# The Magical Neoliberalism of Network Films

AMANDA CIAFONE[1]
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Transnational network narrative films attempt a cognitive mapping of global systems through a narrative form interconnecting disparate or seemingly unrelated characters, plotlines, and geographies. These films demonstrate networks on three levels: a network narrative form, themes of networked social relations, and networked industrial production. While they emphasize realism in their aesthetics, these films rely on risk and randomness to map a fantastic network of interrelations, resulting in the magical meeting of multiple and divergent characters and storylines, spectacularizing the reality of social relations, and giving a negative valence to human connection. Over the last 20 years, the network narrative has become a prominent means of representing and containing social relations under neoliberalism.

*Keywords: globalization, neoliberalism, network theory, network narrative films, political economy, international film markets*

After seeing Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores Perros* (2000) and Rodrigo García's *Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her* (2000), Chilean writer Alberto Fuguet confirmed his excitement about being part of the new Latin American cultural boom he called "McOndo." McOndo, he wrote, had achieved the global recognition of Latin America's earlier boom time, "magical realism," as represented in Macondo, the fictional town of Gabriel García Marquez's *Cien Años de Soledad.* But now the "flying *abuelitas* and the obsessively constructed genealogies" (Fuguet, 2001, p. 71) (and the politics) had been replaced with the globalized, popular commercial world of McDonalds: Macondo was now McOndo. This generation of cultural producers was immersed in the imbrication of the global and the local and the encounter with the persistent and emergent forms of human difference produced by the forces that tore through the opening gates of liberalizing market reforms around the world beginning in the 1990s. Occupied with creating cultural forms to portray this new world and working within the newly freer market to do so, members of this cultural movement, representative of the economic, social, and cultural realities of the free-trade agreement era, might best be characterized as "magical neoliberalism" (ibid, p. 71).

---

Amanda Ciafone: aciafone@illinois.edu

*Figure 1.* **Amores Perros** *poster.*

The films that Fuguet referred to—*Amores Perros* (see Figure 1), a story of urban vulnerability told through the narratives of three Mexico City inhabitants of different classes repeatedly brought together in a single car crash, and *Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her*, which explores female lives and labors through the interwoven stories of five U.S. women—are examples of what became a dominant filmic form representing the complexities of life in the age of globalization: the network narrative. While Fuguet uses the phrase *magical neoliberalism* for effect rather than analysis, it is worth taking up a serious consideration of those terms because these network-narrative films have real elements of both the magical and the neoliberal.

If, as Alejo Carpentier (1949, 1995) conceived it, magical realism emerged from Latin America's uneven development, then the "magical neoliberalism" of these movies at the turn of the 21st century suggests that the social and cultural ramifications of uneven development under neoliberalism "now seems to belong to all of us" (Jameson, 1995, p. 12). The divergent experiences of this unevenness—across widening gulfs of inequality as a result of privatization, marketization, and the fracturing of social collectivity—are interrelated through the commodity chains, financial markets, communications systems, migration routes, and other transnational networks that produce simultaneous connection and fragmentation. To suggest there is a filmic magical neoliberalism, then, is to interpret these cultural texts in their "history now conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations" (Jameson, 2002, p. 60). Along the

trajectory from uneven postcolonial development to uneven neoliberal development is a crucial genealogy of both the modes of representation and of production of these network narratives. And, remarkably, this genealogy is familial as well as social on the largest scale: Rodrigo García, one of the filmmakers that Fuguet focuses on, is García Marquez's son. But *genealogy* is not meant to imply that magical neoliberalism was written in the DNA of its forefathers, as if fated by a deterministic code, although such dynamics of contingency and immutability are a powerful conceit in these films themselves. Instead, in recognizing a genealogy of modes of production and of representation in these network narratives, we can see evidence of contemporary structures and ideologies and perhaps imaginings of emergent alternative futures, even if the latter is still only conceivable in negative terms in our present.

"*Network films*," as defined by Bordwell (2008), are multiprotagonist films with multilinear narratives that intersect. Unlike the classical Hollywood narrative, a single hero is decentered by multiple protagonists (Azcona, 2010), and unlike ensemble films that feature multiple protagonists, in network narratives, protagonists' plotlines and projects are "largely decoupled from one another, or only contingently linked" (Bordwell, 2008, p. 192). Popular film writing has referred to such movies as "mosaic" and "composite" stories of "interlocking lives," "converging fates," and "the web of life." Some critics have called this "hyperlink cinema" (Ebert 2007; Quart 2005), but that seems to place emphasis on narrative form and aesthetics over thematics or industrial production and implies a sense of technological determination by the Internet. Instead, "network films," referencing Castells' (2000) concept of *network society* suggests not just aesthetics and technologies but also the networked social and economic relations of production under which these films are created. These films demonstrate networks on three levels: network narrative forms (multilinear, interconnected plotlines), themes of network social relations (interconnected problems, experiences, and events, often transnational), and networked industrial production (complex, temporary, and often transnational in financing, production, and distribution).

The network narrative has become the filmic representation of the political unconscious of globalization in the last two decades. But Bordwell (2008) is skeptical about such consideration of these films in larger sociohistorical formations. He notes that the use of the narrative form has increased, but he resists contextualizing it in the historical moment because of the "temptation . . . to talk about all this in a zeitgeisty way" (Bordwell, 2008, p. 244) when it seems to have a universal appeal, appearing in various periods in numerous cultures.[2] But taking Bordwell's remarkable international, alphabetical filmography of network films from 1920–2007, and reorganizing it historically, makes evident this dramatic upsurge in the number of network narratives in the last two decades (see Figure 2). Further, this is an argument not just about prevalence but also about prominence: Network narratives were among the highest profile and most acclaimed movies of the turn of the millennium both internationally and in the United States.

---

[2] True, the network narrative is not new. Bordwell (2006, 2008) cites several films of the past, as well as its long history in literature, ranging from Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* (1864) to Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975)*.* Levine (2009) reads networked form in multiplot Victorian novels like Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853)*.* There are also "composite novels" and "short story cycles," especially in modernism and 20th and 21st century U.S. ethnic literature addressing themes of fragmentation and multiplicity. Beal and Lavin (2011) argue that networked narratives in modernist American "collective novels" were meditations on the modern economic order's tensions of "totalization and dispersal."

Iñárritu's transnational triptych of *Amores Perros, 21 Grams* (2003), and *Babel* (2006) (as well as his contribution to *11'09"01 September 11* [2002], which as a portmanteau film has a related logic about an interlocking event), Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic* (2000), Paul Haggis' *Crash* (2004), and Stephen Gaghan's *Syriana* (2005) earned 23 Academy Award nominations between them.
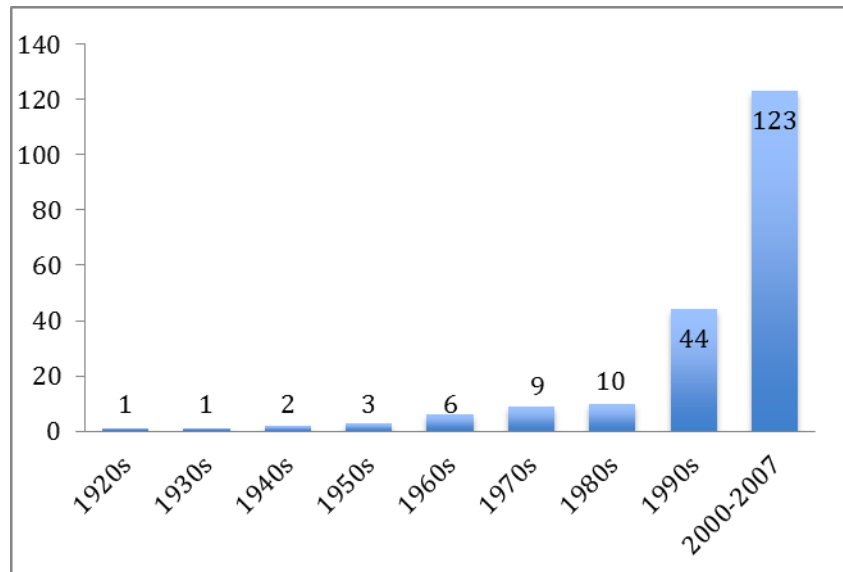


**Figure 2. Network narrative feature films by decade.**
*Derived from Bordwell, 2008, pp. 245–250.*

---

[3] While Bordwell's (2008) list is a working filmography, he aimed to be comprehensive. Because he listed films only up to 2007, a significant number of more recent network narratives are left off, including transnational dramas *Contagion, Rendition, 360,* and *Auf der Anderen Seite* and the spate of recent networked romantic comedies, both of which increase the numbers for the 2000s. A few films that Bordwell elsewhere categorizes as networked—*Syriana*, *Grand Canyon* (1991), and *Grand Hotel* (1932)— are also absent from the list, suggesting the incompleteness of the filmography but not changing the relative proportions by decade. The last, *Grand Hotel,* may be left off because, like numerous other ensemble films such as *Dinner at Eight* (1933) and *The Big Chill* (1983) and disaster films such as *Airport* (1969), *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), and *The Towering Inferno* (1974), the multiple characters' interrelationships are clear and converge in a single locale (Desser, 2003). See Azcona (2010) on this broader field of multi-protagonist films and her characterization of mosaic films. Network narratives became emergent in art house films including *Lóng hǔ fēng yún* (1987) (see Desser, 2003, on the related film cycle of global noir), *Mystery Train* (1989), *Slacker* (1991), *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Short Cuts* (1993), *Trois Couleurs* (1993–1994), *El Callejón de los Milagros* (1994), and *Pulp Fiction* (1996) and have been persistent as a residual form in the likes of *Love, Actually* (2003), *Valentine's Day* (2007)*,* and *New Year's Eve* (2011).

All of the just-named movies are part of a subset of network films, perhaps the most famous of the form: dramas that address transnational issues of social concern. In fact, network films seem to have become the dominant mode of representing globalization on film: *Traffic, Amores Perros, Crash, Syriana, Babel, Cidade de Deus* (Meirelles, 2002), *Fast Food Nation* (Linklater, 2006)*, Auf der Anderen Seite* (Akin, 2007), *71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls* (Haneke, 1994)*, Code inconnu* (Haneke, 2000), *Rendition* (Hood, 2007), *Mammoth* (Moodysson, 2009), *Hereafter* (Eastwood, 2010), *Contagion* (Soderbergh, 2011)*,* and *360* (Meirelles, 2012) are several but far from all. In their attempt to represent the totality and complexity of globalization, these films strive for realism over the magical in subject matter and aesthetics. But their narratives spectacularize the reality of social relations by mapping a fantastic network of interconnections, resulting in the magical meeting of multiple and seemingly divergent characters and storylines.

These magical neoliberal network narratives fall into two loose groups. First are *contingency narratives*, in which protagonists and storylines are brought together, most often violently, in chance events. The second could be called *world-systems films*, as they are filmic attempts at Wallerstein's (2004) proposed analysis of the totality of a system of interrelations that transcends the nation state, such as an industry, commodity chain, pandemic, or communications network, and links diverse entities while acknowledging, sometimes inadvertently, the power differences between centers and peripheries.

**Narrative Form**

As theorists of globalization and neoliberalism have argued, capitalism has increasingly functioned transnationally since the relative freeing of markets from state regulation, the intervention of supranational financial institutions in the developing world, the privatization and commercialization of public goods and services, and the resulting opening up of the "second" and "third worlds" to capitalist expansion. Transnational corporations, international organizations, alliances of nation states, and the international financialization of capital have created global networks of power that are more decentralized and complexly interrelated than previous organizations of capital such as state imperialism. New information and communications technologies have allowed for capitalists to organize capital flows and manage labor across vastly dispersed nodes in global networks. Models of just-in-time production, quickly sourcing elements from a distance to create material and symbolic commodities traded on international markets, have enabled the flexibilization of labor and transitory arrangements of capital investment. Cultural, informational, and financial commodities that are a growing segment of the economy are created and distributed across international networks of capital and labor.

In this moment, a structure of feeling has emerged out of capitalist globalization that is often represented by networks, attempts to conceptualize its interconnections and its fragmentation. Similarly, Jameson (1995) argued that as film encountered the problem of representing the complexity of capitalism's world system in the 1970s, the result was a wave of conspiratorial movies that reflected the collective political unconscious of capitalist power: "Conspiracy . . . is the poor person's cognitive mapping of the postmodern age . . . a desperate attempt to represent the [late capitalist] system, whose failure is marked by its slippage into sheer theme and content" (1988, p. 356). Likewise, since the 1990s, there has

been a wave of films attempting to map global capitalism in its neoliberal form, resulting in films that are as complex and transnational as their subject matter but still unable to represent the totality of the global system, relying on risk and randomness to construct a seemingly magical network of interrelations.



**Figure 3. "We Are All Connected," 360 posters.**

Network narrative films are part of a structure of feeling that includes popular discourses and academic work on human interconnectivity extrapolated to global scale. As Bordwell (2008) notes, in the sciences, chaos theory posited unexpected order in what appeared to be random fluctuations and coincidences. The theory entered the vernacular as the *butterfly effect*, with its evocative image of a butterfly's wings causing a hurricane on the other side of the world or tiny actions in one person's life setting off major consequences in another's, a concept frequently structuring these films and directly referenced in *El Efecto Mariposa* (1995), *Le Battement D'ailes du Papillon* (2000), *Free Radicals* (2003), and *21 Grams* (2003) (Bordwell, 2008; Everett, 2005; Silvey, 2009). Similarly, complexity theorists argue that numerous forms of large-scale, systemic behavior emerge from simple interactions among myriad individuals (Mitchell, 2009), like neuroscientists' hypotheses that human brains are hard-wired with mirror neurons that receive and resonate behavior and affect, suggesting an interconnected, social neurological system (Coles, 2011), as in *360* (see Figure 3). Epidemiological modeling of infectious disease—and the metaphor of *viral* for the diffusion of all sorts of social and cultural phenomena—diagrams exponentially growing nodes of transmission and is, not surprisingly, the subject of another network narrative, *Contagion* (see Figure 4). Not only has remarking on the ever-shrinking small world of six degrees of separation (a phrase popularized by John Guare's 1993 film) entered into common parlance, but the business discourse of networking, or forwarding one's career through connections, has become general wisdom (Bordwell, 2008). Of course, the Internet has become the master metaphor for the network, and its uses have made social linkages identifiable and practicable and drawn attention to the dissemination of ideas and texts through them.

The social and cultural theory of the past twenty years has paid increasing attention to interconnectivity, horizontality, and multiplicity. Castells (2000) has argued that a networking form of organization in economics, politics, social movements, and identity has become the defining feature of contemporary society. Sassen (1998) has suggested that certain global cities are nodes within global economic, information, migration, and activist systems. Deleuze and Guattari (1980) theorized the cultural and social possibilities of the nonlinear and non-hierarchical connections of multiplicities of the rhizome. Latour (2005) and actor-network theory map relations between people, objects, and concepts within systems. Both social-movement and military analysts have noted the potentiality of horizontally proliferating cells sharing political affinities in groups ranging from environmentalists to Zapatistas to al-Qaeda, resulting in the remodeling of state armed forces into networks, because, as RAND analysts suggest, "it takes networks to fight networks" (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, Fuller, & Fuller, 1998, p. 17), a refrain repeated by anticapitalist and antistate actors alike. Hardt and Negri (2004) theorized a similar concept of revolutionary collectivity to challenge the postmodern power system of "Empire"—the "multitude," constituted from the convergence of the subjectivity and social intelligence of heterogeneous groups.



*Figure 4.* **Contagion** *poster.*

Network narrative films are melodramas of globalization constructing sensational interconnection to imagine contemporary systems, relations, and identities. They demonstrate the influence of the flourishing television dramas of "quality TV" but also the maligned genres of soap opera and *telenovela*,

each with its multiple protagonists, intricate narrative structures (Azcona, 2010), interwoven personal relationships, and emphasis on the moral and social ramifications of events. Some of the earliest network theory emerged from Latin American media studies' engagement with melodrama, with Martín-Barbero (1987) arguing for a shift of focus from "media to mediations" by placing mass communications industries like telenovela within a cultural matrix of changing social relations, identity, popular memory, and imagination. Herlinghaus' work conceived of Latin American melodrama not by theme or genre but in its intertextual functionality "as a matrix of theatrical and narrative imagination" (as cited in Salinas Muñoz, 2010, p. 117) that assists people in making meaning amid the complexity of daily experiences and relationships. In fact, at least two of the most well-known network films were direct crossovers from television melodrama: *Crash* was originally developed for TV, and *Traffic* was inspired by the British miniseries *Traffik*.

In representing the transnational networks of globalization, network films develop a multilinear form in which seemingly unrelated plots and protagonists are brought together by various means. In the case of contingency narratives, this is often by a chance encounter, accident, or event, and in world-systems films, by a large-scale system of interrelations. These movies' assertion of interconnection in multiplicity and the unfolding of their plots to suggest the involvement and responsibility of each character in the others' stories at first seems a powerfully utopian statement about human interdependency. The narrative network implies that we are all implicated and complicit in each other's lives, just as characters appear in and affect the plotlines of others in these films.

But contingency-narrative films overwhelmingly emphasize the negativity of this complicity (Orbe & Kinefuchi, 2008), inexorably crashing characters' storylines together in violent encounters so they seem either fated for or deserving of the terrifying outcomes of human connection, effectively denying them both structural cause and positive collectivity. Contingency narratives construct what Sconce calls characters "fucked by fate" (as cited in Tierney, 2009, p. 107). As in the films *Crash* (see Figure 5)*, Amores Perros*, *21 Grams,* and *Babel,* plots rely on chance events to inexplicably collide characters, overwhelming any acknowledgment of the systems of power that position characters and frame their actions, leaving the audience to look for moralistic explanations for characters' destruction. Their chronologies are skewed so that we the audience see in the first moments of these films those events that seemingly randomly and devastatingly have driven the networked characters together—shootings in *Crash* and *Amores Perros*, car crashes *21 Grams* and *Babel*. Then we wait for the characters to come to the ends we already know they are fated for. (In *Crash*, "mobile privatization" [Morse, 1990] in LA and the simultaneous atomization and interconnection of its residents is represented through the repeated crashing together of cars, so the movie begins with an out-of-sequence scene of both a minor car accident and the revelation of a shooting.) This nonlinear organization of flash-forwards "links discrete events in a causal pattern, endows events with an aspect of fatalism, and promotes moral didacticism" (Carlsten, 2007, p. 9). Viewers cannot help but look for causal connections and morals to the story, asking as we watch the characters drive toward their ends, what are they doing to deserve this? In addition to moralism, this emphasis on contingency "maintains the existing capitalist system by attributing any deviations from the social equilibrium to chance and accident rather than immanent social antagonisms or contradictions" (Willman, 2008, p. 28). Shootings, car accidents, financial crises, even international conflicts are all represented as the chance outcomes of individual actions and exceptions in an otherwise

functioning society (Jeff K., 2010). Contingency, as a theory of historical causality and as a narrative trope, "represents a renunciation of any attempt to grasp the operations of the social totality" (Willman, 2008, p. 33). Instead, these events personalize and individualize social and sociopolitical conflicts and privatize such structural issues as racism, immigration policy, and class stratification.
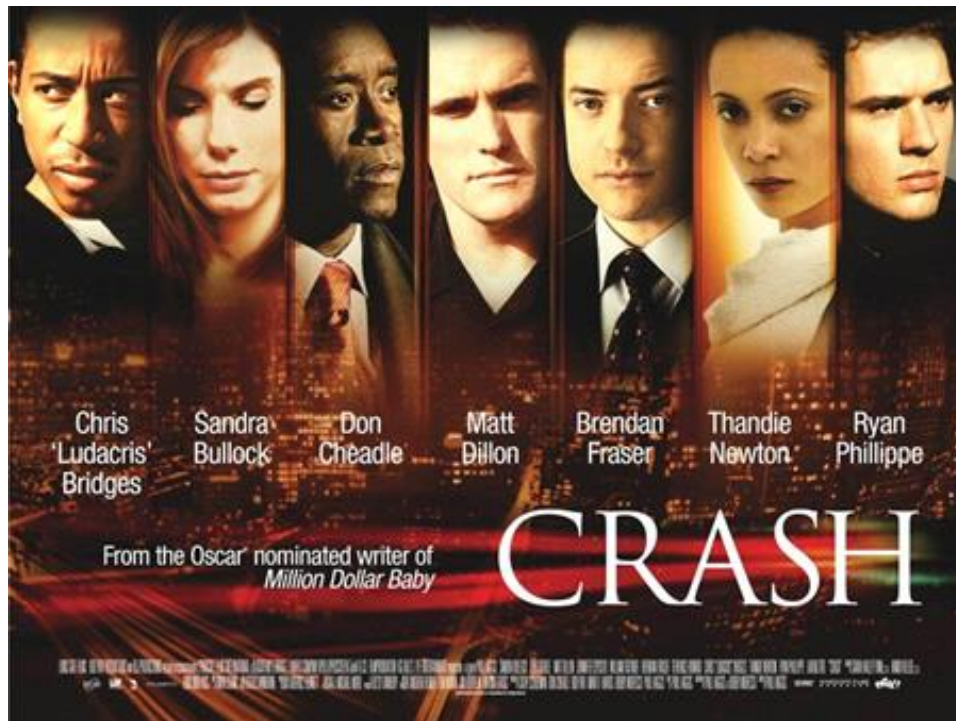


*Figure 5.* **Crash** *poster.*

In the case of world-systems films, as we enter the theater to watch films on the topics of the global drug system (*Traffic*) and global oil system (*Syriana*), we already know the characters are "fucked" by these networks. If there was any doubt, high-angle extreme long shots dwarf characters within their surroundings and the system itself while color tones, shaky camera movements, and grainy images mark characters for future trouble. These films aspire to an aesthetic of cognitive mapping "to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system" (Jameson, 1991, p. 54) and attempt "to think the impossible totality of the contemporary world system" (Jameson, 1991, p. 38), identifying the relationships between states, corporations, commodities, militaries, religious bodies, transnational organizations, and so on. This mapping is impossible and incomplete—"to think a system so vast that it cannot be encompassed by the natural and historically developed categories of perception" (Jameson, 1995, p. 2)—and these films' failures are marked by slippage into sheer theme and formal contrivance. Complexity is simplified, and the result is conspiratorial representations of historical actors such as hazily suspicious CIA agents, government entities, and oil companies, as in the case of *Syriana* (see Figure 6). The formal pressures to relevantly interlock plotlines while tackling a social problem such

as the drug trade in *Traffic* leads to moralistic melodrama through the magical personalization of the issue, as in the storyline of a conservative drug czar so focused on cleaning up the streets that he is blind to his own daughter's drug abuse. The film fails its own liberal good intentions when it relies on the racist trope of this pretty white girl's sexual subjugation by a black brute to quickly and manipulatively develop a sense of tragedy about the cocaine world system. Network narratives seem especially susceptible to such tropes with their many protagonists and limited time devoted to any single character's development. But compared to the conspiracy films of the 1970s and the contingency network films, these world-systems narratives expand the complexity and complicity of power to include more actors, political-economic context, and a sense of cause beyond individual actions, even if they regularly fall victim to conspiratorial and moralistic-melodramatic representation.
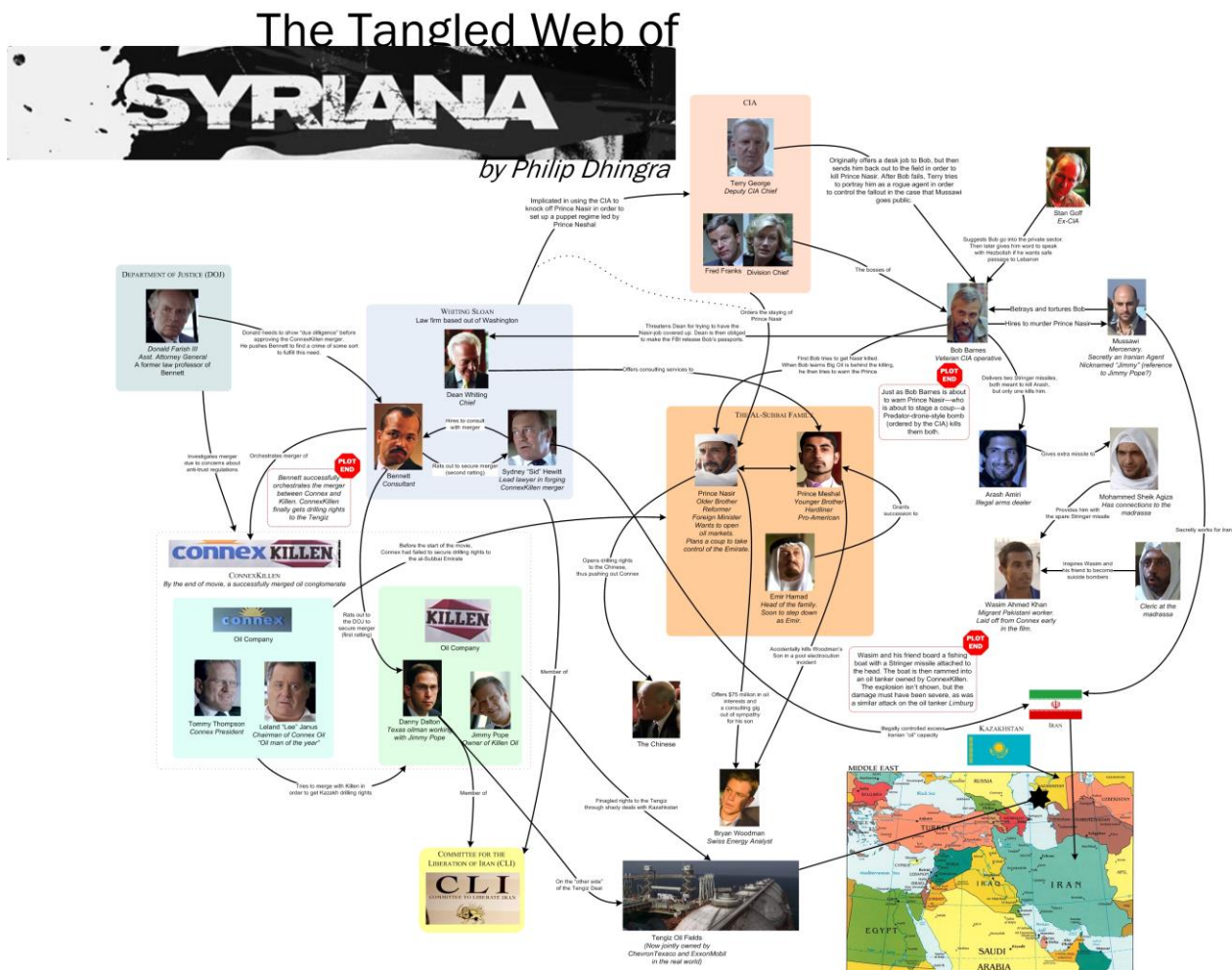


*Figure 6. Philip Dhingra, "The Tangled Web of Syriana."*

The ideology of form of these world-systems films constructs a critique of capitalism's current stage perhaps more powerfully than their liberal thematics, discussed below. World-systems films' narrative inclusion of elements of contingency and chance within clearly identified networks of power disavows the neoliberal individualism celebrated in political and economic discourses. With multiple storylines of various protagonists unfolding in temporal simultaneity, these films displace the individual protagonist so empowered in most film genres from the center of the story. The persistence of contingency in chance encounters between characters, tragic and lucky accidents, and random events belies the presumed rationality of the systems these films are mapping and the assumption of individual agency in shaping one's own life course, represented in neoliberal concepts of individual freedom, self-betterment, and personal choice (Deleyto & Azcona, 2010).

But the political possibility of the effacement of neoliberal individual agency is neither replaced with alternative forms of agency nor is it completed. Network films' overwhelming emphasis on narrative structure produces what film critic David Denby criticizes as "closed, even over-determined, forms" (2007, para. 24). He blames their "pretentious fatalism and structural willfulness" (ibid., para. 20) on filmmakers' being "too obsessed with the unfair distribution of power and capital in the world to operate freely as radical experimenters in form" (ibid., para. 24). But it is something else: their form suggests that they are not radical experimenters in the distribution of power and capital in the world. Within these films there is no multitude created from multiplicity and rarely the production of "counter-power" (Castells, 2007) within the network. But a radical cognitive mapping of neoliberal capitalism does not have to "be some uplifting socialist-realist drama of revolutionary triumph but may be equally inscribed in a narrative of defeat, which sometimes, even more effectively, causes the whole architectonic of postmodern global space to rise up in ghostly profile behind itself" (Jameson, 1991, p. 415). But with world-systems films made in the mold of Hollywood, defeat by the system is moderated by happy endings of escape in the form of homecomings of characters who flee from the most intensive nodes of the system (*Rendition* and *Syriana*) or characters able to make small strides working within the system (*Traffic*).

### Transnational Network Thematics

The network narrative form is so closely associated with themes of global human connection that a reader of Roger Ebert's blog asked him for clarification on whether they were a genre prerequisite, writing: "There is now widespread belief that such films need international flair . . . and multiple languages" (2007, para. 1). Azcona (2010) similarly argues that multiprotagonist narratives have become "a powerful template for organizing contemporary experience on film," principally "the psycho-cultural impact of globalization and attendant processes" (p. 7). Network narratives' utility at mapping human connection means that they have been mobilized to address contemporary social issues, especially when global in scope. This is part of the genre cycle deWaard conceives of as "the global social problem film" (2007). *Traffic* on the illegal drug trade, *Syriana* on the oil industry, *Amores Perros* on vulnerability in post-NAFTA Mexico City, *Babel* on the challenges of human communication, *Crash* on post-9/11 race relations in the world city of LA, *Rendition* on the U.S. state's use of international black sites for torture, *Mammoth* on transnational networks of social reproduction, *Contagion* on fear and global pandemics, and so on. The form connects geographically remote characters and situations to address international political, economic, social, and cultural interrelations. Reviews have characterized many of these network

films as liberal, primarily because they address contemporary social issues and include the perspectives of diverse characters, but they could more accurately be termed neoliberal in their overall approach to these issues.

*Amores Perros* reconfirms bourgeois fear about Mexico City's degradation into "neoliberal fratricide" (Reber, 2010, p. 282) and social violence. While recognizing the inequalities produced since NAFTA, the film focuses on the punishment of all three protagonists across their vast differences, each on moralistic grounds for familial dissolution, but the ultimate blame for the chain of events that produces the violent contingency of their shared car crash rests on working-class Octavio (Gael García Bernal) and his reckless attempt at escape from familial dysfunction and poverty. Sánchez-Prado (2006) persuasively argues that the film is characteristic of the "imaginary" of Mexico City's middle class, and its "neoliberal fear" of the violent excess of urban marginalization spilling over and colliding (literally and figuratively) with their lives.[4]

*Syriana* (see Figure 7) critiques the political economy of U.S. oil interests in the Persian Gulf, populating its world system with a slew of morally ambiguous characters. But the film also produces some neoliberal heroes in Bob Barnes (George Clooney), a CIA hit man who has a human side; Bryan Woodman (Matt Damon), an oil-futures analyst with whom the audience empathizes after witnessing the accidental death of his son; and Prince Nasir (Alexander Siddig), a reforming Arab prince willing to break with U.S. influence and royal and religious authority to bring increased freedoms and, importantly, a free market to his country. The last character is so worthy of saving in the logic of the film that Barnes breaks with his CIA mission to try to warn him of his imminent assassination by U.S. state and multinationals afraid of real market reforms. Only Woodman survives these dealings in the Persian Gulf, fleeing to the United States, with the film closing in a "conservative return to the family and local community" (Jagoda, 2010, p. 80) as a model of escape from the tangled web of "foreign oil."[5]

*Crash* narrates racial tensions in global Los Angeles by throwing its characters together in car crashes and shootings. Every character proves to be racist, and every racist character proves to have one redeeming quality. As one film critic said: "In the end, *Crash* says, when you push a vicious racist, you get a caring human, but when you push a caring human you get a vicious racist" (Edelstein, 2005, para. 5). Their racism is represented without context as an individual character flaw, ignoring the conditions that produce racial exclusions as well as the persistence of systemic white privilege and institutional racism. *Crash*'s neoliberal stance on race and racism, as Giroux and Searls Giroux argue, "privatizes and depoliticizes race, drowning out those discourses that reveal how it is mobilized 'around material resources regarding education, employment conditions, and political power'" (2007, p. 754).

---

[4] Deleyto and Azcona (2010) point out that both *Amores Perros*' subject matter of social tumult and poverty and its international box-office success were a result of NAFTA. Reber (2010) interprets el Chivo's storyline as offering a politics of love as an exit from the "death machine of neoliberalism" (p. 293), while Herlinghaus (2008) reads it as an ethical choice of "bare life" (in Agamben's terms) amid neoliberal modernity that seems limited by the emphasis on familial love.

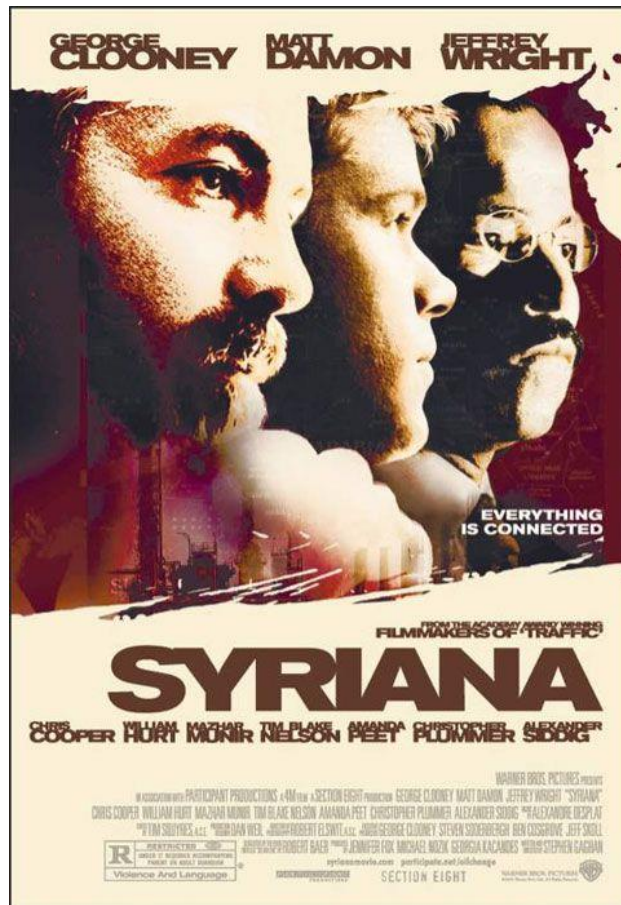[5] See Jagoda (2010) for his interpretation of the progressive interventions of *Syriana.*

*Figure 7. "Everything Is Connected," Syriana poster.*

These magical neoliberal network narratives deliberately "hail a cosmopolitan audience" (Barnard, 2009, p. 209) that is interested in global social problems and open to following them through a story told through diverse global perspectives. In their multiple storylines, network narratives formally bring together very different characters, points of view, and contexts into a single film. The recognition of difference and, more rarely, of the ways in which difference, peripherality, and subalternity is produced within global systems of power are powerful gestures in these films. The inclusion of multiple storylines and points of view challenges the sense of a narrative center and potentially complicates the dominant White, Western perspective privileged in most globally circulated films (Barnard, 2009; Everett, 2005). Quick transitions between the multiple nodes in the story can produce moments of disorientation in the viewer, as one follows cuts from a storyline with familiar characters and setting to a seemingly distant but related one, sometimes effectively collapsing "the safe distance between 'us' and 'them'" (Westwell, 2011, p. 827).

But there are real limitations on the potential of these films to radically reframe social issues from the perspectives of those not usually represented in film. Even as network narratives attempt to decenter dominant positionality, storylines about characters of color and those outside the global north often become subaltern and peripheral in the narrative network being mapped. Next to global stars such as Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Matt Damon, and Jude Law—themselves products of the dominance of the U.S. cultural industries on screens around the world—characters played by less internationally renowned actors become peripheral, with their importance dependent on their relation to the centering power of global stars and their Western/northern storylines. Even as a film attempts to elucidate the ways in which difference is produced within global systems of power, it runs the risk of reproducing such dynamics.

## Industrial Networks

These films deserve their *network* moniker, too, for the circuits of transnational capital and labor that characterize the current era of globalized, commercial independent film, as they are produced by a complex conjunction of numerous financiers, production companies, and sources of labor that come together briefly to make and distribute the film before dispersing again (Kerr, 2010). While the form is not vulgarly determined by its relations of production, it is difficult to imagine such a full articulation of the transnational network narrative genre without the emergence of global industrial networks in media production in the neoliberal era.

No longer made by a single major Hollywood studio or under the auspices of one nation's state film subsidy, network films are often complex private-sector coproductions, examples of a post-Fordist mode of production and the "New International Division of Cultural Labour" (Miller, Govil, McMurria, & Maxwell, 2005) in the film industry characterized by "subsidiary and subcontractor capitalism" (Wayne, 2003, p. 98). The network narratives *Crash, Babel, Syriana*, *Contagion,* and *Traffic*, for example, were made at arm's length from the major studios by a web of independent production companies along with the "major independents," which arose from the majors' acquisition of independent production companies and the creation of subsidiaries to produce commercial independent films. In the 1990s, "every major studio acquired a stable of subsidiaries" (deWaard, 2007, p. 13) to profit from the notoriety gained through film festivals and awards season. These major independents attempted to negotiate artistic and commercial imperatives and accumulate the financial, social, and cultural capital "for big-budget, celebrity-starring, heavily-marketed films that can still retain their artistic merit and message to thrive within a landscape dominated by blockbuster filmmaking" (ibid.). In addition to buying up independent studios, the majors also appropriated the network narrative form that had been developed and familiarized in art-house and indie films in the 1990s.

The independent-cum-studio network narratives of the 2000s exemplify a networked mode of production by a web of companies and financiers including the major independents: *Traffic* was developed with Universal's USA Films (now Focus Features) and *Syriana* and *Contagion* were developed by Soderbergh's own production company, Section Eight Ltd. (a partnership with George Clooney), and co-produced and co-financed by both Warner Brothers and Participant Productions (a production company that focuses on films to inspire social change, founded by Jeffrey Skoll, whose eponymous foundation is concerned with issues such as pandemics and oil dependence). The complexity of the producing and

financing (which included several banks and a German tax fund) of the relatively low budget *Crash* led to a lawsuit and complications in paying out the exponentially large profits (Waxman, 2006). And five different companies financed *Babel*: Iñárritu's film and advertising company, Zeta Films; the U.S.-based Media Rights Capital, which is partly owned by a talent agency with additional investment by AT&T and Goldman Sachs; the major independent Paramount Vantage; an American company specializing in marketing and packaging talent for commercial independent films; and a French film company (Kerr, 2010). As Dixon and Foster (2007) describe in their history of the U.S. film industry, Hollywood studios are no longer the "one-stop production centers" they were at midcentury:

> [T]hey now function basically as distribution and funding entities . . . [they] are really umbrellas for a variety of smaller production companies, where actors, directors, producers, and writers compete to get their projects funded and distributed. . . . [T]oday everyone is a free agent. (p. 379)

As in Castells' (2000) network society, the labor of these free-agent cultural workers, while globally integrated, is increasingly differentiated by function as well as geography and made vulnerable through disposability and interchangeability. The networked production of these films is characteristic of Harvey's (1989) postmodern "flexible accumulation," in which products for an increasingly segmented market are sourced from a global system of flexibilized, casualized workers contributing elements just-in-time. These film productions are complexly organized and dispersed across space, with the essential members of the cast and crew and their corresponding film product moving quickly from locale to locale, where production springs up from the labors of temporary workers: deWaard describes them as "complex, erratic," "frantic," and "light and quick" (2007, p. 17). *Traffic* was filmed in three months across 10 cities and 110 locations. *Syriana* was shot in five languages on a 75-day schedule across four continents and more than 220 locations in Geneva, Dubai, Egypt, Tehran, London, Morocco, New York, Texas, Maryland, and Washington, DC (Jaafar, 2006). For *Babel,* four different production companies organized the labor for each of the film's national locations of Japan, Mexico, Morocco, and the United States, and *Contagion*'s globalized production spanned Hong Kong, Macao, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, Casablanca, London, and Geneva (deWaard, 2007; deWaard & Tait, 2013). Unlike the Model Ts or big-budget musicals that came off single assembly lines at Ford plants or Hollywood studios at midcentury, in classic post-Fordist terms*,* these film products are globally sourced from components produced just-in-time by workers dispersed across space, like the Sonyist media technologies they are viewed on.

This networked industrial production appealed both to stars interested in prestige independent films and producers hoping to ensure box-office returns. Directors realized they could recruit major stars to network narratives even with their smaller budgets: Stars gained the credibility (and sometimes accolades) of working on an indie film without having to commit much time to the project or demand their usual high salaries because theirs was just one of many proportional protagonist roles. That appealed to producers hoping to ensure a return on investment by casting a wide net of talent in starring roles (Bordwell, 2008). Talent agencies also stood to profit from network narratives as ideal vehicles for packaging a group of creative talent under their representation (Kerr, 2010). As agencies globalized their stable of talent, they provided films with a diverse team of protagonists for these often multiracial and transnational network narratives. Agencies also profited from investments in independent studios and

financing companies: talent agency Endeavor's part ownership of independent studio Media Rights Capital, run by former talent agents, helped finance *Babel* (see Figure 8) and other films organized around its client list, which included Iñárritu himself (Cieply, 2007).[6]
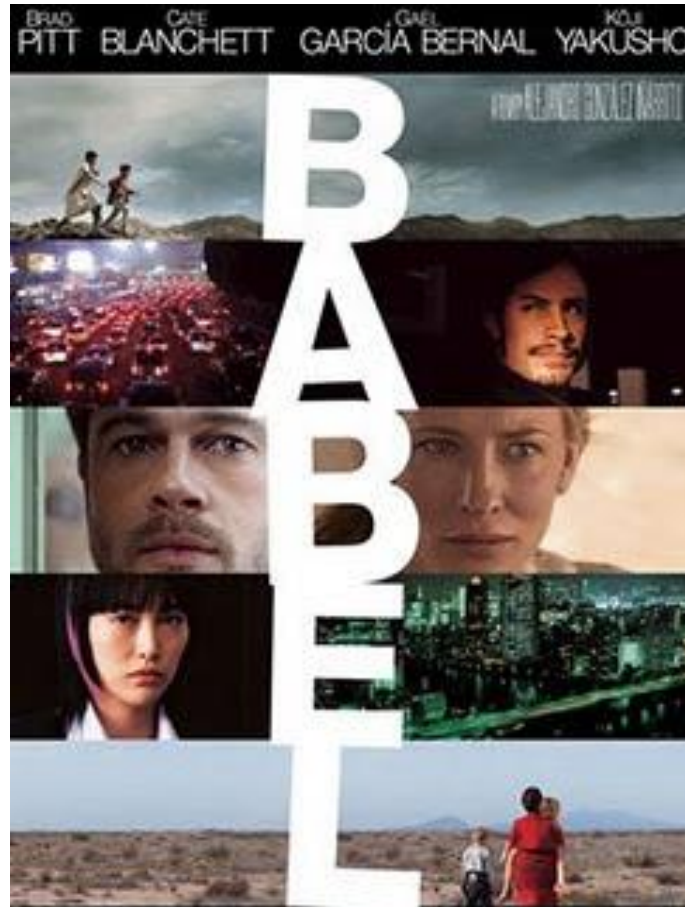


*Figure 8.* **Babel** *poster.*

The international economics of cinema in the neoliberal era and the industry's interest in garnering film revenues beyond a single domestic market, especially as the U.S. market provides a decreasing proportion of box-office revenue, mirrors if not motivates global network narratives, settings, and characters (Kerr, 2010). Of *Babel*'s $135 million worldwide grosses, 75% came from outside the United States. Not surprisingly, the film's U.S., Mexican, and Japanese settings and film stars (plus the

---

[6] Ensemble movies have a long history, but they became prominent after midcentury when the industry attempted to create film events in sprawling historical epics, literary adaptations, and cameo-packed films to compete with television. But rarely did more than two protagonists get central plotlines with stories simultaneously diverging and converging, as in network narratives (Bordwell, 2006).

addition of Australian Cate Blanchett) mapped onto some of the largest international media markets where the film had the highest gross, namely the United States and Canada, Japan, Spain, Mexico, Germany, and Australia. These films' multiple protagonists enable Hollywood to incorporate both racial and national diversity while also maintaining a visible presence of its mainstream White film stars. For producers, these films offer the prospect of bridging market segmentation and appealing to U.S. ethnic and international audiences. In the 2000s, international profits accounted for around half the revenues of the U.S. majors and significantly more for U.S. indie producers and major independents. As Hollywood's "cine-capitalism" (Marshall, 2008) drove it to look for forms and voices that might have currency internationally as well domestically, there was a corresponding rise in multilocation films, international references, and actors from around the world speaking their native languages.

This is, of course, a result of the globalized market for films and international film industries reshaped by neoliberal economic reforms. Since midcentury, many governments around the world supported the "protection-preservation" of national cinemas and the celebration of art cinema without concern for commercial potential (Smith, 2003). But structural adjustment, international trade agreements, and resultant cuts to state film subsidies and protections in the last few decades dismantled the statist model of investment in national cinemas in favor of private and increasingly transnational financing (Hinojosa Córdova, 2003; Trejo Ojeda, 2009). In Mexico, for example, private investment in film exceeded public support for the first time in the early 2000s. Iñárritu and other filmmakers of the *nueva onda* of Mexican cinema came of age in the market: Iñárritu eschewed dwindling state film programs, instead developing his skills at the Mexican megacorporation Televisa and directing television commercials to fund his own production company, Zeta Films. He relied on private financing for *Amores Perros* and his subsequent films and has been critical of the elitism and cronyism of the filmic state apparatus that preceded neoliberal marketization (Deleyto & Azcona, 2010; Menne, 2007). Such filmmakers are part of a select group that have emerged from the marketization of film production in countries like Mexico to make films in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. Different from the generations of émigré filmmakers before them who fled political, economic, and cultural nightmares to Hollywood, these filmmakers are more like a transnational directorial class, drawing on Sklair's (2000) concept, who have cultural (and economic) interests that are "globally linked rather than local or national" (para. 8), who share similar lifestyles, and who "seek to project images of themselves as citizens of the world as well as of their places and/or countries of birth" (ibid., para 12).

In the wake of marketization, media corporations began investing heavily in transnational linguistic markets to create texts that would be marketable to Spanish-language audiences, resulting in inter-American production companies, Spanish investment in Latin American media companies, and Spanish–Latin American coproductions. Transnational finance, production, and distribution corporations interested in prospective transnational linguistic markets have proliferated— these include Cha Cha Cha, Costa Films, Buena Onda, Focus Features International, Buena Vista International, AltaVista/CIE. Their films often include themes, storylines, and stars appealing to multiple national markets. Faced with the threat of marginalization in a global media market and the contraction of state investment, media firms in smaller national markets have embarked on joint ventures with international media companies, providing some films with globe-spanning corporate networks for distribution (Kerr, 2010).

In European filmmaking, a minor cultural tradition of network narratives had already existed, but sources of transnational capital alongside international funding bodies through the formation of the European Union encouraged transnational coproductions, deemed a way to keep European cinema afloat amid the tide of Hollywood big-budget movies. As European coproductions gained larger subsidies from multiple sources and wider distribution to multiple nations in the European common market, shooting actors in their native countries and local languages also became more feasible (Bordwell, 2008). European coproduction funding bodies such as Eurimages, the cinema support fund of the Council of Europe, and MEDIA, the European Union support program for the audiovisual industry, have supported filmic visions of European transnationalism (Jäckel, 2003; Sieg, 2008; Silvey, 2011).

Concurrently, European nations also compete for filmmaking jobs and dollars, offering producers incentives to shoot in their locales. Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles' *360* (2012), which follows Slovakian, British, Brazilian, French, Algerian, Russian, and American characters taking risks for love and sex across Vienna, Paris, London, Bratislava, Rio, Denver, and Phoenix, was a coproduction between UK, Austrian, French, and Brazilian companies (and an American film distributor), receiving a major grant from the film initiative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Economy for partnering with an Austrian coproducer and shooting in part in Vienna (Blaney, 2011).

Coproductions and resulting network narratives have had the effect of making themes of European unity and difference common in film (Bordwell, 2008), resulting at its worst in "Europuddings," unwieldy coproductions aiming for a mass European audience by offering a potluck of nationalities (Baldwin, 1997; De Vinck, 2009). This complex interplay stems in part from the mandates of the sources of film funding, as with Eurimages, which states that "it endeavours to support works which reflect the multiple facets of a European society whose common roots are evidence of a single culture" (as cited in Silvey, 2011, p. 4). With their transnational production, casts, and plotlines, network narratives such as *Auf der Anderen Seite, Code Inconnu* and portmanteau films[7] like *Paris, Je T'aime* (2006) (see Figures 9 and 10) have complicated the traditional sense of European national cinemas.

---

[7] Portmanteau, anthology, or omnibus films package two or more stories connected by a common theme or event. They feature less connectivity than network narratives and are sometimes the works of different directors. Portmanteau films like *11'09"01*, *Tickets* (2005), *Paris, Je T'aime*, *New York, I Love You* (2009), and the crowd-sourced video compilations *Life in a Day* (2011) and *One Day on Earth* (2012), have been especially transnational. Similar to portmanteau films, Griffith's parallel film *Intolerance* (1916) evidences narrative innovations in feature filmmaking's earliest history.
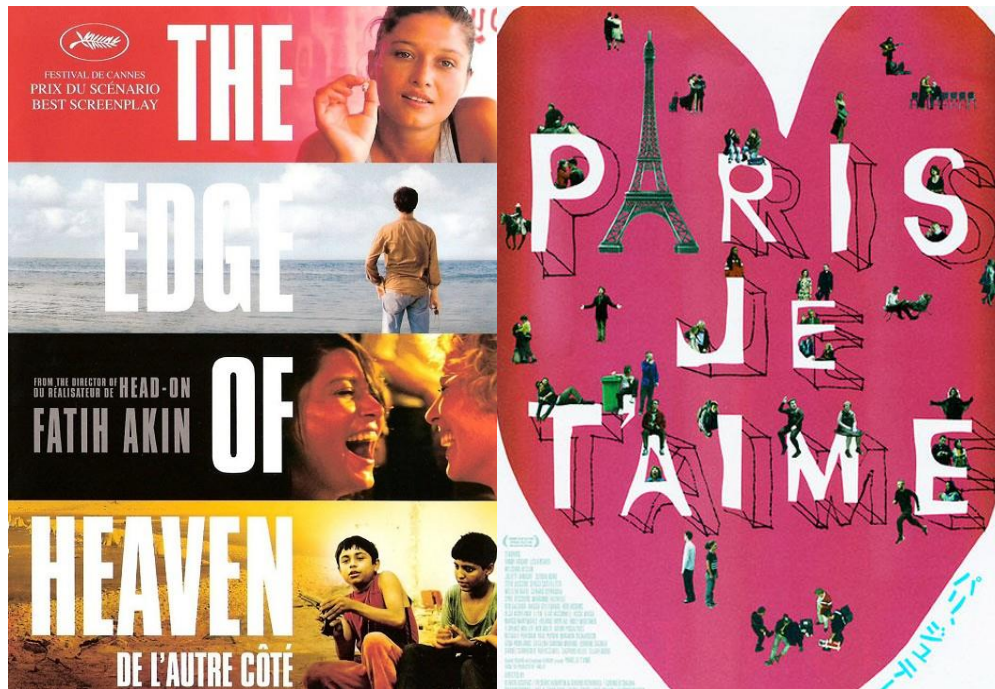
***Figures 9 and 10.*** **Auf der Anderen Seite** *and* **Paris, Je T'aime** *posters.*

It is important to reiterate that networked production does not determine networked film form—many films financed and produced this way have fewer protagonists and a more linear narrative, and some financed and produced from a smaller number of sources also display a network narrative. A film's thematic focus does not always correlate with a network narrative structure either—*The Social Network* (2010), for example, with the exception of shots cutting between Zuckerberg's misogynistic coding and the viral spread of his new site and the slight manipulation of linear temporality through flashbacks to build the legal drama, demonstrates little narrative innovation for a film meant to capture the networked new economy and its social impact. This is also not to say that all network narratives, even the transnational ones, are neoliberal. The network narrative form in itself does not determine politics. But there is something appealing about this form to societies in the thrust of globalization, where the free flow of information, people, and commodities is the implicit promise, if not actual outcome, of the global free market.

**Conclusion**

These magical neoliberal network narratives freely flow from node to node of their multiple storylines, crossing national borders with ease and projecting a neoliberal fantasy of cosmopolitan vision even while reproducing inequality and difference in both their production and representation. In their attempt and failure at the admittedly impossible task of representing the total logic of capitalist globalization, they become bound by their formal structure's emphasis on the inevitability and violent

randomness of human interconnection across these differences. But perhaps where they fail individually, they succeed collectively. With films coming out year after year over the last two decades, viewers have been unable to escape the systems of network narratives. The act of imagining human interconnectivity and dependency, however incomplete or flawed in these films, holds out the possibility of alternative futures based on these networked relations. And this may win out on the whole over the negative valences of connection in any single film. We are stuck to each other, and our stories will unfold and be told together, so we might make it for better over worse.

## References

Baldwin, D. (1997, April 24). The proof will be in the "europudding." *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from
        http://articles.latimes.com/1997-04-24/business/fi-51831_1_european-films

Barnard, R. (2009). Fictions of the global. *Novel: A Forum on Fiction, 42*, 207–215.

Beal, W., & Lavin, S. (2011). Theorizing connectivity: Modernism and the network narrative. *Digital
        Humanities Quarterly, 5*(2). Retrieved from
        http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/5/2/000097/000097.html

Blaney, M. (2011, June 15). Fernando Meirelles' *360* first English language production to tap Austrian
        incentive. *Screen International*. Retrieved from
        http://www.screendaily.com/news/europe/fernando-meirelles-360-first-english-language-
        production-to-tap-austrian-incentive/5028791.article

Bordwell, D. (2006). *The way Hollywood tells it: Story and style in modern movies.* Berkeley, CA:
        University of California Press.

Bordwell, D. (2008). *The poetics of cinema*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Carlsten, J. (2007). Containing their rage: Anger and the liberal cinema. *Cinephile, 3*(1), 4–11.

Carpentier, A. (1949). *El reino de este mundo* [The kingdom of this world]*.* Madrid, Spain: Alianza
        Editorial.

Carpentier, A. (1995). On the marvelous real in America. In L. Parkinson Zamora & W. Farris (Eds.),
        *Magical realism: Theory, history, community* (pp. 75–88). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Castells, M. (2000). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Castells, M. (2007). Communication, power, and counter-power in the network society. *International
        Journal of Communication, 1*, 238–266*.*

Cieply, M. (2007, March 19). Tilting Hollywood's balance of power to talent agency clients. *The New York
        Times*. Retrieved from
        http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/19/business/media/19fund.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Coles, R. (2011). The neuropolitical *habitus* of resonant receptive democracy. *Ethics & Global Politics*, *4*,
        273–293.

De Vinck, S. (2009). Europudding or europaradise? A performance evaluation of the Eurimages
        coproduction film fund, twenty years after its inception. *Communications*, *34*, 257–285.

del Mar Azcona, M. (2010). *The multi-protagonist film*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2004). *A thousand plateaus* (B. Massumi, Trans.). London, UK, and New York, NY: Continuum.

Deleyto, C., & del Mar Azcona, M. (2010). *Alejandro González Iñárritu*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.

Denby, D. (2007, March 5). The new disorder. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2007/03/05/070305crat_atlarge_denby

Desser, D. (2003). Global noir: Genre film in the age of transnationalism. In B. Grant (Ed.), *Film genre reader III* (pp. 516–536). Austin, TX: University of Texas.

deWaard, A. (2007). The global social problem film. *Cinephile, 3*(1), 12–18.

deWaard, A., & Tait, R. (2013). *The cinema of Steven Soderbergh: Indie sex, corporate lies, and digital videotape.* New York, NY: Wallflower Press.

Dhingra, P. (2006, July 30). The tangled web of *Syriana* [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://philosophistry.com/specials/syriana

Dixon, W., & Foster, G. (2007). *A short history of film.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University.

Ebert, R. (2007, September 6). Think beyond the top layer [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.rogerebert.com/answer-man/think-beyond-the-top-layer

Edelstein, D. (2005, May 5). *Crash* and fizzle. *Slate*. Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/id/2118119

Everett, W. (2005). Fractal films and the architecture of complexity. *Studies in European Cinema, 2*(3), 159–171.

Fuguet, A. (2001). Magical neoliberalism. *Foreign Policy, 125*, 66–73.

Giroux, H., & Searls Giroux, S. (2007). Don't worry, we are all racists! *Third Text, 21*, 745–759.

Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Herlinghaus, H. (2008). Affectivity beyond "bare life": On the non-tragic return of violence in Latin American film. In S. Castro-Klarén (Ed.), *The Blackwell companion to Latin American literature & culture* (pp. 584–601). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Hinojosa Córdova, L. (2003). *El cine mexicano: De lo global a lo local* [Mexican cinema: From the global to the local]*.* Mexico City, Mexico: Trillas.

Jaafar, A. (2006). Interview with Stephen Gaghan. *Sight & Sound, 16*(3), 18–20.

Jäckel, A. (2003). *European film industries*. London: British Film Institute.

Jagoda, P. (2010). Terror networks and the aesthetics of interconnection. *Social Text, 28*(4), 65–89.

Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism.* Durham, NC: Duke University.

Jameson, F. (1995). *The geopolitical aesthetic: Cinema and space in the world system.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University*.*

Jameson, F. (2002). *The political unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act.* London: Routledge.

Jameson, J. (1988). Cognitive mapping. In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 347–360). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.

Jeff K. (2010, May 8). Mapping conspiracy [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://cartographiesoftheabsolute.wordpress.com/2010/05/08/mapping-conspiracy/#_ednref

Kerr, P. (2010). *Babel*'s network narrative: Packaging a globalized art cinema. *Transnational Cinemas*, *1*(1), 37–51.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network theory*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Levine, C. (2009). Narrative networks: *Bleak House* and the affordances of form. *Novel: A Forum on Fiction, 42*, 517–523.

Marshall, L. (2008, January 18). Critical mass: Foreign affairs. *Screen International*. Retrieved from http://www.screendaily.com/critical-mass-foreign-affairs/4036686.article

Martín-Barbero, J. (1987). *De los medios a las mediaciónes: Comunicación, cultura y hegemonía* [From media to mediations: Communication, culture, and hegemony]. Barcelona, Spain: Gustavo Gili.

Menne, J. (2007). A Mexican nouvelle vague: The logic of new waves under globalization. *Cinema Journal, 47*(1), 70–92.

Miller, T., Govil, N., McMurria, J., Maxwell, R., & Wang, T. (2005). *Global Hollywood 2.* London: BFI.

Mitchell, M. (2009). *Complexity: A guided tour.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Morse, M. (1990). An ontology of everyday distraction: The freeway, the mall, and television. In P. Mellencamp (Ed.), *Logics of television* (pp. 193–220). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

Negri, A., & Hardt, M. (2004). *Multitude: War and democracy in the age of empire.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Orbe, M., & Kinefuchi, E. (2008). *Crash* under investigation: Engaging complications of complicity, coherence, and implicature through critical analysis. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *25*(2), 135–156.

Quart, A. (2005). Networked: Don Roos and *Happy Endings*. *Film Comment*, *41*(4), 48–51.

Reber, D. (2010). Love as politics: *Amores Perros* and the emotional aesthetics of neoliberalism. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, *19*, 279–298.

Ronfeldt, D., Arquilla, J., Fuller, G., & Fuller, M. (1998). *The Zapatista social netwar in Mexico*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Salinas Muñoz, C. (2010). Melodramas, identidades y modernidades latinoamericanas en el cine actual: De *Amores Perros* a *Sábado* [Melodrama, identities, and modernity in Latin American cinema: From *Amores Perros* to *Sábado*]. *Aisthesis, 48*, 112–127.

Sánchez-Prado, I. (2006). *Amores Perros*: Exotic violence and neoliberal fear. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies, 15*(1), 39–57.

Sassen, S. (1998). *Globalization and its discontents.* New York, NY: New Press.

Silvey, V. (2009). Not just ensemble films: Six degrees, webs, multiplexity, and the rise of network narratives. *Forum: The University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts, 8*. Retrieved from http://www.forumjournal.org/article/view/621

Silvey, V. (2011). Paris, borders, and the concept of Europe in *Paris, je t'aime* and *Code Unknown*. *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media, 1*. Retrieved from http://www.alphavillejournal.com/Issue%201/ArticleSilvey.html

Sieg, K. (2008). *Choreographing the global in European cinema and theater*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sklair, L. (2000). The transnational capitalist class and the discourse of globalization. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 14*(1) 67–85, Retrieved from www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/162/27656.html

Smith, P. J. (2003). Transatlantic traffic in recent Mexican films. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies, 12*, 389–400.

Tierney, D. (2009). Alejandro González Iñárritu: Director without borders. *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, *7*(2), 101–117.

Trejo Ojeda, R. (2009). *Cine, neoliberalismo y cultura: Crítica de la economía política del cine chileno contemporáneo* [Film, neoliberalism, and culture: A critique of the political economy of contemporary Chilean cinema]. Santiago de Chile: ARCIS.

Wallerstein, I. (2004). *World-systems analysis: An introduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Waxman, S. (2006, July 25). "Crash" principals still await payments for their work. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/25/movies/25movi.html

Wayne, M. (2003). Post-Fordism, monopoly capitalism, and Hollywood's media industrial complex. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 6*(1), 82–103.

Westwell, G. (2011). Regarding the pain of others: Scenarios of obligation in post-9/11 U.S. cinema. *Journal of American Studies, 45*, 815–834.

Willman, S. (2002). Spinning paranoia: The ideologies of conspiracy and contingency in postmodern culture. In P. Knight (Ed.), *Conspiracy nation: The politics of paranoia in postwar America* (pp. 21–39). New York, NY: New York University.