



Report on the Multiplier event of the Erasmus+ project,
'Hospitality and European Film (HOSTFILM),' held at
the Broadway Cinema, Nottingham on 27th April 2019



Aims: Film Analysis and IO: Multiplying the impact of A Syllabus on Hospitality and Film

The aims of the event were to make some of the lessons of the Hostfilm Project and, more specifically, the IO already finished, available to at least 40 individuals who were either members of the general public or representatives of specific institutions (NGOs, migrant support groups, educationalists) but who were not from any of the universities involved in the project.

The aim was to put on an event that would be both a successful film education event in its own right and a showcase for the Hostfilm project and the Syllabus. It turned out to be a perfect interaction, since a great deal of the films showcased or discussed were already analysed in the Syllabus. Because we expected people who had substantial experience of dealing with issues around migration, we felt it was essential to open a space for dialogue and to learn from the audience as much as they might learn from us. We wanted the day to be interactive. We also wanted it to create networking possibilities for those involved so that educationalists and people from migrant support groups would be able to know each other and explore possibilities for future collaboration. The informal part of the day (refreshment breaks, lunch) would play an essential role from this point of view. Because migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are routinely disempowered and silenced, we also felt it essential that the day should open space for them to be active voices and not simply objects framed by the European cinematic gaze or discourses of humanitarianism.

Preparation

Planning for the event began nine months in advance. The starting point was detailed discussions between Prof. Martin O'Shaughnessy of Nottingham Trent, the organizer of the multiplier event, and Professor Ana Manzananas Calvo, Dr Jorge Diego Sanchez and Susana Verde Ruiz, all of the University of Salamanca, to ensure that the planned event would meet both the immediate needs of the project and the broader requirements of Erasmus+ sponsored activities. Martin O'Shaughnessy then held a series of meetings with programmers at the Nottingham Contemporary Gallery and at the Broadway Cinema, the former, an outstanding regional art gallery, the latter, a leading arthouse cinema which, among other things, is a long-standing member of the Europa Cinema network and has a strong record of educational and public engagement activities. Due to their greater flexibility, their experience in putting on film education events and their history of collaborations with Nottingham Trent, the Broadway Cinema was chosen as the best host for the event. Its staff, notably, Caroline Hennigan, the programmer, Laura Cubley, the Events Organizer, and the technical and catering staff were exceptionally helpful and supportive. Caroline Hennigan helped us identify a suitable film to be shown at the end of the dayschool. She put Martin O'Shaughnessy in contact with Sharon Walia, the director of *The Movement*, a 2018 documentary about the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, attempts to help those affected and potential longer-term ways to address the issue. Sharon Walia kindly agreed for her film to be used and to participate in a post-screening discussion of her film. She also invited Brendan Woodhouse, a Nottingham fireman who has worked on rescue boats in the Mediterranean, to participate in the discussion. The local connection was strengthened by the fact that Sharon Walia, although now an established media professional, did her studies at Nottingham Trent University. It was also strengthened when Allan Njanji, a local film-maker and member of the Nottingham Refugee Forum agreed to take part in the event and to talk about obstacles that prevent refugees taking part in film-making.



Promotion for the day

Two essential strategies were mobilised to ensure a good level of attendance at the event and the right audience mixture. The Broadway Cinema's webpage, its monthly brochure and its routine mailings to its members and subscribers were used to promote the event with a cinema loving public. At the same time, Martin O'Shaughnessy was able to mobilise a range of networks and contacts to target more specific audiences and institutions. Allan Njanji, Martin O'Shaughnessy's contact at the Nottingham Refugee Forum, promoted the event through the Forum's mailing list. Although not directly part of the event, Nottingham Contemporary agreed to promote the event to those on its mailing list for similar events. Marianne Hohendorf, the President of the Immigration Education Network at Nottingham University, promoting the event to her network. Similarly, Laura Rossi, a recently qualified teacher in Nottingham, agreed to spread news of the event to local teachers she knew to be interested in issues around immigration.

Structure of the day

The day was divided into 3 (participatory) taught sessions, a screening and post-screening discussion as follows:

10.30-11.30 Session 1: Introduction to the day: Hospitality in European Film (HostFilm) and the completion of Multiplier Event: A Syllabus on Hospitality and Film.

European fiction and documentary film and migration: laying out the issues: the politics and ethics of migrant and refugee cinema. Screening and discussion of extracts from significant film.

11.30-11.50 tea / coffee break

11.50-12.50 Session 2: Further screening and discussion of extracts: from social realism to fantasy, the importance of genre: Conclusions from the morning session.
Reference to films analysed on the Syllabus.

12.50-1.30 lunch break

1.30-2.15 Session 3: From objects to subjects? Migrants and refugees as directors or active participants in film-making rather than simply being shown in other people's films.
Discussion with film-maker, Allan Njanji. Discussion of the taught part of the day

2.30-4.00 Screening: *The Movement* (UK, Sharon Walia, 2018)

4.00-4.30 post-screening question and answer session with Sharon Walia, the film's director and Brendan Woodhouse, a key participant in the film.

The rationale for this structure was:

- To show the relevance of the Syllabus and as an interpretive and educational tool
- To show the richness and diversity of cinematic responses to migration (from fiction to documentary, from modest films to expensive ones etc.).
- To bring out the political and other consequences of different film-making choices
- To create a framework and a context in which the syllabus could be introduced to attendees in a way that would bring out its usefulness and relevance.



- To allow a progression from films about migrants / migration to films made by migrants or within which migrant voices were prioritised.

Martin O’Shaughnessy led the teaching activities on the day, presented the syllabus and chaired the post-film discussion. Anna Manzananas Calvo, Jorge Diego Sanchez and Jesús Benito Sanchez from the Universities of Salamanca and Valladolid were active participants in the discussions and played a crucial role in organising activities on the day. Allan Njanji spoke very powerfully about obstacles to migrant and refugee film-making. The Broadway technical, front-of-house and catering staff provided excellent support on the day and ensured the event ran smoothly.

Attendance and feedback

41 people signed the attendance register. Also in attendance were staff from the Broadway Cinema, Martin O’Shaughnessy, Anna Manzananas Calvo, Jorge Diego Sanchez and Jesús Benito Sanchez from the Hostfilm project. Sharon Walia and Brendan Woodhouse (the director of the film screened and a key participant from it) were also present but did not sign the register. Other people not recorded on the register also came to the screening part of the day and took part in the post-screening discussion. There were at least eleven different nationalities present (British, Zimbabwean, Sri Lankan, French, French-Canadian, Irish, Mexican, Slovenian, German, Spanish, Italian). Organisations and professions represented included: the Nottingham Refugee Forum, Nottingham City Council, the Nottingham Academy, Nottingham University, Immigration Education Nottingham, the Nottingham Arimathea Trust (an organisation that provides support to asylum seekers and refugees), Secondary school teachers, the film programmer for Nottingham Refugee Week.

34 of those present filled in feedback forms. Answers to the seven questions in numerical terms can be seen here:

| Question | Yes | No | Don’t know or non-committal |
|---|---|----|-----------------------------|
| Did the multiplier event (the course) encourage you to look at migration differently? | 22 | 10 | 2 |
| Do you feel you have a better understanding of migrant / refugee cinema as a result of the course? | 31 | 3 | 0 |
| Do you think the course gave you a broader sense of how film works, what it can do and its limitations? | 33 | 1 | 0 |
| Will you be able to make use of any of what you have learned from the day in your work or activities outside the workplace? | 31 | 2 | 1 |
| How would you rate the quality of the course? (5 being the highest score) | 2 people rated the course as 3, 10 as 4, and 20 as 5. | | 2 did not give a score |
| Is this your first time participating in a film event? | 16 | 18 | 0 |
| Would you recommend the activity to others if it were repeated? | 32 | 1 | 1 |



Analysis of these numerical scores confirm the organisers’ sense that the multiplier event was extremely successful. 30 out of 34 returns scored the event at 4 or 5 out of the maximum 5. An overwhelming majority (32 out of 34 respondents) said they would recommend the activities to others. An overwhelming majority also felt that the event had given them a better understanding of migrant / refugee cinema (31 out of 34) and, more broadly, of the functioning of film (33 out of 34). Very encouragingly, 31 out of 34 people present said they would be able to make use of what they have learned in their workplace or activities outside of work. Encouragingly too, 16 out the 34 respondents said that this was their first time at a film event: the event clearly brought in a new audience not previously involved in film education. Interestingly, 10 of the 34 respondents noted that the event had not changed how they look at migration while 22 said it had. These last figures should not be seen negatively: some of the respondents had significant experience in migrant and refugee support work and were unlikely to learn anything new about migration itself. However, the figures suggest that the course was very successful in showing those same people how film could be used to educate other people about the issues.

The feedback forms invited attendees to explain their answers. In general, the explanations were also tremendously encouraging. While there is no space to consider all the individual responses in detail, some of the most significant ones are given below.

| Question | Selected individual answers |
|---|--|
| Did the multiplier event (the course) encourage you to look at migration differently? | <p>“I already do some work with Refugees / Asylum seekers. Just want to find out more”</p> <p>“I valued the opportunity to view the issues from the perspective of a refugee / migrant”</p> <p>“It encouraged me to look again at the problems faced by the people involved.”</p> <p>“Debate and discussion [was] possible with the films [to] facilitate and create relationships with the audience with different points of view instead of staying with my own reactions.”</p> <p>“I especially liked the short extracts of films shot by refugees themselves. You can identify with their everyday problems.”</p> <p>“There was a good collection of films on show that depicted migration positively.”</p> <p>“I have not thought about migration in relation to film before. It is interesting to see the different perspectives – fiction, documentary etc.”</p> <p>“very thought revealing and very emotive”</p> |
| Do you feel you have a better understanding of migrant / refugee cinema as a result of the course? | <p>“[Yes], undoubtedly. It was good to see clips of so many films. I would like to see more.”</p> <p>“I know there are a lot of films I was unaware of. It has been an educational day.”</p> <p>“Great resource sheet with wide range of film choices.”</p> <p>“[I was] Exposed to films I haven’t seen / heard about and motivated to watch them.”</p> <p>“Real people talking about their experiences are more powerful and bring home the stark conditions they face.”</p> <p>“I hadn’t seen any of the films selected, so I definitely have a better understanding of the different types of films / perspectives etc.”</p> <p>“Yes, I have more of an understanding of different attempts to depict the refugee experience.”</p> <p>“Good counter-narrative to popular media portrayal of migrants and refugees.”</p> <p>“It has demystified the issue for me.”</p> |
| Do you think the course gave you a broader sense of how film works, what it can do and its limitations? | <p>“As a film-maker, I saw some of the challenges that other directors face.”</p> <p>“The concept of refugees / migrants being able to tell their own stories, I think is very important.”</p> <p>“The course leader did a good job of explaining what can be captured and conveyed by film and some insight on distribution, audience etc.”</p> <p>“Yes, the facilitator was keen to draw attention to this.”</p> <p>“Very important to have M. O’Shaughnessy explain different aspects of the film based on different extracts of film[s]. Very structured and rich information opening</p> |



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|--|---|
| | <p>my eyes to watching films.”</p> <p>“The differences between drama / documentary (and its many aims) really gave me something to think about. Certainly, filming with a migrant / refugee behind the camera is something I will now seek out.”</p> |
| <p>Will you be able to make use of any of what you have learned from the day in your work or activities outside the workplace?</p> | <p>“Yes, I will watch the films and find ways of helping on a practical level.”</p> <p>“I will use the knowledge to educate others and draw attention to the representation of refugees and asylum seekers’ lived experience.”</p> <p>“I will share it with societies at University who work with school children locally and community organisations promoting social justice.”</p> <p>“I work in health: to raise awareness.”</p> <p>“[yes], with the young asylum seeker / refugee people I teach.”</p> <p>“Certainly, for personal development and for future film watching (I am retired). There are films I definitely would like to see on the very helpful filmography provided.”</p> <p>“Certainly, as a teacher, I will endeavour to use these resources in the classroom.”</p> <p>“As a secondary school teacher, I will be using today’s ideas and resources for whole school assemblies.”</p> <p>“I teach languages and I’d like to use clips to discuss the topic and work on linguistic skills.”</p> <p>“I run a human rights course at Uni of Nottingham and will certainly share project resources with my students next year. And I’ll work my way through the filmography!”</p> <p>“This year, I curated the film festival for Refugee Week. [It] gives me more of a range of films for next year if I do it again.”</p> <p>“I’ll be watching movies and talk to Allan Njanji about expanding the platform for film-makers of refugee backgrounds. I would very much like to develop participatory media opportunities within refugee sectors in Nottingham and provide resources for refugees to become active voices for their communities.”</p> |
| <p>Would you recommend the activity to others if it were repeated?</p> | <p>“Yes, but you are preaching to the converted. Bring others in and open their eyes.”</p> <p>“It will make people more aware of problems.”</p> <p>“Yes, absolutely.”</p> <p>“Of course!”</p> <p>“100%”</p> <p>“A breath of fresh air! Very invigorating to hear those messages given the current political climate.”</p> <p>“Definitely. [I] feel there was so much to talk about. [I] would appreciate another follow-up session.”</p> |

Adding detail and explanations to the yes / no answers and bringing the range of individual reactions into full view, these comments confirmed the success of the multiplier event and its usefulness for the participants. It was pleasing to see that the event – and the film extracts shown as part of it – opened people’s eyes to issues around migration, asylum seekers and refugees and encouraged empathy with the displaced. It was also pleasing to see that participants felt that the event helped them develop a greater understanding of the stylistic and narrative choices made by films and the inequalities of access to film-making, distribution and exhibition experienced by different individuals and groups. It was especially gratifying, however, to note how many of the participants felt that they would be able to use what they had learnt, as well as the analyses of the Syllabus, to promote awareness of the issues raised among different publics, especially young people, and in different social and institutional contexts. That is, indeed, the ultimate aim of the Syllabus and the HostFilm Project at large.

Conclusion



The Nottingham multiplier event was a great success and achieved all its main aims. It was a very useful showcase for the Syllabus and the Hostfilm project and made attendees aware of the rich resources available on the project website. More generally, the event encouraged those attending to take what they had learned from the day and make use of it to educate other audiences, adapting the resources provided to them to different contexts and publics. It gave people real insights into the workings of film and the significance of stylistic and other choices when representing challenging topics such as migration and refugees. It successfully highlighted the dangers of framing migrants and refugees as objects denied their own voice and point of view and pointed to the need to consider inequalities of access to the resources required for film-making and film distribution. Just as importantly, and in a way perhaps not reflected adequately by the feedback, the day provided great networking opportunities and opened up dialogues that will undoubtedly continue. It gave all those present a sense that more work needed to be done. One priority that clearly emerged is the need to provide opportunities for young refugees and asylum seekers to acquire film-making skills. More generally, there is clearly a demand for other events that will build on the success of this one and exploit the potential of film to educate and stimulate debate.