

# MIGRANT AND DIASPORIC CINEMA IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

Oxford Brookes University (Oxford)

General information: An International Conference hosted by Film Studies and the Institute for Historical and Cultural Research at Oxford Brookes University.

Date: July 6-8, 2006.

Location: Lincoln College, Oxford.

Deadline: December 31, 2005.

Please send a proposal of 200-300 words for a paper of approx. 20 min., together with your contact details and a brief biographical note to the following e-mail address: dberghahn@brookes.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can send your proposal to:  
Dr. Daniela Berghahn, School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus, Oxford, OX3 0BP, Great Britain.

With European cinemas becoming increasingly determined by multi-cultural and multi-ethnic presences and themes, critical paradigms which examine these cinemas in terms of their national specificity do not adequately address the shift from the national to the transnational which has occurred in all areas of European cinema during the past twenty-five years. This shift has been fuelled by the ongoing process of European integration, the geopolitical changes following the collapse of communism and the continuing influx of migrants into what is still perceived as the politically and economically stable heartland of Europe. These wider socio-political processes have meant that the concept of European identity and nationhood is becoming ever more contested and fluid. This is reflected in a growing number of films made by migrant and diasporic filmmakers which challenge traditional concepts of national identity and ›Europeanness‹.

As a result of these changes, the cultural spaces occupied by migrants are gradually shifting from the margins to the centre as representations of migrant and diasporic identities are assuming a more prominent position in cinema. Recent examples of Turkish-German and Turkish-Italian cinema, French *beur* cinema and Asian-British cinema have won considerable public and critical acclaim and have captured mainstream audiences. However, migrant cinema in contemporary Europe is by no means limited to these high-profile groups. Of equal significance are the films of transnationally mobile filmmakers from former Soviet Bloc countries or the Balkans who are now working in the heartland of the old ›Western‹ world.

This conference seeks to explore how migrant and diasporic filmmakers have redefined our understanding of European cinema. By adopting a comparative perspective in our search for the commonalities and specificities between migrant cinemas across different European countries, we endeavour to transcend the borders and limitations of an analytical framework that privileges the concept of discrete national cinemas.

Papers exploring the following areas are particularly welcome:

- *Mapping the field of migrant and diasporic cinema*: How can we define ›migrant‹, ›diasporic‹, ›transcultural‹ or ›exilic‹ cinema in a context in which most European filmmakers are transnationally mobile, working where the best funding and (co-)production opportunities arise? How – if at all – can we classify films which are made by migrant filmmakers but which do not engage with themes relating to marginality, migration, exile, culture conflict and identity?
- *White-authored vs. black-authored films*: Does the representation of migrant experiences differ in white- vs. black-authored films? Do these films negotiate integration and assimilation in the same or in different ways? How do these films define difference; do they emphasise race, religion, language or cultural origin and tradition?
- *Gaining a voice*: What factors have empowered migrant/diasporic filmmakers to gain access to the means of film production?
- *Evolutionary strands*: Does the development of migrant cinema over the past few decades follow similar patterns across Europe? In what respect do narrative and aesthetic choices as well as the attitudes articulated in films made by the first generation of migrant filmmakers differ from those of second and third generation filmmakers?
- *Between Hollywood and Bollywood*: How is the cultural hybridity of migrant/diasporic cinema reinforced by the generic templates used? Are these generic templates and stylistic influences predominantly derived from the filmmaker's country of origin or from Western mainstream cinema?
- *World music*: What function does music play in these films?
- *Distribution and reception*: What are the main distribution channels for migrant cinema? What different audience responses do culturally and linguistically hybrid films meet in the country of the film's production, in the filmmaker's country of origin and in the (sub)cultures to which the film refers?