INTRODUCTION

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The Cinema of Small Nations

In a recent article entitled 'An Atlas of World Cinema', Dudley Andrew concludes his discussion in the following way:

> Let me not be coy. We still parse the world by nations. Film festivals identify entries by country, college courses are labelled 'Japanese Cinema', 'French Film', and textbooks are coming off the presses with titles such as *Screening Ireland*, *Screening China*, *Italian National Cinema*, and so on. But a wider conception of national image culture is around the corner, prophesied by phrases like 'rooted cosmopolitanism' and 'critical regionalism'. (Andrew 2006: 26)

Andrew's concluding remarks reference the recent emergence in film studies of a new critical vocabulary – 'world cinema', 'transnational cinema', 'regional cinema' – while his discussion of world cinema more generally responds to, and thus reflects, the need for fully developed conceptual models that will lend analytic precision to the terms in question. Particularly relevant in the present context is the way in which Andrew's reference to nations and to their inevitable persistence in film culture also acknowledges, at least implicitly, that innovative ways of understanding national elements must be part of the critical shift that is currently occurring in film studies.

There can be little doubt that film studies today requires models that go well beyond conceptions of the nation as a monadic entity involved at most,

perhaps, in an unfortunate relationship with a single dominant other, Hollywood (Morris et al. 2005; Nagib 2006). A guiding premise motivating *The Cinema of Small Nations* is that careful analysis of a range of small national cinemas, with a focus for the most part on the last few decades, will suggest a number of conceptual models for understanding the persistence of nation in various transnational constellations. Small nations or states, it is widely recognised in the specialised literature, are necessarily a relational phenomenon: 'A state is only small in relation to a greater one. Belgium may be a small state in relation to France, and France a small state in relation to the USA . . . . *small state should be therefore considered shorthand for a state in its relationship with greater states*' (emphasis added, Erling Bjöl, cited in Chan Yul Yoo 1990: 12). Some small nations or states are marked by a history of colonial rule and thus by an important relational complexity that emphases on American cultural and economic imperialism tend to obscure. And many small filmmaking nations have sought alliances in recent times with nations that are similarly perceived to be grappling with the inequities that size, under some definition of that term, generates. As an analytic tool in the context of film studies, the concept of small nation promises to shed light on at least some of the ways in which subnational, national, international, transnational, regional and global forces dovetail and compete in the sphere of the cinema.

Conceived as a collaborative and collectivist project, *The Cinema of Small Nations* encompasses twelve case studies by authoritative scholars with specialised knowledge of a particular small nation and its cinema. Contributors were asked, where relevant, to provide information about the institutional parameters governing cinematic production in their context, to identify some of the persistent challenges faced by filmmakers in that context, and to discuss and assess the impact of any solutions that might have been explored over the years. In addition, the hope was that the various essays would help to draw attention to some of the key cinematic texts or tendencies associated with the cinemas in question, as well as to any features that these films might share by virtue of their production by film practitioners operating within the constraints and opportunities that a given small nation affords. The overall result of this collectivist project is, we believe, a set of reliable data that can be, and indeed should be, mobilised for comparative purposes. An influential view in the field of small states studies has it that 'small states are not simply scaled-down versions of larger states but instead have an ecology of their own' (Bray and Packer 1993: xix). At the same time, '[i]t is not always easy to discern which features of individual small states are reflections of small size and thus can be generalised, and which features merely reflect the specific cultural, economic or other features of the particular states in question' (xxiii). The comparative picture that *The Cinema of Small Nations* presents allows film scholars to begin to determine which features of particular small filmmaking nations are generalisable and why.

What soon becomes apparent, if the comparativist invitation that lies at the heart of this project is taken up, is that the possibility of full generalisability across all cases is rare. However, small filmmaking nations clearly do tend to confront certain types of problem and to have recourse to certain types of solution, depending on the particular form of small nationhood in question.

Defining Small Nation

Small Nation, Global Cinema (Hjort 2005) attempts a definition of 'small nation' relevant to the study of film, but for the most part the concept of small nation has not been central to the concerns of film scholars, who have yet to engage with the rich literature on the topic produced by other disciplines. Small nationhood figures mostly as a general intuition, rather than a clearly defined analytic tool, in the work of film scholars. For example, in a chapter devoted to films from the silent era in *Film History: An Introduction*, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson include a section entitled 'Smaller Producing Countries', where traits held to be common to films produced 'in the smaller producing nations' (2003: 78) are identified: 'First, many were shot on location . . . Second, filmmakers frequently sought to differentiate their low-budget films from the more polished imported works by using national literature and history as sources for their stories' (78). These traits, Bordwell and Thompson further claim, reflect enduring strategies relevant not only to the silent era but also to contemporary cinema: 'The strategies of using national subject matter and exploiting picturesque local landscapes have remained common in countries with limited production to the present day' (79). Countries referred to in this short section on 'Smaller Producing Countries' include Mexico, India, Colombia, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Canada. While the section heading evokes a concept of small nationhood, the discussion itself gives priority to the question of levels of production, thereby blurring the distinction between the idea of a small country that produces films and the idea of a country that produces a small number of films. While the two categories may overlap, and often do, they do not necessarily coincide. What is more, the inclusion of India is coherent if the focus is indeed on levels of production during the silent era, and questionable if the aim is to say something about the early involvement of small countries with film. The point, quite simply, is that intuitions about small nationhood do inform writing on film, but in ways that highlight the contributions that conceptual elaboration and clarification might make.

In disciplines such as sociology, education, political science and international relations, research on small nations, countries and states was very much prompted by their proliferation, particularly after 1945 (Bray and Packer 1993: xxiii). In *Education in Small States: Concepts, Challenges and Strategies*, Mark Bray and Steve Packer work with a definition of small states that adopts

population as the 'main indicator of size', with the upper-level 'cut-off' being
set, quite arbitrarily, they admit, at 1.5 million (xx). This particular definition
of a small state allows them to note that 18 out of 71 states qualified as small
in 1939, as compared with 42 out of 156 in 1976, and 47 out of 168 in 1986
(xxiii). Even a significantly higher cut-off figure, they remark, supports the
claim that 'the world is a world of small states. Over half the sovereign states
have populations below five million, and 54 have populations below 1.5
million' (xix). The proliferation of small states is the result primarily of the
process of decolonisation (Olafsson 1998: 1) and, in more recent times, of the
collapse of the former Soviet Union (Bray and Packer 1993: xxiii–xxiv). Bray
and Packer's 'cut-off' at 1.5 million reflects a second phase in the literature on
small states, the first having been concerned with significantly larger entities.
Indeed, in his influential study entitled *The Inequality of States: A Study of the
Small Power in International Relations*, David Vital identified the upper level
as a population of between 10 and 15 million 'in the case of economically
advanced countries', and as a population of between 20 and 30 million 'in the
case of underdeveloped countries' (1967: 8). Vital's definition includes '[n]o
lower limit', the assumption being 'that the disabilities that are a consequence
of size where the population is ten million will clearly be intensified where it is
five or ten times smaller' (8).

For many researchers on small states the 'most important measure of size is
population', although most agree that a definitive definition of small state
cannot be provided. Emphasis on population helps to draw attention to this
measure's implications for 'social structure and processes', a key point being the
extent to which population size determines 'the size of the internal market
before the foreign trade factor comes into operation' (Olafsson 1998: 9). This
particular market correlation has clear relevance for film as a high-cost indus-
try, and as a result the vast majority of the seventy-nine small states identified
by Bray and Packer (including such places as Liechtenstein, Andorra, Aruba,
Kiribati and Oman) have no pertinence in the context of the present study. A
noteworthy exception, however, is Iceland, with a population of just over
300,000 and a film industry that has produced sixty feature films since 1978.
As a film-producing microstate, Iceland is included here as a case allowing for
an exploration of the extra-small factor. It is clear, however, that in the context
of film studies a definition that lies somewhere between Vital's and Bray and
Packer's is needed if a comparative project focusing on small nationhood and
film as an institutional practice is to get off the ground. Yet, in developing the
framework for *The Cinema of Small Nations*, we did make a point of ensuring
that our cases span the full spectrum, ranging from Bray and Packer's
microstates to what Vital would call a developing small nation, with a clear
concentration in the population range of 4–10 million. Focusing on a series
of independent states, a city state, a special administrative region and a

sub-national entity with a significant degree of self-determination, the small nations/states that provide a basis for the case studies have populations as follows: Taiwan: 23,036,087; Burkina Faso: 13,902,972; Cuba: 11,382,820; Tunisia: 10,175,014; Bulgaria: 7,385,367; Hong Kong: 6,940,432; Denmark: 5,450,661; Scotland: 5,062,011; Singapore: 4,492,150; New Zealand: 4,076,140; Ireland: 4,062,235; Iceland: 309,699.

The literature on small states and nations identifies 'geographical scale or area' as a 'second measure of size' (Olafsson 1998: 9). Discussion of this measure includes considerations having to do with whether total area or only habitable land should be counted (Lloyd and Sundrum 1982: 20–1), as well as the possibility of establishing 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones in the case of islands and archipelagos that are 'remote and isolated from large markets' (Olafsson 1998: 7). Some approaches to small nationhood pay scant attention to geographical scale, however, as Ernest Gellner points out in his commentary on Miroslav Hroch's work:

> State-endowment would seem to be more important than size in a literal sense, in so far as the Danes appear to be consigned to the 'large nation,' which can hardly be correct in some simple numerical sense. This makes the Danes a large nation, and the Ukrainians a small one. (Gellner 1996: 135)

We have opted to follow the lead of Gellner and many other scholars in taking geographical scale seriously as an indicator of small nationhood. Our largest small filmmaking country, Burkina Faso, is thus half the size of France and eleven times smaller than India. The small filmmaking nation with no independent state, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, is approximately six times the size of Washington DC. The Hong Kong case is particularly interesting inasmuch as it provides an opportunity to look closely at the cinematic activities of a small nation that is destined in the course of fifty years to be absorbed into the largest nation-state on earth. The following figures establish the scope of analysis in *The Cinema of Small Nations*, with regard to this second measure of size: Burkina Faso: 273,800 sq km; New Zealand: 268,021 sq km; Tunisia: 163,610 sq km; Cuba: 110,860 sq km; Bulgaria: 110,550 sq km; Iceland: 103,000 sq km; Scotland: 78,772 sq km; Ireland: 70,280 sq km; Denmark: 42,394 sq km; Taiwan: 32,260 sq km; Hong Kong: 1,042 sq km; Singapore: 682.7 sq km.

A third size variable figuring centrally in analyses of small states and nations is gross national product (GNP) (Chan Yul Yoo 1990: 11). This particular variable is held to be an 'indicator of the size of the internal market' as well as 'an indicator of military potential' relevant to 'the study of political power' (Olafsson 1998: 10). Our cases range from affluent European and Asian

countries that fail the test of small nationhood with regard to the GNP indicator while meeting it in other respects, to one of the poorest countries of the world, Burkina Faso. On the assumption that smaller figures are easier to compare than larger ones, the break-down provided here refers to GNP on a per capita basis and in US dollars: Ireland: 41,000; Iceland: 35,700; Denmark: 34,800; Hong Kong: 34,000; Singapore: 28,600; Taiwan: 27,500; New Zealand: 25,300; Scotland: 23,622; Bulgaria: 9,600; Tunisia: 8,200; Cuba: 3,500; Burkina Faso: 1,200.

Miroslav Hroch introduces yet another conceptual element to the discussion. In his classic work, *The Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, Hroch foregrounds domination as a core component of small nationhood:

> We only designate as small nations those which were in subjection to a ruling nation for such a long period that the relation of subjection took on a structural character for both parties. (Hroch 1985: 9)

With its history of colonial rule in the North, Denmark must be classified as a large rather than a small nation if rule by non-co-nationals is adopted as a sole indicator of small-nation status. In all of the other eleven cases, however, questions having to do with domination, the struggle for autonomy, spheres of influence, and a balance of power are crucial for any genuine understanding of the more general social and political frameworks for small-nation filmmaking. Nine became fully independent nation-states in the twentieth century, in the case of Tunisia, Burkina Faso and Singapore between 1956 and 1963. Bulgaria has experienced independence twice: first in 1908 from the Ottoman Empire and then again in 1989 from Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe. Cuba, which became independent of Spain in 1902, was subsequently transformed by the Marxist revolution of 1959. Of the two remaining case studies, Hong Kong, once a British colony, became one of several special administrative regions of China in 1997, a change of status that was widely perceived at the time as a form of re-colonisation; and in 1999 Scotland became a devolved nation within the United Kingdom. The histories of power relevant to the small-nation status of such a range of specific places are complicated and do not lend themselves to easy generalisations or quick comparisons. The various contributions to *The Cinema of Small Nations* do, however, support the idea that the structural character assumed by rule by non-co-nationals over time is a constitutive element of small nationhood.

The Cinema of Small Nations presents a multifaceted working definition of small nationhood encompassing four indicators of size. The twelve cinemas were selected not only with these indicators in mind, but also with a view to

bringing other potentially relevant issues into focus, particularly with regard to the thematic aboutness of a given nation's films, or the role that film might play as a form of public criticism or critical intervention. Some of the states or nations are ethnically and culturally homogeneous while others are highly diverse. Some of the contexts are officially bilingual, others officially monolingual, and others unofficially multilingual. These differences may ultimately have no implications for the general concept of small nationhood, but they do have a clear bearing on the particular way in which small nationhood manifests itself in any given case.

It is important to underscore that the term 'small nation', which contrasts with 'large nation', is not proposed here as a definitive categoriser reflecting essential and unchangeable properties, nor as an implicit affirmation of putatively great nations. The point of an analytic of small nationhood in connection with the institutional bases and outputs of a range of cinemas marked by partially overlapping problems is not to engage in a process of demeaning labelling, but to identify inequities and injustices that call for change. In this sense, small nationhood, at least with regard to some of its facets, refers to a situation requiring change. This is particularly true of low GNP and domination as features of the small nation phenomenon. A second motivation for the development of a comparative analytic of small nationhood has to do with the possibility of identifying strength in apparent weakness, and solutions that might be transferable.

An important feature of the literature on small nations, and particularly of those writings produced by members of small nations, is to call attention not only to the challenges of small nationhood, but also, potentially, to the opportunities. Working primarily with population as a measure of size, Olafsson, for example, argues that 'the citizen of a small state has a better possibility to influence decision making than a citizen in a large state' (1998: 14), and this is a point that harmonises with at least some of our cinematic cases. And in *Realism and Interdependence in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, N. Ganesan evokes a 'siege mentality' associated with concerns about 'political survival and national viability' in the face of 'limited land area, small population base and the relative absence of natural resources' in order subsequently to show that such adverse factors have led to policies that effectively augment the 'state's limited endowments' (2005: 1–2). Small nationhood need not be a liability nor a clear sign of sub-optimality, and the task in any analytic of small nationhood associated with film is thus a dual one: to identify those factors that are genuinely debilitating and caught up with questionable power dynamics; to pinpoint strategies that ensure access, visibility and participation; and to transform these strategies, through analysis, into cultural resources that can be appropriated in, and adapted to, other circumstances.

THE VEXED QUESTION OF THE NATION IN FILM STUDIES

The absence of fully developed concepts of small nationhood in film studies has required an engagement with the findings of other fields. It is time now, however, to return to film studies, and to situate *The Cinema of Small Nations* in relation to the current debates concerning national and transnational cinema. To return to Dudley Andrew's observation at the beginning of this introduction, the concept of 'national cinema' continues to feature strongly in Anglophone film studies and global film culture more generally. Moreover, the increasing interest on the part of Western film scholars in the idea of 'world cinema' has extended the range of studies of individual national cinemas beyond the long-established focus on North American and European cinemas to embrace the post-colonial and emergent national cinemas of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Yet all of this is happening at the same time that the status of the nation state – as the primary unit of economic, political and cultural differentiation in the world system – is being brought into question by the impact of globalisation. Key factors here include the aggressively transnational imperative of finance capital, the deregulation of markets, the increasing geographical mobility of labour, and the global penetration of communications networks facilitating business, information, entertainment and other forms of cultural exchange. These developments have rendered the boundaries of the nation-state porous and have also weakened the regulatory control of governments, thereby eroding the sense, and indeed the reality, of national autonomy. While advocates of globalisation argue that such change has brought greater freedom, opportunity, choice and diversity (Cowen 2002), it is also clear that globalisation has served the economic, political and cultural interests of certain parties more than others, raising concerns about a new era of American or Western imperialism and attendant cultural homogenisation or standardisation (Jameson 2000). Certain manifestations of resistance to the negative effects of globalisation may have taken a defensive nationalist form, but neo-liberal globalisation has also led to the emergence of alternative oppositional networks including various non-governmental organisations (or NGOs) that can be seen as constituting alternative forms of globalisation, or 'globalisation from below' (Appadurai 1997, 2001).

With regard to the cinema, one of the most visible consequences of globalisation has been the consolidation of the American motion picture industry as the dominant international player. While aggressively engaged in the cultivation of overseas markets from as early as the 1910s, Hollywood has been able to intensify its grip on global distribution and exhibition as a result of the impact of neo-liberalism on trade practices and terms. The US government has actively assisted Hollywood's efforts along these lines, and Hollywood's apparently unassailable position within the domain of screen entertainment is one that corresponds

closely to America's political, economic and military status as the world's only super-power in the post-Cold War era. As Toby Miller et al. note in their detailed analysis of 'global Hollywood', over the past fifteen years American films have doubled their share of the international market, accounting for between 40 and 90 per cent of national box office revenues around the world (Miller et al. 2005). This process of consolidation has been reinforced by a vigorous campaign by the American motion picture industry through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and since 1995 the World Trade Organization (WTO). As is well known, the relevant global trade negotiations have often been a matter of the United States exerting pressure on competitors to reduce or eliminate any barriers to free and open access to markets. A poignant recent example of this can be found in South Korea, where a thriving film industry with regional significance and considerable local support, both at the level of audiences and in terms of cultural policy, found itself reeling from US demands concerning screen quotas.

The transformative effect of globalisation on the international motion picture industry has had other significant implications for the nature of national film industries and film policy. As Miller et al. argue, the traditional binary model that pitted an essentially commercial, free-market and internationally oriented industrial model (Hollywood) against a culturally-informed and state-subsidised model (European national cinemas) has been superseded by a 'new international division of cultural labour' (Miller et al. 2005: 50–110). Once again building on established practice, this new order is founded on an intensification of Hollywood's direct participation in the production sectors of other national film industries – most notably Canada, the UK and Eastern Europe – through an increase in runaway and co-production initiatives. While fluctuating currency exchange rates have dictated the relative cost benefits of producing films in various countries, American producers have also been enticed by a number of inducements offered by national governments including tax breaks, subsidies and related forms of assistance. What is significant here is the indication that national film policy has become less concerned with protecting local production or culture perceived as being under threat from Americanisation, and instead is embracing the putative benefits of the new international division of cultural labour, most notably the substantial levels of inward investment that major Hollywood-funded productions bring in terms of local employment and the purchase of goods and services. This shift from a cultural to an economic imperative may chime with the neo-liberal turn in world trade but it has also generated a great deal of anxiety about the erosion of cultural difference and non-commercial filmmaking practices that might be entailed by acquiescence to a Hollywood/American agenda.

At the same time, the operation of the new international division of cultural labour in the motion picture industry can also have the effect of boosting the

international status and visibility of small or minor players. For example, the annual New Zealand Screen Production Survey for 1999–2000 noted a 62 per cent increase in total production financing from the previous year, a rise due to the production of *The Lord of the Rings* and another Hollywood-funded project, *Vertical Limit* (*Survey of Screen Production in New Zealand* 2001). *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy also provides an apposite example of just how transnational motion picture production has become. This adaptation of a well-known novel written by an Oxford don is directed by a pre-eminent New Zealand filmmaker, financed by an American studio and a German investment bank with considerable assistance from the New Zealand government through tax breaks, shot and post-produced in New Zealand by a predominantly local crew, and featuring an international cast led by American, British and Australian actors. This example interestingly suggests that cinematic transnationalism need not be synonymous with an affirmation of American imperialism. While the idiom of Jackson's trilogy may be clearly in line with the mode of popular Hollywood genre cinema, the films are clearly identified in New Zealand as local product. Much of the trilogy's profits inevitably flowed back to Los Angeles, yet the substantial inward investment generated by this US$600 million production has led to a significant upgrading of the basic infrastructure in the New Zealand film industry, and in ways that continue to benefit local as well as offshore productions.

Miller et al.'s analysis focuses primarily on industrial process issues, and the shift in film studies away from a concern with national cinema in a narrow sense towards greater interest in a transnational frame of reference also embraces questions of culture. One notable example of this kind of shift is provided by the work of the British film historian Andrew Higson. The author of a very influential essay on 'the concept of national cinema' (Higson 1989), whose wider work on British cinema has mobilised such concepts as national consensus and national heritage, Higson has more recently begun to question some of the assumptions that underpinned his earlier position. Influenced by certain strains of post-colonial thinking, Higson now advocates a post-national approach that recognises the extent to which national cultures are characterised by plurality, heterogeneity and diversity. As he puts it, 'all nations are in some sense diasporic . . . forged in the tension between unity and disunity, between home and homelessness' (Higson 2000a: 64–5). Within a specifically British context, Higson acknowledges the implications of the multi-ethnic transformation of British culture in recent decades, especially in connection with the emergence of a 'post-national' British cinema marked by cultural difference and diversity. But Higson also brings this understanding of hybridity to bear on earlier periods in British cinema, including those identified in his earlier work as forging a strong sense of national cultural consensus along ethnic lines. The suggestion at this point is that film scholars must take seriously a previously

neglected yet long-standing tradition of cosmopolitanism in British cinema, at the level of both creative personnel and textual meaning. A similar argument is developed by Tim Bergfelder in relation to European cinema, which, he contends, needs to be studied in terms of its transnational and cross-cultural dimensions and not merely as a loose federation of differentiated and bounded national cinemas. Bergfelder also invokes the significance of migration for the discursive construction of national cinemas in Europe, pointing to, among other things, the historical legacy of the dynamic inter-relations amongst the cultural centres and margins of Europe. Particularly relevant in this connection are the cosmopolitan and hybrid production studios that emerged at various historical moments in Berlin, Paris, London and Rome. Bergfelder's rejection of the more traditional conception of European cinema as a defensive response to the economic and cultural encroachment of Hollywood effectively disputes the idea of American cinema as the primary determining cultural and industrial force in the creation of European cinema on both a national and a regional level, highlighting instead the workings of a quite different kind of internal geo-cultural dynamic.

The search for alternative perspectives on transnational relations in cinema where Hollywood does not play the predominant role and is not the major beneficiary is taken up in a non-European context by Meaghan Morris in relation to Hong Kong action cinema. Morris writes:

> In an inter-Asian context, [Hong Kong action cinema] . . . allows us to reflect historically on transnational industrial as well as aesthetic imaginings, which do not solely derive from the West and which 'flow', as it were, towards and through Western cinemas as well as around the region itself. (Morris 2004: 182)

Morris goes even further, suggesting that the model of national cinema itself has to be superseded if film scholars are to avoid falling back on a situation where the norms for discussing cinema are defined by Hollywood. Hong Kong action cinema repays study, then, inasmuch as it is linked to a specific geographical production location that has brought together filmmakers from a variety of places (including East and South East Asia, Australia and the United States) and thus has helped to foster transnational interaction with a local film industry and the creation of a genuinely transnational film genre.

The above references to Miller et al., Higson, Bergfelder and Morris point to the centrality of transnational relations and interactions in the context of contemporary film studies. At the same time, questions having to do with various forms of nationhood persist. Indeed, as the discussion thus far has demonstrated, national categories continue to be invoked with reference to sites of production, exhibition, acquiescence, resistance or some form of transformation.

The unequal character of globalisation also raises the problem of structural domination and subordination within a system that may be global and international, but in which nation-states continue to function as key actors within prevailing patterns of power relations. Within film studies, the problem of such relations is probed in a provocative way by Paul Willemen, who identifies some of the problems associated with the increasing international focus in Western cinema studies. (This essay was initially published in 1994 before the recent vogue for trans- or even post-national discourse but the caution remains pertinent, particularly given the kind of progressive claims frequently made for extra-national perspectives.) The problems Willemen identifies include the neo-colonial imposition of Euro-American paradigms on non-Western films; the assumed universality of film language, which has the effect in some contexts of undermining local knowledge; and the forced (as well as elective) internationalism imposed on national film industries, frequently on economic grounds, which can serve to marginalise non-mainstream and oppositional practices in the name of marketability. Willemen is also at pains to differentiate discourses of nationalism and national identity from those centred on the specificity of a given national or cultural formation. While the former have tended to reinforce the kind of homogenising perspectives on national cinema that have inspired some critics to turn to more transnational frameworks, the engagement with national or cultural specificity remains, in Willemen's view, both legitimate and necessary. In their introduction to a recent volume of essays theorising national cinema, Willemen and his colleague Valentina Vitali describe the complex relationship between cinema and the national as follows:

> It is precisely as discursive terrains for struggle between dominant and non-dominant forces over the power to fix the meaning of the given narrative stock that films can be seen not to 'reflect', but to 'stage' the historical conditions that constitute 'the national' and, in the process, to 'mediate' the socio-economic dynamics that shape cinematic production along with the other production sectors governed by national industrial regulation and legislation. (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 8)

Following this line of argument, the most important dimension of a national cinema is its mode of address. For Willemen this cultural *raison d'être* is a much more fundamental consideration than the nationality of the filmmaker or the origin of the production finance (Willemen 2006: 34).

In a similar vein, Chris Berry reaffirms the significance of a national frame of reference in film studies by calling for a paradigm shift in how the relationship between national and transnational concepts and questions is to be understood. Berry identifies three examples (pertaining to global relations, the international film industry, and the discourses of film studies) of the kinds of developments

that require attention to both national and transnational issues. First, while the onward march of economic globalisation and free trade has eroded the idea of the nation-state as the primary actor within the world system, new nation-states and national disputes continue to proliferate around the world, frequently stimulated by the very same processes of globalisation. Second, in the context of cinema production the growth of international co-productions and transnational networks of distribution and exhibition has cast doubt on the idea of national film industries as a paradigm; yet, anxiety about local film production and film culture continues to inform policy, and national labels remain salient in the international marketing and understanding of particular films. Third, the emphasis on a more transnational perspective in cinema studies coexists with, and sometimes even articulates, an abiding interest in national phenomena that are sustained by the very forces that threaten them. Berry thus insists on the need to explore the full range of ways in which a concept of nation remains relevant to film studies. His most recent book, entitled *China on Screen* and co-authored with Mary Farquhar, takes up this task with great force and lucidity. Indeed, the case of Chinese cinema, which embraces the cinematic production of Hong Kong, Taiwan and the People's Republic, facilitates a productive analysis of transnational/national dynamics in which culture and ethnicity, rather than territorial boundaries, play a dominant role. For Berry and Farquhar, the challenge is precisely to transform the study of national cinemas into the study of cinema and its relation to national phenomena, the ultimate goal being to grasp the specificity of various contemporary and historical conjunctures rather than imposing a necessarily reductive or homogenising framework of national identity upon the complexity of a particular cultural, spatial and political conjuncture.

Locating Small National Cinemas

These debates in film studies are marked by a certain conceptual slippage between an array of different terms – international, transnational, postnational, global and even diasporic – deployed to describe and analyse relationships and systems operating above and beyond the level of the nation. Greater specificity is required here, particularly if we are to develop a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of the global system and how it impacts upon the individual and collective examples of small national cinemas considered in this volume. A useful start to such a conceptual differentiation is provided by the political scientist Peter Katzenstein, who two decades ago wrote a very illuminating book on the political and economic advantages enjoyed by small European nations during the initial stages of what we now understand as the emergence of a new global phase in late capitalism (Katzenstein 1985). In a new work entitled *A World of Regions: Asia and*

Europe in the American Imperium, Katzenstein focuses on the nature of contemporary global and international relations in a world defined in terms of 'porous regions interacting with an American imperium'. For our purposes here, two key elements in Katzenstein's account prove particularly useful. First, his conceptualisation of a global system in which a central player achieves a position of pre-eminence while being transformed by the very process in question helps to clarify the workings of a global film industry dominated by Hollywood and its new international division of cultural labour. The latter may have served to promote American national interests, but has also worked against these same local interests inasmuch as it has facilitated the involvement of non-American corporate interests (such as Sony's and Vivendi's) in Hollywood as well as an increase in offshore production, the result being high levels of unemployment in the California labour market. Second, Katzenstein makes a cogent case for viewing globalisation and internationalisation as distinct phenomena contributing in different if interlocking ways to the dynamics of a contemporary world of regions:

> I define *globalisation* as a process that transcends space and compresses time. It has novel transformative effects on world politics. I define *internationalisation* as a process that refers to territorially based exchanges across borders. It refers to basic continuities in the evolution of the international state system. Globalisation highlights the emergence of new actors and novel relations in the world system, internationalisation the continued relevance of existing actors and the intensification of existing relations. Territorially based international processes permit continued differences in national practices. Nonterritorial global processes push toward convergence of national differences and also toward a wide variety of local processes of specific adaptation to global changes. (2005: 13)

Globalisation, Katzenstein claims, serves to erode the cohesion of nations, whereas internationalisation reaffirms the nation-state as the primary actor in the world system. While the concepts of globalisation and internationalisation lie at the heart of divergent interpretations of the contemporary world system, what is important is the interaction between the two and how they serve to make regions essentially porous. The call for careful attention to both globalisation and internationalisation, and especially their reciprocal dynamics, is relevant to the study of film where it points to some possible solutions to the recurrent conundra associated with discussions of national, transnational and global issues. As analysed by Katzenstein, the complementary inter-relation between globalisation and internationalisation provides a framework for understanding the kinds of tension between national and global perspectives or commitments which Berry identifies. Globalisation may underpin the emergence of the new

international division of labour, including the new emphasis on transnational production and distribution and a near-simultaneous global release, and lend credence to cosmopolitan or diasporic perspectives on cultural production, but internationalisation informs the national schemes of film funding that continue to exist in many countries. Internationalisation is also at work in the branding of films as particular national products aimed at a global market place, just as it informs the ways in which audiences make sense of films (including those from Hollywood) as expressions of particular nationally specific cultures.

Limited size has arguably rendered the impact of these processes of globalisation and internationalisation even more intense in the case of small nations than in large nations. Small nations by definition have very limited domestic markets for all locally produced goods and services – including culture – and so have been forced by the neo-liberal economic and political pressures of globalisation into a greater dependency on external markets. At the same time many small nations have emerged out of twentieth-century processes of decolonisation and liberation struggles and consequently have a strong vested interest in nation-building and the maintenance of a strong sense of national identity relevant both internally and externally to the nation. The specific ways in which these apparently contradictory forces are negotiated are a recurring theme in the various case studies here. Some of the small nations featured in this volume have been producing films since the silent era, but the idea of a specifically national cinema gained currency across the world in the 1970s and 1980s as part and parcel of the wider transformations that have refashioned global relations over the last thirty years. While the cultural and political value of the moving image in nation-building was quickly recognised in some nations, particularly following independence from former colonial rule and in connection with other revolutionary struggles, in other cases the opportunities for filmmakers to address the complex specificity of national formations, post-colonial or otherwise, took time to arise. In examples where the state has assumed a central role in determining the political or ideological content of films, internal tensions and even conflicts have also arisen around the production of independent or oppositional representations and as a result of various systems of censorship. The essays on Tunisia, Cuba, Burkina Faso and Singapore all identify such tensions, which are integral to the process of development towards democratic institutions and the recognition of an inclusive and heterogeneous civil society. Filmmakers can also experience forms of creative limitations if non-commercial funding is scarce or the local industry is over-reliant on overseas sources of production finance or markets. This has been an issue in nations with a tradition of single party domination such as Taiwan and Bulgaria, but also in more politically pluralistic small nations such as Ireland, New Zealand and Scotland.

Central to the creation and consolidation of a national cinema has been the establishment of national institutions – such as the Irish Film Board, the Danish

Film Institute, the New Zealand Film Commission, the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos, and the Société Anonyme Tunisienne de Production et d'Expansion Cinématographique – and of funding initiatives designed to encourage, nurture and support film production and a wider national film culture. The impulse in question has found diverse expression in different parts of the world. In Western Europe, for example, a concept of culture has played a decisive role, with film being construed as deserving of public, state support *qua* culture. In Third World post-colonial or revolutionary states, such as Burkina Faso, Tunisia and Cuba, state support for the moving image has served a more properly political function linked to the project of building a new independent nation and forging a national identity. South East Asia brings to light yet another permutation, for here state involvement has traditionally been aligned with more regionally focused commercial imperatives that have created opportunities for production but often within tightly defined cultural and generic parameters. However, in Europe, the traditional sense of bounded and differentiated national cinemas has always been more difficult to maintain in the case of small nations and consequently, in addition to nationally specific initiatives, filmmakers have benefited from sources of pan-European support (MEDIA, Eurimages), regional initiatives (the Nordic Film and TV Fund) or co-production sources often located in the metropolitan centres (Channel Four, Canal +). Former colonial relationships – for example, the UK with Ireland, France with Burkina Faso, Spain with Cuba – have also ensured a source of external funding for filmmakers in some small nations, predicated in each case on a cultural or linguistic bond. But whether particular institutional arrangements favour a primarily centrifugal or centripetal momentum in terms of national engagement (i.e. either oriented outwards by creating nationally branded culture for a wider international arena/market or inwardly focused and addressing a specifically domestic audience), there is evidence of both cultural diversity and a simultaneous inward/outward impulse in all of the small national film industries/film cultures presented here.

Under globalisation state support has been influenced by a new international division of cultural labour, with economics competing with, and at times eclipsing, culture as the primary rationale for funding. In some small nations this has led to a certain tension between two conflicting visions, the one favouring subsidies for film as both culture and a vehicle for a politics of recognition, and the other a more market-oriented investment in cultural industries allied to other potential sources of foreign earnings, such as tourism. While the emergence of a cultural industries agenda in places like New Zealand and Scotland may have raised fears of the overt commodification of culture, in some of the more economically vulnerable nations globalisation has had serious consequences for the actual viability of local production. The essays on Burkina Faso, Cuba and Bulgaria drive this point home, and in ways that have clear relevance for other

African, Latin American and Eastern European cinemas. In different ways the smallness of small national cinemas has ensured that the effects of the external forces that structure and drive the global system are felt all the more keenly, a constant reminder of the predicament of small nations as actors in the global economy.

However, this does not give us the whole picture. The WTO's neo-liberal economic agenda has also had an impact on the film industries of richer countries such as Taiwan, Singapore and New Zealand, where it has allowed the dominant players in the global system to enhance their market positions, although not always with purely negative local effects. The analysis of contemporary small national cinemas also reveals the emergence of regional networks and alliances that are providing transnational alternatives to the neo-liberal model of globalisation driving contemporary Hollywood. In some instances these alternatives find a basis in supranational initiatives aimed at both large and small nations, examples including the aforementioned MEDIA and Eurimages programmes launched by the European Union. In other cases, transnational networks have been fuelled by a focal awareness of small nationhood, and by film practitioners' desire to build lasting relationships with people who are perceived to be grappling with similar problems or to be inspired by similar ideals. Relevant in this connection are the now quite substantial relations between Denmark and Scotland, and the 'affinitive transnationalism' (Hjort, forthcoming) to which sustained interaction between this small nation and sub-national entity gives rise. What this affinitive transnationalism also highlights is the important role that individual initiatives and artistic leadership can play as a complement or alternative to cultural policy in small-nation contexts. The most visible example of this form in the past decade has been the Danish Dogme 95 initiative which not only helped to rejuvenate the fortunes of one small national cinema, but also became an alternative form of global cinema based on a radically different set of aesthetic, economic and cultural priorities and practices from those underpinning Hollywood (Hjort 2005). The Dogme legacy can also be discerned in the new 'Advance Party' initiative involving Danish and Scottish filmmakers working closely together in ways that represent a new moment of devolution away from the idea of national specificity in the Scottish case (Murray, this volume).

The essays in this volume all engage with ways in which the form and content of films connect with both national and global determinants. In line with many of the most incisive accounts of cinema and nation, the analyses call attention to the complexity of national formations, and to the differences and conflicts that are key features of their histories. Sometimes the tensions that inform and animate, or occasionally hamper, national production relate directly to questions of political power and censorship, as well as to a process of self-critique aimed at creating the conditions for pluralistic and democratic modes

of expression. In other cases the decisive tensions have to do with competing national and cosmopolitan or international frames of reference. Some small national cinemas are comprised of what Dina Iordanova calls 'parallel industries'. Whereas one of these industries is small and both locally focused and anchored, the other is externally owned and run, and in every way part of the global film industry. In other small national cinemas difference manifests itself in distinct types of product, aimed at specific audiences. This kind of differentiation draws on various models of cinematic practice such as the First/Second/Third Cinema framework and its possible extension to Fourth or indigenous cinema, as in the case of settler societies such as New Zealand. What is also significant is that, in the case of a small national cinema, all of these dimensions are oriented towards a global as well as a local audience, whether that of the ubiquitous multiplex, the cosmopolitan art house or the specialised festival.

While globalisation and internationalisation may have impacted negatively on some small national cinemas, they have created opportunities that others have grasped, with some enjoying unprecedented international visibility as a result. By virtue of an ecology that is specific to various measures of size, small national cinemas repay careful attention at a time when film scholars are looking for positive definitions of world cinema, for evidence of the diverse ways in which global forces affect local cinematic contexts, and for conceptual models that acknowledge that cinema is caught up in a web of international relations and not merely in an ongoing drama with Hollywood.

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