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Paris, Borders and the Concept of Europe in *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown*

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Abstract: Michael Haneke's *Code Unknown* and the multi-director *Paris, je t'aime* belong (the latter at least in part) to a recently emerged cinematic form described as the network form, which represents changing spaces and plural perspectives in multicultural societies. Reflecting Rosalind Galt's concept of "anti-anti-Eurocentrism", they represent discursive and referential spaces of Parisian society. Through a comparative analysis of how they frame space with regard to borders and transnational relationships, it becomes apparent that some of the approaches these films take to representing Europe are problematic. In contrast, others encapsulate key concerns surrounding the constantly changing relationships between Europe and its others. While *Code Unknown* challenges discourses of identity, home and belonging, *Paris, je t'aime* tends to reinstate and validate divisive social hierarchies despite its appearances of pluralism.

Introduction

Two recent films set in Paris represent the perforation and existence of borders in ways that challenge traditional concepts of identity, centres and peripheries. Examining these films using Rosalind Galt's concept of "anti-anti-Eurocentrism" (*European Cinema* 4), I will investigate their representations of Europe and Paris. Like many other European films from the past two decades, Michael Haneke's *Code Unknown* (2000) and the multi-director *Paris, je t'aime* (*Paris, I Love You*, 2006) represent changing spaces and plural perspectives in multicultural societies (Halle 6). They accommodate "discursive and referential spaces of nations", elements which Galt argues are necessary to an anti-anti-Eurocentric analysis of cinema (*European Cinema* 4). Through a comparative analysis of how they frame space with regard to borders and transnational relationships, it becomes apparent that some of the approaches these films take in representing Europe are problematic as they redraw and elide certain boundaries. In contrast, other elements encapsulate key concerns surrounding the constantly changing relationships between Europe and its others, presenting them in duly complex ways.

Code Unknown depicts alienation, miscommunication, violence and rare gestures of kindness between a cross section of loosely connected people. Prefaced by a deaf girl playing an unsuccessful game of charades with her peers, the film opens with a scene in which a white French boy, Jean, throws rubbish into the lap of a Romanian beggar named Maria. A young second generation French-African man, Amadou, attempts to make Jean apologise to the beggar, a conflict ensues and they turn to physical violence. In a demonstration of racial prejudice, the police arrest Amadou but let Jean go. Similar moments of confrontation, distress, doubt and

empathy unfold in these and other characters' lives, including an actress named Anne (Juliette Binoche), her photojournalist lover Georges (who is Jean's older brother), Georges and Jean's father who owns a farm, and Amadou and Maria's family. *Paris, je t'aime*, meanwhile, is an omnibus film comprising a series of eighteen short films from different directors concerning love, whether romantic, familial or existential. Like *Code Unknown* it contains stories about white Parisians and French-African characters, and in addition contains stories about tourists, American and British expatriates, a Columbian nanny, a Muslim girl and an Asian hairdressing salon. The presence of these cultural others emphasise Paris' status as a multicultural city and tourist destination, emphasising the constant shift in cultural relationships within the city.

“Anti-anti-Eurocentrism” and Paris in Cinema

Paris, je t'aime and *Code Unknown* are frequently described as transnational films due to the industries in which they were created, their directors', casts', thematic, and financial internationalism, and the fact they belong to cinematic forms which have recently blossomed worldwide. However, in his discussion of transnationalism in German and European filmmaking, Randall Halle points out that:

Transnational and transcultural have often been used to designate “marginal”, or “third world”, or “migrant” cinemas, celebrating their fractured, transgressive, “trans” nature. Such analyses de facto leave the European national cultures as intact organic wholes—which they are not—and fill the “marginal” with a fraught, high-tragic nature. These presumptions of a European *intactness*, versus an *in-betweenism* of Europe's “others”, actually prove to be profound promotions of Eurocentric perspectives. They do a disservice to the artifacts they set out to analyse. (8)

Looking at the transnational elements of these films, it appears that *Code Unknown* and *Paris, je t'aime* in many ways undermine such intactness, but in others maintain it and convey Eurocentric perspectives. In order to discuss Eurocentrism in these films, Rosalind Galt's theory of “anti-anti Eurocentrism” provides a nuanced rather than derisive approach. Galt adapts the concept from Derrida and Paul Gilroy in order to counter an imbalanced focus on “the ‘Other’ of Europe” (*European Cinema* 3). She also uses the concept to address how European cinema during the 1990s wonders “how to become European—as opposed to simply continuing an older model of national cinemas—without degenerating into the ... Europudding” (2). Anti-anti-Eurocentrism seeks to destabilise the binary opposition of Eurocentrism and anti-Eurocentrism. These approaches either see the world through a European standpoint or reject such a standpoint. Instead, Galt proposes that European space should be considered as a global constituent. This is a fitting interjection relating to *Code Unknown* and *Paris, je t'aime*, which draw together global connections and complicate assessments of their Eurocentrism and anti-Eurocentrism. Galt writes:

An anti-anti-Eurocentric consideration of contemporary European cinema must not speak only of coproduction, of European Union funding and of national heritage; neither must it speak only of the diasporic, the hybrid, and the radical. Rather, it must

take on the logic of cartography: a form of writing that articulates both the discursive and the referential spaces of nations ... (*European Cinema* 4)

Galt's theory broadens the horizons of theories of national cinema, considering films' global relationships and exchanges. Eurocentrism and anti-Eurocentrism are thus acknowledged as constituents of a dialogue regarding spaces that are constantly changing and are not simply limited to Europe. As part of her analysis she sees post-Wall 1990s European films predominantly engaging in "discourses of homelessness and belonging" (*European Cinema* 231). Currently these discourses continue to focus on the perforation and construction of imagined and/or physical borders, including processes of "dispersal and recentring" in European cinema (Bergfelder 329). Thomas Elsaesser describes the ways in which recent films exhibit "mutual antagonisms" in societies rather than impenetrable peripheral and central oppositions (King's College). *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown* also engage in these discourses of homelessness, belonging and mutual antagonisms. The changing social spaces of Europe and the globe are imagined and inscribed in the character relationships and spatial dynamics in one of the world's most iconic cities. In the following sections I will examine their presentation of centres and peripheries via these coordinates: as Galt suggests, "space is a determining element of the cinematic per se" (*European Cinema* 5).

Cartographies of Production and the Question of a "Transnational Aesthetic"

Paris, je t'aime and *Code Unknown* belong to cinematic forms that have become popular over the past two decades, not just in Europe but globally. The omnibus and network forms have, as Mark Betz and David Bordwell catalogue, long and widespread histories that have been significantly resurrected in the era of digital media (Betz 237; Bordwell, *Hollywood* 74; *Poetics* 191). Omnibus films are collections of short films by different directors. Network films feature multiple protagonists who are loosely and often unknowingly connected to one another. Both of these forms usually balance fragmentation with cohesion and explore "the fundamental tension between realism ... and artifice" (*Poetics* 194). Common themes or motifs link the narrative strands, as does love for *Paris, je t'aime* and alienation for *Code Unknown*. These forms are strongly associated with European art cinema since they favour auteurs and narrative complexity, and manipulate time (Everett 159). However, Betz argues that omnibus films are "[a] truly global phenomenon" (206), and Bordwell says of the network form that "most generally, however the format gets specified in local circumstances, it seems to be trading on a cluster of cross-cultural norms" (191). Wendy Everett, meanwhile, draws a Eurocentric line between American network films' penchant for narrative closure as opposed to European examples' (including *Code Unknown*) open-endedness (164). However, *Paris, je t'aime* complicates such distinctions as it consists of international influences and its French producer inserts transitional scenes that smooth out narrative fragmentation to create "unity within diversity" (Deshpande, "Film Producer" 13). Furthermore, *Code Unknown* concludes with an arguably conventional montage (Bordwell, *Poetics* 208). The fact that both *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown* thematically focus on transnational relationships and reach beyond Parisian borders suggests that they are both formally and diegetically anti-anti-Eurocentric, globally-focused films. However, further analysis reveals this hypothesis does not necessarily hold true.

Both films' backgrounds seem to eschew the notion of a European "intactness" and concentrate on intersections between marginal and mainstream representatives. *Code Unknown* is directed by the Austrian director Michael Haneke, who, as Catherine Wheatley observes, "rail[s] against his films being seen as treatments of specific national situations" (21). *Code Unknown* was produced by French studios such as Canal+, France 2 Cinema and MK2 Productions, and it also drew from Bavaria Film, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, and the Romanian Culture Ministry. Postdating *Code Unknown*, Haneke has made films in France using the French language (*Hidden (Caché)*, 2005) and *The Time of the Wolf (Le Temps du loup)*, 2003)). In the Austrian-set film *The Piano Teacher (La Pianiste)*, 2001), he again used a French-speaking cast and French star Isabelle Huppert; while his English-language remake of his own Austrian-made film *Funny Games* (2007) stars American-accented (though English and Australian) actors. Haneke's career thus complicates its classification as European or specifically national (Galt, *Haneke* 222). The multi-director *Paris, je t'aime* is a broad example of trans- and multinational filmmaking. It includes directors who are French, American, Brazilian, Mexican, German, as well as transnational filmmakers such as Gurinder Chadha (an Indian-English director) and Christopher Doyle (who moved from Australia to Hong Kong and has worked with Wong Kar Wai). Both films have creators at the helm who complicate the notion of European intactness and instead represent international exchanges and place Europe within a global constituency. Co-productions such as these have had a significant impact upon European filmmaking, problematising traditional concepts of national cinemas. European co-production funding bodies like Eurimages and CINEMA EUROPE have encouraged transnational "European" visions (Bergfelder 323, Crofts 29, Halle 49, Deshpande, "Anthology Films" 81). The Eurimages website states that "Eurimages' first objective is cultural, in that it endeavours to support works which reflect the multiple facets of a European society whose common roots are evidence of a single culture". This emphasis on a "single culture" underscores the confusion surrounding geographic and social definitions of Europe.

In spite of such progression towards multinational cinema, France still dominates the European filmmaking scene. It owns some of the largest production studios such as Studio Canal, Pathé, Gaumont and EuropaCorp. The primary contributor of funding for *Paris, je t'aime* was Canal+, with the German X-Filme Creative Pool contributing for Tom Tykwer's segment and another two French companies created specifically for the film (Victoires Internationale and Pirol Stiftung) making smaller contributions. *Paris, je t'aime's* funding is evidently almost all from France. Haneke's move towards creating films in France is partly due to the monopoly that France has over the European film market (Ostrowska 60). Galt warns that "if funding sources do not direct aesthetic choices in any simplistic way, they do, nonetheless, define the parameters within which production choices are made" and notes that Haneke's "choice [to make his major films in French] speaks to the dominance of France not only in film funding but as the privileged language of *international* European cinema" (*Haneke* 234, 235). Similarly, Deshpande ("Producer" 12-13) points out that *Paris, je t'aime's* producer Emmanuel Benbihy had a large amount of creative control over the segments' and film's editing. He provided the directors with a single film crew, and limited the lengths of the films and the production schedules. *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown's* production and sources of funding therefore raise questions regarding the extent to which these films can be considered transnational and how they relate to interpretations of anti-anti-Eurocentrism. Importantly, however, the equation between funding and narrative transnationalism and anti-anti-Eurocentrism is a premature assessment in this case.

Although funding suggests biases, it does not necessarily denote the narratives' thematic concerns and messages. This is of particular significance when examining the transnational and international connections within the narratives. The reviews of *Paris, je t'aime* stress the film's international collaboration with Paris as a backdrop, and most compare and evaluate the segments individually rather than seeing it as a cohesive and nominally French film (Murray, Urban, LaSalle, Chocano). This interpretation also applies to reviews of *Code Unknown* which also interpret Paris as a gestalt of Europe (Horton, Winter).

Representing Plurality in Europe

As an icon of European identity as well as European cinema, Paris is an apt site from which to consider contemporary changes taking place. Paris', and more generally Europe's large Muslim and immigrant populations, the political protests regarding these populations, the national histories of revolution and class conflicts and the importance of urban planning in the city (Rearick 2) have a strong influence on discourses of complexity and space in Europe (Lykidis 37). *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown* present a range of these issues in their reconsiderations of European and international community. Their representations of space, (specifically tourist and local sites), the narratives and the films' cinematographic styles will be the main focus of the following discussion, since these elements characterise their depictions of Europe.

How Paris' identity as a tourist destination and a multicultural space is screened by French and foreign directors often raises issues of belonging and mutual antagonisms. The tradition of American films representing Paris as a romanticised tourist setting is perpetuated in films such as *French Kiss* (1995), *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) and in many respects *Paris, je t'aime*. Referencing *Moulin Rouge!* and *Amélie* (2001) as well as the Paris casino in Las Vegas, Katherine Lawrie Van de Ven concludes that "[c]ommodified experiences of romance and passion, of rebellion or revolt, of the purportedly authentic and of the nostalgically historical are to be found in especially high concentration around the imaginary construct of 'Paris'" (89). Jean-Luc Godard also notes the foreign romanticisation of Paris, stating that "one rarely sees the Arc de Triomphe in [French] films except the American ones" (qtd. in Greene 52). However, as Naomi Greene notes, in *À Bout de Souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960), Godard deliberately filmed the Champs-Élysées and the Eiffel Tower, reversing traditions of Parisian self-representation and constructing a type of "Ameurope" (Mariniello and Sisneros 165-6). Schehr also observes that other French films include:

the usual visions of Paris for those beyond its borders: images of touristy Paris with a requisite shot of the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame or both ... And, as films like *Paris, je t'aime* and *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie* show, images of the Luxembourg Gardens, a typical market street, or even post-Haussmann-era apartment buildings, with their balconies on the second and fifth floors, connote a kind of almost atemporal, and certainly geographic, Parisian continuity. (56)

On the other hand, tourists, locals and cosmopolitans merge and share the city space in a number of segments in *Paris, je t'aime*, in a similar vein to Richard Linklater's *Before Sunset*

(2004). Taking a more “realistic” and “authentic” local approach (Powrie 487), French filmmakers continue to question and occasionally subvert Paris’ status as a spatially iconic city, as in *35 Shots of Rum* (*35 Rhums*, 2008), *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* (*De Battre mon coeur s’est arrêté*, 2005) and *La Haine* (1995). These films are indicative of trends during the 1990s and early 2000s of Beur cinema and films which “are not set in the luminous areas of the city ... but, rather, in squalid, crime-ridden back alleys and in bleak suburbs or *banlieue* on the outskirts of the city” (Greene 254). Greene notes that Paris’ centre and “luminous area[s]” are depicted as untenable destinations in these films (255). *Code Unknown* and *Paris, je t’aime* represent alterations and progressions of these traditions, drawing into question the boundaries between self and other(ing)’s representations.

Spaces of Inhabitation, Visitation and Interaction

Code Unknown and *Paris, je t’aime* highlight different types of transnational links and borders between foreigners and locals using the representation of tourist sites, public spaces, work and domestic spaces. Divided into *arrondissements*, Paris is a city in which inhabitants’ cultural identities are greatly influenced by space. Susan Hayward explores this concept and asks “where are the ethics of city planning in all of this?” (30). In *Paris, je t’aime* different areas connote their inhabitants’ class and cultural identities. Schehr (54) notes that the film “use[s] both stereotypical touristic Paris and more typically ‘Parisian’ Paris (i.e., a Paris recognizable to locals, even without the seemingly obligatory shot of the Eiffel Tower) to reinscribe the relations of characters and city, of characters within the city, and of the structuring of subjectivity by the city”. *Code Unknown* also concentrates on relationships between place, class and identity, but does so in confined and anonymous spaces so that the idea of a cohesive and segmented community is undercut. It questions whether community is possible at all and what type of boundaries limit it. Both films use cinematic space to frame Parisian and European space in discussions of transnational community and multiculturalism.

Tourist Sites

The two films draw on Paris’ international recognisability and iconic status: *Paris, je t’aime* in order to appeal to audiences, and *Code Unknown* in order to subvert it. *Paris, je t’aime* focuses in part on tourist sites in Paris. *Code Unknown* deliberately avoids this, juxtaposing brief scenes of glossy and emotionally manipulative television images against the predominantly *vérité*, seeming arbitrarily “seen” diegesis (Rhodes 20). Aside from using the Eiffel Tower on its promotional poster and naming the city in its title, *Paris, je t’aime* concentrates on the theme of Paris as the city of love, and features numerous tourist sites. The segments can be roughly grouped into three types, some of which confirm Eurocentric binaries and some of which blur them. The three types involve: a) locals; b) tourists; and c) relationships between visitors, diasporic subjects, cultural others and/or local Parisians, which signal a transnational sharing of cultures. In terms of foreigners visiting tourist sites, *Paris, je t’aime* creates transnational links, but certain segments also override them in the Eurocentric affirmation of Paris as a romantic place of transformation.

In *Paris, je t'aime*, two portions of the film treat tourist sites as places of revelation for foreigners, taking occidentalist views of Paris as an exotic and culturally enlightening place. In Wes Craven's segment at the *Père Lachaise* cemetery, the ghost of Oscar Wilde helps a bickering English couple to renew their humour and appreciation for Paris and each other. Oscar Wilde's exile from Ireland and England in Paris during the later years of his life establishes a sense of compatriotism with the English couple, which is furthered by the fact that they are fighting about humour and romanticism. In Alexander Payne's segment *14ème Arrondissement*, Carol from Denver feels existential joy and sadness as a result of her solitary wandering around the Montparnasse tower, cemetery, and Montsouris park. Without knowing much about Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir whose graves she sees, Carol articulates the simultaneous existential joy and sadness that Sartre discussed, and practices de Beauvoir's feminist independence. These segments create transnational echoes of cultural exchange. However, they are also bound by the idea that only within Paris can such epiphanies occur. Ironically, the enlightened English couple return to their hotel room, thus cocooning themselves away and removing themselves from the city itself. Moreover, the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz, whose grave Carol admires, resisted the French invasion during the Franco-Mexican war. The city is thus romanticised and the experiences of the characters are tailored to their national identities. The result of this is that while the characters are portrayed as enlightened, they still remain largely abstracted from French society.

The concept that tourists are ignorant of the "real" Paris is explored in the Coen brothers' segment. At the Tuileries metro station, we see a naïve tourist (Steve Buscemi) who is overloaded with Mona Lisa merchandise. His romanticised views of Paris are shattered when he is abused by a little boy who pelts him with spit balls and a couple of thieves who beat him up. Ultimately Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile seems to mock him. In this almost silent comedy, Buscemi is completely reliant on his guidebook and phrasebooks' translations. Due to this second-hand, incompetent access to French culture, Buscemi is rendered as a fraud and an outsider who thought he was an insider. This segment reconsolidates the idea of an authentic and deceitful Paris underlying and opposing the one that tourists usually access.

In stark contrast to *Paris, je t'aime*'s episodes, which often convey a stylised and recognisable Paris, *Code Unknown* uses long takes and abrupt cuts to black to convey a drab, realistic and fragmentary Paris. Benbihi's transitions between segments in *Paris, je t'aime* use panoramic tourist shots of the Paris skyline and establishing shots which locate its characters in famous tourist sites. Alternately Paris is rendered almost unrecognisable in *Code Unknown*. Aside from Anne's acting scenes (which critique Hollywood spectatorship (Wheatley 121-2)), *Code Unknown* avoids close-ups, point of view shots, and any sense of a panoptic, comprehensive view of the city. Instead, characters are placed at mid to wide shots that distance them emotionally from the audience. The lack of establishing shots lead to a sense of confinement in these spaces. Alternately the camera itself as a narrator seems limited, confounding narrative flow with its static position when it does not follow characters who wander off-screen. These constrictions make the narrative seem arbitrary and the city itself chaotic. Alex Lykidis writes:

In [Haneke's] films, bourgeois privilege is challenged during traumatic multicultural encounters that reveal the breakdown of spatial demarcations between majority and

minority groups in postcolonial France. Haneke keeps the identities of these groups distinct but reduces the social distance between them so that societal inequalities are foregrounded and rendered untenable ... (42)

The film does not inscribe these characters within spaces as if they are a natural extension of their identities. The social cross-section's different levels of belonging and the privileges and precariousness of their positions are illustrated in how the characters move through space. The white characters Anne, Jean and Georges move confidently along the street, whereas the Romanian illegal immigrant Maria huddles on the ground begging, and the young French-African man Amadou's attempt to defend Maria when Jean throws rubbish at her leads to him being unfairly arrested. The notion of belonging is constantly under question just as the long takes and obstructive framing undermine the narrative flow (unlike the long take that culminates in a twist-ending in Alfonso Cuarón's segment of *Paris, je t'aime*). Characters in *Code Unknown* appear uncomfortable in their domestic surroundings and are framed with obstructions within narrow, marginal spaces. For instance when Anne mutes her television to hear the neighbour's little girl screaming but does nothing about it, she is framed beside a glass door that reflects the television screen. In this scene, John David Rhodes describes, "we sense the stubborn arbitrariness of its motionless limits, as if they (the edges of the frame) were walls, insubstantial but immutable" (19). *Code Unknown* stresses discrepancies between characters' experiences and perspectives (as when Amadou mistakenly believes he is being discriminated against at the restaurant), and emphasises this immutability with the sudden cuts to black which interrupt scenes often in mid-sentence. *Code Unknown* therefore dismantles the romanticised view of Paris as a city that converges people's experience of love and life, and instead presents it as a fragmentary, antagonistic space.

Local Sites

To varying degrees, *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown* depict work, public and domestic spaces as sites of interaction between locals and cultural others. In showing Paris as a city adapted, inhabited and familiarised by cultural others, the films stress the city's multicultural and international reaches. However, as Bhaskar Sarkar remarks that "Global multiculturalism would appear to provide the cultural basis of neo-colonialism" (42), relationships between majority and minority figures in these spaces question and in some cases validate Eurocentric privilege.

In *Paris, je t'aime*, English and American people's familiarity with the city, the language, and Parisians is stressed in a few segments. In *Pigalle*, *Parc Monceau* and *Quartier Latin*, French, English and American characters interact as old friends, relatives and lovers who cross linguistic barriers with relative ease. In Tom Tykwer's segment *Faubourg Saint-Denis* (the film's embryonic story (Chocano)) a blind French boy happens upon a young actress, Natalie Portman, and helps her find a shortcut through the city. Their estranged positions of blindness and foreignness do not heed their adopted embeddedness in these spaces. Another foreigner's familiarity with the city is also evident in Gus van Sant's portion where a young French man mistakes an American who works locally as being French. He bares his heart to the American in French, of which the American understands little. After the French youth leaves, the American

runs out of this workplace down the street in a tracking shot reminiscent of the final scene of François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (*Le Quatre cents coups*, 1959). In the course of Truffaut's film, a schoolboy, Antoine becomes homeless and delinquent. The final scene shows Antoine running away from school, tracking him as he runs alongside the school gates and out onto the beach, metaphorically toward an uncertain future. This quotation of the seminal French film transforms the American character into an embodiment of Antoine's out-of-place-ness and wilfulness, creating a transnational parallel. Similarly, in Olivier Assayas' tale of an American actress (Maggie Gyllenhaal), the character speaks fluent French and displays her adaptation to but also distance from the culture because of a romantic disappointment. A non-verbal story of a vampire who seduces a tourist (Elijah Wood) shows an almost total and exotic cultural divide, although a coda suggests that this, like Assayas' segment, is another collaborative film set. These characters' inhabitation of domestic, street and work spaces and cinematic references signals that globalisation often works in the visitors' favour, where French culture is accessible but in some cases backgrounded.

Paris, je t'aime represents non-Anglophone multiculturalism as a domain of tension. Representatives of Chinatown, French-Africans, and a Columbian immigrant struggle to occupy less marginalised social positions. These cultural others occupy Parisian spaces as locals, yet their positions of alterity are different to those that the American and British characters experience. The *arrondissements* and culturally marked spaces in these stories are portrayed as distinct from Paris in general, signalling cultural difference and distance more so than cohabitation. The stories concern poverty, personal sacrifice, conflict and the desire to belong in French society. Characters in the Chinatown diaspora community enact a symbolic repositioning and ultimately a celebration of Asian identities and hairstyles in France, but at the behest of a white French hairdresser. Two French-African characters, one of whom dies from a stab wound, share a language and past that none of the surrounding white characters understand. Similarly, the father of a Muslim girl tells a boy who defends his daughter against French bullies and follows her to their mosque that the girl is compelled to write "her own" version of Paris. Although these characters and their designated spatial associations represent marginalised identities in Paris, hegemonic narrative trappings patronise, celebrate and reinstate their positions of alterity and marginality, confirming Bhaskar Sarkar's suspicions of multicultural neo-colonialism (42).

There are a number of stories in *Paris, je t'aime* that concentrate solely on French characters and perpetuate Eurocentric perspectives. Each of the stories centring on French characters (a man parking his car, mimes, a man who falls in love with his terminally ill wife a second time, two mimes and their son) project stereotypical French scenarios. This self-projection (each of the tales are from French directors) recall Van de Ven's comments on the imaginary commodified construct of Paris—self-reflexively so in the story about the mimes who are dressed in striped costumes and berets and have no real personalities other than as mimes. These segments reify and endear Eurocentric perspectives.

Code Unknown treats its geographies and characters differently to *Paris, je t'aime*. As well as showing Paris in a disorienting frame that lacks iconic reference points, *Code Unknown* includes disorienting and often unexplained scenes and pictures of its constitutive others. As well as urban Paris we see images of war in Kosovo, and characters in Mali, in Romania, and on a

farm near Paris. *Code Unknown* problematises the notion that immigrants might regard African and Eastern European sites as forsaken homes. Amadou's father returns to Mali, and Maria is deported to Romania before she again returns to Paris. These places are not romanticised or framed as places of origin and belonging. Indeed, when a counsellor tells Amadou's mother that Amadou should return to Africa, the romanticisation of a place of origin as essentially a place of healing and belonging is rejected. The counsellor suggests Amadou go "home to the land of his ancestors", but Amadou's mother responds: "That's ridiculous. Who could possibly want that?" When Amadou's father returns to Mali, the claustrophobic view from inside the taxi of the unyielding crowds in the street emphasise the dislocation and asynchrony between himself and any sense of Mali being an ancestral home. There is no sense of home in *Code Unknown*, no affirmation of belonging, and in this respect Haneke presents a complex perspective on European space and the perforations of borders. However, Galt critiques the way *Code Unknown* portrays borders between Western Europe and the Balkans. She argues that Haneke presents the Balkans "not as a real place but as a metaphor for Europe's Other" (Haneke 225) and represents a simplistic idea of Europe through inadequate and stereotypical signifiers. She writes:

I have mentioned the potentially instrumentalizing use of the Balkans in *Code Unknown*. The freighted history of west European representation of the region makes it hard to use it figurally without reiterating this quasicolonial mode of thought. Indeed, as the film of Haneke's that most directly speaks 'about' Europe, it may also be the least successful in analyzing it. Its narrative of multiculturalism is precisely the discourse on Europe that is unable to grasp the inadequacy of ventriloquizing the West's Others. Thus, the overt narrative on immigration and race actively resists the film's more radical impulses. (228)

Thus images of violence rooted in the Balkans are juxtaposed against the violence in Paris, presenting a limiting analogy of an embattled fortress Europe. Within Paris, each character is in a constant state of uncertainty and rootlessness, as we see Anne and Georges interact and argue in public rather than domestic spaces. When Maria is deported, her daughter's wedding and her family's new house are incentives not for her to remain in Romania but to again try to earn money in Paris, and she soon returns, where she finds her old begging spot taken and is forced to keep moving. These places beyond Paris are similarly depicted as claustrophobic and anonymous, affirming a view of Europe and its constitutive others that is global in the sense that the geographic boundaries are blurred and unspecific, although they are arguably reinforced in relation to the Balkans. These places are only briefly named and are not visually identifiable through tourist icons or panoramic establishing shots. *Code Unknown* breaks with traditions of representing Paris as a tourist site and instead treats it as an anonymous city, in which borders and communications between people and countries are partially privy to the limitations of subjectivity. Notably, the final instance of kindness occurs on a train and between strangers, when an Arab man defends Anne against an Arab youth. Instead of a Eurocentric viewpoint, which redemptively unites characters within Paris, *Code Unknown* destabilises notions of home and belonging, presenting a multicultural society in constant contest and negotiation between each individual, not simply separate cultures.

Conclusion

Looking at these films in view of their Eurocentric, anti-Eurocentric and global anti-anti Eurocentric positions, they reveal contradictions concerning multiculturalism and pluralism in the representation of European spaces and constitutive others. Both have international backgrounds but are dominated by French funding. Narratively, *Code Unknown* cites a former colony in Africa, a range of social classes and Eastern Europe. *Paris, je t'aime*'s selection of characters reaches further East and West, representing people from Asian, South American, North American, the United Kingdom and other backgrounds. These constellations suggest that the films present plural perspectives concerning the inequalities and/or the benefits of globalisation and perforated borders. However, in some cases the ways in which these films represent characters' positions within the city and the narratives indicate a compromise of pluralism. *Paris, je t'aime* tokenises marginalised identities and features a strong American and British presence, offering neo-colonial relationships despite its global background. *Code Unknown* offers a more complex approach to the representation of Parisian society, investigating the ambiguities of the idea of community and identity rather than legitimising them. Rather than essentialise its characters as *Paris, je t'aime*'s segments sometimes do through the use of space and narrative, *Code Unknown* uproots its characters from senses of home and belonging. It destabilises the concepts of home/lessness and belonging, identity and social and racial profiling, although it cites the Balkans as a metaphor for fortress Europe too simply. On the whole, *Paris, je t'aime* represents a Western-centric standpoint. *Code Unknown* challenges the workings of centrism, but is in some ways also privy to them. The discursive and referential spaces of nations in *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown* reflect, in some cases reproduce and in other cases critique problematic transnational and multicultural relationships within and between Paris and its "others".

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