

## **Investigating Migrant Cityscapes: London and Los Angeles c. 1960**

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Migrants fabricate their place in the city and their use of the city's landscape; observers re-construct and re-interpret these social and physical maps for their own purposes. Both migrants and their observers undergo a process that Marshall Sahlins calls 'a more or less self-conscious fabrication of culture in response to imperious outside "pressures"'. This paper considers two films as records of contemporary ethnographic investigation into the communities and neighbourhoods made by Native Americans in the Bunker Hill, Los Angeles, and by African-Caribbeans in Notting Hill, London. *The Exiles* (dir. Kent Mackenzie, 1961) and *Sapphire* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1959) depict rural migrants traversing the early post-war metropolis, construct urban migrant landscapes as well as reflect on the creation of the migrants' place and non-place in the city. Identifying to varying degrees with their subjects, the films employ social actors to authenticate both the presence of the migrant community and the documentary effect. Moreover these two films promote political awareness, yet at the same time manipulate the migrants' cityscape in order to meet as well as to shape supposed audience expectations. As historical documents, *The Exiles* and *Sapphire* remake urban migrant belonging and exclusion, the procedures of looking and interpretation which produce these states, and the struggle for control over the migrant image.

