FILM FESTIVAL YEARBOOK 2

Film Festivals and Imagined Communities

St Andrews Film Studies

St Andrews

Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Institut für Medien...

Contents

Acknowledgements

Mediating Diaspora: Film Festivals and 'Imagined Communities'

Dina Iordanova[1]

I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community [...] It is *imagined*, because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion [...] It is imagined as a *community*, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 1983: 5-7

The festivals that we zoom in on here are all linked in some way to the concept of the nation as 'imagined', precisely as Anderson conceives it, and, in most cases, to 'diaspora' as well. Members of the community probably will never meet face-to-face; however, they may have shared interests or identify as part of the same group. It may be the imagined community of Spanish speakers that is being cultivated in the sphere of Ibero-American or Hispanic festivals, or the imagined supranational community of Africans, or the global one of indigenous peoples, or the transnational stateless nationhood in the case of Kurds or Tibetans, or the imagined community of migrant workers or displaced refugees where a more abstract degree of imagined 'togetherness' comes into play.

But while Anderson dedicates special attention to the role of print media in the rise of nationalism, the reality of festivals is somewhat different. The regular temporality of newspapers is crucial to his argument: people based in the same country read the same newspapers on a regular basis and are continuously addressed as a 'nation'. They are repeatedly invited to think of themselves as part of a single entity even though they may never come face-to-face with one another or have much else in common. Festivals, however, are different: they are 'live' events that convene only in one place at a time, usually at regular intervals as yearly events. For the festival to happen, organisers and audiences must come face-to-face in exactly the same place at exactly the same time. They practically suspend the 'imagined' element of the community by substituting it with a very real one that is, nonetheless, configured around the same axis of imagination that drives the ideas of nation and nationalism. There is a double-step process when transnationally-positioned film festivals are involved. On the one hand, audiences and programmers involved with the festival are invited to experience themselves, by an undisguised act of imagination, as an extension of a community that is 'headquartered' somewhere else but to which they, by virtue of their very attendance at the festival, now relate to through a mental image of affinity and through the act of their very real togetherness. Yet, a secondary act of imagination is implied as well, linked to the need to experience a certain degree of identification with imaginary, fictional characters whose stories are told in the films projected at the festival. In the 'live' space of the festival, organisers and audiences form a community, an actual one, that congregates face-to-face for the purpose of fostering an 'imagined community' that comes live in the act of watching a film and imagining distant human beings becoming part of one's own experiences. Thus, the festival's set-up extends an invitation to engage in what is essentially a political act of imagined belonging and to continue the nation building process that is pre-supposed by extending it to the diaspora and beyond. Ultimately, then, festivals also work toward extending the 'imagined communities' by deploying their very different geography and temporality in mediating transnational identities in a new way.

'Media theory in the West', observe the editors of *Media Worlds*, 'has established a cultural grid [...] with the effect of bringing into visibility only certain types of media technologies and practices' (Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin 2002: 2). If the creation of imagined communities originally became possible due to the printed media that targeted a mass audience in a generalised mode of public address, as per Anderson (1983: 43-7), the perpetration of national and nationalist causes via visual media and film (in which film festivals are truly instrumental) is of primary importance today. Festivals play a central, even if less recognised role, in transnational mediation, yet they are left out of focus in the context of the traditional range of media. It is usually television, video, the internet, or news production that attract most scrutiny. Research on film festivals that position themselves transnationally in the context of media and diaspora has yet to find its way into the project of 'mapping of diasporic mediascapes' (Karim 2003: 1). One talks extensively of 'narrowcasting', of personal and social media, and of varieties of satellite television channels catering to ethnic minorities (Gillespie 1995, Naficy 2003, Aksoy and Robins 2003), as well as of various internet and cyberspace configurations (most often with focus on activism), and of the international circulation of pre-recorded videos (Cunningham and Nguyen 2003, Kolar-Panov 2003). Film festivals, for now, remain outside the sphere of these studies probably because there is no clearly discernible 'medium' here that could be in the centre of attention. Even if working with the medium of 'film', they are not perceived as phenomena that belong to the sphere of media. Scholarship on film festivals and nationalism remains limited to showcasing national cinemas within one's own national context (Czach 2004, Ahn 2008).

The study of film festivals, however, increasingly includes the investigation of various symbolic practices that relate to transnational production and consumption patterns and particularly to the transcultural dimension of these processes. The film festivals considered here could,

thus, suitably be described as occupying an 'interstitial' position in the range of transnational media as, like most of the films they feature, they are also 'created astride and in the interstices of social formations and cinematic practices' (Naficy 2001: 4).

The focus on film festivals as 'interstitial' events works well in combination with the 'floating lives' model (Cunningham and Sinclair 2001), which develops a framework allowing to take into account the dialectics of global creative output, the ever-changing diasporas and their dynamic consumption patterns. Even though the approach of Cunningham and Sinclair's study has been to take up only a single 'ethnic' channel — Vietnamese, Fijian Indians, Chinese, Thai — and study it in detail, as revealed in the experience of international production, distribution and consumption, the 'floating lives' approach sets a milestone in building a new understanding of the transnational mediatory dynamics. It allows for the analysis of interactions that take place at the 'interstices' of various transnational 'imagined communities' and their media practices. It also enables a critical consciousness of a wider mediatic universe to be developed that keeps in check activities taking place in a variety of public 'sphericules' which may not break through into the mainstream. Film festivals are one of the few instances where production set-ups, distribution patterns and modes of consumption can be studied together as parts of an uninterrupted cycle in the context of transnational media ethnography. The fluid reality of multiple interactions and narrative confluences that take place within the 'interstices' of transnational film festivals require this more flexible approach to bring together media ethnography and political economy.

My investigation is divided into two parts. In the first I try to bring some structure into the wide array of diverse festivals related to 'imagined communities' by proposing a typology which draws on John Porter's concept of 'vertical mosaic'. The festivals in the focus of my attention do not belong to the mainstream but are instances

of what Cunningham has described as a 'decidedly marginal culture' that reveals 'how globalisation-at-the-margin works' (2008: 147). Positioned at the intersection of the 'ethnoscapes' and the 'mediascapes' that Appadurai speaks about (1996), these festivals remain in relative isolation from the mainstream as well as from one another. In the second part of the essay, I discuss some aspects of the 'globalisation-at-the-margin' that is revealed in the context of the multiple 'public sphericules' occupied by the festivals and in the dynamic tensions that link ethno-specific diasporas with the hybridising tendencies of the global city.

The 'Vertical Mosaic' of Festivals

I would like to use the term 'vertical mosaic', a popular functionalist category first introduced by Canadian sociologist John Porter (1965), in my discussion of the wide array of diverse festivals that mediate diaspora. Scrutinising Canadian society, Porter described it as a 'mosaic' of different ethnic, linguistic, regional and religious groupings that was 'vertical' in that it reflected the different access to economic and cultural power that these groupings had within the social sphere. Unlike the U.S. metaphor of the 'melting pot', the official 'multiculturalism' of the public sphere in Canada kept the groupings apart in their agendas and access arrangements.

The situation with festivals related to 'imagined communities' is very similar, I feel, especially as most of them have sprung up in the context of contemporary multicultural societies. Like the agendas they represent, these festivals are also not equal but are rather engaged in an interplay created by the nation-state agenda as complicated by the parallel existence of multiple other interests and agendas within it. These festivals have different degrees of visibility, different access to resources, and are marginalised to various degrees in the context of the so-called mainstream public sphere of multicultural societies. In addition, they not only make the communities they represent visible but also institutionalise their visibility by taking advantage of freely accessible state-sanctioned mechanisms, such as incorporation and local funding streams. Such regulated structures of multiculturalism are meant to enable the festivals (and groups) that are closer to the bottom to climb closer to the top.[2]

There are three main categories that we can distinguish within the 'vertical mosaic' of diaspora-linked festivals: A) Festivals that are tools of cultural diplomacy of an affluent nation with a robust cinematic output. These often have higher visibility as they are supported by state-level efforts and take advantage of additional funding streams coming from abroad. B) Festivals that are set up to promote certain identity agendas. These most often rely on incorporation and funding opportunities available locally but also benefit from financial support of internationally-positioned organisations that support the cause in question. C) Festivals that promote diaspora-linked business. These rely on institutionalisation and funding available through the mechanisms of multiculturalism as well as on identifiable business interests that function locally or transnationally.

A. Cultural diplomacy

Even if not always directly demonstrated, the support that a festival receives from a government-backed agency or other politically powerful body is of crucial importance and assists their higher positioning within the 'vertical mosaic'. Festivals that are organised with the blessing of governmental and publicly-backed NGOs stand a better chance of visibility and of promoting their causes in the public sphere, be it the thriving national cinema of a foreign nation, the struggle for self-determination of a deprived stateless group, or the idea of cultivating a shared supranational identity by interacting in the diaspora. Where such assistance is systematic and sustained one

can talk of cultural diplomacy. Only a handful of countries, however, seem to make film festivals a regular part in their programmes for international relations in the sphere of culture.

There is disparity in the behaviour of countries when it comes to festivals organised with the mandate to promote national cinemas. This disparity is often linked to the availability of resources directed to culture. In some cases cultural diplomacy initiatives are backed solidly by interested parties in the source countries, as we see in the examples of the French and German film festivals featured in Tables 7 and 8 at the end of this volume. Some are supported only sporadically. Film does not score high on the list of cultural diplomacy priorities of some countries either, and staging regular festivals to showcase national output in the context of other cultures is limited to the activities of countries such as Spain (with Instituto Cervantes as main organiser), Italy, and Germany (Goethe-Institut). Britain and Japan engage in some cultural diplomacy efforts related to film, yet the support is mostly for single events. They seem to have no systematic policy in place to encourage the creation of a chain of events, like those that have been fostered by other West European countries. In the case of the U.S., it is the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) that has most international visibility, yet it only represents the interest of Hollywood, whose product is well distributed internationally and does not need to be promoted through specific festivals. U.S. embassies provide occasional assistance for ad hoc groups that convene to organise festivals of American indies. Israel has elaborate mechanisms in place for communicating with and supporting the cultural activities of Jewish communities across the world. It regularly sponsors film festivals abroad, mainly showcasing Israeli cinema, but it also assists some of the more transnationally-orientated Jewish film festivals that form a networked circuit (see Table 4 in the Listings, Part III).[3] China appears to organise one-off cultural diplomacy events to coincide

with diplomatic initiatives but does not sponsor festivals that may be taking place on a regular basis.[4] Given the size of India's film industry, it is startling to realise that India's state authorities do even less. The Scandinavian countries, Turkey and Greece support various events around the world (as shown in Tables 6 and 9 in the Listings, Part III). A country like Taiwan, which seeks state recognition, uses film festivals as an important tool in international relations (Table 10 in the Listings, Part III).

When it comes to cinema, France undoubtedly has the most consistent and dedicated cultural diplomacy programme. Table 7 in the Listings at the end of this volume shows the number and spread of French film festivals, all of which are partly sponsored by French cultural organisations. The table itself is compiled on the basis of the information from Unifrance's own website (en.unifrance.org/feature-movies/manifestation). This lists 22 French film festivals that seem well organised around the calendar as a cycle and therefore appear to constitute a centrally coordinated exhibition circuit. Indeed, judging by the coverage that these festivals are receiving, it seems that events like the touring French Film Festival UK (at one time sponsored by carmaker Renault) are truly popular. The French Film Festival UK's funding model is discussed here by Cheung.

Among various events in the U.S., the French Film Festival in Richmond, Virginia (www.frenchfilm.vcu.edu), a brainchild of French department academics based at Virginia Commonwealth University, has been in existence for two decades now and has grown into a key cultural event locally. Mostly geared towards a student audience, the festival attracts a 35,000-strong audience and has been considered worth coverage in the context of *Cahiers du cinéma*'s special issue on the state of current cinema around the world. The publication notes that the event creates a 'true interest in the latest French film productions largely unknown to audiences in an average-sized American city' (Malausa 2008: 67). The sponsors, notably, are a mix of French institutions (CNC, Unifrance, *Cahiers du cinéma*) and local businesses.

The best illustration of targeted French film cultural diplomacy at work, however, is the Los Angeles event known as City of Lights, City of Angels (CoLCoa, www.colcoa.org), which has been in existence since 1996. Established by a coalition involving the Franco-American Cultural Fund, it relies on a unique collaborative effort between America's Directors' and Writers' Guilds, the Motion Picture Association, and the French Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers of Music (SACEM). In a well-orchestrated push of cultural diplomacy, the festival has, over the years, received support from the Association of Authors, Directors and Producers in France (ARP), the Film and TV Office of the French embassy in Los Angeles and from Unifrance. Directed by the suitably named Francois Truffart, the festival, which attracts an audience of 15,000 (75 per cent of whom are people from the film business), is described as 'traditionally positioned as a networking event for L.A. Francophiles and French expats' in Hollywood (Keslassy 2009). It relies on the involvement of the sizable community of French Hollywood expats and their professional networks, as well as on a varying array of commercial sponsors, most of which are French food and fashion labels (agnès b., Ligne Roset, Zadig & Voltaire, Pernod Ricard, Volvic). It also depends on assistance from Île-de-France Film Commission and TV5MONDE. The festival's director describes

the event as 'a financial backer for French films' promotion' which effectively subsidises activities that may not be affordable to individual filmmakers. 'If they had to rent the DGA at their own expense, they'd spend a fortune' (Truffart quoted in Keslassy 2009).

I cannot think of other cultural diplomacy initiatives that would match the French usage of film festivals. There is no high-profile British equivalent of CoLCoa meant to boost British cinema industry and to serve directly the interests of the expat British filmmakers.[5] The only well-known festival of British cinema abroad is a 20-year-old event in France, the Dinard British Film Festival (www.festivaldufilm-dinard.com), a popular local event that sees a crowd of English film professionals cross over the Channel for a brief visit to France at the end of the season in October. In existence since 1990s, the festival awards a 'Hitchcock d'Or' and is sponsored by cultural organisations like the British Council and the UK Film Council, as well as by French public bodies (CNC, most notably) and a mixture of private sponsors (Cooper 2009).[6]

The importance of showcasing cinema in the context of cultural diplomacy has been recognised by those at the receiving end as having been of crucial importance for the development of cinéphilia across various territories around the world. Talking of 'the years before film festivals' in Asia (and referring to Bangkok in particular), Kong Rithdee describes a situation where cinéphiles

haunted various institutions to consume non-American films. The Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute, the British Council and the Japan Foundation organized regular screenings in their auditoriums (as they still do now), and those places saw the gatherings of small legions of film students and enthusiasts craving for alternatives from Hollywood dominance. (Rithdee 2009: 125)

In a recent encounter, Indian film academic Ira Bhaskar spoke of her experience in the 1980s. When programming for various events in New Delhi (the only context in which foreign cinema would be seen at the time), she and her fellow programmers heavily relied on the assistance of various European diplomatic missions, who supplied prints and information about current cinema (Bhaskar 2009).

B. Identity agendas

Festivals that have come about mainly for the promotion of political and identity agendas can be divided into roughly three groups that occupy different positions within the 'vertical mosaic' and are related to different categories of 'imagined communities'. First, there are festivals that build on a certain supranational agenda, such as Francophone, Arab, Ibero-American, Mediterranean, pan-African and Arab film festivals. These are often linked to a shared geographical space or linguistic practice. Secondly, there are festivals engaged in identity building in the context of an ongoing struggle to unite a dispersed population, establish statehood (e.g. Kurdish film festivals) and/or increase identity awareness (e.g. Gypsy film festivals). Thirdly, there are festivals that promote political agendas. These events aim to foster understanding and togetherness between different groups, thus creating a specific kind of ephemeral 'imagined community' that is not necessarily linked to existing ethnic or national categories.

Festivals that evolve around identity affiliations carry along an array of narratives which they put forward with variable degrees of success, depending on the festival's political clout and access to funding. For example, the narrative of solidarity and unity within the supranational Hispanic and Ibero-American sphere is cultivated in the context of festivals like San Sebastián and Havana; the pan-African narrative is put forward in the context of various African film

events (Slocum 2009). All these festivals share a common feature: films that promote the respective narrative are placed centrally in the festival programme or occupy a specially high-profile sidebar, a positioning that confirms that decisions related to the festival's architecture reflect its programming ideology.

Festivals of Palestinian (Table 5 in the Listings, Part III), Kurdish, Tibetan and other stateless groups, with their respective national struggle causes, also foster various 'narratives' of nationhood, while reconfiguring the supranational space by bridging the post-colonial nation and its transnational diaspora. These events usually exist only abroad, far away from the actual territory concerned, and yet they function as triggers of formative importance for the development of cinematic culture within the homeland. Many such festivals have difficulty sustaining themselves and securing continuous financial backing. Often closer to the bottom of the 'vertical mosaic' of festivals, they have either been one-off events or, even where conceived with the intention of continuity, have had to halt at some point, due to sporadic funding and limited access to volunteers. The driving force behind these festivals is often migrants themselves, still quite closely linked to their source cultures and poorly connected in their new host societies. Producing the festival is a personal project for many programmers, who function as important cultural mediators. The ideal target audiences for such festivals are the members of the respective diasporas, but the festivals also strive to make a mark in the cultural space of the location where they are held. In addition, many of these festivals foster the development of a new filmmaking culture in these developing nations, creating yet another dimension of 'imagined communities' in practice.[7]

There is mutual influencing between these festivals, also in instances where there is no direct collaboration or linkage (even if it is not always recognised or openly acknowledged), in particular where programming, funding and promotional strategies are concerned.

Some Jewish film festivals in Europe, for example, are influenced by the spirit of the Jewish Film Festival in San Francisco; the mostly South Asian 3rd I film festival in San Francisco is directly influenced by British ethnic minority culture and, indirectly, by a festival such as Bite the Mango in Bradford; the initiators of the 2005 London Gypsy Film Festival are influenced by Rotterdam's 2003 sidebar on the Gypsies. The oldest Jewish film festivals have been in existence for around three decades now and have branched out a wide variety of loosely networked events taking place around the world. These festivals have often served as prototypes for others that, often working with completely different material and promoting completely different political causes, have taken inspiration from the degree of networking and multicultural awareness that the Jewish film festivals have embraced.

> Some generalist festivals have spun out into activities that acknowledge the variety of migrant groups and cater to their needs by creating specialised mini-festivals. One example would be the **Hawaii International Film Festival**, which specialises in showcasing Asian cinema in a context where nearly half of the audience is of Asian descent. The generalist approach of the festival cuts across ethnic divides and aims to draw large crowds of diverse backgrounds. The festival has also experimented with organising screenings that target specific audiences. For example, they have created a specialised Korean festival spin-off for film just from that country. The programmer, Christian Razukas, acknowledges that there would also be audiences for a Bollywood festival. In the past the festival has featured special sections on the Philippines and the Vietnam diasporas (Alford 2006: B1).

The film festival provides suitable context for the causes of the stateless and the dispossessed that thrive on solidarity and togetherness. It brings together diverse ethnic or indigenous groups for empowerment and to benefit from exchanging images, narratives and ideologies. Festivals aimed at fostering understanding and togetherness in the context of conflict are most often staged as one-off events. One example includes Borderlands, a Turkish-Armenian-

Greek film festival (www.chgs.umn.edu/Coexistence/borderlands. asp) which took place in 2004 in Minneapolis and was organised on the campus of the University of Minnesota. Its goal was to reconstruct the imagined community around this remote mountainous corner of the Black Sea, which was historically plagued by tensions and disagreements. The narrative that the festival aimed to promote was that for centuries the place 'has been the meeting place of different peoples and home to a panoply of religions, cultures and languages' and that long periods of coexistence between religions and ethnicities prevailed over the short-lived conflicts. The festival, thus, engaged in supporting and furthering the present-day political project of reconciling today's disparities by bringing together filmmakers from the troubled region and asserting the need and the possibility of peaceful coexistence. Catering to an audience of displaced individuals (refugees, trafficking victims, illegal labour migrants) makes up the political mission of festivals such as the one in Sahara, or the Migrant Worker Film Festival in South Korea, as well as of the range of film festivals organised by non-profit-making organisations that are aiming to raise awareness and combat human trafficking (Torchin 2010). In a way, all these festivals work with a political vision of a certain imagined community and target a diasporic audience that is intrinsically diverse.

C. Business and diaspora

Festivals in this category do not rely on diplomatic clout and are usually not linked to contested political agendas, either. Far more, they use film as a means of promoting the agenda of diasporas and diasporic businesses. Sometimes their very business proposition is linked to the creation of ephemeral 'imagined communities' that become the fan base niche for transnational film distribution of special interest material. Depending on the funds these festivals have access to and

on trends in global business, migration and tourism, the position of these festivals within the 'vertical mosaic' varies. Many of the smaller film events pair locally with active sponsors from within the range of diasporic small businesses —professional (immigration law firms, accountants) or service (real estate and travel agents, dentists and doctors) — as well as with food shops and ethnic restaurants, as it is around food and travel that these 'imagined communities' stick together (see Iordanova 1999, 2001).

Where no state-level cultural diplomacy is involved, various regional and local commercial interests step in to fill in the gap. Indian film festivals abroad, for example, rarely receive government support. They are usually organised on the initiative of diasporic groups who showcase Bollywood fare alongside other material from within India and from the global Indian diaspora. Diasporic businesses as well as the international distributors of Indian film are closely involved. The key factor that gives impetus for organising the event is the existence of the diaspora with certain business interests or the existence of political will toward creating opportunities for economic exchanges with India. The Bollywood and Beyond (www.bollywood-festival.de) festival in Stuttgart (Germany), for example, which held its fourth event in 2009, is an important part of the partnership between the twinned cities of Stuttgart and Mumbai. The film event, which features a Bombay Boogie Night party and Bollywood fare but also films of diasporic directors and independents, relies on assistance from Stuttgart city officials and corporate sponsors (Meza 2007). 'City partnerships tend to get neglected after a while', says Festival Director Oliver Mahn. 'The festival really revitalized the relationship and it has helped create greater interest on both sides' (in Meza 2007). Launched in 2004, the festival has been jointly developed by an association of Indian producers partnering with Stuttgart city officials. In 2009 it screened about 60 films, sold about 6,500 tickets and was attended by an audience of about 8,500. In the absence

of regular government funding, the festival has branched out into revenue-generating activities and now includes an 'Indian Food Festival', an Indian dance workshop and an Indo-German business forum (Meza 2007).

Other diasporic events that feature Indian cinema often capitalise on the commercial appeal of Bollywood but pursue agendas quite different from the commercial Hindi cinema that has made its way into mainstream theatres in many Western countries during the past decade or so. Quite often the effort is to foster ethic minority talent, as seen in the case of the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA, www.indianfilmfestival.org). This recently launched a fund for filmmakers and awards development grants of US$10,000 to artists of both Indian and non-Indian heritage who would like to make feature or documentary films reflecting universal themes inherent to Indian culture (Kay 2009). It has no Indian government support but rather relies on sponsorship by the American Film Institute, the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Los Angeles and the L.A. County Arts Commission. It also relies on an array of private and corporate sponsors (transnational conglomerates such as Wells Fargo, Lufthansa, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and a range of Indian diasporic businesses and media). The 3rd I festival in San Francisco is an equally independent undertaking which targets local diasporic audiences.

Foreign language media, travel agencies, specialised ethnic food shops and restaurants can often be found on the list of sponsors for these film festivals and sometimes even the film selections very clearly reflect the need for touristic promotion. The 2009 edition of the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival (www.lagreekfilmfestival.org), for example, opened with *Opa!* (Udayan Prasad, Greece/UK, 2005), a film that recycled familiar tourist clichés about Greece. Starring Matthew Modine, the romantic comedy tells the story of a straight-faced Western archaeologist who discovers 'a world of picture-

postcard scenery' and 'a whirlwind of romance' in Greece. Besides Greek tourist organisations (e.g. visitgreece.gr), the Greek Ministry of Tourism and the Greek Film Centre, a range of businesses related to tourism/travel and ethnic food (Metaxa, Taste of Greece, GreekShops.com) provided sponsorships, as did Californian Greek-run legal or real estate businesses, ethnic organisations and local media. A host of similar Polish film festivals take place across Canada and the U.S.,[8] usually bringing in a high-profile filmmaker for a visit. They are organised with the support of well-to-do expats from the sizable community and rely on sponsorships from local ethnic businesses (shops, real estate and travel agents, lawyers, dentists, immigration advisers) and their respective associations. Catering is usually provided by locally-based ethnic delis and restaurants. Similar events are organised with the sponsorship of almost any ethnic group that has viable commercial presence in the context of Western metropolitan cities. Some of these festivals manage to showcase fully comprehensive programmes of the respective national cinema's recent output. The Los Angeles-based Nollywood Foundation for the promotion of Nigerian commercial cinema also mostly backs the business agenda of the respective filmmaking community (nollywoodfoundation.org). The commercial element is particularly important in the context of these events, and locally based ethnic businesses are particularly interested to be involved in events from which they believe they can derive immediate economic benefits.

Other festivals that rely on 'imagined communities', this time on sizable fan groups, are engaged with supranational agendas that are mostly driven by market considerations. While they do represent the identity affiliation of a sizable fandom, it is not an identity that has entered the public sphere in a durable way and the 'imagined community' of fans is of more or less ephemeral nature. A good example is the range of Asian film festivals which have proliferated

largely driven by a niche commercial interest. Such festivals have been thriving in the context of a distribution reality where a large number of highly popular Asian productions of great commercial potential do not find a way into mainstream distribution in the West. They capitalise on what is seen as a vibrant niche of specialised, usually younger audiences who are interested to have access to cool Asian box office smashes. 'When we first launched this festival, viewers were discovering a completely new world, and they were driven mostly by curiosity', says Thomas Bertacche, the coordinator of the Far East Film Festival in Udine, Italy. 'Now, however, a small market for Asian cinema has opened in Italy, and our audiences bring much more background knowledge to each screening' (quoted in Paquet and Schilling 2007). Smaller distributors from a variety of European territories who seek to establish a niche, sometimes theatrical and sometimes in the DVD market, come to Asian festivals like Udine to source new products. Thus, a specialised festival functions as a factor in fostering an alternative distribution circuit. Attending such festivals is seen as a more advantageous networking opportunity for 'niche' buying than the opportunities offered in the context of the generalist film markets taking place alongside large international festivals like Cannes or Berlin. Billed as 'the leading North American showcase for East Asian pop cinema', the New York Asian Film Festival plays a similar function in a context largely characterised by a significant drop in the interest to Asian productions among mainstream distributors (O'Hehir 2009). Apparently, most of the titles featured in the context of the festival, even though of high commercial potential, arrive at the festival without existing North American distribution. The festival, thus, presents an opportunity for new independent distributors, often tiny in size, who enter the business by picking up titles for distribution on-line or on DVD (O'Hehir 2009).

A variety of commercial events that build on the growth in

diasporic markets are the touring Bollywood shows, as well as the global Bollywood awards of the International Indian Film Academy, IIFA (www.iifa.com/web07/cntnt/iifa.htm).[9] For the 10 years of its existence, IIFA's awards ceremony has targeted a global audience of non-resident Indians (NRIs) and been staged transnationally, with locations of events varying between London (2000), Sun City, South Africa (2001), Malaysia (2002), Johannesburg (2003), Singapore (2004), Amsterdam (2005), Dubai (2006), Yorkshire (2007), Bangkok (2008) and Macao (2009). The event is sponsored by the Hindi commercial film industry and does not feature government involvement. Over the years it has significantly grown in show value, lavishness and importance to become one of the most exciting show business attractions. It is clearly an upwardly mobile event in the hierarchy of the 'vertical mosaic', rivalling the Academy Awards in every respect and often surpassing the showmanship on display.

Cultural Diplomacy and Distribution Entrepreneurship: Australia's 'Touring' Festivals

Dina Iordanova in dialogue with Australian film critic and academic Adrian Martin

Dina Iordanova: 'Like most other major territories', writes Sandy George in *Screen International*, 'Australia has a clutch of festivals dedicated to spotlighting cinema from a single territory of which the French, Italian and Spanish film festivals are the biggest' (George 2009). In the case of Australia, however, this seems to be an interesting instance where cultural diplomacy and film distribution related to overseas cinema work together. According to George, the touring French film festival is organised by Alliance Française and the French Embassy, yet one-third of the 30 or so films that it showcases have an existing local distributor attached. Thus the event can be regarded as a specific distribution set-up. Distributors have been taking 'a slice of all festivals' receipts' since 2006, she notes, and have recognised that festival showings assist them in reaching out to wider audiences than the normal art house circuit. Jean-Jacques Garnier, the French Embassy's cultural attaché, dubs as an artistic director for the festival (George 2009). Apparently, there are also German, Italian and Spanish film festivals, all of which seem to tour the same range of cities (Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane), thus covering the territory with an array of nationally-themed film festivals which are all quite highly placed within the 'vertical mosaic' of festivals here. I was struck to discover the advanced level of coordination of these festivals. It is only here that we so regularly see national film festivals listed as 'touring'. They always seem to go to the same set of cities, and they all seem to have a website that is set up in a uniform way (e.g. Spanish Film Festival, www.spanishfilmfestival.com; Italian Film Festival, www. italianfilmfestival.com.au; Greek Film Festival, www.greekfilmfestival.com.au). So I wonder if there is any special cultural policy context in which this is taking shape with such uniformity? Admittedly, we have got some varieties of this in the UK (e.g. French Film Festival and Italian Film Festival, both run by the same group and in a selection of cities). But 'touring' here usually involves a combination of mixed cities, whoever has come on board, really, rather than a showcase systematically covering the big cultural centres. In Australia it always seems to be a cluster of the same cities. Can you tell me more about this observation?

Adrian Martin: Yes, the situation of the touring national film festivals is peculiar to Australia, and for a very specific reason. It all has to do with a distribution/exhibition company called Palace, which has been running since at least the 1980s and is still essentially a 'family business' run primarily by husband (Antonio Zeccola), wife, and their grown-up kids at various levels of the organisation. Palace is among the few surviving 'independent' distributor-exhibitors of the twenty-first century scene in

Australia, partly through savvy business sense and also through its various deals with the major commercial distributors. Palace has managed to extend into several states of Australia. Hence the spread of state-venues you have noted. Palace has always had a strong connection to (mainly European and 'old school') art cinema. Its exhibition venues are known to the public as 'boutique' or 'art house' cinemas, and the actual programming mixes typical art house fare (Haneke, French comedies, Jarmusch, etc.) with films from the majors like Tarantino and suchlike.

So, Palace has always been involved — as a matter of Italo-Australian national pride, partly! — in certain high-profile festival-events that are very successful for them: especially Italian and French. This goes back (in my recollection) at least to the 1990s. Palace has a technique that works well for them: when they programme these festivals (by sending their own reps to Italy and by having contacts with the likes of Unifrance), to avoid problems with booking and availability of prints over the entire haul of the national tour around Palace cinemas, they actually buy the rights to about a dozen of these films. So they have one or two 35 mm prints that screen really only for the duration of the event (and afterwards can be made available for Australian cinematheque and other special screenings). A year or so later all the films are released on Australian DVD ('bare bones' style, subtitled in English but with no extras) in a 'box set' called something like 'Italian Film Festival 2008'. Palace also has a relation to a music-publishing company, so there are also CDs that help to promote these events, e.g. 'Soundtrack to the French Film Festival', which is usually just a lot of current pop tunes with little relation to the films! But the CD sells well with the 'world music' crowd in Australia.

Now we come to the next part of this process, which has been occurring in recent years. Palace does its own festivals, but it also 'hosts' others, responding to advances from small cultural groups in the Australian, Spanish, German and other communities: a Spanish group named 'Filmoteca' (a monthly film society), for instance, or the Goethe-Institut. Palace becomes a partner in programming these events, sourcing prints and doing promotions and sets up the national touring, which is the big drawcard for these small groups. Palace has a say in how the event unfolds. If it has just bought, for example, The Baader-Meinhof Complex (Uli Edel, Germany, 2008) or some other new high-profile title, it will propose that it is the showcase Opening Night presentation in the German Film Festival, and Palace will bring down the actors and/or director for promotional purposes.

To sum up, this whole phenomenon is not at all a 'cultural policy' initiative of governments (although some of the small ethnic-interest cultural groups I have mentioned may receive various government subsidies — but nothing like what it takes to do a national film tour). It is purely an 'enlightened business initiative' by a company that itself started as a small, independent business and has held on to some of its cultural goals to showcase international art cinema — even if still in fairly mainstream terms.

'Globalisation-At-The-Margin'

Within multicultural societies, film festivals related to diasporas and 'imagined communities' all happen at the periphery of the mainstream public sphere. In recent years scholarship has assessed this multiplicity and vibrant diversity differently. On the one hand, there is the somewhat sceptical view that sees the range of separate ethno-specific 'sphericules' remaining isolated from each other and contributing to the profound fragmentation of an ideally monolith public sphere. On the other hand, there is the more celebratory view that favours hybridisation and integration processes and promotes conceptual frameworks that foster a multicultural ideology, as revealed in 'undoing diaspora' in favour of the 'global city concept', which we discuss here. Keeping in mind the proliferating number of film festivals that relate to multiculturalism, I believe that one ought to seek a balance between the two views. While indeed the existence of various 'imagined communities' within the multicultural sphere may lead to fragmentation, there are also processes of hybridisation and integration, of 'situated' yet mobile identities that come about as a result of 'the homing of diaspora' (Brah 1996: 1, 187).

A. Multiple 'sphericules'

For Stuart Cunningham, multicultural society's public sphere is a public sphere 'in plural', a conglomerate of complex and overlapping 'caste cultures, identity formations, social commitments', each one characterised by 'broad consensus and agenda-setting capabilities' (Cunningham 2008: 153). Drawing on Todd Gitlin's view of the public 'sphericules' (1998), Cunningham talks of pluralistic 'ethnic sphericules' that form the building blocks of a multifaceted and ultimately disparate public sphere found in all contemporary multicultural contexts. Most of the 'sphericules' remain 'ethno-specific' and thus enclosed and self-contained. The cultural activities

that take place within them are profoundly transnational, yet they revolve around one-track channels of ethno-specific transmission. This is manifested in a variety of examples related to the promotion of a certain type of material that is brought into use in order to extend the nation's 'imagined community' beyond national borders, often linking it to cross-cultural efforts toward building or consolidating linguistic communities (such as Lusophone or Celtic ones).

Cunningham (2008: 154-9) outlines several aspects that typify the functioning of media linked to 'ethnic sphericules'. Firstly, the media of 'ethnic sphericules' are fragmented and rarely reach a significant critical mass. Secondly, they contribute to further fragmentation of the public sphere, revealing a variety of voices contending for a range of causes. Thirdly, they modify and perpetuate essentialist notions of community. While all these features directly apply to the film festivals of our investigation, it is Cunningham's fourth aspect that comes closest to the festival sphere, as it is marked by the convergence of information and entertainment. 'The spaces for ethno-specific public communication are media-centric', Cunningham writes, 'and this affords new configurations of the information-entertainment dualism'. He then elaborates:

> Given the at times extreme marginalisation of many diasporic groupings in public space and their lack of representation within leadership of influence and persuasion in the dominant forums of the host country, ethno-specific media become, by default, the main organs of communication outside certain circumscribed and defined social spaces, such as the Chinatowns, the Koreatowns, the little Saigons, the churches and temples, or the local video, spice and herb parlours. (2008: 159)

The diversity can be even more complex depending on what forces are at play within the fragmented 'ethnic sphericules'. A variety of political and economic agendas come into play and one often needs to consolidate a scattered diaspora ridden by internal political disagreements. And indeed, the writing included in this volume provides evidence that, given the variety of agendas and visions of 'imagined communities', there is much less interaction between the different ethnic groups and their respective film festivals than one would expect.

B. Global city versus diaspora

The constellation of various film festivals linked to 'imagined communities' in the context of a vibrant multicultural setting reflects a more general sociological debate, one that juxtaposes diaspora (as a notion that is inherently set to extend a nation-centred discourse) with the global city (as a comprehensive notion of dynamic migratory confluence). In an essay entitled 'Undoing Diaspora' (2001), Ien Ang voices the view that the 're-description of a dispersed people as a diaspora is not an innocent act of name-changing but a transformative political move' (2001: 81). Like the fragmentation observed in diverse 'ethnic sphericules', 'diaspora' asserts an implicit nationalistic discourse that extends beyond the boundaries of the nation-state and seeks to extend the 'imagined community' of nationhood on to internationally-dispersed groups. Drawing on sociologist Saskia Sassen's work (1998, 2006), Ang juxtaposes 'diaspora', a concept that she sees as singular and tainted by nationalism, with the 'global city', a pluralistic and cosmopolitan concept that encompasses the idea of multicultural coexistence. Diaspora, often celebrated uncritically, Ang argues, needs to be 'undone' in favour of the 'multicultural global city'. To her, the global metropolis offers a better 'model for analyzing social

relations in the age of globalization' (2001: 76) as it includes the notion of the inherently hybrid nature of contemporary public sphere. The discourse on 'diaspora', Ang insists, has failed to recognise its own 'limiting conceptual and political implications' (2001: 81). It is important, therefore, to develop the counter-metaphor and counter-discourse of the 'global city' as site for truly transnational cosmopolitan imagination. Ang even contrasts the characteristics of the two transnational formations in a table (2001: 89):

Diaspora	Global City
Ethnic unity, spatial scattering	Ethnic diversity, spatial convergence
Transnational nationalism	Local hybridity
Virtual deterritorialized space	Actual social/territorialized space
Sameness-in-dispersal	Together in difference

'The hybridizing context of the global city', Ang notes, 'brings out the intrinsic contradiction locked into the concept of diaspora, which, logically, depends on the maintenance of an apparently natural, essential identity to secure its imagined status as a coherent community. The global city is the space of diaspora's undoing' (2001: 92). It perpetuates the discourse on syncretism and multidimensionality and subverts the 'sameness in dispersal' stance of 'diaspora'.

Transposed into the reality of the film festivals that are linked to 'imagined communities', Ang's plea to abandon the singularity of 'diaspora' for the plurality of the 'global city' makes perfect sense. The convergence of multiple film festivals that stand in to represent a variety of diasporic dimensions is revealed in Tables 11, 12 and 13 at the end of this volume. The listings reference manifold festivals that, while indeed related to concrete 'imagined communities', 'diasporas' and 'sphericules', overcome fragmentation by the very fact that they take place in the context of 'global cities' such as San Francisco, Los Angeles or London — all places where hybridisation can and does take

place. Besides representing their specific causes, many of the festivals in question operate on the premise that film can make a difference to their immediate metropolitan environment. They thus directly confront the 'multicultural challenge' that, according to Mette Hjort, plagues some of the smaller European nations (2009: 9). Such festivals offer the 'alternative globalisation' that, she states, is needed in order to dissolve parochialism and define multiple modernities (Hjort 2009: 23-4). In addition, many of these events tap into the same funding and sponsorship pools, available to them only due to the centralised policy of local authorities committed to fostering multiculturalism.

Sustained by transnational activities (media, tourism, trade), the global cities are 'translocalities', in Appadurai's terms (1996: 192), spaces where various mobile populations have come together in neighbourhoods that may be seen as extensions of 'imagined communities' but whose daily routines revolve around interactions with other minority groups.[10] The space of the transnational film festival is, thus, yet another 'interstice', an ephemeral 'translocality' that provides an intermediary between the source country and the receiving one, in the sense of Homi Bhabha's 'third space' (1994), and perpetuates opportunities for the multicultural education of 'unthinking Eurocentrism' that Shohat and Stam's suggested back in 1994. The film festivals considered in this volume, each with their own fragmented agenda, engage in such 'unthinking' particularly well by persistently bringing in continuous evidence of the rich cultural multiplicity of the 'sphericules' that come into interaction in the space of the festival.

As Karim H. Karim aptly observes, 'diasporic space is not monologic' (2010: 404). Indeed, the dialogical potential of diasporas is revealed most clearly in the context of the global city. Here transnational festivals operate on the premises that a variety of peoples will congregate as an 'actual' community at the festival, even when they are primarily intended to cater for an 'imagined community'. The 'liveness' of the festival creates an actual, face-

to-face togetherness (Harbord 2009). Even if this togetherness is temporary and transient, it does create a momentary site for mutual empowerment at-the-margin that all fragmented groups of the 'vertical mosaic' benefit from.

Notes

1   This essay and the related research form part of the 'Dynamics of World Cinema' project, undertaken by the Centre for Film Studies at the University of St Andrews and sponsored by The Leverhulme Trust. I am grateful to Ragan Rhyne and Ruby Cheung for constructive feedback and suggestions that have been incorporated in the text of this essay.

2   Other mechanisms, which we explore in the context of the 'Dynamics of World Cinema' project at large, are specifically looking to bypass these structures entirely through underground exhibition and distribution, particularly via the web.

3   At the same time a range of these Jewish film festivals operate with a specific vision of the 'Jewishness' they want to represent, one that differs from the official Israeli view. Like the festival in Vienna, they opt to steer free from the Israeli cultural diplomacy (see Segal, this volume).

4   Examples include one-off events organised in Washington, D.C. in April 2006, to mark the first state visit of Hu Jintao to the U.S. (www.china.org.cn/english/features/HujintaoUS/165941.htm), as well as one at the Chinese mission of the United Nations headquarters in New York, in June 2006 (www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t257958.htm).

5   It is only since 2007 that a U.S.-based British TV producer, Nigel Lythgoe, has been organising a 'BritWeek', in L.A. He has managed to gradually involve a variety of organisations for a sprawling PR event that, besides film, also 'celebrates everything British', including 'TV, music, sport, fashion and even science' (Hazelton 2009).

6   The British Council, a non-governmental organisation close to the government, is charged with this role of cultural diplomacy in the UK. The British Council has a film department (www.britishcouncil.org/arts-film) that issues an annual catalogue of British films. It also maintains a calendar of festivals on its website and an information desk at a number of international film festivals.

7   Examples of fostering filmmaking activities, where the festival becomes instrumental in fostering the development of national cinema as part of the struggle related to establishing nationhood, are discussed in the texts on the Sahara International Film Festival and the London Kurdish Film Festival in this volume.

8   Sarasota-based POLART (www.polandbymail.com) is one of the very first companies that ventured into diasporic distribution in the early 1990s, releasing Polish films on VHS for home usage across the U.S. They did remarkably well in creating a niche business for this type of merchandise.

9   It is noteworthy that while the IIFA awards ceremonies have not yet attracted the interest of Indian film culture scholars, several researchers seem to work independently on the travelling Bollywood shows. A conference I attended earlier in 2009 featured University of Manchester's Rajinder Dudrah ('Performing Bollywood: Hindi Cinema Entertainment Shows in the Diaspora') and Jawaharlal Nehru University's Ranjani Mazumdar ('Event Management, Liveness and the New Circuits of Film Stardom'). Both presented on these matters (in the context of University of Westminster's conference 'Indian Cinema Circuits: Diasporas, Peripheries and Beyond', 25-26 June 2009 in London).

10   Some current studies are conceived precisely with this multicultural interaction in mind. 'Cinema and Diaspora: A Comparative Study into Ethnic Film Cultures in Antwerp' (www.

ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=*CWONZ&n=39392&ct=40094&e=20459 0), for example, involves a group of academics from Antwerp and Ghent Universities. It focuses on the interaction between Indian, Northern African, Turkish and Jewish communities that organise film events in this Belgian city. Its research revolves around four case studies that look into film consumption in relation to cinema-going, rental movies, TV and internet usage. It then compares and correlates their findings. The study, which is to be concluded in 2012, may reveal interesting patterns of interaction between the groups. Alternatively, it may show that no real exchanges take place and that the communities live parallel to one another, each within their own cultural universe in a fragmented public sphere.

Works Cited

Ahn, SooJeong (2008) 'Re-imagining the Past: Programming South Korean Retrospectives at the Pusan International Film Festival', *Film International*, 6, 4, 24-33.

Aksoy, Asu and Kevin Robins (2003) 'Banal Transnationalism: The Difference that Television Makes', in Karim H. Karim (ed.) *The Media of Diaspora*. London and New York: Routledge, 89-105.

Alford, Christopher (2006) 'Hawaii Mixes it Up: East-West Cinema Gets an Isles Seat', *Variety*, 404, 9, 16 October, B1 (2).

Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Ang, Ien (2001) *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*. London and New York: Routledge.

Appadurai, Arjun (1990) 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Public Culture*, 2, 2, 1-24.

___ (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bhabha, Homi (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bhaskar, Ira (2009) Personal Interview. St Andrews, 30 November.

Brah, Avtar (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London and New York: Routledge.

Cooper, Sarah (2009) 'Dinard British Film Festival Reveals Line-up for 20th Edition', *Screen Daily* (21 September). On-line. Available HTTP: http://www.screendaily.com/5005912.article (1 November 2009).

Cunningham, Stuart (2008) 'Theorising the Diasporic Audience', in *In the Vernacular: A Generation of Australian Culture and Controversy*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 147-61.

Cunningham, Stuart and John Sinclair (eds) (2001) *Floating Lives: The Media and Asian Diasporas*. Boulder, Colorado: Rowman and Littlefield.

Cunningham, Stuart and Tina Nguyen (2003) 'Actually Existing Hybridity: Vietnamese Diasporic Music Video', in Karim H. Karim (ed.) *The Media of Diaspora*. London and New York: Routledge, 119-33.

Czach, Liz (2004) 'Film Festivals, Programming, and the Building of a National Cinema', *The Moving Image*, 4, 1, 76-88.

George, Sandy (2009) 'Spreading the Foreign Word', *Screen International*, 29 May, 34.

Gillespie, Marie (1995) *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*. London: Routledge.

Ginsburg, Faye, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin (eds) (2002) *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gitlin, Todd (1998) 'Public Sphere or Public Sphericules?', in Tamar Liebes and James Curran (eds) *Media, Ritual and Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, 175-202.

Givanni, June (2004) 'Curator's Conundrum: Programming "Black Film" in 1980s-1990s Britain', *The Moving Image*, 4, 1, 60-75.

Habermas, Jürgen (1989 [1962]) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, English translation. Cambridge: Polity.

Harbord, Janet (2009) 'Film Festivals-Time-Event', in Dina Iordanova with Ragan Rhyne (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies with College Gate Press, 40-9.

Hazelton, John (2009) 'Springboard for Brits in LA', *Screen International*, 1686, 17 April, 19.

Hjort, Mette (2009) 'Living with Diversity: What Difference Can Film-making Make?', *Northern Lights*, 7, 9-27.

Iordanova, Dina (1999) 'Expanding Universe: From the Ethnic Food Store to *Blockbuster*', *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, 41, Autumn, 54-70.

____ (2001) 'Displaced? Shifting Politics of Place and Itinerary', *Senses of Cinema* (14 June). On-line. Available HTTP: http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/14/displaced.html (1 November 2009).

____ (2010) 'Rise of the Fringe: Global Cinema's Long Tail', in Dina Iordanova, David Martin-Jones, and Belén Vidal (eds) *Cinema at the Periphery*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 23-46.

Karim, Karim H. (2003) *The Media of Diaspora*. London and New York: Routledge.

____ (2010) 'Re-viewing the "National" in "International Communication": Through the Lens of Diaspora', in Daya Thussu (ed.) *International Communication: A Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 393-410.

Kay, Jeremy (2009) 'Indian Film Festival LA Unveils Find for Universal Stories with Indian Themes', *ScreenDaily*, 8 July.

Keslassy, Elsa (2009) 'Ahead of the Remakes: L.A. French Fest has History of Pic Preems that Spur Hollywood Interpretations (City of Lights, City of Angels)', *Variety*, 414, 10, 20 April, A3 (1).

Kolar-Panov, Dona (2003) 'Video and the Macedonians in Australia', in Karim H. Karim, (ed.) *The Media of Diaspora*. London and New York: Routledge, 105-19.

Malausa, Vincent (2008) 'Amerique et terroir', *Cahiers du cinéma*, May, 67.

Meza, Ed (2007) 'Stuttgart Fest Brings Bollywood to Town', *Variety*, 407, 6, 25 June, 14 (1).

Naficy, Hamid (2001) *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

____ (2003) 'Narrowcasting in Diaspora: Middle Eastern Television in Los Angeles', in Karim H. Karim (ed.) *The Media of Diaspora*. London and New York: Routledge, 51-63.

O'Hehir, Andrew (2009) 'Exit the Dragon', *Salon Magazine* (25 June). On-line. Available HTTP: http://www.salon.com/ent/movies/btm/feature/2009/06/25/asian_film/index.html (1 November 2009).

Paquet, Darcy and Mark Schilling (2007) 'Italian Fest Plays up Asian Pics', *Variety*, 406, 11, 30 April, 8 (1).

Porter, John (1965) *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rithdee, Kong (2009) 'The Sad Case of the Bangkok Film Festival', in Richard Porton (ed.) *Decalog 3: On Film Festivals*. London: Wallflower, 122-31.

Sassen, Saskia (1998) *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: The New Press.

____ (2006) *Cities in a World Economy*, third edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press.

Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam (1994) *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. London: Routledge.

Slocum, David (2009) 'Film and/as Culture: The Use of Cultural Discourses at Two African Film Festivals', in Dina Iordanova with Ragan Rhyne (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies with

College Gate Press, 136-52.

Torchin, Leshu (2010) 'Traffic Jam: Film, Activism and Human Trafficking', in William Brown, Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin, *Moving People, Moving Images: Cinema and Trafficking in the New Europe.* St Andrews: College Gate Press, 223-43.

Directors' Cut: In Defence of African Film Festivals outside Africa

Lindiwe Dovey

Introduction

This article is based on the premise that there are three kinds of film festival that have a relationship to African film: film festivals in Africa, African film festivals outside Africa, and major international film festivals outside Africa. Each kind requires discrete analysis. As part of a larger comparative study of the work that each of these different kinds of film festival performs in relation to African film, this article focuses, in keeping with the theme of this edition of *Film Festival Yearbook*, on African film festivals outside Africa,[1] and specifically on the experiences of the directors of such festivals. The study aims, therefore, to reflect on and theorise the experience of directing an African film festival outside the continent. In spite of the growth of African film festivals outside Africa over the past two decades, very little scholarship exists on this topic, either in the field of African film studies or in that of film festival studies. The majority of the scholarship (see Bachmann 1973, Diawara 1993 and 1994, Bikales 1997, Slocum 2003 and 2009, *Ecrans d'Afrique* 7 and 8 [1994], de Valck and Loist 2009: 200-1) has focused on film festivals in Africa, and the only full-length study (Bikales 1997) unsurprisingly focuses on Festival Panafrican du Cinéma et de Télévision de Ouagadougou (Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou or FESPACO, www.fespaco.bf), the largest and most well-known of African film festivals worldwide.

In 1994 several articles about African film festivals outside Africa were published. The U.S.-based Malian scholar and