

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts

Conference Paper

**Contribution to Workshop 6, Session 1:
Artistic Migration and Mobility –
Impacts on Cultural and Citizenship Education**

**“Why is the film the best medium for cultural education?”
Marion Döring, European Film Academy, Berlin**

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Watching films:

Like going on mental journeys, getting often deeper into other cultures and societies than during real journeys.

A camera can get closer to a human being than a human eye. The camera's eye allows to break into the intimacy of others - without hurting their feelings.

A good film does not only make us SEE, it makes us also HEAR, FEEL, even SMELL, TASTE - a strong film may activate all five senses.

Film is said to be the seventh art and, at the same time, the sum of the six others:

LITERATURE, THEATRE, MUSIC, DANCE, VISUAL ARTS, ARCHITECTURE - a film can reflect all cultural achievements of a society.

Watching a film in a theatre is a social experience - we are sharing it in the company of others.

Watching a film does not request much of our time (usually not more than 90 minutes).

Films are therefore consumable even by people who do not have the patience to read a book - a factor not to be underestimated in an impatient world.

More than ever before, European cinema reflects the struggle of individuals to cope with conflicting cultures.

Migration cultures have especially enriched the native soil of German, British, French and Scandinavian cinema over the past 20 years.

We are talking a lot about European cinema but we never really manage to describe what it is.

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Maybe there is a European cinema that is marked by more than DIVERSITY, a new European film culture created by the second or third generation of immigrants who are meanwhile working behind the cameras.

Migration subjects have also been visualised by filmmakers who never left their own societies.

Examples:

Stephen Frears (UK)
„My Beautiful Laundrette“ (1985)
“Dirty Pretty Things” (2002)

Ken Loach (UK)
“Ae Fond Kiss” (2004)

The brothers Dardenne (Belgium)
“La promesse” (1996)

Claire Denis (France)
“Nenette et Boni” (1996),

Mathieu Kassovitz (France)
“La haine” (1995)

not to forget:
Rainer Werner Fassbinder
“Angst essen Seele auf” (1974)

But more and more we are seeing the migration subject on the screen from the angle of film directors with a migration background themselves.

Examples:

France:
Mehdi Charef “Le Thé au Harem d’Archimède » (1986),
the pilot film of the *cinéma beur*

Germany:
Fatih Akin, “Gegen die Wand” (Head On, 2004)

UK
Gurinder Chadha, “Bend it like Beckham” (2002)

Sweden
Josef Fares, “Zozo”

With or without a migration background - film directors are curious by nature. Constantly moving around, collecting stories, searching for money, looking for and shooting in many locations, travelling with their films to festivals around the globe.

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Film festivals: multi-cultural universes frequented by a film industry moving every year from one festival to the other like a travelling circus.

Film people are team workers. A film is always the result of co-operation.

The multi-cultural socialisation of filmmakers has made it possible to create an open cultural space, marked by curiosity and tolerance.

Migration has always been a serious matter. Nowadays, migration movies are often marked by humour, self-irony, political incorrectness. This is a major progress!

Fashion, music, life style of the younger generations are making migration movies attractive, especially to young audiences.

Be it the story of a Libanese in Sweden, of a French immigrant from Algeria, of young Turks in Germany, or Pakistanis in the UK - the young audience will always and everywhere recognize the own experience and be able to identify with the protagonists.

By the way, Hollywood was made by immigrants ...