**Original Title:** Lola und Bilidikid  
**English Title:** Lola and Billy the Kid  
**Country of Origin:** Germany  
**Director:** Kutluğ Ataman  
**Producer(s):** Martin Hagemann  
**Screenplay:** Kutluğ Ataman  
**Cinematographer:** Chris Squires  
**Art Director:** Mona Kino  
**Editor:** Ewa J. Lind  
**Runtime:** 95 min.  
**Genre:** Drama/Queer  
**Starring/Cast:** Bakı Davrak, Erdal Yıldız, Gandı Muklı, Michael Gerber, Murat Yılmaz, Inge Keller  
**Year:** 1999

**Synopsis:**

This film is partly about the love story between two of the main gay male characters Lola (Gandı Muklı) and Bili (Erdal Yıldız), also known as Bilidikid. With Şehrazat (Celal Perk) and Kalıpsı (Mesut Özdemir), Lola is a drag performer in a group called Die Gastarbeiterinnen (the female guestworkers). Bili and his brother, İskender (Murat Yılmaz), are hustlers. Lola has two brothers, whom the viewer encounters: an older brother, Osman (Hasan Alı Mete), and a younger brother, Murat (Bakı Davrak), whom one first sees in a gay cruising spot. Lola has never met Murat, because she was forced to leave her home when she was younger because she was gay. There are also three xenophobic, young, white German males, Rudy (Willi Herren), Hendryk (Mario Irrek), and Walter (Jan Andres), who harass and intimidate Lola and attack Lola and Murat. İskender brings into the plot a thread of his budding relationship with an older, aristocratic, white German man, Friedrich (Michael Gerber), whom İskender met after a sexual encounter in a park. Friedrich’s mother, Ute (Inge Keller), is very involved with his affairs. The relationship between Lola and Bili finds tension in Bili’s continuing hustling as well as his desire for Lola to undergo a sex change operation. In Bili’s eyes, the latter would allow them to live normally, “as man and wife.” After Murat’s brother, Osman, tries to force him to have sex with a female prostitute, Murat runs away from home. Murat then meets Bili, who introduces him to the world of hustling in public men’s rooms. After Lola is found dead, floating in the Spree River, Murat finds out from Şehrazat and
Kalipso that Osman raped Lola upon discovering that he was gay. In their belief that the three xenophobic young men are responsible for Lola’s death, Bili and Murat lure them into an abandoned factory. After Bili castrates Rudy, he kills Hendryk but not before he is fatally wounded. Murat discovers from Walter, who has escaped alive, that none of them was responsible for Lola’s death. Murat knows that it was Osman, who had killed Lola. Murat confronts Osman, thereby informing his mother (Nısa Yildirim) of the circumstances surrounding Lola’s death.

**Critique:**

*Lola und Bilidikid* was Kutluğ Ataman’s (b. 1961 in Istanbul, Turkey) second film and his only one thematizing and produced in Germany. Ataman’s work as an artist and documentary filmmaker in Turkey, Great Britain, and the United States is visible in *Lola* as the artful creation of various scenes combines with his aim of bringing to light the lives of marginalized populations. The film was originally to be produced and filmed in Turkey, but financing was more readily available in Germany, making the German focus an alteration of the original project. Nonetheless, the film served a distinct and necessary purpose of highlighting the gay Turkish(-German) subculture in Germany and in Berlin in particular. One can see from the synopsis, however, that the film is overloaded with dramatic material, which makes the plot difficult to describe and limits the overall success of the film’s narrative. The acting, cinematography, and plot create a filmic world that is at times reminiscent of Westerns and melodramas. The film often features dark sets, scenes shot at night, haunting music, and overcast weather, all of which contribute to its somber and sometimes eerie atmosphere. The focus on Turkish(-German) gay subculture fascinated critics and reviewers, most of whom received the film positively. Some hailed the arrival of a new generation of (Turkish/Turkish-German) filmmakers creating new and noteworthy films around this time. These filmmakers (e.g., Fatih Akin, Thomas Arslan, and Yüksel Yavuz) aim to take films beyond the common trope of racial minorities as victims (cf. the German “literature of the affected,” Betroffenheitsliteratur). The *tageszeitung* commented, “Dass es Ataman gelingt, in den Wirrwissen und zahlreichen Nebenplots die dramaturgischen Fäden in der Hand zu behalten, ist erstaunlich.”¹ The critics also contribute to an Orientalist discourse, which emphasizes the foreign nature of Turks, who are living among the Germans, that is, “bei uns lebender Türken, die zwischen Tradition und Moderne nach ihrem Platz suchen.”²

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born on German soil to non-German parents, who have resided in Germany legally for at least eight years, to apply for German citizenship. That this film arrived amid the public debates of the late 1990s surrounding German and double citizenship makes it all the more intriguing, as the public discussions likely colored audiences’ and critics’ reception. Ataman’s film is thus a part of contemporary trends, which contributed to increased visibility of Germany’s largest racial/ethnic minority. This film, however, remains unusual among its counterparts because of its treatment of race and (transgender) sexuality against a German background.

**Author of Review:**

Kyle Frackman

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