or as Maria reflects on her dark past, we see shots of the sprawling and empty roads. In Kaurismäki's conventional road movies, the aim of the protagonists is liberation from suffocating social confines and, accordingly, the camera moves along with the protagonists to convey their flight. The camera of *Honey Baby* remains static, reflecting the protagonists' inability to embrace the dynamic opportunities

of the open road. But as these two lost beings move closer to each other and find a sense of purpose in companionship, the camera movement increases to pans and eventually takes flight with them, as it moves fluidly alongside the car or follows them on a steadicam while they navigate through all the peripheral spaces they visit. It seems as if two zeros equate to one as they combine their skills of liminality in order to benefit from this very condition. The ability to embrace liminality as a life-style thus emerges as a key method to counteract the destabilizing connotations of the wider geopolitical transformations.

The film is based on the *Orpheus* legend, which provides a further intertextual dimension to the film's examination of its protagonists' liminality. Tom is cast in the role of Orpheus, a powerful god-like figure whose gifts of music can make the gods favour him and grant him all his wishes. But it is clear that this earth-bound Orpheus has lost his gifts, if he ever had any. We are repeatedly shown his inability to complete a song, even when Maria volunteers to act as his self-appointed muse. Tom cannot face his lack of mythical ability, which stands as a metaphor for the relevance of American cultural imports – or more appropriately, their lack of relevance in the post-communist landscape. As Tom's ability to use his cultural identity as a calling card fails, he is not able to grasp success or any other sort of cultural grounding that would make sense to him. The film recreates this intertextual thematic connection via an extensive dream sequence after Tom is knocked unconscious on his way to rescue Maria from her supposed kidnapper, Karl. After crashing his motorcycle, Tom decides to go by foot to Murmansk, a foolhardy proposition at best. He arrives in a small town and is picked up by a taxi driven by a sinister-looking giant, who ferries him to the Hades nightclub located in the middle of nowhere in Northern Russia. Upon entering the club, Tom descends a flight of stairs reminiscent of the pathways of Egyptian pyramids, reinforced by the iconography of the pharaohs and Egyptian mythology that decorate the club.

These scenes play out as an obvious homage to the *Orpheus* myth as Tom descends to the underworld to rescue his beloved Eurydice (Maria). The nightclub is imagined as a harem, with young dancers entertaining its wealthy mysterious clientele, presided over by Karl as Hades. Tom performs a song in a spotlight in the middle of the club to entice Eurydice/Maria to leave with him. He is successful in his attempts, seemingly fulfilling the part of Orpheus, whose music can break through the barriers between life and death. The Orpheus of myth failed to carry out his instructions not to gaze back on his ascent, but to take his bride and leave without self-doubt. Tom's levels of reality crash down on him, as he glimpses Karl's reflection at the exit, allowing Karl to appear in flesh and shoot Maria. Tom takes the body to an empty field where bees cover her from head to toe. Maria's affinity with bees has been a frequent theme throughout the film and it is this final embrace from her 'kind' that signifies her place in the world. The regenerative power of bees in the Orpheus myth becomes literal in Tom's fantasy, as the bees allow Maria's body to float between life and death. It seems that acting out this fantasy has grounded Tom and Maria's fluctuating identities, as Tom wakes up in a hospital to find out that Maria had, in fact, refused the advances of Karl and returned to her home village. As Tom joins her, she is attending her local church, seemingly atoning for abandoning the village to pursue life in the big city. As these two marginalized

beings embrace in this traditionalized setting, with all its connotations of family values and the healing power of religion, all of the heterogeneity and ambiguity of the road movie are resolved by a return to a traditionalist paradigm. The neatness of this conclusion is a literal embodiment of Altman's suggestion of the road movie's tendency to validate the ideological structures which its protagonists seek to oppose (Altman 1999).

The film's conclusion thus seems to contradict the transvergent philosophy of Kaurismäki's cinema, but closer inspection of its representation of gender norms and genre conventions points us to a more nuanced understanding. Tom acts as the strong male lead who drives the pair and the narrative to its destination. Along the journey we see transvergent visions of the political landscape which follow his alternative perspectives on mainstream cultural and political discourse. But Tom's strength only exists in fantasies, whereas, in real life, he is a self-confessed loser who is unable to afford a plane ticket back to America from his misadventures in Europe. If we take the road to be a gendered space, in that its normative functions are often to do with the male odyssey or the maintenance of heteronormative relationships, *Honey Baby* undermines these conceptions through its portrayal of Tom as a lost and hopeless dreamer who is unable to sustain a typically masculine narrative. His music is not flowing in an Orpheusque way, nor is anyone else particularly interested in the music he currently painstakingly churns out. He is a relic, unwilling to adapt to his circumstances and use his cosmopolitan background for navigation through a changing Europe. His manager has even replaced him on his tour with a lookalike performer, who takes the basics of Tom's songs and updates them with rap beats and hip-hop dancing.

Through this doubling, the film comments on the superficiality of commercialized cultural production, where artists (and by extension, identities) are replaceable via the most basic surface-based allusions to authenticity. Similarly, the rap-rock fusion that Tom's double performs has no authentic core – purely an approximation of currently popular trends, a simulacrum hiding no reality beneath. This is also a comment on Tom's music, as his fleeting moments with stardom were reduced to one hit song, and even his European fans seem to only pine for a superficial image of an American indie rocker – precisely the type of character Tom is in his fantasies. Thus, the Americans have not managed to colonize the subconscious of East Europe; they only give the illusion of such success. In reality, the representative roles of artists such as Tom are now ironically appropriated by local artists who use the imported modes of cultural expression for their own purposes. 'Global' culture thus becomes glocal culture, suggesting that any impulse of American cultural colonialism meets with resistance and adaptation in its contexts of reception. Tom's decreasing level of cultural capital and his final acceptance of a meagre but stable existence away from his life of travel indicates that a reworked sense of cosmopolitanism may be more appropriate in the new Europe of the twenty-first century.

What does this reworked cosmopolitanism entail? As Tom seems to ultimately settle down to a conservative lifestyle, the impression is of an inversion of road movie dynamics. Are we to believe that both the protagonists, who have throughout the film emphasized their enjoyment and endorsement of individual freedom, would willingly submit to the

double binds of family and religion, two notions that have had very little significance for either of them throughout the film? Instead of providing a realistic (by genre standards) conclusion to the narrative, Kaurismäki's film undermines our expectations. The failure of the open road to satisfy the protagonists sheds light on the inability of this 'most American' of genres to capture the metamorphosis of Eastern Europe. By undermining the male bias of the genre and highlighting the complexities of European identity and its relationship with the colonizing influence of American culture, we are asked to view the film's cultural politics with a healthy sense of scepticism. Cultural authenticity and the reliability of narratorship are undermined in a final *coup de grâce* as Tom spots a copy of his album in a Russian marketplace. While there is nothing extraordinary about depicting the pervasive pirating of cultural goods, it transpires that the seller is in fact played by Kaurismäki. This is a self-reflexive turn that acknowledges Kaurismäki's complex position as a director from the 'West', who now intends to critique the very pervasiveness of Western cultural colonization. But, as is the case with the complex reciprocity of glocalization, the blurring of distinctions between the colonizer and the colonized is entirely appropriate in the complex geopolitical space of this New Europe. Thus, cosmopolitanism, as a distinctly-Western ideology, takes on connotations of disorientation and rootlessness instead of the more positive transience it holds in mainstream discourse of the West. Through this, the film highlights the inability of any simplistic attempt to represent the cultural and identity politics of the region through film. It does not and cannot give conclusive answers to the changes taking place in the region – all it can do is instigate a sense of scepticism towards any notion of a comfortable and universally-agreed Europeanization, especially from the perspective of its peripheries, which are increasingly becoming central to its contemporary geopolitics.

Dialectical images and (trans)national histories

While the depiction of the social and political transformation of East Europe is intentionally ambiguous in both *Highway Society* and *Honey Baby*, their transvergent perspectives indicate some of the larger problems in capturing these transformations through the medium of cinema. Walter Benjamin's conception of the dialectical image allows us to unravel some of these complexities. He states:

It is not what is past casts its light on what is present; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical. (Benjamin 1998: 460)

This passage from his *Arcades Project* is important for clarifying how representations of history function in Kaurismäki's films, for this relationship is never as simple as many of

Kaurismäki's critics would have it. Transvergence is built on the ongoing dialectic between versions of the past and versions of the present, taking the polyphony of any singular event into account. For Rosalind Galt, 'history is never that which happened in the past. Rather, it is conceptualized as a political and experiential moment in time, a space in which past and present can be brought into conjunction in a dialectical relationship, in which a particular historical constellation can be imagined anew' (Galt 2006: 72). The road of Kaurismäki's films functions as a space for reimagining these historical constellations. Its heterotopic potential to indicate both emergent understandings of society, while working with the conventions that maintain the structural narratives of that society, allow it to reconceptualize its patterns and dominant paradigms. These films combine different modes of cultural production (popular culture/art-house) with subversive plays with genre conventions, all contextualized with ideological reworkings of nationalism, geopolitics, traditionalism, spatio-temporality, gender politics, to name a few of their main concerns. They are able to evoke a sort of historical-cultural constellation, which, for Galt, constitutes 'a pattern of historical, aesthetic, and critical discourses that enables us to read history alongside the present' (Galt 2006: 230).

The dialectics of the past and the present are a key feature of transvergence. *Honey Baby* is brimming with such dialectical moments. For example, the Soviet monuments, with their connotations of totalitarian history and political domination of the Baltic, contrast against the shopping malls and multinational advertisements. The present of the diegesis is a space of ongoing ideological and political contestation, where narrative strands are left dangling, despite the nominal neatness of the film's conclusion. A similar emphasis on capturing the very moment of transition is achieved in *Highway Society* as we see Jack journeying through the snowy landscapes of Finland. Such monumental imagery is often mobilized for ethno-symbolic purposes in traditional narratives of Finnishness, as a type of political landscape aimed at bolstering the authenticity of such narratives. But from the perspective of the nomad, these landscapes are only obstacles, and any affective response they call for in traditional narratives is deconstructed. The dialectical uses of history in Kaurismäki's films interrogate the relationship between culture and identity, gesturing towards the difficulty of situating cultural identity in a specific socio-political formation. Instead, culture is something constantly in a state of transit. While stable formations certainly exist in this world, they are portrayed as unproductive and backwards, whereas travelling culture is conceptualized in dynamic terms, providing the only, if meagre, optimism for the future.

We must go back to Kaurismäki's 1984 heritage film *The Clan* to clarify this dialectical approach to history. According to Anu Koivunen, nostalgic representations of the traditional nation can create a sense of disjunction or a feeling of absence instead of its more commonly associated feelings of security and belonging (Koivunen 2006). *The Clan's* much-discussed hay-barn scene provides an exemplary instance through which to discuss the disjunction inherent in nostalgia. Studio-era rural melodramas featured such scenes as a natural part of the structures of the society they were depicting, as part of their everyday life. In Kaurismäki's contemporary example, the imagery the film draws on and the types of lifestyle it references

are no longer part of its world, at least not in their original form. Thus, we are confronted with the necessity of an indexical reading, which replaces authenticity with absence and the realization that traditional conceptions of the national past have different implications in contemporary society. Rather than just pointing out this disjunction, Kaurismäki's films need to be thought of as plays with representations of this past. The self-aware use of material from what could be called the audio-visual cultural memory of the nation is a clear way of politicizing the cinematic dialectics of the past and the present, of participating in the public discourse over the constitution of national culture. The sense of absence created by nostalgia is filled with the dubious morality of the Sammakkos, yet we are not asked to identify with their antisocial goals. Instead, their existence emphasizes an almost pathological sense of trauma growing at the heart of the traditional nation. In contrast to heritage cinema, *The Clan* works in a liminal moral space that does not support the moralizing maintenance of society's norms, nor does it valorize the criminal behaviour of the protagonists. Nostalgia's absence is complemented by the moral vacuum that the Sammakkos represent, resulting in a depiction that negates the affective potential of heritage and supplants it with a sense of ambiguous distance. Thus, Kaurismäki's heritage film becomes the opposite of its origins – a cinematic question mark on national history.

While there is nothing particularly revolutionary in evoking the contradictions evident in national collectivity, Kaurismäki's transvergent take on history aspires to make strange any notion of cultural affinity. The problems of conceptualizing linear historical narratives are also interrogated through his emphasis on travelling cultures. Rosso's pseudo-foreign perspective on cultural history produces precisely the types of imagery that characterize dialectical history. A key scene takes place as his car breaks down and he is forced to travel on foot through the flooded Ostrobothnian plains. Ostrobothnia has repeatedly been framed as a national heartland, but such material signs of the nation become signifiers of 'otherness' for Rosso. National history contrasts with his outsider perspective, resulting in a feeling of confounding cultural vertigo. If images are dialectics at a standstill, then this momentary absence of movement, in both the diegesis and in this narrative of travel, produces a distillation of Kaurismäki's approach. The past and the present, the familiar and the foreign, intertwine in complex unpredictable patterns, allowing the spectator to read this as purposefully alienating mirroring (Finland as seen through the perspective of the other) and as an ironic form of cultural mimesis (the Finnish actor/director adapting elements from foreign culture to make a statement about the alienating effect of traditionalist thinking). The place of his demise, pizzeria Rosso, is a part of a large chain of restaurants that started operating and multiplying in early 1980s' Finland. While the restaurant is not foreign, it simulates foreignness and exoticism as part of its appeal, effectively creating a mirror image of Rosso the protagonist's earlier self-confident foreignness. The two 'foreigns' inherent in the title *Rosso* create another set of dialectics, this time between the global and the local. What is nominally conceptualized as foreign may indeed already be part of the familiar, the global part of the local. But as he is shot upon entering the restaurant, the optimistic sense of cultural reciprocity evaporates. Through this, the film captures a sense of 'immature'

transnationalism, where little hope of cultural reconciliation with nationhood or with the pleasures of reflexive cosmopolitanism can be found. The dialectics between the past and the present suggest that the negotiations between national traditions and the increasing necessity for cosmopolitanism are still at a nascent stage.

Alongside *The Clan's* evocation of the multiple versions of the national past that circulate in popular culture, *Rosso's* transnationalism gestures to the multiple levels on which belonging and cultural identity must be negotiated. The landscape is the ultimate signifier through which this complexity can be explained. While landscape is a material element that can be appropriated in a multitude of ways, its use as a geopolitical space is often mobilized for heritage purposes. Landscapes, thus, have a contradictory dimension, as they are used as a signifier of the national past, while the temporal moment of their cinematic capture is in the present. This contradiction can be solved through a dialectical conceptualization, as we observe the aura of the 'real' history in such landscape images, while they also tell us of their transforming implications in the *longue durée* of 'history' and its uses in the contemporary world. The gaps that these films open in the fabric of historical narration reveal its heterogeneous and contested nature and argue for the need to reconceptualize cultural memory's multiplicity.

Key to this multiplicity is the ambiguous ideological potency of the protagonists' outsidership. Their preferred modes of authenticity are rarely portrayed in a positive light, as they come across as naïve and foolish (*Highway Society*, *Honey Baby*), or immoral and confused (*Rosso*, *The Clan*), instead of the ideological absolutism of the nomad. The injection of traditionalism into the final frames of *Honey Baby* even seems to indicate that these outsiders are willing to succumb to social order if the road proves infertile. In contrast to the protagonists of the European New Waves or even the films of Aki Kaurismäki (all which share similarly disillusioned characters), Mika Kaurismäki's protagonists travel in an ideological vacuum. As there are few stable structures against which to rebel, they increasingly find themselves as rebels without a cause.

The ideological disillusionment evident in the protagonists' pointless search extends to the films' mapping of political space. We never get a tangible sense of the spaces the protagonists travel through, as they are permanently lost in their environments or they are framed against monuments of political significance which have no meaning for them. In many ways, their distanced gaze is that of a tourist. But instead of excitement of visiting new and exotic places, these spaces only produce a sense of alienation and strangeness. These spaces come close to achieving the qualities of the any-space-whatever of Gilles Deleuze's (1989) description. But in contrast to the slow-paced and persistently delocalized wanderings of the protagonists of the time-image cinema, Kaurismäki uses cinematic techniques such as fast-paced editing, glamorous shots, genre tropes, humour and popular music to complement these narratives of displacement. But, simultaneously, these films are too slow and aimless to be included in any categorization of mainstream cinema. As much as the protagonists find themselves in a constant state of liminality, the oscillation between the movement-image and the time-image leaves Kaurismäki's films struggling for a marketable identity between the art-house and the mainstream.

Kaurismäki's use of music allows us to explore this distinction further. *Highway Society* uses a variety of songs with titles like *On Your Road* and *Down the Highway* by a group called Steamhammer. This is an English band popular in West Germany in the early 1970s. The localized use of this 'foreign' music is both an indicator of the transnational mindset of protagonists such as Jack, but it also displays his niche status in contemporary society. Not part of the mainstream, but hardly an outrageously esoteric choice either, Jack's musical taste reflects Kaurismäki's cinematic tendencies, and allows us to view this as another instance of intentional border-crossing. As Jack and Maria travel to north-eastern Finland, Kaurismäki performs another temporal dislocation with Finnish popular culture. In a karaoke bar, Maria sings a song called *I Will Stay* by the Hurriganes to a group of depressed, alcohol-laden (stereotypes of) Finnish men. This was a popular song in the 1970s and its reinvigoration in the context of transnational interaction comments on the frozen time of the traditionalistic narrative that these stereotyped middle-aged men represent. If the temporality of the nation works along the lines of Benedict Anderson's 'homogeneous empty time of the nation' (Anderson 1991), Kaurismäki's film represents the fracture of this temporality. Maria's updated version of the canonical song simultaneously works within the framework of this narrative, whilst it gestures towards the ways that the nation's globalization reinvigorates its stagnant mores. Appropriately, her song soon rouses the morose group out of their pints to take part in this cultural transformation.

As this discussion of the dynamics of the global and the local demonstrates, representing the ways globalization changes the constitutions of nations is never simple. One way of achieving this is to point the camera at all that is new within the national sphere and to capture its transformations on a surface level. But to chronicle the very moment of emergence and transformation is more difficult. This can only be achieved metaphorically, yet simple metaphors rarely encapsulate more than a basic understanding of globalization's impact. To comprehend the ways this complex set of processes functions in changing cultural attitudes, a transvergent perspective is necessary. Thus, it is not only enough to have national stereotypes awaken to transnational circulation, but to indicate the ways the dialectics of national history transform through this re-interpretation and awakening. The emphasis on self-reflexivity and historical dialectics allows Kaurismäki's films to capture traces of cultural memory, which merge with emergent conceptualizations such as cosmopolitan identities and transnational cultures. The result has implications not only for national narratives, but also those of European geopolitical identity.

Counter-cartographic mappings – transvergent cartography

To describe the process of mapping as counter-cartographic may seem like an exercise in futility. After all, the idea of mapping territories is to provide a clearly-illustrated sense of geographical location that corresponds with political and cultural considerations. Drawing on the work of Irit Rogoff, Rosalind Galt proposes the process of cinematic counter-cartography

as a form that seeks to interrogate established identities and hegemonic power structures (Galt 2006: 94). This is the model that Kaurismäki's films follow in their attempts to investigate the changing structures of European society through ideological ambiguity and the unravelling of traditionalist narratives. As transnational movements of people, capital, organizations and cultures challenge established geopolitical power relations, we have to rethink those previously-held cartographic conceptualizations of the nation, community, city, and cultural space.

While borders are a tangible inconvenience for the protagonists of *Highway Society* and *Honey Baby*, they are shown as barely functional in their job as protectors of national sovereignty and cultural identity. In *Highway Society*, we discover that the border that runs between Finland and Russia is a space where drug-smuggling not only takes place, but is, in fact, encouraged by the officials in charge. In the ideological vacuum of a transforming Europe, it seems that the ideological foundations of the nation are overtaken by individualism and micro-capitalism. In turn, it is not surprising that the protagonists of these films have little respect for the official borders. Maria and Tom are unable to cross the border between Estonia and Russia as Tom's passport has been stolen. But when they meet a travelling circus, a group of vagabonds for whom the very idea of borders is ludicrous, they are shown a shortcut through the woods that bypasses the border. Official material designations of national identity have little purpose in Kaurismäki's new Europe, where geopolitical maps have lost most of their use value.

Are we able to detect the formation of a European sense of identity or a cinematic conception of Europe through these road movies? While many of the films take place within nationally-defined spaces, it is clear that we cannot comfortably equate or restrict these films within any clear sense of nationhood. A way to approach the films' depictions of 'Eastern' Europe is to interrogate the very concept of Europe, and evaluate the role of geopolitical power in maintaining this conception of 'other' Europes. The notion of an Eastern European constellation is something that has effectively acted as a mirror to the 'free' and 'developed' Western society. Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall, if not even before, such distinctions have been contested by political integration, the influx of capitalism, dissolution of ideology, conflicts based on ethnicity, the movement of peoples, and EU-integration, amongst many other factors. But as Dina Jordanova (2003) suggests, the concept of the other Europe persists in most attempts to represent the relations between the former Soviet-bloc countries and Western states.

Highway Society's representation of Finland draws on the nation's long history as a political liminal space between the East and the West, featuring as the space of political conflict and as a mediator between the powers. While borders as material signifiers of separation are losing some of their importance in an integrating Europe, 'invisible borders' still persist. Rosalind Galt suggests films such as Lukas Moodyson's *Lilya-4-Ever* (Moodyson, 2005) reveal the very real socio-economic and cultural differences that exist between the 'developed' West and its exploitative relationship with the East (Galt 2006: 118). While *Highway Society* certainly focuses on the real borders that exist between the east and the west, its depiction

of the border between Finland and Russia can be understood in invisible terms. First of all, it focuses on establishing a distinction between the civilized West and the wild East, but Finland's role in this divide is ambiguous. As its depiction erases most signifiers of culture (even life), despite brief instances of only the most backwards-looking stereotyping, the space is left open for assimilation and recontextualization. The film thus performs a remapping of geopolitical space by extending the invisible border between the West and the East over Finland. In defiance of cartographic logic, ideological mapping decimates history and political distinction and focuses on perceived cultural similarity. As part of its attempt to map Finland in relation to the rest of Europe, the nation becomes caricatured as part of this still 'undeveloped' world populated by stereotypes, living a life of stasis in expectation of transnational liberation.

In contrast to the highly negative and binary assertion of Finland's geopolitical location in *Highway Society*, *Honey Baby* ventures to a more complex assessment of the division between the developed West and undeveloped East. While the real borders are not much of an obstacle for its protagonists, and while life on the other side is depicted as parochial in many ways, it avoids the stereotyping that permeates *Highway Society* by maintaining its focus on the many ideological and cultural similarities with Western Europe. As the road-movie philosophy of its protagonists affords them an alternative vantage point to the social and political development of the Baltic region, the film's perspective focuses on blurring the distinctions between the East and the West, the developed and the developing, through its critical politics of glocalization. By refusing the cultural and political mapping of two distinct zones, the films open up the possibility of imagining new conceptualizations of Europe, allowing for multiplicity and heterogeneity in a world of fluctuating borders.

Dystopian Europe

To explore the implications of Kaurismäki's Europe further, we must turn to *The Last Border* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1993), a post-apocalyptic adventure film, which explores supranational communities in a European context. The film's production coincided with Finland's EU referendum preparations: a topic of substantial coverage in the mainstream media. The opportunity to participate in wider debate on Finland's sovereignty made it only natural for Kaurismäki to follow his examinations of cosmopolitan identity politics in the late 1980s (*Helsinki Napoli*) and his discontent with the welfare state (the life-politics films) with a film exploring the complexities of supranational identity. *The Last Border* takes place after an environmental catastrophe has destroyed most of the natural environment. In the far north, a group of bandits, led by the vicious Duke, rule the land. Other survivors are busy with their attempts to find food and shelter from the hostile weather and the even-more dangerous people that inhabit these spaces. The film's group of protagonists embodies many different European (ex-)nations: German (Jürgen Prochnow) French (Fanny Bastien), English (Jolyon Baker) and Finnish (Kari Väänänen, Matti Pellonpää); they now live in what

is known as the Sami-land. The Sami are a distinct ethno-cultural group who inhabit a large geographical space in the northern parts of the Norden. They live according to their own customs and regulations; the borders of nations have little relevance for them. The space of the Sami is a truly postnational (prenational?) space as they have few uses for any sense of official state establishments or civic dimensions of national culture. By situating this post-apocalyptic examination in the Sami land, the film aims to create a set of associations for the creation of an idyllic communitarian space, where national distinctions do not hinder interaction.

While postnational space provides a means to construct a shared sense of Europeaness, *The Last Border* is not naïve in its assertion of this possibility. As the protagonists, with their own remnants of national culture, engage in their futile warfare, it is clear there is very little hope for any sense of Europe-wide reconciliation or harmony. The whole world of the film functions in terms of the road, as the protagonists have to keep moving to avoid capture. If there are any connotations of stable societal structures (as per the heterotopic, transgressive potential of the road to evoke the normative structures of society), they only resonate in the present of the film's production as their absence in the diegetic world leads us to project the reasons for the cataclysm. In contrast to the more positive cosmopolitanism of *Helsinki Napoli*, the primitive world of *The Last Border* reminds us of the problems of unfettered supranationalist activity. The last point is made explicitly clear in the ways the film largely ignores the treatment of the Sami people by insensitive colonialist expansionism. The only representatives of the Sami in the film are an old mystic and her deranged son Borka. Firstly, Sami culture is conceptualized as the exotic other, the culture that the rest of the displaced Europeans find difficult to understand. Second, the roles are not played by Sami actors, but by the well-known Finns Soili Lambart and Kari Väänänen. This evokes a contradiction in the cultural politics of the film, as it is simultaneously distinctively Eurocentric in its approach, while it tries to criticize cultural imperialism. *The Last Border* is symptomatic of the problems and contradictions of the concept of European cinema in that it prompts us to question how we draw cultural and political borders, while it upholds those borders, no matter how inadvertently. Kaurismäki approaches this dilemma from a multitude of perspectives, all with a different approach to the vital question of what and where is Europe?

Mapping Europe

Kaurismäki's films acknowledge the powerful presence of the concept of Europe, but their transvergent approaches refuse to promulgate or essentialize any sense of homogeneous Europeaness. We can see a progression in the films' attitudes to transnationalism and European integration by observing the ways his road movies negotiate social structures and the emergent, displaced identities of their protagonists. *The Liar* and *The Worthless* draw a correlation westwards from Finland, where the imagined (and largely fantastical) Paris

comes to represent the allures of cosmopolitanism. Whereas *The Clan* remained focused on representing these transformations from within, *Rosso* moves this parallel towards Italy. *Helsinki Napoli* situated the power centre of European cosmopolitanism in West Berlin at the geographical heart of 'old' Europe. In this set of films, we see a cinematic mapping of Europe from the perspective of Finland, which is here firmly situated in West Europe, away from its contested borderland position. But, as we move into the 1990s and the post-communist era, these distinctions start to blur. The first significant indication of this is the Istanbul of *Zombie and the Ghost Train*, a visually-identical borderland to Helsinki, and a space where the distinctions between the East and the West co-exist. By the time we reach the new millennium, Kaurismäki's films take place in a nominally-unified Europe where both concrete and invisible borders operate. In *Highway Society*, the networks that proliferate through European borders challenge the civic and cultural dimensions of national sovereignty in taking advantage of the weakening structures of the state. Borders only exist in name in *Honey Baby*, as the film performs a counter-cartographic reading of the state of Europe. In the road movies of the new millennium, it is these counter-cartographic urges that contest existing power structures and ideological forces and connote the complexity of the changes taking place, not only in Russia and the Baltic countries, but in the whole of the European society. What emerges from these films is not so much a conception of a new type of European cinematic identity, but a contested form of community still in transformation. And, according to the historical trajectory and future projections of the films, it may be the case that transience and fluidity will come to characterize any attempt to formulate a shared sense of European identity.

Chapter 5

Auto-ethnography: Merging the Self and 'Other' in Brazilian Music Documentaries

I do not see myself as purely a film director, as I think of myself as an observer, an anthropologist, who travels and observes the world through the camera.

(Mika Kaurismäki in Rosenqvist 2009)

In an early scene in Kaurismäki's environmentalist adventure film *Amazon* (1990), we see the film's Finnish protagonist Kari drive down the Amazonian highway (in reality, an abandoned dirt path snaking through the jungle). As he gets increasingly desperate about the lack of people and, more importantly, gas stations, we see a pair of indigenous people, dressed only in loincloths, carrying a massive television antenna across the road. This brief instance encapsulates many key themes of Kaurismäki's work. We have the displaced protagonist navigating an interminable road in a space of substantial cultural and socio-political transformation. But, most importantly, we have the collision of different developed and developing modes of life, captured in moments of fluctuating power relations. The Western entrepreneur has met his match in being completely incapable of responding to the complex challenges of his circumstances. Meanwhile, globalization is met with increased finesse by those on the receiving end of the equation as they incorporate elements of these processes to their own social contexts.

This example comes from a fictional film, but a similar instance takes place in the documentary project *Tigrero – the Film that Was Never Made* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1994). Kaurismäki's film follows fellow directors Jim Jarmusch and Sam Fuller to the village of the Karaja Indians, where Fuller had been filming location footage for an abandoned John Wayne epic in 1954. The film's focus is on the differences between the indigenous culture and Western imperatives of modernization. As Kaurismäki organizes a screening of the 40-year-old material for the village, the Karaja tribe gathers in front of a huge television screen to view the footage from the past. Some of the Karaja witness their younger selves on the screen whereas others see their ancestors come to life via the flickering images. The spectators of Kaurismäki's *Tigrero* (ideally, to include people from all over the world, including, eventually, the Karaja gazing at themselves) are in a more complex position. By including different levels of cinematic representation and intertextual association into its diegesis, the film's multi-levelled perspective problematizes the relationship between the spectator and the representation, and between the film-maker and the subject of representation. Both *Amazon* and *Tigrero* ask us to think critically about the advances of modernity, but how are we to achieve this critical perspective without being extensively hypocritical in our own viewing positions? After all, we are only made privy to this situation via the technological

means of modernity as we consume exoticized spectacle that simultaneously maintains the distinction between civilization and the 'natural' (understood here in the usual derogatory manner as the developing or uncivilized sphere). How can film acknowledge and negotiate the relationship between the structuring implications of concepts like civilization and the so-called developing world and the very real socio-economic and cultural power cinematic representation can wield in both maintaining and unravelling these dynamics?

To answer these questions, we must turn to considerations of ethnography and cinema's power to represent other cultures. The ethnographic perspectives of Kaurismäki's films are not simply about exploring other cultures from an outsider perspective. They seek to interrogate the very process through which an ethnographic perspective is constructed, and the role the film-maker plays in this process. We are constantly made aware of this relationship through self-reflexive instances, such as the one from *Tigrero* which reflects our gaze back to us. It is not altogether surprising that Kaurismäki's films refuse to take the ethnographic relationship for granted. Kaurismäki took up permanent residence in Salvador in the early 1990s after becoming infatuated with the country during the production of *Amazon*. Brazil is now his permanent home, though he often talks of Finland as the place where his roots remain. Fluent in Portuguese, Brazil is the space where his daily identity negotiations take place, as he has achieved an insider-outsider position that allows him to understand and navigate through the complexities of daily life there. But he simultaneously maintains the vantage point of someone whose roots and philosophical conceptualizations of society are based elsewhere in the world. During his years of living in the country, he has produced three documentaries on the different musical cultures of Brazil: *Moro no Brasil* (2002), *Brasileirinho* (2005), and a film situating these cultures in a global perspective, *Sonic Mirror* (2007). The documentaries capture Kaurismäki's increasingly confident insider-outsider position, as they provide a two-fold mode of representation, capturing an exoticized depiction of Brazilian music and an 'auto-ethnographic' perspective on cosmopolitan identity negotiation.

Home is a notion that constantly lingers at the background of Mika Kaurismäki's films, whether in the form of something that the characters seek or something more profound, unutterable, that manifests in the transvergent structures of the films. *Amazon's* depiction of Rio de Janeiro can help us unpack some of the implications of Kaurismäki's approach to his new home. The city is captured as two distinct spheres, where the affluent centres and beach hotels of the city welcome the Finnish entrepreneur Kari. The film uses many clichéd techniques, such as the throbbing samba fusion music and sweeping helicopter shots that capture the city in touristic terms. We are also made privy to the criminal underworld that lurks beneath the commercialist surfaces of the centre when Kari's briefcase, containing all of his embezzled finances, is stolen. The episode gestures towards the complexity of the city network and the simultaneous co-existence of its different socio-economic spheres but, ultimately, this depiction only reinforces the distinctions between the affluent and the impoverished sections of the city. As Kari is forced into destitution, he has to take shelter in the *favelas* [shanty towns] of the city, which are depicted as alien, 'other' spaces, unwelcoming

and unwelcome for the foreign entrepreneur. Brazilian urbanity is a nightmarish and hostile condition, utterly unsuitable and strange to the Western protagonist.

As Kari discovers the profits to be made from illegal diamond mining, we follow the many immoral actions he takes in achieving his goals, including setting up a business franchise to exploit an untouched piece of land by transporting mechanical tractors. His relationship with the local people is similarly myopic: he is willing to accept their medical aid as his plane crashes, and is taken to a local village for healing, but escapes the first chance he gets and carries on with his plans of exploitation, incapable of casting aside his profit-oriented view of the world. The film ends on a typically ambiguous note, with a freeze-frame of his face as helicopters transport the caterpillar to the unexploited diamond mine. *Amazon* demonstrates considerable interest in criticizing the Western perspective and exploitative impulses of its protagonist, but it also works as a typical example of the adventure genre with a distinct emphasis on spectacular shots of exotic locations and local people, whose only real function is to act as foils or moral conundrums for our protagonist.

While *Amazon* will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 7 in relation to its environmental argumentation, its mobilization of genre structures and ambiguous character perspectives illuminates its self-reflexive and often conflicted approach to the globalizing impulses of cinema, and the role of the film-maker/participant in this. The film's contradictory liminality highlights its status as one of the largest 'Finnish' productions, with investment from the Finnish Film Foundation. As most of its funding came from banker Pentti Kouri and a group of American financiers, it needed to appeal to audiences beyond the usual festival and art-house settings. The original version of *Amazon* contains in-depth exploration of the poverty of the inhabitants of the *favelas*, including an additional narrative, where Kari's daughters befriend a group of local children. Kaurismäki had originally intended to produce a small-scale road movie along the lines of *Rosso*, but the complications of shooting in the Amazonas with an international production crew resulted in a hugely expensive production effort. While Kaurismäki the director may strive for a semblance of authenticity or critical balance, working in the international arena of commercial film production necessitates certain unfortunate compromises. Globalization and its discontents may be a key theme of the film, but its production also exemplifies many of the problems the medium imposes on the production of films which attempt to appeal to wide audiences.

Representing otherness

Film is a good way to travel. Through it, one gets a deeper perspective on local life than as a mere tourist. I have travelled Brazil extensively due to my films. I could even state that I know the country better than some Brazilians. Without my films, I would have hardly known the scope of the country, the multitude of its cultures and also its problems. (Mika Kaurismäki in Rosenqvist 2009).

There are two strands of inquiry that run through this chapter. The exploration of Kaurismäki's Brazilian films provides a neo-auteurist reading of Kaurismäki's auto-ethnographic position that chronicles his cosmopolitan attempts at integration. This feeds into discourses of globalization as I explore the position Kaurismäki inhabits as both a mediator and instigator of globalization. Yet, the topic is not simply to do with some sort of altruistic desire to bring attention to social disparity and cultural variety in Brazil. We need to consider both Western appropriation of indigenous cultures and commercial exploitation of exotic cultural capital, as the films highlight Kaurismäki's contradictory position as a cinematic 'ethnographer' working within the commercial field of film production. The following quote emphasizes this duality: 'It is interesting to live in the third world. It opens one's perspectives on the world generally. One does not only rely on a European or a rather narrow Finnish perspective' (Kaurismäki in Rosenqvist 2009). There are a number of problematic assertions in Kaurismäki's comments as the use of terms like 'third world' seems to rely on the global division of nations into zones of development, which effectively seeks to enforce the primacy of the 'West'. Simultaneously, he seems well aware of the need to transcend any limiting baggage that his artistic and cultural background may bring. It is this contradiction in the methodological and thematic approach of Kaurismäki's films to which we now turn.

Dana Polan suggests that 'even if [globalization] is represented to us in abstract terms, [its] mode is embodied, and its embodiment occurs locally' (Polan 1996: 259). The abstraction of globalization is to do with the difficulty of attempting to represent something as complex and contradictory as globalization through any form of media. The only way to participate in discourses of globalization is to work from a local level, which mediates one's perspective on issues of global importance. A useful idea to deploy here is the concept of glocalization as it emphasizes the ways in which the complex patterns of globalization necessitate thinking not only of the ways in which the complex connectivity and homogenizing tendencies of economic and cultural imperialism function, but also of the ways in which local agents and socio-economic and cultural formations contest these tendencies. The filmic frame of Kaurismäki's films is, to use Mike Featherstone's description of cinema's ability to capture elements of globalization, 'the generative frame within which diversity can take place' (Featherstone 1990: 2). In many of his early films, we see a wide array of cultural elements co-inhabit the same diegetic space. Alongside the cosmopolitan approaches of the films, these collages exemplify the cinematic space through which transnational interaction and glocalization takes place. Both Featherstone and Polan are somewhat celebratory of the full extent of this reciprocity. While local producers and spectators are certainly able to contest and re-appropriate 'global' imperatives, and effectively instigate glocal cultural negotiations, a film-maker working in the field of commercial cinema has to consider a wide array of spectator positions for their product. The demands of the narrative structure, for one, often necessitate recourse to identifiable tropes and a form of closure, especially in the type of genre cinema Kaurismäki operates. But this is not to imply that any sort of cultural worth is instantly negated by a Western (semi)commercial perspective. How do these tendencies of

glocalization work in Kaurismäki's films, where both commercial imperatives and fidelity to local cultures are major concerns?

Kaurismäki's excursion into the Brazilian rainforests for the filming of *Amazon* began his intense fascination with this multi-faceted country. This fascination led to a relocation to Brazil – a sort of 'home away from home'. The launch of Mika's Bar, a music restaurant owned by Kaurismäki in Rio de Janeiro, can be seen as a concrete attempt to integrate his transnationalized identity into the cultural surroundings of his adopted home country. Kaurismäki's short film *Sambolico* (1996) functions as an intriguing example of the cultural negotiations this integration entails. The film's narrative revolves around a Finnish conductor in Rio de Janeiro, played by Kari Väänänen, the Kari of *Amazon*. As with this earlier production, we are introduced to the location with a slow pan across the exotic beaches and the cityscape of Rio de Janeiro. Exoticism prevails as the Finnish maestro practises for his upcoming concert by pacing around his hotel room, exploring the different ethnic features of the people in the paintings that decorate this room. The film makes explicit connections with colonialism and its patriarchal impulses, as the conductor's outfit, comprised of a white suit and hat, connects/contrasts with his patriarchal gaze at a young woman whom he meets in the lift. She has been crying, so he gives her his tie to wipe away the tears. As he continues to stare at her walking off, her body is silhouetted against the light from the outside. The objectifying gaze continues as the conductor is distracted from composing a piece titled 'Sambolico' by the numerous dark-skinned children playing ball on the beach. More problematically, we also get slow lingering pans of several women clad in tiny bikinis, making us complicit in an ethnographic and objectifying gaze. The case could be made that this exposes our involvement in supporting the types of exoticism we frequently receive in mainstream media, but we are also made aware that this is the gaze of our protagonist, who clearly enjoys the process of looking and the power it provides him. The exotic 'othering' continues even further when the unnamed girl he met in the lift rises out of the waves and the camera and the gaze linger on her glistening body, all accompanied by samba music on the soundtrack.

The film's perspective is clearly not the nuanced and sophisticated insider-outsider perspective through which Kaurismäki chronicled European spaces. Instead, this is an excessively touristic gaze, appropriating local cultures and peoples for the purposes of commodified spectatorship. To make matter worse, the maestro exhibits the distrustful perspective of a tourist who finds himself in strange locations being accosted by seemingly-hostile locals. As the performers try to get the conductor to join in their samba or give them money for the performance, the unnamed girl approaches him to reveal that she knows he is from Helsinki, and that he is lonely in his travels around the world. The exotic adventure continues when the conductor enters the side streets of the city with the girl, captured in exotic blues and reds, as if in a particularly titillating nightmare. Upon entering a bar, the camera lingers on half-naked female bodies, captured from waist-level, as if it is more interested in capturing exotic spectacle than following the narrative. A German thug (seemingly her ex-boyfriend) pursues the pair as they escape through transvestite bars and street carnivals. The girl's explanation of her family's disapproval of her lifestyle

enables the conductor to act in the 'civilizing' and protective manner that often characterizes (Western) representations of encounters between Western and 'uncivilized' cultures. The adventure culminates predictably in the pair's sexual encounter on the beach, but suddenly the conductor is attacked by the thug who rises from the ocean. He wakes up back on the original beach, where he fell asleep during his 'composing' activities. As he goes back to the hotel, he meets the previously-mute girl in the elevator. But now we hear her voice, which is clearly that of a man. It turns out that 'she' is in fact one of the people from the transvestite club the conductor visited in his dream. Thus, the implications of this touristic narrative fold into itself, provoking us to question commonplace 'truths' about exotic spectacle and the dominance of the patriarchal orientalist gaze.

This rather rudimentary narrative relies on a range of problematic and crude ethnic and gender stereotypes. Yet, the objectifying and orientalist narrative of the Western entrepreneur has more complex inclinations. Exploring this fantastical narrative in light of Deleuze's concepts of re- and de-territorialization can provide some further directions for teasing out the complex ways in which Kaurismäki's films engage in their politics of representation. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Kaurismäki's films blur the distinction between Deleuze's time- and movement-image cinema (Deleuze 1986; 1989). *Sambolico* certainly continues this trajectory, but it is clearly attuned to the movement-image in its undermining of the expectations of, for example, the active male protagonist of the erotic thriller genre. David Martin-Jones' (2006) use of the concepts of reterritorialization and deterritorialization in his discussion of national cinema allows us to explain Kaurismäki's transvergent tendencies. Here, inversions of narrative temporality and unreliable narrators in films such as *Memento* (Nolan, 2000) seek to destabilize or question any sense of a coherent national narrative. These are instances of deterritorialization, which create narrative folds that function as 'an expression of the difficulty of narrating national identity at a time of historical crisis or transformation' (Martin-Jones 2006: 1).

While *Sambolico* does not explicitly engage with narratives of national identity, its narrative transvergence seeks to problematize the primacy of Western subjectivity. By focusing on the unreliability of the Western narrator over other perspectives, it interrogates the relationship between the Western anthropologist-explorer and the cultures to be observed. And, as this narrative takes place in the mind of the protagonist, it provides an exclusive opportunity to observe the processes through which objectification takes place. Its initial narrative structure is a typical case of reterritorialization, as we are made complicit in the orientalist eroticism commonplace in narratives of (neo-)colonialist cultural encounter. By relegating interaction to stereotyped notions of physical difference, the tourist maintains an essentialist perspective on his 'others.' This is an impression that only focuses on what one wants to see, which is often completely different from the reality of the cultural formations one visits, allowing for the maintenance of the colonizing subject's transcendent superiority over 'other spaces.' Yet, the revelation of the dream state invites us to deterritorialize from the ideological directions of the fantastical narrative. The encounter between the exotic and primal 'other' and the 'civilized' white western male is suddenly undermined, making us question who

the uncivilized party in fact is. Furthermore, as the girl is revealed to be a transvestite from the dream club, the heteronormative foundations of the orientalist gaze are unravelled. The final shot of the film captures the unreliability of surface-based assumptions as it is of the conductor gazing at a painting of a woman facing the sea with her back turned to the viewer. The impression is of the enclosed touristic perspective, only focusing on those aspects they want to see (the face of the 'woman'), unwilling and incapable of burrowing deeper to understand the complexity of the local cultural formations. Surface-based impressions, and not even attempting to hear the voice of the other, will only result in enforcing one's own cultural prejudices onto other cultures.

While *Sambolico's* self-reflexive politics of representation are intriguing, we must still confront the visual language the film uses to convey this idea. The frequent examples of the exoticized male gaze revel in the spectacle of the female body, and the roles of the protagonists follow the typical trajectories of the active Western male and the passive foreign female. *Sambolico's* perspective is, regardless, more developed in its self-reflexivity than that of *Amazon*, though both of the films share the problem of exoticized spectacle. The contradiction between objectification/appropriation and anti-eurocentricism is foregrounded as a central theme, and something that Kaurismäki would develop in his subsequent Brazil-set films. *Sambolico* shows that it is not enough to compose odes to other cultures from a distinctly limited perspective, as this only results in recycling stereotypes and maintaining a sense of Western superiority. Such perspectives must be actively challenged if one wants to account for cultural complexity, as is the case with the conductor's sudden awakening to his tunnel vision. There is a large degree of self-reflexivity at play in *Sambolico* as the protagonist's position in the culture industry echoes Kaurismäki's: by the mid-1990s, Kaurismäki had lived in Brazil for five years and become increasingly familiar with its cultures. Kari's detachment from local cultures in *Amazon* is worked through the narrative of *Sambolico* in an almost therapeutic manner – as a sort of apology for the myopic tendencies of the former film. But, regardless, the two share many problems in their approach, not least in their persistent foregrounding of the European experience over others. Within these auto-ethnographic constraints, we can, nevertheless, observe a progression in Kaurismäki's approach from an outsider position into a more liminal one, one where he is still inherently self-aware of his limitations.

Global perspectives

Moro no Brasil is a film about life beyond the seas, which searches for music made by people and finds music amongst the people... [made by] a Finn, speaking Portuguese and English in his own style, travel[ing] throughout Brazil looking for musicians, people who play folk-music. (<http://www.moronobrasil.com/artikel/Presseheft%20English.pdf>)

The official description of Kaurismäki's *Moro no Brasil* (2002) from its publicity website captures the film's duality. On one hand, the film is about shedding light on exotic cultures.

On the other, it is about Kaurismäki, the explorer, who travels ‘beyond the seas’ looking for authentic folk musicians. The perspective is thus an inherently Western European one, which seeks to translate these exotic cultures for the consumption of global audiences. The initiative for *Moro no Brasil* came from Hans Robert Eisenhauer, producer for the German production and distribution company Arte. The company had garnered substantial financial and critical success with Wim Wenders’ (1999) *Buena Vista Social Club*, a film which attempted to meld two cultural formations (Ry Cooder exploring the musical cultures of Cuba) into a cinematic package that could be easily consumed by global audiences. Kaurismäki admits that he was rather puzzled about why the producers had not approached Brazilian directors for the project. Indeed, Kaurismäki is extraordinarily self-reflexive of his authorial position as he asks: ‘Why should I as a Finn do the film as the Brazilians should be doing this on their own?’ (Kääpä 2010b). It turns out it was precisely Kaurismäki’s insider-outsider position that drew Arte to him because this liminality allows him to explore the country in novel ways and pay attention to aspects that may be taken for granted by ‘insiders’. The film was thus conceived as a hybrid product which could attract international audiences through Kaurismäki’s knowledgeable cultural translator position that radiates a necessary degree of mediated authenticity.

Moro no Brasil starts out in Finland: we see Kaurismäki on a windy, snowy beach on the outskirts of Helsinki. The clear disenchantment with Finnish cultural confines is enhanced by his voiceover, which narrates the film’s theme of cultural transition by stating ‘30 years ago, I exchanged my old Deep Purple LPs for obscure Brazilian folk music.’ As a sailors’ strike destroyed his dream of visiting Rio de Janeiro, he has had to wait for secure financial and artistic success before he is finally able to fulfil this dream. Cinematic production is the means by which this dream is realized, providing him with the concrete apparatus through which interaction and integration can take place. As the green title logo of the film appears on the screen in startling contrast to the dark blue hues of Finland, we hear the first rhythms of Samba on the soundtrack. Kaurismäki is transported on a search for the ‘Brazilian dream’ and the roots of Brazilian music, while this transnational transition simultaneously establishes *Moro no Brasil* as a document of this journey.

The two intertwined subjects of the film, Kaurismäki’s journey and Brazilian music culture, tell us of the complex ways in which cinema participates in globalization. We can envision the film Kaurismäki is producing as a globalization initiative, which seeks to incorporate local elements into a framework that can be distributed and consumed globally. The global often receives primary consideration, at least in mainstream media, where stereotyped exoticism of the ‘other’ still seems the norm (any number of Hollywood productions from *Transformers 2* (2009) to the James Bond series testify to this). As the film is a distinctly Western production, aimed at Western consumers, the diegetic space of the film exemplifies the hegemonic prerogatives, which maintain the primacy of the Western ‘right’ to represent. Here, ‘the local [is] seen as a fluid and relational space, constituted only in and through its relation to the global’ (Morley & Robins 1996: 117). While such frameworks have distinct homogenizing implications, Kaurismäki’s insider-outsider position enables the creation of



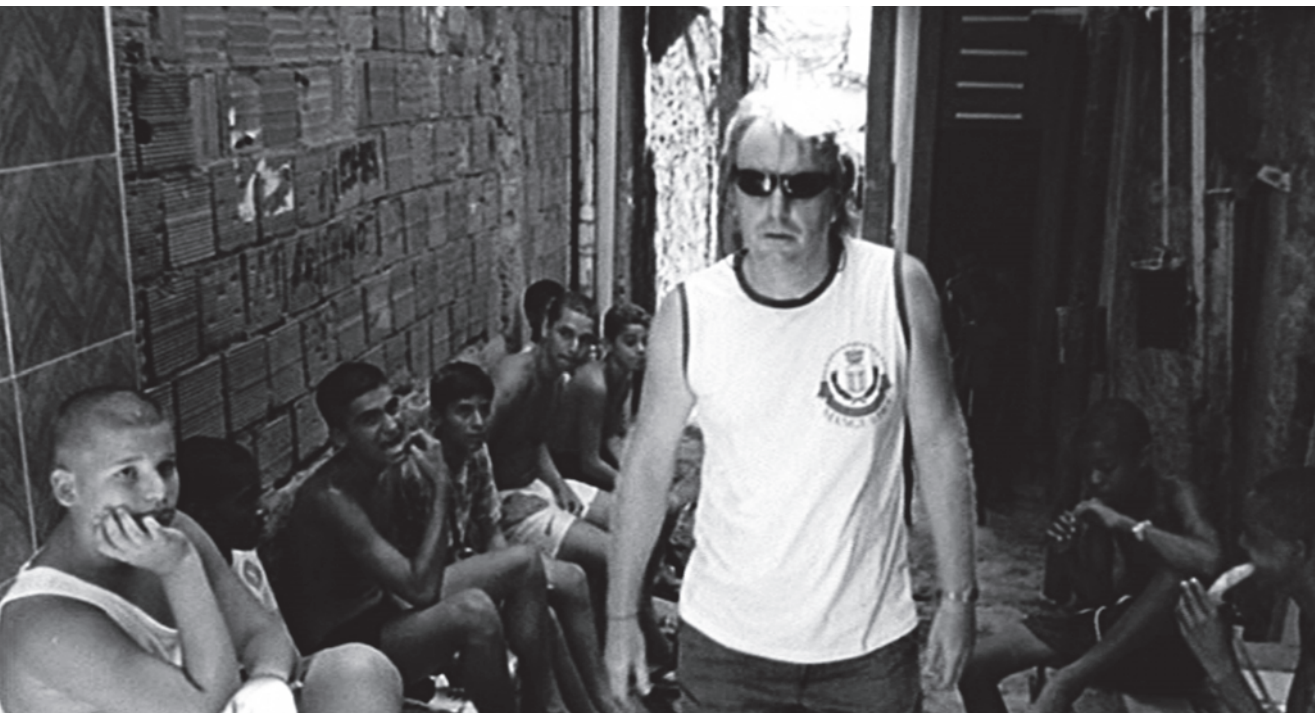
Helsinki
Finland

The blue and white hues of frozen Finland in *Moro no Brasil*. (Courtesy of Arte/Marianna Films)

a more glocalized perspective, at least in theory, and it is this space of contestation between the local and the global that *Moro no Brasil* interrogates.

Kaurismäki often comments on his representations of other cultures as anthropology, and on his position as an ethnographer (Kääpä 2010b). Thus, films like *Moro no Brasil* aim to capture the various local cultures with some measure of authenticity. Before we focus on the representation of these cultures, it is necessary to explore Kaurismäki's complicit directorial subject position – his 'auto-ethnographic' perspective – in more analytical depth. David MacDougall (1998) suggests that the author of an ethnographic film often becomes a subject within the film itself. Such a perspective necessitates that we ask how can one represent one's 'embeddedness' objectively. Thus, we need to explore the relationship of the director as author with the director as subject of the film; inhabiting both roles allows Kaurismäki to simultaneously encapsulate both the global and the local dimensions of the film. Many of Kaurismäki's fictional films function as cosmopolitan contributions to identity politics, where the protagonists (especially Kari Väänänen's performances) act as Kaurismäki's ideological alter egos (what James Clifford, 1997, might see as self-fashioning). Such self-fashioning takes place in *Moro no Brasil* as we follow Kaurismäki on his journey that not only takes place in physical space but also on the level of his identity. As the distinction between the ethnographer and the 'other' becomes blurred by the doubling of authorial subjectivity, the auto-ethnographic documentary suggests that 'identity is no longer a transcendental or essential self that is revealed, but a 'staging of subjectivity' – a representation of the self as performance' (Russell 1999: 276). *Moro no Brasil's* introductory moments set the scene for this staging of subjectivity, as we are implicated in Kaurismäki's personal narrative through the voice-over and his active presence within the *mise-en-scène*. Understanding *Moro no Brasil* as an auto-ethnographic film integrates the relationship between the representer and the represented into its thematic fabric.

While self-reflexivity is a large part of the film, it is still aimed at communicating information of Brazilian cultures to primarily Western audiences, and it uses conventional cinematic means to achieve this. Is Kaurismäki's cinematic voice 'loaded with hidden messages from [his] cultural heritage, messages that often reach beyond the capacity of the ordinary words of any language' (Modarressi 1992: 9)? Taghi Modarressi's conceptualization of this type of cultural inflection (or 'accent', as he calls it) indicates the fundamental problem with ethnographic perspectives: no matter how unbiased one may attempt to be, contextual production factors (cultural, social, political, and economic) will influence the representation. On the DVD commentary of the film, Kaurismäki talks of the difficulties of condensing 100 hours of footage to 100 minutes and his decision to keep to the format of the road movie as 'we cannot show everything, so I had to keep what I found important'. Kaurismäki's auto-ethnographic position allows him to avoid what David MacDougall has termed 'external reflexivity' in ethnographic film-making. His participation in the diegetic proceedings allows for unpredictability and an element of agency to local subjects, thus avoiding pre-structuring his representation to fit with an idealized, subjective portrayal, which 'would give us an interpretation of known bias' (MacDougall 1998: 88). Rather,



Kaurismäki's auto-ethographic journey in *Moro No Brasil*. (Courtesy of Arte/Marianna Films)

Kaurismäki's position concerns what MacDougall describes as deep reflexivity, which requires positioning the author in the very fabric of the film. Kaurismäki becomes a screen character in a construction of his own making (his is the subjective voice of the film), allowing him to aspire to exist on an equal 'local' level with the Brazilian locality *within* the diegesis.

As a participant observer and a mediator between global and local forms of cultural expression, Kaurismäki has to traverse between two levels of representation. While he is relatively familiar with the customs and the language, he is still clearly an outsider: the locals call him gringo, for one. Kaurismäki's physical appearance (Western clothes and even a parasol) is more that of a tourist than a local, distancing him from the population and the locale of the film. As we see him walking in the *favelas*, the shadows of the film crew follow him, highlighting the cinematic (staged) nature of this cultural integration. The shadows act as traces of Kaurismäki's context, as a reminder of his status as an individual from the affluent West who seeks to represent the cultures of other people to a global audience. By including the cinematic apparatus within the image, Kaurismäki reminds the spectator of their complicity in the film's problematic politics of representation – an approach which reveals that the manufacturing of such an 'easy' access point to other cultures involves a large degree of cultural translation with a substantial possibility of losing cultural density.

The subtitle of the film, 'I live in Brazil', is Kaurismäki's final statement in the voiceover of the film. It works as an integrationist statement by Kaurismäki, the cultural émigré, but it also complicates the balance of power between the representer and the represented. Once the film has established Kaurismäki's complex glocality, it focuses on onscreen cultural interaction and moments of integration. MacDougall provides a framework for unpacking the different levels of subjectivity in ethnographic film. These are 'narration (including actual narrative storytelling, but also description), address (which may be direct or indirect), and perspective (which may focus on testimony, implication or exposition)' (MacDougall 1998: 101). First-person testimonies by local people are the primary source of information about the titular topic of the film: the cultural space of Brazil. While the local Brazilian musicians are allowed both the ability to address the spectators and provide their perspectives on the topics, these are consistently intercut with Kaurismäki's approving gaze or his authorial voiceover. While subjective positions become more varied, the film maintains an auto-ethnographic structure as it continues to follow Kaurismäki's journey to the various Brazilian locales. A typical example of this is a montage of shots of Kaurismäki travelling through the Brazilian countryside, accompanied by a voiceover stating: 'Here I am, in search of my dream.' Thus, Kaurismäki still retains narratorial authority over the representation as it is ultimately the ideas that matter to him that make it to the theatre screens.

One such occasion is a meeting with a local musician by the name of Maestro Salustiano. He informs Kaurismäki that his field of music, Maracatu, was initially intended as a tribal gathering of black Brazilians. Salustiano provides Kaurismäki with in-depth information on the instrumentation they use and the different roles they assume when performing the music. Kaurismäki's voiceover subsequently assumes the duty of narration, of providing contextual

and historical information. He states that the term Maracatu is nowadays used for two types of musical celebration: Maracatu rural and Maracatu naçao. To emphasize his authoritative voice, both styles are then individually showcased as musical performances. In another instance, Fulni-o Indian musician Setka provides a history of the Fulni-o musical culture, which again becomes contextualized by Kaurismäki's authorial narration, informing us that there are over 20 different forms of rhythm within this musical culture. This is accompanied by shots of Banda Fulni-o performing their music; the footage, tellingly, features Kaurismäki standing in the background. This template is followed throughout the film as the frequent and informative testimonies of the locals punctuate Kaurismäki's journey.

We are constantly reminded of his itinerary by Kaurismäki's voiceover and the frequent shots of him driving through the countryside. He is our guide, narrating the complexities of this cultural field by his first-hand expertise. The only instances that communicate a sense of detachment involve concert footage, although even these occasionally feature a cut to Kaurismäki, participating in the events on the level of a connoisseur. These instances would under other circumstances be what Walter Goldschmidt has seen as a distinguishing characteristic of the ethnographic film: 'shots of people doing precisely what they would have been doing if the camera was not there' (Goldschmidt in MacDougall 1998: 129). However, Kaurismäki, the director, mediates all three of MacDougall's subjectivities: narration, address and perspective. While the multitude of subjectivities contained in the film creates an intersubjective way of looking at culture: 'a cultural consciousness that consists of discourses between different subjectivities' (MacDougall 1998: 122), this intersubjective space is mediated through Kaurismäki's authorial position. He is the structuring force of this 'global' text, deconstructing and reassembling different cultural elements to meet his vision of a multicultural Brazil.

The proprietorship of Mika's Bar allows Kaurismäki to have a certain semblance of rootedness in the cultural field of Brazil. While the restaurant provides a means of cultural expression for the local musicians, Kaurismäki's position is of the globalizing observer: he obviously has a deep interest in their music and is willing to provide a venue for it. His position is that of the patron, of someone who effectively 'owns' the local product, at least while they are performed in this venue and in front of the camera. They are thus a form of cultural capital that provides the bar and the film their distinct flavour in the global markets. While the film relies on Kaurismäki's insider-outsider position and shows his immersion in the cultural field, the realities of cultural and commercial exchange prohibit integration; he is an owner and an author, not an equal participant in the cultural mosaic of the film. The instruments of his attempted integration, the film and the restaurant, ultimately display his incompatibility with Brazilian locality. The film's integrative intentions are undone by the very fabric that builds it – Kaurismäki's authorial perspective and his partial immersion into the diegesis. The resulting film resembles a touristic travelogue, a document of personal cultural transformation, rather than an attempt at objective representation of another culture. Thus, the film reflects Zygmunt Bauman's conception of tourism: Kaurismäki inhabits 'everywhere he goes in, but he is nowhere of the place he is in' (Bauman in Hall & Du Gay 1996: 29). This

form of cinematic tourism is exemplary of the problems of the politics of representation, of 'talking' for others and using local forms of culture as exotic cultural capital.

Kaurismäki's personal view of Samba culture enables us to consider the film's globalizing approach – that is, its attempts to communicate the cultural diversity of Brazil to non-Brazilian audiences in just over 90 minutes. Samba-musician Silverio informs Kaurismäki that Samba, seen as integrally Brazilian music, is, in fact, a combination of a variety of styles, ranging from Western jazz to African and Indian music. The music is, effectively, hybridity built on diversity, yet it has different connotations for different ethnic groups, as it seems to foster a space in which they can establish themselves and retain a connection with their cultural roots: for the black Brazilians, it is a form of expressing their societal concerns; for the indigenous Indians, it is a meeting point with other cultures, a way of sharing their cultural forms. For Kaurismäki, it is 'a synthesis of all the rhythms born in Brazil, a state of mind'. For the musicians, it is a way to celebrate their ethnic identity in the multicultural Brazil. For Kaurismäki, it is an integrationist movement, one that combines different cultural elements into a singular whole. Whereas the local people focus on the heterogeneous potential of samba, Kaurismäki dilutes its diversity by homogenizing it into a 'synthesis' under the over-arching category of 'the music of Brazil', a conveniently simplified statement, suitable for non-indigenous audiences. The competing pulls of heterogeneity and homogeneity, which characterize the dynamics between the global and the local, are reflected in *Moro no Brasil's* politics of representation. These call to mind Morley and Robins' (1995) point on globalization's discontents: a renewed interest in localities, though only in relation to benefits for the 'global cause' (the commercial and artistic imperatives of the film).

Contextualizing *Moro no Brasil* as part of the road movie genre necessitates we mobilize the concept of the heterotopic road for exploring the film's cinematic politics of representation. First of all, the funding for the film comes from a range of European sources and thus necessitates the creation of a film that draws connections between different countries and cultures. Kaurismäki's authorial position is the predominant means by which this is achieved yet, beyond this auteur-centrism, the film involves substantial glocalizing discourses which complicate simple, homogenizing views of the text. To put it in other words, while Kaurismäki undoubtedly shapes the thematic content of the text, the words and customs of the local people resonate beyond the confines of this Western-oriented framework. For example, interviews with musicians like the shaman of the Yathe-tribe emphasize the importance of their language and the education of young people in their culture, allowing them to foster their own cultural heritage. Kaurismäki's film is sufficiently self-reflexive to allow gaps to appear in its homogenizing framework, as it makes the point that oral- and performance culture function as a means of communicating one's identity to future generations. This becomes contrasted against the predominant way of telling the West about itself – the cinema. Of course, this is not to denigrate Brazilian cinema and particularly 'the new Brazilian cinema' that was emerging at the time of *Moro no Brasil's* production. Rather, it functions as a way of commenting on different systems of communication, none of which should take precedence over others. While cinema functions as the 'meta-language' that

communicates this cultural diversity to us as the audience, we are nevertheless made aware of cinema's position as one language amongst many others.

Simultaneously, the road movie structure keeps Kaurismäki at a distance from the cultures he observes. While this works to emphasize the film as his personal narrative it also indicates that the cultures represented have a life beyond the representation. This is an inversion of the critical potential of the heterotopic road, which in his European films functioned to question the taken-for-granted stature of the societies through which the road passed. *Moro no Brasil's* inversion extends to the elevated position of the Westerner on the road and his nominal power to represent. Juxtaposing Kaurismäki's journey with comments from local musicians on overreliance on Western forms of culture becomes ironic – one of the performers suggests: 'We listen to a lot of white music, so we are already civilized'. As this is conveyed through a vague smile, we are left with an impression of glocalization's dynamics – it is clear that western forms of culture may predominate, yet these are appropriated and contested in various ways.

The depiction of the cityscape follows this pattern (and those seen in his earlier city-based films with their depiction of the fragmented and constantly transforming spaces). To contest any hegemonic implications of the city, we are shown the appropriation of city centres and ghetto spaces for the expression of music from a variety of ethnic groups. Seu Jorge informs us of his previous life as a homeless person and how this made him a social outcast. Performing samba was a way for him to regain his dignity and integrate with this community. Similar arguments are made by Ivo Meireilles, who discusses the economic instability of life in Rio, where those who can earn money leave the city. In contrast, he has to stay to set an example for young people, who can observe his social status and aspire to be something more than a gang member. As we see shots of the carnival and its potential for bringing together people from all walks of life, the two sides of the country are made explicit – the Brazil of the touristic imagination and the reality of an overcrowded metropolis in one of the fastest-growing economies of the world. To underline this, the trappings of modernity are depicted in all their complexity through multiple shots of traffic jams and the ongoing development of housing in the *favelas*. This feeds into cultural considerations, as it is samba and its variations that can bring some form of stability for the people who are excluded from the financial centres of the city.

The cinematic construction of Brazil is a lot more positive than the one seen in the majority of Brazilian films – crime and poverty are ever-present on a connotative level, yet they are never the explicit focus of the film: 'despite poverty, we want to celebrate and play our music as this displays our strength', comments one musician. In the conclusion of the film, we see Meireilles' Funk'n'Lata band perform a melange of songs in one of the city's development zones. The songs range from hip hop-samba hybrids to a cover of James Brown's well-known 'Sex Machine'. The band's appearance is distinctively different from the performers with whom we have become familiar throughout the film as they are dressed in the type of colourful loose-fitting outfits associated with rap culture. Whereas the many local performers of samba music used self-made or organic instruments to perform their

music, often relying on a collective sound to make their music heard, Funk'n'lata uses large speakers and microphones and modern drum-kits. Kaurismäki edits the scene in the style of an MTV music video with sharp, fast edits and off-kilter camera movements. Yet this does not imply abandonment of the social and cultural context for the demands of commercialism. Rather, this is a form of glocalized cultural dialogue, as, in no uncertain terms, the background of the abolished *favelas* connotes one of the predominant effects of modernization and urbanization – the destruction of communities and the displacement of people. Indeed, the contrast between the audio-visual style and the background resembles the type of socio-critical performance that rap artists in the US have mobilized to comment on social inequality.

The final montage brings back all the artists we have met throughout the film to create an impression of how samba has developed from a rural to an urban form of self-expression, from a local to a global form of cultural politics. Kaurismäki once more uses a set of intertextual and cultural connections to create a critical impression of social development and the substantial inequalities and gaps such transformations leave in their wake. While Kaurismäki's journey maps the country as a multicultural society, teeming with different forms of ethnic culture, the film intends to produce a hybrid of the global and the local, shown in Funk'n'lata's final performance. The auto-ethnographic qualities of the film support such an interpretation, but it is ultimately Kaurismäki the cosmopolitan who decides *Moro no Brasil's* multicultural approach. Instead of instigating heterogeneity, *Moro no Brasil's* subjective view of multiculturalism favours a melting-pot approach. The transitory qualities of the road movie work to trace Brazil's development from the predominantly Portuguese northeastern Pernambuco to the black-dominated Salvador and, finally, to the cosmopolitan metropolis of Rio de Janeiro, creating a somewhat troubling teleology of modernization's inevitability.

Moro no Brasil can thus be seen as a form of cultural tourism, highlighting Kaurismäki's integrationist approach to representing and effectively packaging cultures into an easily-consumable product. The intentional reliance on the global success of Wenders' *Buena Vista Social Club* works in the framework of 'acculturation' where 'all of the elements that are culture specific ... that create barriers to intercultural reception ... may be contained in a familiar narrative pattern that not only plays down cultural differences, but also guarantees comprehension across viewers. The result is the emergence of a new breed of film – the "accultured" cultural product' (Wang & Yeh 2005: 178). While the marketing of *Moro no Brasil* relied on making these acculturating connections by highlighting Kaurismäki's similarity to Wenders, and even presenting posters and trailers that employed a similar colour and compositional scheme, the result is anything but a 'deculturalised' product. Kaurismäki's authorial stamp and his well-known ideological affinity with Wenders as a critic of global capitalism allows us to interpret the mobilization of acculturation as a critique of the inequality of globalization, while the film and its distribution simultaneously benefit from these very processes. While Wenders uses third-person narration in Ry Cooder's interaction with various Cuban musicians, Kaurismäki's narration and frequent interaction

with the subjects of the film render the film's subjectivity more complex. The resulting product functions as an attempt to advance the cultural discourse of Wenders' films and as an example of the constantly-evolving dynamics of the global and the local: the road movie format explores the country's uneven development and undermines the objectification of other cultures into prepackaged consumables. Thus, Kaurismäki's embedded subjective position suggests we need to be aware of our own complicity in the process of objectifying other cultures. Instead of mobilizing a cosmopolitan perspective that could make the local and the regional invisible, Kaurismäki's subjective perspective seeks to interrogate the very processes through which cosmopolitanism works as both an integrating and a dividing tool.

Brasileirinho

Kaurismäki's follow-up to *Moro no Brasil, Brasileirinho* (2005), is an exploration of the choro, a musical style prevalent in many urban parts of Brazil. Whereas his first documentary project provided a comprehensive, if somewhat homogenizing, overview of the Samba, often perceived as the quintessential Brazilian music, *Brasileirinho* takes a more esoteric approach, as it explores one particular music style and its social implications. The willingness to expand (or narrow) his focus highlights the complexity of Brazilian music culture and Kaurismäki's desire to represent this multiplicity of cultures to global audiences. We learn that choro is another hybrid style, combining the melodic and harmonic structure of European ballroom dancing, the rhythm of African music, and the melancholy of Brazilian Indian music. Choro is the 'Brazilian jazz': a genuinely urban form of music that is alive in downtown bars and big theatres, which is in clear contrast to the villages and urban zones of development where samba dominates. Appropriately, and not unproblematically, the establishing shot of the film is a decidedly glamorous touristic image of night-time Rio de Janeiro. As with the samba, choro relies on communal interaction, working as a form of communication and dialogue between different instruments. One of the most respected performers of choro, Mauricio Castilho, explains that choro is a particularly difficult form of music, often taught in specifically-designated schools for Brazilian musicians, while samba is often learned through life on the streets.

Whereas samba gave voice to the diverse and often disenfranchised populations of Brazil, Choro is more a middle-class form of cultural expression and, to emphasize the point, we see a clear difference in the living habitats of the musicians of the choro and samba: the concerts of choro musicians are held in theatres, those of the samba are in the *favelas*. In many ways, the differences in these styles of music reflect a conception of two Brazils. Whereas samba is about providing a voice for the different marginalized groups of the nation, choro is very specifically identified as a canonic form of national identity by its performers. This is a notion underlined by the references to one of the most famous icons of Brazilian music, classical composer Villa-Lobos. There is a clear distinction between choro as a form of high culture,

and samba as more akin to mass culture with its wide popularity. Kaurismäki's film also seems to support this assertion, using cinematic techniques that are substantially more reserved and thoroughly 'composed' in comparison to the almost free-flowing, energetic style of *Moro no Brasil*. The road movie framework is also absent from the film and its narrative revolves around the frequent tropes of documentary film – talking heads interviews and concert sequences. Kaurismäki's presence is hardly felt, and the film maintains a more impersonal approach to depicting the different ways of life within the Brazilian mosaic. Yet, it would be a mistake to suggest that Kaurismäki's film advocates class separation and elitism, as we are repeatedly shown scenes of the musicians mentoring children from the streets in the ways of the choro. We are also told that music works as a way of bridging the class divisions of Brazilian society and it is constantly open to historical revision and new interpretations. In combination with *Moro no Brasil*, *Brasileirinho* continues Kaurismäki's attempts to depict the complexity and ever-evolving nature of the Brazilian society. While both films feature their share of problems in terms of limited perspectives on this society, we are nevertheless frequently asked to assess our perspectives in this representational relationship. Both films reinforce touristic conceptions of Brazil through the narrative perspective and glamorous cinematic techniques. Simultaneously, *Moro no Brasil's* problematization of narrative subjectivity and *Brasileirinho's* extended discussions of the ways that Western forms of culture are adapted by the local people exemplify the complex relationship between the global and the local. While these two films feature substantial discussion of globalization's effects on the cultural mosaic of Brazilian society, the final part of this unofficial trilogy, *Sonic Mirror*, extends this scope to a larger global scale.

Sonic Mirror

It does not matter if I play with a professional big band orchestra in Finland, with some of street kids in Brazil or with autistic patients in Switzerland, music is the common ground for communication. (Billy Cobham)

On the streets of Salvador, the legendary drummer Billy Cobham provides a virtuoso demonstration of a rhythm he has been developing in his head for days. To Cobham's astonishment, a young girl with a home-made drum takes her turn and performs an even more complex pattern. The scene is one amongst many in Kaurismäki's *Sonic Mirror*, where normative stereotyped expectations are undermined in moments of unexpected cultural dialogue. *Sonic Mirror* continues *Moro no Brasil* and *Brasileirinho's* cultural work of documenting the varied Brazilian musical landscape. It was produced with largely the same crew, as Arte and Swiss-based Marco Foster once again provided the project with its funding. Whereas the first two parts of the trilogy focused on Brazilian cultural diversity packaged for a global audience, *Sonic Mirror* aims for a thoroughly global picture of cultural interconnectivity.

Large sections of the film work much like Wenders' *Buena Vista Social Club* by chronicling the journeys and cultural encounters of a famous musical figure in a context relatively unfamiliar to them. *Sonic Mirror* has something wider in scope in mind as it situates Cobham in three different cultural contexts (Brazil, Finland and Switzerland), where he faces different opportunities and challenges for cross-cultural communication. As Kaurismäki suggests, the film took on a life of its own as 'the first idea, a film about Billy Cobham, became something more, a film about music as communication, and rhythm as a universal language. It isn't a traditional music film, it's not a musical, it is something else, something deeper, an attempt to understand life and the human being through music' (Kaurismäki 2007).

Billy Cobham is an ideal subject for an exploration of global interconnectivity. His parents came to the US from East Africa and lost their possessions on the way. They did not forget their cultural roots, and insisted on expressing their culture through music. Cobham's childhood was brimming with musicality and the constant reminders of cross-continental connections were essential in fostering his burgeoning musical skills. While he has performed extensively in different countries around the world and is well-known for his open-minded willingness to adapt to and adopt from other musical styles, Kaurismäki's film situates him in circumstances where musical communication is both essential and inherently complex. Cobham explains the difficulties of intercultural communication, as his philosophical perspective on musical performance is similar to that of language: if one is to be able to play the music of a culture, one has to have lived in the cultural formation from which this music emerges. He explains: 'It is difficult from someone who lives in the north to play like a Brazilian conguero, to be able to understand the roundness of the performance in the original context.' As Cobham explains his ancestral roots in Brazil, Kaurismäki's film cuts to street children, constructing the sense of an interconnected world, where cultural and political barriers certainly do exist, but crossing of these barriers is the vital duty of anyone interested in learning about the world and themselves.

When we last saw Finland in Kaurismäki's films, it was the bleak, stagnant cultural space from which Kaurismäki desired to escape in *Moro no Brasil*. *Sonic Mirror* also contains scenes set in Finland, which resort to a distinctly ethno-symbolic depiction of this northern space. As an introduction, we see a long pan up to the Espoo Concert House through a dark snow storm. As it is the start of the April Jazz Festival, juxtaposing the imagery with April's connotations of spring creates a sharp contrast that can only be read ironically. We simultaneously hear positive comments on the performance abilities of the Finnish musicians, The Espoo Big Band. Cobham accompanies the band in a duet-style performance, but as large parts of Cobham's percussion are improvised, accompanying him needs a certain degree of fluidity and understanding of his musical context. The collaboration is organic and the musicians interpret his movements in the type of reciprocal dialogue that characterizes successful intercultural communication.

Establishing Finland takes very little time beyond the brief recourse to ethno-symbolism, as it seems that Kaurismäki accepts this northern cultural climate as a self-evident part of his cinematic global puzzle. In contrast, the sections in Brazil and Switzerland rely

on a range of typical documentary methods, including extensive establishing shots and captions that map these locations according to the cultural cartography the film aims to espouse. Cobham explains his personal inspiration for drawing these global connections, which largely seems to echo Kaurismäki's perspective: 'I have achieved more or less all I want in the northern hemisphere of the globe. There is something that draws me to the south. You have to live here to experience it. South America and especially Brazil is part of the picture for me. It is a big picture of the world, but I am still not sure how all the pieces fit' (Kaurismäki, *Sonic Mirror* DVD, 2008). The film's exploration of global inequality is part of this bigger picture, as it moves from the performance with the Espoo Big Band to the living conditions of street children in the *favelas*. These connections highlight the ways in which the local people use music and education as a means to counter some of the more problematic urges of globalization. Whereas the other two parts of the trilogy gestured to the discontents of globalization in their examination of societal inequality, *Sonic Mirror* is more intent on chronicling its emancipating potential. The seamlessness of the editing creates a rhythm that connects the different nodal points of the film's global network, as we move from Northern Europe to Brazil and back, creating an impression of a mosaic premised on shared humanity. In another instance of mediating connectivity, Kaurismäki has to translate dialogue between Cobham, who is unable to speak Portuguese, and the children. As we hear Kaurismäki's voice faintly on the soundtrack beneath the main dialogue, it concretely functions as the connecting tissue in the creation of global connectivity. He is an insider and an outsider in all the contexts in which the film is set and, thus, it is his cosmopolitanism that ultimately decides the ideological direction of this connectivity.

Yet potential obstacles for cultural communication lurk everywhere, reminding us that the nodes that sustain this network are often fragile. For example, as the founding members of the *Male* movement describe their political and ideological need to defend their culture, they evoke the history of colonialism and slavery that still lingers in Brazilian society. While such historical injustices are vital formational components of the different ethnic cultures of Brazil, the film is more focused on providing a positive depiction of the processes of globalization, and, while the focus on connections instead of separations may seem somewhat naïve, this should not be understood as some apolitical embrace of common humanism. Instead, it is more productive to conceptualize this as an instance of what David Bordwell calls a 'network narrative' (2008). These are narratives which aim to come to terms with globalization's complexities through creating intertwining multi-narrative tales exploring both the disconnections and unexpected encounters/collisions that complex connectivity entails. Recent examples of network narratives, such as Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006), are situated in a similar global framework as Kaurismäki's film in their quest to explore the problems of intercultural communication. In contrast to Iñárritu's focus on the barriers of communication, Kaurismäki's film is more optimistic about breaching these barriers through the potential of music.

The section on Salvador finishes with a girl describing her desire to study and learn about other cultures. Appropriately, a sharp edit provides the nodal point for one of the film's global connections as we cut to majestic shots of the Alps with the sombre sound of the flugelhorn on the soundtrack. The flugelhorn has similar ethno-symbolic connotations as the snowy landscapes of Finland, and creates one of the simple global/local interconnections on which the mosaic of the film depends. The establishing shots of the Swiss locations are accompanied by the sound of tolling bells on the soundtrack, played by a patient at a care home for autistic children. While these bells are actually a part of an African ritual to cleanse one's spirits and have little to do with any sense of Swiss or European culture, it seems perfectly natural that these instruments would be used in this setting. The ease of this hybridization is part of the film's strategy in creating a sense of 'banal globalism' (a conscious expansion of the ideological implications of Billig's banal nationalism). This approaches the complexities of globalization from a largely positive angle and takes the flow of cultural elements across borders as granted. Here, the appropriation of ethno-symbolic signifiers into other cultures is largely unproblematic and beneficial for these cultures. There are, of course, substantial problems with such an approach, as it sidesteps many of the very real problems of economic and cultural appropriation that take place in constructing a film such as *Sonic Mirror*; problems which will be addressed in the following chapter on ethnography.

Autism is one of the key ideas through which the film creates its impression of a global communication network. We are told that autistic people face many obstacles in their attempts to communicate with the outside world in their struggle to vocalize their different ways of experiencing the world. Rhythmic music has an important function in fostering self-expression and making themselves understood by 'normal' people, due to music's ability to convey emotions and concepts without resorting to esoteric socio-linguistic structures. Roger, one of the patients at the institute, has a habit of displacing his own subjectivity by using the term 'I' for other people. The linguistic determinants of subjectivity do not matter in music, allowing Roger to get across the communicational barrier. Kaurismäki's cinema has persistently focused on finding new forms of communication for his marginalized protagonists, of whom the autistic patients are just one type of 'abnormal' individual. *Sonic Mirror* maintains a focus on other such groups as we explore the *favelas* of Salvador, where we focus on musicians, who only need a solid surface, and any part of the material world can be turned into an instrument. They explain that good musicians can hear music in everything in the world, from the brushing of teeth to the sound of traffic. Appropriately, they make most of the instruments from old tyres as a form of maintaining a connection with the surrounding world. Music becomes more than a means of expression and communication because it is also a natural part of human life – a part that needs to reconnect with its origins in the environment.

Whereas transnational flows of culture provided a way out for his Finnish protagonists, *Sonic Mirror* goes further in its attempts to construct an understanding of inter-cultural and -personal communication as a part of the dialectics of the global and the local. Cobham initially performs a solo for the patients at the institute, followed by a performance with a

band of Nigerian musicians. The complex rhythms communicate well with the patients as they join in the accumulating rhythm. What may sound like cacophony is, to each individual, an expression of their inner self, expressed in their unique interpretation of the rhythmic patterns. Cobham's underlying drum solo provides all the different modes of performance with an underlying structure and a framework in which the patients and the Nigerian musicians express their individuality. Much as Kaurismäki's films connect the different nodes of global existence into a multicultural framework of universal communication, the rhythm is able to let the individual patients connect and communicate fluently across barriers. As Kaurismäki intercuts scenes of the patients and the Nigerian performers with Cobham's concert in Brazil with local musicians, and his performance with the Espoo Big Band, the audio-visual sensations construct a multidirectional rich collage of boundary-less interaction. Instead of a global sense of disintegration, the cinematic techniques reintegrate parts of the world, cutting from Brooklyn to Salvador, from Switzerland to Espoo, smoothed over by the sound of the drums and the universal language of the music. This is not music as an industrialized and commercial enterprise, but as a means of expression, a language that reflects one's social and cultural background. As the different nodes of the film are connected by the editing, creating links between spaces and individuals in unexpected ways, it provides an answer to Pasi Väliäho's call for the cinematic creation of emergent 'non-organic' communities between people, which do not rely on antecedent orders or 'organic' traditions (Väliäho 2003: 105). These new and as-yet unrecognizable communities are created by Kaurismäki's polylocal dynamics and intercultural editing, both of which capture the dynamics of glocalization in a highly optimistic light.

While Kaurismäki's network narratives do not shy away from the problematic dynamics of the global and the local, their relationship with Europe remains unexplored. Earlier, we discussed the ways *Amazon* and *Sambolico* exhibit a problematic conceptualization of the Western gaze while, they seek to criticize this very process. Do such problems persist in his Brazilian music trilogy? One way to begin to answer this problem is to explore the ways these films work around their inherent Eurocentricism. The trilogy does its best to avoid accusations of Eurocentric bias, but it also acknowledges the role of Europe as the financial and cultural grounding of the films. Whereas Kaurismäki's first two Brazilian films could be thought of as anti-Eurocentric in their argumentation, the trilogy goes further in trying to understand the place of Europe in this equation. Rosalind Galt (2006) calls for an 'anti-anti-Eurocentrist' cinema as a way of locating a more productive role for European cinema beyond the usual critical paradigms of national cinema's contradictions with postcolonialism. Kaurismäki's trilogy provides a response to her query: 'if an anti-anti-Eurocentrist cinema is possible, we must map its borders, its contradictions, and its appearances (Galt 2006: 25). Crucial in conceptualizing this sort of cinema is not to take 'anti-anti' as implying a self-defeating proposition, resulting in the same old Eurocentric modes of argumentation. Rather, this calls for the need to rethink Europe's position within the changing structures of the global society, and also attempting to face the historical patterns of injustice on which even contemporary calls for equality are premised. Kaurismäki's trilogy certainly

attempts to work towards understanding Europe and its individual nations as a part of an interconnected global network, attempting to place equal value to it and the other parts of the world. But here again lies its contradiction – by attempting to move beyond these paradigms, it largely ignores the cultural-political realities from which this reconstructive argumentation emerges. Perhaps the only truly productive way to start working towards this type of cinema is by acknowledging these contradictions via the sort of self-reflexive rhetoric which *Moro no Brasil* most dynamically (if still problematically) encourages. Kaurismäki's films are hardly the type of critical cinema Galt has in mind, but they do make for productive case studies to start conceptualizing a new type of a responsible and politically engaged European film. This type of cinema does not seek to establish itself as a central location of cultural heritage, but to view itself as one node amongst many in a global framework.

Ethnography

Kaurismäki often talks of his work in terms of anthropology, yet to what extent does this assertion meet with the existent body of work on cinematic anthropology? For theorists such as Karl Heider (2006), anthropological cinematic practices are inherently connected to the scientific process of 'ethnography' that seeks to create as truthful and as whole, or complete, as possible depictions of a culture and its associated practices. Other anthropological theorists describe cinematographic ethnography along similar lines, though the totalizing assertions in Heider's work are increasingly a source of discontent within anthropological theory. Ethnographic scholar Jay Ruby would hardly agree with Kaurismäki on his anthropological qualities. In fact, in a recent work, Ruby (2001) attacks the notion of cinematic ethnography, drawing attention to the widespread confusion between anthropologists and documentary film-makers. His point is that one should have appropriate and thorough training as an anthropologist (that is, as a scientist) to be able to capture the nuances of anthropological study and simultaneously engage in the type of scientific research that befits the field. According to him, a dominant preconception of ethnographic film understands it as simply a subgenre of the documentary, where its focus relies on the representation of cultures which have exotic potential for Western audiences. According to such perspectives, ethnographic film becomes synonymous with the cinematic study of the other (Ruby 2001).

It is clear that Kaurismäki's films are hardly ethnographic in the sense that these authors would prefer to characterize its scientific orientation. While many of Kaurismäki's films balance between the stratas of commercial and art-house cinema, many of his comments imply the necessity to take into account the economics of film production. Even in the low-budget documentaries set in and around Brazil, the audience is a major concern, even more so than any fidelity to the scientific method of ethnography. The spark for these productions emanates from the success of *Buena Vista Social Club*, and can, accordingly, tell us of the commercial expectations the producers have for the market value of Kaurismäki's films. But it would be counterproductive to limit the cultural potential of these films purely to economic

factors. Nor would it be productive to keep insisting on labelling these films according to categories such as the scientific ethnographic film. While such anthropological conceptions are important for Kaurismäki, abiding with the objectivity of scientific research is never the paramount concern. In fact, blurring the distinction between observer and participant is key to the films' exploration of the complexities of globalization. As such, they are not so concerned with depicting other singular cultures, as they are about chronicling cultural integration and hybridity. Transvergent auto-ethnography captures this well, as it implicates the subject into representation and the global into local, connoting the reciprocity of glocalization.

To explore the concept of auto-ethnographic transvergence further, we must go back to Kaurismäki's 1994 production *Tigrero – the Film that Was Never Made*. The film chronicles Sam Fuller and Jim Jarmusch's journey to the village of the Karaja in the Amazonian jungle, where Fuller had been location-scouting for an abandoned John Wayne adventure film in 1954. It is very appropriate that the genesis of the trio's adventures in the jungle lie in an unproduced John Wayne western, as Kaurismäki's *Tigrero* is, in many ways, an adventure narrative about a group of outsiders coming to explore and profit from the multiple riches of the natural environment. Yet Kaurismäki's film approaches the problems of such representations via a self-reflexive perspective on the boundaries between 'nature' and 'civilization'. All three directors consistently interrogate normative conceptualizations of modernization and primitivism as they criticize the Brazilian government's efforts to 'civilize' the village and its occupants. The inclusion of the directors into the film's representation suggests that its ethnographic qualities are as much concerned with representing the Western mindset on other cultures as it is focused on those 'other' cultures.

Yet, awareness of modernization's fallacies is not enough to dispel the film's problematic approach. As Kaurismäki's crew gathers the villagers to view the 40-year-old footage, they witness shots of relatives who have now passed on or of younger versions of themselves, living in the same locations that they now inhabit. For the villagers, this is a moving moment where the temporal and corporeal dimensions of human life are made visible. As the spectators of Kaurismäki's *Tigrero*, we inevitably have different perspectives on the screening of the footage. First of all, we are aware of the history of the footage as part of the production machinery of Hollywood and the uses to which this 'anthropological' material would have inevitably had to be subjected. Secondly, the screening of the footage and the Karajas' emotional response becomes a form of entertainment, which we are invited to appreciate as a form of 'profound' cultural spectacle that provides many an art-house film with their cultural capital. While the screening is an attempt by the protagonists to provide the villagers with a connection to their past, we can also interpret this act in a more cynical manner as a prime example of the sort of benevolent educationalism under which cultural imperialism operates. Thus, we can interpret the film as using the emotional catharsis of the 'other' as a form of spectacle, intended for us to feel good about our role in bringing these 'deprived' people the possibility of connecting with their ancestors and their past. Such an interpretation of the film sees it in as an example of Ruby's unqualified form of anthropological film production, only catering to Western exoticism.

This spectatorial positioning can also be interpreted in alternative, more complex ways. By positioning the film-makers within the narrative of this documentary and displaying both the production and viewing processes in its diegesis, the film is able to extend its suggestive scope on our spectatorial engagement. The cinematic doubling of the gaze necessitates that we ponder the pleasure derived from such spectacle. By adding another layer of reflexivity to the notion of spectatorship, the film calls into question the ethnographic practices of anthropological film-making (or whatever term the scholars in the field find most appropriate) and the spectacle of nativism and exoticism we may bring to this cultural palette. Such a mode blurs the distinction between the explorer and the explored, as the protagonists become as much a part of the representational focus of the film as its 'indigenous other'.

While *Moro no Brasil* and *Tigrero* contain most of the hallmarks of the traditional ethnographic film, they also include self-aware levels of intervention from Kaurismäki, the observer. Communicating about other cultures is not as much a concern as interrogating the blurring distinctions between the producer and the topic of the production. Ultimately, these films are very self-conscious of their part in the global cultural production machinery, a notion that immediately differentiates them from scientific anthropology. While even his fiction texts share many of qualities of the ethnographic film, their purpose is to interrogate the idea of cultural authenticity and its connections to social power. The global perspectives of *Sonic Mirror* and *Brasileirinho* complicate this equation by suggesting that cultural representation is not purely a matter of capturing another culture on film, but exploring the implications of cultural reciprocity in this ethnographic relationship.

In building connections between different cultures of the world, Kaurismäki's auto-ethnographic cosmopolitanism exemplifies Homi Bhabha's suggestion that hybridity takes place at the margins, 'where cultural differences contingently and conflictually touch' (Bhabha 1994: 206). While Kaurismäki's films rarely focus on displaced postcolonial subjects, the protagonists exemplify different sorts of marginalization, as it is the 'colonializing' subjects who are forced to re-interrogate their positions. This type of blurring of established identity categories is present in all aspects of his work, extending to rethinking the boundaries between the centre and the periphery through questioning the righteousness of the Western protagonist/representer. Even hybridity as a concept is disassociated from its normative implications, reminding us of Bruno Latour's criticism of critical thinking which conceives of the 'hybrid' as a mixture of two pure forms (Latour 1993: 78). Instead, he suggests that we need to consider hybridity in terms of networks of meaning. Here, participants from a range of contexts come to enunciate their own perspectives and are assigned equal amounts of agency. Hybridity becomes a contested idea, having different implications dependent on the perspective from which such hybrid constellations are viewed.

Kaurismäki's documentaries question the complacency of the film-makers and their prospective audiences in maintaining unequal power relationships between the subject and the explorer. In *Tigrero*, we are asked to interrogate the roles of the film-makers as part of the so-called harmonious and enlightened civilization and the villagers as less-developed

parts of some pure natural condition. For example, the trio is clearly contemptuous of the modernization efforts impacting the village but, beyond easy condemnation of technology, we also learn how the villagers have adopted elements such as television to their lives. The blurring of the simplistic dichotomy between pure nature and corrupt civilization suggests that the concept of a pure, untouched natural condition is a specifically Western preoccupation, which seldom does little more than reveal the Western intellectual's emphasis on such critical frameworks. Such idyllic forms of life rarely exist in this form in the cultures to which they are assigned, suggesting that the hybrid meeting point of the West and its others rarely coincides with the simplified concepts on which much of this sort of philanthropic cultural representation is based. The complex patterns of interconnection and transformation in global interconnectivity suggest that, if we are to mobilize the concept of hybridity for cultural analysis, we must focus on its implications of difference and inequality as much as we do on its attempts to create new forms of cultural identity.

Chapter 6

Post-nation: Kaurismäki's Films in a Global Perspective

One must acknowledge one's roots, both in their positive and negative implications.

(Mika Kaurismäki in Kääpä 2010b)

Despite Kaurismäki's increasingly multinational productions with their distinctly global scope, national identity remains for him the grounding force in a globalizing world; a way of navigating through this complex mosaic. Thus, it is not altogether surprising that he chose to produce two films in Finland towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. What was more surprising was that these films were so emphatically 'Finnish' in their approach. The narratives of *Three Wise Men* (2008) and *The House of Branching Love* (2009) revolve around dissolving societal structures and unfulfilled lives and feature a significant amount of national stereotyping and traditional cultural signifiers. Simultaneously, their depiction of society is distinctly askew, as everything is excessively over-caricatured to the level of hyper-national cinema. *Three Wise Men* begins early on Christmas Eve with Pertti berating his pregnant Russian wife for her lack of understanding of Finnish Christmas customs. Meanwhile, he gets increasingly drunk and angry, accentuating the idea that, to him, she is unable to understand the ways a real Finn celebrates. The scene culminates in the breaking of her amniotic waters, while Pertti tries ineffectively to rush her to the hospital.

It is clear from these early moments that what we are about to see is a depiction of a crisis of Finnish identity. Pertti is a police officer, a representative of the nation state, but his ineffective and aggressive behaviour signals the malfare version of the Nordic welfare state. Similarly, Erkki and Timo, the other two men of the title, repeatedly vocalize their unhappiness in Finland, as it seems more opportunities are freely available elsewhere. Life in the nation is a combination of broken families, domestic violence, dilution of traditional customs, and fragmented personal relationships. Increasing multiculturalism also contributes to their confusion, as their national mentality seems to prohibit integration with the globalizing structures of the society, at least when they inhabit the space within the nation's borders. Inside, such integration only leads to estrangement, as is the case with Pertti and his Russian wife's distraught relationship. Only alcohol provides some sense of escape from their claustrophobic and hopeless lives, and the three men eventually embark on a night of soul-searching.

For these representatives of the Finnish male, there is no escaping the pull of national nostalgia and the problematic masculinity repeatedly evoked as part of the national mentality. According to Homi Bhabha, the stereotype 'is a form of knowledge and identification that

vacillates between what is always “in place”, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated’ (Bhabha 1994: 370). Bhabha’s postcolonialist discussion emphasizes the pervasive uses of derogatory stereotypes in constructing and maintaining social inequality. Kaurismäki’s films have a similar political drive as they interrogate how stereotypes of Finnish cultural identity function to create and maintain ethno-symbolic conceptions of culture. By interrogating how such stereotypes are frequently out of place, rather than ‘in-place’ in the cosmopolitan life-worlds of contemporary Finland, *Three Wise Men* provides a transvergent picture of the nation’s transformation from inside its confines. The liminal space of the karaoke bar, where the men spend the night, creates a sense of spatio-temporal transvergence that throws all the stereotypical meanings and realist aspirations of the film in question. To use terminology associated with Kaurismäki’s previous films, the bar is an open road, where endless possibilities and unknown dangers lie at every turn. Alcohol consumption provides the film with a further level of socio-critical discourse: the act of getting drunk is a social norm that these men take for granted as part of their stereotyped identities. The power of inebriation allows the men to break down the social barriers that they rigorously uphold in their daily life and throughout the initial hours of their meeting. This is a transvergent state precisely because drunken communication rarely moves along the expected patterns of interpersonal communication. Rather, such communication is able to resurrect moments from the past and indicate potential destinations for the future in a relationship that is based on evanescence and uncertainty. Off-kilter drunken discussion, thus, becomes the basis for transvergent identity politics and interpersonal connectivity.

The film’s existential angst increases as the mysterious Magdaleena, who accidentally caused the death of her husband and newborn baby in a fire, joins the men. Erkki understands her suicidal feelings, as he had attempted suicide earlier having been diagnosed with a terminal disease. Timo’s son also joins the group and the two begin their painful attempts to overcome the destruction caused by Timo’s abandonment of his family. This sense of despair at the state of society, and the individual shortcomings of the people inhabiting it, continues most of the night. The conclusion of the film suddenly veers in a radically different direction as the men take to the karaoke stage with Magdaleena and Timo’s son. As with so many of Kaurismäki’s conclusions, this culmination needs to be seen in an ironic light. As part of the transvergence that alcohol can provide, we should not interpret this conclusion as anything more than a euphoric, momentary state of resolution that, in all likelihood, will dissipate in the bleak morning light. When the protagonists emerge from the bar to find a fully-suited baritone on a snowy rooftop singing the well-known ‘Niin Kaunis On Maa’ [The Land Is So Beautiful], we are very clearly asked to separate from any sense of conventional realism.

This hymn is associated with both burials and weddings due to its exploration of the cyclical nature of life. Its implications in Kaurismäki’s film can be interpreted as a way of signifying the fragile compromise of the nation, captured in metaphoric terms through the culmination of the fragile relationships of these three metonymic reminders of national identity. They may have confronted one another with their individual preoccupations and misgivings, but this particular male odyssey has come to a very uncertain end. All the



Three Wise Men concludes with ambiguity as its protagonists walk to an uncertain fate on a frozen lake.
(Courtesy of Marianna Films Oy)

problems of the nation state are still in place at the conclusion, despite any surface sense of optimism we may receive from the conclusion and the transvergent moments of inebriation. As Magdaleena and Erkki walk onto a frozen lake, we are very aware that both of them have given up hope of continuing with their lives. The nation is similarly eating its own structures from within, corrupting any homogeneity it seemingly intends to inspire.

The House of Branching Love

Whereas *Three Wise Men* uses a 'lo-fi' (handheld aesthetics and largely improvised script) approach to depicting the fallacies of the nation, *The House of Branching Love* is much more 'wholesome' in its approach. It was produced with a large budget and features many well-known actors as part of its sizeable cast. The film's subject matter is also more commercial as it creates a screwball narrative focusing on a married couple who have grown tired of each other and aim to separate. As Juhani (Hannu-Pekka Björkman) and Tuula (Elina Knihtilä) wait for the necessary paper work, they choose to share their expensive lake-side residence, with predictably disastrous consequences. In addition to sleeping with different people and making each other's life as difficult as possible, they get involved in a drug-smuggling scheme in collusion with the Finnish underworld and the Estonian mafia. The film's narrative weaves connections between its upper-middle-class protagonists, working in the service sector of this formerly-social-democratic welfare state, the criminal underworld of Finland, the inefficient police officers of the state, and the Eastern European criminal syndicates, providing a complex portrait of Finnish society and its discontents. Under the superficial harmony of the prosperous welfare state, the problems of the malfare state brew. *The House of Branching Love* concludes with a disjointed sequence when the couple, who had previously attempted to practically murder one another, walk into a sprawling wheat field. Such fields have frequently been used in ethno-symbolic examples of Finnish cinema to connote harmony and reinforce a sense of national belonging. The implications of the landscape seem distinctly out of place in Kaurismäki's cynical and even misanthropic film, and we are invited to interpret the conclusion as another instance of transvergence. It is this oscillation between divergence (self-destruction as part of the national mentality) and convergence (harmony), which provides both *Three Wise Men* and *The House of Branching Love* with their unstable sociological structures, revealing the ways in which national narratives construct their fragile harmony.

The narratives of *Three Wise Men* and *The House of Branching Love* continue the postnational project of Kaurismäki's earlier depictions, as their perspectives on a fragmented Finland aim to 'to make visible the incoherence, contingency, and transitoriness of the national narratives' (Pease 1997: 5). While Pease is writing from a postcolonialist perspective, this description is apt for Kaurismäki's films, as they instigate a similar re-imagining of the nation and call into question its dominant structures. The films reflect the notion that 'for substantial numbers of people, the world appears as complex, liminal, lacking in clearly demarcated borders and



The ethno-symbolic idyll of the conclusion clashes with the narrative of *The House of Branching Love*.
(Courtesy of Marianna Films)

commonly accepted values' (Hedetoft & Hjort 2002: xviii). Similarly, global responsibility and attempts to build transnational connections are constant themes of his Latin American films, from the mediated multiculturalism of *Moro no Brasil* to the complex connectivity of *Sonic Mirror*.

We have already explored many of the ways in which the transvergent techniques of the films work to destabilize taken-for-granted meanings in contexts ranging from urban cityscapes to the environment, from geopolitics to cinematic-political conventions. The criticism of the films inevitably flows down to the level of particular nations, as the various states still have a legislative and cultural-political importance on how such matters are both debated and acted upon in their various contexts. For example, Kaurismäki's urban films focus on the formation of alternative collectives in the marginal spaces of the cityscapes, while the road movies rethink the geopolitical implications of national borders. It is this critical perspective that necessitates viewing these films in a postnational framework as they gesture to alternative modes of existence beyond the nation, yet these modes rarely seek to supplant the nation as the primary source of social collectivism. Thus, they work in the framework of the nation-state system, criticizing and reworking it to suit their ideological purposes.

If we are to understand the postnational as another way of critiquing established conventions of society and its associated power structures, we can build a dynamic picture of the ways in which Kaurismäki's films not only build a global mosaic but also seek to reveal the fissures and contradictions that any such notion inevitably contains. This does not necessarily amount to antagonistic anti-societal rhetoric, as they (especially his documentary films) are largely positive (if not naïve, even) in attempting to construct a universal sense of humanism. But with any such notion of universalism, one has to be careful of wide-eyed idealism, reducing complex problems to easily understandable and solvable ideas – both notions which are commonly associated with liberal Western approaches to the contradictions and complexities of global inequality. In attempting to come to terms with these complexities, transvergence comes to enunciate a way of accounting for one's embeddedness in the very structures one is criticizing.

Conceptualizing postnationalism in transvergent terms allows us to explore the ambiguity and heterogeneity inherent in Kaurismäki's examinations of social identity and the complex power relations between different parts of the global economic and political system. For example, we can observe a simultaneous critique of colonialist tourism, as well as exoticized ethnographic representations of the cultures of other nations, in films such as *Sambolico*. And what makes such an exploration postnational instead of the more commonly used postcolonial? First, these texts are not only focused on providing a voice for the previously marginalized indigenous peoples but also criticize the roles of Western forms of representation in maintaining unequal power relationships and exploitation. Second, these films are not focused on apologizing for the colonialist impulses of the West, as is so common in epic forms of cinema, ranging from Roland Joffé's *The Mission* (Joffé, 1986) to Regis Wargnier's *Indochine* (Wargnier, 1992). As we are initially carried along by the

protagonist's perspective on the different levels of the cinematic construction, we are given a glimpse into how a colonialist narrative is constructed and accepted by spectators, who may be witness to these types of explorations on a regular basis. Yet, as the film reveals our complicity in the objectifying gaze and the cinematic apparatus' Eurocentric normalization of 'the white man's burden', the postnationalism of the approach extends beyond the nation-state into the ways that nationally-ingrained thinking influences interpersonal and cultural-political encounters on a global scale.

To clarify this, we must go back to the roots of Kaurismäki's transvergent postnationalism. This emerges with the general development of postmodernism and post-Fordism, and, in the same period, the increasing transnationalization of national cultures and the migratory movements of peoples under the pressures of global capitalism. The particularities of Finland's historical context – the relative lateness of the Great Migration from the country to the city in relation to the rest of Europe and the resulting urbanization of the society, the fall of communism and the rise of 'casino-economics' in the late 1980s, the depression of the early 1990s and EU-integration in 1995 – create a multifaceted socio-economic geopolitical matrix that influences his complex approach to the contradictions of the international system of nation-states. The constant oscillation between nation and transnation corresponds, in Tommi Aitio's view, with 'the duality of Mika Kaurismäki's films, the wavering between action and meditation' (Aitio 2000: 68). While Aitio's perspective aptly summarizes the dialectical tendencies of Kaurismäki's cinema, it seems somewhat reductive to equate these films to a binary scope. For one thing, the films subvert established conventions of socio-cultural representation in their attempts to capture the heterogeneity of contemporary social life, for which simplistic representational structures are insufficient. Any action (both in the sense of narrative action and deployment of tropes from the action genre) are always achieved in premeditated terms for a specific thematic purpose, making such forms of action meditative action. Merging these modes enables him to combine the dualities of the time-image and movement-image cinema into a transfusive form between popular entertainment and critical art-house cinema. Similarly, the relationship between the national and the international becomes a complex, ambiguous idea. The films consistently navigate between these poles in their quest to find new means of envisioning social life in a globalizing world society, refusing all fixating designators or using them in a manner that reinterprets their cultural-political implications. Home is not to be found in any sense of national identity, as the actual process of the search forms the locus of the protagonists' interest – instead of the political and geographical conformity of the nation, the films emphasize that communality in a globalizing society is characterized by fluidity and networks of individuals who share ideological similarities. Returning back to Hall's comment, we are truly past any fixed or defined sense of identity (Hall & Du Gay 1996).

While the ways in which Kaurismäki's films challenge national culture and identity may be clearer in their socio-political implications, their reinterpretation of the meanings of internationalism needs more exploration. Kaurismäki's postnationalism not only seeks to rework how we think of national culture but also how we conceptualize forms of international

cultural exchange. In Peter Katzenstein's view, internationalism emphasizes reciprocal interaction between two national entities, as it involves 'a process that refers to territorially based exchanges across borders' (Katzenstein 2005: 13). There is a clear sense of fixity in internationalism as it is predicated on the interaction of geographically- (and therefore often politically-) fixed entities. How do these theoretical ideas work in practice? *Zombie and the Ghost Train* is simultaneously one of the most 'national' of Kaurismäki's films, while it mobilizes tropes of inter- and transnationalism to undermine the need to 'locate' cinema by defined geographical locations. The first shot of the film is of the steps of an unidentified cathedral, still covered in debris from the previous night's revelry. Seagulls, the indicators of a city by the sea, are still feasting on the leftovers, and we cut to Zombie, wrapped in dirty newspapers, lying on a stone bench. The impression is of an 'any-city' only defined by its capability for providing temporal solace for the displaced individual. Zombie's clearly downtrodden acceptance upon waking indicates he has been here before, not necessarily in this geographical space, but in this mindset. It does not matter to him where he is, as his feeling of universal nausea overrides any consideration for locating the place of his misery. There are also no cultural considerations by which to abide, as in the state of zombiedom all cultures seem the same. Zombie wanders resolutely down a typical rain-trodden and dirty side-street, so common in Kaurismäki's films, with very little to distinguish this street from other marginal spaces familiar from his city-films. The first indication that this is not Kaurismäki's typical Helsinki is when mosque domes appear in the background. The (dis)placement of the diegesis is counterpointed by the culmination of the screen credits informing the viewer that the film was written, edited, produced and directed by Kaurismäki. Such auteurist dictation makes instant connections with his body of work, situating the spectator in the by-now familiar sense of dislocation and cultural heterogeneity. The city is, in fact, Istanbul, but there is little to distinguish the activities of its inhabitants from those elsewhere in Kaurismäki's Europe.

As Zombie has his first beer of the day in a shabby café under one of the city's bridges, he has to run to the toilet to vomit. We hear his voiceover explain that 'I felt my life as dirt water in the back of my throat. But I felt no shame or remorse, as it was I that was responsible for what I am now'. These words accompany a transition to Finland, where we see Zombie's return from an unknown departure point. The malfare state makes itself known immediately as he is arrested for being a deserter and a 'faggot', providing a depiction of the armed forces in as negative a light as possible. A military exercise is captured in typical ethno-symbolic terms, set against a snowy expansive landscape where the camera focuses on this display of needless might and the havoc it wreaks on the environment. Zombie does not partake in this madness and sits out the exercise under a tree. Eventually, he is discharged from the army on grounds of insanity and we consequently see him walking through a frozen landscape. This landscape has political implications, as its frigidity combines with Zombie's thin and dark composure – almost like another tree. The land is unable to nurture him or provide any sustenance and, eventually, we see him hunched against a broken car on the brink of death. The infamous band Ghost Train rescues him and ferries him back to the land



Kaurismäki's auteurist stamp in *Zombie and the Ghost Train's* opening credits. (Courtesy of Marianna Films)

of the living. The band does not communicate with Zombie, as he still partially occupies the world of the living but, in the eyes of society, he is past redemption: a social agnostic, a walking carcass, a zombie.

This liminal existence provides him with no solace as he goes back home to 'the ruins of his childhood', where more misery is heaped on him: the contemporary mass unemployment has made his father redundant. Zombie has to attempt to integrate into society because he still maintains some sense of duty to be a productive member of society. All the jobs he tries are part of the essential maintenance of either society, including health care, or culture, when he takes part in renovation of traditional buildings. Yet, aspects of these positions trigger his phobias and result in him running off in morbid fear. He becomes one of the walking dead of society, as it seems he is inherently hard-wired to object to any form of social contribution. His deficient curriculum vita is a history of his difference, his liminality. His army discharge means that he cannot now be a civil servant or the president of the nation. The only contribution he can provide is to be a liminal being, an outpost for the normative confines of this society.

Zombievision

Zombie, as the 'other' against which normative structures of society are defined, is the antagonist in the welfare state narrative persistently constructed by sections of the mainstream media. By providing us with an image of the current complications of the nation via Zombie's postnational perspective, the film seeks to unravel many of the nodal points that support the national constellation. Kaurismäki provides a useful explanation for Zombie's perspectival predicament: the majority of people in the film can only focus on a single goal; if they were to look around them everything would collapse (Kaurismäki, *Zombie and the Ghost Train* DVD, 2008). Zombie has the misfortune of being a 'seer' – someone who can observe all the structures of the society, including all the complications and injustices that are part and parcel of this maintenance. Zombie spends his days walking around the city and sitting in bars, a sort of *flâneur*, whose disengaged and cynical perspective struggles with all conventional designations of the welfare state. The film constantly connects cityscapes, traditionality and transnationality, as Zombie strolls the bleak modernity of the city while a traditional song, 'Kuihtuu Kesäinen Maa', plays on the soundtrack. When he stops for a drink in a bar, the television broadcasts news of the first Gulf War and the Vilnius attack by Russian forces. Every time Zombie fails at social behaviour, we see a sign of wider social cataclysm or an icon of the state in the background. For example, the Senate comes into focus the instant he has robbed a jewellery shop. Unable to focus on a single goal, he must take in all that goes on around him, including natural and man-made disasters, as the space of the national society becomes one of oppression. All the postnational subject can do is to stare hopelessly at his surroundings, and long for some form of escape.

Is Zombie a victim of circumstance like the bird drowning in the spilled oil of the Gulf War he glimpses on television or is he to blame for his aimlessness? It does not seem to matter whether Zombie reacts passively or aggressively against the society – the result is constant marginalization. The film's coda in Istanbul makes this alienation clear: Zombie has sold his passport in order to pay for his motel bills – he has no use for it as neither civic nor national identity can provide him with any meaning. Ironically, it is in this city at the edge of Europe that he discovers his portal for transcending the realms of society. Walking off to a hazy destination in the bazaars of the city, Zombie steps out of the international-national system. No longer bound by national or even international designations, Zombie's perspective captures a transnational mindset, where national subjects inspect other national spaces, finding them increasingly similar to their own. But whereas the majority of transnational films see them as spaces of contestation, Kaurismäki's film emphasizes their similarities as spaces thoroughly undone by the perspectives of their postnational protagonists. The issue is no longer concerned with the implications of national subjects interacting, but flowing past man-made borders and finding life on the other side more or less identical. The Europe of Kaurismäki's cinema seems borderless, a space where the nation is only an inconvenience or an obstacle for finding individual forms of stability (or oblivion in some cases).

The –nationals of cinema

The concept of transnational cinema needs to be interrogated further in order to understand its implications for Kaurismäki's films. Hamid Naficy (2003) has used the term 'accented' for discussing the works of transnational or diasporic film-makers, who capture the tensions between home and host societies through their liminal perspectives. Will Higbee has proposed the concept of 'the cinema of transvergence' as an 'attempt to go "beyond" the (trans)national to evaluate current theorizing around the idea of "transnational cinema" and its potentially problematic relationship to contemporary notions of globalization as they apply to the postcolonial or diasporic film-maker' (Higbee 2007: 80). Transnationalism, certainly, is an essential factor in thinking of postcolonialism and cultural hybridity, as it encapsulates the processes instigated by cross-border flow of culture, people, commerce, and capital. While the works of these two writers explore similar concerns as this book – liminality and the need to rethink dominant paradigms of nation, identity, society and culture – the films on which I focus approach such issues from a different perspective. I have suggested elsewhere that transvergence encapsulates the critical perspectives of 'internal immigrants' of the national society (Kääpä 2007), but Kaurismäki's '(neo)colonialist' perspective necessitates expanding this framework. Transvergence in this book comes to imply an approach that self-reflexively deconstructs the politicized constellations against which both the accented cinema and the cinema of transvergence work, providing critical reflections on the complex politics of representation from the perspective of the displaced nomadic, but crucially, Western, subject.

Kaurismäki's films are certainly transnational, as they interrogate the relevance of the nation and the unequal politics of representation globalization entails, but their transvergent approach can also point us in more critically pertinent directions. According to Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim, transnational films

need to be considered in the collective context of... a specifically diasporic configuration, that implicitly or explicitly, articulates the relationship between the host and home cultures, and is aware... of the interconnectedness between the local and the global within diasporic communities. Such a cinema can be defined as transnational in the sense that it brings into question how fixed ideas of a national film culture are constantly being transformed by the presence of protagonists (and indeed film-makers) who have a presence within the nation, even if they exist on its margins, but find their origins quite clearly beyond it. (Higbee and Lim 2010: 11)

The authors' focus on diasporic movements and their transformative potential for national film cultures is certainly an apt consideration for Kaurismäki's films. Most of Kaurismäki's films feature protagonists who live their lives inside the nation-state framework, but who often very clearly find themselves alienated by this very framework. The diasporic connotations of 'beyondness' in the above quotation certainly make sense for the majority of transnational cinema. But many of Kaurismäki's films produce their sense of postnationalism from an internal alien perspective, as films like *Zombie and the Ghost Train* and *Cha Cha Cha* operate in the framework of national societies, which they then criticize from within. Other films, such as *The Worthless*, *Rosso*, *Highway Society* and *Honey Baby*, focus on the dissolution and even disappearance of national borders, all through perspectives that approach the still-relevant nation-state structure from an explicitly critical angle. While transnational flows certainly contribute much to these films, they are more appropriately characterized as postnational due to their forceful reconstruction of the cultural and civic dimensions of the nation. Or, in other words, transnational approaches are more suited to exploring the transformations of the nation (or the formation of new communities and identities in the wake of cross-border interaction), while the postnational explicitly challenges the very relevance of the nation, often coming to very uncertain and ambiguous conclusions on social and cultural identity. And while Kaurismäki's films still find validity in the persistence of nations, this criticism has already succeeded in undermining many of the political/cultural assumptions under which discourses of national cinema and culture still operate.

While the term transnational seems too transient in accounting for the implications of these liminal films, the border-crossings of *Brasileirinho* and *Sonic Mirror* are still best understood clearly in the normative framework of transnational cinema. While the protagonists and the producers of the films move between national, social, political and cultural borders, they also propose fundamentally postnational challenges. In films such as *Sonic Mirror*, the construction of an intersecting and overlapping mosaic of global universalism seeks to rethink the constructed nature of social belonging. My use of the concept of the postnational

depends in part upon the work of German political philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who argues for the need to envision a cosmopolitan mode of citizenship capable of transcending the national, which, in turn, would provide an effective solution to the range of problems posed by neo-liberal globalization (Habermas 2001). Such a cosmopolitan conception of citizenship would be the necessary basis for the creation of a European socio-economic political order capable of upholding democracy. The confluence of these cosmopolitan citizens into what Habermas calls 'the postnational constellation' would create a sufficiently strong socio-economic body to compete against the powerful neo-liberalist operations of global corporations. Thus, constitutional patriotism indicates the ways that individuals should focus on shared values rather than the origins of the different groups that inhabit the constellation. When this is extended to the European Union, we see the fostering of a European sense of identity based not so much on inclusive restrictions on the basis of national origin but on a shared sense of Europeaness.

While Habermas' conception of the postnational shares ideological and contextual similarities with the representations of nationhood in Kaurismäki's films, it is considerably more positive than the postnational identity politics of these films. Whereas Habermas sees the postnational as an ideal permanent state of communal identity, Kaurismäki's films emphasize the postnational condition as a temporary means to counterbalance the liminal and constantly changing nature of contemporary society. While their representational perspectives sometimes lead to the enforcement of global imbalances of power, they attempt to undo this problem by, for example, complicating the relationship between the observer and the observed. Transvergence is a useful concept to clarify my distinction of postnational cinema, as the term captures the sense of disorientation and complex disjunctures that characterize these films. To extend the implications of this term further, both national and transnational cinema can be understood in terms of Novak's (2002) 'epistemologies of continuity', where the homogenizing implications of national cinema seek to create a convergence of nation-people under a cultural community; the hybridity and negotiation emphasized by transnational cinema function as a divergence from the national narrative, yet they may also embody convergence into the new 'third cultures' or the types of hybrid identities which Bhabha discusses.

Postnational cinema, in comparison to other forms of national cinema, works to evoke both discontinuity and stasis (of the depletion of opportunities to withdraw into a comfortable past or to look forward to a promising future). This paradoxical state is captured via unfinished, ever-continuing narratives and the liminal nature of the habitats of the protagonists. *Honey Baby* seems to differ from this pattern, as it features a definite conclusion, at least in terms of narrative structure, as the protagonists Tom and Maria come to the end of their road and seem to settle for life in her small home village and in socially-accepted traditionalist roles. After their transvergent journey of Eastern Europe, this undermines everything the film has told us of their personal qualities, effectively providing an ideological reversion of the subversive qualities of the road movie, as per Rick Altman's suggestion. But, as was discussed earlier, the conclusion plays out more in terms of irony of the expected conclusions to Hollywood

entertainment rather than what we have seen previously in the film. And, as large sections of the film discuss the imposition of American culture on the European subconscious, it seems this is a final gesture to the incompatibility of these orders. As much as Tom's transvergent narrative, the conclusion only evokes scepticism of the stability it proposes.

It is this uncertainty over ideological submission to the nation's 'promise' that provides the film with its postnational qualities, as it undermines the coherency of the nation-state structure from within its structural parameters. Rather than just presenting an objection to the nation's contemporary form, the film seeks to emphasize the very impossibility of comfortable nationhood. If it was presenting a mere objection, it would still function comfortably under the rubric of national cinema but, as it seeks to undermine what we know and take for granted about national cinema, it is more productively understood as a postnational film. Instead of attempting to understand Kaurismäki's films as either national or transnational cinema, the postnational comes to enunciate an alternative transvergent position that moves in between the ordered layers of society, seeking to exhibit new modes of understanding individual identities and their relation with society.

Global community?

If we take a step back from all the different contexts in which Kaurismäki has worked and represented on screen, we can see the construction of an elaborate multicultural mosaic. The films take place in different national contexts, which are often clearly marked as such. They represent both the majority and minority cultures that inhabit these spaces. Yet we are constantly held at a distance from any sort of conventional depiction of the relationship between the different cultures as the films consistently blur distinctions between cultural constellations. But it is national space to which we return, both in terms of his 'postnational' and more globally-minded films. This is the necessary socio-political groundwork from where all these cosmopolitan and marginal evocations of identity stem. While national (and its different localities) remain the fundamental constituents of a global world, despite the cross-border flow of cultures and capital and the dispersive loyalties of regional identity groupings, Kaurismäki's films show that cultures and identities remain constantly fluid. This is not the stable postnational constellation of Habermas' description, but something inherently in a state of constant transformation. Whether they rely on multifaceted arguments for cosmopolitanism or a universal sense of humanity, Kaurismäki's films draw connections between different parts of the world, essentially engaging in an act of cartography which aims to make visible the connections, not the separations, between people inhabiting the so-called developed and the developing nations of the world. This cartography of global interconnectivity creates a transvergent framework where films such as *LA without a Map* and *Sonic Mirror* construct tangible cross-continental connections and parallels, while others such as *The Worthless* and *Condition Red* make these connections on intertextual levels. This is the case even when the act of mapping reveals the problems of imposing a

restricted geopolitical and cultural order over societies that may not agree to the socio-political directions of this imposition.

Should we then attempt to understand these films in the wider rubric of 'world cinema'? This category is used generally to refer to non-English-language films that emerge from outside the Hollywood studio system. It is also often used for art-house film-making, which operates outside the dominant paradigms of the mainstream. The concept is highly problematic on many levels, not least in its indication of the dominance of Hollywood cinema as the global norm. Secondly, it stratifies the products of other national cinemas under a simplified rubric that emphasizes their difference from the mainstream – again defined according to the vernacular of Hollywood. The label has little space for exploring the complex modes of production we can witness in most, if not all, national cinemas, where domestic blockbusters are as common as the more frequently globally-visible art films.

It would be clearly limiting the scope of Kaurismäki's works to equate them under a simplistic label like world cinema as the production histories and identity politics of the films are more complex than the categorization implies. For one, these films directly engage with the art-popular binary, especially as their transnational scope aims to reveal the 'othering' implicit in such categories. By playing to both art-house and popular culture expectations, the films negotiate through the intentionally muddled conceptual framework that operates in the global distribution of non-Hollywood films, shedding light on the ways that global distribution mechanisms and industrial structures maintain the hegemonic dominance of Hollywood cinema. Yet they are not entirely successful in this, as revealing the structures through which such distinctions become normalized also effectively marginalizes Kaurismäki's films to a liminal status as neither/nor, a problem which is distinctly problematic for their marketing and distribution, as we will see in the final chapter.

Chapter 7

The Potential of Post-humanism: Kaurismäki and the Ecological Imagination

The notion of the global environment, far from marking humanity's reintegration into the world, signals the culmination of a process of separation.

(Ingold 1993: 31)

Many of the preceding chapters have discussed Kaurismäki's films in the nexus of globalization and national cinematic production. This is not surprising as concerns such as cosmopolitanism and urbanization necessitate engaging with the ways that the complex processes of globalization challenge our preconceived ideas on social belonging. Many of his films take this social deconstructivism even further as they focus on the ways social constellations and ideologies restrict our comprehension of the world. By striving to find some semblance of meaning in a world of fluid borders and transient relationships, the ephemeral and fleeting nature of human existence is mirrored in the dislocation of the protagonists against the backdrop of natural landscapes. This is not merely a case of seeking to strengthen (or contest) the films' discourse on national identity, but as a way of interrogating the relationship between humanity and the natural environment. As we will see, the films merge their identity politics with considerations of the global ecosystem, evoking quintessential questions of what it means to be human.

Key works in the field of post-human philosophy discuss the relationship between humanity and nature, posing questions which interrogate the centralized role of humanity in this framework. The 'post-human condition' has been discussed in a range of theoretical frameworks from Donna Haraway's cyborg-theory (Haraway 1991) to Bruno Latour's eco-philosophical investigations (Latour 1993). In their ecological examinations of cinema, David Ingram (2000) and Pat Brereton (2005) suggest that most Hollywood depictions of the environment enforce a binary between nature and humanity. Ingram's *longue durée* examination highlights many of the ways in which nature has been objectified and effectively colonized by the human imagination. For one, the natural environment is gendered in patriarchal terms as the second sex (Mother Gaia) waiting to be rescued by people clearly coded as Western and masculine in a typical (neo-)colonialist scenario. Both writers draw on a range of examples, from canonic westerns (*Stagecoach*, John Ford, 1939; *Giant*, George Stevens, 1959) to recent adventure films (*On Deadly Ground*, Steven Seagal, 1994; *At Play In The Fields of The Lord*, Hector Babenco, 1992), which conceptualize the relationship between humanity and nature in binary terms. Furthermore, anthropomorphic films like Disney's *The Lion King* (Minkoff, 1994) use nature (the circle of life) as a justification for their dubious gender and race politics. In the majority of Hollywood's engagements with nature, it becomes a space for human, often

masculine, self-realization, or the films construct narratives which play out socio-political and cultural scenarios where contentious or problematic socio-political issues are inscribed onto a supposedly depoliticized and harmless 'other' – the animals.

By highlighting the immersion of the human being into the ecosystem, post-humanist approaches seek to unravel the predominance of the human in the 'natural order' of environmentalist discourses. If humanity is only a part of the global ecosystem, and not its 'logical' master, it becomes necessary to rethink and challenge many of the predominant, taken-for-granted ideas of organized collectivity and relations of social power, many of which rely on discourses of naturalization of hegemonic social order. Indeed, eco-philosophical and post-humanist discourses have already emerged in relation to Kaurismäki's films. The mobilization of the landscape as a part of the political construction of nationhood was a key factor in *The Worthless*' aim to expose the politicized aspects of this mobilization and the alienating effects such uses of the environment have on individuals who do not fit in with predetermined, naturalized ideas of belonging. For these alienated protagonists, the landscape is a signifier of the postnational condition, as it indicates outsidership and difference, not belonging and harmony.

While one could suggest that these films re-appropriate landscapes for their own postnational politics, other examples from his oeuvre make this critical perspective clearer. *Amazon* was the first of his films to take place in the Amazonian jungle and includes substantial environmentalist discourse as part of its narrative. From the early moments of the film, when its protagonist Kari is lost in the jungle in a broken-down car, we are made aware of the significant barriers between man and the natural environment. As night falls, he has to sleep in the car, and the environment surrounding him seems exceedingly hostile from his perspective. A group of unidentified tribesmen slink past the car, touching its metallic structures and windows. To Kari, the tribesmen are part of the uncivilized 'natural' world, which is something completely apart from his Western European existence. Furthermore, it seems any trust in the overpowering promise of technology is misplaced, as the Amazonian highway, on which Kari is stranded, is littered with the corpses of mechanical caterpillars and trucks. As all the safeguards of his Western superiority have been stripped and he is left with only his useless car and his corporeal body, he is faced with the daunting disjunction between technological over-reliance and the natural environment. Stubbornly stuck in the frameworks and cultural prejudices he knows best, everything around him seems alien and only hinders his already meagre chances of survival.

While the film focuses on the potential thread of Kari's plan to transport industrial technology to the ecological harmony of Terra Revoluta, the instances where we actually encounter Western technology highlights its uselessness in this environment. Being destitute, Kari resorts to working in a large-scale diamond mine, where the use of destructive chemicals and the slave-like conditions of work emphasize the destructive potential of the human race not only on the environment, but also to themselves as part of this ecosystem. But, ironically, it seems that it is only the human body that can successfully do this type of hard labour, as the machinery can only be used for clearing trees and solid pieces of rock – human judgment is needed for quality control. This is an early indication of how the film seeks to equate the human body with the natural environment in its attempts to explore this relationship in more

productive ways than the simplified criticism of destructive human activity seen in most environmentalist cinema. The film draws its environmentalist themes in terms of an ongoing dialectics between humanity and the environment, which it contextualizes with the dynamics of the road movie. It first introduces these dynamics to capture Kari's aimless search through the Amazon, as this reflects his inability to come to terms with his immersed position in the ecosystem. But when Kari meets American pilot Dan and the two hatch a scheme to save money for the caterpillar by transporting a range of very dubious people across the jungle by Dan's plane, the road is made linear for the purpose of capital accumulation. The moral structures of *Amazon* thus become curiously simplified for a Kaurismäki film, as Kari's love-interest Paola repeatedly berates him for his activities, and both Kari and Dan are portrayed in a distinctly negative light of being prone to anger and addicted to alcohol.

This criticism is directly targeted at capitalist exploitation of the ecosystem, and Kari and Dan act as metonymic representatives of the ways that such corrosive activities can destroy the renewable cycle of the Terra Revoluta. According to the local miners, human beings come and go and take small amounts of diamonds from the land but, eventually, the rains wash away the signs of their existence. We should not take this as an excuse for justifying Kari and Dan's exploitative practices, but rather as an early indicator of the more complex dynamics between the environment and humanity, which the film has in mind. Initially, Kari is increasingly aware of the threat he poses to the ecosystem and the different cultures it contains, and he tries to find a more ecologically sound way of mining without using mercury. But such considerations are quickly overrun by the thought of the rewards that industrialized modes of mining will bring. This myopia also applies to Kari's approach to the indigenous population, especially as he briefly mentions 'some Indians' who populate the northern regions of Finland. While he calls them 'Laps', these are, of course, the Sami, who exist in a similarly estranged position as the many indigenous tribes of Brazil, marginalized by political and cultural considerations. Kari's limited perspective on other cultures and peoples functions as a part of the film's ideological criticism of his Western perspective, with all its colonialist connotations. It is not surprising that when he is taken to a local village in the wake of an accident, he views the residents as people thoroughly different from him, escaping the first change he gets. Kari's limited perspective relegates the indigenous 'insiders' to a subjugated position in relation to the Western 'outsiders' by mobilizing the human-centric, naturalizing distinction between the developed and the developing spheres of society.

We can conceptualize Amazon's engagement in environmentalist argumentation through four stages, in which the relationship between humanity and the ecosystem is conceptualized. The first stage involves appropriating environmental resources for human consumption by non-recognition or rejection of humanity's part in the eco-system, to which, of course, it inherently belongs – this is the normative lifestyle Kari has been leading as an international businessman. As Kari has moved to the second stage of environmental appropriation (explicit use of the environment for exploitative purposes), we need to take a post-humanist approach to unravelling the film's problematic discourses of subjugation. As part of its evolving dynamics of environmentalist representation, the film repeatedly indicates the

necessity for human immersion into the wider ecosystem. Kari's technological dependency is consistently undermined by such instances, as when Paola educates him about mapping by the North Star – suggesting that the structures of the solar system are mirrored in the natural environment. Thus, navigating in the jungle is not feasible through recourse to roads and other systems of conventional human transportation. In order to survive in this environment, it is necessary to move to a more complex understanding of the complexity of the ecosystem of Amazonia beyond focusing on the technology humanity has created to master the environment. By foregoing this superficial feeling of superiority, Kari learns to navigate by the stars and eventually finds a way out of the jungle.

Kari's success in letting go of his technological dependency leads to the third stage of environmentalist argumentation, which is achieved by merging (immersing) the protagonist into the natural environment. In earlier Kaurismäki films, such as *The Worthless*, the protagonists are the focal point of the screen. Even when we see them in a long shot, they stand out from the *mise-en-scène* or their ideological predilections are reflected in elements of the diegesis. In comparison, the protagonists of *Amazon* find themselves thwarted by the sheer magnitude of their surroundings, reducing their individual goals to insignificance in comparison to wider concerns. While the film does elicit warnings that every individual contributes to the destruction, the immersion of the human body into the organic material of the environment (such as when the mud-covered Kari becomes indistinguishable from the open mine or the flowing river) indicates that individual motivations pale in comparison to the importance of the ecosystem. As Kari and Dan's plane crashes in the jungle, local tribesmen come to Kari's rescue and take him to their village where he is treated with indigenous medicine and his broken leg is mended. Kari eventually attempts to escape from the village and return back to his 'civilization' by stealing a boat, which he aims to navigate down the river. The aural world of the film supports the need for immersion: the score music is comprised of organic elements that sound atonal and strange, at least to Western ears. As Kari is lost in the jungle, the organic aural and visual spectacle seeks to synergize his body with the natural environment but, to him, all of these elements are, at first, strange and alienating, suggesting his inability to cope with this type of binary breaching. But, as he slowly comes to understand the necessity for immersion, we see him navigating through the jungle river on his boat and he even successfully kills a crocodile. While this type of adventurism is certainly somewhat naïve, it reveals the film's intentions of situating its environmental politics on the level of corporeality, gesturing to us to think beyond the structures and binary paradigms instilled by humanity.

These stages of environmentalist argumentation are also exemplified through the types of identification that costumes provide or prohibit. In *The Worthless*, the overcoat worn by Manne evokes Godardian associations which differentiate the film from the mainstream of Finnish cinema. The coat signifies his otherness against the backdrop of the political landscape, allowing the creation of the films' ideologically-critical collages. Costume, or more appropriately clothing, plays a substantial role in the environmentalist films as well, signifying the degrees of immersion of the protagonists into the natural environment.

Amazon is a key example of this, as the clothing covering Kari's body mirrors his trajectory from a multinational businessman to a person who has to reassess his relationship with organized society and the natural world. Kari gradually loses his physical possessions, beginning with his briefcase and his suit in Rio de Janeiro. The loss is highly symbolic because Kari has come to the city to escape his past, relying on the country's reputation as an exotic uncivilized third-world nation where exportation laws do not apply. Such a condescending perspective can only get him so far and, soon, his sense of cultural superiority backfires. Eventually we find him lost in the middle of the jungle with nothing more than a vest and a pair of trousers, failed by his reliance on technology and his 'cultivated' business instincts.

To survive in the wilderness and not be detected by his white vest, Kari has to strip down to a loincloth. This is a very unusual occurrence in the oeuvre of Kaurismäki, as the human body is seldom revealed in his films. Even *The Clan*, with its reliance on the national landscape and nature/man parallels, never shows us much of the human body, or if it does, it is part of its subversive politics of the national landscape. The role of clothing is highlighted by this occurrence, signifying its importance in unravelling human-centric thinking on the environment – a notion reflected in the organic ornaments and clothing of the tribesmen. Instead of the suits and trousers that follow the general patterns of the human body, the costumes of the tribesmen are in line with natural patterns such as trees and bushes of various kinds. Whereas urban clothing is more about the centrality of the human body, nature clearly has more of an influence on organized communities in this environment. Urbanity is governed by structures that are increasingly distinct from any sense of correlation with the environment, but Kaurismäki's film intends to show us a return us to a more harmonious state.

Is Kaurismäki's film an eco-philosophical text, intending to complicate, perhaps, unravel, our understanding of the human/nature paradigm, or does it inadvertently strengthen the systems it seeks to critique? Certainly, the film is problematic on a level similar to most large-budget Hollywood explorations of environmental issues. These problems have been identified by David Ingram (2000) as 'melodramatic ecologicalism', where melodramatic narrative structures and neat closures reduce complex issues to individualized or simplified answers to complex problems. Furthermore, 'the attribution of blame to a nameless and inaccessible "they" is a consistent element in the depoliticization of environmental issues in Hollywood films' (Ingram 2000: 3). Kaurismäki's film complicates both of these notions with its final scene, where Kari returns to Paola and the unexploited diamond mine. The final image of the film is a freeze-frame of his face as he gazes at a helicopter transporting the caterpillar to the mine. It seems he is inherently complicit in the destruction that is about to be unleashed. This is the fourth stage of its argumentation. There is no narrative closure here, as the end credits are preceded by shots of the destruction unleashed by deforestation with captions providing information of its extent. There are no nameless 'they' here: it is our protagonist, and our focal point of the film, who is the culprit of environmental destruction. Despite all the instances of environmental awakening, Kari resorts to the lure of exploitative capitalism. The fourth stage is, then, a self-reflective one. It seeks to awaken the spectator to their own complicity in supporting, and thus maintaining, the exploitation they have witnessed.

Producing environmentalism

The film sets out to interrogate what rights the humans have in terms of nature. (Kaurismäki, *Amazon* DVD-interview, 2008)

Film production has an impact on any environment it aims to depict because the material resources and the physical presence of the production crew create great a demand for sustenance and production facilities, and Kaurismäki is well aware of such problems inevitably involved in producing filmic depictions of environmental destruction. The initial problems with *Amazon* involved locating suitable technology to take to the jungle. The crew would also leave unavoidable traces of their presence, not only on the ecosystem, but also on the socio-cultural systems they seek to represent. Kaurismäki's position as a Western film-maker further complicates the argumentative positioning of the film. While the film was produced with the clear intention of raising awareness of these global problems, it was still financed by Finnish investor Pentti Kouri and a group of American financiers operating in the film business. The conflict between idealism and capitalism thus manifests in the production process as Kaurismäki's small-scale road movie bloated into an expansive and expensive epic – it would effectively have to function within the system it is criticizing.

Amazon's inability to escape its own structures is reflected in its choice to focus on a nomadic outsider in the wilderness and 'non-civilization'. This is a conventional narrative device in films which explore relations between the developed and developing world from a Western perspective, applying equally to 'colonialist' films such as *Indochine* and environmentalist cinema like *Medicine Man* (McTiernan, 1992). Here, the relationship between humanity and the natural environment is often framed in terms of civilization (the West) and nature (indigenous people). Idealistic as they may be, both approaches are emblematic of 'greenwashing', as they enforce human superiority over nature and, in the process, naturalize a colonialist perspective on the natural domain. Both modes are achieved through seemingly-beneficial techniques emphasizing environmental awareness, but they are mostly comprised of empty and ineffectual rhetoric, as Ingram suggests. Images and ideas of change take over from change itself, providing only a surface allusion of socially-participant criticism.

Amazon's self-reflexive critical perspective allows it to distinguish itself from these types of cinema. As Kari is put in a position where he is unwilling to relinquish his former identity, yet the trappings and qualities of that identity mean very little in his current predilection, we are provided with a transvergent gap in the representational structure. This gap is also present in the production strategies of the film. Kaurismäki used a small crew for the majority of his scenes due to transportation and location-shooting logistics. But, for many of the large scenes, he had to employ an army of people who would inevitably leave a mark on the environment. However, instead of disrupting the way of life of an indigenous village, Kaurismäki's crew built a replica village near the city of Manaus with the help of locals, who had migrated to the cities and were already familiar with the 'culture of the white man' (Kaurismäki, *Amazon* DVD). This collaboration aimed for a high level of authenticity as they wanted to show

‘what life was really like in the villages’ (ibid.). While this perspective shows awareness of environmental and cultural costs of cinematic representation, it also demonstrates a common fallacy of large-scale Western environmentalist cinema. The replacement of authenticity with simulacra only works to reinforce a touristic, exoticized perspective on nature and the people who inhabit such ‘undeveloped’ villages. The double complications of such representations assume that indigenous cultures can be easily replicated by Western technology and that such representations are, in one way or another, beneficial for both nature and the people, who are conceptualized as part of the natural environment.

Here, the film maintains a ‘manichean’ sense of conflict as it provides an idyllicized image of the natural environment, accentuated by many of Paola’s comments on the purity of nature. This approach is very close to perspectives aligned with ‘deep ecology’. This is a conservationist approach, problematic in its emphasis on maintaining barriers between humanity and the environment. While it emphasizes humanity’s need to protect the environment under its auspices, the environment is conceptualized as something radically different and separate from humanity. According to radical environmentalist thought, mainstream conservationism strengthens capitalist ideology, as it maintains the right of humanity to control the environment. Deep ecology is also not conducive for an eco-philosophical approach because it proposes no new ways of understanding this complicated relationship. Kaurismäki’s film negotiates between different perspectives, seeing the environment as something in need of protection, but also including the suggestion that human-centric approaches need to be unravelled in order to reach some type of equilibrium with nature. By demonstrating the incapability of a business-minded entrepreneur like Kari to successfully immerse himself in the environment, the film shows the inability and unwillingness of capitalist or any expansionist ideology to conceive of the natural world as anything but a collection of resources waiting to be exploited for human consumption.

Are we then to abandon critical explorations of other contexts and contentious political ideas if we constantly become implicated in sustaining these unequal power relations? Kaurismäki’s films do not side with this view, as they try to complicate the problems of conservationism and preservationism – both positions which see humans as fundamentally opposed to, and separate from, the natural environment. Instead, they try to understand this relationship in holistic terms where humanity exists as another part of the ecosystem, as we saw in Kari’s (failed) attempts at immersion. This holistic interconnection is not only a part of the environmentalist films but extends to his music documentaries. For example, *Moro no Brasil* evokes ecological conceptualizations through its depiction of the ways different music cultures incorporate elements from nature. Local musicians in Pernambuco tell us that there are over 20 different styles of musical culture, all of which live in harmony with nature. The musicians explain that, for them, ‘music is a part of the body and a part of life’. Connecting musical self-expression to an organic sense of the body understands musical self-expression as emanating from one’s corporeal interconnectivity with nature. For them, music emerges from the rhythms of the natural environment as improvisational techniques, which channel patterns of nature and connote the merging of the body with the ecosystem.

Such eco-harmony provides a template for *Sonic Mirror's* attempts to map a more holistic perspective of interhuman and 'post-human' communication. As the film bases its universalism on rhythm's ability to cross interpersonal and cultural barriers, it decentralizes humanity's position at the forefront of 'progress'. If humanity is just one part of the ecosystem, then the centrality of its structures of power, as well as its systems of categorization/exploitation, need to be rethought. We see this type of rethinking in *Moro no Brasil* as Kaurismäki's crew ventures to industrial sites which are now being re-appropriated for indigenous artistic and cultural use. The deindustrialization of these sites also gestures to an understanding of the changing balances of power within the developed and developing nation paradigm, entirely appropriate with Brazil emerging as one of the largest economies in the world. As we are made privy to the glocalised performance of Funk'n'lata in these sites of restructuring, the re-appropriation works as an invitation to reassess the stratification of the city into finance centres and marginal manufacturing hubs – a notion which extends to the need to reassess the one-way flow of culture and capital in the unequal developed/developing nations relationship.

To emphasize this point, *Moro no Brasil* tells us that 'the earth can give us everything as the music creates a connection between the invisible and the visible'. Such a perspective moves beyond the conservationist and preservationist tendencies, where nature is still conceptualized as an entity external to human beings. The performers' reciprocity with the environment shows that it is up to individuals to change their modes of conduct as 'there can be no general species accountability for ecological damage, due to global inequality and the stratas of exploitation' (Ingram 2000: x). The last point is crucial, as it underlines the extent to which ambiguous conceptualizations of humanity mask the role socio-political power plays in environmental exploitation, of displacing the terms of the debate into a 'pan-human' arena, instead of interrogating the role of specific organizations and nations in this process. *Amazon's* self-reflexive narrative techniques and a blurred sense of spectator identification with the Western heroes complicate our spectatorial position, negating any possibility that we may take these representations for granted. But, inevitably, any ideological or critical work the film does is challenged by its origins. Thus, Kaurismäki has to negotiate the complexities of being a Western producer working with Western capital for audiences that will predominantly be in the West. This is not only a problem of appropriating exoticized cultures for the sort of cultural capital that allows a film to succeed in the art-house market, but also of using environmental messages to increase their visibility and respectability in critical circles. The demands of the market are met by the films' focus on exoticized spectacle, but their complex and constant attempts to undermine narrative expectations necessitates that the spectator engages with their position in the global mosaic the films construct, raising questions over one's situatedness in the global politics of representation.

The environment and the human cinematic imagination

Despite the many efforts of Kaurismäki's environmental films to achieve a sense of ecological harmony, nature still functions as a way of fostering self- or group identity. The valorization of

agrarian ways of life highlights the schisms between modernity and tradition, but the constant emphasis on the (un)education of the rural people maintains a dichotomy between the 'civilized' and the natural world, effectively constituting another form of greenwashing. While their connectivity with nature is often shown as a positive quality, the 'natives' are portrayed as superstitious or technologically undeveloped. Similarly, the protagonists of *Tigrero* venture into the Karaja village with the intention of capturing something authentic and original that is presumably missing from the modernized lifestyles they lead. The group comes across as tourists wandering into an exoticized spectacle, as we are constantly drawn to the disjunction between the 'authenticity' of the Karajas' lifestyles and the negative impact of modernization.

As was the case with the Indian village in *Amazon*, the Karaja act as a metonym for nature. The film makes a clear distinction between the Western subject and their technological modes of representation, and the indigenous subject, who is given very little agency in the cultural negotiations of the film. The distinction is largely one to do with anthropology, of observing and being observed. Any perspective the film provides is ultimately restricted by its selective representational framework, where the comments by the Karaja provide the text with suitable forms of critical capital. Thus, we have the impetus to create ethnographic forms of representation that allow Western audiences to appreciate and marvel at the 'authenticity' of the lifestyles of the villagers. By maintaining the strong binary between 'humanity' and the environment in place, the film continues to repeat the old colonialist paradigms of using 'natural matter' for the strengthening of Western self-identity. There is very little difference here between the type of film that Kaurismäki is producing and the John Wayne epic Sam Fuller intended to produce in the first place, as it is Western technology that comes to embody civilization and development.

While we must acknowledge all these problems of perspective in Kaurismäki's films, we must also ask how we are to engage with the unequal balances of power and the destruction of the global ecosystem in cinema, if all Western approaches are immediately compromised. As the protagonists of Kaurismäki's documentaries consist of well-known film-makers who have devoted their careers to inspecting the problems of cultural communication, the placement of these figures in this landscape instigates debate on the tendency to capitalize on other cultures, inherent in most Western modes of environmental representation. The immersion of these cultural producers in the ecosystem gestures to an understanding of nature as a 'breathing landscape that is no longer just a passive backdrop against which human history unfolds, but a potential field of intelligence in which our actions participate' (Abram 260: 1997). Despite all their problems of representation, such films are also able to do some beneficial work, at least on the level of using their production and distribution machineries for creating wider awareness of these problems. Indeed, Kaurismäki's environmentalism was commended by the World Wildlife Federation, as he was awarded an 'Eco-Finlandia' prize in 1990 for the cultural awareness that *Amazon* created.

Tigrero's final line ('and now we have to go back to civilization!') indicates that, for these directors, the term civilization needs to be, if not contested, at least thoroughly explored. The barriers between humanity and the natural environment may still be in place, but it seems that nature is expelling humanity out of its recyclive structures. Having migrated to

the replacement jungles of cities, humanity now finds itself in urban landscapes that they are free to mould into their own image. But these are also spaces that encourage the worst of human exploitation, as interpersonal and communal degradation seems entirely natural in these environments – almost as if these spaces were designed for this sole purpose. And if the protagonists venture outside the cities, they come face to face with the remnants of the commodified ('cultured') natural environment, or they find themselves in Marc Augé's non-places: 'a world where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating... a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and the ephemeral' (Augé 1995: 78). In *The Worthless*, we observe a literal translation of Augé's concepts as Matti and Juuso escape the city and set up camp at an abandoned summer cottage. These cottages are an integral part of the Finnish national imaginary and a way for the Finns to go back to their 'ancestral' roots from the displacement of the cities. In Kaurismäki's film, the cottage has been transformed into a non-place, a temporal habitat and only a transit point that connotes the 'supermodernity' of the Finland of the early 1980s. Ordinarily, national landscapes would serve to situate the protagonists in the national imagination, effectively reinforcing the typical paradigm of materialist appropriation of the natural environment. Kaurismäki's films sever its implications as socio-cultural connective tissue, inverting the typical structure of cinematic environmentalist appropriation. Thus, the environment of the films becomes something that shatters social cohesion instead of enforcing it.

What is the role of non-places in a post-human world? *The Last Border* shows us a world where social organization on the basis of nationhood has ceased to exist. Social collectivity has evaporated with the sustainable ecosystem and now the environment only functions as something that repels humanity from its surface. If humanity is not able to live without its exploitative tendencies, its collective formations will also cease to exist, the film seems to imply. As these nomadic people wander through the non-places that national spaces have become, the notion of home gets more and more distant. The road is the only place where any sense of stable life can be created, as all the people have become Augé's 'passing strangers': 'a foreigner lost in a country he does not know can feel at home there only in the anonymity of motorways, service stations, big stores or hotel chains' (Augé 1995: 105). This world is not only populated by the burnt-out husks of the non-places (making them something akin to 'displaces'), but by a conception of society as an interminable road. Once the environment severs its connection with humanity, we enter the post-human condition. In this condition, any mode of social organization only functions as a heterotopic version of the now-defunct society, reminding us of what we have lost. It is clear that humanity has been an organic part of the natural world (contradicting the arguments of human ownership over nature) but, as with any part of a system that starts to malfunction, it has to be eliminated for the benefit of the greater good. Conceptualizing of the whole world as a non-place extends the post-humanist and postnationalist argumentation of Kaurismäki's films, suggesting the need to rethink the organizational structures and power relations of human-to-human connectivity and its relationship with the eco-system.

Chapter 8

The Polyphonicity of Transvergence: The Reception of Kaurismäki's Cinema

Close readings of Kaurismäki's films make it clear that the films challenge most aspects of mainstream cinema as they navigate transvergent courses through the established power structures of cinematic, political, economic and cultural production. His films can seldom be categorized into the conventional structures, on which much of the global critical discourse and distribution and exhibition practices of cinema rely. They contain the critical perspectives we usually associate with the art-house, while they use genre and aesthetic conventions from popular cinema in ways that seem to abide with commercial imperatives. Mobilizing the conventions of commercial genre film is often done in narratives that have an alternative ideological goal, whether it is the environmentalism of *Amazon* or the geopolitical nihilism of *Honey Baby*. Pam Cook's insightful distinction of what she calls simply 'the popular art film' can account for this complexity. Such modes of film production are

characterized by a disregard for traditional boundaries between art and entertainment; it mixes classical forms with modernist strategies, and crosses over between popular and niche audiences. While it may have discernible national characteristics, it is transnational in approach and realization, and its national/transnational status is often contested via contextual discourses such as press and other critical reactions. (Cook 2010: 25)

Kaurismäki's films meet all of the above criteria and their transnational/international/postnational/national structures are heavily debated in both Finnish and international circles. This chapter situates my theoretical readings of Kaurismäki's films with their industrial context and critical reception. It is important to perform this work to understand the implications of Kaurismäki's transvergent films on both cultural politics and economics of Finnish cinema. I have discussed the Finnish critical reception of Aki and Mika Kaurismäki's films from 1981 to 1994 in my monograph *The National and Beyond* (Käpä 2010a). In this work, I suggested that the reception often tends to 'linearize' the Kaurismäki's postnational approaches to a more traditional national narrative. In Chapter 2, this volume, we explored the differences and similarities in the Kaurismäki's films, suggesting that there is substantial overlap in how critics and distributors perceive them. To account for Mika Kaurismäki's cultural and industrial status, it is necessary to deconstruct the implications of what I call the 'Kaurismäki structure': a compendium of meanings critics, distributors, producers, and exhibitors identify as part of an idiosyncratically Kaurismäkian cinema.

How is this structure created and maintained? The origins of this structure are relatively easy to reconstruct, as their roots lie not only in the thematic content of both Kaurismäki's

films but also in their production methods. Since the early collaborative years at Film Total, the Kaurismäkis have often worked together, also giving interviews in collusion. When lengthier articles were written on them in the first half of the 1980s, journalists were predominantly concerned with the Kaurismäkis as a package (see Von Bagh, 1984, for one particularly influential example). Due to their antagonistic manner, the Kaurismäki brand started becoming synonymous with a certain style of youth-oriented and aggressively critical art-house film production. This esoteric criticism was, of course, ultimately modified to a more populist approach in the Mika Kaurismäki-directed *The Worthless* and *The Clan*, both of which were co-produced and written by Aki Kaurismäki. Both brothers found international success more or less at the same time, as Aki's *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel*, and Mika's *Rosso* and *Helsinki Napoli All Night Long* received commercial and festival distribution across Europe, often in repertoires of either Finnish cinema, or those devoted solely to the Kaurismäkis. As few competitive Finnish films received international distribution, critics began to take note of the nation as one populated by tough-talking cosmopolitans, petty criminals, alcoholic miscreants, or downtrodden proletarians.

Their association with both established (Fuller, Wenders) and emergent indie directors (Jarmusch, Demme) further contributed an element of hipness to the Kaurismäki brand. This was fully consolidated when Jim Jarmusch produced *Night on Earth* (1991), his episodic exploration of five taxi journeys taking place around the world during a single night. The film's final episode is set in Finland, where a lone taxi driver (played by the 'sad rat' icon of Kaurismäki cinema Matti Pellonpää) has to pick up three drunken men on a snowy Christmas Eve. Two of these men are called Aki and Mika (played by the Kaurismäki regulars Sakari Kuosmanen and Kari Väänänen), and the other two people we see in the film are played by Jaakko Talaskivi and Klaus Heydemann, both regular collaborators on the Kaurismäkis' productions. The three men reflect many oft-repeated factors of the 'national character' (unemployed, drunk, depressed, suicidal). But as Pellonpää's character tells a story so devastating that the three men have to reassess their depressive tendencies, it is clear that the film works with stereotypes and narrative structures familiar from both brothers' films, but it does so in an even more self-conscious manner than the authentic films of the Kaurismäkis. Crucially, the set of associations Jarmusch draws on are, by the early 1990s, predominantly associated with the themes and cinematic techniques of Aki Kaurismäki's films. The construction of the Kaurismäki structure arguably affects the perception of Mika Kaurismäki's films more than they do those of his brother. This is due to the global prevalence of Aki's films, almost to the extent where the conception of an 'Aki-world' seems to have replaced cinematic representations of Finland. Thus, Jarmusch's film strengthens the limiting dimensions of the Kaurismäki structure. From an international perspective, the films of both Kaurismäkis are connected, first of all with the network of meanings Jarmusch mines and, secondly, with the very idiosyncratic cinematic discourses that circle around the persona and films of Aki Kaurismäki.

Whereas critics identify a clear set of inspirations for Aki Kaurismäki's films, they have had a much tougher time pinning down Mika Kaurismäki's films. Frequent comparisons

have been made with the films of the French New Wave, as many of his early films were clearly inspired by the irreverent attitudes and stylistic transmutations of these films. Cameos by many well-known film-makers and actors maintain this set of associations. For example, Wim Wenders' cameo in *Helsinki Napoli* reinforces the sense of a cosmopolitan film maker, who feels at home travelling through the different cultural climates of the world. But, as is the case with Wenders, Kaurismäki is also an outsider who does not abide by the dominant moral or political conceptualizations of cinematic mores or power relations – it is thus no coincidence that Kaurismäki's *Moro no Brasil* can be thought of as a sequel of sorts to Wenders' *Buena Vista Social Club*.

Wenders's reputation as a director who famously rebels against Hollywood's 'colonization' of the subconscious of the world is another key feature of the Kaurismäki structure, and both Kaurismäkis have repeatedly and publicly voiced their opposition to commercial cinema. Yet Wenders and even Jarmusch can be seen as purveyors of the popular art film. For example, Wenders' *The End of Violence* (1998) and Jarmusch' *Ghost Dog* (2000) feature recognizable faces such as Forrest Whitaker and Bill Pullman who, if not entirely A-list, provide recognizable cultural capital, while the films also focus on transnational connections and use genre structures in unconventional ways. Similarly, Kaurismäki's casting of actors like Johnny Depp and David Tennant allows them to traverse the lines between the art-house and popular culture. These associative interconnections go further back in film history, as Sam Fuller also makes appearances in Kaurismäki's film as a cigar-chewing stereotype of a gangster, all the more appropriate considering his seminal role in the formation of the American independent film, creating 'B-pictures' such as *Underworld U.S.A* (Fuller, 1961). This connection is further highlighted as he was the first invited guest of the Midnight Sun Film Festival in 1986 in the northern Finnish town of Sodankylä. Other notable festival guests include Jonathan Demme, who started out in independent films working for Roger Corman (who in turn, was the guest of honour at the festival in 1992), and went on to graduate with large-scale Hollywood productions such as *Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991). Demme assisted Kaurismäki in the production of *Condition Red*, which contains a thematic connection with his early film *Caged Heat* (Demme, 1974). The transnational independent cinema espoused by all these directors (plus other festival guests and key directors of contemporary 'world cinema' such as Fatih Akin and Abbas Kiarostami) is a key associative framework in the production methods of both Kaurismäkis' films, but also in how they are distributed and exhibited, and, ultimately, received around the film festivals of the world.

The creation and sustenance of such networks of affinity work to provide both opportunities and obstacles for the distribution and reception of Mika Kaurismäki's films. To set the context for further analysis, I will briefly discuss an article from 1987 by Finnish journalist Rolf Bamberg, *The International Kaurismäkis*. The article emphasizes the important status of the Kaurismäkis within Finnish cultural circles, detailing their various activities in the field of Finnish cinema as distributors, exhibitors and producers. This culminates in the declaration that 'one cannot talk of Finnish cinema without

mentioning the name Kaurismäki' (Bamberg 1987). Bamberg moves on to detail the various international dimensions of their cultural work, including Mika Kaurismäki's first international co-production, *Helsinki Napoli*. Mika Kaurismäki informs us that Andorra, their cinema in Helsinki, programmes, for example, Spanish and Irish films, as they are frequently categorized as art-house cinema, which would not be otherwise shown in Finland. Through the Midnight Sun Festival, the Kaurismäkis feel they can remain connected to the rest of the world (Bamberg 1987). Kaurismäki's comments highlight many of the ways in which the Finnish cultural confines seem to him limiting. For one, the distribution mechanisms are, at least in his opinion, clearly prejudiced towards commercial entertainment, allowing little space for artistic difference and experimentation. Similar comments have been made by both Kaurismäkis through the 1980s, as they frequently cite the close-minded commercialist cultural circles of the nation as a primary reason for starting to seek international collaboration and financing. But it is also crucial that they attempt to rectify this situation by bringing international culture to Finnish audiences. By distributing foreign films and assimilating transnational elements into their own films, they effectively negotiate the internationalizing parameters of Finnish cinema by controlling what gets brought in and how content is integrated into its transnationalizing structures. Transnational cultural exchange and the reciprocity of glocalization are, thus, established as a key trend, not only in the cultural activities of the Kaurismäkis but also in the critical perception of their artistic personas.

Many of the normative tropes of the Kaurismäki structure emerge in Bamberg's article. For him, we cannot talk of Finnish cinema without mentioning the Kaurismäkis. There is a concrete effort here to widen the parameters of what constitutes Finnish cinema in terms of what constitutes Kaurismäki-cinema – not only in narrative terms, but also in terms of the distribution and consumption of foreign films in the country. For some Finnish critics, such internationalization was the cause of cultural panic, reflecting a general resistance to the increasing globalization of Finnish society. Certain critics, including Bamberg, saw this internationalization as a positive factor in aiding Finnish culture undo what they perceived as its excessive hermeticism. These issues generated substantial debate and served to reinforce some of the predominant paradigms of the Kaurismäki structure already in place by the mid-1980s. As these ideas were consistently and successfully reinforced by comments from both Kaurismäkis, their distribution and self-marketing activities, affinity networks, and global reception patterns, it is not surprising that such a clearly-defined framework still largely impacts the ways that Mika Kaurismäki's diverse films are consumed globally – a notion that also filters down to the types of opportunities he receives.

The need to internationalise

Before we discuss the reception of Mika Kaurismäki's films, we must clarify how they relate to industrial considerations of Finnish cinema. In Andrew Nestingen's view, Aki Kaurismäki

continues to mobilize an 'anti-capitalist model of business practice' in the production and distribution of his films. This model is predicated on working on small-scale productions with very limited funds, a set of frequent collaborators, in-house marketing, and pre-organized international distribution mechanisms (Nestingen 2010). This contrarian model has its roots in the founding of Film Total, an independent film organization in which both Kaurismäki played a key role. Nestingen suggests this cooperative allowed for several artists, such as Markku Lehmuskallio and Anssi Mänttari, to operate outside the delineations of the Finnish Film Foundation and, crucially, to engage in anti-institutional criticism of the state of the Finnish film industry. Yet, while Aki Kaurismäki maintains the Film Total approach (simultaneously using it for the cultivation of a very self-aware public image of the Bohemian artist), Mika Kaurismäki's multi-faceted career has necessitated constant negotiations with the cultural economics of film production.

Finland still has relatively small-scale film financing budgets despite all types of resuscitation, especially when compared to most European countries. This is of course visible in Finnish cinema. When films are produced with the same budget and same production crews, they begin to seem the same, even if their stories are different. There should be more chances to make different types and sizes of film. (Kaurismäki in Rosenqvist 2009)

These comments made by Mika Kaurismäki in 2009 clearly demonstrate his discontent with Finland's production and financing structures. Yet the majority of his productions, ranging from small-scale efforts like *Zombie and the Ghost Train* to some of the most expensive productions ever undertaken by a Finnish director (*Amazon*), have received support from the Finnish Film Foundation. For example, *The Worthless* received a 'quality grant' of £16,000 (160,000 Finnish markkas) in 1982 from the Foundation, in addition to its production subsidy of £141,000 – a substantial increase from the £10,000 awarded to the production of *The Liar* in 1981. Most Finnish critics also found the film successful, yet the viewing figures (70.188 spectators) were a relative disappointment. Mika Kaurismäki's productions have consistently maintained a very lucrative relationship with governmental funding organizations, as the production financing (£37,800) and the quality grant (£20,000) for *Rosso* can attest. Similarly, the financing for *The Clan* (over £200,000 in production subsidies) indicates an increasing willingness on the part of the Foundation to support Kaurismäki's cinematic endeavours.

Despite receiving continuous funding for his projects, the infrastructural framework of Finnish cinema does not seem to facilitate or foster the type of innovation he seeks. For him, the pre-eminence of national themes produced and dictated by the same artistic and material sources limits its scope and the type of material that is to be covered. Thus, internationalization, both in terms of themes and production sources, becomes a necessary feature of any cinematic production which aims to find new means of expression. While Kaurismäki's films up to *Rosso* could be comfortably situated within the funding and

distribution structures of European art-cinema (despite their domestic 'mainstream' status, internationally they are considered art films), his next production, *Helsinki-Napoli All Night Long*, was a truly international collaboration. The financing for the production came from a multitude of sources, with the Finnish Film Foundation providing approximately £100,000 of its £1 million budget (one of the largest production budgets for any film with key input from Finland). The film was released commercially across Europe, Brazil and Japan, as well as through substantial festival distribution, building on the release of *Rosso* in both France and Germany, and all the Scandinavian countries. At this point in their careers, both Kaurismäkis began directing their attention to distribution and production mechanisms abroad. They received a five-picture production deal with the Swedish Film Institute, who helped co-fund Aki Kaurismäki's *Ariel*, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* and *The Match Factory Girl*, and Mika Kaurismäki's *Cha Cha Cha* and *Paper Star*. Both films received substantial grants from Sweden (over £200,000) compared to the approximately £40,000 they received from Finnish Film Institute. While they were not particularly successful in either country, the films received commercial releases in Sweden and Germany and also benefitted from festival circulation in Montreal and La Baule in France. Nevertheless, their real success lies in initiating pan-Nordic interconnectivity, as Finland had been relatively isolated from the frequent Nordic cinematic cooperation between the Scandinavian countries.

There are two clear, interconnecting parallels taking place in the ways Mika Kaurismäki mobilizes his attempts to move beyond singular national confines. On one hand, he is keen to foster thematic connectivity not only with other national cinemas, but also incorporate elements from them into his idiosyncratic cinema. On the other hand, a large part of this activity is devoted to fostering connectivity with production companies and financiers, both of which contribute to a cinematic network that facilitates increasing transnational visibility, and provides further opportunities to find potential collaborators and audiences who are familiar with his particular brand of cinematic production. As an indicator of how these strategies work, *Zombie and the Ghost Train*, a small-scale esoteric film by most standards, received releases in most European countries, including the previously elusive markets of Spain and Turkey, but it was also released in Japan and the United States. The film had one of the widest festival circulations of any Finnish film up to date, including screenings in New York and Hong Kong, and resulting in the best actor award for Silu Seppälä's performance at the San Sebastian Pescara festival. *Amazon* was an international production with a sizeable budget of £1.5 million (qualifying it as the most expensive Finnish film up to that point). It was produced in collaboration with German, Finnish, American, and Brazilian production companies, receiving £200,000 from the Finnish Film Foundation. It was distributed commercially in over thirty countries – the widest release for a Finnish production at the time – including Latin and North America and Asia, markets which had been more or less impenetrable for the Kaurismäkis up to this point. In addition, it received substantial domestic and international journalistic coverage of its wide festival circulation in, amongst others, Montreal, Berlin, New York, Havana and Sao Paulo, amounting to a truly global circulation for this adventure film. *The Last Border* was significantly less successful as it

participated in some minor festivals around the world, though it received a well-publicized screening at the Toronto International Film Festival. While commercial releases followed in Germany and Russia, this was a substantial downturn from *Zombie's* multi-continental market penetration. *Tigrero* was something of a return to form for Kaurismäki's critical status, as it received a dose of awards in Berlin, Bratislava and San Francisco, and circulated globally at festivals. The fact that such an esoteric documentary film was also released commercially in Latin America, Australia, Germany, US and Europe tells us of the level of success in Kaurismäki's engagements with different productions modes.

Self-reflexivity

Before embarking on in-depth analysis of the Kaurismäki structure, we must acknowledge certain self-reflexive issues in terms of my analytical position. The discussion of the reception of both Kaurismäki's films in *The National and Beyond* suggests that the Kaurismäki's films contest the normative structures of Finnish cinema. While I emphasize Aki's class-based postnationalism and Mika's increasingly wide-ranging cosmopolitanism, the investigation of these matters in a single monograph bearing the name of both brothers will have a limiting impact and, perhaps inadvertently, reinforce the Kaurismäki structure. This work follows the ideological and methodological impetus set by the transvergent texts of Mika Kaurismäki, which necessitates that I consider my position as a native Finn and the influence this has on my understanding of the dynamics of national culture and cosmopolitanism in his films. As is the case with Kaurismäki's auto-ethnographic cinema, it would be very difficult for any culturally-located analyst to transcend their context to an objective level, free from any sort of cultural interference. Even if they would like to consider themselves as a cosmopolitan outsider or a nomadic 'other', they still have some stake in the outcome of these cultural and political negotiations. Indeed, it would be counterproductive to insist on such a position, as cultural discussion is always contextual, despite any arguments concerning the ways in which culturally-located subjects are irrevocably displaced by the many complex processes of globalization. Where we come from and the contextual factors in which we write will inevitably function as signposts in any attempt to negotiate the complexities of cultural exchange. Even if we consciously reject any sense of situational effect on our analytical position, such avoidance will only result in situating us within another analytical framework. For example, if we seek to reject any limiting connotations of the national, as Higson has urged us to do (2000b), we may find ourselves in the emergent frameworks of transnational or postnational cinema, all with their own sets of rules and limitations. As much as Kaurismäki finds himself trapped by his subjective perspective on other cultures, and thus conforms to auto-ethnographicism in trying to overcome his limiting positionality, we, as academics, pursue both insider- and outsidership in our attempts to provide a modicum of in-depth cultural knowledge, while we attempt to maintain a distinctly objective perspective on the subjects we study. And, as we criticize Kaurismäki for his approach, we must also be the

target of critical self-reflexive analysis due to our embeddedness in our philosophical and material conditions.

How can we negotiate these problems of cultural situatedness and account for Kaurismäki's attempts at polylocality and transvergence? Zhang Yingjin has put forth a productive model for analytical self-reflexivity, which he calls a 'dialogic mode of cross-cultural analysis' (Zhang 2002:140). Zhang writes in the context of Chinese cinema, where the imposition of Western theoretical and cultural concepts to the study of this cinema has been a persistently problematic notion. The analytical work of Western scholars on Chinese cinema tends to be limited by their 'cultural baggage', which needs to be thoroughly interrogated and not merely acknowledged, if we are to come to any dynamic and productive form of cross- or intercultural understanding. Dialogism calls for the need to maintain ongoing reciprocal dialogue between different cultures (and inside such cultures) and interrogate our taken-for-granted values.

What does this process entail and what do such notions mean for Kaurismäki's films? The necessity to create reciprocal knowledge, based on open-ended conceptualizations of individual subjectivities and cultures, is entirely appropriate in the case of Mika Kaurismäki's cinema. I have suggested that understanding these films strictly in the framework of transnational cinema may limit their meaning-potential. Despite all its connotations of hybridity and border-crossing, transnational cinema is fast becoming established as a discipline in its own right, with its internal rigours and forms of conformity (and there are clear borders here, despite its focus on 'borderless' film-making). If we take these constraints as dogma, we may unconsciously, or otherwise, end up forcing films such as those of Kaurismäki into the existent paradigms of transnational cinema studies. Such an approach will take for granted that these films explore the instability of identity and culture in conditions of diaspora or cross-border flow. And, to a large extent, such approaches have valid points to make, as globalization necessitates us to ask these questions and interrogate our assumptions about shared culture or normative values. While there are fundamental differences between the ideologies of cosmopolitanism and nationalism, and while cosmopolitanism and hybridity certainly require us to apply complex and multi-levelled modes of thinking, there are still many aspects to such categories that may have a similarly-limiting impact on the analytical position as any adherence to the dogmas of national cinema.

The notion of culture as a contested, open-ended conceptual formulation necessitates the analyst to think of their own cultural position from a self-reflexive perspective, through 'foreign' eyes, which is effectively the method that Mika Kaurismäki has used throughout his career. Thus, we need to apply the logic of a dialectical position that does not enforce the scope of the films to the analyst's own ideological preference or to a complex categorization like transnational cinema, which may, in itself, be a restricting category. Such dialogism necessitates acknowledging the subjectivity of cinematic representations of people inhabiting actual cultural formations with their very real and powerful historical and political formations – such as a cosmopolitan Finnish-Brazilian film-maker reflecting on his position in the global circulation of culture and capital; or an academic writing on the

work of this cosmopolitan Finnish film-maker in a framework that seeks to challenge any essentialist notion of cinematic representation. We need to seek new ways of allowing the films to speak for themselves, while being simultaneously aware of one's own position in enforcing a set of ideological constraints on the text.

To achieve such a dialogic perspective, we must turn to the critical reception of Kaurismäki's cinema, as this can provide a polyphonic view of their wider cultural-political implications. As much of this book focuses on my readings of the films, it is necessary to bring in this additional critical material. Of course, the ways in which I appropriate material from the reviews is subjective, but studies of the reception, at the very least, enable us to acknowledge the subjective ways in which films and the cultural discussion surrounding them are utilized for different purposes. This exploration will focus predominantly on how the ideological patterns of the Kaurismäki structure are persistently maintained in the reception through the critics' emphasis on national culture, as this, for better or worse, largely defines the exhibition and reception of the films. While this can limit the scope of the films' cultural impact, the multiple perspectives reveal the extent to which Kaurismäki's films work to generate debate over the very topic they so often interrogate.

Finnish Reception

From 1981–2 onwards, Finnish critics have persistently framed Kaurismäki in a selective framework. Beginning with his 'internationalism', practically all the mainstream newspaper reviews of *The Liar* discuss Kaurismäki's formative years studying at the Munchen Fernsehen and Television Schule and the Grand Prix de Juri awarded to the film at the Henri Langlois film festival. Subsequently, the film's *nouvelle vague*-inspired approach, or 'the film's liberated naturalism and European spirit (Ylänen 1981a), is taken as an antidote to the current slump in the Finnish film industry. For these critics, '*The Liar* is an exceptional film [in Finnish cinema] in that it is all cinema and not amateur dramatics' (Kejonen 1982), 'taking flight via the liberated style of the New Wave' (Montonen 1982). While following a 'European' lineage of art-house film-making is nothing new in Finnish cinema (the 1960s saw film-makers such as Risto Jarva and Mikko Niskanen embark on *nouvelle vague*-inspired productions), *The Liar's* strength lies in its development of a 'Finnish version [of the *nouvelle vague*] in a creative and independent way' (Lumirae 1981). Crucially, it is precisely the film's direct confrontation with nationhood that allows it to distinguish itself from previous New Waves. Two dominant tendencies emerge from this brief overview. First, *The Liar* was welcomed for bringing something new to the enclosed cultural circles of Finnish cinema, something which had been missing amongst the standardized fare, frequently supported by the Finnish Film Foundation. Second, the 'newness' of the Kaurismäki-style (and it was already remarked upon as an idiosyncratic style) emerges from its engagement with transnational circulation of culture. The reception of this debut sets a clear template through which the future films of the Kaurismäkis would be approached. And, as the critics also made note

of Aki Kaurismäki's role as the star and screenwriter of the film instead of focusing their discussion solely on the director, the persistent equation of the brothers under a singular banner was initiated.

By the time *The Worthless* came out in 1982, the Kaurismäki brand had become more identifiable with the releases of the short film *Jackpot 2* (1981) and the music documentary *The Saimaa Phenomenon* (1981). The latter is especially crucial for the cultivation of the Kaurismäkis' emergent image as it focuses on a number of rock bands and artists such as Sielun Veljet, Eppu Normaali, Juice Leskinen, and Tuomari Nurmio, touring the lake district of Finland. The collision of the politicized landscape and these ideological outsiders continues the Film-Total 'rebellion', and the Kaurismäkis' mediating influence packages this tour into a distinctly antagonistic product. The film, exclaimed many of the critics at the time, is 'the first ever Finnish rock film' (Ylänen 1981b, Lumirae 1981). The novelty value of the Kaurismäkis' approach could not be emphasized enough as, according to the critics, these films seem to emerge from a distinct generational gap that has not been adequately represented or covered in the mainstream media. Whereas many of the commentators noted the films' thematic similarities with *Täältä Tullaan Elämä* and *Ajolähtö*, there was something different about the films of the Kaurismäkis – their insistence on intertwining internationalism with Finnish culture.

The publicity of *The Worthless* emphasized this distinction in the following terms: 'the film's story draws on the heritage of the French New Wave and the American gangster film, and returns us to the internationalism of the [pre-1917] Czarist period; to be sure, Finland is a part of the world' (Talaskivi in LeCorre 1982). The remarks not only argue for the need to see contemporary Finland in transnational terms, but they also remind us that the foundational conceptions of Finnishness already have their roots in internationalism. The titles of several contemporary Finnish reviews reflect this culturally hybrid view, with 'Bonnie and Clyde in Finnish Forests' (Haavikko 1982), and 'Raiders of the Lost Finland' (Avola 1982) providing good examples. While these critics celebrated internationalism, critical consensus ultimately came down to the idea that what we see is still the 'same old' Finland, albeit approached from a slightly different angle: 'Finnish society in the film is perhaps a bit strange, but undeniably familiar' (Haavikko 1982), as 'the tacky bars, dance-halls and restaurants, service stations and city lights, abandoned houses and lakesides convey a picture of Finland in a mode in which it is rarely presented' (Toiviainen 1982). For some critics, internationalism presented an opportunity to bemoan the erasure of traditional culture as the 'the society of *Arvottomat* is more an American metropolis than Finland' (Nummelin 1982) – the film 'is about Finland, but not in a Finnish way' (Welin 1983). While the film was marketed as the advent of resurgent internationalism, the implications of this opening of cultural borders became a contested field of debate, reflecting the different political opinions on Finland's cultural constitution.

These debates continued with the release of *The Clan* as its subversive heritage politics resulted in many attempts to reconcile its subversive depiction with a more linear national narrative. For some, the film was a welcome contribution to contemporary debates on the

state of Finnish culture: 'in a Finland of consensus, *The Clan* is a tale of utmost contemporary relevance' (Toiviainen 1984). For others, the film continued the marginal anarchism of *Arvottomat* (Lumirae 1984), though this only corroborated a vision of an alternative, yet somehow culturally traditional Finland (Toiviainen 1985). Overwhelmingly, critics felt the need to equate the film closely with traditional heritage culture by drawing parallels with, for example, Finnish literature (Suominen 1984). Simultaneously, the Kaurismäki structure was being manufactured by reactions such as the following: 'What would Finnish cinema be without the Kaurismäki brothers, only cheap amusement and pseudo-intellectuality? Luckily, such a situation belongs only to nightmares and not real life as we have the Kaurismäki brothers!' (Karkimo 1985).

As many critics began to take note of the emerging idiosyncrasies in the Kaurismäki's films, the implications of 'structure' had its supporters and its detractors. Helena Ylänen saw this idiosyncratic style as enriching and widening the norms of Finnish cinema: 'Finnish film has two governing styles, thin everydayness and thick atmospherics. Mika Kaurismäki's style differs from both. His camera moves and reacts to the light ... he can create a unified world' (Ylänen 1984). This sort of reception highlights the extent to which Kaurismäki's individual style casts heritage and national stereotypes in a questionable light through its depiction of 'an exotic and poetic depiction of the underworld' (Maskula 1984). For the detractors, 'the Kaurismäkian dialogue is still a problem. On the other hand, Finns simply do not talk or express their feelings, so one has to somehow come up with a stylistic method of making them talk. One option is this Kaurismäkian literal Finnish, but it has not yet reached the heights of poetry, so that its unnatural qualities could be replaced by fluid form' (Jalander 1984). The views range from discussing essentialist problems of Finnish identity to Kaurismäki's attempts to transform it into something else, all the time maintaining an eye on the transnational qualities of Kaurismäki's auteurist perspective: 'How would the West Germany-educated Mika Kaurismäki apply the conventions of international cinema to translating a traditional work of Finnish prose?' (Siltavuori 1985). Others situated the film in the wider context of circulation and appropriation of American culture: 'A self-confessed admirer of American cinema, Kaurismäki's *The Clan* is positively the most 'American' film so-far produced in Finland' (Etelänpää 1985).

Thus, transnationalism and difference become dominant aspects of the Kaurismäki structure, a notion increasingly emphasized as *Rosso* prodded the critics to discuss the film as a chronicle of a transforming Finland. But while it 'examines our land through the eyes of a stranger, *Rosso* is a 'local' film despite the internationalism of its approach (Etelänpää 1985). As was the case with *The Worthless*, transnationalism is, for many of the critics, something that needs to be localized within a clearly identifiable framework: 'The Italian loses his identity and becomes assimilated with Finnishness. This is what we are: gloomy, withdrawn, depressed and destruction-orientated folk, whose landscape counterpart can be found in the angsty, flooded and muddy plains of Ostrobothnia' (Laiho 1985). In the eyes of these critics, it is precisely Finnishness that the film reflects back to the Finnish spectators, using its 'foreign' protagonists as a mirror to reveal to its domestic audience something

inherent about themselves (Peltonen 1985). Other critics discussed *Rosso*'s implications for national cinema, where *Rosso* is a very 'Italian film: the narrator speaks Italian from the beginning to the end, the music is Italian, the dialogue of the film is mostly written in Italian. Of course, the main and end credits are in Italian' (Jokiranta 1986). While the perceptive Finnish audiences (who are undoubtedly aware of the film's Finnish roots) see it as an examination of Finland from an alternative perspective, the film intentionally blurs the markers of nationhood to make us question the fragile premises on which such designations are based. Through this, *Rosso* tells us something about 'Finland and Finnish culture, and not about Italy or Italians. A stranger only opens the door into ourselves' (Huida 1985a).

As part of the ideological construction of the Kaurismäki structure, several critics continued their emphasis on the internationalization of the film industry as '*Rosso*'s "europeanism" is exactly the type of domesticity that our film production needs' (Valkola 1985). For Pertti Lumirae, *Rosso* signifies a new approach to the age-old question of national cinema: '*Rosso* gives a foretaste of the direction that Finnish cinema could develop itself in order to get rid of the suffocating national and hermetic elements (Lumirae 1985). While Lumirae suggests that the most successful type of national cinema is one that merges the national and the transnational, many disagree with him on this, as 'despite the language, *Rosso* has [little chance] at the international markets. Its real power is embedded in its nationness, in its patriotism that pervades all its external cosmopolitanism' (Kivi 1985). For others, one has to wonder about 'the cultural political function of a Finnish-language Italian film' (Maskula 1985). For these critics, the picture that emerges from *Rosso* is clouded due to the impossibility of melding such a 'backwards, reclusive' culture as Finnishness with more cosmopolitan aspirations. There seem to be three main strands of reception: celebration of a truly authentic Finnish film; debate over the transnational dimensions of the film; but also, most revealingly, criticism of *Rosso* for being anti-Finnish. The implications of the Kaurismäki structure are substantial for the last point, as both Aki and Mika Kaurismäki's comments on cultural reclusivity and their miscreant public behaviour often predetermine the ways that the films are approached. While both Kaurismäkis present their public personas and their films as political commentaries on Finnish culture, they are inadvertently made open to criticism for what they do with this culture. This is especially the case because their increasing international prestige reverberates back to Finland as the Kaurismäkis become indelibly connected, in one way or another, to the image of Finnish culture abroad. Thus, accusations of misrepresentation are frequent, but these accusations also serve to highlight the notion that critics take the ethnographic qualities of these films in a very serious manner, and that there is plenty at stake in any cultural 'truth-value' of the films.

Aki Kaurismäki's *Shadows in Paradise* was praised for its Finnishness in 1986, and soon after, Aki Kaurismäki's *Hamlet Liikemaailmassa/Hamlet Goes Business* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1987) received positive notices for its sarcastic exploration of the Finnish corporate world. It therefore comes as no surprise to find that many of the critics based their examinations of *Helsinki Napoli* in 1987 on a clear Finnish template. But, simultaneously, the Kaurismäki brand had become synonymous with a certain type of internationalism still rare in Finnish

cinema. Thus, critics interpreted Mika Kaurismäki's film in terms of a call for building international networks as it was the first 'Finnish film that is authentically international: not only for its milieu, characters, actions, but also by its core, its blood circulation' (Toiviainen 1987). Similarly, Pertti Lumirae, who had commended *Rosso* for neither forsaking its national qualities for flat internationalism nor remaining stuck in hermetic nationalistic structures, suggested that *Helsinki Napoli* is 'precisely the type of international co-production that fulfils all the benefits that internationalism can provide' (Lumirae 1987). Antti Lindqvist, a Kaurismäki supporter and soon to be co-worker on the screenplay for *Paper Star*, argued that the film cannot be accused of 'pandering to supranational entertainment industries' since Mika Kaurismäki's personal vision is more that of a European director than a Finnish one (Lindqvist 1987). The discourses of internationalism and nationalism intertwine as '*Helsinki Napoli* paves way for Finnish cinema in Central Europe. It is no longer a clearly Finnish film, but a generally European film' (Apunen 1987b). Supranationalism is thus specifically connected to Hollywood cinema, whereas European co-production is conceived as auteurist art-house film-making, which, at least in the eyes of these critics, retains an important critical function free from the commercial pressures of the mainstream cinema.

Unavoidably, critical perspectives on this popular art film and its relationship to cultural homogenization vary. Despite this nominal internationalism, the film, according to certain critics, qualifies as 'an international film only by its outward appearance, [but] in its lack of style it barely reaches the status of the B-film' (Maskula 1987b). In this perspective, *Helsinki Napoli* fails to achieve the standards of 'international' cinema, where its oscillation between the commercial and the art-house negate the benefits to be gained from both. For some, the film was a clear case of unacceptable supranationalism as *Helsinki Napoli* is 'tedious in its rootlessness, [where] its Finnish national characteristics create a feeling of embarrassment' (Jalander 1987b). While Finnish farcical elements may provide the film with 'a primal exoticism' that sells well in international markets, the unbalanced mix of Finnish cultural tropes and the conventions of Hollywood negate the film's aspirations as transnational Finnish cinema (Jalander 1987b). Thus, the international cast, its genre conventions, international crew, funding structures and cosmopolitan approach made many a critic view it in terms of the 'euro-pudding' (Makkonen 1987). This concept was frequently used in the late 1980s as a term to disparage co-productions which would forsake national specificity in aspiring to reach wider multinational audiences. Mette Hjort has since labelled these films 'self-defeating co-productions' as they erase most designators of the national identities and cultures of the participating countries (Hjort 2005). In the place of cultural specificity, they include homogenized genre conventions and 'global English'. Such self-defeating productions try to be all things to everyone, but succeed only in alienating most audiences.

Mika Kaurismäki's comments at the time imply an acute awareness of such issues. In contemporary interviews, he often stressed that his approach is characterized by a fine balance between commercial entertainment and a more explicit, sociologically-potent analysis of contemporary identity politics (Carpelan 1987; Lehtisalo 1987). While accusations of supranationalism are understandable in the case of Kaurismäki's film, for

some critics the film touches on fears over the erasure of national identity, which goes so deep that 'Kaurismäki's film could be called "The Seekers of a Lost World" ... the world has for the majority lost its humanity, people their roots' (Makkonen 1987). Makkonen's review gestures towards contemporary uncertainties over the geopolitical changes taking place in Europe, as the Glasnost policies of the Soviet Union were altering the old balances of power. The increasing border-crossing and cultural interaction, of course, had immense effects on perceptions of geopolitical stability and traditional forms of national culture. It also needs to be remembered that the presence of the Soviet Union was still felt strongly in Finnish politics, and it would be two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of the Soviet Union necessitated re-negotiating what is meant by European and, for that matter, Finnish identity. The critical reception of *Helsinki Napoli* can thus be seen as an extension of the film's themes and its socio-political relevance. While the film is distinctly in favour of European cosmopolitanism, it provided a suitable platform to engage with the topic from multiple perspectives. Its success in participating in wide debates over geopolitics highlights the important role these films play. But the conflicted ways in which the film was received also emphasizes the fundamental contradictions at the heart of Kaurismäki's cinema.

Kaurismäki's films continued to be discussed as barometers of debate over Finnish identity in the late 1980s. While internationalism ceased to be the main topic of concern with *Paper Star* and *Cha Cha Cha*, the critics noted the new perspectives these films brought to debates over the nation's conceptualization (Appunen 1990). For example, *Cha Cha Cha* is 'about the significance of family, private property and the origins and meaning of the nation', according to one critic (Lindqvist 1989). But, as Kaurismäki's productions became clearly defined by their international structures, the reviewers found themselves unable to stick to the preordained Kaurismäki structure. *Amazon* was distinctly more complicated compared to his previous films, as many critics commented favourably on the film's participation in environmental politics and its role in publicizing environmental issues (Peltonen 1990, Siltala 1990). While the film was still too focused on 'disarming blue-eyed naivety', its themes come through via 'the beauty of Kaurismäki's methods of representation' (Makkonen 1990). Simultaneously, it was also criticized for the superficiality of its approach: '*Amazon* publicizes the catastrophic destruction of the rainforests, notes it up and shows it, but does not examine the reasons behind it' (Peltonen 1990). For others, the film was overtly preachy (Apunen 1990), or focused on spectacle where 'grand visions of the natural landscapes have taken prominence over characterization' (Uusitalo 1991a). Hollywood's supranational products again became an unfavourable comparison as 'Mika Kaurismäki has reached too far in trying to compete in the grand adventure genre in which no-one can beat Hollywood' (Toiviainen 1990).

Amazon's internationalism was met positively by some Finnish reviewers, as it 'breaches restrictive borders and presents a fresh option for Finnish cinema' (Lumirae 1991). By being a 'domestic film' with a distinctly 'global mindset' (Uusitalo 1991b), the film urges critics to consider environmental problems beyond their national implications. But the persistence of national identity emerges even in films that feature minimal roles for national culture.

Finnishness is centralized as 'the environment has been in a more important position [in Finland] than in most other countries' (Jalander 1991a). These debates were also connected with the film's political potential as it 'animates real facts, of which we are well aware, but which do not affect our actions enough' (Jalander 1991a). Instrumental in this was Mika Kaurismäki's environmental activity beyond the production of the film as it provided a platform to establish the Amazonia charity collection. This project was devoted to financially supporting the health programme of the indigenous tribes of the Rondonia, with the goal of immunizing them against the diseases brought in by people from the outside. The project was organized in collaboration with the World Wildlife Federation and the Finnish Environmental Protection Agency, whereby two Finnish marks for every ticket sold were devoted to the collection. Kaurismäki's eco-activism was concretely acknowledged as he was awarded the first-ever Environmental Finlandia – an annual award highlighting major achievements in the arts. The citation of the award noted that Kaurismäki

has used extraordinary means in bringing a serious environmental threat to the mass public's attention. Cinema can have an effect in novel ways and reach target audiences, which scientific documentation does not necessarily address. Kaurismäki has highlighted the communal and global nature of environmental problems in a fresh way. (Finlandia award statement 1990)

Even though this statement deals briefly with the film's environmental message, it ultimately emphasizes the film's populist potential, which is conveyed through its visual splendour and linear narrative. This is reminiscent of Yve Jalander's argument that *Amazon* presents a point of identification for spectators who may not have thought seriously about environmental issues (Jalander 1991a). It is also necessary to remember that awareness of environmental issues was not as widespread in the early 1990s as it is today. The dilemma is thus two-fold: is it more beneficial to produce populist films targeted at mass audiences, but with simplified content, or to remain within a smaller-scale and more academic type of expression? And while it could be argued that this is a question one could ask in relation to the majority of Kaurismäki's films, it needs to be remembered that his earlier films are determinedly art-house-based esoteric texts designed to appeal to a limited audience. *Amazon*, on the other hand, was explicitly conceived as an audience-friendly adventure film, where its populist characteristics would be instrumental in creating and fostering awareness.

By 1993, Mika Kaurismäki's career had become distinctly international, and it was very difficult to situate him in any prescribed structures of national cinema. The Finnish critical reception of *The Last Border* displays a sense of this confusion as it was frequently accused of being supranational entertainment: 'The film is a shoddily made work aimed at the international markets in a way that has lost its national identity' (Noukka 1993). EU-accession was a heated topic of discussion at the time of the film's release, which led many critics to vocalize their perspectives in the following terms: 'Is this what the upcoming euro-cinema is going to be like? The factors opposed to the EU could use Kaurismäki's film as

a warning example of EU-cinema at its worst' (Noukka 1993). The type of 'euro-cinema' exemplified by *The Last Border* signals 'the future of cinema in the formation of the brave new Europe. The leading cast members are chosen according to the funding countries, and the whole enterprise has to be approved with every funding body and the manager of the euro-bankroll' (Kinisjärvi 1993). These critics clearly situate the film in the category of the self-defeating co-production, where all national specificity is negated by the film's strive for the global markets.

Continuing from the debates surrounding his other international productions, the dichotomy between Finnishness and internationalism is once more centred on the distinction between commercial and art-house cinema: 'Whereas Aki Kaurismäki has convinced the Europeans with his small-scale asceticism and Renny Harlin with his thoroughly commercial workmanship, Mika Kaurismäki struggles somewhere in between' (Manninen 1994). For others, the film was to be commended for its environmental awareness, but, as was largely the case with *Amazon*, any ideological potential it may have is compromised by the conventions of an average adventure film, undistinguishable from multiple similar films. The critical discussion of Kaurismäki's final film produced in Finland before 2008 ultimately fell on the national / international binary. The national is still largely conceived of as the cultural space of authenticity, contrasted against the dilution of inter- or supranationalism. And as Kaurismäki was still perceived as a Finnish director, who receives public funding for his projects, it seems that his style of art/popular fusion constitutes a problem for national cinema. For them, Kaurismäki is a 'director, whom one would want to find completely new solutions to combining international funds and national specificity' (Jalander 1993).

Kaurismäki's subsequent productions received very limited releases in Finland and were met with minimal levels of substantial critical reception. *Tigrero* only received a handful of reviews, most of these merely notes. When critics discussed the film, they were largely focused on the film's novelty value and its environmentalism (Jalander 1994b, Lumirae 1994). After its release several – admittedly small – articles appeared in the major newspapers emphasizing *Tigrero*'s success in gaining international distribution (Lindqvist 1995, Salminen 1995). The retrospective embracement of its international success highlights Kaurismäki's complex status during the mid-1990s. Still clearly a source of national pride, Kaurismäki exists in a truly transvergent cultural landscape. While both domestic and international critics relate him to clearly defined ideas of Finnishness, or even with the constraints of Aki-landia of the Kaurismäki structure, his films now function in a largely different cultural sphere from the national cinema rhetorics of his critics and distribution.

These distinctions continued to be mobilized throughout the 1990s. *LA Without a Map* received comparatively favourable reviews from the Finnish critics: 'Having received more free reign in the bosom of a larger production machinery, the result is clearly more assured and can stand up in comparison to other international examples' (Rosenqvist 1998). Many of the reviews suggest that its focus on outsiders and the margins of the city provide the film with the idiosyncratic 'Kaurismäki-aura', where the indication is still largely of a Finnish director, who may now work in a larger arena of cultural production, but where

the final product is still connected to a clear sense of Finnishness. Yet, for many of the critics, Kaurismäki's fictional films during his 'international' period are too much like the self-defeating co-productions that emulate Hollywood conventions. The discussion once more returns to the differences between Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, with critics commenting on how Aki has condensed his style to idiosyncratic minimalism, whereas Mika is unable to 'find his own feet amidst the universal genre frameworks of action, romance and crime' (Kaisjoki 2005)

The complex dialectics of the national and the international continue to play out in the production and distribution patterns of Kaurismäki's films. The persistent, if reducing, emphasis on the Finnish qualities of *Highway Society* and *LA without a Map* in their critical reception mirrors their funding and distribution patterns. Both films were awarded small grants by The Finnish Film Foundation and afforded screenings at prestigious festivals, such as The Toronto International Film Festival and the London Film Festival, but they received very limited commercial release in Finland. Similarly, *Brasileirinho* received support from the Finnish Film Foundation and AVEK (The Centre for the Promotion of Visual Arts), whereas *Moro no Brasil* and *Sonic Mirror* were supported by YLE1 (national public television channel). The latter did not receive any support from the Foundation. In contrast, Aki Kaurismäki's post-1995 films received substantial bursaries from the Foundation and increasing critical and commercial success in both Finland and abroad. It seems that as Mika Kaurismäki sought to integrate with international structures, his connections with Finland decreased substantially. Simultaneously, his reputation retains his connection with the funding and cultural circles of Finland, allowing him to benefit from the support they provide him, even if this is increasingly miniscule. Simultaneously, these connections also signify the willingness of the Finnish funding organizations to support increasing internationalism. While the Kaurismäkis have traditionally been at the forefront of internationalization, the economic and industrial structures of Finnish cinema have increasingly become more attuned to the need to expand to the markets outside the nation's borders. Thus, these films and their support can be seen as an exemplary instance of the ways Finnish cinema in all its structures is becoming a part of an interconnected, reciprocal global network.

International perspectives

We have gone through the Finnish reviews of Kaurismäki's films systematically, observing both the maintenance of the Kaurismäki structure and the ongoing discourse of globalizing Finnish cinema. This section moves the parameters of study to the international reception of these films. Before exploring this in more analytical depth, it is necessary to chronicle some of their predominant patterns of distribution and audience attendance, especially in the 1990s when Kaurismäki's career became thoroughly international. *L.A. without a Map* received a wide release across Europe in Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Spain and France. Its biggest successes were Finland with 18,000 spectators and Germany with nearly 52,000

tickets purchased. Perhaps its biggest disappointments were the UK and Denmark as it was viewed by less than 900 spectators in both markets. *Moro no Brasil* received a respectably wide release for what amounts to a relatively non-commercial documentary film, with over 85,000 spectators Europe-wide, in markets such as Greece, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Belgium. France and Germany were again the dominant regions with 25,000 and 35,000 spectators respectively. *Honey Baby*, in comparison, only received a commercial release in Estonia, where it was viewed by approximately 2,000 spectators. While this is not a respectable tally for the country, Finland fared even worse with barely 800 spectators, reflecting the 3,000 tickets sold for *Moro no Brasil* and the 900 for *Brasileirinho*. *Sonic Mirror's* distribution was also minor, as it received theatrical screenings in France and Finland, viewed by 4,330 and 700 spectators respectively.

These low figures for Kaurismäki's documentary films are somewhat understandable as documentaries rarely receive wide-scale releases. Even so, the viewing figures pale in comparison to Aki Kaurismäki's films such as *Drifting Clouds (Kauas Pilvet Karkaavat, 1996)* and *The Man without a Past (Mies Vailla Menneisyyttä, 2002)*. These art-house blockbusters received Europe-wide distribution, and they were viewed by 471,069 and 2,051,073 spectators respectively. This discrepancy goes to highlight the difference in status of the brothers' productions. Aki Kaurismäki's films are marketed and distributed as the films of one of the 'great' European auteurs, especially in those markets where such distinctions matter most (predominantly France and Germany). In comparison, Mika Kaurismäki has never achieved the heights of these box office figures. As the majority of his films in the late 1990s and early 2000s have been television productions (*Highway Society*) or documentaries, their reception has also been more limited. Additionally, some films (such as *Condition Red* and *Sambolico*) were released only on home video, so reviews for these are scarce at best.

Kaurismäki's reputation as a Finnish film-maker precedes the releases of his films abroad – a factor highlighted by his films often receiving premieres in retrospectives on Finnish cinema or those devoted to both Kaurismäkis. These reviews often acknowledge Kaurismäki's history as a Finnish film-maker whose specialty is an outsider perspective and a striving for multiculturalism. Accordingly, the constraints of the Kaurismäki structure apply here as well, as the reviewers relate their readings to questions of Finnish national identity. Even Jim Jarmusch talks of Mika Kaurismäki in this tone: 'He makes connections with different cultures, but he comes from one that is very distinct – and that can't be eradicated. It's in his soul' (Jarmusch in Lindgren 2009). Kaurismäki is, of course, well aware of this conception, responding to a reporter's greeting in 1993 for *The New York Times* with a self-aware 'You're disappointed I didn't at least order a beer?', hinting at both the stereotype of Finnish alcohol over-consumption and his brother's reputation for inebriated interviews (Roston 1993). While it is not surprising that a review for *Zombie and the Ghost Train* in French magazine *Liberation* discussed it in terms of Finnish alcoholism and alienation, Kaurismäki is keen to expand this interpretative framework by mentioning in an adjacent interview his homages to well-known auteurs such as Howard Hawks and Ken Mitzoguchi. Appropriately, the interview moves to discuss his upcoming project *Tigrero* and his cineaste comradeship with

Jarmusch and Fuller (Waintrop 1992). The Kaurismäki structure dominates the reviews of both brothers' films at least until the mid-1990s. An article in *Moving Pictures*, 'Sealed with a K', discusses the Finnish contribution to the 44th Berlin Film Festival: 'Finland has no less than four major films in the official programme, and in one way or another they are all signed by a K – for Kaurismäki' (Jensen 1994: 30). Such discussion conveniently situates both film-makers not only in relation to one another, but also to existing discourses and preconceptions on Finnish cinema.

A brief discussion of the international trailer for *Zombie and the Ghost Train* sheds light on the ways the Kaurismäki structure is mobilized in the exhibition of Mika Kaurismäki's films. It starts out with a frozen landscape, counterpointed by the sound of howling wind on the soundtrack, creating an immediately recognizable set of associations with the structure. Critical perspectives and 'Kaurismäkian' elements collide as quotations from German critics are interspersed with shots from the film, all punctuated by repeats of the film's title card accompanied by Mika Kaurismäki's name. Soon, Matti Pellonpää's character can be heard over the frozen landscapes as, next, we see him singing a 'humppa', a style of pop/dance music often associated with the eastern and northern parts of Finland. Two correlations are created. The first one is to do with Pellonpää's star persona, as he had, by this time, become the icon of Kaurismäki cinema through his long association with the films of both brothers. The musical style connotes the 'veijari'-tradition for Finnish viewers, and strikes a chain of associations with the uneducated, yet street-wise characters – the hallmark of this set of traditions. The early audio-visual collages of trailer create a set of associations aimed at two different types of audiences. The Finnish audiences are aware of these traditions and the international reputation of Kaurismäki, whereas the international audiences, who will presumably see the trailer in an art-house setting, will receive an impression of some of the key elements of the Kaurismäki structure. The majority of the trailer consists of glimpses of the film without dialogue as Harri's music does the talking. Lyrics of alcoholic debauchery contrast with *Zombie* drinking desperately in a stereotypically-morose bar, playing up all those elements of national culture for which both Kaurismäkis are internationally known. The trailer culminates with the words *Ein Komische Tragödie* and shots of *Zombie*'s tragic-comic accident as he falls on a bowl filled with boiling water. His desperate cry 'munat palaa!' [my privates are burning] contrasts with the film's title card, creating a sense of downbeat comedy with a simultaneously cosmopolitan and local reach.

International reception and the Kaurismäki structure

It is not difficult to see how the Kaurismäki structure plays into Mika Kaurismäki's international reception. *Variety*'s review of *Rosso* situates the film firmly in the tradition of European art cinema: '*Rosso* is a small-scale feature takeoff on French intellectual thrillers and on Michelangelo Antonioni-type colourful-empty-space-and-enigmatic rhetoric' (*Variety*, 11 December, 1985). By referring to the film's star Kari Väänänen as Finland's Alain

Delon act-and-lookalike, the review expands this comparative framework to incorporate Kaurismäki's Finnishness. Such equations are present in most of *Variety's* reviews for Kaurismäki's films and indicate the fostering of a persistent template due to the trade magazine's influential global position in the festival markets. For example, *The Last Border* is 'not as uniquely inventive as his brother Aki's movies, but Mika Kaurismäki's film still stands at the forefront of a burgeoning new wave of Finnish cinema' (Levy1993). *Helsinki Napoli All Night Long* is also discussed as a Finnish film which is 'likely to find limited international exposure because of its name actors from many lands plus supporting bits and cameos' (*Variety*, 18 May, 1988).

It was not only the American trade press that fostered this idiosyncratic image of Kaurismäki, as positive commendations in both Sweden and France followed *Helsinki Napoli*. Monica Ohlsson (1988) and Rene Gralla (1988) commend the film for its assured cinematic compositions, though in both cases the Finnishness of the film is contextualized with international action cinema. The rhetoric of commercialism is especially clear in Ohlsson's comments on the Berlin of the film as a 'bag of non-stop candy'. While these perspectives focus on merging the Kaurismäki structure with commercial cinema, others followed the antagonistic, Finland-centric dimensions of the structure more clearly. *Zombie and the Ghost Train* was screened at the Hong Kong International Film Festival, where the festival programme included the following excerpt from a review by Rita Nierich: 'Another dark look at desolate social conditions in Finland, like the ones Mika Kaurismäki's brother Aki has shown us before. As opposed to Aki's films, helping hands reach out towards *Zombie*, who reacts very sensitively towards the environment' (Nierich 1993). In *The Christian Science Monitor*, an article entitled 'Finland Gaining Notice as International Film Source' notes the increasing presence of Finland on the international film scene, which it relates to Aki Kaurismäki's success at the Berlin Film Festival in 1989. The article also discusses Mika Kaurismäki's *Helsinki Napoli* as being 'true to the Kaurismäki brothers' reputation, covering its quick-and-inexpensive production schedule with handsome production values and lively performances. Versatility is clearly a Kaurismäki trademark' (Sterritt 1989). While articles such as these rely on the limited range of the Kaurismäki structure, other writers make effort to distinguish the brothers from one another. *Tagesspiel* comments that with *Amazon*, 'Mika comes out from the shadow of his younger brother. He explores ecological problems in a masterful way' (Carbon 1991). While this article tries to differentiate the film-makers, the Kaurismäki structure remains as a comparative framework, as is also the case with *Berliner Morgenpost*: 'Mika Kaurismäki makes fundamentally different, less spectacular films than his younger brother' (Jaedicke 1991).

An article in *The Hollywood Reporter* (Ulmer 1992) discusses Mika Kaurismäki's unique status as a Finnish director working on the international scene in the early 1990s, as it describes Kaurismäki's working process with Janet Peoples on 'the still unfunded, futuristic *No Man's Land*', a project which was to become *The Last Border*. Kaurismäki discusses his still uneasy relationship with the Hollywood culture industry: 'I've never really thought about working for the American market. I think I will be a European director as Europe is

what I know best' (Ulmer 1992). As was the case with some of the Finnish reviews, Mika Kaurismäki is often somewhat forcefully situated in the framework of Hollywood production. In an article introducing the Kaurismäkis' to New York audiences in *The Films in Review* magazine, Louise Tanner suggests that Mika Kaurismäki's films can be defined simply by the term 'Helsinki Amerikanski' (Tanner 1989). This is a conceptualization that gets to the heart of the dichotomies in the discussion on both the Kaurismäkis' cinematic works. Mika is interpreted as the more commercially-oriented director, one who uses elements from genre films and popular culture, but who is still tied to European art-house and nationally-based cinema. In comparison, Aki is the art-house auteur with a distinct idiosyncratic style. This dichotomy prevails also in the eyes of the Finnish critics, well-summarized in Helena Ylänen's (1991) article, where she suggests that Aki Kaurismäki's films have always been thematically more tightly-reigned, and therefore easier to generalize about, than those of his brother. Mika Kaurismäki is more interested in providing 'moving pictures' than characterizations, pictoriality rather than dialogue. And while Mika Kaurismäki aspires to produce large scale 'international' films, his roots in the European New Waves do not allow him to coldly aim for spectacle. The voice of the ordinary person and the demands for social justice unavoidably enter the films, complicating their positioning as mere entertainment (Ylänen 1991).

Even the Brazilian documentaries, with their seemingly minor connections to the Kaurismäki structure, are often read in familiar terms, with reviews focusing on the films' 'ethno-graphic' qualities (Weber 2005), and fostering a stereotypical conception of Finland as a dark northern country – as the title of one of the articles does ('A Finn finds the sun!') (Keer 2006). Kaurismäki does not complicate this, as he states that 'choro fascinates me as it includes so many cultures, races, customs and languages within. You do not get that in Finland' (Ibid.). The article maintains a very stereotyped perception of Finnish identity, while it uses vocabulary that conceptualizes the films as a form of cinematic tourism. Other articles highlight cultural similarities in a fluid way, drawing on Kaurismäki's description of commonalities between Finns and Brazilians: 'Brazilians and the seemingly more gloomy Finns have much in common. Both are down to earth people. Since the invention of mobile phones, Finns have become almost as talkative as the Brazilians' (Tasman 2005).

Whereas the Finnish reviews largely focused on Kaurismäki's documentarian skills and his focus on multiculturalism, the international critics were more interested in comparing his Finnish origins with the ethnographic qualities of the films (Gordon 2007). For some, it seems Kaurismäki has reached his ethnographic goal, as Judith Aretz notes that Kaurismäki has captured diverse cultures and the spirit of great music with his work (Aretz 2005). Other critics find *Moro no Brasil's* exploration of Brazilian music very satisfactory, but suggest that Kaurismäki's presence in the film is 'unappealing' (Harvey 2002). Finnishness remains a persistent topic of interest in the reception of his fiction films as *Die Tageszeitung*, for one, discusses *Honey Baby*, screened at the Nordic Film Festival [Nordische Filmstage] in Berlin, as more appropriate for this particular film festival than its summer screening in Munich. This is due to its focus on loss and a feeling of sadness, which feels more at home with the

aura of Nordic gloom that emanates from the rest of the festival programming, rather than as a part of the cultural activities of a summery Central European city (Wiese 2004). It seems that wherever Kaurismäki goes, the critical aura of Nordic gloom and Finnish melancholy follows him.

In contrast to the overbearing presence of the Kaurismäki structure in international circles, Finnish critics had increasingly begun to contextualize Kaurismäki in alternative frameworks. Many critics suggested that the documentary genre is Mika Kaurismäki's most successful area, where the relaxed mannerisms and irony of the form undo the bombastic and inflexible structures of his fictional work (Aro 2007). This search for new avenues of expression connects to cosmopolitanism, which had by now become a recurrent feature of Kaurismäki's reception. Eero Tammi, for example, suggests that Kaurismäki's in-depth knowledge of both cinematic production and the cultures of Brazil allows *Moro no Brasil* to achieve a level of cultural relevance which makes Wenders' *Buena Vista Social Club* seem like a commercial (Tammi 2002). Kaurismäki's cosmopolitanism had become so pervasively accepted in the Finnish critical reception that many reviewers pondered the relevance of thinking of Kaurismäki along national lines. Accordingly, for some of the critics, the universality of music is 'common sense' (Rosenqvist 2008), as part of the expected range of topics one would encounter in a Kaurismäki film.

Kaurismäki returned to a familiar setting with *Three Wise Men* and *The House of Branching Love*, but his international reputation had substantial repercussions for the critical reception of the films as part of national cinema. The Finnish reception of these films continued to recycle many of the tropes familiar from earlier criticism. Taneli Topelius (2008) welcomed Kaurismäki's return to Finland by comparing the complex worlds of his international films with the simplicity to be found in *Three Wise Men*. Yet, for Topelius, this return was a continuation of Kaurismäki's favoured themes of marginalization, which is not instigated 'by foreignness, but from a deep Finnish melancholy, which makes the men of the film uncomfortable in their own lives. It is not easy to fulfill your role if the society's expectations of the nuclear family model do not fit your own demands' (Topelius 2008). Before *Three Wise Men's* release, Kaurismäki discussed at length the ways his film differs from conventional Finnish cinema, highlighting the small budget and improvisational style, which allow the film to stand out amidst the mainstream (Puurtinen 2009). Critics followed suit and interpreted its minimalism as realism, as they commended the film for being an anthropological study of middle-age angst of the Finnish male (Piela 2008). For these critics, the intimacy and 'realism' of the film suits Kaurismäki because it allows him to connect with an 'identifiable sense of Finnishness' (Heiskanen 2008). The return to a simplified, even minimalist form of expression was seen as a positive quality after the 'wanderings' of Kaurismäki's international career.

The reception of *The House of Branching Love* echoes the sort of criticism we can observe throughout Kaurismäki's career. Many critics commented favourably on the film's social themes, but found the execution of the complex narrative lacking (Valkola 2009). Other critics suggested that the film's flaws are to do with the 'international atmosphere' favoured

by Kaurismäki, as elements from the crime and gangster genre intrude on what ought to have been a down-to-earth farce, resulting in a 'hybrid monster' (Aro 2009). Once more, genre becomes associated with internationalism, and internationalism with a certain type of commercialism. It seems that, for these critics, authenticity and national relevance can only be achieved through the conventions of the art-house cinema, that is, by emphasizing minimalist techniques and small-scale narratives. This is, of course, standard rhetoric in national cinema discourse, but it also provides an interesting contrast to some of the earlier reception of Kaurismäki's films, which emphasized the need for internationalization. In something of a reversal of these dynamics, it now seems the critics want to push any sense of commercialism out of the national framework, whereas the Foundation and film producers are increasingly emphasizing internationalization. For some of the critics, real and authentic national culture can only be captured in terms of art-house cinema, as any attempt to merge the artistic and the commercial results in a compromised product, a hybrid monster.

The preference of the artistic over the popular is an ongoing debate in Finland and, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, we saw increasing calls for expanding the audiences of Finnish cinema by internationalization from different sections of the Foundation. The policy discourse frequently connected internationalization to, first of all, popularism, and then, specifically, to genre cinema as an antidote for the auteurist-dominated art-house mode that had led to substantial problems in meeting audience expectations (see Pantti 2000, for more on these debates). Kaurismäki holds an interesting position in these debates as his film-making practices embody both the desired and abjected qualities of 'national cinema' identified in these discourses. This was also reflected in the funding that Kaurismäki continues to receive from the Foundation and other publicly-funded sources for films with seemingly transient connections to Finnish cinema (specifically his Brazilian trilogy). The discourses of art cinema, genre, auteurism and popular culture were also evoked in the funding patterns of *The House of Branching Love* and *Three Wise Men*. Kaurismäki's reputation and mobilization of populist, genre and auteurist qualities in the production and marketing of *The House of Branching Love* enabled the film to receive £700,000 from the Foundation to supplement the other funding received from domestic and international private sources and pre-sales to television channels such as YLE. Meanwhile, *Three Wise Men* received support for nearly half of its £300,000 budget from the Foundation, this time relying on the more traditional 'quality' grants afforded to auteurist art house productions.

Kaurismäki, then, is at the centre of many of the policy-related developments in Finnish cinema. We can increasingly observe acceptance, no matter how reluctant, of the international/popular paradigm in these circles, as the 'popularization' discourse embarked upon in the 1990s has become something of a norm in Finnish cinema. International success has evolved from a curiosity to an almost commonplace occurrence with films such as the Finnish-Chinese production *Jadesoturi/Jade Warrior* (Annala, 2006), the animated adventure film *Niko – Lentäjän Poika/The Flight Before Christmas* (Juusonen, Hegner, 2008), fairy tale *Joulutarina/A Christmas Tale* (Wuolijoki, 2007) and, more conventionally, *Musta Jää/Black Ice* (Kowica, 2008). The first three mobilize genre associations to appeal to the international

markets, where *The Night Before Christmas* and *A Christmas Tale* utilize fantasy narratives and *Jade Warrior* works as part of the transnational ‘wuxia-genre’ (including films like Zhang Yimou’s *Hero/Yingxiong*, 2002), at least in its marketing. *Black Ice* is more traditional in its art-house dynamics but, as is the case with most of Kaurismäki’s films, it is considered distinctly mainstream in Finland. The mobilization of genre and art-house associations continues in the internationalization of Finnish cinema and, in some ways, Kaurismäki can be considered as an innovator in this regard. Yet the attention Kaurismäki commands internationally, and the co-production opportunities this provides him, is still something unique in transnational Finnish cinema (alongside Aki Kaurismäki, of course). But whereas the active policy of internationalization may be gaining more of a foothold in Finland, it would be counterproductive to see Kaurismäki’s films simply as part of this trend. Indeed, the complex evocations of both transnational and postnational idioms indicates directions, which challenge national cultural sovereignty or seek to criticize its parameters. Thus, his Brazilian documentaries have the palimpsest ties to Finland, and films such as *Three Wise Men* unravel national meanings from within. Accordingly, Kaurismäki’s representational and production methods are best regarded as a cultural-political anomaly, rather than as a clear trend-setter for internationalization.

Renationalization in the international reception

The House of Branching of Love and *Three Wise Men* were distributed in a range of festivals (from Toronto to Goa, from Petroskoi to San Jose), including the European Union Film Showcase in Washington DC and The European Film Market in Berlin. Internationally, they were marketed on the basis of the Kaurismäki structure, relying on a combination of Kaurismäkian auteurism and the art-house, exoticized connotations of Finnish cinema. Whereas Finnish critics bemoaned the inclusion of an ‘international sheen’ on domestically-produced cinema, the international reception, somewhat ironically, moves in the other direction, as it emphasizes the national qualities of Kaurismäki’s films. In *Variety*’s perspective, *The House of Branching Love* is a ‘Finnish “War of the Roses”, what is probably Kaurismäki’s most polished production – a departure from the dry, droll, low-tech fare for which he’s better known. Stateside distribution will be tough, but adult themes and ribald humor could sell it as a highly exportable Finnish resource’ (Anderson 2009). As is so common in the international marketing of non-Hollywood films, despite their commercial and populist status within the nations from which they originate, it is precisely this national aura that gives the films their marketable power in the international marketplace. It seems that the Kaurismäki structure is not only evident in a set of expectations on Finnishness (Aki Kaurismäki is also name-checked multiple times) but also with genre, as Anderson suggests the film could form a new genre in its own right. Thus, Kaurismäki’s merging of elements from different genres is read as an instance of the hybridity of popular art film, which becomes part of the exoticism of national cinema (despite the prevalence of such

techniques in the majority of contemporary Hollywood films). *The Hollywood Reporter* reviewer, Peter Brunette, also resorted to the Kaurismäki structure: 'Mika Kaurismäki, pretty much universally known as the less talented of the Finnish Kaurismäki brothers, is back in Toronto with an offbeat, often funny battle of the sexes comedy. Chances of distribution in major territories, where Mika is much less well known than his brother Aki, are not robust, but not miniscule either' (Brunette 2009). Both reviews are for trade industry publications and thus categorize the films in terms of their market value, where association with established brands is key to successful marketing. It is, then, not surprising that they rely so extensively on the associations created by the Kaurismäki structure and the promise of exoticism identified in the Nordic roots of the films.

Producing and marketing postnational cinema

While the reception and marketing of Kaurismäki's popular art films relies on both national and transnational factors, how do they relate to conceptualizations of postnational cinema? Economic-cultural conceptualizations on postnational cinema have little consensus as to what exactly the postnational refers. Ezra and Rowden (2005: 11), for example, understand the postnational as encompassing cinema that transcends national borders. The economic bases for such films are in international co-production deals between multinational media organizations (such as Canal + or the multimedia conglomerations that own Hollywood studios) and national or independent production companies. These films often emulate the aesthetic and narrative conventions of the Hollywood system and, according to Marquerite Danan, 'the postnational mode of production erases most of the distinctive elements which have traditionally helped define the imaginary coherence of a national cinema against other cinematographic traditions or against Hollywood at a given point in time' (Danan 2007: 12). The type of postnationalism Danan has in mind is exemplified by productions such as *Valmont* (Forman, 1990) and *The Fifth Element* (Besson, 1997), films which communicate in the narrative and aesthetic vernacular of the Global Hollywood, using an accented version of Global English to carry their narratives. The first of these pre-packages heritage 'Frenchness' into an easily-consumable product for global audiences, whereas the second has, at best, only cursory links to any specific form of French culture. Danan acknowledges that such postnational films can promote an image of France abroad as an 'industry leader' while art films compensate for the postnational films 'lack of cultural potency' (Danan 2007: 14). When these postnational films become a part of global circulation, they are marketed more or less as part of the Hollywood system (based on technological prowess and relatable cultural values) by conglomerations such as Sony, who distributed *The Fifth Element* in the US. At this conjecture, the films' nominal Frenchness becomes negated even beyond the production stage as the films become a part of the global cultural distribution machinery. In such a situation, heritage films like *Valmont* become no more authentic than Hollywood-produced 'puddings' such as *Les Misérables* (Bille August, 1998).

Perhaps it would be more appropriate to understand the films Danan has in mind as supranational rather than postnational, as these are films which, in the first instance, dilute their cultural specificity or repackage it as exoticism in their attempts to cater for the global marketplace. When these texts are appropriated into the global distribution machinery, most national designators are bypassed in favour of pre-packaged Hollywood-style marketing campaigns, emphasizing exoticized prestige and visual spectacle or global star names. In this way, the immersion of these films into the global cinematic landscape approximates the urges of supranationalism in diluting national specificity (or agency) or bypassing such 'hindrances' completely. And while these films may bring cultural and economic capital back to French sources, the ultimately 'denationalized' viewing positions implied by the global marketing strategies suggest that such films operate on a level that reduces national agency rather than contributes to its transformation.

While Mika Kaurismäki's cinema exhibits certain similarities with Danan's conceptualization, namely reliance on well-known actors and multinational production schemes, their textual emphasis on interrogating cultural authenticity, while playing up the national qualities of both the stars and the contexts in which they work, differentiate them from the supranational productions described above. Kaurismäki's production, distribution and exhibition are clearly transnational in their approach and, as such, a part of what commentators label transnational cinema. As their thematic elements instigate critical questioning of the dead ends and uneven flows of transnational cultural exchange, we begin to arrive at what I see as postnational cinema, cinema that works from a transvergent basis to imply the ambiguous polyphonicity of cultural production. The contradictions and the ability to evoke multiple layers of cultural-political meaning certainly make themselves visible in the critical reception of Kaurismäki's films. This puzzlement is evident in the many attempts to label them as indie or art-house cinema, which fails to capture their relationship with the commercial industry. But neither do the attempts to accuse them of supranationalism seem especially convincing as they do not adequately account for the persistence of the national in the films. Thus, the critics persistently resituate these films' complex networks of meaning with something more familiar. Transnationalism and the transformative effects of globalization are rerouted back to a coherent sense of national culture, instead of attempting to engage with their more problematic, challenging nature. Similar trajectories are evident in the international reception, where the films are marketed under the labels of Nordic or world cinema. While labels like these are necessary to allow unknown quantities to be marketed effectively, they also structure cinematic relations of power based on seemingly culturally-neutral assumptions of Hollywood hegemony. Kaurismäki challenges this politically-laden conceptualization of world cinema by blurring its paradigmatic signifiers and urging spectators to construct the contradictory interconnections that characterize his global mosaics. Thus, the uncertain and defiantly inconclusive ways in which both the national and the transnational are mobilized for different cultural-political reasons in the reception – indicates Kaurismäki's thematic and industrial liminality and refusal for easy categorization, underlining the need to adopt both postnationalism and transvergence as critical tools for negotiating their contradictions.

Another factor in this transvergent postnationalism is the ways the films seek to reveal the situated perspectives of the spectators. By refusing the pleasures that one can receive from national and/or transnational spectatorship, and art-house and popular cinema, the films instigate self-reflexive interrogation of one's cultural position and the impact this has on the meanings they derive from the film text. Simultaneously, the reception shows how spectators may often reject these interconnections by relying on their established cultural practices conventions of cinema spectatorship. While the films are not always thoroughly successful in encouraging exploration of our viewing practices and the ways our cultural contexts influence our patterns of spectatorship, at the very least, they can keep the dialogic mode of self-reflexivity, for which Zhang (2002) calls, alive in the realm of popular discourse. By understanding the implications and limitations of structures like national and world cinema, the art house and the popular, and those constructed by the Kaurismäki structure, we can begin the cultural work of dismantling their restrictive effects.

Conclusion: Beyond the Happy Ending

Kaurismäki has recently developed a tendency to conclude his films with a happy ending. While many of his earlier films culminate in ambiguous (*The Worthless*, *The Clan*) or distinctly bleak terms (*Rosso*, *Zombie and the Ghost Train*), the finales of *LA without a Map*, *Honey Baby*, *Three Wise Men* and *The House of Branching Love* can all be interpreted as typical Hollywood endings. The majority of these films chronicle the difficulties of interpersonal or cross-cultural communication and their narrative attempts to achieve harmony build obstacle upon obstacle. The conventionality of *LA without a Map*'s romantic comedy ending and *Honey Baby*'s culmination of the road need to be understood as instances of genre subversion, as the endings' overt optimism and fantastical qualities serve to undermine the hegemonic ideological structures that the genres often maintain. Similarly, *Three Wise Men* and *The House of Branching Love* work as subversions of the dominant conceptions of national cinema, as they consciously evoke traditions and national homogeneity as part of their fantastical conclusions. By suggesting that these elements only work on the level of fantasy or imagination, the films unravel the homogeneous connotations of the imagined community.

The many happy endings of Kaurismäki's films encourage us to ponder the ways that they negotiate the complexities of both popular and art-house film-making. Kaurismäki's films liberally deploy techniques from both types, assimilating them in complex ways that challenge their supposedly distinct and separate spheres. By incorporating both art and popular film production tendencies, the films provide new ways of understanding the realities and complexities of transnational film production. While Kaurismäki has been the focus of surprisingly sparse in-depth discussion in academia, his reputation as a film-maker working in and across multiple, generally taken-for-granted, frameworks has allowed him to play with and challenge established cine-cultural conventions. The Kaurismäki structure certainly functions as a limiting factor in the ways his films are distributed and received, but the confines of this framework and his refusal to play along with all its cultural-political implications allow him ample room for experimentation and exploring new directions when it comes to the production of his films.

His next projects are, first, a biopic called *Mama Africa* on South African singer Miriam Makeba, which is to receive distribution by the Fortissimo distribution company. The film

is being produced for the German Starhaus Produktions, after which Kaurismäki is moving to historical epic *Queen Christina*, a Canadian-French co-production, recreating the life of Sweden's titular monarch, starring indie actress Sarah Polley. The combination of a small-scale musical documentary, dealing with pertinent social issues, and the production of a lavish historical epic exploring historical conceptions of Nordic culture, does not come as a surprise when one considers Kaurismäki's lengthy career. Whereas Aki Kaurismäki consistently mobilizes his 'anti-capitalist' business practices, Mika Kaurismäki's work indicates the complex realities of producing socio-critical and 'different' cinema within the constraints of the commercial film industry. While Aki Kaurismäki's brand identity provides him with a platform from which to produce his idiosyncratic cinema, this is substantially more difficult for Mika Kaurismäki, who has been more moderate in his approach to antagonistic cultural politics and the type of *enfant terrible* auteurism that Aki embodies. Thus, the occasionally disruptive tones of the happy endings of the films need to be seen on two levels. In the first instance, they are concessions to the demands of the context in which Kaurismäki operates. While the rest of the narrative may be the typically-downbeat exploration of alienation and marginalization, the demands of the industry dictate that a seemingly-upbeat conclusion must take place. But when taken in tandem with the politicized argumentation of the rest of the films, the ironic and self-reflexive dimensions of the conclusions become part of the films' uncertain narrative structures, which implore us to question and rethink all that we have seen previously.

Kaurismäki's whole body of work creates not only a multicultural mosaic that spans different continents of the globe, but also an experiment on the politics of representation. The films function as a way to ponder the relevance of cinema in negotiating the complex patterns of cultural interaction that an increasingly globalizing society requires. It is not only their complex global connections, but moments of introspective calm, which allow the films to function as metonymic indicators of wide-scale societal transformation. For example, the seemingly insignificant and static scenes depicting Rosso in the Ostrobothnian plains cannot simply be understood as instances of existential angst. Rather, they need to be thought of as metonymic captures of transnational collision at a time when transnational interaction was still a relatively emergent idea in the Finnish cultural landscape.

The cultural vertigo endured by the protagonists of these early films dilutes as we move through the decades. No longer a source of fear or alienation in *Helsinki Napoli*, transnational interaction now forms the seeds of cosmopolitan community. These changes of approach are part of a larger attempt by Kaurismäki to interrogate some of the major preoccupations of transnational cinema. As social inequality increases in the welfare vacuum left by conflicts between the so-called developed and developing nations, and immigrant populations face increasing discrimination and lack of protection by their host nations, transnational cinema can capture the condition of uncertainty and insecurity that diasporic and exilic existence and neo-liberalist restructuring can have on the ordinary people facing these tumultuous transformations. Many of these problems are key topics of Kaurismäki's films, but increasingly, there is also a clear sense of attempting to come to terms with some of these

changes. If many of the more prominent examples of transnational cinema seek to normalize displacement and marginality as the unfortunate norm in an integrating world of unequal global power relations, Kaurismäki's films move beyond this state of displacement to capture a more 'positive' sense of marginalization. Instead of the dispersal that diasporic conditions can instill, Kaurismäki uses these conditions as building blocks for a new emergent sense of communality.

Of course, Kaurismäki's latter-day films are, to a large extent, utopian in their emphasis on multicultural harmony. Focusing on the enabling, instead of disabling, aspects of intercultural communication in the schisms of the developing world inevitably leads to questions of subjectivity and the right to represent, and any such sense of optimism needs to be explored in relation to Eurocentricism. Questions of ownership, exoticism, commodification of indigenous cultures and cultural capital thus emerge as crucial points of investigation. While Eurocentricism is a highly problematic and essentially limited approach to representing the interaction of different cultures, the very self-consciously self-reflexive positions that these films take necessitates that we interrogate their implications instead of just labelling it as redundant neo-colonialism. While most of Kaurismäki's protagonists are from European confines and engage with other cultures from a self-conceived superior outsider perspective, we are simultaneously invited to criticize the protagonists and their actions. In *Amazon*, for example, we are not only invited to criticize Western complicity in eco-destruction, but the motivations of the protagonists (our focal point of the film) are consistently characterized by moral ambiguity and contradiction. This self-reflexivity seeks to reverse our 'orientalist' gaze and reveal our complicity in both the cultural objectification of other cultures, but also as part of the system that maintains the exploitation of natural resources. Accordingly, the complexity of the narratives necessitates that we approach the political qualities of the films from a perspective that does not insist on simplified categories like nationhood or one-directional flows of power implicit in conceptualizations of the developing/developed country relationship. Rather, these films compile a range of different perspectives into open-ended visions, whose complexities and contradictions seek to unravel dominant paradigms of cultural production and representation.

To account for these complexities, we have introduced terms like transvergence and postnational that allow us to move beyond taken-for-granted ways in which 'world' or national cinema are studied. Interrogating categories of (trans)national cinema through the framework of postnational cinema allows us to rethink the cultural vacuum of terms like the europudding and supranational co-production. Instead of providing cinematic emulations of Habermas' constitutional patriotism, postnational cinema explores national belonging from an insider-outsider perspective. Kaurismäki's films critique the nation by operating in the folds and schisms that emerge when the national meets the global. Yet, the postnational is not something that emerges 'after' the national. Rather, it seeks to find new ways of understanding the role of the nation as still one of the most fundamental forms of social community. Accordingly, the postnational condition emerges as a way of being in touch with national roots, of understanding their powerful, but simultaneously ephemeral, quality

in social life, which is something Mika Kaurismäki constantly discusses in interviews. The postnational dimensions of Kaurismäki's films contradict Jürgen Habermas' use of the term for conceptualizing a shared sense of collectivity in terms of a pan-European citizenship. Instead, these films focus on people who are 'passing' through, the nomads of contemporary society, for whom collectivity is an on-going, fluid process, and which is something to be constantly negotiated in the shadow of global inequality. While Kaurismäki's films seldom resort to problem solving, some of his later films have started suggesting a more utopian sense of universal humanism. Yet, they do not rely on any models of convergence (supranationalism or nationalism as the basis for community) or divergence (permanent oppositional communities are impossible, as is the simplistic rhetoric of contrasting national cinema to Hollywood/global homogeneity). They acknowledge that the world is more complex than this and any representational technique is always compromised by subjectivity or by becoming part of the wider structures one aims to critique. This does not mean that we are unable to construct critical perspectives on global power relations, ones which can also contribute to cultural and socio-economic development through their increasing visibility in popular forums of debate. Kaurismäki's films function as suggestive contributions to globalization's complex, contradictory patterns, which in turn seek to direct us as the audience to evaluate our contributions to globalization's discontents.

The many complex directions in which Kaurismäki's films gesture can be examined by recourse to a range of well-known analytical frameworks such as poststructuralism and postmodernism. These are, of course, more than valid approaches. They take apart the normative structures that govern societies and dictate human-centric modes of thinking, both of which are clearly connected to maintaining existing modes of inequality. I prefer to use the concept of transvergence to refer to this process. The concept encapsulates the multiple emergent directions in which these films gesture in their attempts to chronicle the heterogeneity and constantly-transforming constitution of society. Transvergence has a interrogative orientation similar to many prevalent concepts in cultural studies – such as non-places, liminality, displacement, hybridity, to name a few key concepts in the field. It is a term that encapsulates the cultural-politics of Kaurismäki's cinema. But, as is the case with Novak's (2002) conceptualization of transvergence as neither convergence nor divergence, Kaurismäki's films do not move towards any sense of epistemological certainty on any political position or value statement but, instead, evoke questions about taken-for-granted notions, both in the field of identity politics and cinematic representation. Mika Kaurismäki operates 'at the intersections of two or more cultural regimes of knowledge' – to paraphrase Laura Marks's conception of 'intercultural cinema' (Marks 2000: 31) – which implies the basic conditions for an effectively radical and critical film practice. Transvergence involves this type of interculturalism as it highlights the ambiguity and heterogeneity of new conceptions of culture and identity emerging in the zones (or more appropriately schisms) of development of the transforming world.

While films such as *The Worthless* and *Honey Baby* conclude with the establishment of a seemingly-permanent type of unity, such a sense of stability can only be temporary, as the

conclusions of the films work against the remainder of their narratives. It is this oscillation between movement and stasis that characterizes the dynamics of these films as they invite us to question the very principles and reasons which force these protagonists to take to the road. The typical impetus of the road movie is a quest for self-realization but, here, it is the very process of search that matters and 'the most important thing is leaving'. Ultimately, these ideological outsiders find that there is very little point in their original quests as they are still as lost as they were when embarking on these missions. Instead of discovering stability at the end of the road, they realize the road is an internal concept – in the contemporary world, these ideological outsiders will need to constantly inhabit the position of the traveller and the nomad as there is no ideological or social form of stability that can placate their needs.

Transvergence similarly permeates the seemingly well-intentioned ethnographic approaches of Kaurismäki's documentaries. While films such as *Moro no Brasil* and *Tigrero* can clearly be labelled Eurocentric, the limitations of Eurocentrism are one of the topics these films address, as we are invited to question our participation in the construction of these sorts of narratives. Part of the benefits (and problems) of cinematic transvergence is the films' persistent refusal to give any clear answers to the dilemmas proposed by their themes or narratives in their avoidance of confirming set structures or easy standpoints. For example, the environmental texts are very self-aware of their problematic status as part of the cinematic industry, which uses natural resources in ways that may have detrimental effects on the environment – the very topic on which they want to raise spectator awareness. Furthermore, the films are inherently aware of the fact that cinema is a commercial mode of production and not some ideologically-pure vessel for carrying worthwhile or ideologically-pertinent messages. Accordingly, we are never merely invited to relax and go with the flow of the entertainment factors, or feel self-satisfied with our environmentalist 'work' of watching a film on eco-destruction. By implicating the spectator in the cinematic construct, they interrogate our complicity by inviting us into the trappings of genre or commercial entertainment, and then, effectively, pulling the rug out from under us. By understanding these films in terms of the dynamics of postnationalism and transvergence, we can reach as close a mode of dialogic cultural analysis as possible. Such a mode acknowledges our complicity in fostering any cultural imbalance, and gestures towards new emergent meanings, both ideas encouraged by Kaurismäki's thematic complexity and multi-faceted production methodology. The films are, then, not merely national or transnational cinema but something in between and beyond. They are part of transvergent cinema, of new heterogeneous meanings simultaneously contradictory and prophetic.

Bibliography

- Abram, David (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous*, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Ahonen, Kimmo (2002) 'Suomalaisen Miehen Omakuva', in Kimmo Ahonen, Janne Rosenqvist, Juha Rosenqvist, and Päivi Valotie (eds.) *Taju Kankaalle: Usin Suomalainen Elokuva*, Helsinki: Suomen Elokuva Arkisto, pp. 140–54.
- Aitio, Tommi (2000) 'Kyynelet Täyttämä Valtameri: Mika Kaurismäen Elokuvat *Valehtelijasta Rossoon*', in Sakari Toiviainen (ed.) *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia 9*, Helsinki: Edita, pp. 44–7.
- Altman, Rick (1999) *Film/Genre*, London: BFI Publishing.
- Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Anderson, John (2009) 'The House of Branching Love', *Variety*, 21 September.
- Apunen, Matti (1990) 'Amazonin Seikkailu', *Aamulehti*, 15 December.
- Apunen, Matti (1989) 'Paperitähdestä', *Aamulehti*, 30 September.
- Apunen, Matti (1987a) 'Levoton Mies Suurkaupungin Yössä', *Aamulehti*, 13 November.
- Apunen, Matti (1987b) 'Elintilaa Haulipyssyllä', *Aamulehti*, 14 November.
- Aretz, Judith (2005) 'Brasileirinho', *ZDF Aspekte*, 12 February.
- Aro, Tuuva (2009): 'Haarautuvan Rakkauden Talo', MTV3.fi. <http://www.mtv3.fi/viihde/arvostelut/elokuva.shtml/935413> (accessed 20 April, 2010)
- Aro, Tuuva (2007) 'Sonic Mirror', MTV.fi. <http://www.mtv3.fi/viihde/arvostelut/elokuva.shtml/638753> (accessed 20 April, 2010)
- Augé, Marc (1995) *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, London: Verso.
- Avola, Pertti (1982) 'Aki ja Mika Kaurismäki: Kadonneen Tarinan Metsästäjät', *Näköpiiri*, 11.
- Bamberg, Rolf (1987) 'Kansainväliset Kaurismäet', *VR-Extra*, 4.
- Benjamin, Walter (1998) *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Billig, Michael (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage.
- Bordwell, David (2008) *Poetics of Cinema*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Braidotti, Rosi (1994) *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Brereton, Pat (2005) *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Brunette, Peter (2009) 'The House of Branching Love', *The Hollywood Reporter*, 14 September.
- Bustelo, Eduardo (1992) 'La Producción del Estado de Malestar: Ajuste y Política Social en América Latina' in Alberto Minujin (ed.) *Cuesta Abajo*, Buenos Aires: CELS.
- Carbon, Sabine (1991) 'Forum des Jungen Films: Amazon', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 27 February.
- Cardullo, Bert (2008) *Movies on My Mind: Selected Writings, 2002–2007*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Carpelan, Pirkko (1987) 'Mika Menee Myötätuulella', *Me Naiset*, 22 May.
- Chambers, Iain (1994) *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, London: Routledge.
- Clifford, James (1997) *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard: Harvard University Press.

- Cohen, E. Ben-Yehuda, N. and Aviad, J. (1987) Recentring the World, *Sociological Review*, 35 (2), pp. 320–46.
- Cook, Pam (2010) 'Transnational Utopias: Baz Luhrmann and Australian Cinema', *Transnational Cinemas* 1: 1, pp. 23–36.
- Danan Martine (2007) 'National and Postnational French Cinema', in Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (eds.) *Theorising National Cinema*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 172–85.
- Davis, Belinda (2008) 'The City as Theater of Protest: West Berlin and West Germany, 1962–1983' in Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse (eds.), *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 247–74.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1989) *Cinema 2: the Time-image*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1986) *Cinema 1: the Movement-image*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Etelänpää, Heikki (1985) 'Tappajan Taival', *Uusi Suomi*, 12 October.
- Ezra, Elizabeth and Rowden, Terry (eds.) (2005) *Transnational Cinema: A Film Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Featherstone, Mike (1990) 'Introduction', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 7, pp. 2–3.
- Ferry, Jean-Marc (1991) 'Pertinence du Postnational', *Esprit*, no11, pp. 80–94.
- Fiske, John (1987) *Television Culture*, London: Methuen.
- Foucault, Michel (1986) 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16, pp. 22–7.
- Fuentes, Victor (1995) 'Pedro Almodovar's Postmodern Cinema', in Kathleen Vernon (ed.) *Post-Franco, Post-Modern: The Films of Pedro Almodovar*, Westport: Greenwood, pp. 155–70.
- Galt, Rosalind (2006) *The New European Cinema: Redrawing the Map*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Gordon Bonnie (2007) 'Sonic Mirror', *Hollywood Reporter*, 5 July.
- Gordon, Tuula and Lahelma, Elina (1998) 'Kansalaisuus, Kansallisuus ja Sukupuoli', in Perttti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (ed.) (1998) *Elävänä Euroopassa: Muuttuva Suomalainen Identiteetti*, Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, pp. 251–80.
- Gralla Rene (1988) 'Helsinki Napoli', *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 14 April.
- Haavikko, Heikki (1982) 'Bonnie ja Clyde Suomalaismetsissä', *Riihimäen Sanomat*, 18 November.
- Habermas, Jürgen (2001) *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Hall, Stuart and Du Gay, Paul (eds.) (1996) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage Publications.
- Haraway, Donna (1991) 'The Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York; Routledge, pp. 149–81.
- Harvey David (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Harvey, Dennis (2002) 'Moro No Brasil', *Variety*, 30 April.
- Hedetoft, Ulf and Hjort, Mette (eds.) (2002) *The Post-national Self: Belonging and Identity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Heider, Karl (2006) *Ethnographic Film*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Heiskanen, Outi (2008) 'Kolme Viisasta Miestä', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13 November, 2008.
- Hèlen, Ilpo (1991) 'Ajan Läpi?', *Filmihullu*, 5, 1991, 12–18.
- Higbee, Will (2007) 'Beyond the (trans)national: Towards a Cinema of Transvergence in Postcolonial and Diasporic Francophone Cinema(s)', *Studies in French Cinema*, 7 (2), pp. 79–91.
- Higbee, Will and Lim, Song Hwee (2010) 'Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies', *Transnational Cinemas*, 1 (1), pp. 7–22.
- Higson, Andrew (2000a) 'The Instability of the National', in Justine Ashby and Andrew Higson (eds.) *British Cinema, Past and Present*, London: Routledge, pp. 35–47.
- Higson, Andrew (2000b) 'The Limiting Concept of the National', in Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (eds.) *Cinema & Nation*, London: Routledge, pp. 63–74.
- Higson, Andrew (1995) *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Higson, Andrew (1993) 'Representing the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film', in Lester Friedman (ed.) *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism*, London, UCL Press, 109–29

Bibliography

- Hjort, Mette (2005) *Small Nation, Global Cinema: The New Danish Cinema*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hjort, Mette (2000) 'Themes of Nation', in Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (eds.) *Cinema & Nation*, London: Routledge, pp. 103–18.
- Huida, Jarmo (1985a) 'Miehet ja Petolliset Naiset', *Satakunnan Kansa*, 27 October.
- Ingold, Tim (1993) 'Globes and Spheres: the Topology of Environmentalism', in K. Milton (ed.) *Environmentalism: the View from Anthropology*, London: Routledge, pp. 31–42.
- Ingram, David (2000) *Green Screen: Environmentalism and Hollywood Cinema*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press.
- Iordanova, Dina (2003) *Cinema of the Other Europe: The Industry and the Artistry of East Central European Film*, London: Wallflower.
- Jaedicke, Tom (1991) 'Mit Kaurismäki an den Amazonas', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 27 February.
- Jalander, Ywe (1994) 'Tigrero – Elokuva Joka Ei Valmistunut', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 14.
- Jalander, Ywe (1993) 'Kotimaista', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 34.
- Jalander, Ywe (1991a) 'Surullinen Seikkailu Sademetsissä', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 4 January.
- Jalander, Ywe (1991b) 'Alkoholimelankoliaa', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 16 August.
- Jalander, Ywe (1987b) 'Ylikansallista Viihdettä', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 27 November, 1987.
- Jalander, Ywe (1984) 'Sammakot', *Ahjo*, 43.
- Jensen, Jorn 'Sealed with a K', *Moving Pictures*, 10 February.
- Jokinen, Kimmo and Saaristo, Kimmo (2002) *Suomalainen Yhteiskunta*, Helsinki: WSOY.
- Jokiranta, Jarmo (1986) 'Laadukas Kotimainen: Rosso', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8 August.
- Kaisjoki, Jussi (2005) 'Matka Mielen Murmanskiin', 25 February, Film-o-holic.com. <http://www.film-o-holic.com/arvostelut/honey-baby/> (accessed 28 August 2010)
- Karkimo, Ari (1985) 'Sammakoita ja Ihmisiä', *Etelä-Suomi*, 1 May.
- Kastoryano, Riva (2002) 'Citizenship and Belonging: Beyond Blood and Soil', in Ulf Hedetoft and Mette Hjort (eds.) *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 120–37.
- Katzenstein, Peter (2005) *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Kaurismäki Mika (2007) 'Sonic Mirror'. <http://www.sonicmirror.com/index.php?id=11> (accessed 20 April, 2010)
- Keer, Frank (2006) 'Ein Finne Fand Sonne', *Lebensart*, 27 July.
- Kejonen, Pentti (1982) 'Arvottomien Käsikirjoittaja Aki Kaurismäki: Suomalainen Kulttuuri On Tuomittu', *Kaleva* 15 October.
- Kell (1988) 'Helsinki Napoli All Night Long', *Variety*, 18 May.
- Kell (1985) 'Rosso', *Variety*, 11 December.
- Kinisjärvi, Raimo (1993) 'The Last Border', *Kaleva*, 29 August.
- Kivi, Aleksis ([1870]2003) *Seitsemän Veljestä*, Helsinki: Otava.
- Kivi, Ilmo (1985) 'Isänmaallinen Roadmovie', *Uusi Valta*, 6–7.
- Klinger, Barbara (1994) *Melodrama and Meaning: history, culture, and the films of Douglas Sirk*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Koivunen, Anu (2006) 'Do You Remember Monrepos?', C. Claire Thomson (ed.) *Nordic Constellations*, Norwich: Norvik Press, pp. 133–49.
- Koivunen, Anu (2003) *Performative Histories, Foundational Fictions: Gender and Sexuality in Niskavuori Films*, Helsinki: SKS.
- Kääpä, Pietari (2010a) *The National and Beyond: the Globalisation of Finnish Cinema in the Films of Aki and Mika Kaurismäki*, Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Kääpä, Pietari (2010b) Interview with Mika Kaurismäki, 7 January 2010, unpublished.
- Kääpä, Pietari (2007) 'The Politics of Contradiction in Aki Kaurismäki's Leningrad Cowboys Trilogy', *Wider Screen*, 2.
- Kääpä, Pietari (2006) 'Displaced Souls Lost in Finland', *Wider Screen*, 2.
- Laiho, Antero (1985) 'Muukalainen Suomenmaassa', *Turku*, 22 October.

- Latour Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, Hemel Hampstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- LeCorre, Pirkko (1982) 'Suomalaisfilmin Teko Innosti Ranskalaisia Pariisissa', *Turun Sanomat*, 16 August.
- Lehtisalo, Juhani (1987) 'Suomalainen Euroleffa', *Apu*, 117.
- Lehtonen, Mikko (2004) 'Suomi on Toistettua Maata', in Mikko Lehtonen, Olli Löytty and Petri Ruuska (eds.) *Suomi Toisin Sanoen*, Tampere, Vastapaino, pp. 121–49.
- Lehtonen, Mikko, Löytty, Olli and Ruuska, Petri (ed.) (2004) *Suomi Toisin Sanoen*, Tampere, Vastapaino.
- Levy, Emanuel (1993) 'The Last Border', *Variety*, 4 October.
- Lindgren, Tommy (2009): 'Kun Mitään Ei Tapahdu', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20 May.
- Lindqvist, Antti (1995) 'Tigrero', *Katso*, 1.
- Lindqvist, Antti (1989) 'Cha Cha Cha', *Katso*, 5.
- Lindqvist, Antti (1987) 'Miehen Tehtävä', *Katso*, 48.
- Lumirae, Pertti (1994) 'Pidä Penkin Laidasta Kiinni, Katsoja', *Demari*, 14 January.
- Lumirae, Pertti (1991) 'Kaurismäki Palkittiin Sademetsäelokuvastaan', *Demari*, 22 May.
- Lumirae, Pertti (1987) 'Mika Kaurismäki Berliinissä', *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti*, 1 November.
- Lumirae, Pertti (1985) 'Kaurismäen Rosso on jotain uutta', *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti*, 12 October.
- Lumirae, Pertti (1984) 'Klaani – Kaurismäen Uusi Merkkiteos', *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti*, 1 December.
- Lumirae, Pertti (1981) 'Saimaa-Ilmiö', *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti*, 15 September.
- MacDougall, David (1998): *Transcultural Cinema*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Makkonen, Veli-Pekka (1990) 'Amazonin Pimeyden Sydän', *Tiedonantaja*, 21 December.
- Makkonen, Veli-Pekka (1989) 'Cha Cha Cha', *Tiedonantaja*, 20 January.
- Makkonen, Veli-Pekka (1987) 'Valoa Berliinin Yössä', *Tiedonantaja*, 20 November.
- Manninen, Olli (1989) 'Kaurismäen Vaihtokaupat', *Iltalehti*, 20 January.
- Marks, Laura U. (2000) *Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*: Durham: Duke University Press.
- Martin-Jones, David (2006) *Deleuze, National Identity and Cinema*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Maskula, Tapani (1987) 'Kaurismäen Pizza', *Turun Sanomat*, 24 November.
- Maskula, Tapani (1985) 'Yksinäinen Harhailija', *Turun Sanomat*, 15 October.
- Maskula, Tapani (1984) 'Laitakaupungin Balladi', *Turun Sanomat*, 4 December.
- Mazierska, Ewa and Rascaroli, Laura (2003) *From Moscow to Madrid: Postmodern Cities, European Cinema*, I.B. Tauris.
- Modaressi, Taghi (1992) 'Writing with an Accent', *Chanteh*, 1, Fall, pp 7–9.
- Montonen, Mikko (1982) 'Kadonneen Suomen Metsästäjät', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 9 October.
- Morley, David and Robins, Kevin (1995) *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, London: Routledge.
- Naficy, Hamid (2003) *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nestingén, Andrew (2010) *The Cinema of Aki Kaurismäki*, London: Wallflower Press.
- Nestingén (2008) *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Nestingén, Andrew (2005) 'Aki Kaurismäki's Crossroads', in Andrew Nestingén and Trevor Elkington (eds.) *Transnational Cinema in a Global North*, Wayne State University Press.
- Nestingén, Andrew (2004) 'Leaving Home: Global Circulation and Aki Kaurismäki's *Ariel*', in Andrew Nestingén (ed.) *In Search of Aki Kaurismäki: Aesthetics and Contexts*, Beaverton: Aspasia Books, pp. 96–115.
- Newland, Paul (2008) *The Cultural Construction of London's East End*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.
- Nierich, Rita (1993) Review of *Zombie and the Ghost Train*, Hong Kong Film Festival, 24 August.
- Normann, Tor, Ronning, Elisabeth and Norgaard, Elisabeth (2009) *Challenges to the Nordic Welfare State – Comparable Indicators*, Copenhagen, NOSOSCO.
- Noukka, Reijo (1993) 'Mad Max Lähtee Lappiin', *Aamulehti*, 21 August.
- Novak, Marcos (2002) 'Speciation, Transvergence, Allogenesis: Notes on the Production of the Alien'. <http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~marcos/transvergence.pdf> (accessed 20 April 2010).
- Nummelin, Matti (1982) 'Kaurismäen Matka Suomalaiseen Elämään', *Satakunnan Työ*, 2 December.
- Nyrhinen, Jussi (1984) 'Pispalassa Syntyy Nykyajan Putkinotko', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 11 April.

- Ohlsson Monica (1988) 'Helsinki Napoli', *Chaplin*, 219, December.
- Pantti, Mervi (2000) *Kansallinen Elokuva On Pelastettava: Elokuvapoliittinen Keskustelu Kansallisen Elokuvan Tukemisesta Itsenäisyyden Ajalla*, Helsinki: SKS.
- Pease, Donald, E. (1997) 'National Narratives, Postnational Narration', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 43 (1) (1997) pp. 1–23.
- Peltonen, Osmo (1985) 'Rosso', *Kansan Uutiset*, 12 October.
- Peltonen, Osmo (1990) 'Matka Sademetsän Sydämeen', *Viikkolehti*, 15 December.
- Piela, Mikko (2008) 'Kolme Viisasta miestä', *Uusi Suomi*, 13 November.
- Polan, Dana (1996) 'Globalism's Localisms', in Rob Wilson and WimalDissanayake (eds.) *Global/Local*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 255–83.
- Puurtinen, Toni (2009) 'Maailmaa Kameran Kautta Tarkkaileva Elokuvaohjaaja', 14 December, Film-o-holic.com. <http://www.film-o-holic.com/haastattelut/mika-Kaurismaki-kolme-viisasta-miestä/> (accessed 20 April 2010).
- Raban, Jonathan (1975) *Soft City*, Glasgow: Fontana.
- Robertson, Roland (1995) 'Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity', in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (eds.) *Global Modernities*, London: Sage, pp. 25–44.
- Rosenqvist, Juha (2009) 'Elokuva on Hyvä Tapa Matkustaa', *Kulttuuri*, 2, pp. 56–58.
- Rosenqvist, Juha (2008) 'Sonic Mirror', Film-o-holic. <http://www.film-o-holic.com/arvostelut/sonic-mirror/> (accessed 20 April 2010).
- Rosenqvist, Juha (1998) 'Lost in L.A.', 27 August, Film-o-holic.com. <http://www.film-o-holic.com/arvostelut/la-without-a-map/> (accessed 20 April 2010).
- Roston, Anne (1993) 'A Finn Scans a Rock Scene both Tragic and Screwball', *New York Times*, August 7.
- Ruby, Jay (2001) 'The Professionalisation of Visual Anthropology in the United States', *Conference Proceedings of Origins of Visual Anthropology: Putting the Past Together*, Göttingen, Germany.
- Runeberg, Johan Ludvig ([1848]2003) *Vänrikki Stoolin tarinat*, Helsinki: Gummerus.
- Russell, Catherine (1999) *Experimental Ethnography*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Römpötti, Tommi (2008) "'Voiks Mikään Enää Pysäyttää Meitä?"; Tie, Vapaus ja Foucault'n Heterotopia', *Lähikuva*, 1, 26–41.
- Salminen, Kari (1995) 'Tigrero', *Turun Sanomat*, 4 January.
- Sassen, Saskia (2001) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Seigworth, Gregory (2000) 'Banality For Cultural Studies', *Cultural Studies*, 14 (2), pp. 227–68.
- Sheffler, Karl (1910) *Berlin: Ein Schicksal*, Berlin: Erich Reiss Verlag.
- Shiel, Mark and Fitzmaurice, Tony (eds) (2001) *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sihvonen, Jukka (1999) 'Between the Two: Dimensions of Space in Finnish Cinema', in Konstantarakos, Myrto (ed.) *Spaces in European Cinema*, Exeter: Intellect, pp. 166–77.
- Siltala, Mika (1990b) 'Kaurismäki Perhematkalla Maailman Keuhkoissa', *Uusi Suomi*, 15 December.
- Siltavuori, Aino (1985) 'Sukutarina Yhteiskunnan Laitapuolen Kulkijoista', *Filmaaja*, 1.
- Soila, Tytti (2003) 'The Landscape of Memories in the Films of the Kaurismäki Bros', *Film International*, 3, pp. 4–15.
- Soja, Edward (1996) *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Spaces*, London: Blackwell.
- Sorlin, Pierre (2002) *Italian National Cinema*, London: Routledge.
- Soysal, Yasemin N. (1994) *Limits of Citizenship. Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sterritt, David (1989) 'Finland Gaining Notice as International Film Source', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 March.
- Stålhammar, Leo (1989b) 'Tähtenä Miesten Maailmassa', *Suomenmaa*, 6 October.
- Suominen, Raili (1984) 'Suku on Pahin', *Turun Sanomat*, 1 December.
- Tammi, Eero (2002) 'Road-movie Elämänvirrassa', Film-o-holic.com. <http://www.film-o-holic.com/arvostelut/sound-of-brazil-moro-no-brasil/> (accessed, 20 August, 2010)
- Tanner, Louise (1989) 'Who's in Town', *Films in Review*, April.

- Tasman Kira (2005) 'Brasileirinho', 12 February 2005, *Screen*.
- Thompson, Ben (1991) 'Off the Wall and Out of Finland', *The Independent on Sunday*, 20 January.
- Toiviainen, Kalervo (1985) 'Maailma Katoo – Kakola Ei', *Pohjolan Sanomat*, 30 January.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (ed.) (2004) *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia 11, 1991-1995*, Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (2002a) *Levottomat Sukupolvet: Uusin Suomalainen Elokuva*, Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (ed.) (2002b) *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia 10, 1986-1990*, Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (ed.) (2000) *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia 9, 1981-1985*, Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (1990) 'Aika Lyö Amazonilla', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 14 December.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (1987) 'Kohtauspaikkana Berliini, Kotimaana Elokuva', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 13 November.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (1984) 'Klaanin Loisto ja Kurjuus', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 30 November.
- Toiviainen, Sakari (1982) 'Arvottomat', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 17 October.
- Topelius, Taneli (2008) 'Miehenä Olemisen Paine', *Turun Sanomat*, 14 November.
- Ulmer, James (1992) 'The Amazon Director isn't Finished with Europe', *The Hollywood Reporter*, 21 January.
- Uusitalo, Kari (1991a) 'Kotimaisen Elokuvan Vuosi: Kaukokaipua, Yleisökatoa', *Hyvinkään Sanomat*, 4 January.
- Uusitalo, Kari (1991b) 'Valkoisen Miehen Odysseia', *Hyvinkään Sanomat*, 12 March.
- Valkola, Jarmo (2009) 'Haarautuvan Rakkauden Talo', in *Keskisuomalainen*, 21 August.
- Valkola, Jarmo (1989a) 'Perinnönjaon Ongelmista', *Keski-Suomalainen*, 16 February.
- Valkola, Jarmo (1989b) 'Hymynsä Kadottanut Nukke', *Keski-Suomalainen*, 7 November.
- Valkola, Jarmo (1985) 'Mika Kaurismäen Rosso: Elämän Koomisessa Kiirastuksessa', *Keskisuomalainen*, 20 October.
- Vernet, Marc (1983) 'The Filmic Transaction: on the Openings of Film Noirs', *Velvet Light Trap* 20, pp. 2–9.
- Von Bagh, Peter (2000): *Drifting Clouds: a Guide to Finnish Cinema*, Helsinki: Otava.
- Von Bagh, Peter (1984) 'Kellarin Filosofia', *Filmihullu*, 7, pp. 4–11.
- Väliahho, Pasi (2003) 'Siirtymävaiheen Amnesia: Mies Vailla Menneisyyttä', in Kimmo Ahonen et al. (eds.) *Taju Kankaalle. Uutta Suomalaista Elokuvaa Paikantamassa*, Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 98–105.
- Wang, G. and Yeh, E.Y. (2005) 'Globalisation and Hybridisation in Cultural Products: the Cases of Mulan and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon', *International Journal Of Cultural Studies*, 8:2, pp. 175–93.
- Weber, Julian (2005) 'Zweihundert Songs im Schädel', Zurich, *Wochenzeitung*, 24 February.
- Waintrop Edouard (1992) 'Zombie – Le Blues du coq a l'ame', 17 February.
- Welin, Marja (1983) 'Arvottomat - Elokuva Nykyajasta', *Ruotsin Suomalainen*, 8 February.
- Wettenhovi, Hannu P. (1989) 'Kotimaisen Elokuvan Juhla', *Pohjalainen*, 4 February.
- Wiese, Daniel (2004) 'Orpheus im Schnee', *Die Tageszeitung*, 4 November.
- Wyatt, Justin (1994) *High Concept*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ylänen, Helena (1991) 'Mika Kaurismäen *Zombie ja Kummitusjuna* Osaa Lentää: Z – Hän Elää', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2 August, 1991.
- Ylänen, Helena (1984) 'Sammakko Meissä Ihmississä', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1 December.
- Ylänen, Helena (1982) 'Tärkeintä on Lähteminen', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 17 October.
- Ylänen, Helena (1981a) 'Rahaton Nuori Mies', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 29 February.
- Ylänen, Helena (1981b) 'Meillä Kaikilla Oli Niin Mukavaa', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 12 September.
- Zhang, Yingjin (2002) *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Additional reading

- Aitio, Tommi (1991) 'Elegia Alkoholismista', *Filmihullu*, 5, p. 37.
- Alasuutari, Pentti and Ruuska, Petri (ed.) (1998) *Elävänä Euroopassa: Muuttuva Suomalainen Identiteetti*, Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy.

- Alasuutari, Pertti and Ruuska, Petri (1999) *Post-patria?: Globalisaation Kulttuuri Suomessa*, Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Apo, Satu (1998) 'Suomalaisuuden Stigmatisoinnin Traditio', in Pentti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (eds.) *Elävänä Euroopassa: Muuttuva Suomalainen Identiteetti*, Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, pp. 83–128.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bacon, Henry (2003) 'Aki Kaurismäen Sijoiltaan Olon Poetiikka', in Kimmo Ahonen, Janne Rosenqvist, Juha Rosenqvist and Päivi Valotie (eds.) *Taju Kankaalle: Usin Suomalainen Elokuva*, Helsinki: SEA, pp. 88–97.
- Ball, Edward (1992) 'Amazonas', *Village Voice*, March.
- Benjamin, Walter (1978) 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century' in Peter Demetz (ed.) *Walter Benjamin, Reflections*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1999) 'The Other Question: the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse', in Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds.) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London: Sage, pp. 370–85
- Canby, Vincent (1992) 'Finns' Plea for Amazon', *New York Times*, 25 February.
- Cantell, Timo (1995) 'Kulttuurinen Murros ja Eläminen Epävarmuudessa', *Sosiologia*, 3, pp. 191–200.
- Cosgrove, Denis (2004) 'Landscape and Landschaft', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 35, pp. 57–71.
- Harle, Vilho and Moisio, Sami (2000) *Missä on Suomi? Kansallisen Identiteettipolitiikan Historia ja Geopolitiikka*, Jyväskylä: Vastapaino.
- Hayles, Katherine (1997) 'Searching for Common Ground', in M. Soule and G. Lease (eds.) *Reinventing Nature?* Washington: Island Press
- Higson, Andrew (1989) 'The Concept of National Cinema', *Screen*, 30 (4), pp. 36–46.
- Hjort, Mette & MacKenzie, Scott (ed.) (2000) *Cinema & Nation*, London: Routledge.
- Hjort, Mette (2005) 'From Epiphanic Culture to Circulation: the Dynamics of Globalization in Nordic Cinema', in Andrew Nestingen and Trevor Elkington (eds.) *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Horn, Effi (1988) 'Vielvölkerstaat Berlin', *Münchner Merkur*, 21 April.
- Huida, Jarmo (1985b) 'Vapaana Vankeudessa', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 13 January.
- Huttunen, Timo (1984) 'Maailma Sannakkoperspektiivistä', *Kansan Tahto*, 4 December.
- Hyvärinen, Aimo (1985) 'Uudistuva Suomalainen Elokuva', *Suomi-lehti*, 11 January.
- Hyvärinen, Aimo (1984) 'Filmtotal Tuottaa Tänä Talvena Kuusi Kokopitkää Elokuvaa', *Länsiväylä*, 14 November.
- Immonen, Petri and Kaipainen, Lassi (1982) 'Halu Paeta Todellisuutta, Joka Oli Julma ja Kylmä', *Spektri*, 4.
- Immonen, Petri (1984) 'Sammakoiden Tarina', *Katso*, 50.
- Jameson, Fredric (1991) *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Jääskeläinen, Ari (1998) 'Kansallistava Kansanrunous: Suomalaisuus ja Folklore', in Pertti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (eds.) *Elävänä Euroopassa: Muuttuva Suomalainen Identiteetti*, Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, pp. 41–82.
- Mazierska, Eva and Rascaroli, Laura (2006) *Crossing New Europe: Post-modern Travel and the Road Movie*, London: Wallflower Press.
- McRae, Kenneth D. (1997) *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies: Finland*, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Miller, Toby, Govil, Nitin, McMurria, John and Maxwell, Richard (2001) *Global Hollywood*, London: BFI.
- Montonen, Mikko (1982) 'Elämän Arvot ja Arvottomat', *Ilta-Sanomien*, 15 October.
- Naficy, Hamid (2006) 'Situating Accented Cinema', in Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (eds.) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 111–30.
- Nesting, Andrew (2007) 'Aki Kaurismäki and Nation: The Contrarian Cinema', *Wider Screen*, 2.
- Nesting, Andrew (2003) 'Nostalgias and Their Publics: The Finnish Film Boom, 1999–2001' *Scandinavian Studies*, 75 (4), pp. 539–66.

- Romney, Jonathan (1996): 'The Kaurismäki Effect', *Sight and Sound*, June.
- Poussu, Tarmo (1982) 'Kaurismäki Kurkottaa Unelmia Kohti', *Turun Ylioppilaslehti*, 20.
- Poussu, Tarmo (1991) 'Muukalainen Elävien Kuolleiden Maassa', *Katso*, 12 August.
- Ruokamo, Marja-Terttu (1987) 'Berliinin Yö Antaa Huimat Puitteet', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 6 May.
- Ruuska, Petri (1998) 'Mennyt Tulevaisuutena', in Pertti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (eds.) *Elävänä Euroopassa: Muuttuva Suomalainen Identiteetti*, Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, pp. 281–311.
- Rönkä, Anu-Liisa (1993) 'Suomalaisuus on Tunnustettava', *Ylioppilaslehti*, 18 February.
- Salmi, Hannu (2003) 'Nousukausi: Katse Kotimaisen Elokuvan Menestyksen Tekijöihin', in Kimmo Ahonen, Janne Rosenqvist, Juha Rosenqvist and Päivi Valotie (eds.) *Taju Kankaalle: Usin Suomalainen Elokuva*, Helsinki: Suomen Elokuva-arkisto, pp. 12–21.
- Savolainen, Erkki (1989) 'Kaurismäen Paperitähiti Ei Maistu Paperille', *Savon Sanomat*, 3 October.
- Semeri, Jaana (1989) 'Amerikan Raitti', *La Strada*, 1.
- Semeri, Jaana (1987) 'Autoilu on Kivaa', *La Strada*, 4.
- Shiel, Mark and Fitzmaurice, Tony (eds.) (2003) *Screening the City*, London and New York: Verso.
- Sinisalo, Kati (1990) 'Amazon on Suursijoittajan Avaus Viihdeteollisuuteen', *Uusi Suomi*, 14 December, 1990.
- Smith, Anthony D. (2004) 'History and National Destiny: Responses and Clarifications', *Nations and Nationalism*, 10 (1/2) pp. 195–209.
- Smith, Anthony D. (2003) 'The Poverty of Anti-Nationalist Modernism', *Nations and Nationalism*, 9 (3) pp. 357–70.
- Smith, Anthony D. (2001) *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Smith, Anthony D. (2000a) *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates About Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Smith, Anthony D. (2000b) 'Images of the Nation: Cinema, Art and National Identity', in Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (eds.) *Cinema & Nation*, London: Routledge, pp. 45–61.
- Soper Kate (1996) 'Nature/nature', in George Robertson, et al. (ed) *Future Natural*, London: Routledge, pp. 22–34.
- Steinbock, Dan (1989) 'Kaurismäkien New Yorkin Valloitus ei Onnistunut: Helsinki - Napoli on Pelkkää Filminauhaa', *Ilta-Sanomat*, 2 March.
- Stiglitz, Joseph (2001) *Globalization and Its Discontents*, New York: Norton.
- Stock, Ann Marie (2006) 'Migrancy and the Latin American Cinemascape', in Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (eds.) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 157–67.
- Stranius, Pertti (1985) 'Ponsimaa Suomesta, Rosso Italiasta', *Kansan Ääni*, 17 October.
- Stålhammar, Leo (1985) 'Tappaja Seikkailee Suomessa', *Suomenmaa*, 15 October.
- Tal, Jürgen (1985) 'Vapauden Kaipii ja Uskallus', *Riihimäen Sanomat*, 15 January.
- Varjola, Markku (1989) 'Kaikki tai ei Mitään', *Filmihullu*, 3, pp. 37–8.
- Varjola, Markku (1988) 'Helsinki Napoli', *Filmihullu*, 1, pp. 29–30.
- Waarala, Hannu (1985) 'Palkkamurhaaja Rosso ja Hänen Kadonnut Suomi-neitonsa', in *Vastin*, 17 October.
- Waarala, Hannu (1982) 'Moraali ja Yhteiskunta eli Mistä Arvottomat Uneksivat', *Jyväskylän Ylioppilaslehti*, 20.
- Wettenhovi, Hannu P. (1985) 'Rosso Vaeltaa Pohjanmaalla', *Etelä-Saimaa*, 21 December.
- Wettenhovi, Hannu P. (1984) 'Klaani – Elokuva Epäonnistujista', *Pohjolan Sanomat*, 6 December.
- Wilson, Rob and Dissanayake, Wimal (eds.) (1996) *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Whatmore, Sarah (2002) *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures and Spaces*, London: Sage.
- Ylänen, Helena (1989a) 'Kaurismäen Kesäolympialaiset', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 21 January.
- Ylänen, Helena (1989b) 'Kaunotar ja Hirviö Iltalehden Kaupungissa', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30 September.
- Ylänen, Helena (1987a) 'Rosso Keväällä Roomaan', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 4 February.
- Ylänen, Helena (1988b) 'Mika Kaurismäen Helsinki-Napoli Tukholmassa: Päivälehtiarvostelut Laimeita', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 12 November.
- Ylänen, Helena (1985) 'Hirvittävän Surullinen Komedia ja Viileä Melodraama Rikoksista', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 7 February.

MIKA KAURISMÄKI

THE CINEMA OF MIKA KAURISMÄKI TRANSVERGENT CINESCAPES, EMERGENT IDENTITIES PIETARI KÄÄPÄ

Mika Kaurismäki's films challenge many boundaries – national societies, genre formations, art/popular culture, fiction/documentary, humanity/nature, and problematic distinctions between different zones of development. Synthesizing concepts from a range of thematic frameworks – e.g. auteurism, eco-philosophy, genre, cartography, cineaste networks, global reception, distribution and exhibition practices, and the potential of postnationalism – this book provides an interdisciplinary reading of Kaurismäki's cinema. The notion of 'transvergence' – of thinking in heterogeneous and polyphonal terms – emerges as an analytical method for exploring the power of these films. Through this, the volume encourages rethinking transnational cinema studies in relation to many oft-debated notions such as Finnish culture, European identity, cosmopolitanism and globalization.

PIETARI KÄÄPÄ is based at the Institute of Comparative Cultures at University of Nottingham Ningbo China and he also works as a postdoctoral researcher at University of Helsinki. His research is focused on theoretical considerations of transnational and ecological cinema, with a particular interest in the globalizing Finnish cinema and all its transnational permutations.

ISBN 978-1-84150-409-4



9 781841 504094

