at the Periphery, and were eagerly anticipating the next few days. Academics and PhD student attendees had arrived from across Scotland; some had travelled from other English and European destinations. Looking back now, I think we did not disappoint. The atmosphere throughout the conference was intellectually intense yet friendly and relaxed. Twenty years earlier some of the guests had attended the seminal issue of the Edinburgh Film Fest in 1986 and the concurrent conference, which had triggered the Third cinema debates – an occasion that had strongly influenced their academic trajectories later. Back in Scotland, they kept comparing their experience at Cinema at the Periphery with that earlier experience.

The location, at the Gateway, was suitable for this size of gathering, and we were lucky with the weather: it was simply fantastic. So, by the end of it on the evening of the third day I could truly unwind: we had had an extraordinary time.

The inevitable British rain arrived on Sunday morning, as if it had just waited for us to wrap up. This was the day when those who were still around were set to travel to a 'peripheral whisky distillery' (Karen had chosen the single-malt at Glengoyne) where, besides being shown around by an astonishingly sharp guide with an outstandingly Scottish sense of humour, each one of us was given the chance to produce our own personal whisky blend. There were even awards for the best blenders! The winning blend was the one by multi-talented Hamid Naficy, closely followed by Mette Hjort's and Faye Ginsburg's (both teetotallers who blended the whiskies without tasting). Congratulations!

We are particularly grateful to the leadership of the University of St. Andrews, who gave continuous moral and financial support to our endeavour and enabled us to convene Cinema at the Periphery in St. Andrews. We are also grateful to the British Academy which sponsored the event and made the travel of some of our speakers possible. Our thanks also go to Thomas Gerstenmeyer at Dundee Contemporary Arts Cinema, to David Morris at the New Picture House Cinema, and to Kath and Phil at the Gateway, who ensured that everything run smoothly and pleasantly.
PANEL ONE

The first day was to focus on issues of the industry set-up. Before the proper academic part started, there was the traditional opening address. It was delivered by the Master of the United College, Prof. Keith Brown, the man responsible for bringing Film Studies to this University, a Scottish historian with academic interests in film. After describing St. Andrews as a town of three industries—higher education, golfing and retirement—and outlining his vision for the future of film studies at the University, Prof. Brown wished us productive time, and then rushed off to a succession of management meetings that awaited him. The conference proper could now start. Our very first speaker was Mette Hjort of Lingnan University, who had arrived from Hong Kong the previous day. She promptly got to the heart of the matters by offering her six-tiered classification of the kinds of cinematic transnationalisms, from epiphnic to homophilic. Her theory was then tested on the example of the transnational production practice of Danish filmmakers collaborating with the Glasgow-based production company Sigma Films, an area in which Mette has done extensive field work (the results are likely to be reported in Edinburgh University Press’ forthcoming volume on the Cinema of Small Nations, which she and Duncan Petrie are co-editing). We benefit from Mette’s company so much that we would like to see her more often. But she is based in Hong Kong, and while we envy her for enjoying this exciting corner of Asia, we would ideally like her to be situated closer. So we have applied to the Leverhulme Trust to enable us to bring Mette as a guest professor for the next academic year. The outcome will be known by September; so for the time being let’s keep our fingers crossed.

Our second speaker was Rod Stoneman, of the Huston School for Film and Media at the National University of Galway in Ireland. The highlight of his presentation was that it reminded us of the good times when Channel Four (where Rod worked in the 1980s) was engaged in meaningful work and was doing things like fostering peripheral cinemas and other noble projects that have now been eradicated from the agenda of this organisation.

PANEL TWO

Panel Two granted us insights into the cinematic cultures of New Zealand, China and Japan and served to generate a lively discussion. Needless to say, these aspiring cinematic cultures have all undergone ups and downs during their evolution. Duncan Petrie, a native Scot who chairs the film studies programme at the University of Auckland, presented an overview of how New Zealand has striven to build a national cinema as part of its painstaking national identity project in the past decades. The endeavours have been full of challenges yet the end result is exemplary for other up-and-coming small national cinemas to model themselves on. The presentation gave insights into the methodology of the forthcoming book on small national cinemas which Duncan Petrie and Mette Hjort are co-editing for Edinburgh University Press.

Sheldon Lu, a major specialist in Chinese transnational cinemas who teaches at the University of California at Davis, drew the attention to the oscillating film policies of post-socialist China in dealing with their “underground” directors. Many of the filmmakers dubbed as the Sixth Generation have already obtained
Mohammed Soueid addresses the audience post screening

The conference’s scheduled screenings opened with the work of Lebanese filmmaker Mohammed Soueid and his film Harb Ahiya (Civil War, 2002). Conference participants and guests watched the film together with members of the public form St Andrews at the New Pictures House Cinema located a few doors away from the Film Studies Department and were treated to a post-film question and answer session with the filmmaker. Born in Beirut in 1959, Mohammad Soueid is not only a filmmaker but also the author of several books on Arabic cinema, including Lebanese Civil War Films (Beirut: Institute of Arab Research, 1986) and History of Movie Theatres in Old Beirut (Beirut: An-Nahar, 1996). Soueid underlined the fact that often the most significant part of his films, in the eyes of Western audiences, tends to be the portrayal of current affairs in Lebanon (since so little is known about this country in the West). Soueid seemed somewhat more concerned about explaining his filmmaking style than discussing the content of his films in detail. I knew Beirut through the songs of Fairouz or the novels of Amin Maalouf and maybe through Ziad Doueiri’s West Beirut and recognised its cosmopolitan heritage as a city inhabited by Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and Kurds. Yet I would not picture in my mind filmmakers imitating the movements of samurai film characters, or imagine that so many people would turn their heads responsive when the name “Mohammad” was called out, nor that toothache can be a sign of post-war stress and the military could dominate feminine fashion.

As the second part of a trilogy on Post-war Lebanon, Harb Ahiya investigates and narrates the mystery of Mohamed Dou'aibas, a filmmaker, who was found dead after having mysteriously disappeared for months. Just as on the streets of Beirut in the Post-Civil War era, the film has fragmented cityscapes composed of location shots as well as archival footage. Collage of the familiar images of ruins and unidentified soldiers of Beirut, with fancy dressed crowds of women, taverns and luxurious alleys illustrated the disparities caused by the coexistence of trauma and post war recovery.

After the recent bombings in Beirut, what struck me about this film was its timing. It also coincided with the date of Roger Waters’ last concert in my hometown Istanbul, where Waters sang Leaving Beirut: “Are these the people that we should bomb? Are we so sure they mean us harm? Is this our pleasure, punishment or crime? Is this a mountain that we really want to climb.”

Canan Balan
Mohamad Soueid airs his thoughts

The top table contemplate a Presentation

Questions open up to the floor

Bélén Vidal chairs Panel 5

A hot Gateway conference room fills with delegates

An attentive audience
PANEL THREE

Picking up the thread from the previous night and invoking the screening of Civil War by Mohamad Soueid (Lebanon, 2002), Laura Marks of Simon Fraser University in Vancouver opened the panel with a theoretical framework used for addressing the modes of filmmaking in Arab cinema. According to Marks, and her pen-marked whiteboard, personal experiences of the Arab filmmaker search upwards, through a layer of information where the experience is explained, to culminate in the form of images. Some experiences however never make it to the image stage whilst other experiences jump the level of information to make an image.

The consequence for Arab cinema, which is reliable on foreign funding for their films, is that funding censures (on the level of information) block these experiences, e.g. personal intimacy, torture or militancy. Questions were raised concerning the type of experience and the role of language within this framework, but, in my opinion, Marks’ chart promised an original form of addressing a post-socialist mode of Third World film production. If the Third World constituted the periphery for Marks, then New York University’s Faye Ginsburg pushed us further into the periphery with her paper on the Fourth World and Australian aboriginal media production. Ginsburg illustrated how Australian Black screens have evolved from challenging the White Australian national cinema to become part of the national cinema that it was once fighting. Through clips from Radiance (1998) and Beneath the Clouds (2002), she showed how second generation aboriginal filmmakers’ search for a national identity has diversified and their films now consumed within the national cinema. Is this cinema of the centre (Australian cinema) or cinema of the periphery (World cinema)? This was the question that Ginsburg posed with her paper, saying that for these filmmakers the influence is not the collective activism of the past, but Spike Lee, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Japanese cinema. Her paper reminded us that many Four World people, whose stories we have not seen, which also lead to the questioning of distribution. The cinema of Four World people is probably the most peripheral in the world – but only in the sense that Carlsberg is “probably the best lager in the world”.

Lars Kristensen

PANEL FOUR

Dudley Andrew’s talk gave an interesting re-reading of the history of cinema as a whole, by re-examining the notion of national cinemas and the creative authenticities that derive from this concept. Andrew’s talk first positioned cinema as a medium for which the definition of national in a political and historical sense is more important than is usually accepted – thus substantiating Benedict Anderson’s theory that it is the press which plays a key role in helping to create a common feeling of belonging to a nation or nationhood. Andrew attributes the same role to cinema, explaining it as another phenomenon of society embraced by modernism and employed by capitalist system to define the framework of nation and the collective consciousness of common belonging. Andrew also pointed towards various changeable elements within this theory. As an example, he offered the career of the famous Japanese script-writer, Junichiro Tanizaki. At the end of War World One, Tanizaki was a world weary bohemian with a cosmopolitan outlook, who indulged in films from all over the world in his private cinema. In the 1930s however – in the spirit of the times – Tanizaki dropped his cosmopolitan views in order to support vehemently nationalist Japanese politics. After World War II, he changed again – prompting Andrew to ask what could guarantee a strong national cinema that would not generate and feed the “lethal consequences of unrestrained nationalism”? As a possible answer, Andrew proposed the ideas of a transnational cinema and the related concept of cinematic federalism. He suggested that consequently a good national cinema would be more akin to a terroir in winemaking, rather than to the blood and soil of extremist policy making.

Bill Marshall’s talk would have continued almost seamlessly from Andrew’s, had not Marshall first rejected Andrew’s premises based on binary oppositions. Following the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Marshall rebutted binary concept and embraced the two authors’ theory on minor literature, as elaborated in their book, A Thousand Plateaus. Mar-
shall viscerally illustrated this theory with the career of the Quebeccois filmmaker, Claude Jutra. In the 1960s, Jutra was very much a representative of the nouvelle vague; indeed, his career could be seen within the history of this (French) movement. However, Marshall emphasized the differences stemming from the fact that he was Quebeccois, thereby feeding into the theory of minor literature. Marshall, like Andrew, examined the complexities of identity in cinema, also reminding us that cinema fictions often "seep back into reality." These two impressive presentations inevitably provoked a lively debate. Sheldon Lu questioned Andrew's emphasis on similarities rather than differences, particularly in his claim that many national new waves were all part of 'one sea.' Dina Iordanova questioned the importance of festivals for film distribution. Andrew strongly defended festivals as significant contributors to the wide availability of films. These two thought-provoking papers by Yale University's Dudley Andrew and Glasgow University's Bill Marshall thus left many questions hovering, awaiting further debate.

**SCREENING DENIS**

The Programme of Screenings for Cinema at the Periphery included a double bill of films by renowned French director Claire Denis at the Dundee Centre for Contemporary Arts (DCA). Denis's work touches on key issues debated in the course of the Conference and holds a distinctive place in the art-house circuit. Chocolat (1988), shown on Friday afternoon, is an autobiographical meditation on inter-racial relations in colonial Cameroon (a territory that Denis plans to revisit in her new film project). Also, the audience had the chance to discover or enjoy again in the big screen the ravishing Beau Travail, perhaps her best-known work (in the UK) to date. Regrettably, Denis was unable to travel to Scotland in the last month due to insurmountable personal difficulties. The screenings were, notwithstanding, well-attended by Conference participants and members of the general public alike, and gave the delegates the chance to enjoy a visit and supper at the DCA. These special Conference screenings are part of a series of initiatives that the Centre for Film Studies at St Andrews is developing in association with the directors of film programming at the DCA, Thomas Gestemeyer and Mairi Wallace.

Belén Vidal

**PANEL FIVE**

Panel Five was one of the most coherent and polished of the conference. It began with John Caughie's excellent discussion of Lynne Ramsay's Morvern Callar (2002). Referring back to Laura U. Marks's paper of the previous day, and discussions surrounding Mohamad Soueid's filmmaking, Caughie outlined the potential space for experimentation that existed on the periphery. Drawing on sources as diverse as Gilles Deleuze and Paul Willemen, Caughie explored Ramsay's film in relation to Scotland's unusual circumstances as a devolved nation without a State. Here a gauche politics enables Scottish filmmakers to replace images from the "monstrous archive" with new identities: in Morvern Callar, by mingling the Scottish gothic tradition with rave culture.

Pam Cook gave a fascinating presentation on Baz Luhrmann. A well-known filmmaker not usually considered peripheral, Cook uncovered how Luhrmann's artisanal production practices place him on the periphery of today's normative film production standards. This liminal position is mirrored by his semi-autonomous position in relation to financial backer, Newscorp's Fox. Cook's conclusions resonated strongly with Caughie's, not least because in both Ramsay and Luhrmann's works imaginary spaces were created in which new identities could be imagined.
Finally, Patricia Pisters focused on representations of Tangiers, revisiting Homi K. Bhabha's work on the temporality of Tangiers and offering a new perspective using Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze. This approach was successfully applied to films made about a part of the world where nostalgia for the colonial past often structures representation. Pisters's paper ranged through a number of popular genre and art films set in Tangiers, concluding with a close analysis of Deleuzian sheets of the past in For Bread Alone (2004), Tanger, le rêve des bruleurs (2003) and André Téchiné's Les Temps qui changent (2004). These examples demonstrated how filmmaking in Tangiers has now begun to capture how times are changing for the people of the region.

Not surprisingly the concluding discussion went on well beyond the end of the allotted timeframe, not least because of the good natured sparring between Cook and Caughie. Perhaps the high point of the panel was when Caughie revealed that the image from Morvern Callar used to depict a sequence in which the dismembered body parts of her deceased boyfriend! As all the papers showed, one obvious advantage of being at the periphery is the possibility of deconstructing the past and moving on.

David Martin-Jones

Deleuze For The Masses!


Deleuze and Terminator 3? Deleuze and Saving Private Ryan? Deleuze and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind? The world has surely gone mad! Surely Deleuze is only useful for analysing self-conscious European art films, not sci-fi, war and rom-com genre films? Do you mean to say that you can use Deleuze's work with films that people have actually seen? More to the point, Deleuze and national identity? Is Deleuze not just brainwashing, ahistorical, jargon-filled philosophy with no apparently useful application to the "real world"?

There's even a chapter on Deleuze and Asian cinemas, what is going on?

Like many Film Studies academics dedicated to working with Deleuze, the untapped possibilities of his work for the discipline have always seemed exciting to me. In fact, the turn to popular films amongst Deleuzian film scholars is currently expanding into something of a wave, as recent books like Patricia Pisters' The Matrix of Visual Culture (2003) and Anna Powell's Deleuze and Horror Film (2005) illustrate. In writing Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity I felt a keen awareness that I was cresting this wave, and therefore I had two major aims. Firstly I wanted to write as clear an introduction to Deleuze's work as I possibly could. Of course this was not entirely an unselfish ploy — after all I wanted the book to sell (!) — but more importantly, I wanted to make Deleuze as accessible as I could. "Deleuze for the masses" may be a slight exaggeration, but to my mind there is no point working with a theorist who you believe has a great deal to offer, only to find that you are talking to the same small crowd of friends each time.

Secondly, my aim was to demonstrate how Deleuze's work could provide very useful insights for the field of Film Studies. To me this was the essential aspect of the book. Working with Deleuze for the last decade I have increasingly encountered puzzlement from colleagues in the discipline. Indeed, this is understandable. At first glance Deleuze's work seems convoluted, elitist, unquestioningly indebted to auteur and art cinema "classics" (usually discussed without adequate analytical rigour) and most importantly of all, devoid of any understanding of how contexts (industrial, generic, cultural, historical, etc) have influenced the films in question. Immediately philosophers will jump to his defence. He was writing philosophy using cinema, they might say, he was not a Film Studies scholar. Yet for me this defence was not enough. He was writing about cinema, and you cannot have it both ways! Instead, I wanted to remould Deleuze, to bring him within the parameters of the discipline of Film Studies, and thereby demonstrate that he did have something to offer us. After all, he was only a philosopher, we cannot expect him to live up to the high standards we expect of ourselves!

In Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity I have written a book that, I hope, will be of interest to Film Studies scholars, a book that addressed them on their own turf, and in their own terms. I chose national identity as the context in which I would place Deleuze's work because it is an established area within the discipline, and because my focus on the construction of character identity in narrative time naturally developed in that direction. In the book I therefore begin by covering one or two of the usual suspects, including Hitchcock's Vertigo (1958) and Fellini's 8½ (1963) - both of which Deleuze discussed in his cinema books of the 1980s. However, I do so to demonstrate how Deleuze's conclusions need an extra dimension. It is one thing to make a grandiose philosophical statement that these films exist on either side of a divide between post-war US and European conceptions of time as Deleuze did, and another altogether to say that in actual fact, their narrative time schemes illustrate the working through of post-war dilemmas of national identity. When analysed through Deleuze's categories, but viewed at a more "local" level, suddenly these well-known films begin to demonstrate the larger applicability of Deleuze's work.
Having made such a point with these well-thumbed classics I then departed for the 1990s/2000s. The rest of the book examines a range of recent films with narratives that—to one extent or another—have used an interesting time scheme to explore national identity. The most obvious examples arose in the 1990s, with European films like Sliding Doors (1997) and Run Lola Run (1998) illustrating their indebtedness to Kieslowski’s Blind Chance (1987) through labyrinthine narrative structures. In these films I found a complex negotiation of national identity under globalization, structured with a model of time that initially suggested chaos theory, but which was—on closer inspection—far more classically linear. Labyrinthine narrative time may open up the possibility of different national identities, but the financial and cultural agendas of these specific films determine the extent to which these possibilities are realisable.

I also felt that US Indie films like Memento (2000) and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004) had a lot to offer, especially when viewed in comparison with more mainstream contemporaries, like Saving Private Ryan (1998), and Terminator 3 (2003). These narratives are more classical, but nonetheless they are engaged in negotiating the same questions of national identity. Finally I decided to go out on a limb and discuss three East Asian films. If this theory was to fly, I needed to prove that it could work for any national cinema, and although it is always risky to venture into territory where so many have been caught out before—from Roland Barthes to David Bordwell—I decided to take the plunge. The Hong Kong gangster-comedy Too Many Ways to be Number One (1997), Hideo Nakata’s Japanese thriller Chaos (1999), and the wonderful

South Korean art film Peppermint Candy (2000) all feature in the last chapter. The formal similarities between these films and their European and American contemporaries demonstrate comparable attempts to negotiate national identity, but in each case, I have shown, the outcome is determined by their specific national context.

To the casual reader this book aims to provide an introduction to Deleuze’s work, and its relevance for the examination of narrative time and the construction of national identity. For die-hard Deleuzians it offers an interesting new slant on Deleuze, read through Homi K. Bhabha, to uncover how the movement-image and the time-image actually function in a more localised manner than Deleuze actually thought.

David Martin-Jones

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**Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity**

David Martin-Jones

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**John Mills and British Cinema**

Left: Gill Plain & David Martin-Jones enjoy a toast at their book launch

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Gill Plain’s book ‘John Mills and British Cinema’ (reported in last issue) was also officially launched at the conference. In this outing Plain examines the career of Mills as an ‘English Everyman’ and charts his filmic career from the early sound days through the British New Wave and beyond, taking pains to examine in what manner Mills managed to negotiate the class divide and represent a new masculine ideal. This book asks how it was possible for an actor to embody national identity through exploring the cultural contexts in which both the actor and nation were to be found. The screen persona of Mills, an often overlooked dimension of British Cinema, is here utilised to help illustrate the ever shifting construction of national masculinity.

D.H. Fleming (ed)
Bill Marshall delivers his paper

Panel 2 open to the floor

Panel 3 take questions

Faye Ginsburg and Bill Marshall

Dina Iordanova and Kristian Feigleson at Wallflower book launch

Yoram Allon introduces Dina for her book launch (for details see overleaf)
THE CINEMA OF THE BALKANS
Edited by Dina Iordanova, Preface by Dusan Makavejev
£18.99 (pbk) 1-904764-80-0 | £50.00 (hbk) 1-904764-81-9

THE CINEMA OF CANADA
Edited by Jerry White, Preface by Atom Egoyan
£18.99 (pbk) 1-904764-60-6 | £50.00 (hbk) 1-904764-81-4

THE CINEMA OF ROMAN POLANSKI
Dark Spaces of the World
Edited by John Orr & Ebitneta Ostrowska
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PANEL SIX

The sudden fluttering of note books and lined paper that began rustling around the Gateway conference room just before three pm served to highlight the high calibre of the afternoon’s assembled speakers. Shortly before proceedings got underway on this scorcher of an afternoon it was decided that the glass conference-room doors should be folded away so that the room would be open to the elements. What light sea breeze there was served to reinvigorate the now stuffy room and cool down the overheating delegates who had recently nibbled and tippled at Gill Plain and David Martin-Jones’ respective book launches. The audible buzz of anticipation that circled the room was finally subdued as event organiser and chair of this panel Dina Jordanova took to the floor to introduce what was to be the final academic panel of the department’s inaugural conference beginning with renowned and prolific academic Hamid Naficy.

Amongst other things, in a paper entitled ‘Intersitial, Transnational, and National-Iranian Silent Cinema’ Naficy discussed the awkward nature of piecing together any concrete models of early Iranian cinema due to a substantial loss of so much cinematic work and the disappearance of so many silent texts. From what fragments remained, Naficy managed to reconstruct a complex model of a multi national and multi regional cinematic tradition. Although exact audience numbers could only be approximated and figures had to be pieced together and estimated from historical documents and contemporary articles, Naficy managed to construct a complex picture of Iranian cinematic production and exhibition that was populated by a colourful constellation of characters and interesting sites of exhibition that stretched from churches to opium dens. Naficy delivered the paper with the confidence and assertiveness of a man who had forgotten more than most people know about his chosen field and laced his presentation throughout with personal anecdotes and humour which served to endear him to the assembled audience.

Kristian Fiegelson then took to the floor after what would be for many a hard act to follow and delivered an intriguing presentation entitled ‘A Visual Map of The World’ which was an extended discussion divided into two sections. Initially Fiegelson transformed what amounted to a ‘dry’ series of spreadsheets, facts and figures and turned them into a lively model of international filmic production and reception and grounded abstract figures in intelligible illustrations and examples. Fiegelson then proceeded to graph his collected data cartographically onto a world map so that each country’s respective filmic production and reception could be ranked. This map served to illustrate that in global terms the US cannot be considered the economic or production centre of the world and therefore raised fundamental questions regarding how we define notions of the centre and the periphery. The second section focused upon the work of Peter Forgacs, and Fiegelson illustrated with examples how his cinematic texts serve to create a tension between ‘memory’ and ‘history’ and grant a voice to the vanquished as well as the victors of war. Fundamental questions regarding whether or not we see or believe when we view a cinematic text was raised.

After the presentations the floor was opened up for debate and discussion with Naficy and Fiegelson before it was expanded to all the speakers who combined to create an informed and lively forum. This eventually led to fundamental questions being raised regarding notions of the periphery and identified future avenues for academic enquiry. Credit must be given to Dina for creating such a vibrant conference where if it were not for the time constraints of the facilities it would no doubt still be running yet. On behalf of Dina and the entire Film Studies department a warm thanks is extended to all who contributed to the success of the conference.

D.H. Fleming (ed)
Sounds of Norway, Sounds of Turkey: Cool and Crazy and Crossing the Bridge

The second and fourth conference screenings were devoted to two documentaries from three different countries: Cool and Crazy from Norway, and Crossing the Bridge: Sound of Istanbul from Germany-Turkey. The difference between the Berlevåg (Norway) and Istanbul was conveyed not only through sounds but also through the eyes of the filmmakers Knut Erik Jensen and Fatih Akin. While both films utilised music as their main governing thematic, the films differed greatly in their approaches toward their subject matter.

Born in Norway, Knut Erik Hansen studied at the London International Film School. In 1978, he started to work at the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK Television), and has since made documentaries and short films both independently and for NRK. His Cool and Crazy focuses upon an all male Norwegian choir who sing folk music and hymns. The film narrates the personal histories of choir members that hail from different social backgrounds and generations. Capturing the private lives of a fisherman, a pastor, a grandfather, a former drug addict and a socialist, the film relates to the viewer the humble ambitions of a heterogeneous group of singers. Engaged in plain storytelling, Jensen takes his camera on a bus trip to Russia where he can depict the choir singing in powerful deserted spaces. The peaceful atmosphere of the small fishing village in this film however could not have contrasted more with the dynamic depictions of the ‘Megalopolis’ Istanbul in Crossing the Bridge.

As the classic “hero” of Turkish cinema, Istanbul in Crossing the Bridge appears as a more sophisticated ‘character’ with its rich cosmopolitanism here being deliberately highlighted. Multiculturalism, which has recently come into vogue in Turkey and is a desirable and fashionable subject for both artists and politicians alike tends to focus attention upon Istanbul’s multi-ethnic construction and its diverse cultural exchanges. Crossing the Bridge is one such artwork that picks up upon and references this new awareness and utilises multiculturalism to help define the city. Strolling around the city like a flaneur, Akin’s camera follows and documents many of the sounds of Istanbul in various musical genres such as grunge, classical arabesque, Sufi infusion, psychedelic rock, Anatolian rock, street music, hip-hop, gypsy music, Kurdish music and many others. Each genre represents the sound of a different socio-economical class, ethnicity, or demographic. By recording some of this heterogeneity Akin seems to capture the contemporary state of the Istanbul mindset.

The two “peripheral” settings utilised for these film narratives serve to offer great insight into the pleasures derived from music, for both performers and the audiences, whilst highlighting the importance of music as a social and cultural act. In the two completely different ‘worlds’ of Scandinavia and the Mediterranean audiences could see the important role music plays as a social and cultural phenomenon, and were left contemplating both the similarities and differences between these two peripheral cinematic texts.

Canan Balan

For Knut Erik Jensen’s biography see http://www.nfi.no/english/norwegianfilms/show.html?id=215
for Fatih Akin’s biography See http://imdb.com/name/nm0015359/bio.