Cultivating Audiences: *Filmbildung*, Moral Education, and the Public Sphere in Germany

by

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Chapter One

Film Competence, Film Literacy, and Film Education

Shortly after I had arrived in Germany in October 2006 to conduct dissertation fieldwork on film education, the newly founded federal *Filmkompetenzagentur* (*Film Competence Agency*) organized a large national congress on *Filmbildung* (film education).[1] The congress was held at a large movie theater inside Berlin's bustling *Potsdamer Platz*, a public square located in the heart of the reunified city. Formerly divided by the Berlin Wall, the square was rebuilt in the late 1990s by a number of international architects and investors and now includes a major train station, several international hotels, a shopping arcade, a casino, a film museum, and the headquarters of Berlin's annual international film festival, *Berlinale*.

I was excited about this opportunity to catch a first glimpse of the phenomenon I had set out to study, and to meet some of the people who participated in and shaped the debates I had followed with great interest from afar. In the years leading up to my fieldwork and while I completed my doctoral coursework at the University of Michigan, I had read press releases and newspaper articles about the German government's campaign to promote film education. German politicians and spokespersons of state organizations reiterated that film could be used to teach youth about relevant cultural and political issues, and stressed the importance of teaching youth how to become "film competent."

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[1] While I have used the term education here for the sake of brevity, it does not reflect the cultural history of the German word *Bildung*. I discuss the origins and history of this term in greater detail below.

They argued that learning to analyze films provided youth with a set of skills that would allow them to weigh arguments and, consequently, to make informed choices. These claims had been echoed by educators as well. I was intrigued by all the attention and activities around "film literacy" and "film competence." Why did the German government and the German public consider the medium of film worthy of so much state concern and state support at this time? How did different programs interpret and implement efforts toward film education? Throughout my fieldwork, I was particularly interested in the *assumptions* that people held about the medium of film, and in understanding why they expected *Filmbildung* to lead to greater social, interpersonal, and political competence among young people. I hoped that analyzing their expectations and assumptions would allow me to explain why the German government and the German public treated film education as so crucial to civic education in the early 21st century.

Movies and Morality

During my first year of fieldwork, I attended a matinee movie screening of a German coming of age film that I call *Love and Soccer*[2] at a small movie theater in West Berlin. Located inside a youth club, this movie theater occasionally offered educational screenings for students and their teachers. The staff members of an organization that I call Cinebureau[3] had organized this screening as part of a state-wide event, Cineweek, which I describe in greater detail in Chapter Four. Cinebureau was a rather small

[2] In accordance with IRB regulations, the names of all institutions and individuals in this chapter are pseudonyms unless otherwise noted. To protect the identity of some of the individuals who were associated with the production, promotion, circulation of films, I have additionally disguised their identity by changing some of the information about the products they promoted. The names of the agencies that are integrated into the bureaucratic structures of the German government, namely the Agency for Civic Education and the Federal Film Competence Agency, have not been changed.

organization, and their staff members had invited me to help out with different tasks during the Cineweek. They had asked me to attend this screening and to welcome the participants, a class of fifth graders, as well as to introduce a special guest who had been involved in the production and promotion of the film, a man named Mark. The film is a coming of age comedy about Sophie, a Berlin teenage girl whose life centers around two strong passions – becoming a physicist and meeting a young European prince who shares her passion for science. When she learns that her school's soccer team is going to participate in a tournament chaired by the prince himself, Sophie overcomes her dislike of sports and takes private soccer lessons from an athletic male classmate in order to qualify for the tournament. The fact that Sophie even skips her Hebrew lessons in order to practice soccer soon leads to conflict with her Jewish American mother who insists that Sophie develop a stronger interest in her Jewish identity. Over the course of the film, Sophie reconciles her interest in science and her atheism with her Jewish heritage, comes to terms with her parents' pending separation, and falls in love with her classmate and soccer coach.

After the film ended, Mark asked the students if they had any questions about the film. A number of students asked whether Sophie had the same hobbies and interests "in real life" as she did in the film. Mark attempted to explain that the characters in the film were played by professional actors whose real lives and interests were often different from the roles they played on the screen. Nonetheless, the students continued to ask whether Sophie lived in Berlin; some also claimed to recognize the neighborhoods in which the film had been shot. After answering their questions, Mark asked "What did you think about the fact that Sophie is Jewish?" None of the students replied. After a few

seconds of silence, he said, “Well, what do you think? Did you know that there was such a large Jewish community in Berlin?" The students still did not respond. Finally, one student asked “Is Sophie’s mother really an American?” Mark explained that the actress playing Sophie’s mother was in fact Bulgarian, and began a long explanation about the difficulties of dialect coaching for films. A few minutes later, the teachers signaled that they and their students had to return to their schools, and Mark officially closed the discussion by thanking everyone for attending.

After the event had ended, Mark and I walked to a nearby streetcar stop. While we waited for the streetcar to arrive, I asked Mark what he thought of the screening and discussion. He said “I think it’s really important to make a film about a Jewish girl in Berlin today just to show people that Jewish life continues to exist in this country. But the students don’t want to talk about that.” He then explained that he had encountered similar responses when discussing the movie with students in other cities, and that the students were mainly interested in talking about the love story that is contained within the movie.

Mark suggested that the students’ non-uptake of Sophie’s Jewish identity was indicative of a national unease surrounding talk (or rather, silences) about Jewish culture and Jewish history in post-Holocaust, reunified Germany. In fact, a number of recent German comedies directed by Jewish filmmakers had tried hard to move away from depictions of Jewish life that mainly centered on persecution and the Holocaust. While Mark might have correctly identified the students’ reluctance to talk about Jews in Germany as part of a larger national sentiment, it is also important to consider that young teenagers in Germany and elsewhere may, of course, be more drawn to a film’s love

subplot than to its discussion of a[4] girl's quest for her cultural and spiritual identity. However, most importantly, Mark's comments illustrated his hope that watching a teenage comedy might inspire a conversation about a politically and socially relevant topic, as well as his frustration that this strategy had been failing.

I have selected this vignette not to comment on the depiction of the Holocaust in popular culture in Germany but because it illustrates the gap between the goals of what people expected film education to accomplish and the actual conversations about film education. In this way, it resembles many of the conversations and encounters that I witnessed during my fieldwork, where group discussions after movie screenings rarely led to the kinds of teaching moments that educators had expected. What made this particular encounter remarkable and perhaps unusual was the fact that Mark openly acknowledged the differences between his expectations and the actual conversation that had taken place. Most other educators did not comment on the discrepancies between the official goals and the on the ground implementation of film education.

In this dissertation, I investigate the origins of some of the official discourses about film education, and compare and contrast them with the ways in which individuals and organizations across the country interpreted and promoted film education. My data suggest that there existed a significant mismatch between the official goals that the film education programs promoted and their actual practices. My analysis challenges the claims made by the German government and other institutions that film education allows young people to develop strong empathetic, communicative, interpersonal, and analytical skills that are important for future citizens.

[4] For example, *Alles auf Zucker* (2004) by Daniel Levi.

Methodologies: Doing Multi-Sited Fieldwork

I was born and raised in (West) Germany and am a native speaker of German, but completed most of my academic training in the United States and Canada. Aside from a two-year long stay in Berlin and Freiburg (2001-2003), I had spent my entire adulthood living in North America until I returned to Germany in the fall of 2006 to conduct dissertation fieldwork. During 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork, I engaged in participant observation, and conducted interviews in rural and urban settings across East and West Germany. The majority of my research took place in three cities that are well known for film and television production in contemporary Germany: Hamburg, Berlin, and Munich. In Hamburg and Berlin, I conducted interviews with staff members of two cultural organizations that offered film education programs for children and teenagers, EduFilm in Hamburg, and the Cinebureau in Berlin. I attended many of their events, spent time in their offices where I helped out with different organizational tasks, and participated in the educational movie screenings for high school students and teachers that they organized and that I either attended as an observer, as a co-facilitator, or as a facilitator.[5] In addition, I conducted short term research in small towns in Northwest, Southeast, and central Germany, where I attended film festivals and participated in training seminars for educators. I joined teams of filmmakers who visited schools to teach week-long filmmaking workshops, I got to know a group of teachers who used filmmaking to teach their students particular social and academic skills, and I talked to teachers who took their students to the movies to provide them with an educational experience. Despite the wide geographic range of my fieldsites, many of the people with

[5] I describe and analyze the work of the film facilitators in greater detail in Chapters Three and Four.

whom I worked knew one another through their membership and participation in various professional organizations and often saw each other at professional development workshops and film festivals throughout the year.[6] Having read about film education programs for teachers, I expected to spend a significant portion of my fieldwork with people who offered film education trainings for teachers and social workers. Since many approaches focused on training teachers and professionals who would pass on their knowledge to their students or the young people with whom they worked,[7] I was interested in studying the transfer of knowledge from "experts" to teachers. Building on linguistic anthropology literature on language socialization (Ochs and Schieffelin 1984; Mertz 1996; Collins 1996) I wanted to investigate how teachers and social workers acquired new types of knowledge, and how they then passed it on to their students or the young people with whom they worked. While I participated in training sessions about incorporating movie screenings into the classroom, or about choosing appropriate films to show at youth centers, I also met a number of professionals who engaged in *making* films with young people. Many of them were so-called media pedagogues (*Medienpädagogen*) who had trained as educators with a special emphasis on using different arts and crafts (ranging from producing community radio programs and running student newspapers and making films).

A Cure for "Film Dyslexia": The Film Competence Agency

From 2002 onward, politicians and media scholars increasingly voiced concern about a perceived "film dyslexia," among young people, and called for efforts to teach

[6] In some cases, I also acted as a liaison between members of different groups and introduced different individuals to one another.

young people how to become "film competent."[8] Politicians and educators were especially concerned about the possible negative influence of violent movies and computer games on the minds and behaviors of young people. These concerns were partly sparked by a series of unprecedented shootings in high schools across Germany (where gun control laws are significantly stricter than in the United States), which led to debates about the danger of so-called "killer video games," such as the game *Counter-Strike*. At the same time, in official speeches experts emphasized the potential of film to help young people acquire "intercultural competence" and "media competence."[9]

This concern about media competence had been partly given voice by politician Christina Weiss, who had become the State Minister for Culture and Media in 2002. The office of State Minister for Culture and Media had been created by Germany's former chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, during the late 1990s, and Weiss was only the second person to hold this office. During her tenure, Weiss, who holds degrees in comparative literature and art history and whose dissertation investigated how children process visual images, focused on promoting the importance of the visual arts. Weiss coined the term "film dyslexia"[10] to describe children's and teenagers' perceived inability to "read films critically." Just as young people needed to learn how to read, understand, and interpret written texts, said Weiss, they also needed to learn how to apply these abilities to visual texts or films to be able to handle the "flood of images" (*Bilderflut*) that regularly invaded their lives (ibid.). The terms "film dyslexia" and "flood of images" soon

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[7] The German term for this role is *Multiplikatoren;* I have not yet found an adequate translation.

[8] The German term "Filmleseschwäche" (film dyslexia or, literally, film reading weakness) builds on the German colloquial term for dyslexia, "Lese-Rechtschreib-Schhwäche" (lit., reading-writing weakness).

[9] For example, the head of the Film Competence Agency, Sarah Duve, highlighted these aspects in her opening speech at the Film Competence Congress, October 26, 2006.

appeared in a number of interviews and official statements about film education. For example, in a 2003 interview, Barbara Mounier, one of the founders of an initiative that had been the precursor to the Film Competence Agency, explained the need for film education as follows:[11]

> In the past decades, our world has changed significantly in the direction of media – away from a world in which words and books are at the center to a world of images [*Bilderwelt*]. We are convinced that children should deal with this daily flood of images, and learn to better understand it. Watching films is an emotional experience. It is important that young people do not lose their critical view in this medium of fascination. We want to discuss movies with students directly on location, in the cinema, and to collectively get to know the language of film. The teachers now have the opportunity to use well-made films to explain to their students how a story works in a film. That way young people get to know the quality characteristics and learn to separate good films from bad films.

The demand that young people learn to talk about films and, importantly, learn to distinguish quality films from less edifying films, continued to inform subsequent discussions about *Filmbildung*. In the spring of 2003, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*), a government agency, organized a federal congress on "Film Education" in Berlin. Participants and presenters had included a number of well known directors, as well as a number of journalists, critics, and public intellectuals. At the end of the congress, the organizers published a "mandate for film competence" with the request that film appreciation and film analysis be taught to elementary and high school students in Germany.

In 2005, together with representatives of the German film industry, Weiss founded an umbrella organization, the *Filmkompetenzagentur* (Film Competence

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[10] http://www.bildungsserver.de/innovationsportal/bildungplus.html?artid=233, accessed 06-23-2011

Agency). The founding of this agency represented an important departure from previous government investments in film education, as its main task was to coordinate and streamline film education programs at the national level. Moreover, unlike previous comparable institutions, this new institution did not merely rely on state funding, but worked together with the German film industry. The Film Competence Agency was headed by Sarah Duve, a lawyer in her early 30s who had previously worked for the film industry. The Agency coordinated a number of national conferences, published an official "film canon," and generated much media attention by proclaiming the importance of film literacy and film education to civic education. Despite the Agency's remarkable media presence and quick usurpation of the activities and programs of already existing organizations, I soon learned that the activities and goals of the Film Competence Agency had remained a mystery to most of the educators, filmmakers, and teachers whom I met through my fieldwork. In fact, people often turned to me to ask if I had any information about this rather nebulous organization whose name and logo had begun to circulate in political discourse as well as on some of the brochures that were published by local organizations and frequently circulated at regional and national film education workshops and film festivals.

One of the first things the Film Competence Agency co-sponsored was a translation from French into German of Alain Bergala's (2006) essay, *L'hypothese cinema. Petit traité de transmission du cinema à l'école et ailleurs*.[12] In this essay, film

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[11] See above, http://www.bildungsserver.de/innovationsportal/bildungplus.html?artid=233, accessed 06-23-2011.

[12] The German translation was published under the title *Kino als Kunst: Filmvermittlung an der Schule und anderswo* (*Cinema as Art: Film Education in School and Elsewhere*). Co-sponsored by the Film Competence Agency, it was published by the Federal Agency for Civic Education. Like most other printed materials published by this institution, this book, too, was available for the nominal fee of 2 EUR

theoretician Bergala argues for an integration of film education into the school curriculum. He posits that children of all ages can learn to recognize and appreciate good movies, and encourages educators to expose their students to a range of aesthetic and stylistic types of films throughout their childhood. The introduction to the German translation of Bergala's essay was co-authored by Sarah Duve and by the director of the Federal Agency of Civic Education. These connections signal once more the close collaboration between these two institutions. The thin book immediately received enthusiastic reviews, and became popular among professionals who attended festivals and film education events across the country. Many of my fieldwork contacts explicitly referenced Bergala's book to argue for the importance of integrating film education into school curricula, or to affirm that film was a medium worthy of serious scholarly study and deliberation.

Similarly, in her speech at the opening ceremony of the second national film competence congress in October 2006, Duve paraphrased Bergala when she highlighted the cinema's potential for fostering young people's communicative competence, their ability to empathize, and their imagination as follows: "Cinema gives meaning (*sinnstiftend*) and communicates meaning (*sinnvermittelnd*). Cinema fosters one's cognitive abilities, and can be a guide to communication. Cinema [serves] as a place of seeing and understanding in which we recognize and continue to write our stories."[13] Hence, Duve emphasized the importance of the Federal Film Competence Agency's

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(approximately one fifth of the regular sales price of most paperbacks in Germany at the time), but was often given away for free at events or conferences.

[13] "Kino ist sinnstiftend und sinnvermittelnd. Kino fördert kognitive Fähigkeiten, kann dazu leiten, zu kommunizieren. Kino als ein Ort des Sehens und Verstehens in dem wir unsere Geschichten wiedererkennen und weiterschreiben." (Sarah Duve, personal communication, October 26, 2006)

mission to teach young people cognitive and communicative abilities. By citing Bergala's observation to her own ends, Duve allowed Bergala to bolster her own claims without making it explicit that she was in fact animating (Goffman 1986) Bergala's arguments. While Duve did not use the term "public sphere," her argument that the cinema provides a forum that allows young people to "recognize and continue to write [their] stories" suggested that she acknowledged the importance of these opportunities for the development of young people who see their realities and their concerns reflected on the screen, and who are able to relate to and empathize with others–in other words, who are able to see themselves as belonging to a larger public. Importantly, Duve did not explain how being able to empathize with characters in a movie might enable viewers to learn something about their own lives. Instead, like many of her colleagues, she appeared to assume that watching films automatically enabled this process.

Similarly, throughout my fieldwork, representatives of the film industry and of the German government evoked a relationship between *Filmbildung* and *politische Bildung* (civic education, lit. political education). For example, in her speech at the 2006 Film Competence Congress, Gitta Connemann, a politician and member of parliament, argued for the importance of *Filmbildung* by stating that media competence enabled individuals to fully participate in society.[14] Hence, both Duve and Connemann linked an individual's film literacy to participation in German society without elaborating on the details of this relationship. The fact that they and many others postulated such a relationship suggests that they viewed the ability to talk about films as a necessary precursor or skill for being able to talk about political issues. Although they generally did

[14] Gitta Connemann, personal communication, 26 October 2006.

not explicitly refer to the work of the German philosopher and public intellectual Jürgen Habermas, their explanations frequently evoked Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action, and his work on the relationship between democracy and the public sphere.[15] One might therefore describe film literacy as an effort to teach a form of communicative competence to the masses without relying on traditional forms of literacy.[16]

Film Education Across Fieldsites

The ways in which educators, filmmakers, and members of educational or so-called socialcultural organizations[17] attempted to promote film education varied significantly. Professionals at each field site had specific ideas about the potential, value, benefits, and effects of teaching young people how to watch films, talk about films, or make their own films. However, all of them worried that young people needed to learn how to interact with the overload or "flood" of visual images to which they were exposed on a regular basis, whether from movies or computer games. At the same time, they expected that the medium of film could help young people cultivate important abilities such as the ability to empathize with others, the willingness to respect and be open to the experiences of others, the ability to appreciate and recognize "good" movies.[18,19]

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[15] For example, in an essay published in the fall of 2010, Habermas argues "Democracy depends on the belief of the people that there is some scope left for collectively shaping a challenging future."

[16] See Besnier (1995) and Street (1995) for analyses of literacy practices elsewhere. Also, see Alverman (2008) for a more recent analysis of online literacies among youth. My thanks go to Andrew Babson for pointing me to this last publication.

[17] I use the translation provided by Stevenson (1999).

[18] See also Decherney (2005) on how movies were established as a serious object of study in the United States.

[19] In Germany there exists a long-standing tradition of distinguishing between *U-Kultur* (*Unterhaltungs-Kultur*, or entertainment culture), and *E-Kultur* (*Ernsthafte Kultur*, or culture that is (to be taken)

Several of the individuals and organizations with whom I worked had also attended the Film Competence Congress in Berlin. The Congress had begun with an opening ceremony in the large screening room and speeches by the head of the Agency, Sarah Duve, and several politicians, followed by a series of parallel workshops on different aspects of teaching *Filmbildung* to young people. During workshops and roundtable discussions, I met media pedagogues from across the country. Many of these men and women held master's degrees in the social sciences or in education, and had experience working for organizations that provided educational programs for children and teenagers, usually funded by public money. Some had come to see old friends and to stay abreast of the programs and projects organized by other institutions. Others were unemployed or underemployed and hoped that attending the congress would provide opportunities for networking and, possibly, future employment. Many engaged in freelance work for various educational programs or in after-school media workshops. Many of these people knew one another because they had studied together, or belonged to the same professional networks. Throughout my fieldwork, while attending film festivals or film pedagogy seminars across the country, I continued to cross paths with people whom I had first met at the Congress.

The Congress provided an opportunity for local and regional organizations to introduce themselves to several hundreds of conference participants from all over the country. Eager to gather any materials that might provide useful for my fieldwork, I left with two canvas bags filled with print publications. Some consisted of photocopied handouts describing the activities and services provided by an organization, while others

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serious(ly)). These distinctions originally arose from copyright laws in the early 20th century to protect less frequently played music, but Germans continue to employ them as salient distinctions in the realms of

were glossy catalogues of award-winning children's and adolescents' films, accompanied by a wealth of background information about each film, suggestions for guided film discussions, classroom activities, and other resources.

The books were either free of charge or available for a nominal fee, and the organizations that published them were funded through public money. The books usually included DVDs with film clips, together with background information about the films and guidelines for movie discussions. Those brochures served a number of functions throughout the course of my fieldwork. Over the course of my fieldwork, when attending film festivals and film education workshops across Germany, I met representatives from a range of organizations whose brochures I had seen circulate at the Film Competence Congress or at other events. Sometimes these brochures allowed me to develop a basic understanding of the organizations' funding structures and political or professional affiliations, but since these publications were part of the organizations' efforts to present themselves to a larger public, they also excluded certain kinds of information. I analyze some of these documents in this dissertation in order to compare and contrast official statements about film education to the practices I witnessed during my fieldwork.

From the Origins of Film Education to its Present Role

In this section, I describe the historical and cultural trajectory that led to the emergence and proliferation of film education in Germany, and investigate how individuals and agencies participated in discourses about film education. As we shall see, the national concern about film education legitimized the work that members of some

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everyday as well as of high culture (*Kultur*).

organizations had already been doing for years, and created new professional and financial opportunities for others.

Of course, film education is neither new, nor is it specific to Germany. Historical studies show that film education has been a concern in Germany since the beginnings of the commercial film industry in the early 1900s. Many other countries teach civic education and, in some cases, mass media education programs to young people in the hope that this education will transform them into informed young citizens who can actively participate in social and cultural life. In fact, in their demands for more attention to and funding for film education in Germany, experts often compared their own funding situation and support for film education to that in other European countries to argue that Germany "lagged behind" and needed to urgently promote and invest in film education. For example, the opening speaker at the Film Competence Congress, a member of the Federal Agency of Civic Education, emphasized that because children were exposed to media at an increasingly early age elementary schools in Germany ought to integrate film education into their curricula. Other speakers pointed out that in countries like France, Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands, film education had been integrated into the school curricula for years (field notes, October 26, 2006).

The German government's endorsement of film education as an important national goal also allowed private organizations to benefit from state subsidies for film education, and to provide services which, at least in some cases, had previously been handled by the state. However, providers were able to offer their services without being expected to document that their methods were effective, and that the young participants had in fact learned anything. I initially assumed that this lack of accountability was

perhaps an example of the unchecked reproduction of state bureaucracy. However, I gradually realized that in order to understand these apparent incongruities and beliefs about *Filmbildung* I needed to acknowledge the cultural beliefs and practices that appeared to inform this belief in film education. I did so by investigating the etymological and epistemological relatives of the concept of *Filmbildung*, namely the concept of *Bildung* and the genre of the *Bildungsroman*.[20]

From Bildung(sroman) to Filmbildung

In Germany there exists a long-standing national tradition of self-cultivation and edification through the engagement with texts—specifically, the German tradition of the *Bildungsroman* (lit., the formation novel). This genre describes the coming of age experiences of a young person, their psychological and moral growth in dealing with adversity, and their gradual acceptance of societal norms and eventual incorporation into society. This genre served a number of specific cultural and social functions in 18th and 19th century Germany when members of the bourgeoisie began to distinguish themselves from nobility to form an emancipated public sphere. Scholars have established that the role of the *Bildungsroman* played an important role in the formation of a national consciousness and identity (see Kuhn et al. 1993:13), and in the emergence of a bourgeois social sphere (see Habermas 1989).[21] The aftermath of the failed revolution of 1848 left many people who had hoped for a more democratic state feeling disillusioned and disenchanted with politics. Many turned to the intensive engagement with literature

[20] I thank Zeynep Gursel for convincing me of the relevance of this connection.

[21] Frykman and Löfgren (1987) document the emergence of a distinct middle class in 19th century Sweden through a number of cultural preferences and activities, including, for example, a professed love for nature, and a separation between work life and domestic life.

as avenue for cultivating honorable and bourgeois citizens of the future. This emphasis on the development of the self through the active engagement with literary texts represented a key aspect of the development of young people at both an individual and a social level, and fostered the development of a new national identity and a middle class identity.[22] Koselleck characterizes this belief in *Bildung* as having transformative potential as follows:

> It is characteristic of the German concept of *Bildung* that it recasts the sense of an upbringing offered from the outside (which still belongs to the concept during the eighteenth century) into the autonomous claim for a person to transform the world: in this respect, *Bildung* is fundamentally different from 'education.' Secondly, it is characteristic of the German concept of *Bildung* that it no longer refers the social circle of communication back to the politically conceived *societas civilis*, but rather, and above all, back to a society which understands itself primarily in terms of its manifold self-formation (*Eigenbildung*): in this respect, the concept of *Bildung* is different from 'civility' or 'civilization.' Finally, it is characteristic of the German concept of *Bildung* that it relates common cultural achievements, to which it also naturally refers, back to a personal, internal reflection, without which a social culture might not be possible. (2002:174)

I argue that current debates about film education in Germany represent a continuation of 19th century concerns about the role of the *Bildungsroman* for the formation of a national identity. As early 20th century scholarship by John Dewey (1916) and Emile Durkheim (1961) attests, mass-mediated moral or aesthetic education is not a new phenomenon; indeed, most nation states claim to socialize children to become responsible citizens of the future. Dominic Boyer (2005) has argued that the emergence of a German nation state was intimately linked to and built on a strong relationship

[22] Notable examples of the Bildungsroman include Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) and *The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister* (1795). Well known twentieth century examples include Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924) and Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959).

between *Bildung*, intellectuals, and the nation state. In his research on East German journalists in reunified Germany Boyer investigates how journalists experienced their relationship to the state by having to negotiate their professional ethos with the expectations of their censors and, in many cases, with their self-imposed censorship. Boyer's analysis allows us to understand that in a national context in which education, cultural, and social capital are closely linked to ideas about democracy and active civic participation, the stakes of both literacy and film literacy are high.[23]

What were some of the possible reasons for this strong yet ambivalent belief in the power of the moving image and its potential to both corrupt and foster young people's moral education? The Nazis' ubiquitous and insidious use of visual propaganda and propaganda films is well known,[24] and it is reasonable to assume that the shared concerns about young people's film competence that I observed during my fieldwork were a direct outcome of fears about the seductiveness of Nazi films, and a desire to inoculate young people against this type of propaganda. I, too, shared this assumption when I began my fieldwork. However, over time I understood that people's concerns about the perceived power of film actually echoed debates of a much earlier time, namely the film education debates in Germany of the early 1900s. Thus, the concerns that many people had about the power of movies and computer games during my fieldwork strongly resembled those that concerned teachers, social workers, religious leaders, and public intellectuals had uttered almost an entire century earlier, many years before the advent of National

[23] I revisit these issues in greater detail in Chapter Four.

[24] In Chapter Two, I describe how the Nazis worked closely with the German film industry to promote Nazi propaganda.

Socialism.[25] Hence, many of these concerns were a precursor rather than a response to the use of visual images in Nazi propaganda. Of course, the nature and the scale of Nazi propaganda were so pervasive that they fundamentally altered the terrain of relationships between film, education, propaganda, and the state. As I document in Chapter Two, film also played an important role in post-WWII re-education and redemocratization efforts. Nonetheless, I propose that understanding today's *Filmbildung* efforts in Germany in their cultural and political specificity, requires situating them in light of earlier national debates about *Bildung*. In this dissertation, I analyze some of the threads in debates about film education that continue to inform ideas about film education, connecting past and present debates about civic participation and the public sphere.

Filmbildung and German National Identity in the 21st Century

In the early years of the 21st century, Germans had to find new ways of thinking about their national identity. The fall of the Berlin Wall and East Germany's subsequent immersion into West Germany, the immigration of many "ethnic Germans" from former Soviet Union countries and a 1999 reform of citizenship law that made it much easier for former guest workers and their children to attain German citizenship (see, for example, Miller-Idriss 2009:12) have posited challenges to traditional understandings of German citizenship and identity (see White 1997). Other changes include a demographic shift and a quickly aging society, and high rates of youth unemployment, particularly among students of non-German descent, but also among young people in economically depressed parts of the country. As one of my fieldwork contacts pointed out, the last

[25] I return to these debates in greater detail in Chapter Two in which I analyze these debates in light of a number of historical sources.

cohort of children born in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), namely the cohort of students born in 1989, graduated from high school and entered the labor market during my fieldwork. At the same time, fewer and fewer historical witnesses who experienced the Third Reich continued to be alive and available to talk to young people about their experiences as perpetrators, bystanders, or survivors. As established patterns of social trajectories, values, and traditions were changing, politicians claimed that there exists an increasingly important need to teach youth to identify with democratic principles, and to transform them into active participants in society.

While politicians' demands for film competence resonated with demands for other kinds of civic competence that German politicians determined as important key competences, such as gender competence or intercultural competence, this dissertation shows that concerns about film competence and film education have influenced ways of thinking and played a significant role in debates about education in Germany for an entire century. It focuses on the potential that people associate with the medium of film. Over the course of each chapter, I explore what made film appear like a suitable (mass) medium for teaching relevant civic skills, and how practitioners approached and engaged with films in their pedagogical practices.

In Chapter Two I provide an historical account of film education programs in Germany over the course of the past one hundred years. I argue that ever since the beginnings of cinema as a form of mass entertainment politicians, public intellectuals, and educators have been concerned about the influence of movies on the general population. In my analysis of how movie-going is transformed from a leisure time activity to an educational activity in the early 20th century and how films have been used

for educational, political, and civic purposes throughout the twentieth century, my findings provide new perspectives on understanding the role of *Bildung* in an increasingly heterogeneous society.

Film education also represented an important component of civic education in both East and West Germany in the decades after WWII. Both national governments were longtime supporters of organizations that promoted a range of film-related activities for children and adolescents, including movie screenings and film discussions as well as filmmaking workshops.[26] During the 1968 revolts in West Germany, Leftist university students demanded more democracy and a more transparent and critical investigation of the still relatively recent Nazi past. During the ensuing "long march through the institutions," many educators who had been part of these social movements promoted active civic participation and the empowerment of underprivileged youth through state-funded youth centers (see also Stevenson 1999). From the 1970s onward, so-called socialcultural centers across West Germany offered after school filmmaking and photography workshops for children and teenagers. [27] A newly emerging group of professionals, so-called "Medienpädagogen" (lit., media pedagogues), treated these activities as an important aspect of socializing children to become emancipated subjects who were equipped to resist manipulation by the media. Media pedagogues argued that teaching children how to use a camera and how to edit film would enable them to understand that all media inherently involved editing and, to some extent, manipulation. Textbooks in media education from the 1970s and 1980s argued that children needed to

[26] While filmmaking workshops were popular in the FRG, I have been unable to find out whether East German institutions offered filmmaking workshops for children and adolescents in the GDR.

[27] Stevenson (1999) provides a good overview of the role and funding structures of these centers.

learn how to deal with violence in television shows, and to be able to resist the powerful messages of commercials that aimed to convert young minds into mindless consumers (see, for example, Baacke 1997; Kommer 1979). By teaching young people how to make films, educators hoped to help them become media-savvy and emancipated young people who were empowered to use the (filmic) means of production to portray and promote their own interests.

Ideologies of Media, Film, and Literacy: Between Civic Literacy and Civic Criticism

As I have detailed above, throughout my fieldwork I was unable to find any explicit statements or observations that illustrated how those who participated in conversations about film education understood the relationship between watching films, talking about films, and participating in the public sphere. Hence, the relationship between watching films, being part of an audience, and, subsequently, becoming a member of an informed public, remained implicit and under-theorized, as did the cognitive and social processes involved. Yet this absence of explicit references did not mean that those advocating for film education did not think that film education could teach young people important social and civic skills. Rather, the absence of a debate about this process illustrates the largely hegemonic position that this concept occupied in the enterprise of film education; in other words, the taken-for-grantedness of this relationship resulted in people not commenting on it.

Building on earlier work by linguistic anthropologists on the nature of language ideologies (see, for example, Silverstein 1981, Woolard 1998, Hill 1998, Gal and Irvine 2000), fellow linguistic anthropologists have recently begun to employ the term “media ideologies.” Kathryn Woolard (1998) defines language ideology as a field of inquiry that

uses claims about language and speakers as a lens for examining social and political processes. In the fall 2010 special issue on media ideologies of the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, guest edited by Ilana Gershon, a number of authors investigate the opportunities and limits of new media technologies for the participation in a democracy. Gershon argues that thinking about media ideologies and language ideologies together is a useful undertaking because "as ideologies, both language ideologies and media ideologies are multiple, locatable, partial, positioned, and contested (see Kroskrity 2000). They are reflections of people's strategies at the same time as the ideologies feed into these strategies, political in the broadest sense of the term" (Gershon 2010:284).

Intrigued by the strength of people's beliefs about film education as a social remedy, I was determined to analyze these ideologies by investigating the premises and practices of different educational approaches and programs, and to compare and contrast their aims and accomplishments. Although or precisely because my informants understood these relationships as predictable and obvious, I wanted to understand why experts, politicians, teachers, and social workers understood and advertised film literacy or film education as a form of social and (inter)cultural competence, and how they arrived at these understandings. Some believed that youth should receive guidance from adults on how to use media responsibly and to become fully "media competent." They argued that many children and teenagers had not yet learned to recognize and appreciate "good" movies in independently owned theaters rather than consuming blockbuster movies in the privacy of one's home; a concern that an unmediated inundation of Hollywood movies and low quality television programs in everyday life led to a very narrow understanding of the creative potential of making films. While none of my

informants stated this comparison explicitly, their descriptions of film education or film competence resembled descriptions of communicative competence proposed by Jürgen Habermas (1989), namely allowing people to participate in a larger discourse by acquiring the discursive and linguistic skills that they considered crucial for talking about films. Hence, ideas about traditional literacy reappeared in discourses about film literacy.

In his work on educational practices in post-Socialist Slovakia, Jonathan Larson points out that the idea that the teaching of critical thinking will lead to democratic participation rests on some very specific and very powerful understandings of civic involvement and democratic participation (2011:7). Larson argues that critical thinking has a long and politically as well as geographically and culturally diverse history, and argues that the imagined relationships between critical thinking and a commitment to democracy deserve to be analyzed rather than taken for granted. In my fieldwork, people often used the term critical thinking to describe one's ability to engage with texts, once again evoking historical connections between *Bildung* and citizenship in the German nation state (see Boyer 2005, above). Most of the individuals whom I got to know and, in some cases, befriended, were themselves the producers of a variety of texts, including print publications in literary or educational magazines, scholarly books, pedagogical guidelines, press kits and press releases, grant proposals, speeches, and policy guidelines.[28] Many of them produced a range of visual texts including documentary films, fiction films, animated films, and television productions, and were used to handling scholarly texts. When they learned about my research, several individuals told me that I first had to read what they considered to be the relevant literature in German before I

could ask any more questions. I took their suggestions seriously, and read some of the texts and monographs on "Medienkompetenz" (media competence) that they recommended and that I saw on the bookshelves in the homes and offices of my fieldwork contacts.[29]

In Chapter Three, I investigate how different organizations interpreted film literacy by focusing on the institutional conditions that shaped how these organizations marketed film education to different audiences. In an economy in which services that had previously been provided by the government were becoming increasingly privatized, "providers" drew on a dominant discourse about the importance of film education to offer their own "products." While these products and services were partly financed or at least subsidized by the German government, the government neither monitored nor evaluated their impact. In fact, many people talked about film education as an end that was worth pursuing for its own sake, rather than as a means toward fostering other educational or civic goals. Focusing on two different organizations, Cinebureau and EduFilm, I analyze how these organizations managed to present their services to audience, and how they positioned themselves in a larger field of debates about film education. In one case, a newly founded for-profit organization, EduFilm successfully marketed its approach as at the national level. In the other case, a formerly government-sponsored organization with strong ties to local communities was forced to reduce its close collaboration with individual clients in order to attract more and larger audience groups.

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[28] Using Edward Sapir's early ethnographic texts as an example, Michael Silverstein (1996) analyzes what he calls the "secret discursive life of the text(s)," and demonstrates how written texts are circulated and can be re-entextualized over time.

[29] Most commonly, people referred to the work of Dieter Baacke, a (now deceased) well known scholar of media education and author of the (1997) monograph Medienpädagogik in which he proposes a definition of Medienkompetenz.

I further explore these issues in greater detail in Chapter Four, “Between Education and Entertainment: Performing Democratic Citizenship at the Movies,” in which I focus on programs that promoted film education through collective movie screenings and guided movie discussions. By analyzing the goals and expectations of film educators, teachers, and students, I highlight the conflicting beliefs and attitudes that different parties brought to film education. I argue that facilitators and teachers expected students to discursively perform tolerance, intercultural competence, and analytical thinking skills, all of which were seen as transportable qualities that were part of a young person’s formative process or *Bildung*.

Film education efforts promoted modes of conduct that strongly reflected and promoted the traditional ideals of the educated middle class, both through speaking about film and through ways of comporting themselves in a movie theater. For example, teachers often used indirect ways of criticizing what they considered an entertaining rather than educational mode of film consumption by referring to bodily practices that they considered inappropriate: They frequently complained about their students’ interest in spending money at concession stands, about the consumption of food and beverages at movie theaters, and about students’ leaving the performances to go outside to smoke. Underlying these criticisms, as well as the evocation of entertainment versus education, were judgments and assumptions about different social classes, turning students’ comportment at the movies into a stage for performing or embodying evidence of sufficient culturedness.

Yet the film education events often *failed* to educate students. My analysis points out gaps between the expectations of students, teachers, and film educators, and shows

how film discussions did not necessarily generate an alternative and more egalitarian public sphere in which participants were invited to share and present different views imagined by Habermas.[30] Instead, group conversations about films had the potential of reproducing existing social hierarchies and silencing individual participants. My analysis reveals how the individuals and institutions I studied failed to theorize or acknowledge the relationship between individual transformation and collective civic participation, and how this mismatch contributed to severe discrepancies between their stated goals and the actual outcomes of their work. I also examine the assumptions that institutions and individuals posit about the relationship between film literacy and active civic participation in a democratic nation state.

Teaching Film Consumption through Film Production

While I prepared for my dissertation fieldwork on film education programs, I expected to spend a lot of time with professionals who specialized in teaching other professionals how to teach children and adolescents how to become film literate. I wanted to compare and contrast the approaches and ideologies of different institutions about the purpose and value of promoting film education, and I indeed spent much of my time with people who engaged in this work. I did not expect to meet so many individuals who argued that one could only become truly film literate or film educated through the experience of having made films oneself. As I illustrate in Chapter Six, some of those who advocated for an experiential and hands-on approach to film education through

[30] Scholars like Nancy Fraser (1990) and Seyla Benhabib (1992) subsequently criticized Habermas's model for its rather narrow and highly gendered interpretation of the public sphere.

filmmaking considered film as an ideal medium for helping young people develop good social skills and cultivating their creativity.

At the same time, as I argue in Chapter Five, "'A Victim Always Dies Alone': Filmmaking, Aesthetics, and Pedagogy from the Perspective of the Filmmakers," not everyone who thought that it was important for young people to learn how to make films shared the same beliefs about the political and aesthetic potential of the medium of film. Drawing on fieldwork with a group of filmmakers who taught filmmaking workshops in schools across Hamburg, I compare and contrast the expectations and understandings that filmmakers, teachers, and students bring to the process, as well as the resulting conflicts and results. My analysis is guided by the following questions: What were the stakes for the teachers and for the filmmakers? How did they view their responsibilities toward the students? How did the process and product of their collaborations differ? How was the process of filmmaking institutionalized in the school context?

Drawing on the observations I gathered while assisting with the production of three short films, I investigate the interactions between filmmakers and students, and observe how the filmmakers' presence affected the students' classroom experiences. My analysis shows that instead of teaching social competence skills these intervention programs can promote inequalities in the classroom and reinforce dominant social hierarchies. My analysis challenges the hegemonic claim on which most film education efforts rest, namely the idea that the activity of filmmaking leads to positive and empowering experiences for children and teenagers at the individual as well as at the group level. The findings of this case study, on the other hand, highlight the potential that even well-intentioned film pedagogical efforts can have counterproductive consequences.

Paired with my analysis of movie screenings in Chapter Four, this chapter challenges the assumption that *Filmbildung* fosters critical thinking skills and democratic participation.

Contrastingly, in Chapter Six, "'Film as an Instrument for Creating Social Relations': Filmmaking, Aesthetics, and Pedagogy from the Perspective of the Teachers," I investigate the practices of a group of school teachers who produced movies with their students. I analyze how these teachers socialized their students to use filmmaking as a way to develop important personal and social skills. They did not view filmmaking primarily as a means of teaching children and adolescents critical thinking skills and an awareness of social and political issues. Rather, they viewed the process of filmmaking as an ideal approach for helping students hone social and intercultural competencies, and for aiding learning processes and boosting participants' confidence in their abilities. They also demonstrated a commitment to teaching youth to explore their creativity and to develop new skills. They often told me that in their opinion, teaching students to become "film educated" (*filmgebildet*) represented a crucial aspect or at least an extension of their overall pedagogical efforts as teachers.

In Chapter Seven I revisit my argument that the analysis of the study of film education in Germany allows one to understand *Filmbildung* as a culturally, historically, and politically situated practice in early 21st Germany. My analysis of the historical and cultural trajectory that led to the emergence and proliferation of the film programs and a shared discourse about the importance of teaching film to young people in Germany also explains gaps and failures in the projected transfer of abilities and experiences from individual transformation to social and political participation. Investigating these questions through the lens of film education provides unique insights into the processes

of civic socialization, into the beliefs about the relationship between (film) literacy and participation in the public sphere, and into the linguistic and social practices that these beliefs encouraged.

Chapter Two

The History of Film Education Debates in Germany, 1909-2009

Introduction

In Chapter One I explained that the film education efforts I observed and participated in during my fieldwork in Germany represented a moment in a long and complex historical and cultural trajectory, and were closely linked to specifically German concerns about self-cultivation through striving for *Bildung*, about establishing and embodying the virtues and values of members of the educated middle class, and, ultimately, about the relationship between individuals and the nation state in the form of participation in the public sphere.

In this chapter, I describe and analyze the political and social backdrop of the history of film education in Germany over the past one hundred years in greater detail. I identify and highlight continuities as well as discontinuities, ruptures, changes, and challenges in the approaches to film education. Over time, film played an important role in the socialization efforts of young German citizens in a variety of ways. During the Wilhelmine era, the Weimar Republic, the Nazi period, the post-WW II period and the Cold War, when East and West Germany each promoted certain kinds of film viewing behaviors in conjunction with promoting different kinds of national consciousness. In this context it is especially noteworthy that a large proportion of film education efforts were geared toward young people, and that young people were seen as particularly prone to being misguided by films and thus in need of film education measures. In addition, from

the 1970s onward so-called media pedagogues in West Germany began to advocate an active and critical engagement with the media through filmmaking activities.[31] While I argue that the film education efforts that I analyze are specific to German cultural and historical traditions I also consider how other countries have approached film education. Moreover, film education efforts have both shaped and responded to political and social changes in German society, as well as to the ways in which these changes affect the lives and experiences of young people and those who teach them.[32]

Overarching Themes and Concerns

Some of the common and recurring themes I encountered dealt with the following topics: concerns about youth; concerns about social class; concerns about the relationship between literature, *Bildung*, and high culture on the one hand and about film, entertainment, and popular culture on the other hand; lastly, concerns about the use of films for political propaganda and for respectable pedagogical purposes.[33] What unites these concerns is that speakers and writers evoking them often use the trope of addiction when talking about what they identify as an unhealthy obsession or habit. Importantly in

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[31] I was not able to find similar data about East German filmmaking programs for youth. Although film screenings in youth clubs were common, I have not found any historical references to filmmaking activities for youth. Only one of the East German facilitators I met, a woman in her late 50s, had worked in this field during the times of the GDR. She had trained as an elementary school teacher, and promoted a very experiential approach to watching films that encouraged the children's active participation and fostered their imagination. For example, when organizing a movie screening about a nature-themed movie, she handed out homemade movie ticket stubs attached to pieces of bark and distributed leaves on the stage, asked the children to find their seats in the dark to enhance their listening skills, or asked the children to draw pictures about the films after the screening. Another facilitator, a young woman from West Germany who had trained as a kindergarten teacher, reported using similar techniques with small children. These experiential approaches were relatively marginal among the film education programs I observed during my fieldwork.

[32] As I illustrate in Chapter Three, the film educators whom I met during my fieldwork had very different educational trajectories as well as geographic and cultural backgrounds.

[33] The uses of film for propaganda or educational purposes are not as diametrically opposed as people often assume them to be.

the decades following WWII, both filmmakers and critics were concerned about the role of film in reflections about the German Nazi past and about German national identities more broadly. These themes are informed by a shared concern about the artistic and social potential of films as objects and about the agency they exert on viewers; about the ways in which art can mediate between individual experiences and collective participation in the public sphere; and, ultimately, with questions about the relationship between art and politics.

Moral and Middle Class Anxieties about Unadulterated Leisure Time at the Movies

Ever since moving images first became available to mass audiences in early 20th century Germany, the relationship between movies and pedagogy has been a complex and ambivalent one. Why, one might ask, have films warranted so much concern and attention? An obvious answer might be the fact that 20th century German history – which included an imperial regime as well as two different dictatorships – would lead both politicians and ordinary citizens to be suspicious of moving images and anything that could be construed as propaganda. However, concerns about young audiences date back to much earlier times. In fact, they emerged together with the first movie theaters and nickelodeons in the early 1900s, when the medium was still new (Altenloh 1914, Kommer 1979, Kaes 1978, Müller 1994). At that time, due to the newness of the medium, the concerns about young people's movie watching behaviors were linked to two main issues: the content of the movies and the spaces in which they were shown. Both were seen as having the potential to corrupt young, susceptible minds, and to deter them from focusing on more edifying and respectable leisure time activities, and from engaging in high culture. Hence, the main concerns were related to social class and the

importance of *Bildung;* they also represented an extension of earlier fears about inappropriate or "trashy" literature.[34] While these people were concerned about the physical setting of the movie theater and the potential for undesirable behavior that the unsupervised space offered, they were not as concerned about the specific qualities of the medium film itself – unlike a few decades later when people worried about the innate seductiveness of the moving images on the large screen. Also, while only a decade or two later German intellectuals began to worry about the potentially corrupting influence that the cinema had on working class people and, in particular, on working class women, the initial concerns were about youth. In later film education efforts, ranging from Nazi propaganda films to post-WWII democratization films and "critical media pedagogy" in the 1970s, young people (also in other places, as Stefanie Middendorf's research on 1960s France and Stephen Hughes's research on colonial India suggests) were seen as both the most vulnerable to manipulation and as the best suited for education through film; these two seemingly different efforts were often two sides of the same coin, or were at least situated along the same spectrum.

As early as 1909, school teachers and social workers voiced their concerns about the corrupting influence that going to the movies might have on susceptible young minds, and conducted a number of surveys and participant observation studies. These studies revealed that movie theaters provided young people with an unsupervised social space that offered a variety of pleasurable and illicit experiences. Altenloh reported that when asked about their moviegoing habits, teenage students stated that they went to the movies to spend time with their boyfriends and girlfriends (1914:66). The impresarios of movie

[34] See Lees (2002) on texts that were commonly considered "smut and trash" (*Schmutz und Schund*).

theaters had already begun to take advantage of this trend by advertising their movie theaters as the "darkest ones in the city" (Altenloh 1914:74, my translation). Many people were alarmed by the enormously seductive potential of the cinema as an unsupervised social space that allowed young people to transgress social and sexual boundaries. Perhaps not surprisingly, social workers, religious leaders, and politicians viewed moviegoing as a particularly unsuitable and dangerous activity for middle class children who were expected to become respectable, educated middle class citizens of the future. Indeed, middle class concerns such as these informed many of the film education debates to follow, both with respect to young people and, as the later debates reveal, with respect to working class women.

Film studies scholar Corinna Müller asserts that contrary to widespread assumptions among scholars in film studies and elsewhere, the audience of "early cinema was not a proletarian, but a *young* audience" (1994:194, emphasis mine). She explains that the movie theater offered "an afternoon's enclave from the adult world where one could consume sweets undisturbed and, during the intermissions, pulp fiction, where the dark screening room provided opportunities for amorous adventures, […] and, if necessary where one could 'park' bothersome siblings" (Müller 1994:194-5, citing Traub and Kalbus). The activities that Müller describes here were likely not just considered undesirable, but perhaps even threatening to (Protestant) middle class norms. Nevertheless, movie theater owners soon discovered young audiences as an important market segment (whom Müller even considers as a class of consumers, 194), and offered children's screenings on weekday afternoons at reduced rates (Müller 1994:196).[35] These

[35] As I explain in Chapters Three and Four, the proprietor of movie theaters I met during my fieldwork often agreed to organize matinee screenings in their movie theaters for precisely the same reasons.

trends not only provide an historical background to current debates about appropriate leisure time activities for children and adolescents, but they also suggest that women and children were placed under greater scrutiny with respect to their comportment in public places.[36]

By comparison, movie theaters in the United States occupied a very different social role during the 1910s. Despite similar concerns about the possible threats to morality that the dark movie theaters offered to a population of immigrants, working people, women, and children, movie theaters also played an important role in socializing recently arrived immigrants into becoming American citizens – in other words, they served as sites of assimilation into American culture. Scholars of early silent film in the United States (Grieveson and Kraemer 2004; Gunning 2004; Hansen 1991; Rosenzweig 2000; Singer 2004) have written about the so-called nickelodeons of the early 1900s as a site of socialization and leisure for immigrants who, due to their limited knowledge of English and limited funds, were barred from participating in more mainstream and more prestigious activities like the so-called high arts that were being performed at the theater or opera house. Some of the earliest fiction films narrated tales of immigration (e.g., Reginald Barker's 1915 film *The Italian*), hence creating a meta-narrative of movie-watching and assimilation. These significant differences both in theater programming and in reception can be attributed to a range of factors (including differences in immigration histories and policies as well as a host of other differences that are well beyond the limits of this dissertation), but are at least partly grounded in different understandings of social class and social mobility. Nonetheless, even a superficial comparison between the two

[36] I return to this issue in Chapter Four in which I discuss teachers' comments on their students' food purchases at the movie theater.

countries reveals that in Germany and elsewhere, movie theaters as social institutions were intricately linked to ideas about citizenship and participation in the public sphere. In Germany more so than in the United States, many viewed movie theaters not merely as those aspects of popular culture that official culture bearers would rather downplay or ignore,[37] but as institutions that fundamentally challenged social orders.[38]

Anxieties about Class and *Bildung*: Literature and the Rise of the Middle Class in 19th Century Germany

In Germany, the medium of film was at the center of numerous political and social debates from the beginning, and often served as a focal point for social anxieties. Anxieties about movie consumption have their origins in conflicting, contradictory, and insecure self-definitions among members of a new blend of middle class in late 19th century Germany. Social mobility in Protestant Prussia was limited, and a number of social spaces remained closed even to educated (Protestant) citizens who did not have any ties to nobility (Boyer 2005:52). The incorporation of a several smaller states into one German nation state in 1871 and subsequent urbanization and industrialization processes resulted in significant social changes and in the development of two newly important categories for establishing social hierarchies: property and education, *Besitz* and *Bildung* (Müller 1994:201). Members of the emerging educated middle class attempted to set themselves apart through the accumulation and display of canonical

[37] See also Andrew Shryock's (2004) descriptions of the inclusions and omissions that occur in the official (re)presentations of "a culture."

[38] Walter Armbrust (1998) describes how newsreel screenings in middle class movie theaters in mid-1990s Cairo allowed audience members, mainly young men, to mock the Egyptian president without having to fear any repercussions, thus creating an alternative public sphere.

knowledge and other forms of linguistic and cultural capital.[39] Dominic Boyer suggests that *Bildung* has been translated as "education, self-formation, self-cultivation, distinction, culture, civilization," with none of these terms ever quite approximating the actual meaning of the term (2005:52). He argues that these processes of identification and definition occurred through the cultivation of particular ideas about what it meant to be an educated and cultivated person, a *Gebildete* (Boyer 2005:52). Similarly, *Bildungsbürgertum* has been translated as "educated bourgeoisie, cultural bourgeoisie, cultural elite" (ibid.), while *Kultur* has often been glossed as high culture. Boyer traces the importance of the German concepts of *Bildung* and *Kultur* to the concept of a German national identity, and argues that the educated bourgeoisie, the *Bildungsbürgertum* played a central role in defining, shaping, and responding to cultural and political trends.

While education had previously been the domain of a small elite, industrialization led to the emergence of a new elite of technicians, capitalists, and professionals whose status was derived from material ownership (Müller 1994:202). At the same time, the educational system opened up and began to accredit technical colleges as universities, thus erasing some of the previously existing distinctions (ibid.). Once universities acknowledged that education was no longer free of immediate, practical purpose nor solely dedicated to one's personal edification, the domain of *Kultur*, the "second domain of the academic domain of 'arts and sciences'" became an area of social distinction, using academic leadership and education as status symbols. *Kultur* made it possible for both old (educated) and new (financial) elites to coexist and to strengthen their shared position (ibid). Boyer points out that the position of 19th century German intellectuals was

[39] See Frykman and Löfgren 1987; Bourdieu 2003 for detailed examples of such efforts and processes in 19th century Sweden and 20th century France.

characterized by conflicts and contradictions: "At the same time that Gebildeten [sic] disparaged other Bürger for their local conceits, they identified themselves as culture bearers whose spiritual purity and ethics of Wissenschaft [science and scholarship] could guide the process of national Bildung" (2005:64). Müller, on the other hand, characterizes the growing importance of so-called culture bearers (*Kulturträger*) and the participation in cultural matters as a filter (lit., a lock) for social mobility (*Mobilitätsschleuse*): "Participation in the cultural economy became a kind of social 'mobility lock' and let the boundaries of belonging to the dominant and educated upper class become more porous" (1994:203). Among other things, these efforts also involved a longstanding concern about so-called *Schmutz und Schund* literature (pulp fiction).[40]

In the early 20th century, members of the educated middle class were highly aware of this relatively recent and still fairly limited change in social mobility and were often eager to guard and maintain it by continually engaging in the process of self-cultivation or *Bildung*[41] while trying to impart the importance of these virtues to members of the petit bourgeoisie and the working classes. Members of the middle class therefore felt the greatest or most immediate need to define their social identity in this society. It was precisely into such class insecurities that cinema entered Germany.

Anxieties about Class and Taste: Cultivating a Taste for Movies

Predictably, the earlier concerns about literature also influenced intellectual debates about the cinema. The fact that in the 1900s and 1910s movies became widely

[40] As I will show in the chapters to follow, debates about "good" and "valuable" literature versus "pulp fiction" (*Schundliteratur*, see Lees 2002) continued to surface in conversations during my fieldwork as well, framing film education debates in ways that resemble those earlier debates.

[41] See also my discussion in Chapter One.

available to large groups of people who were seen as lacking good literary taste and a formal education worried these intellectuals. They thought that watching movies did not require any earnest effort of actively engaging with the material at hand, but rather, a passive form of pleasurable consumption. This kind of consumption was viewed with great suspicion. In response, they attempted to transform moviegoing into a respectable and edifying activity, and to establish film as an art form deserving of serious study and an acquired taste – much like its intellectual older sibling, the "good book." Film historian Anton Kaes (1978) argues that German public intellectuals and film critics had largely ignored the cinema during what Kaes calls the "pre-literary" phase of cinema, from 1895 to 1909, considering it as a form of entertainment that belonged to the realm of vaudeville shows and other forms of mass entertainment.

Since admission prices were extremely low compared even to basic commodities like a loaf of bread (or, presumably, a hard cover book),[42] the movies enjoyed great popularity among those who could not afford other cultural activities. They viewed the role of the cinema and the audiences it attracted and constituted with great suspicion, and their comments often revealed deep-seated prejudice against members of the working class, or the urban poor. In 1909, the author, publisher, and cultural critic Max Brod stated with obvious displeasure that "we are now more interested in looking rather than reading, and thus everyone streams willingly like hypnotized into the movie theater, the image-newspaper, where one indulges in literature. The dry book has been shelved for good; the newspaper is only hastily leafed through, and in the evening one feeds one's hunger for images at the movies" (cited in Kaes 1978:41, my translation). Brod's

[42] I have not yet been able to establish a comparison of prices for different goods and services as well as incomes during that time period.

description reflects a hierarchy of texts based on their proximity to the literary text. He views books as requiring the greatest level of literacy, while newspaper articles presumably contain more pictures or images, and while moving images allow one to indulge in one's "hunger for images" (*Bildhunger*, lit., image hunger). According to Brod, watching movies allows spectators to absorb images without having to actively engage with a written text, or to develop a kind of reading comprehension. Brod does not appear to think that consuming images requires any kind of cognitive or intellectual labor, but that sitting in the cinema allows one to be lulled by the images appearing on the screen in a way that engaging with texts does not – or, at least not collectively.[43] Arguing that watching movies is more relaxing and requires less intellectual engagement than reading, Brod predicts that the popularity of movies would replace people's interest in reading.

While some of his contemporaries agreed with this assessment, others noted quite pragmatically that those who were likely to seek entertainment in movie theaters were less likely to have been interested readers to begin with (see Kaes 1978:2). Alfred Döblin argued that since the cinema offered a form of leisure time activity for the working masses that, unlike drinking and (presumably unregulated) sexual activity, had less severe side effects, one should allow the workers this form of recreation (Döblin (1909) cited in Kaes 1978:38, my translation). In other words, spending one's leisure time

[43] While Brod does not distinguish between these two issues, I think they are worth contemplating here. Did he think that movies were inherently more seductive because of their cinematic qualities that forced viewers to engage with them in a different way (e.g., not allowing viewers to choose the speed at which they watched the film, or whether they watched it all at once or in installments, as one might read a book, etc.)? Or did he consider movies to be more dangerous because of the fact that people could only watch them collectively at the cinema?

watching films of questionable moral value was seen as the lesser of two evils.[44] All of these authors assume that observing images requires less intellectual labor than reading written texts, and present the consumption of moving images as a leisure time activity, rather than an edifying activity. Lastly, Döblin's comparison also suggests that going to the movies is a leisure time activity in which people engage indulgingly and without restraint, and presents moviegoing as a similarly addictive and harmful activity. As we shall see from later debates about cinema, the trope of cinema as a source of social harm and addiction will continue to reappear throughout the decades.

In an effort to lend the medium of film greater respectability, however, filmmakers increasingly turned to literature for the subjects of their films from the 1910s onward. By adapting literary pieces to the screen, they emphasized the similarities between the stage and the cinema in an attempt to present cinema as a respectable medium suitable for middle class tastes and audiences. This trend led to heated debates among critics who considered the cinema an unwelcome and possibly lethal competition for the publishing and theatrical industry (see Kaes 1978:2-3). Yet at the same time, critics argued that filmic adaptations were not literary enough (ibid.), and compared them unfavorably to theater productions.[45] During the 1920s, these discussions abated as critics began to recognize film as more than a mass-produced, low quality version of the stage, but as a genre that existed in its own right and that could be recognized by its own conventions (Kaes 1987:3). Hence, as members of the middle class attempted to make the

[44] Thanks to Zeynep Gursel for pointing this out.

[45] This comparison mirrors the distinctions between "high culture" and popular culture I describe in debates about reading preferences, below.

movies more respectable, movie theaters became part of the terrain through which members of the educated classes defined themselves.

One of the ways in which films achieved cultural distinction was by being reviewed in newspapers, much like theater plays were; as the section on "false consciousness" shows, the authors of film reviews in the 1920s shaped public opinion in significant ways. In his monograph, *Hollywood and the Culture Elite*,[46] Peter Decherney describes the struggles of Harvard scholars and Marxist culture critics in the 1920s and 1930s to turn film into a respectable field of study and research, along with art history. In addition, educators began to attempt using the cinema as a venue for educating young people by incorporating the movies into other educational activities.

In France, the government had already begun to address such concerns a few years earlier. Historian Stefanie Middendorf reports that the French government founded an extra-parliamentary commission in 1916 to develop curricula for the educational use of films in schools. From 1925 onward, various local film education projects were incorporated into a regional film education office. This office initially only provided films that could be shown in the classroom, but soon began to offer special screenings outside of school (Middendorf 2009:237). According to Middendorf, French teachers justified the integration of cinema into educational contexts by highlighting the educational value these films had for the uneducated masses who were thought to primarily be visual learners.[47] One teacher teaching at an academic track secondary

[46] My thanks go to Johannes von Moltke for alerting me to Decherney's work.

[47] Middendorf does not elaborate on the history of this concept, but it appears that being a "visual learner" or, as this quote shows, an "eye person" was contrasted with others who were considered more text-oriented or, perhaps, analytical learners. The teacher's quote below certainly suggests that these different learning styles or leaning preferences existed in a hierarchy in which learning through images is seen as less capable of performing intellectual labor, and as needing special guidance for consuming visual images.

school was reported to have said: "Some of the unapproachable ones say 'Your cinema lowers the level of teaching, you amuse the students and discourage them from making an effort and personal reflection. But we only have a negligible minority of students who are capable of personal effort and critical thought. In them, these valuable qualities are not suffocated by their viewing of images – and the others can only benefit from it since almost all of them are eye people" (Middendorf 2009:238).

Middendorf does not elaborate on the history of this concept, but it appears that this teacher contrasted being a "visual learner" or, as this quote shows, an "eye person" with being a more text-oriented or, perhaps, a more analytical learner. The teacher's words suggest that these different learning styles or learning preferences existed in a hierarchy in which learning through images is seen as less capable of performing intellectual labor, and as needing special guidance for consuming visual images.[48] Hence, while film education efforts officially aimed to teach all students film viewing skills regardless of social distinctions (Bourdieu (2003)), the social distinctions between those who were being taught to become film literate citizens of the future frequently remained intact in everyday classroom teaching.

Anxieties about Politics, (False) Consciousness, and Propaganda

Helmut Kommer's (1979) monograph on the history of film pedagogy in Germany provides a good overview of the early pedagogues' concerns about the social consequences of the cinema, as well as of some of the early attempts to use films for propaganda purposes in Germany. While it is a well known fact that the Nazis perfected

[48] As I show in Chapter Four, many of the teachers whom I met during my fieldwork in Hamburg and Berlin described their students' abilities in very similar ways, usually by informing me that their students "did not have any critical thinking skills."

the use of film for propaganda purposes, research on the political usages of early silent films appears to have been sparse. Kommer's work represents an exception in that he reports on research about ideological uses of film relatively extensively, often citing primary sources at length. Like Müller, he characterizes the pre-WWI German educational system as characterized by overt national, patriotic, militaristic sentiments in which film was seen as yet another tool for conveying these messages to the young masses: While pedagogues were concerned about the dangerous influence of moving images on young audiences they nonetheless viewed film as an appropriate means for catering to a "state-militaristic education" (1979:58).[49]

Kommer cites pedagogues and officials who were enthusiastic about the prospect of screening documentaries about the royal family or the German army and navy, arguing that this could increase feelings of loyalty and commitment to the German monarchy and the nation state (ibid.). The first historical mention of such movie screenings was made in a piece published by author and publisher Franz Pfemfert, a socialist activist who was suspicious of the ways in which German school children were being indoctrinated into patriotism even during the time of the German emperor. Pfemfert worried about the use of movies for indoctrination purposes by the government, fearing that they were inherently more powerful than any written texts. In an essay entitled "Cinema as Educator," he writes: "A bad book may mislead a reader's imagination. Cinema destroys the imagination. Cinema is the most dangerous educator of the people. Nonetheless even the classrooms have now been opened to it. School children are being exposed to the cinema on 'national' holidays. To strengthen [their] patriotism" (cited in Kaes 1978:62).

[49] In the early years of the Soviet Union, V.I. Lenin had already begun films for propaganda purposes (see, for example, Malitsky 2010 as well as Tsivian's (2005) descriptions of propaganda films made by Dziga

This double edged sword of film education as having educational as well as propagandistic potential became visible in the discourses of self-appointed *Volkserzieher* or "people's educators."[50] Kommer describes their task as follows:

> They were in charge of bringing education to the broad masses while at the same time having to focus on the ways in which education provided a fast path to the emancipation of the masses. They had to continue promoting reading as an activity while simultaneously having to battle an "addiction to reading" with respect to mass literature and pulp literature. They had to transform the cinematograph into an educational instrument for the people while having to radically curb an "addiction to the cinema." (1979:71, my translation)

I assume that Kommer's use of the term "addiction" when describing the task of the people's educators is a reference to the historical sources that he consulted during his research. Again, this is another instance in which film viewing is represented through the language of addiction; only a few decades later, the Nazis employed this metaphor for their own political purposes.

During the years following WWI and during Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic, the country became rapidly urbanized, and many people moved from the countryside to the cities. Many young women dreamed of moving to the growing metropolis of Berlin to work in white collar jobs that had only recently become available to women. Existing fears about the seductiveness of the moving image continued to be animated and amplified by bourgeois public intellectuals during that time, many of whom expressed grave concern for the welfare of the moviegoers, particularly for members of the "uneducated masses." In 1928, the public intellectual Siegfried Kracauer published an essay entitled "The Little Shopgirls go to the Movies" in which he argues that

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Vertov). I thank Alaina Lemon for drawing my attention to these parallels.

entertainment was damaging to the imagination and aspirations of petty bourgeois and working class people used the movies as a form of escape from their ordinary lives, believing the images on the screen to be a realistic depiction of social lives. While Kracauer does not use the term "false consciousness" to diagnose their condition, he criticizes the "little shopgirls"—members of a newly emerging class of women who had moved to the city to work as salaried employees—for admiring the glamorous lifestyle depicted in romance and adventure movies, and for lacking awareness of their social status as white collar workers ([1928] 1977).

Kracauer and others viewed the role of the cinema and the audiences it attracted and constituted with great suspicion, and their comments often revealed deep-seated prejudice against members of the working class, or the urban poor. However, these views were shared by fellow intellectuals and teachers in other countries who also espoused a view of literature as having the potential to enlighten its readers, and who were suspicious of cultural products that were widely accessible to the masses, and did not require any sophisticated taste or appreciation.[51] During the Third Reich, Hitler and the National Socialists used this distinction to their advantage by presenting the National Socialist regime explicitly as an anti-classist society in which the former conceit of the bourgeoisie was to be overcome by a national racial regime.

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[50] So far, I have not been able to find the origins of this role and profession.

[51] One of the most famous and most insightful critics of this process was Walter Benjamin who artfully analyzed the processes through which aesthetic forms developed political meanings, for example, in his famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."

Film and Fascism: Building a National Socialist Film Industry

It is a well known fact that propaganda played a key role in establishing and maintaining the National Socialist regime, permeating every aspect of everyday life in Germany between 1933 and 1945. In the pages to follow, I illustrate the structural conditions under which the German film industry worked together with the government and with the "Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda." Rather than providing an extensive review of the role of visual propaganda during the Nazi period,[52] I limit my discussion to the regulations for movie production, circulation, and consumption. In so doing, I illustrate how the Nazis used film as part of a larger framework of cultural policy, following historian David Welch who has argued that "Kulturpolitik (cultural policy) was an important element in German life, but the Nazis were the first party to organize the entire cultural life of a nation systematically" (1995:96).

Shortly after Hitler had been elected as chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933, he began to pass a number of laws that undermined fundamental civic rights, and quickly transformed the country's political and media landscape. Within six weeks of his rise to power, he made Joseph Goebbels the head of the "Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda." Goebbels characterized the mission of the ministry as follows:

> We have established a Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. These two titles do not convey the same thing. Popular enlightenment is essentially something passive: propaganda, on the other hand, is something active. We cannot be satisfied with just telling the people what we want and enlightening them as to how we are doing it. We

[52] See, for example, Rentschler (1996); Hake (2001).

> must replace this enlightenment with an active government propaganda that aims at winning people over. It is not enough to reconcile people more or less to our regime, to move them toward a position of neutrality toward us; we would rather work on people until they are addicted to us. (speech to representatives of the press 15 March 1933 taken from WTB (Wolffs Telegraphisches Büro) press agency report of 16 March 1933 deposited in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, cited in Welch 1995:96)

Here, Goebbels employs the word "addicted" not to draw attention to the potentially harmful effects of cinema on viewers, but to explain that the seductiveness of the moving image is ideally suited to the political purposes of the new political regime: over time, the medium will indeed become the message, as viewers' dependence on or addiction to the cinema is transferred into a dependence on and addiction to the Nazi regime. His statement shows an acute awareness of the qualities that the medium of film had to offer to those willing to use and abuse it for political purposes.

Two weeks after his appointment, on March 28, 1933, Goebbels gave a speech to filmmakers in which he outlined the film policy of the National Socialists for the years to come. In his speech he declared a revitalization of the German film and announced that non-Jewish German filmmakers would benefit from the new German government's support of the film industry – provided they agreed to abide by certain "norms." Furthermore, Goebbels invited filmmakers to "sit at the loom of the time" and to weave a tapestry of this new era through their work – in other words, to offer their skills and talents to the National Socialist cause (Goebbels cited in Albrecht 1969). The "motion picture theater law" that was passed less than a year later, on February 16, 1934, outlined a two-pronged approach to film censorship in Nazi Germany: during the pre-production period, all movie scripts had to first be submitted to the assistant to the minister of propaganda who evaluated their content. In later years, filmmakers were asked to submit

their scripts "voluntarily" and in exchange for state loans to finance film productions. At the same time, the censorship office also expanded its rating system to include a number of new distinction marks that rated whether films could be shown in public, whether they needed special permission to be shown, or whether they could not be shown at all. In addition, films could be awarded a number of distinctions including 'politically and artistically especially valuable' to 'culturally valuable' (Welch 1995:106). Schools and Nazi youth organizations chose films for screenings based on whether they had received special rewards (ibid). Kreimeier points out that within only four months of Hitler's rise to power, the Berlin censorship office had expanded its range of ratings in order to promote National Socialist-friendly films: "As early as June 1933 the ratings 'Particularly valuable' and 'Nationally valuable' were added to the existing ones of 'Artistic,' 'Nationally educational,' and 'Culturally valuable'" (1999:257).[53] Hence, film and education were linked in a dominant and, of course, economic manner. In fact, rating systems were and are a relatively common practice in different countries.[54] However, in this case they determined not only financial rewards and opportunities for screenings, but also represented an extreme example of a closely regulated relationship between film education, censorship, and propaganda.

[53] I do not have any information about the criteria that were applied to rate films according to these distinctions.

[54] In fact, these ideas have not become obsolete yet. Teachers from across Germany frequently informed me that their students did not watch "good films" on their own, and that they need to be exposed to "educationally valuable" (*pädagogisch wertvoll)* films via educators. As I illustrate in Chapter Three, Ilona, who worked as a film facilitator, high school teacher, and university professor, felt compelled to introduce her high school students to "good films." She herself stayed informed about new films by reading educational movie guides that issued recommendations for certain films.

Popular Entertainment and Propaganda during Fascism

Film clearly played a central role in cementing the National Socialist dictatorship. Nonetheless, Nazi Germany was not the only political regime to use the media to promote its political agenda. Yuri Tsivian's (2005) work on early silent cinema in the early years of the Soviet Union, Brian Larkin's (2008) research on film screenings in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, and Stephen Hughes's (2006) work on film screenings in Southern India in the 1910s and 1920s all illustrate the highly politicized use of movie screenings under very different political conditions.

However, sound film was still a rather young medium in the 1930s, and both Hitler and Goebbels showed an uncanny foresight into the possibilities that this medium offered for promoting the Nazis' political and racial agenda.[55] Scholars like Stephen Lowry, David Welch and Sabine Hake have noted that the majority of feature films produced during the Nazi period and especially after the onset of WWII were "entertainment" films – love stories, romantic comedies and musicals, rather than didactic propaganda movies. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that in the context of a dictatorship in which politics and persecution pervade daily life, even seemingly innocuous entertainment movies were not apolitical but, rather, steeped in Nazi ideology (see Lowry 1991, Welch 1995, Hake 2001). The fact that feature films were always presented in conjunction with newsreel footage and selected short films

[55]In some cases, film was explicitly being used in order to stage political events, and to assign them a special place in the country's collective and remembered history. In her well-known essay "Fascinating Fascism," Susan Sontag points out that Leni Riefenstahl's well-known 1936 documentary, *Olympia*, had been "commissioned and entirely financed by the Nazi government," (1974:80) and that her earlier and even more famous movie about the convention of the National Socialist party convention in Nuremberg, *Triumph of the Will*, had been produced to stage a historical event: "In *Triumph of the Will*, the document (the image) not only is the record of reality but is one reason for which the reality has been constructed, and must eventually supersede it" (1974:83).

(Welch 1995:110) further contributed to creating a larger context in which even the most seemingly harmless entertainment film was framed within a larger political context, yet convincingly presented as apolitical entertainment. Lowry argues that in order to understand the role of ideology in *all* entertainment films made during the Nazi era, one needs to understand that ideology functions at different levels and across contexts. He states that earlier scholars had attempted to assess the ideology of Nazi films by defining a concept of Nazi ideology, then applying it to different films made during the Nazi period. According to Lowry, this approach prevents one from understanding the role of ideology in everyday life, and argues for the importance of analyzing the ways in which ideology feeds on existing desires and emotions and uses them to political ends, hence politicizing emotions and rendering even "seemingly apolitical" stories political (1991:1—2). The central role that film and visual art played in promoting Nazi ideologies can hardly be underestimated. Yet in many ways, the Nazis' use of film for propagandistic purposes also largely built on a tradition that had framed film screenings as politicized and much debated activities, and as closely linked to civic education.

Re-Education and Re-Democratization through Film

How did people imagine the relationships between film education and civic education after the end of WWII? As I hope to have shown in the previous sections, cinema and film screenings were put to very different uses in Germany over the course of several decades. The re-education and re-democratization efforts implemented by the Allied Forces in post-WWII Germany are of special relevance to my research, as they explicitly address the range of political possibilities, potentials, or forms of agency that people have attributed to the medium of film with respect to democratic participation.

In general, the re-education efforts that the four Allied Forces attempted to implement in occupied Germany were built on the assumption that watching films collectively could serve as a democracy-building practice. However, since the Allied Forces disagreed in their understandings of what had given rise to fascism, they favored different approaches in their efforts to teach Germans to overcome their fascist mindsets, and disagreed about the appropriate political and pedagogical approaches needed to accomplish this task. Re-education and de-Nazification efforts in the GDR took on a very different form, largely due to the fact that the GDR and the FRG developed two rather different dominant or official historical accounts of the Nazi period.[56] Regardless of these disagreements, however, both the Western Allied Forces and the Soviet Union assigned film a key role in these democratic reeducation processes.

Film historian Thomas Heimann reports that the Red Army was the first of the occupying powers to organize movie screenings in Berlin within weeks after Nazi Germany's capitulation (1994:63). Together with the assistance of some Germans, the Soviet cultural officers selected a number of popular German song and dance films from the 1930s and 1940s that were considered to have "harmless" entertainment value. All portrayals of Nazi symbols were edited out of the films. According to the historical sources consulted by Heimann the Soviet cultural officers determined that the main purpose of the screenings was to boost the German civilians' overall morale, to foster their work morale and increase their participation in rebuilding the city of Berlin, and to help them see the Soviet occupying forces in a friendlier light (ibid.). Later, these efforts were complemented by screenings of Soviet films (1994:62-63).

[56] Historians have explored these differences extensively (see, for example, Fulbrook 1999; Steinweis 2008), and it would be impossible to do them justice in a subsection of a single chapter.

The American occupying forces, on the other hand, soon realized that the Nazis' restrictions on importing films from the United States after 1940 (Fisher 2007:175) offered a valuable economic niche for the American film industry and a grateful audience for films that had already been screened in the United States in previous years.[57] However, German studies scholar Daniela Berghahn points out that "the Americans' commerce-driven approach to democratic re-education was by no means unique," and that the three other allied forces were equally eager to promote their films and achieve high market shares: "The official rationale for these imports was that exposure to films from France, Britain, America and the Soviet Union would facilitate the defeated nation's identification with their erstwhile enemies" (2005:14-15). Hence, film selection was at least in part influenced by very pragmatic political and economic interests.

Film studies scholar Jennifer Fay emphasizes that in an effort to re-educate Germans into becoming democratic citizens, Americans drew on anthropological studies of national characters and concluded that "American democracy was inseparable from its culture," (2008:xv) and that "the United States produced a democratic character structure that could be the model for a new German citizen" (ibid.).[58] According to Fay, "[t]he

[57] This strategy echoes the marketing strategies that Victoria Grazia details in her monograph, *Irresistible Empire*, in which she describes how post-WWII American efforts to convince the citizens of Western Europe of the desirability of capitalism as an economic form, and in which freedom is being packaged as the freedom to choose which brand products one wishes to consume. In other words, the ability to consume represents the backbone of citizenship, and democracy becomes equated with the "freedom of choice" as a democratic right of any consumer citizen (de Grazia 2005:336 ff.).

[58] The organizers of one of the film festivals that I attended in June 2007 had included a screening of the short film "Your job in Germany" in their program. Directed by Frank Capra and the author Theodor Geisel Seuss, this film had been made by the United States War Department for members of the American military to prepare them for their mission as military occupiers in post-WWII Germany. The goal of the film is to advise Americans against fraternizing with Germans by explaining that all Germans were by nature undemocratic and latent fascists, and that German youth were especially threatening because they had been steeped in Nazi propaganda for their entire lives. When the movie was screened, audience members snickered and mocked the American military efforts to bring freedom and democracy to Afghanistan and Iraq.

project in Germany was not education—for everyone acknowledged that Germans were educated—but *reeducation* meant to undo the deep structures of the German collective identity in the way that U.S. immigrants learned to become democratic Americans, regardless of their birthplace or ethnic heritage" (ibid.).[59] Hence, Fay proposes that the screenings were predicated on the assumption that consuming Hollywood films would allow Germans to develop a new, democratic consciousness (2008:37). Her explanations suggest that the American military leaders assumed a direct and almost unmediated relationship between watching films and moral and political enlightenment. It is possible (although Fay does not mention this possibility), of course, that these efforts were partly inspired by the fact that the Nazis' use of film and aesthetics in general had already established just how effective film could be for promoting political ideas.[60]

Creating Democratic Citizens of the Future and Coming to Terms with the Past in East and West Germany

In the introduction to this chapter, I listed several tropes that continue to emerge in discourses about film education, including concerns about social class, the tension between education and entertainment, between education and propaganda, as well as concerns about the addictive nature of film, and about youth as a particularly vulnerable and therefore important group of viewers (see my discussion of Fisher (2007), below). Having provided some background information about the screenings above my analysis focuses on the ways in which democratization efforts framed the relationship between

[59] Fay does not mention the role of cinema in making immigrants into citizens in early 20th century America (see, for example, Rosenzweig 2000) here.

[60] I return to these questions in my analyses of guided film discussions in Chapter Three, in which I discuss the assumptions and expectations that different actors bring to these conversations, and investigate ways in which these enter the actual film discussions.

film, re-education, and youth, and the ways in which youth were seen as the future bearers of democracy and memory. In so doing, I identify some of the continuities and ruptures in the history of film education.

The film education debates of the early 1900s established that youth were both particularly essential to the political future of a state and especially vulnerable to being manipulated by the new mass medium, film. Moreover, film was consistently viewed as having seductive qualities, and audiences (especially young audiences) were seen as needing to learn how to withstand the seductiveness of these images. As we have seen, film was subsequently used for a number of either educational or propaganda functions.

In his monograph *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War*, Jaimey Fisher argues that youth have played in the cultural constructions of German national identity in the decades following WWII, and have shaped Germany's attempts to come to terms with the past (2007:4). Fisher argues that immediately after WWII, Germans attempted to shift the blame from themselves to German youth, portraying German youth as having been particularly prone to Nazism since they had not known any other system, and as especially in need of democratic re-education. According to Fisher this was part of a larger coping strategy through which mainstream Germans attempted to present themselves as victims of the Nazi regime:

> Youth and education thus became crucial building blocks in postwar German national identity, which had to reconstitute itself on the ruins of tainted cultural categories. In fact, coming to terms with the past via discourse about youth and education simultaneously helped select and emphasize elements of German culture around which national identity could be constituted in the future. (2007:63)

Fisher furthermore points out that "[y]oung people are ideally situated for this role, since "[d]iscourse about youth always already pertains to 'adult' subjects as well as their collective forms" (Fisher 2007:64). Although not directly related to film education, Fisher's observations provide an interesting perspective on the stakes and limits of pedagogical efforts in general.

Most re-education efforts in which the American military initially engaged (for example, through public screenings of documentary films about concentration camps, see Fay 2008; Fehrenbach 1995) were abandoned within the first years after the end of the War. As the Cold War began to unfold and led to the foundation of two separate German states, the Allied Forces shifted their efforts toward rebuilding West Germany economically and reorienting rather than reeducating the Germans (Steinweis 2001:743). Meanwhile, East Germany officially distanced itself from National Socialism by claiming that the East German state had been built on the legacy of anti-fascist resistance by the Communists and was therefore not responsible for any of the crimes of the Nazi regime (Steinweis 2001:745). While talk about the Holocaust largely only entered the West German public sphere in the 1970s following the broadcasting of the American miniseries *Holocaust*, a large number of East German popular films from the 1940s onward dealt with the persecution of Communists during the Nazi regime, but not specifically with the persecution of the Jews. Hence, East and West Germany dealt with the Nazi past very differently both politically, socially, and through forms of cultural production. Neither of the German states began to acknowledge these issues until the 1980s and 1990s.

Much has been written about East and West German official and unofficial efforts to engage in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, in coming to terms with the (Nazi) past.[61] In the remainder of this chapter, I explore how Germans have appropriated their past through films, and how these practices have in turn shaped how Germans view and interpret their own representation. I provide a more detailed discussion of these topics in Chapter Three in which I analyze movie screenings that aimed to teach school children how to participate in dominant discourses about the Holocaust. In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on the ways in which coming to terms with the Nazi past influenced the pedagogical efforts in film education, specifically with respect to teaching youth how to engage with media critically, and how to make their own films.

The Young Cinephiles

At the same time as official film reeducation programs subsided relatively shortly after the end of the War, young Germans in both East and West Germany became very involved in the so-called film club movement in the late 1940s and 1950s. Local film initiatives or film clubs emerged in many places and often screened films that had been produced in neighboring European countries. While popular representations of film clubs may sometimes appear to suggest that German culture was permeated with them, Fehrenbach points out that the clubs themselves were fairly small in number yet very influential. She explains that the leadership of these clubs tended to consist of professionals in the teaching professions who reached out to young audiences (1995:171). Fehrenbach carefully highlights the ways in which film clubs spokespersons framed their activities as educational yet somewhat apolitical, presenting film education in the context

[61] See, for example, Steinweis 2001; Rogers 2003.

of bourgeois virtues of self-edification, rather than as an explicitly ideological or political undertaking:

> The postwar film clubs seemed to accept without question the image of a German public of passive subjects led astray by Nazi masters. They sought to counteract the cultural spoon-feeding of Goebbels by training Germans to develop their own critical assessments of film so they could become, in effect, discerning citizens in a new democratic world of consumer choice. This required that German filmgoers be able to 'distance' themselves emotionally from the narrative in order to analyze and evaluate the artistic and technical merits of films. The German public, that is, had to learn to respond with their heads and not their hearts. In the process, film club leaders hoped to redeem both the medium and the masses and prove that the term 'mass medium' need not be a pejorative one. (Fehrenbach 1995:178)

Members of the film club movement often expressed their overall feeling that young Germans had been deprived of any access to international film culture during the Nazi years, and framed their educational mission accordingly: "The clubs were based on the assumption that the German people needed to sharpen their critical and analytical skills, which had been dulled by the state control of cultural production during the Third Reich" (Fehrenbach 1995:178). As Fisher points out (see above), this approach to film allowed members of the non-persecuted majority to distance oneself from Germany's Nazi past, and to position themselves as fellow victims of the Nazi regime who had been deprived of being able to freely cultivate one's mind and identity during the Nazi dictatorship.[62] This stance represents one of few ruptures in the history of film education in Germany. While many of the concerns about the effects of film on young people stayed relatively constant (including moral and middle class anxieties and anxieties about

[62] Although none of the historical references I have read explicitly mention the term *Bildung* or *Filmbildung* I argue that these kinds of claims presume the concept of the German citizen as an educated, *gebildete* individual. See also my discussion of Dominic Boyer's work on this topic, above.

the stupefying, addictive nature of films), this overtly apolitical stance and focus on film aesthetics rather than on political content is striking. It is all the more remarkable because it completely sidestepped any overt discussion about the political and social consequences of Nazi propaganda; perhaps this pointed lack of engagement (see also Stoler 2009) can be seen as a testament to the legacy of the Nazi regime itself.

In West Germany, the film clubs contributed to the emergence of a new film culture in the 1960s, partly drawing on their tradition of film criticism and the demand for "good films." Fehrenbach also points out that they were very successful at convincing federal and state governments of the importance of their agenda (1995:171-2), and were subsequently able to create the foundations for many cultural institutions that exist in Germany today to promote film education, and that are primarily financed through public funding. Several of the organizations I discuss in subsequent chapters, most notably, the *Youth Film* Association,[63] had their roots in this movement and continued the structures that had been created by the early film club movements. Hence, many of the actors involved in various local and regional film education programs came from a tradition in which people saw themselves as the youthful culture bearers of a democratic culture of cinephiles who promote and favor European quality films (*Kulturfilm*) over mainstream Hollywood films (see also Fehrenbach 1995:216).

The film club movements also inspired the beginnings of the Oberhausen Short Film Festival in West Germany in the late 1960s which rang in a new era of German film in the 1970s, the New German Cinema.[64] West German filmmakers used the festival to

[63]Unless otherwise noted, the names of all individuals and organizations are pseudonyms.

[64] Internationally renowned figureheads of this school of film include Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Margarethe von Trotha, to name just a few. There exists a plethora of literature on the history and influence of New German Cinema. For an overview, see Elsaesser 1989.

declare their autonomy from the cinematic traditions of the 1950s and 1960s, introducing instead a new school of thought and the concept of author cinema. Through its affinity toward small European productions, the Oberhausen festival also contributed to filmic exchange between Western European and Eastern European filmmakers (Fehrenbach 1995:223), promoting a more international outlook and, especially after the end of the Cold War, more international collaborations.[65]

State Funding for Auteur Cinema and Critical Engagement with the Arts

A few years later, in 1974, the West German government passed a new film and television agreement which revolutionized the funding structures available to filmmakers. The agreement resulted in a closer working relationship between filmmakers and the television agencies in charge of commissioning and programming. As a result, film directors often produced directly for television, which affected the nature of their films and made them appear less "cinematic" or "artistic." On the one hand, the new funding structure provided ideal working conditions for filmmakers who saw themselves as *auteurs*, but at the same time the relatively stable funding structure deflected from the image of the lone and impoverished filmmaker creating auteur films (Knight 2004:104). More filmmakers were able to enjoy a comparatively secure economic and professional status. This fact reflected the West German government's high investment in public culture and in general education. Although the situation had changed significantly by the time of my fieldwork, many people whom I met had benefited from these programs at an earlier stage of their careers. For example, two of the Hamburg filmmakers whose

[65] Over time, this trend also slowly led to more filmic engagement with the Nazi past. During my fieldwork, I also noticed an emerging trend among middle aged filmmakers to present their memories of

filmmaking workshops in high schools I describe in Chapter Five had received federal grants for fine arts that allowed them to make short films and create artwork for exhibits during my fieldwork. Moreover, two of the three co-founders of the film education company whose work I describe in Chapter Four worked in commercial television, producing several episodes of a popular soap opera as well as creating television commercials. Similarly, many of the middle-aged West Germans who participated in political discussions about the importance of film education had either established their professional identities partly through these programs or had grown up in an era when the German government had heavily invested in promoting the arts.

The 1970s also witnessed a sharp increase in media education programs in West Germany which was paralleled by an emergence of new professional fields in the social sciences and helping sciences. For example, the development of the field of "social pedagogy" led to the emergence of a group of professionals who specialized in working with young people—initially, with young people from working class and underprivileged homes, although this group soon also included children from working class immigrant families. During my fieldwork, I met members of different community organizations that taught filmmaking workshops in a variety of venues, including youth clubs, daycare centers, or schools. As I describe in Chapter Four, some of these organizations were undergoing significant changes with respect to their opportunities for funding, but were still committed to teaching filmmaking as a medium that was ideally suited for consciousness-raising and empowering the underprivileged. These efforts were fueled by the idea of a passive viewer who was unprepared to critically engage with mainstream

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growing up in Eastern and Western Europe during the last years of the Cold War. It remains to be seen whether this trend will enter mainstream German cinema in the near future.

television, movies, and popular culture, and needed to be trained in order to become a competent consumer (and) citizen.[66]

Recent Trends in German Cinema: Recreating the German Past for the Future

In the past two decades, there has been a strong trend in German cinema toward films whose plots investigate issues of national identity, heritage, history, and belonging. Many of these films either focus on the Nazi period, the years immediately following WWII, or the last years of the GDR while others focus on multicultural representations of German identity. Several scholars have investigated how these issues have been represented in and through film. For example, Randall Halle (2008) comments on the fact that the early 21st century marked an unprecedented increase in German films about the Nazi regime that did not directly deal with the Holocaust, but instead focused on German perpetrators, victims, and bystanders (a phenomenon he calls the "Hitler Boom").[67] Johannes von Moltke has investigated how "postwall" German cinema has adopted the trope of *Heimat* or heritage films toward "revisionist impulses" (2005:233). These feature films as well as a number of recent television productions have influenced a number of discussions about German history and German culture. These changes in German film culture will provide a range of new opportunities as well as challenges for present and future film education efforts.

All in all, German discourses and practices regarding the relationship between film, youth, and participation in the public sphere have been characterized by a

[66] While I have seen a number of materials about filmmaking workshops in West Germany, I have not come across any reports about comparable institutions in East Germany. The staff members of an East German cultural organization that offered filmmaking to young people told me that they had gone to West Germany shortly after the fall of the Wall to pursue additional qualifications as media pedagogues.

[67] I address some of these trends in my analysis of film discussions in Chapter Four.

remarkable continuity in concerns and tropes over the past one hundred years. As I show in the following chapters, many of the opinions, value judgments, and practices I encountered while doing ethnographic fieldwork on film education resonate with concerns and practices from earlier times, confirming that debates about film education are indeed an expression of specific cultural and historical concerns and traditions in Germany.

Chapter Three

The Institutionalization of Film Education

Introduction

When I first learned about the founding of the Film Competence Agency in 2003 and the German government's new commitment to promoting film competence or film literacy to young people, I was curious about the kinds of programs and collaborations this would inspire. How would the government's emphasis on film education affect local organizations that had been engaging in different kinds of film education programs for decades? How would these different institutions collaborate with the Federal Agency for Film Competence?

As I have shown in Chapter Two, film education has a long and complicated history of state intervention in Germany. In this chapter, I analyze the relationships between four organizations that were dedicated to film education. The Film Competence Agency which I already introduced in Chapters One and Two represented a new umbrella organization operating at the federal level. For their day to day tasks, the Agency used the existing infrastructure of several state-funded organizations across the country that had developed over the course of several decades. Among them were two organizations where I conducted my fieldwork, the Youth Center in Hamburg, and Cinebureau in Berlin. Both of them were community organizations funded by state money. While these formerly government-funded organizations continued to offer their own programs, they increasingly found themselves working together with for-profit organizations as well.

The state-funded organizations provided the contacts and channels of communication to facilitate this collaboration. Their knowledge and experience became a resource whose value was established in interactions with other corporate entities. While official portrayals by the Film Competence Agency promoted film education as a sleek and innovative new concept, the relationships between different individuals and agencies were often contradictory, complicated, and messy.

I investigate how a variety of individuals and agencies marketed film education, and how they interacted with and imagined their audiences. My findings show that the industry of film education was fraught with ambivalent, sometimes contradictory motivations, and often less than clear reference points for establishing the goals of film education. Many of the individuals and organizations that organized film education events had been involved in film education and community education for decades, and treated film as a medium for reaching out to different local communities. Others were committed to teaching film, but were also interested in creating new forms of collaboration between publicly funded community centers and for-profit businesses. Many of these people ended up working together across different educational contexts, often with mixed results. I investigate the strategies of two different organizations and analyze how they positioned themselves in a larger field of debate about the importance of film education and civic education. In so doing, I show how institutional constraints affected the quality of services that individual organizations were able to provide.

Educational Film Screenings in Theory and in Practice

Most film education events in which I participated during my fieldwork consisted of matinee movie screenings for students in local movie theaters. This approach offered

many advantages since it allowed organizations that specialized in film education to reach out to large audiences with relatively little additional effort. The screenings were organized by a number of political, educational, and private-public institutions in Germany, and were offered to students of all ages and educational backgrounds. Audiences ranged from six-year-old elementary school students to twenty-one year old students training to become construction workers.[68]

As most venues could accommodate up to one hundred audience members, the organizers attempted to maximize the number of (subsidized) tickets they could sell per screening. Therefore, the audience at most screenings consisted of students of varying ages and from different school types. It was not uncommon to have a group of timid fifth graders watch a movie with some rowdy ninth graders, for example. As one can imagine, this created some challenges for after-movie discussions.

Many organizations provided print materials with information about the movies and sometimes even additional teaching materials for the teachers, including background information about a movie as well as a number of possible discussion questions and classroom activities that related to the movies. Movie screenings were followed by film discussions guided by so-called "film facilitators." These facilitators worked on a freelance basis, and were paid a fixed sum of money regardless of the length of the film or the number of participants. As I show throughout the remainder of the chapter, facilitators differed widely in terms of their approaches and professional qualifications.

[68] Thanks go to Johannes von Moltke for pointing out that the participatory nature of these programs and the attempts to create diverse audiences were partly inspired by those involved in New German Cinema in the 1970s. As I described in Chapter Two, the format of the "movie screening and discussion" had also been used by the film club movement from the late 1940s onward, albeit in a less political manner.

This format of film screenings represented the preferred model for film education because it allowed institutions to reach relatively large audiences with very little additional effort for the cinemas. At a time when many young people preferred to watch movies at home or on their computers, it was crucial for theaters to court the next generation of viewers, and to instill in them an appreciation for moviegoing as an attractive leisure time activity. However, as my findings in this chapter and the subsequent chapter show, the reality of these screenings often differed significantly from their purported purposes and successes.

Film as Art or Film as Pedagogy? Divisions and Debates across Professions

Early on in my fieldwork, I learned about the existence of a longstanding and powerful divide among German film education professionals, namely between those who had trained in media pedagogy (*Medienpädagogik*) and those who had pursued film studies (*Filmwissenschaften*). The former generally included people who had chosen to pursue a career in social work or pedagogy, often providing after-school enrichment programs for young people as well as courses for adults in neighborhood centers. Although their professional trajectories varied, most of them had obtained a two year or four year degree from a technical college specializing in education that emphasized teaching very practical skills for working with different populations. For example, Ralf, a dedicated media pedagogue, had been organizing filmmaking workshops and film festivals for young people for several decades. One of the social workers whom I met at a day-long movie watching event for social workers worked in a neighborhood center that organized coffee and conversation for speakers of the regional *Platt* dialect, as well as

computer courses for the elderly and movie nights for teenagers. He wanted to start organizing movie nights as a means of reaching out to members of different communities.

This approach was markedly different from that of film studies scholars who tended to have a university degree in film studies, and were mainly interested in film analysis and in film as an art form, rather than in pedagogy. Some of them were completing dissertations on film topics, some taught at universities, and some were authors who were invited to academic conferences, or to events like the film education congress sponsored by the Film Competence Agency. Others organized independent film festivals or made films themselves. They often talked about their films as providing critical social commentaries, and prided themselves on their artistic and aesthetic standards. In most cases, their preferred genre was experimental short film. Relatively inexpensive to produce, these films were markedly different from a genre these filmmakers resented, the Hollywood feature length film, and their audiences were accordingly selective.

I had been unaware of this divide or even of the existence of these two groups when I first began conducting fieldwork. However, I was confronted by it only a few months into my fieldwork, when attending the founder's meeting, when a young man asked me "So, do you work with the film scholars or with the media pedagogues?" Professing my own ignorance but sensing the possible relevance of this distinction, I asked him to explain to me the difference between the two. The explanation he provided was one I would continue to hear throughout my fieldwork: "one group focuses on the process, while the others focus on the product." He explained that the media pedagogues

were more interested in using art toward creative group processes while the artists were mainly interested in the product that resulted from a filmmaking workshop.

Throughout my fieldwork, I continued to hear people refer to this distinction in more or less the same words, which suggests that this was a rather common and readily available distinction.[69] Furthermore, I worked with a third group of professionals, namely those who had attended film schools and viewed themselves as professional filmmakers. Perhaps not surprisingly, the relationship between the *Medienpädagogen*, filmmakers and the film studies scholars was not always amiable. The artists looked down at the pedagogues for not being artistically refined. Together with the film scholars, they often expressed their criticism of the pedagogues by criticizing their films for being too heavy-handed, didactic, and predictable. The media pedagogues, on the other hand, did not seem to mind. They mainly ignored it and instead focused on telling me about the social effects of filmmaking in their communities. By avoiding a comparison of artistic or aesthetic merit, they signaled that their actual work was much more complex and socially relevant than one could measure on the basis of aesthetics alone. In this chapter, I show how members of each group capitalized on these different discourses, and how they positioned themselves within these discursive fields (Bourdieu 1984).

However, it is also important to note that many of the people whose work I discuss in this chapter and elsewhere had very heterogeneous backgrounds with respect to their professional training. For example, the independent filmmaker, Bernd, whose work I describe in Chapter Five had trained as a teacher before attending filmmaking school. Elsewhere, a university professor teaching in the School of Education, actively promoted

[69] In other words, this distinction was very much above the level of my interlocutors' awareness and hence a distinction that could be easily applied across different contexts (see Silverstein 1981).

collaborations with a local community cinema. Hence, in daily life the distinctions I have described above were neither as binary as the verbal references to these two groups suggested.

Conflicting Commitments

When I began my fieldwork, I initially hoped to conduct research with the Federal Film Competence Agency, a newly founded organization that was partnered with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (sponsored by the German federal government) and the Federal Film Board (representing the German film industry), and which was expected to serve as an umbrella organization for federal and regional film education programs across the country. During my fieldwork, the agency also co-financed and co-organized a variety of local film education programs across the country. Much like the federal Film Competence Agency itself, these partnerships brought together movie theater owners and professionals working for not-for-profit educational organizations that received funding from the German government but also relied on grants and on corporate sponsorships. In a political landscape in which the former paternalistic state increasingly moved toward privatizing former government-funded services, institutions increasingly honed their approaches to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Its central role in the national debates about the importance of film education made the Agency look like an ideal fieldsite for studying the implementation of film education programs, and I hoped to spend at least a portion of my fieldwork at the events and programs that they organized. Shortly after I had arrived in Germany, the Agency held its second nationwide congress on film education. Prior to the congress, I contacted the staff of the agency to introduce myself and to ask for an opportunity to meet with

them to discuss the possibility of doing some of my ethnographic research at the institution. The head of the Agency, Sarah Duve, was in her mid-30s, and had trained as a lawyer before accepting this position. She informed me that doing research at or about the Agency would not be an option because the Agency already had a "researcher in residence," a young man who planned to write his master's thesis about the Agency. However, she offered that one of the other staff members could meet with me at the conference. I accepted this offer, and had coffee with another young woman who had recently begun working for the Agency, and who had assisted with organizing the Film Competence Congress. After I told her that I was interested in studying how different organizations interpreted and implemented film education programs, she informed me that the Agency neither organized any film education events nor housed any other events on their premises. I was surprised since all the information that I had gathered thus far had suggested to me that the Agency served as the main hub of all film education efforts. While I was initially disappointed that I would not be able to conduct fieldwork at the Agency, I was equally surprised to learn that the Agency was did not actually organize any film education events.

Throughout my fieldwork people frequently approached me and asked me for information about the Agency. Most of these individuals had received informational material and, in some cases, funding from the Agency. Yet many of them wondered about the day to day operations of the Agency, and asked me "Have you ever met anyone who works there? What do you know about them? How do they work? What do they really do?" A good number of people whom I met through my fieldwork appeared to be very suspicious of this organization. Since my field sites were located across the country

from rural North German villages to large cities like Munich and Chemnitz (the former Karl-Marx-Stadt) in the South, my contacts asked me on more than occasion what I knew about the organization and whether I had met its staff members. Apparently, this organization remained as mysterious to many of them as it did to me. Several people told me they themselves did not trust the Agency, that they were suspicious of its motives, and that they feared that it would compete with and eventually replace existing regional and local programs. Most often, the source of such concerns had to do with the fact that organizations feared for their autonomy as small scale, local organizations.[70] The members of several small organizations feared that the Agency would overtake and usurp the concepts that they had cultivated over a long period of time. They worried that the Agency would mine them for their local contacts and local knowledge, and replace them with a business model that did not consider individual, institutional, and regional differences. As we shall see, their concerns were justified.

Coerced Collaborations

During my fieldwork, the Agency organized statewide educational movie screenings in fourteen of the sixteen federal German states. As part of these so-called "CineWeek" events, students and their teachers in these states were able to attend matinee movie screenings of selected films in a number of participating movie theaters. In many of the federal states, similar programs had been organized by local and regional institutions in the past. Starting in 2006, the Agency had begun to coordinate these efforts. Sometimes they provided financial support in exchange for putting their emblem on the program booklets and websites; in other cases, they also demanded significant

[70] See Stevenson 1999 on the history of such organizations and their relationship to the West German state.

changes at the organizational level. Only two states that did not participate were the locations of my main fieldsites, the federal state of Bavaria and the city state of Hamburg; I return to this point in my analysis of the relationships between the Agency and different state and local institutions.

In the fall of 2007, I helped organize the first annual CineWeek in the state of Berlin Brandenburg. Teachers and students flocked to over twenty movie theaters across Berlin to participate. While the Agency's logo was imprinted on all programs and brochures, the bulk of the organizational and content work had been carried out by an institution called Cinebureau. It belonged to a state-sponsored umbrella organization providing services for Berlin's youth. Its office was located on a quiet street in Berlin-Kreuzberg, a West Berlin district whose residents included many former "guest workers" and their families (working class immigrants from Southern Europe and Turkey). Like many other government-sponsored, multi-cultural and educational initiatives, Cinebureau provided cultural events for children and families across the city. Cinebureau's staff consisted of one full-time coordinator, Layla, and a part-time assistant, Annika. Both had grown up in small towns in West Germany, and had moved to (West) Berlin after graduating from high school. Layla, the daughter of a Palestinian and a German, was in her early 40s, and had studied at the Free University of Berlin for a few semesters before dropping out to work at Cinebureau full time. Annika, the mother of two elementary school aged children, had worked as a writer for an environmental organization before joining Cinebureau.

In our conversations leading up to the festival, Layla had told me that Cinebureau had only reluctantly agreed to organize the CineWeek for the Agency. Since the Agency

did not have any personal contacts to organizations in Berlin, the Agency wanted to take advantage of the infrastructure that Cinebureau had created in the past two decades of its existence. The Agency cooperated with already existing institutions and provided funding in exchange for the right to imprint onto the materials provided by these organizations. Layla explained to me that the Agency had contacted Cinebureau and had asked them to organize the CineWeek in exchange for receiving financial support from them. Layla's resentment stemmed partly from the fact that organizing the CineWeek required a lot of time and organization, and that it had meant giving up another project, an Asia Pacific film festival for children that she had been planning for more than one year. In addition, she complained that Cinebureau did not stand to gain anything from this working relationship, and that it in fact hindered them from providing high quality film education programs. While the Agency was able to use the organizational contacts of Cinebureau to recruit large numbers of students and teachers to attend their events, the quality of these relationships was not easily transferable to the mass events that the Agency had planned. In what follows, I will show in which ways the collaboration with the Agency changed Cinebureau's work.

The CineWeek began with an opening ceremony at the franchise of a large movie theater chain near the Alexanderplatz in former East Berlin, followed by a movie screening and reception. I had arrived a few hours early to help set up food and beverages as well as an area from which a group of elementary and middle school children would report on the film festival. Layla and Annika wanted to create a memorable film festival experience for the audience, and had planned a number of activities for the attending students. Some of them filmed the arrival of the filmmakers and other guests of honor,

while others interviewed their classmates about their views on the CineWeek and on movies in general. All of the footage and interviews were being live-streamed onto the big screen, so that those inside the theater could watch their classmates being interviewed. Layla and Annika had planned these activities to provide students with a unique film festival experience. They had also hired several external media educators to facilitate movie discussions.[71] Suresh, an Indian German man in his 30s, had already made a name for himself by authoring a number of publications about how to integrate film into the school curriculum. In addition, he had published several brochures for making schools more friendly for lesbian, gay, and transgender students. He was the emcee of the opening ceremony and welcomed everyone, requested collective applause for the sponsors, and announced the opening movie. After the movie screening Suresh asked the students a number of questions about the movie, including questions about why the main characters had made certain choices, or how they themselves would have handled similar situations. He encouraged the teachers to continue talking to their students about this film, and to participate in the CineWeek again in the future.[72] After everyone else left I helped Layla and Annika return the decorations, cameras, and other supplies to the office. Despite the fact that they had done most of the organizational work

[71] Throughout my fieldwork, I met several persons in their late 20s to late 30s with similar professional backgrounds and institutional contacts who were in the process of establishing themselves as film facilitators, a relatively recent professional identity that has not been formalized or legally defined. It remains to be seen if and to what extent these individuals will develop or coin a particular approach or school of thought, and how their relationships with institutions like the *Film Competence Agency* and the Berlin Film Festival as well as with each other will develop.

[72] Only one of the film facilitators I met during my fieldwork taught his audiences how to identify and pay attention to any formal and aesthetic aspects of film. Before each screening, he asked the audience to pay attention to elements like the use of color in a film, or the role of the soundtrack. Most of the other facilitators focused exclusively on a discussion of a film's plot.

for the festival they had received relatively little attention and time on stage compared to the official sponsor, the Agency.

The following week, Layla invited me and one of the fellow facilitators and close friend of hers, Volker, to her house for a homemade dinner to relax after a long and intense week of organizing events and facilitating screenings, writing press releases, and attending other official functions. Following an opulent dinner, we sat around her kitchen table and talked about our work and lives, a conversation that quickly spiraled into stories about former co-workers and festival organizers. Layla and Volker outperformed each other as they retold some of the scandals, rumors, and anecdotes of their shared work experiences. They reminisced about the first year that the CineWeek had been held in Berlin, and about the difficult collaborations with individual members of the Agency as well as some of the facilitators whom they had hired at least partly due to their ties to the Agency. Layla explained that while Cinebureau itself did not offer any formal training for the facilitators (perhaps partly because most of their facilitators had trained as *Medienpädagogen* or had previously worked in related fields), she usually asked applicants to facilitate a film discussion before she hired them. In addition, she and Annika often shadowed new facilitators and provided them with feedback. Based on Layla's description to me, her approach sounded like an effective way of assessing whether the approaches by new facilitators were compatible with Layla's understanding of what film facilitation should involve. However, while doing fieldwork in another city, I also met one of Cinebureau's former facilitators who told me that Layla and she had disagreed on a number of points, and that Layla had regimented the kinds of activities and approaches she could use. She explained that she often asked children to process

their impressions of the film by drawing pictures, but that Layla had not approved of any arts and crafts activities. I cannot speculate why this may have been the case or what the relationship of these two women may have been like, but mention this example here to indicate that even among the facilitators who regularly worked for Cinebureau there may have been a rather heterogeneous blend of beliefs about and approaches toward film education. Nonetheless, Layla and Annika were very familiar with each of Cinebureau's facilitators' pedagogical approaches and communicative styles. During the CineWeek, however, Cinebureau not only employed many of its regular facilitators, but also a few facilitators who had affiliations with some of the other sponsoring agencies. As I show in the section to follow, this sometimes led to tensions.

The Challenges of Turning Masses into Audiences

The following week, Layla received a phone call from Annette, a young woman who, thanks to her association with the Film Competence Agency, had been hired as one of the facilitators for the CineWeek and who had complained about being heckled by audience members. Annette was one of the facilitators whom I had met at the Film Competence Conference in Berlin during the first weeks of my fieldwork. She had graduated with a degree in education, and taught French and film studies at a private Gymnasium outside of Berlin that was trying to market itself as a feeder school for the prestigious (formerly East German) film academy.[73] While working as a teacher, Annette also continued to work as a film facilitator at different festivals, and was one of many young women and men who were making a name for themselves by collaborating with

[73] Over time, Annette grew increasingly frustrated with her working conditions, arguing that the school did not take film studies seriously. Toward the end of my fieldwork she had left her position and was working toward a doctorate degree in film studies.

the Film Competence Agency. She strongly identified with French cinema; her work as a facilitator was inspired by Alain Bergala's book which praises the experience of watching movies at the cinema. In many ways Annette was a poster child for the Film Competence Agency: young, attractive, Francophone, trained in formal film analysis and having demonstrated a strong commitment to teaching students film theory, she also published in German non-academic journals about the need for film education, and had developed her own syllabus and teaching philosophy for teaching film to children and teenagers. Nonetheless, she was not prepared to deal with audiences who were less sophisticated than the students at her private school. Annette had called the office to complain about the fact that she had been asked to facilitate a movie discussion with an audience consisting of altogether 100 students of different ages attending different school types. Annette said that the sheer number of students had made it impossible to have any kind of meaningful conversation, but that the students had also been rowdy and intimidating. She had been in charge of facilitating discussions about a newly released documentary film about three teenage girls coming of age in a rough Berlin neighborhood, *Prinzessinnenbad*. The film contained many provocative scenes and candid talk about sexual practices and drug use, and Annette was intimidated and threatened by the responses that the film had evoked particularly among the male students. Cheered on by their classmates, some of the boys loudly announced that they would like to rape the female characters on the screen – girls their age who lived in the same Berlin neighborhood as some of the members of the audience.[74] Annette argued that their

[74] In a workshop for film educators that I had attended only a few days prior to my internship in Berlin, several social workers had expressed concern about the possible consequences that this very candid portrayal of these three teenagers might have for their later lives, especially since the filmmakers had not made any efforts to disguise the girls' identities. Media reports suggested that the three under age

comments and jokes created a hostile and misogynist environment that made any further and constructive conversation about the film impossible. Layla complained to me about Annette's response; she told me that Annette had to learn to stand up for herself, and explained that she would not hire her again in the future.

I myself had witnessed similar audience responses at some of the movie screenings that Layla and Annika had sent me to observe but not facilitate myself. One such screening had been a screening of a Danish movie, *1:1*, that featured a contemporary Romeo and Juliet story involving a Palestinian Muslim boy and a Danish girl whose Neo-Nazi brother is beaten up by a neighborhood gang. The movie had been praised for addressing relevant political issues, and for illustrating the importance of intercultural exchange. I had been told that the audience that morning consisted of tenth graders attending a vocational school who were watching this movie together with their social sciences teacher. While the credits rolled, some of the boys in the audience exclaimed "They really should have raped that Danish slut." Their classmates quickly joined their chorus, expressing disappointment that the female protagonist had not been beaten up and raped by her boyfriend's friends and relatives. Neither their female classmates nor the accompanying teachers appeared to say anything in response. I was secretly relieved that Layla and Annika had suggested that I attend the screening as an observer, rather than as a facilitator.[75] At the same time, I understood that Layla had been reluctant to organize these screenings precisely because they were concerned that showing a movie with potential for interesting conversations to a large group of students might not be

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protagonists had not been able to anticipate their sudden fame and the range of responses that the film evoked from neighbors, teachers, and audiences from across the country.

[75] In Chapter Four I analyze a number of movie discussions in which I had indeed been assigned the role of a facilitator.

successful. In fact, it appeared that in this case the screening had done little to promote multicultural tolerance, but had fueled resentment against women rather than against Neo Nazis.

Cultivating Audiences

Layla's comments as well as the stories that she and Annika shared with me revealed that the collaboration had not always been easy. What had contributed to their success were the close personal contacts and professional relationships that Layla and Annika had developed with the teachers over the years. They had achieved these relationships through a strong commitment to providing the best possible fit between movies and their audiences. Usually, whenever a teacher or parent called to inquire about a movie screening, they routinely engaged in longer conversations in which they counseled the callers on the selection of a film, at times, as I once witnessed, even discouraging teachers from booking an event when they felt that the film was not a suitable choice for the inquiring party. Once while I was telling Annika about that day's screening, she took a phone call from a female teacher who called to schedule a film viewing of a holiday-themed movie for her students in December. During their twenty minute long conversation, Annika inquired about the first grade students' ages and maturity levels. She also told the teacher about the experiences they had made with other first graders, some of whom had been overwhelmed and intimidated by the movie. She then explained that based on what the teacher told her about her students, she would discourage the teacher from booking this event. Since Cinebureau was only able to screen a limited number of movies per month and since the other movies that month were geared toward older children, Annika encouraged the teacher to contact Cinebureau again in the

future when they would have a different selection of movies available. Hence, Annika discouraged a group from booking an event that would have been profitable for the organization because she was concerned about maintaining her organization's high standards and positive reputation. While discouraging the teacher from booking an event meant a financial loss in the short run, this strategy could be advantageous with respect to the organization's overall goals of continuing to meet her clients' needs.

Despite the range of programs they provided and their limited staff, Annika and Layla invested much time and effort in cultivating the long-term relationships they had developed with teachers at schools across the city, and aimed to provide a good fit between their selection of movies and their clients. Their services also included a survey to be filled out by all participants as well as a follow-up phone call with the teacher approximately one week after a screening and after the teacher and students had had a chance to process the event at school.

Since the Film Competence Agency did not have any personal contacts to organizations in Berlin, the festival organizers wanted to utilize the infrastructure that Cinebureau had created in the two decades of its existence to reach out to as many schools as possible. The Agency used the existing infrastructure that Cinebureau had developed over the course of over two decades by working together with schools and youth centers to offer a variety of leisure time activities and information for youth of all ages. While Cinebureau continued to offer its own program, Layla and Annika provided the contacts and channels of communication, and therefore important "behind the scenes" support that was required to organize the CineWeek.

Faced with the task of organizing movie screenings for mass audiences with whom they had not had a chance to establish any kind of personal or lasting contact, these staff members felt that the quality of their work was compromised. Throughout the festival, copies of the same movies were being screened in different locations, and Annika and Layla booked student groups for any available time slots. Since the goal of the festival was to "bring students to the cinema," there was an incentive to overbook events even if this was to the detriment to any discussions following the movie. On average, a movie audience included well over one hundred students with significant differences in age and educational backgrounds, which made it difficult for facilitators to prepare for and lead group discussions. Many teachers signed up at the last minute, and made their movie selections based on the proximity to a cinema rather than on the content of the movie. Layla and Annika occasionally had to ask some of their "regulars" (i.e., teachers who had previously attended movie screenings by Cinebureau) to call them back after the CineWeek to sign up for upcoming movie events because they were so overbooked. As the conversations and experiences of Layla and Annika showed, Cinebureau risked losing some of its loyal customers from a large scale event that the Agency touted as one of its hallmarks but which the latter could only realize with the help of local organizations like Layla and Annika's Cinebureau.

Multi-Sited Networks and Connections

Since I conducted fieldwork with a number of different organizations and often traveled across the country to attend workshops or film festivals, people sometimes asked me for information about other organizations or persons. In the beginning, I worried about the appropriateness of sharing certain kinds of information with other groups, about

my loyalties, and about the repercussions that sharing information might involve. While there is a long tradition of fieldworkers being suspected of serving as spies (see, for example, Herzfeld 2001, Lemon 2000), in this case some of my informants apparently hoped that I might spy for them as they attempted to assess the terms of their relationship with this small and reclusive but powerful organization. Over the course of my fieldwork, I occasionally found out that my knowledge of or contacts with members of the umbrella organization were indeed valuable to the members of different organizations with whom I had worked, and I thought carefully about the consequences my talk might engender. While I gladly introduced individuals and organizations to one another, I was careful not to share what I considered sensitive information or gossip with members of other institutions. Instances in which someone explicitly complained about or mocked a member of other organizations that were part of my network of fieldsites were rather rare, and in some cases, I was not able to understand certain references or successfully combine different pieces of information until much later.

Over time, I developed a better sense of the needs and desires of different individuals and agencies. If asked for information about services or opportunities another institution might be able to provide, I answered those questions as best as I could, and often encouraged people to get in touch with one another. I often introduced people from different fieldsites to one another. For example, Annika, who worked at Cinebureau in Berlin, traveled to Hamburg to attend a children's film festival that I had helped organize. The following year, her elementary school aged daughter made a film and submitted it to the festival. Similarly, I introduced Ramona, a vocational school teacher from Munich, to Natalia, a children's author and fellow film facilitator from Hamburg. Ramona had been

looking for guidance on how to help students improve their writing skills, and Natalia was interested in spending time with older children to collect ideas for her next book. Once Ramona had managed to receive additional funding from her school, she invited Natalia to teach a scriptwriting workshop to her fifth graders, and Natalia later emailed me an enthusiastic report about her time in Munich.

Skepticism, Suspicion and Resistance: Asterix and the Gauls

Through my fieldwork in Hamburg, I met Ralf, one of the main staff members at a state-funded organization located in downtown Hamburg, the Youth Center. The Center was integrated into the ministry of education and of sports in Hamburg, and offered a number of services for children and young adults, including housing advice, information about career choices, and a number of health-related topics. Occasionally, political parties contacted the Center to request information on certain topics—for example, about research on the relationship between computer games and youth violence—that they then used for policy recommendations. Ralf had worked at the Center for over twenty years, and continued to be involved with a number of local groups that I discovered throughout the course of my fieldwork. In addition, Ralf also served as the member of a federal commission that had been asked to develop binding standards for film education in elementary and high schools across the country. Once a month, he traveled to Berlin to convene with colleagues from the other fifteen federal states to discuss the content of these guidelines, and to develop a list of films that they considered to be of educational value and recommended for use in classroom settings. They shared their results with the federal ministry for youth and family. Through this network, Ralf maintained a good overview of what was happening in the field of film education in the other federal states.

Although he had not yet directly worked together with the Agency, Ralf, too, was curious about their agenda. Whenever the conversation turned to the Agency, Ralf cited the famous opening lines of the hugely popular Asterix the Gaul comics, "All Gaul is occupied. But no–one village still holds out stubbornly against the invaders. One small village surrendered by fortified Roman camps."[76] Using this imagery, Ralf liked to compare the two city states of Hamburg and Munich as the last bastions that had resisted being taken over by the Agency. While these comments were not entirely serious, this comparison implied a number of historical references. Of the 11 formerly West German federal states and the post-unification sixteen federal German states, Bavaria has historically occupied a special political status which continues to be reflected in its official title, the "free state of Bavaria." While the actual privileges that come with this status are largely unknown to most German residents outside of Bavaria, many Bavarians take pride in their independent spirit and refusal to be co-opted into a larger Germany. Similarly, the city state of Hamburg retained some of its medieval privileges as a Hanseatic city well into the 20th century. Ralf prided himself on the fact that his Center had been one of the last remaining holdouts yet the Agency continued to encroach on its turf. During one of our last meetings, a few days before I was to return to the United States, I asked him how he viewed the possibility of future collaborations with the Agency. The transcript is based on an excerpt of a recording of our conversation. Since Ralf's shifting usage of pronouns from the first person singular to the first person plural was particularly remarkable, I have italicized them here: [77]

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[76] http://www.asterix.co.nz/take_a_look/gaul/pages/page1.htm, accessed 10-10-2010

[77] Transcription conventions: R= Ralf. S= Susanne […] = Omission. (…) = Pause.

> R: In principle *I* think those school film weeks aren't bad. But you have to simply look what framework that fits into. […] And don't just say, we'll do a school film week and *we*'ll have to put something else aside for that, or give it up. That's a little bit of what *we* defend ourselves against. That British film week, that's something *we* supported, it didn't cost us anything, no. All it cost *me* was to save that e-mail that *I* had gotten from them, and to forward it and write, this is going on, sign up. […] The information that this is going on, I sent that through the listserv and to another listserv for teachers of English. So, *I* do support that, and *we* are pretty willing to cooperate (laughs), pretty friendly. […] If someone says you have to do that, *I* say no (laughing). *I* don't see a problem with doing something. […] *I* wouldn't see a problem either if they were capable of doing a project. Together, sure, if it fits, *we*'ll do it. So. But *I* see a problem when the Agency expects to do a school film week twice a year. That's when *I* see a problem. Because *we* don't have manpower for that.
>
> S: That would mean for you in particular that one of the school film weeks that you do four times a year, that one would be cancelled.
>
> R: It would have to be cancelled, yes. Because of that, and *we* don't want that. Because of course *we* also have to somehow justify *our* existence.

Ralf's characterization of the work of the Center and the Agency reveals that he views this relationship either as a form of "friendly collaboration" or of two different systems where the Youth Center has to "defend" itself against the Agency. The last phrase from this transcript shows that he worried that if the Agency took over, the Center's existence and activities were no longer legitimized. As my description of the Agency's profile and interactions with Cinebureau in Berlin illustrated, the members of the Agency were unable to organize any events on their own because they did not have the infrastructure that was required to organize such events.

When speaking about the work of the Center, Ralf consistently used the pronoun "we," suggesting a strong identification with his institution. He spoke of himself in the first person when evaluating the Agency's demands on his institution. By repeatedly saying "I don't see a problem with that," Ralf demarcated the concessions he is willing to

make toward the larger institution, and shows the limits of his willingness to cooperate with the much more influential Agency. This strategy may have allowed him to implicitly distance himself from his colleagues at the Center who had been collaborating with a recently established for-profit organization that promotes film education, EduFilm. In the example that follows, I analyze how EduFilm collaborated with the Center to increase the company's presence in the domain of film education.

New Forms of Collaboration: From Texts to Screens

One of Ralf's colleagues at the Center already organized matinee movie screenings for students and teachers in a number of cinemas across the city. While the Center was in charge of the outreach and organizational programs, the screenings and facilitated movie conversations were organized by a local for-profit institution, EduFilm. EduFilm had been founded as a for-profit company in 2004 by Ilona and Dennis, a married couple in their late 40s. Ilona taught German and social studies at a vocational high school for business in Hamburg. In addition, she was a lecturer for education and media studies at Hamburg University and at a private college. Dennis was a filmmaker who had worked on a number of popular television shows and soap operas. During the period of my fieldwork he primarily directed television commercials. Ilona and Dennis had recruited a number of their friends and colleagues, including Klaus, to facilitate movie discussions for them. While most organizations where I conducted fieldwork either provided or required formal training or guidelines for facilitators, the founders of EduFilm did neither. The facilitators received print materials to prepare for movie discussions, but were otherwise given much freedom with respect to how they chose to

lead discussions. There was no institutionalized mechanism for either the facilitators or for members of the audience to provide feedback after a movie discussion.

This absence of a formal training and feedback process was balanced by an abundance of print materials. Through my fieldwork I learned about a plethora of journals that provided information and guidance about newly released films and provided information about youth film festivals and filmmaking competitions. Some of these publications were semi-scholarly review journals, while others provided guidelines for pedagogues and social workers, and thus offered more of an applied perspective. Ilona, one of the founders of the Hamburg-based company that organized movie screenings for local schools, EduFilm, subscribed to a monthly television guide for educators that provided summaries of television films that were being broadcast via the public and private television stations across Germany, and labeled them as "worth seeing" or "worth discussing." The program also highlighted films that dealt with particular topics that were relevant to youth. The text-heavy layout of the magazine, together with the fact that it was printed on recycled paper, lent it an air of a scholarly study guide to popular culture. I had not previously heard of the magazine and did not know much about its readership and popularity, but found it remarkable that such a magazine even existed. Ilona herself read it regularly to learn about the films her students were watching, as she explained to me. She occasionally passed on her old copies to me. They often bore the marks of her reading in the form of highlighted sections and margin comments, which rendered the magazine into a study guide to television culture. Thus, they embodied the key stakes in the film education debate: a sincere attempt to transform popular culture into an object worth studying and evaluating.

The Center was in charge of selecting the movies and handling reservations for events that were facilitated by educators working for EduFilm. Teachers contacted the Center to make reservations and to order government-subsidized tickets for the students which included free tickets for the accompanying teachers and chaperones. After the reservations had been made, the Center mailed a press kit to the teachers' workplaces. Press kits usually included film reviews from a variety of journals as well as materials published by the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Film Competence Agency. These materials had been developed for specific films and consisted of guiding questions or explanations of filmic techniques that teachers could then impart to their students while discussing the movie in class. The same materials were also sent to the film facilitators to help them prepare for the guided group discussions after the screenings.

Teachers were encouraged but not required to engage in any preparation work in anticipation of the movie screening. In my experience, few teachers discussed a movie with their students in advance of the screening, and none of the teachers I met had engaged with the written materials provided by the organizations. When I asked teachers whether they had found those materials helpful in preparing their students for this event, they either told me that they had not received the materials, or informed me that they were overworked and did not have time to read any additional materials. One of the staff members of another film education organization told me that film education events were especially popular before school holidays and before the end of the semester when the students' grades had already been determined. These comments suggested that teachers used these film screenings to pass the time during those last days of the semester, rather than incorporate a film event into their curriculum.

Most students, too, appreciated the fact that a trip to the movies followed by a film discussion took up at least half of a school day. Despite the fact that all educational movie screenings were heavily subsidized by the government, neither the organizations themselves nor any branches of the German government conducted any research on the learning outcomes of participation in these events. Only one of the organizations where I conducted my fieldwork, Cinebureau, engaged in any follow-up conversations with the schools by asking participating teachers and students for written feedback and, at times, contacting the teachers by phone to inquire about their responses to an event that they had attended.[78] As some of the examples I discuss below indicate, this absence of feedback mechanisms and exchange between movie theaters as institutions providing leisure time entertainment (as well as, possibly, education) and schools as institutions of higher learning helped create conditions for a variety of experiences, many of which were neither conducive to film education nor to civic education.

Communication Practices among Facilitators, Office Staff, and Teachers

Prior to my first session as a facilitator for EduFilm Ilona had told me to call the Center to request a press kit to assist me in preparing for my work as a facilitator. When I phoned their office, I inquired how many classes and what age grades had registered for the event. The Center's office assistant listed the names of the participating schools, but since I was new to Hamburg and knew very little about the social geography of the city, the names of schools and their districts did not provide me with any information about the possible social backgrounds of these students. She then asked me if I wished to

[78] As I describe below, Cinebureau had cultivated strong relationships with a number of teachers at different schools over the course of several years, but had to diminish these efforts once they began to collaborate with the Federal Film Competence Agency.

contact the teachers directly. While this idea had not previously occurred to me, I accepted her offer. Based on facilitation work I had done in other settings I assumed that contacting the teachers in advance would provide them with an opportunity to ask questions, tell me about their expectations, and allow me to develop specific questions for each group. Contacting teachers in advance of the screenings thus soon became part of my routine as a facilitator.

Getting in touch with the teachers was often challenging. The Center had given me individual teachers' names and the phone numbers of their schools. Each school started and ended classes at a different time, but all schools held classes in 45 minute segments, with 15-20 minute long breaks after every other class period. Due to the different time schedules, contacting all the teachers who had signed up to attend a movie screening required careful planning. Not all teachers took their break in the teachers' rooms, and each room only had one phone line shared by all the teachers who often did not pick up the phone or declined to take messages for their colleagues. It often took two or three days until I managed to speak to at least one teacher from each school.

Whenever I reached a teacher, I introduced myself as the facilitator of a discussion about the movie after the screening. I inquired about the students' ages, and asked if the teacher had already talked to them about the upcoming field trip. In most cases, the teachers were surprised yet pleased when they learned that I called in advance to ask them about their expectations and preparations for the field trip. However, when I asked the teachers if they had had a chance to familiarize themselves with the materials that had been sent to them, most of the teachers with whom I spoke claimed to not have

received the materials at all.[79] They frequently blamed the faulty and slow mail distribution systems of their schools, accused fellow teachers of stealing the materials from other teachers' mailboxes, or claimed to be too overworked to be able to engage in any additional reading. Consequently, teachers often knew very little about the movies they had come to watch, and frequently admitted afterwards that the movie they had chosen had been an inappropriate choice for their students.[80] In some cases, the teachers who attended a screening with a group of students told me that they had merely agreed to accompany the students from another class to the movies, and that they knew neither the students nor the title of the movie they were going to see. Thus, the efforts of the Center to provide the teachers with additional information and teaching resources did not reach the intended recipients, nor did they bring about the desired effects. What did this suggest about the cooperation between the Center, EduFilm, and their intended audiences?

Several EduFilm facilitators with whom I spoke and whose facilitation sessions I occasionally attended or co-facilitated were fully aware that most teachers did not attend the movie screenings prepared. A staff member of the Center office came to the cinema on the day of a movie screening to handle the financial transactions between the exhibitor and the teachers, but usually left before the screening began. Unlike Layla and Annika at Cinebureau in Berlin, the staff of the Center in Hamburg did not provide an official

[79] It did not occur to me to ask anyone why the Center did not distribute the materials via e-mail rather than classic mail; perhaps its staff members had traditionally disseminated information in the form of hard copies and simply had not switched to using electronic copies yet. Also, most high school teachers did not have any work-related e-mail accounts and were not required to use e-mail as part of their job. Throughout my fieldwork, teachers (almost all of them civil servants) told me that they felt exploited and underpaid, and were very guarded about taking on additional responsibilities or financial commitments for which they could not receive any compensation. Ilona mentioned that whenever she offered professional development workshops for teachers through the regional teacher training institute, participants refused to pay the nominal fee for printed materials, claiming that they would not be reimbursed by their schools. The staff of the Center may have attempted to circumvent this problem by sending hard copies to all participants.

feedback process for the teachers or the facilitators. Hence, its staff members may not have been aware that most teachers did not receive the materials beforehand, or they may have expected the teachers to at least read and discuss the materials after the movie screening. An interaction between one of the staff members and me during the last months of my fieldwork illustrated some of the differences that could arise from gaps or misunderstandings in the cooperation between the Youth Center and a facilitator working for EduFilm.

In February 2008, when I called the Center to request a press kit and ask for the teachers' information in preparation of an upcoming screening of a popular children's film, Paula's Secret, the phone was answered by Herr Kordel. I knew that he was the organization's managing director whose responsibilities included planning and coordinating the screening, but had not previously met him nor talked to him. Upon hearing my request, he sounded surprised, and wondered aloud why any facilitator would contact the teachers prior to any screening. Flustered, I struggled to justify myself by explaining that I had found this helpful when I first prepared for facilitating discussions about a recent fiction film about the Shoah. Herr Kordel appeared to momentarily concede before informing me that unlike when preparing for such a serious film by contacting teachers ahead of the screenings, when preparing for a film "as harmless as [Paula's Secret] I "merely wasted [my] time and the teachers' time" (fieldnotes February 2008). The movie in question was a children's adventure film which included graphic portrayals of the physical and emotional torture that child traffickers inflicted on their dependents. In fact, a number of teachers told me after the screening that they considered

[80] I discuss this in greater detail in my chapter "Between Education and Entertainment" in which I analyze specific film screenings and facilitated film discussions.

some of the scenes far too brutal for their students to watch, and that they regretted having taken their students to this screening. They had not read the press kit sent to them in advance, but had signed up their third graders since the Center had marketed this film as suitable for this age group. Apparently Herr Kordel viewed this film very differently. Although the tone of his voice was not unfriendly and his comments sounded matter-of-factly rather than reprimanding, I was embarrassed, and I assured Herr Kordel that I would not contact any teachers for my next (and last) assignment as a facilitator. Unlike him, I had considered these conversations to be part of my job as a facilitator, and had viewed any previous contact with the teachers as an opportunity for conversation and exchange.

Admittedly, I also (perhaps naively) hoped that by giving a face or at least a voice to EduFilm and the Center the teachers might feel more accountable toward these institutions and the participating movie theaters, and would be more likely to intervene when their students engaged in disruptive and destructive behaviors during the screenings. As I describe in greater detail in Chapter Four, students often engaged in physical fights during screenings. In some cases, they had damaged seats and armrests without any intervention from their teachers. During my work as a facilitator I occasionally witnessed teachers leave the screening room to smoke or drink coffee, thus abandoning their legal duty of supervising the students. According to Layla, vocational school teachers were especially likely to sign up their students for film screenings, while academic track teachers were more likely to choose theater or classical music performances offered by local theaters and opera houses. This observation suggested that those teachers whose academic and social trajectories generally least resembled those of

their students were more likely to assume or accept that their students would be unable to attend a live performance in a relatively formal setting without any major disruptions. At the same time, they considered movie theaters as the kinds of cultural spaces that were not only more accessible to their students, but where their students' unruliness and violence was less likely to be noticed or reprimanded. Based on the trends I have described from my work with EduFilm, most teachers failed to treat these movie screenings as the educational opportunities as which they had been promoted.

Apparently, these problems were not unique to screenings organized by EduFilm and the Center. Layla had told me that in her experience, teachers who were afraid of their students signed up for screenings because they viewed it as an opportunity to legitimately abandon their responsibility as a teacher for at least the duration of the movie. She said to me "Those teachers would not take their students to matinee theater performances or classical music performances because they are embarrassed that their students can't behave themselves in public. But they somehow think that it's fine to dump them at the movies for a couple of hours" (fieldnotes, October 2006). The fact that the staff of the Youth Center did not encourage teachers more strongly to prepare their students in advance meant that they enabled teachers to use the movie education events in this way.

In other words, despite all the media attention on the importance of film competence as an important skill, many still viewed film as a secondary art form that required less connoisseurship and serious engagement.[81] If these patterns were indeed true, they contradicted the claims made by German politicians according to which all

[81] See Bourdieu's (1984) findings on the acquisition of taste and culturedness.

students needed to become “film competent.” In practice, the students who were most likely to benefit from developing film competence were students who already had access to aspects of traditional high culture like theater, music, and the visual arts.

Creating a Brand Name Approach to Film Education

Two months after my conversation with Herr Kordel and shortly before my last assignment as a facilitator, Ilona left a message on my answering machine in which she told me to no longer contact the Center about the screenings, and announced that her husband, Dennis would contact me with more specific instructions. Until then, Ilona had never explicitly instructed me in my interactions and communication with the Center. Could this change in protocol be related to my phone conversation with Herr Kordel? When Dennis phoned me a few days later, I asked him if there had been a specific reason why I had been asked to no longer contact the Center. Dennis explained that this particular film had been doing very well, and that a “tremendous number of students” had signed up for screenings. He told me that he and Ilona “wanted to keep things neat and clean,” and thus preferred that the Center only corresponded with Dennis and Ilona, rather than with any of the facilitators (field notes April 2008). Dennis’s response thus accomplished two things: he presented this change in procedure in the context of the institution’s recent success, but did not explain whether this success called for a more streamlined (and, perhaps, more professional or more consistent) approach in the future, or whether it represented a changed foundation for the cooperation between the two organizations. I suspected that Ilona’s and Dennis’s decision to undercut conversations between the facilitators and the Center’s staff was not the result of a conversation with Herr Kordel, but rather an attempt to change the terms of their future collaboration with

the Center. Perhaps the success they had had with this film would allow them to branch out on their own in the future.

Dennis explained that he had called to inform me that members of the school authorities would attend some of the upcoming screenings. While he did not mention whether the school authority had announced these visits or whether Ilona had received this information through some of her professional contacts as a teacher, Dennis hinted that their observations would affect the school authorities' future decisions regarding the funding of film education events. The officials were going to attend the event incognito, and Dennis instructed me not to ask them any questions, but to treat them as regular teachers or chaperones. Dennis himself had recently facilitated another event that some of these officials had attended, and wanted to ensure that the facilitator of any other events would represent EduFilm and the Center favorably.[82] He emphasized repeatedly that this could best be accomplished by officially and explicitly thanking the school authorities in my introductory comments. The founders of EduFilm were very strategic about creating and maintaining alliances with other institutions to promote their work, and to make their name known to some of the key figures in national organizations.

Despite the fact that EduFilm's homepage and print publications merely cited and recycled statements about the importance of film education made by politicians and public intellectuals—several persons from my fieldsites across the country nonetheless

[82] On the day of the event, I followed Dennis's instructions, and did my best to facilitate a good conversation despite some technical challenges (including poor acoustics and malfunctioning microphones which made a group conversation difficult) and the fact that the audience included a group of extremely rowdy students and their helplessly watching teachers. Since I returned to the United States a few days later, I never found out about the responses of the school authority to this visit.

began to recognize the name, or associate it with film education.[83] The organization's trademark logo could be found on an increasing number of websites about film education. Ilona's work experience in the secondary and post-secondary educational system and Dennis's training in advertisement allowed the founders to identify and target their clientele through insider information and clever advertisement campaigns. How had they accomplished this?

EduFilm's Strategies: Building Networks, Creating Institutional Affiliations

When I first met Ilona in the fall of 2006, she told me that she and Dennis had founded their company in order to address what they perceived as a need for further education in Hamburg's neighborhoods and in the educational system. Throughout the course of my fieldwork, Ilona and Dennis sought to create alliances with a number of other organizations and sponsors at both the local and the federal level. In mid-January 2007, Ilona invited me to attend a so-called "Gründerstammtisch"[84] organized by Dennis and her. The purpose of the meeting was to found a local chapter of the Federal Association for Youth Film.[85] Ilona had invited me to attend, suggesting that this would

[83] See Krisztyna Fehervary (2009) on the production of generic and brand name products. What is fascinating about EduFilm is the fact that they successfully developed a trademark product in the relative absence of any special distinguishing traits which EduFilm had created or could have capitalized on. See also Karen Hébert (2009) on the construction of a brand name product in Alaska.

[84] The literal translation is "founders' tribal table." Dominic Boyer describes the Stammtisch (regulars' table) as a social institution in which (primarily) men "gather together at the same table at the same local pub on the same night of every week to discuss the relevant issues of the day and to drink a great deal of beer" (2005:249 ff). During my fieldwork, so-called "Gründerstammtische" became popular among groups of unemployed and/or self-employed individuals who met regularly to share strategies for founding (gründen) their own businesses. At the time, the federal government provided a fixed sum of start-up capital for un(der)employed individuals who wanted to establish their own businesses, and the "Gründerstammtische" provided a forum in which people could share ideas and business plans as well as talk about their experiences applying for these monies. However, in the case of the "Gründerstammtisch" I describe here, Ilona and Dennis focused on networking and recruiting others to join and support the new chapter.

[85] From here on, I refer to them as Youth Film.

allow me to become familiar with the different representatives and institutions of the local film education scene in Hamburg. She had explained to me that while Youth Film had chapters in many other federal states in Germany, the city state of Hamburg was not among them, and that she and Dennis had decided to found a local chapter in order to bundle and coordinate existing initiatives.[86]

The founders' meeting took place on a week night at a café bar close to Ilona and Dennis's home. Almost 20 persons attended, most of them members of educational institutions across Hamburg. Ilona welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Norbert, the chapter representative from another federal state. Following Ilona's introduction, Norbert provided a summary and overview of the history of Youth Film. The association's activities were financed by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth, and included the following activities and services: providing training in "media competence" for pedagogues and youth social workers, maintaining a video and DVD library, organizing film festivals, and providing training and networking opportunities for young filmmakers. Norbert argued that while the range of film-related programs in Hamburg was easy to keep track of, a number of different organizations were offering similar services. Ilona quickly took over again and explained that the foundation of a chapter in the city state of Hamburg would represent a fusion of already existing organizations rather than an additional and new registered association. She emphasized that different member organizations would take turns hosting future meetings. By the end of the meeting, the chapter was officially founded with Ilona serving as the official representative.

[86] Neither Ralf nor Herr Kordel nor any of the other staff people working at the Center attended the meeting.

Although founding a state chapter of Youth Film may not have led to any immediate benefits for Ilona and Dennis's organization beyond additional publicity and opportunities for further institutionalization, this step ensured that their personalities and organization were closely linked to practices that would ultimately lead to greater standardization and streamlining efforts among local organizations dedicated to film education, and that this new organization would bear their imprint. The chapter's trademark logo could be found on an increasing number of websites about film education. Moreover, by organizing a *Gründerstammtisch* to found a state chapter of Youth Film they were able to integrate Learning Space Cinema into a federal institution, and to take advantage of existing federal structures to recruit a steady stream of clients.

Several months later, I realized that founding the Hamburg chapter had been only the first step in a series of steps leading to collaborations at the national level. In the spring, Ilona and Dennis invited me into their home to ask for feedback on a proposal for a new workshop they were developing where they showed me the outline they had written. The entire documented consisted of a title and three subheadings, all in large font:

> **Foundations of cultural work in the area of youth film**
> **1. Introduction: Understanding film: theory and practice**
> **(by Ilona and Dennis Linde, assisted by Susanne Unger)**
>
> **1.1. Understanding filmic effects, teaching the language of film (evaluation and analysis of youth films using general themes)**

1.2. Cooperations with different partners (e.g., youth centers, schools)

Expectantly, Ilona asked “What do you think we still need to add?” I did not know how to respond. To me, the subheadings revealed very little. Years later, translating and typing them into this document, they continue to look just as vague to me. What did Ilona and Dennis imagine the content of this workshop to be? What was its purpose, and how did they envision my role as an “assistant”? Seeing my name listed on their outline, I felt obliged to contribute a few ideas, so I began to list different examples of film forms and genres, editing and cinematography. I also suggested that we clarify the goals of the workshop. Ilona explained to me that all that was needed at this point was a description of the workshop that they could present at Youth Film’s upcoming annual meeting, where Ilona was to represent the newly founded Hamburg chapter. After I named a few film clips to illustrate each of the concepts I had listed, the conversation turned to Ilona and Dennis’s travel plans for the summer. I left their home feeling slightly dissatisfied and uneasy about their project and my role as a contributor. I had been happy to supply them with a number of keywords for an outline, but I had expected that this was only the starting point. How were they going to use the suggestions I had made, and how were they planning to present them? Would they ask me to help them script an entire workshop on this topic? Would they invite me to co-teach this workshop with them?

Some of these questions were answered several months later, when Dennis, Ilona, and I traveled across the country together to attend a famous international children’s film festival, which also hosted Youth Film’s annual meeting. One of the main points on the meeting agenda was a discussion of so-called” building blocks” of educational units was

an important point on the meeting agenda. Facilitators and instructors who wished to pursue an official certificate in film education would have to complete a certain number of these building blocks. Ilona and Dennis proposed that the workshop that they had developed with my assistance become one of the mandatory requirements of the certificate. When describing the workshop, they passed around a three-page handout that included a detailed list of criteria, methods, and practical examples. Except for one or two points, the description closely matched the suggestions I had made at our meeting. I was surprised that Ilona had not only transcribed and listed every single one of my suggestions, but that she had added hardly any additional information, and that the subheading describing the actual implementation of film work and the cooperation with different institutions had still not been addressed. Nonetheless, the membership voted in favor of the workshop being accepted, which meant that Ilona and Dennis effectively became the gatekeepers to one of the key qualifications for any practitioners who wished to complete an official certificate offered by Youth Film. While I had not been aware of the significance of this workshop, I had undoubtedly (albeit perhaps unwittingly) contributed to the canonization of film education programs.

Aside from using the Youth Center to approach schools and organize screenings, Ilona and Dennis had also been organizing two-day seminars for teachers. By the fall of 2009, EduFilm continued to offer workshops for teachers at the annual Hamburg Film Festival. These workshops consisted of movie screenings for teachers, followed by a discussion about the content of the films, but they never included any analyses of formal or stylistic features of films. Most teachers seemed to enjoy these events and treated them as an “afternoon at the movies” in exchange for which they received accreditation from

Ilona and Dennis for having participated in continuing education for teachers. Despite the fact that the workshops they promoted and taught were not characterized by substantive or rigorous pedagogical or analytical approaches, Dennis and Ilona had perfected the language of film education institutions in marketing themselves to different national organizations.

As the former film education programs were being transformed in the process, these transformations affected their approaches to film education: the staff members of Cinebureau continued to view film education as a way to contribute to a traditional concept of Bildung (education) as relevant to the formation of personhood. In their collaborations with the Film Competence Agency, however, film screenings became large fieldtrip outings rather than an experiential, individualized learning experience of the kind that Annika and Layla had traditionally promoted.[87]

Conclusion

My intention has not been to portray Cinebureau's efforts in an overly romantic light and to contrast their local efforts with those of a national agency and a for-profit institution in ways that unquestioningly value localness and community efforts for community's sake (see also Joseph 2002 on the allure of this perspective). Rather, it is important to understand that while the German government's efforts to promote film education did indeed have the potential to homogenize some of the existing approaches to film education (as Ralf's Asterix comparison illustrated), at the same time these new opportunities did not have any mechanisms for allowing the kind of feedback and

[87] Gregory Starrett observes similar processes in his (1998) monograph, *Putting Islam to Work*.

exchange that organizations like Cinebureau had practiced and valued throughout its existence.

EduFilm, on the other hand, utilized the traditional structures of the social-cultural local centers like the Center, and ad used their professional experience and connections to develop strategies for marketing their services to institutions by establishing networks that allotted EduFilm members prime positions within a larger national network. By suggesting the founding of a local chapter of a national working group and nominating herself as the representatives of that group, Ilona had paved the way for making herself indispensable in terms of networking at the national level.

In Chapter Four I continue my analysis of Cinebureau and EduFilm by focusing on the ways in which the relative absence of clearly defined guidelines for film education affected the educational experience of film screenings for students.

Chapter Four

Education and Entertainment: Performing Democratic Citizenship at the Movies

Introduction

In mid-November 2006, only a few weeks after my arrival in Hamburg, I joined a group of 16-18 year old students from a comprehensive school for a movie screening of the movie *The Death Ship.* The film, a 1959 West German movie adaptation of a novel by B. Traven, details the adventures of a young seaman who, after having his money and documents stolen by a prostitute, is forced to sign up on a merchant's vessel where he and the fellow crewmembers are brutally exploited. The screening was part of a film series designed to commemorate Hamburg's Hanseatic history through the screening of historical, international films about life at sea, many of which were unfamiliar to young audiences. While I had read about these types of events before, this was my first time participating in one.

The Anthropologist at the Movies: Participation and Observation

As I have already outlined in Chapter Three, many movie theaters offered matinee movie screenings for groups of students and their teachers that were followed by a group discussion about the film. The organization of these events was jointly organized by

EduFilm, the for-profit organization that Ilona[88] and her husband, Dennis, had founded, and by a not-for-profit agency for civic education, the Youth Information Center.[89]

Ilona taught German and philosophy to academic track students at a comprehensive school in Hamburg. She had invited me to attend this movie screening together with the 11th graders from her philosophy course, a group of approximately one dozen students. The screening took place in a former factory that had been converted into a cultural center in the 1980s, and was known for hosting film festivals as well as a number of other alternative cultural performances. As we walked through the former factory gates, Ilona asked her students if any of them had previously been to this theater. When no one replied, she explained that this center represented an example of how a formerly industrial space now provided space for a range of cultural events such as theater, music, and dance performances. She did not explain why this might be of interest to the students, and the students themselves did not respond to or comment on her explanation. While all of us waited for the projectionist to arrive and let us into the foyer, she and some of her female students chatted about the cold weather and about this autumn's fashion trends. On the inside, the cinema's foyer consisted of a small vestibule where the projectionist made and sold coffee along with snacks and, of course, movie tickets. The screening room was a large, dark room with a low ceiling, filled with rows of metal folding chairs.

Ilona chose a seat in the front, turned around to face her students, and signaled the beginning of the educational event (shifting frames, see Goffman 1974; 1981) by making

[88] In adherence to IRB regulations, all the names used in this chapter and elsewhere are pseudonyms.

[89] I described the founding story and trajectory of EduFilm and their collaboration with the state-funded Youth Information Youth Center in greater detail in the preceding chapter, Chapter Three.

a few introductory remarks. She began by asking a rhetorical question: "Why are we here today? In order to strengthen our film competence. Students have learned to interpret images in the same way as text excerpts. Visual understanding has taken a back seat. Understanding images and films shall be bolstered."[90] The students remained quiet, perhaps sensing that Ilona did not expect an answer. After a short pause, Ilona asked "What is film competence? How can one apply it?"[91] One student said "That one can engage with the plot."[92] Ilona replied,"Yes, but also with aesthetic means. Why is a story being told and how?" She continued: "Today we are watching a filmic adoption of an adventure story. A new atmosphere emerges through images, additional stories."[93] After inquiring whether anyone had any questions about the plot, she announced that we would talk more about the movie after the screening.[94]

Ilona's manner of asking questions and responding to students seemed heavy-handed and didactic to me. This was not at all how I had imagined film education to occur based on how EduFilm had advertised its services in its brochures which argued that it was necessary to develop a "film praxis at school and in youth culture that aims to address film in a more complex manner and that addresses both film reception [and] various aesthetic [film] forms."[95]

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[90] "Warum sind wir heute hier? Um die Filmkompetenz zu stärken. Schüler haben gelernt, Bilder so zu interpretieren wie Textstellen. Das visuelle Verständnis ist in den Hintergrund getreten, Bildverständnis, Filmverständnis sollen gestärkt werden."

[91] "Was bedeutet Filmkompetenz? Wie kann man sie umsetzen?"

[92] "Dass man sich mit Filmhandlung auseinandersetzen kann."

[93] "Heute sehen wir eine filmische Adaption. Die Vorlage ist ein Abenteuerroman. Durch Bilder entsteht eine andere Atmosphäre, zusätzliche Geschichten."

[94] "Gibt es noch Verständnisfragen zur Geschichte? Sonst sehen wir erst den Film, und dann das Gespräch."

[95] Excerpted from the website of the organization I call EduFilm, my translation.

By asking her students to define film competence and to tell her why this fieldtrip was an educationally valuable experience, Ilona emulated the kinds of questions that a teacher might employ when guiding a classroom discussion of younger students; her own responses suggested that she expected a "correct" answer from her students. At the same time, she did not provide any specific suggestions as to how the students might learn to identify or understand the "aesthetic means" which she had mentioned. Based on my own experiences teaching university students how to analyze films, I had expected her to tell her students to pay attention to particular aspects of the film, like camera movement, or the use of sound in a film. Yet while Ilona emphasized that the students should learn to become film competent, she neither explained what film competence meant nor how the students could acquire the necessary skills for becoming film competent.

After the last credits had rolled and after the lights had been turned on again, Ilona asked her students about their impressions of the film. The students remained quiet. Finally, one student complained that the movie had been "old-fashioned and slow,"[96] and that he did not enjoy watching black and white movies. Other students quickly echoed his complaint. Ilona, perhaps in an attempt to present the movie in a more appealing light, explained to her students that this had been considered a racy movie in the late 1950s, and that the actor playing the protagonist, Horst Bucholz, had been an extremely popular West German actor who was well known for his roles as a rebellious young man. The students did not say much, and Ilona shifted the conversation to a discussion of the plot by asking her students what they thought of the fact that the protagonist's story of exploitation and injustice had all been caused by the theft of his identity documents. She

[96] "Altmodisch und langsam."

inquired whether the students viewed his situation as a human rights issue, a topic that they had discussed in their philosophy class. Her students remained quiet. Perhaps Ilona had hoped to engage them in a political debate; after all, topics like human trafficking and the struggle of illegal immigrants and refugees were topics of frequent political debate in German and European politics during my fieldwork. However, the students neither commented on these parallels nor mentioned any other concerns or questions about the film. Shortly afterwards Ilona signaled that it was time to leave so that the students could return to school in time for their next class period. We gathered our things and left the theater to walk to the subway station together, where we parted ways.[97] Feeling slightly disappointed by what I perceived as a dearth of substantial conversation about the film, I decided that this screening had been somewhat atypical. After all, when Ilona talked to her students about the movie, she did so as someone who knew the students from another educational context, not as an outsider who had a background in discussing films.[98] Nonetheless, the official proclamations about the importance of film education I had been reading had caused me to expect a much more involved and analytical conversation. Were my expectations for film discussions simply unrealistic? Again, the written materials I had encountered suggested that conversations about film would include a discussion of film genres, and perhaps even of questions like editing or camera

[97] Since this was the only time I met the students, I was not able to compare this exchange to classroom interactions between Ilona and her students. Ilona had invited me only to the movie screening, so I did not accompany the group to their school afterwards. She taught students from a variety of age groups (ranging from fifth graders to twelfth graders) throughout the day, and the students in her social studies class did not take all of their classes together, which would have made it difficult to follow her or them.

[98] I wondered whether Ilona's various memberships and affiliations presented a conflict of interest, but was reluctant to ask her whether she had paid herself a honorarium to facilitate this event. Ilona and I had met for the first time only a few weeks earlier, while attending the Film Competence Conference in Berlin, and since the screening of *The Death Ship* represented my first opportunity for conducting fieldwork in Hamburg, I did not want to risk alienating her.

movement. The website advertising the screenings announced that "with the aid of pedagogical accompanying materials, the films can be optimally discussed prior to and after the screening." Based on the conversations I had witnessed between Ilona and her students, it did not appear to me that they had discussed the movie prior to the screening, and I could only speculate whether the students and Ilona would return to a more in-depth discussion of the film during their next class meeting.

Norms and Expectations

Over time, I learned that few film discussions ever strayed from a conversation about the plot of a film. Rarely ever did a facilitator invite questions or comments about aesthetic or stylistic elements of film, for example, the use of sound, cinematography, or editing. Despite the official rhetoric about teaching film education to promote civic and political education I only once observed a facilitator ask audience members to discuss a movie in light of recent local events. Natalia had invited me to co-facilitate a screening of a new German fiction film about the Holocaust, *The Last Train*, with her. Since I had been asked to facilitate another screening of the same film the following week, and since she and I had already had a number of conversations about the film, I was especially interested in watching her guide a discussion. Natalia, whom I already briefly introduced in the preceding chapter, had a degree in screenwriting, and was the author of several children's and teenagers' books. She also taught German as a foreign language to young refugees who had recently arrived in Hamburg from various countries and who were learning German in order to be able to attend German high schools. After the movie had ended, Natalia asked the students whether they thought that racism and xenophobia continued to exist in current day Germany. When some of the students responded by

saying that they did not think so, Natalia asked, "Well, what do you make of the recent Neo Nazi demonstration in Bergedorf [a Hamburg district] against the construction of a new mosque there? Don't you find that alarming?" One student responded by saying that he did not think anyone would take the demonstration seriously, another student disagreed, and the conversation quickly became very lively. Since Natalia needed my help passing around microphones so that students could respond and participate I was not able to track the details of the ensuing political debate, but it was clear that Natalia had succeeded at engaging the students. She also asked the students a few pointed questions about the ways in which different characters had been portrayed in the film, and wanted to know which aspects of the narrative they had and had not found convincing. The entire discussion lasted over 45 minutes, and some of the teachers approached Natalia afterwards and said that they had been very impressed with their students' level of participation. Contrastingly, other facilitators mainly lectured the students rather than asking them for their opinions and impressions, as I show in one of the examples to follow.[99]

Toward the end of my fieldwork I attended another event to which Ilona had invited her students. As part of a city-wide film series of historical films by the famous East German DEFA studios, we attended a matinee screening of the film *Murderers Among us* (1946) at a Hamburg museum together. This fiction film, set in post-WWII Berlin, deals with the romantic relationship between a young woman who returns from a concentration camp to find a medical doctor and former military officer living in her previous apartment. She lets him stay and tries to help him overcome his traumatic war

[99] These inconsistencies among facilitators also characterized the movie discussions that took place as part of the state-wide CineWeek in Berlin that I analyzed in Chapter Three.

memories, and even persuades him not to take revenge on his former military officer who forced him to witness and participate in war crimes, encouraging him to have faith in the democratic process which will bring former Nazi officers to trial.[100] After the screening of this film had ended, Ilona asked her students what they had thought of the film. One of the male students said loudly, "Berlin in ruins... where I'm from it looks just like that."[101] Surprised by this rather personal response, I waited for Ilona to acknowledge his contribution, and to perhaps ask him a few questions about his own experiences with war and displacement. Instead, she said "That's correct, the depiction of those ruins is very striking indeed. Any other responses?"[102] To me, this response sounded oddly detached and almost deliberately casual.[103] Perhaps this response partly explains why despite the fact that Ilona and her students appeared to generally be on friendly terms,[104] the students remained relatively unengaged.

During my fieldwork, students often expressed disappointment when they first arrived at the site of educational film screenings. Most took place in formerly industrial

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[100] Despite or because of its contrived and controversial plot, this was not only a very popular film, but also the first German fiction film to address the Nazi past. However, the film remains silent about why the beautiful young heroine (who looks like she has just returned from finishing school in Switzerland) was imprisoned in a concentration camp or why she would offer her apartment and, subsequently, her unconditional love and support to a former member of the Nazi military struggling to come to terms with his traumatic participation in war massacres.

[101] "Berlin in Trümmern… in meiner Heimat sieht es genauso aus." The student did not mention where his "home" was and whether this referred to a place where he himself had lived before coming to Germany. However, based on the relatively large number of students from Palestine, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon living in Hamburg at the time, it is likely that he may have been from a country that had recently experienced civil war and/or military invasions.

[102] "Richtig, die Darstellng der Ruinen fällt sehr auf. Sonst noch Meldungen?"

[103] One of the organizers of the film series who was present at the screening later confirmed my impression. She reported that she had been shocked by what she interpreted as an almost callous response from Ilona; she also explained that she had been generally surprised that Ilona had not made more of an effort to facilitate a conversation.

[104] Contrastingly, many of the other teachers I met over time avoided interacting with their students during movie outings. As I describe below, they often sat as far away as far as possible from the students during

spaces that had recently been converted into cinemas (such as the theater where Ilona and her students watched *The Death Ship*), or, very rarely, in restored movie theaters from the 1920s. Facilitators as well as teachers repeatedly told me that it was important for students to be exposed to "alternative" or "independent" movie theaters. In Germany these kinds of cinemas represent an important component of the overall cinematic landscape, and are often members of the so-called "cinema guild," an association of cinemas across Europe that is committed to promoting European and world cinema, rather than Hollywood blockbusters.[105] In the larger cities in which I conducted fieldwork, these theaters gladly hosted such events as an opportunity to reach out to future customers.[106] Most of these theaters did not offer the amenities that the students associated with multiplex movie theaters, including plush seats, large lobbies, cocktail bars, and luxuriously wide escalators that provided ideal opportunities for making eye contact and flirting. The physical environment of the screenings and the relative lack of luxury and comfort of these theaters reinforced the impression that students attended these screenings for education rather than leisure. The teachers seemed to expect them to tolerate these differences as part of an overall educational experience. When students grumbled about the poor acoustics of screening rooms, their smells, and their worn-out, sagging chairs, and occasionally asked their teachers "Why can't we go someplace nice?" few teachers or facilitators explained why they considered these venues edifying. In fact,

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movie screenings and, unlike Ilona, did not engage in casual conversations or small talk with the students before or after the screenings.

[105] The cinema guilds emerged from the film club movements I described in Chapter Two.

[106] In some of the smaller cities or villages, the only existing or remaining movie theater belonged to a national chain of cineplexes.

the only occasion on which I heard a teacher refer to the history of a particular cinema was on this first movie screening with Ilona's students.

The absence of a public discussion about the programming and location choices suggested strong financial interests as well as a presumed consensus among those working in arts education about the kinds of visual art which they wanted to teach to young people. The preferred physical environment gives us insights into the pedagogical motivations of the teachers and event organizers; they wanted to expose their students to a moviegoing experience that was otherwise unfamiliar. Students were not just learning how to watch films, but also how to watch films in arthouse cinemas (see above). The equation of educational cinema with alternative cinema was so hegemonic that most people who championed film education never commented on it in my presence, nor in official reports or statements about film education.[107]

This interpretation is further supported by the fact that the film education events were co-sponsored by the German federal government and by members of the German Film Board. In their speeches and proclamations, neither politicians nor filmmakers nor educators usually considered it necessary to elaborate on the relationship between the physical environment of a movie screening and the experience of members of the audience. If they mentioned the importance of the cinematic space, they presented it as a fact, rather than something worth analyzing. For example, when announcing the foundation of the Film Competence Agency in 2005, the State Minister for Culture and

[107] Of course this raises questions about the limits of inclusion – which films and spaces were considered "too alternative" to promote in this context? While the programs reflected a marked preference for linear fiction films and for documentaries (rather than "artsy" experimental films) there were few topics that were off limits. Most films were not explicitly pedagogical or moralistic in scope, but many films had been rated as "pedagogically valuable" by the German voluntary self-censorship board. Many of the members on that board were also members of the federal YouthFilm organization I described in Chapter Three.

Media at the time, Bernd Neumann, stated that the purpose of the Agency was to "advertise for the cinema as an experiential place"[108] (*Erlebnisort*). His description suggests that the Agency did not merely provide a series of movies for people to watch. Instead, they provided participants with an *experience*. [109] According to this description, watching a movie at the movies (rather than, say, on one's computer at home) was considered a special and memorable experience. Of course, as film scholars and media anthropologists have pointed out (see, for example, Hansen 1991, Armbrust 1998) watching a film collectively and at the movie theater is indeed a unique experience. At the same time, the choice of participating venues implied that the kind of moviewatching experience that the Agency aimed to provide influenced their programming choices. These individuals confidently and consciously promoted the progressive, liberal tastes of members of the educated middle class (see Frykman and Löfgren 1987), and preferred a somewhat dilapidated movie theater in a former factory as having "more character" than a gleaming new Cineplex but failed or refused to acknowledge some of the contradictions inherent in their preferences.[110]

Practicing Participation: Teachers' and Facilitators' Expectations for Film Facilitation

Over the course of my fieldwork I was surprised to find out that many students and teachers who attended educational matinee movie screenings chose *not* to participate

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[108] (personal communication, October 23, 2006)

[109] Perhaps the company suggested this much in the same manner as other companies claim to sell a lifestyle requiring a certain kind of connoisseurship, rather than a commodity? See, for example, Silverstein 2006.

[110] Bourdieu (1984) examines the class-based nature of the assumptions that inform one's evaluation of objects as beautiful or valuable. My examples show how the cultivation of these tastes is reproduced in an educational setting precisely because there is no open acknowledgment of or debate about the criteria on which these judgments are based.

in guided discussions after the film. While I was unable to log the numbers of classes and students that attended a particular screening,[111] usually at least one teacher and her or his students left the screening room immediately after a movie had ended and before the closing credits were over. In most cases, classes of students that had been particularly noisy and unruly during a screening did not stay for the discussion, but it was difficult to tell whether the teachers had planned this in advance, or whether they had made this decision based on their students' behavior during the screening itself. On several occasions, teachers warned me prior to a screening that their students would not be able to sit through an entire movie, let alone participate in a group discussion about the movie, and that expecting students to engage with a topic for such an extended period of time was "expecting too much." In some cases, teachers cited the students' young age, saying that their fifth graders' concentration span barely allowed them to watch a 90 minute film without intermission.[112] In other cases, teachers informed me that their vocational students or professional students were used to taking smoke breaks during the five minute breaks in between 45 minute classes. While these reasons may have been rooted in legitimate concerns about the students' ability to pay attention for a slightly longer period of time, the teachers must have been aware of these issues when they chose to register for this event. Importantly, the teachers often engaged in the very behaviors that they criticized in their students. Teachers smoked cigarettes outside of the movie theater before and after the screening and discussion, they frequently bought coffee at concession

[111] As I explain in greater detail below, the information about participating school classes that I received prior to screenings was usually incomplete, difficult to verify, and often subject to last minute changes. In some cases, participating teachers did not know the students themselves nor were they able to tell me how many students had come to the movie theater with them.

[112] Most fifth graders are between ten and eleven years of age.

stands. Once, when the proprietor of a movie theater commented to a group of teachers about the students' noisy, disrespectful and destructive behavior during the screening, an exasperated middle school teacher explained that "most of [his] students already have criminal records," implying that young offenders could not be expected to act civilly at a movie screening. His comments represented not merely a dismissal of the students as a group, but also a very disrespectful comment to make in front of their students.

Over time, I learned that the approaches by different EduFilm facilitators varied considerably as well, both with respect to the amount of time they spent guiding a movie discussion and in terms of their pedagogical approaches. In what follows, I provide several examples of the heterogeneity of approaches among facilitators and teachers.

Evaluating the Documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* in Hamburg

One of the events I attended as a co-facilitator was a screening of the then-new documentary film directed by Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*, in which Gore attempts to educate his audience about the harmful effects of global warming. The screening took place at Harbor Cinema, an independent movie theater which, compared to many other arthouse cinemas, was relatively luxurious, offering spacious plush chairs and a high tech sound system. Harbor Cinema showed mainstream as well as independent films, and hosted monthly poetry slams for teenagers. The building was located in a former propeller factory near Hamburg's industrial harbor that had recently been converted into commercial space and now housed two upscale restaurants, one gallery, and two goldsmiths offering custom-made jewelry.[113]

[113] The building also housed Shortcuts which organized filmmaking workshops in schools across Hamburg. I discuss these workshops in Chapter Five. The organizers of Shortcuts's outreach program and the

Ilona had invited me to attend this movie screening, and I had immediately agreed to come because I was curious to see how other facilitators interacted with student groups. That day's designated facilitator was Klaus. Not having previously met him nor knowing what he looked like, I arrived at the cinema half an hour prior to the screening, expecting to find him among the students and teachers in the foyer. Since no one approached me directly, I walked up to the adults in the crowd to introduce myself and to ask them about their reasons for attending this event, as well as their expectations. Several teachers explained that they had chosen this event either they had just completed teaching a unit on environmental issues or were about to do so and thought the film might provide some additional information about this topic.

Once Klaus arrived, he explained that he was relieved to find out that I would co-facilitate the event with him, since he was feeling rather tired and not in shape to guide a conversation. While I had expected to merely observe this event rather than to be in charge of a group discussion, I did not feel that I could legitimately refuse to help him. After all, he allowed me to attend and observe his work, so honoring his request was the least I could do, I thought. All of us entered the movie theater together. Once the students and teachers had chosen their seats and the lights had been dimmed, Klaus took the portable microphone, stepped onto the stage, and introduced himself a Hamburg-based filmmaker. He had neither asked me for my name nor my professional background, but, pointing at me, proclaimed that "we" welcomed everyone to this event, then thanked everyone for attending. Klaus's use of a microphone nonwithstanding, a steady stream of conversations among the students made it difficult to understand what he was saying. A

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founders of EduFilm were aware of each other and sometimes attended the same educational or informational events, but they followed very different approaches to film education.

few teachers tsk-ed and turned their heads in different directions, but without any audible effect. The students only began to quiet down after the documentary had begun. Like the vast majority of American films in Germany, this film, too, had been dubbed into German, hence allowing the students to follow the film without having to read the subtitles. The silence did not last long, however. Soon, students were whispering, giggling, and talking again. The noise level rose steadily until a few minutes into the film when a cartoon character resembling Bart Simpson made a joke that put an abrupt end to any conversations. Mocking the attitude of a xenophobic white American who does not believe in the scientific basis of global warming, the character exclaims "Nein, Schuld [an der globalen Erwärmung ist NICHT der Ausländer!" ("No, the foreigner is NOT to blame for global warming!")[114] Suddenly all conversations appeared to have ended. No one laughed. This joke, most likely intended by the director as a sarcastic commentary on American xenophobia and racism, did not seem funny to the members of this audience, many of whom had foreign-sounding first names, as I had overheard while waiting in the lobby for Klaus's arrival. As the movie continued, the atmosphere in the theater changed again. Students began fidgeting in their seats, and more and more students left the screening room (presumably to use the bathrooms) and then returned. Brightly lit screens of cell phones indicated the flow of text messages across the theater and beyond. Other students began to boo during Gore's voiceovers.

[114] Only having watched the version dubbed into German, I am not entirely certain about the phrasing in the original script. The transcripts of the film I have found do not include the comments voiced by animated characters such as the character resembling Bart Simpson. I suspect that the term in the original English version that was translated into "Ausländer" (lit., foreigner) in German may have been "immigrant" rather than "foreigner." However, what is relevant for my analysis is how the German translation was perceived among members of a German-speaking audience.

An Overly Critical Audience?

By the time the movie had ended and the last credits had rolled, Klaus and I went to the stage and turned on our microphones. I expected to listen and respond to comments and questions. In the discussion that followed, several students complained about having been made to watch a "propaganda" movie about environmental issues. They argued that the narrator's voiceover had been too smooth, and that some of the images had been "too subjective" and "too cheesy" to be believable and authentic (for example, a scene showing Al Gore sitting by his young son's hospital bed). At that point, Klaus and one of the teachers began to challenge the students' comments, reminding them of the seriousness of environmental issues. Although Klaus was himself a filmmaker and hence presumably knowledgeable about editing and production processes he began to lecture the students on the importance of using energy saving devices and reusing and recycling raw materials. The lecture format only further alienated the students who continued to complain about what they saw to be a film intended to "brainwash" them. Perhaps they merely attempted to emancipate themselves themselves from the position on global warming that their teachers had been teaching them.[115] The students' emotional and cognitive responses were likely shaped by a range of factors, including their previous knowledge of and attitudes toward global warming and their personal interest in the topic of climate change. While debates about the causes of global warming were not nearly as contested, political, or radical in the political climate of Germany than in that of the United States, some students may have disagreed with or resented their teachers' efforts to teach them environmental awareness.

[115] See also Miller-Idriss (2010) on how secondary school teachers in Germany discuss politics in the classroom.

Importantly, the screening also took place at a time when many Germans were extremely critical of the American administration under George W. Bush, and of the United States in general. In addition, the German educational system teaches students to question the motivations of politicians who appear media-savvy and likeable rather than sober and rational, and who are therefore seen as populist. The audience of this film had little tolerance for Al Gore's portrayal of himself as a likeable, approachable politician, and responded negatively to Gore's strategy of interspersing science reports with anecdotes about his personal life and family. Several students complained that Al Gore's portrayal of the issues at stake had not been serious enough, or simply said "I thought this movie would be about global warming, not about Al Gore's family!"[116] Ironically, one could perhaps view the students' perception of Al Gore as a successful previous socialization as democracy-minded citizens who had been warned not to believe charismatic leaders. Moreover, these comments show that the students had recognized those aspects of a Hollywood film that their teachers criticized.

While some of the students' criticisms were of editing and cinematography, the film facilitator and teachers did not respond to such references. Despite a proclaimed commitment to teaching young people film literacy and thus the ability to evaluate films critically, they steered the discussion toward the topic of the film, rather than focusing on how that topic had been portrayed. The adults, rather than addressing the students' complaints and asking them why they had found certain aspects of the film unconvincing, insisted on the importance of the film's content. They quickly turned the event into a heavy-handed pedagogical exercise. A discussion of the use of camera movement,

[116] In the film, Gore uses photographs of his older sister who died of lung cancer, and of his son, who barely survived a serious accident, to explain how the loss and near-loss of these people sensitized him to

editing, sound track, and mise en scène might have enabled the participants to analyze, and possibly confirm or challenge, the students' responses to the film. It might have allowed the students to better explain or perhaps even justify their frustration with the film. In other words, the students were not encouraged to acquire the skills that politicians and teachers claimed to value: the ability to analyze films by identifying how moving images can be employed to evoke certain emotions, and how films can shape the portrayal of ideas or events.

One hallmark of German civic education is to teach environmental awareness, and the ability to express a deep concern for this topic takes on the character of a transportable quality that is seen as an important civic skill. The students resisted the efforts of film facilitators and teachers, and refused to acknowledge the importance of these issues. Whether they did so out of genuine disbelief or as a way of rebelling against the teachers' expectations would require further fieldwork with the students. Nonetheless, the example I have described above showed that educators mobilized talk about film as a venue for teaching civic virtues, rather than as an opportunity for teaching aesthetic sensibilities or art appreciation. This suggested that the educators, too, understood the screening as an opportunity for talking about environmental and political issues, rather than about formal aspects of documentary film. Hence, talk about film became an index of one's ability to perform and engage in civic discourses, but there was no acknowledgement of the nature and characteristics of film as an art form in and of itself.

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the preciousness of life and of our natural environment.

Evaluating the Documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* in Berlin

A few months later, I facilitated a discussion of the same movie in Berlin during a movie screening at one of the smallest and most humble movie theaters in Berlin, Krypton, located in a middle class district in West Berlin, Schöneberg was the home of many political, literary, and artistic figures in the early 20th century, including Christopher Isherwood, August Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, and Billy Wilder. Amidst a variety of cafes and bars, Schöneberg's businesses mainly include kiosks, internet cafes, and a number of Turkish greengrocers and bakeries along with dollar stores, sex shops, and a few high-end used book stores or antiquity shops. The district continues to be one of the centers of gay and lesbian life in the capital.

Krypton Theater was located between a kebap shop and a news kiosk. The theater's only screening room accommodated approximately up to 50 persons in a room filled with stale air and worn out seats. The theater usually showed only one or two movies per week, many of them LGBT- themed. On my previous visits to the theater, the audience consisted mainly of middle-aged male couples, and the atmosphere had been relatively informal and quiet. Prior to a screening, the projectionist also sold admission tickets and refreshments. Krypton's location, modest ticket prices, and emphasis on alternative and LGBT movies attracted audiences who valued the theater's movie selection and loyally supported the theater's catering to Schöneberg's LGBT community (see also Joseph 2002).

That day, Krypton was scheduled to screen the recently released documentary film, "An Inconvenient Truth." The screening had been scheduled for the late morning, and I had arrived almost an hour earlier, well before any of the teachers and students would have arrived, I thought. However, I was wrong. The movie theater had not yet

opened, but a group of teenagers had already gathered on the narrow sidewalk outside of the theater entrance, together with a middle-aged German woman, obviously the group's teacher. While I introduced myself and started asking her about her work and her reasons for taking her students to this screening, her students jostled each other on the sidewalk, giggled, called out to each other, or joined the conversation.

In the meantime, two of the students returned from a nearby bakery, where they had been sent to buy *simit*—a Turkish baked good shaped like a large doughnut and covered with sesame seeds—for the entire group. After returning the change to their teacher, the students distributed the food to their classmates. In the dozens of film screenings that I had already attended during my fieldwork, I had never observed a teacher provide her students with food prior to a movie screening. By treating her students to a (relatively healthy) snack before the class had even entered the theater, this teacher promoted one kind of consumption, and preempted another. During my work as a facilitator in Hamburg, I frequently observed teachers complaining to each other or to me about the fact that many students insisted on purchasing chips, soft drinks, and chocolates (usually for twice or thrice the cost these items cost at a supermarket). Sometimes, teachers expressed their disapproval by claiming that "these students are unable to watch a movie without eating popcorn or chips," thereby suggesting that for the students, going to the cinema – even as part of a field trip organized by their school—was bound up with other modes of consumption, such as eating overpriced fast food. On other occasions, teachers turned to me and expressed outrage at the prices that different theaters charged for their concessions, saying "*I* can't afford to buy these things myself," sometimes adding that the students' families were not well off enough to afford these foods, either.

In all of these instances, there was a strong moralistic bend to the commentary about food. This represented another way in which the teachers attempted to instill in the students a (perhaps Protestant-inspired?) middle class ethic of restrained consumption during educational events, thus reifying the cinema as a site of education rather than of pure leisurely enjoyment.

The projectionist arrived and unlocked the doors of the movie theater. Other groups of teachers and students began to arrive as well, and made a beeline for the concession stand inside the theater where they purchased large amounts of popcorn and chips. I followed them inside and introduced myself to the accompanying adults. Unlike the first teacher, none of the other teachers talked to their students, nor did they appear to have any information about the movie that they and their students were about to watch. One male teacher explained that he did not personally know the students whom he accompanied, and that he did not know which movie they were about to watch, either. His school had merely asked him to attend the screening as an additional chaperone. For this screening, the organization had also invited a guest speaker, Dr. Feld. He was one of the founders of a local research institute, and had been invited to lead a discussion following the movie screening. Once all the students were seated, I greeted the audience, introduced myself and Dr. Feld, and announced that there would be a discussion after the movie.

Despite the positive impression I had gained from my earlier interactions with the school teacher and her students, the screening itself turned out to be one of the most intense screenings in which I participated during my fieldwork. The theater's loudspeakers barely worked, which encouraged the students to engage in noisy

conversations from the minute the movie began. Sitting in the dark and far away from their teachers, some of the male students soon began to engage in fights. A group of girls sitting close to me complained that the boys in their vicinity were throwing food at them. I tried to intervene, but without success. A few minutes later, some of the students began to throw bottles and cans, paper planes, and food items in the direction of the screen. One bottle flew to the front and missed Dr. Feld by only a few centimeters. One teacher intervened by changing seats to sit with one of the noisier groups of students, but none of the others made any efforts to contain their students. What to do?

When working as a facilitator in Hamburg, I had frequently encountered noisy or aggressive students and had usually found ways to engage them in the discussion after the movie, but I had never encountered such a large group of disruptive students at once, and felt conflicted about how to best respond. On the one hand, I was angry that the disruptive behavior of some students, tolerated by their teachers, made it difficult for others to fully engage in watching this movie. Not having previously worked for this organization, I was not sure how they expected me to handle this situation. Was the students' behavior still within the range of the acceptable to others, and was I merely imposing my own middle class standards about the importance of being able to watch a movie quietly? At the same time, I worried about my obligations toward the guest speaker. In my role as representing the organization that had invited him to this screening, was it not my role to make sure that others treated him respectfully, and that he didn't get hit by an empty bottle, for example? Finally, if I asked the projectionist to interrupt the movie, would the teachers demand their money back? Would Layla and Annika be angry with me if I interrupted the screening? Should I call them and ask for

their advice, or would that make me look unprofessional? What was the appropriate response for an anthropologist – ending the screening, or continued participant observation and notetaking?

Later, after returning to the office and talking to the staff about the students' performance at this screening, I heard stories of facilitators who had returned from movie screenings in tears because they had felt threatened and overwhelmed by the students. Layla reported that after a screening that she had facilitated she once found the movie theater seats sliced into shreds by students who had applied their pocket knives the upholstery. Annika explained that many teachers were too afraid of their students to intervene, and that teachers often took their students on such outings because they viewed these events as a respite from having to confront their students. Over the course of my fieldwork, I quickly learned to identify those teachers based on how far they chose to sit away from their students, indicating their willingness (or lack thereof) to engage with and, if necessary, confront their students. Hearing these stories was both unsettling because it suggested that there was a significant potential for disruption and violence, and that facilitators could not rely on teachers to intervene.

During the screening, I got up and started looking for the projectionist to ask him for assistance, but was unable to locate him. By the time I returned, the students had calmed down, but continued to engage in side conversations throughout the rest of the movie. After the credits had rolled, I announced a short bathroom break for those classes who had planned to stay for the film discussion. Two of the school classes left immediately, including the eighth grade teacher who had appeared to have such a positive relationship with her students. When another pair of teachers who had seated themselves

far away from their noisy students ushered students out of the movie theater I approached them and explained that I had found their students' behavior extremely disruptive and inappropriate. One of them, a young man who had arrived late for the screening, informed me that my complaints were "directed at the wrong person," that I should not expect his students to act any differently, and that my "standards were clearly too high," suggesting perhaps that his students could not be expected to behave better in a public setting, or that he did not feel responsible for their behavior, or both. Clearly, the teachers' expectations regarding this outing differed significantly.

When I spoke to the projectionist after the event to apologize for the mess that the students had left behind, he merely shrugged. Was I the only adult in the movie theater whose standards for acceptable behavior in a movie theater were unrealistic? Was I turning into a stern disciplinarian unable to appreciate different forms of movie consumption? At the same time, why did all the other educated middle class professionals insist that the students couldn't be expected to act differently? When I returned to the screening room, Dr. Feld opened the floor for a discussion about the film. Since none of the students volunteered any comments or questions, he began to lecture them about the cause and effects of global warming, and began to ask them a series of factual questions such as "What's the difference between weather and climate?" He then followed up on students' brief, hesitant responses by providing mini lectures on these sub-topics. Similar to the conversations I had witnessed when attending film screenings facilitated by Ilona and Klaus in Hamburg, the facilitators and the teachers ended up doing most of the talking, while there were few opportunities for the students to speak up. In other words,

events that were promoted as providing students with opportunities to become film literate were events in which adults spoke *for* or on behalf of the students.

After the event had ended, I thanked Dr. Feld for his efforts, and apologized for the students' unruly behavior. He explained that he rarely ever had an opportunity to speak to young people about his work, and that he was usually invited to give talks to board members who supported his organization, or to members of the industry. He said that he had very much enjoyed this opportunity to talk to young people. By the time I returned to the organization's office, Dr. Feld, had already phoned and assured the staff that he would gladly participate in future film education events. Apparently, Dr. Feld and I had very different expectations as well as interpretations of the event we had attended. While I had worried about what I had perceived as highly disruptive behavior with the potential of turning into violence and had been angry at the (predominantly male) students who had used the screening to breach (what I at least assumed were) the norms for classroom behavior, Dr. Feld had perhaps chosen to interpret the students' response as a way of engaging with the film.

Teaching Film Literacy: Art or Politics?

One of the central premises of most film education programs in Germany was the emphasis on the experience of watching a movie in the movie theater rather than in the classroom, and of participating in a conversation about a film in an unfamiliar setting. Members of the federal Film Competence Agency often emphasized that watching movies at the cinema was a unique cultural experience. Their descriptions evoked images of young people watching an edifying movie together and walking out of the movie theater spellbound, fascinated, and transformed. In reality, during many of the screenings

I attended groups of bored teenagers sent text messages to each other or listened to their MP3 players in the dark, thus removing themselves from the immediacy of the movie watching experience. Despite the fact that all educational movie screenings were heavily subsidized by the government, neither the organizations themselves nor any branches of the German government's department of education conducted any research on the learning outcomes of participation in these events. Only Cinebureau engaged in any follow-up conversations with the schools by asking participating teachers and students for written feedback and, at times, contacting the teachers by phone to inquire about their responses to an event they had attended.[117]

Many teachers were hesitant to talk about films and filmmaking in the classroom because they worried that their students know more about filmmaking than they do. In an essay entitled "The film projector and the pointer: Similarities and differences in the visual order of cinema and school," Wilfried Pauleit, a professor of art education and film studies at the University of Bremen, argues that teachers often view movie screens as a powerful and attractive source of authority in the classroom – and, ultimately, as serious competition for the teacher – if not as his or her doppelganger. He argues that film education programs have to acknowledge the tension between teachers' traditional roles in the classroom, the potential of films to educate and raise awareness, and the association of film with leisure time activities and unadulterated enjoyment.

The observations I have described suggest that, in its current form, the primary function of film literacy programs was not to teach students how to analyze and talk about films. Instead, the movie discussion skills emphasized were the ability to perform a

[117] As I described in much greater detail in Chapter Three, this organization had cultivated strong relationships with a number of teachers at different schools over the course of several years, but had to limit

particular discourse about political and social issues. Citing the political scientist Lisa Wedeen (1999:19), Brian Larkin writes that "states produce forms of language and modes of public ritual in their own image. […] [Wedeen's] argument is that the state is less interested in legitimacy—whether citizens believe the statements they are making or not—and more in subjection, forcing people to take part and mimic languages even, or especially, when they do not believe it" (Larkin 2008:107). Was this the case with the film education programs I have described here? In what follows, I analyze the conversations that occurred – and the ones that didn't—following the screening of a movie about the Holocaust,[118] a topic that continues to inform difficult and often painful political conversations about how to talk about this topic in current day Germany at a time when many young people find it increasingly difficult to relate to Germany's Nazi past.

Watching an Action Film about the Shoah

A few months after having facilitated the discussion of *An Inconvenient Truth* at the *Harbor Cinema*, I returned to attend a screening and facilitate a conversation about *The Last Train* (*Der Letzte Zug*), a fiction film about the Holocaust that included many elements of an action film in the hope of making this difficult and sensitive topic more interesting and relatable to today's youth.

The participating students were tenth grade students from a trade school as well as two classes of tenth graders from an academic track school who attended the event

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these efforts once they were forced to cooperate with a larger, national organization.

[118] Since most Germans continue to refer to the Shoa as the Holocaust, I use both terms interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

together with their history teachers.[119] The trade school teacher, Herr Schmied, had informed me that his students were "not known for their critical thinking skills," and warned me not to expect them to engage in a thoughtful conversation. The academic track teachers, on the other hand, told me that their students had already studied the history of National Socialism extensively, and that some of them had previously participated in a school trip to Poland to visit the former concentration camp *Theresienstadt*.

The film is a fiction film about the Holocaust, directed by Dana Vavrova and Joseph Vilsmaier in 2006. Vavrova, a Czech actress, and Vilsmaier, a German film director, were a well-known couple that had made a number of successful films in Germany since their first collaboration on a fiction film in 1980. The film details the last deportation of German Jews from Berlin to Auschwitz in 1943, and centers around the lives of a number of wealthy Berlin residents, including a former prize fighter and his wife and young children, an elderly gynecologist and his daughter and granddaughter, a famous opera singer. The protagonist is a young woman played by Turkish German actress Sibel Kekilli, a rising star in the German movie industry, for whom this role presented her debut as a "serious" actress and her first appearance in a film in which she was not cast as a Turkish German woman. Filmed almost exclusively inside a train wagon, the movie chronicles the lives of these people as they spend six days inside a train wagon on their way to Auschwitz. Over the course of the six days without access to water or food, the passengers are shown to slowly lose their dignity, their sanity, and, eventually, their lives. Using a series of flashbacks, the audience is shown snippets from

[119] One of the history teachers teaching at an academic track school, Frau Cadoso, told me before the screening that her students would not stay for the discussion after the movie, since she preferred to give

the characters' previous lives, all of which are marked by high levels of professional and material success. While reviews praised Kekilli's performance as an actress, the movie received overwhelmingly negative reviews in the German press for its heavy use of clichés and its reductive manner of portraying the atrocities of the Shoa as symptoms of individual Nazi officers' sadism, rather than a carefully planned genocide. How did the students respond to the movie during the discussions I facilitated at the *Harbor Cinema* in Hamburg?

Evaluating Student Responses

During the movie, I sat near a group of students who greeted Kekilli's appearances on film with wolf whistles and shouts demanding that she take off her clothes,[120] and provided a running commentary throughout the movie. They anticipated plot twists based on sound track changes, and advised the protagonists how to handle tricky situations. After the movie had ended I began the discussion by asking the students what they had thought of the movie, and if there were any scenes that they had found especially memorable or especially difficult to watch. As always happened after a film had ended and the students found themselves in a movie theater together with largely unfamiliar students, no one responded immediately. However, since the students sitting closest to me had been very astute at recognizing some of the characteristics of an action film, I tasked them to think about how their responses had been shaped by the sound track and camera movement. However, the conversation quickly returned to the content

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them an opportunity to "digest" the movie by going to a neighborhood café.

[120] These sorts of comments may have referred to Kekilli's overall attractiveness, or to the fact that she had starred in a series of pornographic films prior to her breakthrough role in the German Turkish film *Head On*.

of the movie, and when one female student raised her hand and said "Why do we have to watch yet another movie about the Holocaust? I am sick of watching movies about the bad Nazi Germans."[121] A number of students who had come up with really insightful comments on this topic joined the chorus of students in saying that they were tired of being depicted as Nazis. A group of students spontaneously began to applaud. I was shocked by the applause, and realized that this comment had clearly struck a chord with many students. I was about to ask the students to elaborate why they felt this way, and how many movies about the Holocaust they had actually "had" to watch in the past, but at that point one of the teachers, Herr Schmied, intervened by quickly asking the students "Who has seen the first James Bond movie?" A number of students raised their hands, and started talking about how much they had enjoyed the recently released *Casino Royale*. Herr Schmied said, "Well, why did they continue making James Bond movies after the first one?" He then delivered the answer himself: "Because it's a story that can be told again and again." None of the students appeared to question the analogy between the Holocaust as an historical event and the fictitious story of a Cold War secret agent, and Herr Schmied appeared pleased with that response. He had, at least momentarily, managed to steer the conversation away from the responses about which he had warned me earlier, and had justified his decision to take his students to this screening.

When I attempted to reroute the conversation and asked the students why they did not want to watch "yet another film about the Holocaust," one student argued that "there is a lot of suffering in the world, and it is more important to watch, say, movies about hunger in Africa than about something that has nothing to do with us." Her classmates

[121] Note also the semiotic shift from the description of the movie as being a movie "about the Holocaust" to being a movie "about Nazi Germans."

responded with approving murmurs. Again, the use of "us," albeit used by different speakers and in a different context than the one I have described above, served to distance the speakers from a group of people whose plights they felt were not of any concern to them. In fact, the students were so eager to distance themselves from the experiences of Jewish Germans in the 1940s that they implied that they had more in common with contemporary Africans than with Jewish and non-Jewish Germans of their great-grandparents' generation. The seemingly nonchalant attitude the students displayed when talking about the Holocaust and the vehemence with which they repeatedly affirmed that this topic had absolutely no relevance for them revealed that this topic was clearly imbued with a number of strong emotions for all participants. The students' comments were part of a larger social discourse about the Holocaust. Some of the students' refusal to engage in a conversation about this topic has to be attributed to the fact that refusing to respond to the movie in the expected manner represents one of the starkest and most provocative ways of rejecting the process of "coming to terms with the past" that had been advocated by many educators, activists, and politicians in West Germany in the 1980s and early 1990s. Generally, students were taught to understand that while they are not personally responsible for the Holocaust, their heritage and citizenship required them to acknowledge the burden of Germany's Nazi past, and to consequently commit to standing up for freedom and democracy.[122] Thus, one might interpret the students' refusal to engage in part as a strategy for rebelling against their teachers' expectations.[123] It is therefore possible that the students displayed this very lackadaisical behavior in order to

[122] See Cynthia Miller-Idriss's excellent monograph on representations of the Shoah in the German educational system.

[123] See Willis (1977) for an analysis of working class boys' attempts to resist the authority of their middle class teachers.

provoke their teacher. While their complaints about being forced to deal with "an overdose of guilt and history" may indeed have constituted a genuine lack of interest in the topic, most of them are also well aware that this pronounced lack of interest in a topic[124] that their teachers struggled to make relevant to them was one of the most effective ways of provoking their teachers.[125] Both the students' provocative remarks and the teacher's troubling response suggested that this topic evoked a series of complex emotions that needed to be acknowledged and addressed well beyond the constraints of a single educational film screening.

After the last students had left, I looked at my watch and was surprised to see that we had spent almost an hour talking about this film—much longer than most film discussions which usually end after half an hour when the students become restless. The attending teachers thanked me. The history teacher told me that he had appreciated my style of leading the discussion by asking open-ended questions, and allowing the students to voice their opinions as well as to contradict one another. He was also impressed by how well the different student groups had interacted with each other. Herr Schmied, the vocational school teacher, said that had found the discussion very fruitful. He explained that he was surprised that his students had managed to "behave themselves" during the movie, stayed in their seats until after the credits had rolled, and that they had even "picked up after themselves" before leaving the cinema. Again and again, he emphasized how impressed he had been by how his student, and explained that he would certainly

[124] Ann Stoler (2009) investigates the cultivated indifference of colonial agents' families toward their colonial subjects, demonstrating that an emphatic lack of interest in the histories and lives of marginalized others requires at least some (however subliminal) effort.

[125] Again, see Miller-Idriss 2009 for a very thoughtful and thorough analysis of these intergenerational dynamics.

consider taking them to similar events again in the future. Herr Schmied's comments suggested that for him, having his students participate in this film education event had been as much about teaching his students about appropriate behavior during a field trip as it had been about encouraging his students to participate in a group discussion about the movie. In other words, at least for Herr Schmied, this outing had successfully rendered a visit to a movie theater into a legitimate cultural and educational event.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have illustrated a gap between the official goals of educational movie screenings that aimed to promote conversations about relevant political and social issues and the on-the-ground implementation of these pedagogical efforts. My analysis reveals that social hierarchies were being reproduced along the lines of membership in different cultural groups, majority-minority relations, and social class. These boundaries were neither overcome by the physical space of the movie theater (as opposed to the classroom setting), nor the creation of a facilitated conversation about the movie. Hence, while the students did to some extent practice talking about important political issues, these conversations often did not transcend or challenge existing social boundaries or stereotypes. In addition, while discussions of the documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* and of the fiction film *The Last Train* were often highly politically charged, they revealed little engagement with the formal aspects of the medium of film, or with how certain aesthetic effects were accomplished. In fact, the only occasion on which a facilitator attempted to explicitly commented on the aesthetic choices of a film occurred during the discussion following the screening of *Murderers Among Us* that I described at the beginning of this chapter. In this instance the facilitator, Ilona, responded to a

student's comment about his personal experience with war by commenting on the visual aesthetics of the Berlin ruins depicted in the film. Hence, her comment about the filmic depiction of post-War Berlin ruins eclipsed the possible conversations about personal experiences or political perspectives on war that the student's comment had invited. My overall findings suggest that the majority of film education programs in Germany that I studied during my fieldwork privileged talking about film as a way of teaching *about* a topic, rather than teaching young people about a medium whose representational qualities can be investigated analytically and, ideally, equipping viewers to analyze all forms of visual representations in their everyday lives.

Chapter Five

"A Victim Always Dies Alone": The Politics of Filmmaking, Aesthetics, and Pedagogy from the Perspective of the Filmmakers

Introduction

A few months before I started my fieldwork, one of my classmates who had read several iterations of my research grant proposals asked me "So, are you going to make a film about your fieldwork?" Her question made me laugh with surprise. While I enjoyed watching films and discussing them with others, I did not expect to be involved in producing a film myself. Yet only a few months later I was setting up a tripod in the untamed Wild West (between the school library and the basketball court) and filming a group of boys in their fathers' oversized lumberjack shirts strolling up a hill. They were going to confront the mischievous cowgirls (dressed in lacy black shirts) who had abducted their herd of cattle from the canyon (somewhere behind the ping pong table and the bicycle shed) and were now hiding in the prairie (a group of birch trees in one corner of the school yard). We had to film the scene several times because of a group of older students, apparently unaware of the impending showdown, continued to enter the scene on their way to the library.

Throughout this dissertation, I examine how a variety of individuals and agencies implemented film education programs in Germany. In the preceding two ethnographic chapters, I analyzed how different institutions organized film screenings for young people, and demonstrated that these efforts often failed to produce the thoughtful

dialogues that politicians, social workers, media pedagogues, and cinephiles had advertised or advocated. I demonstrated that in group conversations about films, mediated by expert "film facilitators," teachers and students often reinforced rather than challenged the social hierarchies of the classroom setting. Based on my observations, students were often barred from participating in discussions about film. As I have shown in the preceding chapter, teachers who had signed up their students for film screenings often did not anticipate that the students would be able to develop the skills that they considered necessary for film education; specifically, many of them claimed that their students lacked "critical thinking skills." In this chapter, I investigate processes of education, evaluation, agency, and hegemony by turning my attention to the social and artistic processes that take place during a week-long filmmaking workshop taught by a trio of filmmakers to a class of fifth graders in Hamburg.

While the German government and the federal *Film Competence Agency* presented film education as teaching students how to watch and talk about films, a significant number of initiatives across the country actually focused on making films. Most of them were social workers and so-called media pedagogues working in youth centers as I have described in the preceding two chapters, but some of them were also teachers, as I show in Chapter Six. People frequently referred to these filmmaking programs as "active film work" (*aktive Filmarbeit*) in an effort to distinguish the process of making films from the process of watching films and talking about them (*passive Filmarbeit*, or "passive film work"). This wording of this distinction implies that the former is a more intensive and, perhaps, more self-aware way of approaching films and of becoming "film educated." Indeed, watching a movie as part of a large audience

requires different skills and places different demands on participants than does spending an extended period of time making a film with one's classmates in one's school. The media pedagogues and the group of teachers whose work I describe in Chapter Six frequently argued that engaging with film would have a positive impact on the children, and that the experience of filmmaking would allow them to empathize and develop other important interpersonal and social skills.[126]

Most other people whom I met through my fieldwork did not explicitly comment on how or why film education allowed young people to become better citizens. Nonetheless, they frequently argued that film education represented an important arena of learning. The fact that so many people automatically and repeatedly evoked this relationship without reflecting on it and without being able to explain this relationship to me indicated the strength of their belief in film education as a worthy goal.[127] As I outlined in Chapter Two, the strength of this belief can be attributed to the long-standing tradition in Germany of socialization through literature. Politicians in turn argued that becoming film educated would equip young people to join an educated, democratic public.

In this chapter, I compare and contrast the expectations and understandings of teachers, filmmakers, and students toward filmmaking, and revisit my investigation of film education by investigating the filmmakers' assumptions and expectations regarding film education and film literacy, by examining what kinds of potential and qualities did

[126] As I explain in greater detail in Chapter Six, the group of Bavarian school teachers with whom I worked throughout my entire fieldwork argued that gaining some firsthand experience in filmmaking was beneficial to the group process of a group of students because it created a collaborative work environment. Politicians, bureaucrats, and official guidelines, on the other hand, only discussed film education in terms of watching and talking about films.

they consider films to have that other media did not have, and what kinds of agency did they attribute to filmmaking and films. I also study how the process of filmmaking became institutionalized through and incorporated into the school context.

Domains of Knowledge: Independent Filmmakers and the Educational System

During my fieldwork in Hamburg I worked for a local film academy that offered professional filmmaking courses for adults. As part of the acasdemy's community outreach program the academy also taught week-long filmmaking workshops to elementary and high school students. Some of the staff members knew about my research, and one day the academy's coordinator asked me if I were interested in participating in some of the upcoming week-long filmmaking workshops at an academic track school in one of Hamburg's wealthiest suburbs.[128] She suggested that I could serve as an assistant to the filmmakers who were teaching the workshop, and that I could help out with whatever tasks needed attention.

I immediately agreed to participate because I was interested in learning how the filmmakers would adapt their skills and experience to the highly structured and hierarchical environment of a school. Many of the film education events for students that I attended thus far consisted of one-time fieldtrips to movie theaters. I expected that observing and interacting with the students in the school environment would provide me with important insights into the lives of high school students in this city. The team of

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[127] Of course I, too, subscribed to this belief to at least some extent; after all, had I been convinced that film education did not have anything to offer to anyone I would not have set out to study it.

[128] Any school could request a workshop, since the workshops were free of charge to the schools and the students. However, the participating schools were limited to three or four schools that regularly approached the film school to request a workshop. This led to a number of conflicts among staff members as well as more fundamental disagreements about the purposes of the programs and the people that ought to benefit from them.

instructors I would be joining was made up by two women, Britta and Carla, and one man, Bernd. All three had worked as instructors at the film academy for less than one year, and belonged to a larger pool of filmmakers who occasionally offered workshops in order to retain affiliation with the academy and to substitute their incomes. Although Hamburg was one of the strongholds of the German film industry, and the home of a number of well known productions for German television, most of the filmmakers affiliated with the short film did not have any ties to the film and television industry, and were generally rather marginal to the world of mainstream film and television. Britta and Carla had graduated from West German art schools in the 1980s, and belonged to an artists' guild that had its headquarters in a former factory close to my home. Britta had traveled extensively, and had used footage from her travels in her experimental films. Carla had made a number of experimental documentaries set in Hamburg, and occasionally invited me to attend her group exhibits in a basement studio in a rather run-down neighborhood across the city. Bernd, a man in his mid-30s, had grown up in Hamburg. He had trained as an educator, and specialized in working with disabled adults. He had a strong interest in queer theory and Marxist theory, and had recently enrolled as a student at the local film academy.

While Bernd, Britta, and Carla did not spend much time discussing politics, all three were concerned about social justice issues and the environment.[129] Bernd had

[129]One incident in Bernd's personal life did cause a brief political discussion among all of us, however. During the week when we taught the filmmaking workshop the G8 summit took place at a peninsula in Northern Germany, with Hamburg being the closest airport. Fearing attacks by Leftists and anarchists, the Hamburg police had searched some squatters' houses whose residents were known for their anarchist leanings and political activities, apparently including members of Bernd's commune. Bernd casually mentioned that after the first day of our workshop when he had helped students realize a film about cowboys and sheriffs in the Wild West, he had returned to his home to find that it had been searched by the police.

recently made a short film about the political economy of labor in the film industry. Britta and Carla preferred to make nonlinear, experimental films with a strong local flavor. Some of them were filmed against the backdrop of gritty, working class and immigrant neighborhoods in Hamburg, and contrasted urban spaces with images of rivers and large industrial harbors. The two women had previously taught a filmmaking workshop to a group of female students at a comprehensive school in a rough part of Hamburg who had wanted to provide a counterpoint to the largely sensationalist and negative portrayal of their neighborhood in the mainstream local media. The three filmmakers considered film a medium that was suitable for showcasing political issues. More generally, they also assumed that the art forms they had chosen—specifically, experimental short films that employed a range of unusual aesthetic and narrative choices—had the potential of making a difference in the lives of both the producers and the audiences.

Negotiating Artistic Expectations: Genres, Representations, and Estrangement

Bernd, Carla, and Britta invited me to join them for a preliminary visit to the school to speak with the class teacher of the fifth graders, Herr Weiss, about the details of the filmmakers' week-long workshop, and to get to know the students. Herr Weiss was a young man who had only recently begun teaching at that school. During our first meeting with him, he explained that he had scheduled the workshop as an activity for the school's annual "project week" (*Projektwoche*), a common practice in secondary schools in Germany. During that week, instead of following their usual class schedule, each class collectively worked on a single project. Typical activities include conducting oral history projects in their neighborhood, studying local environmental issues, or engaging in some other hands-on learning activity. Ideally, project weeks provided opportunities for

students and teachers to discover and cultivate new skills outside of the traditional classroom setting, to engage in collaborative work, and to develop new skills while one's efforts were not being evaluated in the form of grades. Hence, the filmmaking workshop also represented a departure for the students from their usual modes of learning and working.

Since Bernd, Britta, Carla, and I all lived in the same part of the city, a formerly industrial but now increasingly gentrified district favored by many bourgeois bohemians and their young families, we spent an hour on the same commuter train and bus on our way to school each morning. For our initial visit to the school, Britta, Bernd, and Carla came prepared: they had brought a film projector as well as a selection of short films marketed and distributed by the film agency. They explained to me that whenever they taught a workshop together they started out by screening some of these short films. Since short films were rarely shown in movie theaters or on television, most students had likely never seen a short film, not to mention an experimental short film. Instead, they were mainly familiar with the format of television serials or feature length films, both of which employ a rather predictable narrative arc. Moreover, in light of the limited timeframe of the filmmaking workshop and the sheer amount of filming and editing required for making a film, the film agency generally encouraged participants to focus their efforts on making a short film that could realistically be completed within a week's time.

However, the reasons why filmmakers promoted short films were not entirely pragmatic, but also had to do with the status of the short film within this community of independent filmmakers and cinephiles. Members of the film agency often talked about the genre of the short film as an endangered art form which, underappreciated and

ignored by mainstream audiences, deserved special attention and active promotion. Many of the independent filmmakers whom I got to know over the course of my fieldwork favored the genre of short film over other types of films, arguing that short films were more authentic, less commercially viable, potentially subversive, and generally "raw" rather than "polished."[130] They often pointed out that many filmmakers had begun their careers by making short films, and that the genre of the short film merited greater public recognition. Among the bourgeois bohemians who frequented the events and festivals organized by the film agency, short films had a strong following. The three filmmakers wanted to provide the students with a sense of the range of topics and styles that one might choose even for films that were only a few minutes in length.

Together with the class teacher, Herr Weiss, and his approximately 30 students between the ages of eleven and twelve, we gathered in one of the classrooms where we projected movies onto a white wall. The first film that the filmmakers had chosen was set in a kitchen, and showed a person boiling eggs, rinsing them with cold water, and finally chopping them into small pieces. These domestic activities were accompanied by the soundtrack and piercing human screams taken from the infamous shower scene of Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, *Psycho*. By contrasting a mundane culinary activity with the frightened screams of a famous murder scene, the film not only illustrated the wide range of possible relationships between sound and image, but also provided a tongue-in-cheek commentary on audience expectations (as well as a commentary on Alfred Hitchcock's legendary fear of eggs). However, when Britta asked if any of the students recognized the soundtrack, only one student raised his hand and said that he had heard about the film

[130] Of course, they did not consider television advertisements as short films.

Psycho. The second film showed an adult man walking down the street carrying a matchbox car in his hands and making car engine noises with his mouth until he is stopped by a police officer. Instead of reprimanding the man for his unusual behavior, the police officer retrieves a matchbox car from his uniform, and begins to make car engine sounds himself. The camera zooms out on the two men enthusiastically engaging in child's play. This film challenged viewer expectations because it used elements of a police movie (a car chase and a police officer) in an unexpected and lighthearted manner.

Both films were included in the standard repertoire of films that filmmakers working for *Shortcuts* showed to school children during their visits to schools. Bernd, Carla, and Britta considered them good examples of ways in which filmmakers might play with and subvert audience expectations. In each film, this juxtaposition of genre-specific elements produced estrangement effects. Originally an element of Brecht's epic theater, estrangement aims to render the familiar unfamiliar, to engage the viewer, and to continually remind him or her of the constructedness of a performance. [131] Brecht employed estrangement techniques in order to unearth the mediated nature of theater productions, and to prevent audiences from being able to passively consume and enjoy theater performances as a form of leisurely entertainment. Instead, this form of theater genre aimed to educate rather than entertain, and to awaken its audience members from the slumber of false consciousness.[132] The filmmakers told me that since many children and adolescents associated filmmaking with recording special events such as weddings or school plays, they tended to think of filmmaking as recording events rather than manipulating them. Carla, Britta, and Bernd had hoped that watching these films would

[131] See, for example, White 2004.

encourage the students to transcend genre-specific conventions and to become more experimental and daring in their filmmaking approaches.

The Filmic Division of Labor

Unfortunately, the filmmakers' ambitions were thwarted by the students' class teacher, Herr Weiss. When we met with him to discuss our plans for the film workshop, he explained that he had requested a workshop for his students because he was going to spend the school's project week accompanying another class on a week-long excursion, and wanted to provide his students with an interesting learning experience during his absence. To this end, Herr Weiss had already tailored his German lessons to the upcoming filmmaking workshop. He had divided the class into three groups of roughly ten students, and had asked the students groups to decide on a plot, to draft an outline of the plot points, and to then consult with the filmmakers about how to adapt their ideas to a film script. Now the only thing the filmmakers had to do, he explained proudly, was to help the students transform the scripts into movies.

One group planned to make a cowboy movie about a group of cowgirls who had been hired by the owner of a fast food chain to abduct cattle from the local cowboys in order to raise the market price of beef.[133] Another group of students had written a murder mystery involving a male sociopath who returned to his old high school to take revenge on the classmates who used to bully him (perhaps inspired by a recent series of school shootings across the country?). The third group had composed a comedy about a couple

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[132] Ibid.

[133] The ideas for this film may have been partly inspired by two comedies that had just recently been released and had enjoyed huge box office successes in Germany, the American movie *Charlie's Angels*, and the German movie *Manitou's Shoe* (a persiflage of old Western movies involving grand scale blackmail and theft).

who specialized in kidnapping children and selling them to adoptive parents, and who were being investigated by a doddering police inspector (possibly inspired by prime time television dramas about child prostitution, or perhaps by daytime soap operas?).

Herr Weiss appeared to have instructed his students to write a film script in much the same way as they wrote other kinds of texts for his German class: he told them to produce a text that could later be adapted to the screen. Perhaps he chose this approach for didactic reasons or simply in an effort to break down the overall task into familiar components, but his approach reflected a fairly narrow understanding of film as a filmic adaptation of a literary text. The curriculum for academic track secondary schools included the study and critique of different literary genres with the aim to help students develop a literary taste (Kommer 1979). Perhaps Herr Weiss had explicitly encouraged his students to consider the genre conventions when they drafted their plot outlines. Apparently he thought that film education and, in this case, filmmaking, mainly involved learning how to use a camera, how to direct actors, how to act in front of a camera, and how to edit a film.

The filmmakers, on the other hand, perceived this division of labor very differently. They resented the fact that Herr Weiss had already completed what the filmmakers might have considered to be the most enjoyable and creative aspect of the process. They were surprised and dismayed to hear about the extent of preparatory work that the students had already completed. “A typical teacher,” sighed Bernd on our shared train ride following our first meeting with Herr Weiss and his students. He was not pleased with the plots that the students had collectively developed under the guidance of their teacher, and complained that the narratives fit the characteristics of fairly

conventional and cliché-ridden genres. That evening, Bernd sent the following e-mail to Britta, Carla, and me:

> hola companheiras,[134]
> i am now becoming attuned to playmo western animation
> but it doesn't have to remain that way.
> this dadaist, surreal kidnapping story very much inspires me as well,
> however, it urgently requires rethinking its attitude toward homosexuality.
> the story about an aging detective doesn't really interest me,
> i don't even know how one might play the protagonist.
> maybe that group can also consider doing something entirely new.
> at any rate we should explain up front
> that the completed worksheet ought to be thrown across the farmhouse
> fence altogether.[135]
> not even the concept of a thriller has to be implemented, perhaps some
> new ideas will have developed after our screening.
> the teacher has once again pre-thought too much, that results in – as it so
> often does at school – a worksheet and that prescribes a clear frame.
> on monday i will probably travel via barmbek again.
> so we'll take the carriage that arrives in [name of the school's suburb] at
> 8.34
> am?
> hasta la vista cowgirls
> b.

Bernd's e-mail message indicates his ambivalence about (if not open disdain for) the films' close orientation toward the genres of Western, thriller, and primetime detective show. He was very critical of the efforts that the students, guided by Herr Weiss, had put into developing their scripts prior to the filmmakers' arrival. Bernd argued

[134] It is not clear to me why Bernd chose a Portuguese form of address for the recipients of this message. His use of the mock Spanish expression "hasta la vista" (see Hill 2001) leads me to suspect that he may have intended to use a Spanish term, compañeras, but had erroneously used the Portuguese term instead. As far as I know, Bernd spoke neither Portuguese nor Spanish. Much like his (grammatically incorrect) use of lowercase spelling and the poetic form of his message, his use of these iconic reference terms may have served primarily as stylistic devices intended to portray the author of his message as a free spirit not bound by language conventions.

[135] Bernd's adaptation of the expression "to throw something overboard" underscores his disdain for what he perceived as the teacher's overzealous efforts. This sentiment is echoed a few lines later by Bernd's observation that "the teacher has once again pre-thought too much, [and] that results in – as it so often does at school – a worksheet."

that any kind of creative potential of the students had been constrained by the use of worksheets before he and his colleagues had even set foot in the school. While Bernd was the most vocal about his dissent, Britta and Carla shared his reservations. All three of them complained that the narratives had been reduced to fit the characteristics of fairly conventional and cliché-ridden genres. Their acerbic remarks about Herr Weiss's habitus and about the general tendency of teachers to destroy any creative impulse in children by making them describe their ideas on worksheets rather than letting them use their imagination became a recurring theme in the conversations on our daily commutes to and from the school. Bernd, Britta, and Carla disagreed with how Herr Weiss had framed their role as professionals who would assist the students in realizing the ideas that they and Herr Weiss had previously developed, rather than as independent artists who guided the entire artistic process according to their own rules. They complained that Herr Weiss had overstepped his boundaries and had imposed his didactic tools on what they considered to be their professional and artistic territory as filmmakers. The planning meeting prior to the actual filmmaking workshop foreshadowed two central issues that were to influence the implementation of the project week: how the teachers and filmmakers understood their roles in guiding students through a workshop, and what the filmmakers expected the students to learn about the artistic possibilities that the medium of film had to offer.

By the time the filmmakers arrived at the school to teach their workshop, the students had already spent considerable time discussing plots and developing characters. Most students had already identified with the roles in which they had cast themselves, and several of the girls had already coordinated their outfits and agreed to wear matching

black tops. The conversations among the students showed their determination and commitment to realizing the films they had already imagined. The filmmakers only reluctantly acknowledged the students' investment in their existing group projects. Their attempts to redirect the students' imagination toward making a different kind of film remained largely unsuccessful. In the sections that follow I describe the obstacles that the teachers encountered in their attempts to influence the students' filmmaking endeavors, and identify some of the assumptions that led to the differences in aims and expectations between students, teachers, and filmmakers.

Group Processes

During the five-day long workshop, the filmmakers split into three groups. I visited each group and helped out whenever one of the instructors needed assistance or wanted an additional adult to supervise some of the students while he or she worked with a smaller group of students. This allowed me to get to know the different students and compare the group dynamics, leadership styles, and filmmaking process in each group. After spending the first day primarily with Carla's group, I followed Bernd's group the next two days, spent the fourth day attending a filmmaking workshop at another second school, and spent the last day with Britta's group. However, each day I also spent a significant amount of time going back and forth between the groups and helping out with whatever tasks needed to be done – from setting up the computer and camera equipment to helping the students mount a camera onto the janitor's dolly in order to film a car chase.

The challenges for the filmmakers continued beyond establishing modes of representation. Over the course of the week, they also had to deal with a complex set of

group dynamics within each group, and had to decide how to address them from their perspective as outsiders who had been brought into the institutional context of the school for a limited time period. In order to understand how the filmmakers and the students tried to assert their understandings of what film should and could accomplish one needs to acknowledge some of the institutional constraints in which the filmmakers, students, and teachers were operating.[136]

A school teacher may legitimately force students to participate in an activity or project. The instructors, however, were in a much different position – one that they officially embrace, but whose limitations they were occasionally forced to confront. Whenever I talked to staff and volunteers at *Shortcuts*, they made a point of mentioning that the instructors had a "totally different understanding of what it means to make films with kids" than regular school teachers did. People repeatedly emphasized this point by explaining that unlike teachers, filmmakers were actually able to refuse to work with a student. Maren, the head of *Shortcuts*, once explained this difference as follows: "If the students are not interested, our filmmakers can say, 'Well, we don't have to do this. If you are not interested, we can quit now and I will go home to go back to my day job'" (field notes, April 23, 2007). This example not only underscored Maren's belief that the filmmakers' agency as artists surpassed the structures of the school hierarchy, but also allowed her to claim that the filmmakers' lack of pedagogical and vocational obligations toward the students provided the instructors with the relative luxury to refuse engaging in

[136] Bourdieu's notion of "the field" is a useful concept to understand how these different groups collaborate (or fail to collaborate) in a shared context of rules and ideas (see, for example, Bourdieu 1999). As I describe below, Keane (1997) explains how these collaborations due to different understandings or interpretations of the overall rules.

what they saw as a fruitless collaboration. As the examples in this chapter illustrate, Maren's claims did not apply to the interactions I observed.

Aesthetic Hegemonies

During the week we spent at the school, Bernd in particular often referred to the pedagogical challenges that he felt were a result of Herr Weiss's overbearing preparatory work. Bernd himself hoped to lead the students into new artistic directions, away from the films they had envisioned making. Early on, he had determined that he wanted to work with the group of students who had written the script for a cowboy movie, and since neither Britta nor Carla had any specific preferences, they accepted this request. Bernd then suggested to the students that they produce the movie as a stop motion film, using Playmobil figures as actors and Playmobil sets as stage sets. However, the students showed little interest in his suggestion. Bernd himself suspected that the students had only recently stopped playing with Playmobil themselves and, at the cusp to puberty, associated Playmobil with childhood playtime activities from which they were eager to distance themselves.

Why was Bernd so invested in making a stop motion film with plastic figures rather than a fiction film with student actors? What would make a stop motion film more artistically, aesthetically, or pedagogically valuable? When I asked him that very question, Bernd explained to me that he thought that any attempt to copy a popular and legendary movie genre would only result in disappointment and dissatisfaction among the students. By attempting to create a feature length, realistic representation of an environment that they themselves had only experienced via filmic representations would leave them disappointed and dissatisfied with their efforts; in short, he felt that any

attempt by a group of fifth graders to copy this genre would lead to an unfavorable comparison with the original, and would cause the students to feel embarrassed and frustrated rather than proud of their product. He explained to me that using plastic figures rather than playing the roles themselves would allow the students greater creative freedom, as they would be creating their own (and presumably more authentic) project rather than a poorly executed copy of a well known genre.[137] In addition, Bernd argued that using plastic figures as actors rather than acting the scenes themselves would help the students understand that filmic representations are the results of mediated processes rather than straightforward representations of an event. Of course, one might argue that the students would also learn to understand this concept by recording and editing any film footage, including footage of themselves. Yet, Bernd argued that the transmutation provided by the use of Playmobil figures would teach them even more clearly that the representation of visual images is always mediated.[138] To him, turning the plot that the students had created into a stop motion film would have lent the movie an air of estrangement, and would have complicated the relationship between the actors and the roles they portrayed.[139,140]

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[137] These comparisons raise some interesting questions about art and authenticity. Fred Myerson has investigated this concept with respect to indigenous art production (see, for example, Myers 1992; Errington 1994). I hope to analyze these relationships in greater detail in the future.

[138] Zeynep Gursel (2007) explores these relationships in her work on how image brokers negotiate and determine the accuracy of representations.

[139] Another way to alter the representation of the characters in this movie would have been to use other artistic techniques, such as making a stop motion film using modeling clay, or making an animated film based on students' drawings and paintings. These were techniques that the art teachers whose work I discuss in Chapter Six regularly employed when making films with their students. However, despite their backgrounds in visual art, Bernd, Britta, and Carla did not propose those techniques in their filmmaking workshops.

[140] I want to thank Alaina Lemon for encouraging me to examine more carefully Bernd's assumptions about which conditions call for realistic versus estranged forms of representation.

Problems of Creativity and Representation

Aside from his pedagogical agenda, Bernd's suggestion may also have been inspired by very pragmatic reasons, namely his concern about how the final product of the film would reflect on him as an artist and as an educator, and about future opportunities for offering filmmaking workshops. *Shortcuts* did not follow any official procedure when choosing which filmmakers to invite to teach a filmmaking workshop at a school. Criteria like previous successes, positive reports from the students and teachers, or an outstanding film that was later shown at film festivals contributed to one's reputation. For Bernd, who had only recently begun working for *Shortcuts*, it may have been important to establish himself as a filmmaker who had successfully and productively worked with teenagers in the past, and whose efforts had been documented in the form of a film. It was not uncommon for teachers and students to use the films that they had made in collaboration with filmmakers affiliated with *Shortcuts* when entering local or regional film competitions. Since very few of the filmmakers and media pedagogues who were engaged in filmmaking projects in Hamburg employed stop motion or other experimental techniques, using Playmobil would have visibly and significantly distinguished Bernd's film from other films.

Compared to Britta and Carla, Bernd had only recently begun to make films. When we met, one of his first films had just been included in a compilation of short films, and had received much attention in the local short film scene. The film, entitled "An Actor Gets Angry," was three minutes in length and consisted of a single shot, namely the closeup of an older man's face slowly exploding into an angry grimace. Bernd had made this film in an attempt to point out a gap in traditional critiques of the economy of labor that failed to take into account the performance of emotional labor by

professional actors and actresses. This neo-Marxist meta- commentary on the construction of labor in the film industry had been Bernd's entrée into the world of filmmaking. In his own work, he was committed to using film as an instrument to point out the contradictions of late capitalism. Like his colleagues, he viewed film as having important social as well as aesthetic potential, and tried to share this perspective with the students by encouraging them to use Playmobil to put a more innovative spin on what he viewed as an otherwise rather predictable plot.[141]

To understand the students' lack of interest in his proposal, one needs to acknowledge two factors whose significance Bernd failed to recognize: the students' interest in role-playing and in representing themselves on film, and the fact that the workshop took place in the institutional context of the school. Many of the students were attracted to filmmaking because it provided an opportunity to act in front of a camera, to explore different roles, and to watch themselves on film. These trends were further supported by the fact that throughout the process of filming, students continually approached the cameramen and women and asked to view their acting in a previous scene, occasionally demanding a re-take if they were not happy with their on-screen representation. The movie screen served as a mirror in which these pre-teens could view themselves in a new light. Moreover, while at least some of the students owned cell phones with built-in cameras, using "real" cameras was a new and exciting experience for many. The teacher, Herr Weiss, and the filmmakers had explained in the beginning that the finished films would be screened at their school, and, possibly, at a local children's

[141] I understood Bernd's reservations about the abundance of clichés and the creative constraints that making a film about the Wild West would involve. Nonetheless, I thought that the students' tale about the cowgirls who work for the owner of fast food chain had the potential to be an interesting and thoughtful film.

film festival. Hence, in addition to wanting to see themselves on the screen during the process of making the film, at least some students may have anticipated watching themselves on a large screen.

Lastly, the students' reluctance to turn their film into a stop motion film could partly be attributed to the fact that the script writing and editing had occurred in a highly familiar context and manner: The teacher had assigned them into groups, and had instructed them to create a plot, a cast of characters, and a number of stage instructions using the worksheet he had developed for this purpose. Even if not all students were equally comfortable with the assigned division of labor, most of them were reluctant to abandon the result of this process in favor of starting anew under the guidance of a stranger and, most likely, without a clear understanding of what an alternative or experimental film might look like. As I described in the beginning of this chapter, Bernd, Britta, and Carla had attempted to teach the students about the aesthetic potential of short films by screening two experimental films. Yet I suspect that simply showing the students these two films did not suffice to enable the students to understand the creative potential of short films.

Ultimately, the filmmakers' and, in particular, Bernd's struggles to impose their visions of filmmaking onto the students were predicated on mutual misrecognition of the semiotic qualities and the agency of films:[142] While the filmmakers relied on what they understood to be the power of film to speak for itself (see, for example, Daston 2004 and Snyder 2004), the students relied on the power of film to represent themselves as they wanted to represent themselves. Both interpretations are significant in their own right.

[142] Webb Keane (1997, 2009) has analyzed the semiotic chains that make this misrecognition or misreading of the properties of objects or language possible or encourage it.

Yet, as I have shown above, the context of the collaboration that aimed to produce these films influenced how the different participants interpreted and received them. As the examples I describe below illustrate, the different assumptions about the agency of film, about the nature of representation, and the conflicting understandings that arose from it presented central and recurring problems in this collaboration.

Carla's Group: Social Hierarchies on the Screen and in the Classroom in "A Victim Always Dies Alone"

I spent the first two days of the workshop mainly with Carla, who worked with the group of students who had written a script about a formerly bullied student who returns to his old school as an adult to take revenge on his former classmates. On the first day, after Carla had unpacked the video cameras and laptop computer and installed them on a desk, she asked all the students to introduce themselves before describing the work that lay ahead of us. The students immediately began to talk about the props they had chosen for the film, debating which kinds of weapons would be available to them, and what kind of mask the villain would be wearing. Carla listened for a while, then explained the division of labor she had in mind for the coming week: "As it is, we are not working on a theater play, but on a film, where many people work behind the camera" (fieldnotes, May 2007).[143] In this way, she informed the students that not everyone would be eligible for a speaking part in the film. She mentioned the comparison to remind the students that the behind the scenes work of directing, filming, and editing was equally crucial to filmmaking.

[143] Wir sind hier nun mal nicht beim Theater sondern beim Film, wo viele hinter der Kamera stehen"

Next, Carla asked the students how they had planned to film the script, and what steps would be involved in the process. The students came up with a number of suggestions, and asked Carla for advice on how to best realize the protagonist's childhood flashbacks. Carla explained that this could be accomplished through a number of means, including the voiceover of an omniscient narrator, or through the protagonist's direct speech. She also challenged the students to specify the ways in which other scenes would be filmed, asking questions like "What does the police inspector's home look like, and where might that be? In what order are you going to film the different scenes?" Through these questions, Carla encouraged the students to start thinking about the different tasks they needed to complete over the coming week, and to help them develop a time line that would allow them to conceptualize, shoot, edit, and complete a movie within five days. By asking open-ended questions, she challenged the students to build on the ideas they had previously developed, to think about the practicalities of filming, and to take responsibility for their own work. The students came up with a tentative outline, and Carla showed them the equipment they would be using. She let them adjust the tripod for the camera, showed them how to turn the camera on and off, and showed them some of the commands of the editing software they would be using.

Afterwards, while the students took a break in the courtyard, Carla and I shared our observations about the group. She commented on the fact that the girls had quite literally taken a back seat when it came to learning how to use the camera and how to edit digital footage. When Carla explained the details of the camera to the students, the boys huddled around the computer while the girls formed an outer circle from which it was difficult to see anything on the screen. When Carla encouraged the girls to move closer to

the computer, they didn't follow her invitation. They soon stopped paying attention to her explanations. Carla was troubled by this behavior yet unable to intervene or get the girls more engaged. By the end of the week the boys appeared more confident using the editing software, while the girls had withdrawn from this part of the production process altogether.

While working with Carla's students, I began to notice friendship patterns. Two boys who were vocal and apparently well-liked by the others repeatedly taunted Matthias, an acne-prone, gangly boy who had been cast in the role of the formerly bullied student who later becomes a psychopath and murders his former tormenters. In group discussions, Matthias had difficulty making his opinions heard, and his suggestions were often mocked by his classmates or altogether silenced with an unfriendly "Shut up." During breaks, he often sat alone. Since the teacher had let the students choose their groups and the groups in turn had chosen the topics of their films, Matthias may not only have been an outsider within this group, but also within the larger class. Matthias had been made to play the unpopular student and victim of bullying whose only coping mechanism takes on the form of a delayed, deadly revenge on his former classmates. Thus, his participation in the film project reinforced Matthias's outsider status among his peers while simultaneous predicting an even unhappier and more disturbed future for him. Carla's comment about the differences between theater and film production suddenly took on a very different meaning: in this case, Matthias's fictitious fate was to be documented on video and become a story to be circulated and screened in a multitude of settings in the future, the title chosen by Matthias's classmate resembling a particularly

cruel death sentence “A victim always dies alone.” The scenario was as insidious as it was heartbreaking.

Although Carla was very concerned about the gender dynamics in the group, she appeared not to have noticed Matthias’s outsider status among the boys and the girls. If the class teacher had been present for this workshop, he might have noticed this trend sooner, and may have been able to direct our attention to the classroom dynamics that were already in place before the workshop had even begun. For example, he might have chosen to cast one of the popular boys to play the role of the bullying victim. Instead, the lack of communication between the teachers and the filmmakers about their division of (pedagogical and artistic) labor during the week, and the filmmakers’ temporary presence at the school meant that in this case the filmmakers’ visit was not at all an empowering experience for the students in the way that the filmmakers had imagined. The students who participated in the workshop participated in a learning experience that greatly differed from their usual school days. The filmmakers were outsiders who knew very little about the individual students, about their social standing in the class, about their families, or about their academic achievements. Since Herr Weiss was completely absent for the entire week,[144] he neither monitored the students’ performance and evaluated them in the form of grades nor was he able to correct the social dynamics that the film was reinforcing. Meanwhile, the students were working together with their classmates and in the same physical environment. They occasionally saw their regular teachers in the hallways or in the schoolyard, and one of their teachers appeared at the film shoot for sporadic visits in between her other classes to check in with the students and the

filmmakers. After we had packed up our things on Friday afternoon and said our goodbyes, the students were going to return to their usual learning routine the following Monday (for example, one of the students told me she had to study for her math exam over the weekend). While the filmmaking workshop may have been an interesting, perhaps even inspiring or memorable experience for many, I believe that most students realized that this workshop was a unique and temporary experience, and a break from the routine of their school days. The ways in which Herr Weiss utilized the filmmaking workshop hence resembled the ways in which many teachers used educational movie screenings described in Chapters Three and Four, namely as form of recreation or leisure, rather than film education.

Bernd's Group: Genre and the Politics of Representation

Bernd had been working with a group of approximately ten cowboys and cowgirls, and had spent the first few days filming different key scenes in the school yard. The film's protagonist was a well-meaning sheriff who worked hard to protect his city from the activities of the evil owner of a fast food chain. He was courteous to the local ladies, friendly to his fellow townsmen, and generally interested in promoting peace. A few days into the workshop I found out that Thomas, the boy playing this role, was the son of a local politician. Taller than most of his classmates and the only one of his male classmates whose voice had already changed, he was frequently teased by his classmates. A few of them bragged about having played a practical joke on Thomas's father, and Thomas asked them to leave his family alone in exchange for not revealing their names to

[144] Based on what I was told, this was relatively rare. Usually the teachers were present during the workshops and were able to accompany their students' learning process, as well as to advise or assist the filmmakers if necessary.

his father. His efforts to mediate between different groups were also reflected in the film's finale that Thomas had suggested: immediately after the showdown, he put his arms around his friends' shoulders and jovially proclaimed, "Let's all go out for burgers." In this way, this cowboy Western movie ended in a rather atypical manner—instead of watching a lone cowboy ride off into the sunset, one could observe a group of cowboys and cowgirls heading to the saloon for a shared meal.

The girls in his group had spent the first two days preening and styling themselves for their roles as the "Black Angels." Despite the fact that their roles had been fairly central to the plot, they ended up with very few on-screen appearances: in the final film, the Angels themselves only appeared in two scenes – one that showed them drinking in a saloon on a girls' night out, the other during the showdown in the prairie that ended with the leading cowboy and town mayor inviting everyone out for a reconciliatory shared meal. Neither the girls nor the boys openly acknowledged nor protested the ongoing reduction of the girls' roles during the filming process. Even as an observer, I found it difficult to determine at which point the girls' roles had become diminished. Shortly thereafter, the girls lost interest in the production of this movie. In an attempt to re-integrate the girls into the group, Bernd tried to recruit them to film the boys. He and the other filmmakers often emphasized the importance of encouraging girls to handle technical equipment and to acquire filmmaking and editing skills. They explained to me that filmmaking represented an opportunity to teach girls these (traditionally more male-dominated) skills. However, much like the girls in Carla's group, these girls, too, showed little interest in learning how to use the editing software, and they soon wandered off to

one of the empty classrooms where they sat around and chatted for the rest of the workshop.

When I returned to Bernd's group a few days later, he asked me to assist him in supervising some of the boys in his group while he was instructing the other group members in the use of the editing software. When I entered the classroom where he and his group had last worked, a group of tired looking cowboys huddled on the desks while one of them sat a little further apart, strumming his guitar and practicing a song he had played in his main scene. Two cowboys had been trying to build a camp fire on one of the desks. They had used a flashlight as the base, had draped a piece of red fabric over it, and covered it with a number of sticks and twigs I had helped them gather in the school yard earlier on. Determined to make the fire look more realistic and to evoke the atmosphere of an evening spent sitting around the campfire, they now wanted to create a soundscape of the Wild West. Thinking that this might be difficult to accomplish in this classroom, I asked them how they planned to accomplish this. They assured me that they could easily use the internet for those purposes, where they would be able to download "tons of sounds" for free. Ignorant of these possibilities and curious to find out more, I joined them as they walked to the school's computer room, and watched as one of them went online and began to search for background sounds that they could download to their computer. Within minutes, they had found an array of sounds that suited their needs, ranging from coyote howls to crickets' chirping and wood crackling, and started downloading the files onto an external drive. They proudly returned to their classmates at the editing computer and instructed them to add the sounds to the sound track, and the results were quite impressive.

I was intrigued by how this group of ten and eleven year old boys in Northern Germany had managed to create a collage of sound effects that evoked the soundscape which had been created in American film studios half a century earlier and which had become the emblematic representation of a mythical era in American culture and in American film. Admittedly, I had initially shared some of Bernd's skepticism about the students' unwavering dedication to creating their ideal Wild West atmosphere at all cost. However, as I observed their enthusiastic engagement with their quest, I began to understand that for these boys, the process of collectively designing a project of their own and with little interference from adults in and of itself was a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Clearly, for the boys in the group the experience of improvising and finding solutions for even the most challenging tasks (constructing a campfire scene in a school yard dominated by concrete and a few sickly looking Northern European shrubs) had been a highly enjoyable and rewarding process. Contrary to Bernd's concerns, it was precisely through attempting to copy a Western film that the students learned about the choices and decisions that inform processes of representation.[145]

[145] My thanks go to Zeynep Gursel for pointing out this connection.

Figure 1: Students watching movie in their classroom. Photo by Susanne Unger.

Britta's Group: Social Hierarchies on the Screen and in the Classroom

Compared to Bernd, Britta was dealing with very different problems of representation on the screen. She assisted with the making of the movie about a couple of child traffickers and the incompetent police inspector trying to convict them. Britta was intrigued by the ways in which the ten and eleven year old students focused on the topics of sexuality, same sex couples' rights, and children's rights. The protagonists, an elderly gay count and his younger male lover, ran a child trafficking operation and exhibited its victims in store front windows holding up price tags (a practice that resembles the business practices of prostitutes in less wealthy districts of their city). The title of this film, "9.99 EUR," as Britta told us with a slight frown, referred to the sales price of one of the kidnapped girls.

Katja, a small blond girl with a loud voice, had emerged as a dominant leader within the group. She played the role of the ringleader who had instigated the kidnappers' scheme and who also served as the equivalent of a brothel madam who managed and sold the kidnapped children. Although her original role in the script was rather marginal, Katja managed to redefine her role into that of a central character—something that her classmates appeared to accept without any visible signs of protest. Katja also held on to the master copy of the script, and made sure that everyone else stayed on task, often by reprimanding other students for chatting or for playing in the hallway between their scenes. Judging from her demeanor, I suspect that she was used to being in charge of her fellow students, and that her classmates were used to taking orders from her. Since the group members were either very self-determined or very willing to follow Katja's commands, my assistance as an additional group facilitator was not needed, and I therefore spent more time helping out with Bernd's and Carla's groups.

Mehmet, a tall boy with an expressive face, was the only student of Turkish descent in his class. He often played the role of the class clown during breaks, borrowing other students' costumes and making silly faces. He had been cast in the role of the inspector in charge of investigating the kidnapping case, an impractical, naive man who has somehow managed to advance to the position of police inspector. His role in the film also increased over the course of the week as he and his classmates continued to add details to the script to highlight the detective's incompetence. The final film included lengthy close-ups of Mehmet picking his nose and showing off his mismatched socks. He played his role well.

On at least one occasion, this led to problems. Frau Kohl, the teacher who had been casually visiting the three student groups during that week entered the classroom where Mehmet and his classmates were in the midst of rehearsing a scene, and loudly demanded that Mehmet stop engaging in mischief. Apparently, she did not realize that Mehmet was merely enacting the role of his character, and, to use Goffmanian distinctions (1981), confused the author with the animator. Mehmet tried to protest, then became silent, while Britta tried to tell the teacher that she had interrupted a rehearsal. Britta, who was deeply upset and offended by this intervention, spent a lot of time reflecting on this event on our shared train ride home. Although she, too, had occasionally told Mehmet to stop goofing around and get back to work, she had also experienced him as a serious and hardworking student. On the last day of the workshop, when it was time to edit the footage and put together a final cut, Mehmet patiently spliced images, aligned soundtracks, and added title credits with Britta, while many other students had already lost interest and had disappeared onto the playground. Britta suspected that Frau Kohl was biased toward Mehmet as a Turkish German student, and that she was stricter with him than with the other students. Britta decided that she ought to stand up for Mehmet, and told us she would talk to the teacher before the end of our time with the students.

On the last day of our visit, the students, filmmakers, and teachers collectively watched the three films that we had made with the students. After we said our goodbyes to the students, we followed the teacher into her office, where we had stored some of our cameras earlier that day. Britta used this as an opportunity to tell the teacher that she had been extremely impressed by the commitment and determination that Mehmet had shown

when editing the film with her. Frau Kohl agreed that Mehmet was a good student, but argued that his inclination to play the class clown sometimes prevented him from focusing on his studies.

She then shifted the conversation to talking about her experience in general, explaining that she was concerned about to new forms of achievement assessment that had recently been introduced into the German school system and that were, among other things, used to determine whether a student would stay in the academic track school or be relegated to a technical or vocational school. She elaborated that in light of the increasing academic pressures that were being exerted on the students, it was her "duty to protect [her] students as much as [she] could by preparing them for the future" (fieldnotes, May 2007). In this way, she also positioned herself as a strict yet caring teacher who guided her students with a firm hand to prepare them for their future academic trajectories. Britta did not appear entirely satisfied with the teacher's explanations. On our way home, she suggested that Frau Kohl's bias toward Mehmet as the only Turkish German male in his class likely influenced her assessment of him as a student, and worried that Mehmet did not receive the same academic recognition as his peers.

While I understood Britta's concern and agreed that the educational system in Germany generally tended to disadvantage students "with migration backgrounds," I was surprised how little she and the other filmmakers appeared to have learned about the group dynamics and social hierarchies within this group of students. As someone who had spent only short periods of time in each group but who had also spent time with the students when they weren't strictly working on the film, for example, when gathering firewood in the school yard with some of the cowboys or when helping the girls from

Carla's group clean up the classroom at the end of the day, I had been able to identify some of the social hierarchies within the group relatively quickly. Yet when I asked Carla if she had noticed that the other students did not include Matthias in their activities she sounded very surprised. Similarly, although Bernd had been the one who told me that Thomas, the friendly sheriff, was the son of a prominent Hamburg politician, he had never commented on the parallels between Tobias's difficult role in the classroom and the persona he had created for himself on the screen as that of a friendly mediator trying to balance the demands of different political factions, the lawless cowgirls and the capitalist owner of a chain of fast food restaurants. As an assistant who moved back and forth the different film groups, I had been able to collect bits and pieces of data from each group in a way that the filmmakers had not. However, since each of them had spent more time with their own group than I had and since all three of them had spent a lot of time commenting on the role of the teachers, I was surprised that they had not talked about the ways in which the students dealt with issues of group dynamics and peer pressure.

Conclusion: Filmmaking and Teaching as a Vocation: Concepts and Conflicts in the Classroom

The filmmakers working for the short film school occupied a unique role within the hierarchical and professional structure. They were granted some of the authority of the school teachers, as well as cooperation with those teachers. In some ways, they also relied on the teachers for maintaining practices like taking attendance and recording absences and misdemeanors in the class register. Yet at the same time they claimed some of the privileges that the teachers enabled them to enjoy—for example, access to the other teachers in the teachers' room, the authority to assign students film-related tasks,

and the expectation that the students would go along with them. The filmmakers appeared to not always be cognizant of the consequences that teaching in this institutional space in which education and fun were brought together had for their own roles as filmmakers and instructors. They were quick to criticize the class teacher and the supervising teachers for their unequal and unfair treatment of different students. However, in presenting themselves as creative interventionists the filmmakers failed to acknowledge the extent to which the school context also affected their own position. During the film workshops that I observed, it became clear that the differences between filmmakers and teachers took on forms that significantly differed from the filmmakers' self-descriptions.

For example, Bernd, Britta, and Carla worked hard to motivate their students to stay involved in the group project throughout the course of the project week. When the majority of the students lost interest after the production and during the editing phase, the instructors tried to reason with them by saying "Today is our last day to finish making this movie together, and if you don't help with the editing now there won't be a movie at all." These types of comments failed to motivate most students, however, and in the end, the instructors ended up doing much of the editing work, together with a few especially motivated students (like Mehmet, for example). The filmmakers' difficulty motivating the students toward the end of the project week also points to some of the structural problems of their role within (or rather, outside of) the school system. The teachers, on the other hand, were by definition expected to teach the students –regardless of how little interest students showed in a particular subject. The members of the film agency framed the leisure of refusing to instruct disinterested students as evidence of the instructors' artistic autonomy: unlike the teachers who were being paid to teach all students, the

filmmakers could afford to be selective. This difference was partly possible because the teachers—and, by extension, the schools—were legally responsible for supervising the students even during the filmmakers' visit.

Bernd's, Carla's, and Britta's experiences illustrate that filmmaking and film education did play an important role in socializing students. However, due to the terms of the collaboration between the schools and the filmmakers, this filmmaking workshop meant that classroom dynamics and common perceptions of some of the students were being reinforced rather than challenged, and that some students were marginalized or not included in the filmmaking process. While the filmmakers were concerned about issues of equality and social justice, and were ready to identify forms of inequality when they occurred in conjunction with salient categories like ethnicity and gender, they were unable to use filmmaking to promote positive learning processes among the students. Moreover, the filmmakers were not able to convey their artistic visions to the students. Their attempts to impose their aesthetic vision of art most likely did not provide the students with a better sense of experimental film, nor did it provide them with an empowering experience of how art could transform their lives.[146]

Hence, the filmmakers were unable to sufficiently address both the social and the aesthetic dimensions of making films when working with a group of students. Both the students' creative accomplishments (in creating a Wild West atmosphere, for example) and their social interactions (a bullied student being forced to reenact his own outsider status) testify to the immense artistic and social potential of filmmaking as a collective

[146] Bernd, Britta, and Carla's approach to filmmaking also differed from the approaches used by the group of Bavarian teachers who made films with their students and whose work I discuss in Chapter Six. For example, despite their efforts to encourage the students to push the boundaries of specific genres, Bernd,

enterprise. Yet precisely because the filmmakers had such faith in the potential of film to inspire positive social and aesthetic transformations they failed to recognize the instances in which these qualities backfired and reproduced social inequalities.

Britta, and Carla were less successful in helping the students develop new ideas and in making sure that all students stayed involved during the process.

Chapter Six

"Film is an Instrument for Creating Social Relations": Filmmaking, Aesthetics, and Pedagogy from the Perspective of the Teachers

Introduction: Doing Fieldwork Among Teachers

"Susanne, what are you doing hanging out with a bunch of teachers? Are you going to study us as [if we were] a tribe?" Mirko,[147] who had completed a master's degree in ethnology at a German university prior to getting his teaching certification for teaching German literature and theater studies to academic track students, often teased me about my research, and asked me to explain to him why his work would be of interest to fellow anthropologists. I do not know if I ever answered his questions in a satisfying manner, but his comments and those of his colleagues certainly reminded me that these were questions I would have to address in my dissertation. Besides, by teasing me, he reminded me that I was neither the only anthropologist in the room nor the only expert on teaching. Indeed, he and his colleagues never tired to describe to me with equal measures of self-deprecation and pride what they considered the typical characteristics of members of the teaching professions.

Indeed, against the backdrop of my multi-sited fieldwork across Germany, the time I spent with the members of this community of thirty school teachers brought together by their passion for making films most closely resembled the kind of ethnographic fieldwork in which anthropologists have traditionally engaged. Over the

[147] In adherence to IRB regulations, all the names used in this chapter and elsewhere are pseudonyms.

course of one year, we gathered every few months at monasteries that had been transformed into conference centers to participate in week-long filmmaking workshops. Far away from most participants' home and work lives, our stays at the conference center were marked by an intense sociality and long conversations during shared meals in the center's canteen, joint expeditions to the town's only drugstore, and late night conversations at the local pub. Between the retreats, I kept in touch with some of the participants via phone and e-mail, attended the film festivals they organized, visited them at their workplaces, met their students, and, on some occasions, stayed with them for shorter periods of time.

In this chapter, I analyze how this community of teachers incorporated filmmaking into their teaching, and how they talked about and pursued their pedagogical and artistic goals. Drawing on conversations and observations, I discuss how the teachers treated filmmaking as a medium for teaching students how to communicate about personal and social issues, for teaching them problem-solving skills by letting them explore their own abilities and resources, and for teaching them about domains of knowledge to which some of their students had not previously had any access. I show how the teachers used filmmaking within the social constraints of the educational system to create a forum for recognition and personal growth, and to allow the students to "find their place" in their classrooms, and ultimately, how to become a part of the larger German public. I therefore focus on the social functions of this medium and the ways in which people calibrated and negotiated their relationships and social hierarchies through the use of film. Specifically, I investigate how the artistic objects that the teachers and students created together required a careful balancing between individual praise and

failure and collective accomplishment – not just between teachers and students, but also among the teachers as a group. My fieldwork with the teachers provided a very strong counterpoint to all the other pedagogical efforts I witnessed during my fieldwork, and often provided an implicit basis for comparison, even though I was not always cognizant of this fact.

Meeting the Filmmaking Teachers

Shortly after I had arrived in Germany to conduct dissertation fieldwork, I attended the federal "film competence congress" in Berlin, which was organized by the newly founded Film Competence Agency which had been formed by the Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*) and members of the German film board, which represented the German film industry. The conference included a number of podium discussions with well-known politicians, actors, and directors about the state of film education in Germany and other European countries. Franz, a school teacher from the state of Bavaria, gave a short presentation about a new film education program for teachers that he and a number of colleagues who taught at elementary schools and high schools had jointly developed, and that had been co-sponsored by the Film Competence Agency. The program represented a radical departure from the standard teacher education courses.

Bavarian school teachers were generally entitled to participate in one week's worth of government-sponsored professional development courses per year. Those courses were held in a medieval monastery in rural Bavaria that had been converted into a state-owned conference center. Here, teachers from schools all over the state participated in continuing education courses ranging from chemistry to improvisational

theater. The course instructors were fellow teachers who were especially knowledgeable in their fields or knew about special topics. Usually, teachers from the same school types took those classes together: In most federal states, students attend elementary school for the first four years before being tracked into a vocational (grades 5—9 or 5—10), technical (grades 5—10), or academic track (grades 5—12) type of high school.[148] Schooling is compulsory for nine years, followed by another three years of attending a vocational school where students train for a specific trade or line of work, or by completing three years at an academic track school. Recent studies indicate that approximately two thirds of German youth aged 16—21 attends vocational schools (Miller-Idriss 2009: 8). The remaining one third complete an additional three years of high school that leads to the *Abitur*, a degree that qualifies students to continue their studies at a university or technical school. As businesses are increasingly unwilling to accept students from vocational or special schools as apprentices especially if they had poor grades, those students often participate in auxiliary educational program upon graduation from their vocational school to improve their chances on the labor market.

The program that Franz and his colleagues had developed, on the other hand, did not have such specifications or restrictions. Anyone who was interested in learning more about film and in incorporating film into their teaching was welcome to participate. The community of approximately thirty teachers taught a range of academic subjects in different school types and age groups, ranging from college preparatory secondary schools to special education schools for students with severe learning disabilities. Many

[148] During my fieldwork, some states had begun to adopt a different model whereby students are only tracked after the sixth grade. Also, some West German states had comprehensive schools that to some extent circumvented tracking. This school form did not exist in politically more conservative states like Bavaria nor in any of the East German states.

had been making films with their students for years. During the previous year, they had developed an ambitious curriculum for a film certification course, and had managed to secure funding from the Ministry of Education, the State Academy for Film and Television, from a regional film production company, and from a computer manufacturer and distributor of the leading editing software programs. Each institution had provided financial and material support, and had agreed to send representatives to teach courses on a range of topics, including scriptwriting, film analysis, and editing. The courses took place over the course of eighteen months. At the end of the program, participants completed a final exam and received a certificate as part of an official graduation ceremony. The proclaimed goal of the program was to enable the participants to not only make films on their own, but to also be in charge of so-called "film competence centers" at their respective schools from which they would advise and instruct other colleagues who wanted to learn how to make films with their students. Participants' travel expenses and accommodations were subsidized, making participation affordable for most. Nonetheless, since half of the courses were scheduled to take place during school vacations, participants gave up their vacation time without being compensated by their schools.

After meeting me at the conference and learning about my research, Franz invited me to participate in the community's upcoming week-long course on digital editing and film analysis. A few weeks later, I spent a day on the train to attend a week-long seminar on digital editing and on film analysis at the former monastery with Franz and his colleagues.

When I first arrived at the retreat center, Franz introduced me as the "visitor from America" who wanted to learn about their work. Within a few days, I quickly got to know most of the teachers. There were plenty of opportunities for conversation between seminars and during meals. Many participants also asked about my educational background, and were interested in the fact that I had grown up in Germany and had returned from the United States to study film education programs in my home country. Several teachers asked me whether film education had been included into school curricula in the United States, and some inquired about the possibility of organizing exchange programs for their own students.

When I began doing research with this community of teachers I was mainly interested in comparing the learning process of the participating teachers to the ways in which they conveyed this knowledge to their students. Once I began to spend more time with the teachers, I realized that their understanding of themselves, and their understanding of what film education could accomplish differed greatly from the approach of the filmmakers I described in Chapter Five. Analyzing these perspectives allowed me to consider their views in light of discussions about agency and about moral and aesthetic education[149], and suggests some new ways of looking at the relationship between artists and the objects they create.[150]

Personal Relationships and Friendship Patterns

While the teachers who participated in the training were very committed to teaching, the differences between the schools at which they taught were remarkable.

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[149] See Durkheim [1925] 1961.

[150] Lorraine Daston (2004) explores these questions in a much more thorough manner.

Moreover, while some had been making films with their students for years and had won numerous student film prizes at regional festivals, others had only recently begun to work with this medium. All stated that the process of filmmaking was an invaluable part of the educational development of children and teenagers, arguing that it allowed their students to explore their creativity, to learn important social skills through the collective work process, and to use filmmaking as a way of talking about important personal and social issues.

Most teachers dedicated a significant portion of their time and resources to their students' filmmaking efforts. Some teachers allowed their students to use their personal cameras and computers to finish filming and editing in order to meet a deadline for a film festival. Others coordinated transportation to shooting locations or met with parents who were hesitant to have their children participate in films. They often worked overtime, and rarely received teaching relief in exchange for their filmmaking efforts. Several teachers told me that they felt underappreciated at their respective schools, that their colleagues and bosses did not recognize the amount of time that went into filmmaking, and that they did not appreciate the quality of their work. Some said that their colleagues frequently asked them to record plays performed by their school's drama club, or to film other school events like graduation ceremonies. The teachers told me that they found these requests inappropriate, belittling, and reductive. After all, they explained to me, their job as filmmakers was not to merely record the creative work of others, nor could they be expected to put their filmmaking skills to work in order to contribute to their colleagues' accolades. One teacher complained "It's not my job to only record what the others are doing." He was offended by his colleagues' implication that filming events solely

involved an unmediated and straightforward process of recording reality, rather than a creative and artistic interpretive process. Most teachers also complained that their work was neither appreciated nor taken seriously at their schools, and that getting their principals' permission to attend the filmmaking seminars was sometimes tricky.[151]

Approximately half of the participating teachers taught art, literature, or social studies at academic track schools. Most other participants taught a range of subjects at elementary and vocational schools, or at schools for students with special needs.[152] Despite the overall closeness of the group, teachers often had stronger ties to colleagues who either shared their own educational trajectories, who taught the same subjects, and worked at similar and, in some cases, the same institutions. For example, the vocational teachers often sat, dined, and worked together with their colleagues who taught at vocational or special education schools. Some of the male vocational school teachers were heavy smokers and periodically retreated to collective smoke breaks into the yard. Compared to most teachers, my own training resembled most closely that of an academic track school teacher; one or two of the academic track teachers in the group had themselves completed PhDs before entering the teaching profession. The academic track teachers were the first ones to approach me and ask me about my work, while the vocational and special education teachers only began to tell me about their work after I had approached them on my own and explained to them that I was interested in film education in all types of primary and secondary education.

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[151] When I visited some of the teachers at their schools, they were generally eager to introduce me to their headmasters and colleagues, explaining that I was an anthropologist at an American university who was writing a dissertation about their work. Thus, they framed my presence as an ethnographer to further underscore the seriousness and importance of their work.

[152] Three teachers, for example, taught at schools for the Deaf.

Other groups clustered around shared educational trajectories: Some of the art teachers had developed particularly close friendships, since many of them also worked together in other contexts; for example, they organized film festivals together or attended continuing education workshops for art teachers together. Prior to the establishment of this program, an annual, state-wide film festival for and by students had been the lynchpin around which much of the community members' activities and contacts revolved; the film training program allowed people to see each other even more frequently. Participating in week-long filmmaking seminars allowed the teachers to spend time with likeminded colleagues who shared their interests, not unlike academics who attend academic conferences to converse with friends and colleagues.

A few of the art teachers were long time friends who had met as students attending the state academy of fine arts in Munich, and, in some cases, had even lived in the same dormitory. Several teachers arrived with a colleague from their school with whom they had been making films; one such delegation, for example, included a chemistry teacher and a German teacher who had founded a film club at their school and also taught filmmaking workshops to their students.[153] Some teachers also worked at neighboring schools that shared spaces and resources, like the school yard, the cafeteria, or art rooms.

Teachers' Reflections on their Roles: Practitioners vs. Professionals

When I first joined this community of thirty teachers, I was struck by the frequency with which fellow participants commented on their styles of learning and

[153] The chemistry teacher was the only science teacher in the group. He was interested in photography and filmmaking, and had begun to incorporate these interests into his teaching by filming chemical reactions and science experiments with his students.

teaching in everyday conversations. Throughout my research, participants emphasized that they saw themselves as "practitioners," rather than film theorists. In their interactions with their instructors, the teachers presented themselves as individuals who already had the necessary skills to be effective teachers, and merely wanted to hone their technical skills, rather than learning how to communicate these skills to others.

Each workshop or series of workshops that I attended focused on one specific topic related to filmmaking. On my first day of fieldwork we participated in a unit on the use of digital editing software, taught by a representative of the computer manufacturer that had co-sponsored the entire certification program. Since I did not own a copy of this software package myself, I was unable to follow the quick series of steps that the instructor demonstrated on the main screen. I soon realized that I was not the only one who failed to follow the required steps and enter the appropriate commands; approximately an hour into the three hour seminar, a number of participants were fidgeting with their pens, opening up other applications on their laptops, whispering and giggling to each other, or even leaving the room for collective smoke breaks in the courtyard. Following the seminar, several participants approached me and informed me that this instructor was not very good at presenting new materials, and that the quality of the workshops was usually much better. Over dinner and throughout the next few days, participants continued to seek conversations with me to tell me what they thought about this particular instructor. Comments on the quality of a workshop we had just attended were immediately followed by a detailed analysis of how this instructor had presented her or his material to the community, or in what ways he had failed to teach at a level that allowed everyone to follow and benefit from his explanations.

The teachers continually assured me (and, perhaps, one another) that they were a "very heterogeneous community of learners," and they, much like their students, came from all walks of life. Drawing on detailed observations about the instructor's teaching style and criticizing his approach to teaching, the teachers demonstrated the wealth of knowledge and experience that they were able to employ both when teaching their own students and when assessing the teaching abilities of others. Their performance also highlighted their shared socialization and shared background knowledge as teachers.

During a three-day long workshop on film analysis the participants engaged in small group activities and analyzed movie clips from a range of movies. The instructor, a professor of film analysis at one of the most prestigious film schools in Germany, also introduced a number of models for analyzing narrative and dramatic aspects of a movie plot, and applied these models to a feature film. She was an engaging instructor, and her presentations were met with great enthusiasm, partly because her approach to teaching was easy to follow and very clear. She introduced a series of concepts, then asked participants to apply them to a new film clip or a new situation. However, neither she nor any of the other instructors ever provided any suggestions regarding how the participants might digest some newly acquired skills or knowledge, and how they might then convey it to their students. I had expected that the instructors would address these issues during their workshops, perhaps by outlining how the teachers might break down different steps of the editing process, or how they could teach a group of students about sound engineering.

Yet when I asked the other participants whether they felt that this had been absent from the training, or asked what other kinds of information they would have found

helpful, they repeatedly explained to me that they already possessed the most important job qualification for being a teacher: they were trained pedagogues. One of them explained to me that since she knew her students and knew how to guide their understanding of new material, she could apply this knowledge to any new material without needing explicit instructions. Other teachers agreed with her, explaining that they were experts in learning and teaching, again highlighting their shared expertise and professional background. Thus, despite the fact that the teachers were moving into the arena of becoming semiprofessional filmmakers, they still maintained a strong sense of their professional identity as teachers, and advocated for a division of labor and expertise between the teachers and the professional filmmakers.

Professional Goals and Expectations

I was intrigued by this community of people who so consistently and explicitly commented on their own experience as learners and teachers, and who took such pains to explicitly remind me of their professional identities. Oftentimes participants drew my attention to habits or behaviors that they claimed were typical of teachers. For example, several of them had corrected the spelling on their IRB consent forms I had asked them to sign to reflect the changes that had been passed as part of a spelling reform in Germany. When they returned the forms to me, they teased me for not having kept up with the linguistic changes of my mother tongue while living in the United States, then pointed out that obsessively correcting everyone's spelling was a teacher's curse, and pitied me for having to spend so much time with, as one of them said, "a bunch of people who are used to always being right."

I initially wondered whether people engaged in these performances for my benefit as the newcomer and only non-teacher in the group. After all, most participants had already known each other for at least a few months and, in some cases, a few decades. Over time, I gradually understood that these sorts of tongue-in-cheek comments were part of the overall communicative culture of this community, and that my colleagues' self-mocking commentaries and teasing represented efforts to simultaneously highlight what they had in common with teachers in general while also asserting their difference and uniqueness as a group of highly dedicated teachers and filmmakers. Through this frequent use of joking and teasing, participants created and recreated a strong sense of community and belonging. The format of these kinds of interactions reminded me of Keith Basso's (1996) work on the role of storytelling and joking among Western Apache. Basso argues that talk about landmarks and events serves as an important socializing function because it instills moral values into its members, and recreates important community ties among its members. Of course, for the teachers, similar experiences and lifestyles had contributed to their sense of community and their shared habitus: as teachers and civil servants, most of these teachers earned roughly the same income, had the same vacation times, were familiar with the same bureaucratic apparatus of the state's education system, and, despite the diversity of school types and age groups I have already described, shared similar professional responsibilities.

Socialization Practices among Teachers and Students

Over the course of my fieldwork, several new teachers joined the community. Many of them were young teachers who had only recently finished their studies and now worked as student teachers at different schools. Occasionally, community members who

mentored some of these young teachers invited them to attend the annual film festival, and encouraged them to learn about the network. Some of the more senior members also talked about the ways in which they could socialize the new "recruits" to become teachers who could support them and eventually be in charge of filmmaking work at their schools. Since the film festival occurred only once a year, the community decided to organize another retreat in Munich that could serve as a refresher course for existing community members and as an introduction for new members. To accommodate those participants from Southern Bavaria who had been traveling far to attend the seminars in the central Bavarian conference center, this seminar took place in Munich.

Participants repeatedly emphasized that they appreciated the diversity of teachers and institutions in their community. Nonetheless, I also observed a "division of labor" between the types of schools and the filmic genres represented. Art teachers teaching at college preparatory and technical schools often presented stop motion films or experimental films that were characterized by non-linear plots and often evoked the characteristics of a particular time period in art history (e.g., German expressionism or Dadaism). Teachers who worked at vocational track schools or schools for students with learning disabilities favored documentary films or fiction films that revolved around events that had occurred at the school or in the students' lives. This division of labor involved ideas of students' present and future intellectual and vocational possibilities. Importantly, these trends were also related to the teachers' own training as artists: the art teachers who taught academic track students had graduated from art academies and had received training as professional painters and photographers in addition to pursuing a

teaching degree.[154] Those who worked at technical, vocational, or special education schools, on the other hand, had attended teacher's colleges where they had studied a broad range of subjects rather than studying one or two subjects to teach to advanced academic track students. These differences also affected the teachers' experiences within the program and their expectations for what film education could accomplish.

At the same time, a number of the teachers indicated that participation in the film program had changed how they thought about their work as teachers. When I asked Sebastian, a young teacher who taught Latin and German at an academic track school "Do you feel that you have gotten anything out of the seminar so far? Do you feel that this seminar has been relevant to your work?" he described his impressions as follows:

> I have the feeling that for me the ways in which I interact with students has really changed. Especially during the seminar on dramaturgy, one has learned to restrain oneself even more. That's what I learned. I saw how necessary it is to really play the role of, of a medium, and to let the students develop ideas much, much more on their own. That means that I have learned to become more of a teacher. To dissipate that basic teacher's disease of standing there and dominating the whole situation, and of having too many speaking parts. That experience was very helpful for my work, but also for me as a person.

Similarly, Ulla, who taught art to 5th—7th graders at an academic track school explained:

> This seminar really encouraged me to restrain myself more in my work with the student film group. To help them and support them, rather than to dominate and focus on getting them to make use of the finished products. That is the direction in which I have been working recently. If there is a deadline for a film submission approaching in two months but the students are in the midst of wildly experimenting and are making lots of technical mistakes and are working on different topics, then it's important to pay attention to that, to ask yourself, what do they need at this moment. To be like a partner who has slightly more knowledge, but to also expect the

[154] This option only existed in the state of Bavaria. In most federal states, students enrolled at art academies cannot simultaneously pursue a teaching degree.

> students to develop some initiative. And if they come to me and say, we don't have any ideas, well, then maybe they have to handle being out of ideas for the quarter of an hour or so, and that's good for them, too. […] So, that one first lets things develop also through poor acting or whatever, even detecting editing mistakes. So, that this is our job as a teacher and not that we are ambitious in our spare time or that we would have liked to apply to film school ourselves, and then to realize our own projects to make them appeal to the audience and to the jury and to the media. So, this has affirmed me in this role in these two years there and I realized I'd rather do my things independently and then how in my opinion this is pedagogically justifiable. If it does the students good, then it's good with competitions to not let yourselves be directed by foreign interests, but to look in from the outside, to see what is actually interesting to my class right now.

Ulla's remarks showed that her understanding of herself as a teacher had changed, rendering her more cognizant of moments when she may have projected her own goals and needs onto her students. She explained that rather than pushing her students to perfect their skills while working on films to be submitted in competitions, she recognized that other experiences may were more valuable and important. Hence, allowing her students to use their imagination even at the expense of technical perfection, and learning how to use one's boredom as a source of inspiration was an important quality and skill.[155]

Filmmaking as Moral and Aesthetic Education: Oliver's Special Education Students

One of the special education teachers, Oliver, was especially known for encouraging his students to make documentaries rather than fiction films. I saw a number of his students' films at different festivals and on DVD. In contrast to the stop motion

[155] Clearly, this is also a skill that will not be tested by any standardized academic tests. Depending on their academic performance during their first years of the academic track program, not all of the 5th—7th grade students whom Ulla taught would be allowed to stay in the academic track program. Yet Ulla's comments suggest that the skills she is teaching her students may actually prepare them for an academically rigorous trajectory.

films or experimental films favored by the art teachers, these films were characterized by very simple editing and strong use of sound tracks that mirrored the current pop music charts. Movie plots often dealt with problematic events from the students' everyday lives, often involving issues like theft, bullying, drug abuse, and other social problems. Most films ended with a strong didactic note. For example, a movie about a young girl who is caught shoplifting included interviews with (real life) police officers and social workers who talked about the consequences of the girl's criminal offense, and ended with a scene that showed the girl doing community service in a nursing home. Oliver had told me that since most of his students did not have basic reading and writing skills,[156] writing a film script would have been too challenging for them and would have left them frustrated and unable to complete the process of making a movie. He thus encouraged his students to make fictionalized documentaries about real life events because, as he explained to me, this allowed them to re-enact familiar scenes without having to rely on a script, nor on memorizing lines. His films were often criticized by his colleagues for their predictability, and screenings of his films (both in the community of teachers and at festivals) were at times accompanied by yawns and disinterest from the audience members.

While I respected Oliver's efforts, I initially questioned his judgment of the students' analytic abilities and their capacity to process and communicate ideas. I felt that his students ought to be entitled to making movies about a broader range of topics, and with more freedom to experiment with different genre forms and modes of representation. A number of his colleagues had also commented on the fact that Oliver

[156] Oliver reported that most students had trouble reading and comprehending written texts, and could only write basic sentences. Many of them were also slow readers and writers, which may have made writing and

limited his students' interests and creativity to a very narrow range of topics and filmic approaches. Unlike Ulla, Oliver did not have faith in his students' ability to develop interesting stories and ideas on their own. However, over the course of my fieldwork Oliver's films slowly began to shift in a very different direction; two of his more recent films involved students' encounters with ghosts and other supernatural forces – issues that his students found fascinating and enjoyed watching on television. While these films were less didactic and heavy-handed, they nonetheless relied heavily on clichés from the popular teenage films and television shows that had inspired them, and tended to operate within a predictable plot line. Thus, while he wanted to give his students more artistic freedom Oliver also had to learn how to encourage his students to make films that allowed them to showcase their own ideas and their originality.

Filmmaking as Moral and Aesthetic Education: Martin's Vocational Students

Martin, a man in his late 50s, had spent most of his work life in industry before he changed careers two or three years earlier, and began to teach at an educational institution for teenagers and young adults who had failed to obtain a ninth grade diploma, the minimum requirement for entering an apprenticeship. Most instructors at Martin's school were former tradesmen and tradeswomen who taught the students some of the vocational skills that were required of seamstresses, hairdressers, and carpenters. Due to their lack of a secondary school diploma, most students would still not be able to enter these professions after graduating from the program. Martin once admitted to me "All we can do is try to keep these students in the educational system for as long as possible. Because after [they finish] this [program], where else can they go?" According to Martin's

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reading longer texts especially challenging for them.

description, this institution gave teenagers with poor academic performance opportunities for learning some basic skills in a supportive environment. He and his colleagues attempted to provide the students with some positive learning experiences before they were going to enter the labor market as unskilled laborers with poor job prospects and little hope of finding paid work, let alone career opportunities that interested them.

Martin explained to me that most of his students lived in families in which most other family members had any scheduled obligations (for example, going to work or to school), and where often neither the grandparents nor parents had successfully managed to enter the labor force. These circumstances made it more challenging for his students to participate in a structured school week that required regular attendance. Martin talked about filmmaking as a strategy to "motivate his students to show up every day" (interview, April 2007), and to help them understand that they had obligations to others, and that their classmates depended on them for shooting, editing, and completing a film. He described his approach as follows: "If one of them is in charge of the camera and doesn't show up on the day of the shoot, the others will let him know what they think of that. He'll think twice about not showing up." He explained to me that the collaborative nature of filmmaking and the diversity of skills needed—ranging from organizational skills to directing a group of actors to paying attention to details during the editing process—required active cooperation among the students and fostered students' sense of solidarity and responsibility for one another. Thus, he used film as a strategic tool for encouraging students to attend class regularly, to participate in a collective effort, and to learn to take responsibility for their work, explaining that the students would also need these skills at their future work places.

Martin worked hard to motivate his students and to create new and positive experiences for them. During my fieldwork, a German film company adapted a popular children's literary classic *Krabat*, to a fiction film. Based on a traditional Sorbic tale, the story had been published several decades earlier by Gottfried Preussler, a German author of children's books. The book had enjoyed tremendous success over the years, and there had been significant press coverage about the impending release of the film. Martin attempted to hold his students' interest in film and in school by encouraging them to develop designs for costumes and hairdos for the characters of the film, and to present pictures of their fashion sketches and wigs on a website. His only condition was that the students read the book first. Most of his students rarely read books in their spare time, he said, and some of them were not functionally literate. Nonetheless, much to his surprise, every single one of his students read the book (or, as he suspected in some cases, had someone else read it to them) in order to participate in the project. Although the students knew that their designs would not be chosen for the actual film, Martin hoped that participating in this project and knowing about its online presence would not only motivate the students, but also provide them with an experience that they could list on their resumes once they completed their schooling and entered the labor market. To this end, Martin had included a feedback section on the website where visitors were able to leave feedback for his students.

The website allowed Martin's students to imagine new audiences who would further circulate the object they had created, and thus endow it with a new sense of appreciation and value that went beyond the recognition their work had achieved in their local school setting. In *The Fame of Gawa*, Nancy Munn (1986) illustrates how objects

can be imbued with new and emergent qualities through their circulation or social life. The objects in turn reflect and improve the status of their owners. In the case of the students, they owned and circulated images that reflected their own creativity and skills. Similarly, the online description and depiction of the students' work created possibilities for new chains of recognition and appreciation of their work. Furthermore, the existence of the website allowed the students to imagine themselves as being in dialogue with audiences that were removed from their own lives and whom they might not ever meet in person. Hence, the presentation of their work outside of their own circles and the viewers' or readers' recognition of the students' work endowed this work with new recognition, value and meaning. Anthropologists studying value production (Miller 1987, Latour 1999) and the agency of objects (Latour 1999, Gell 1998) have frequently stated that the value and meaning of objects are not always predetermined, but hinge on emergent properties of material goods that may unfold in certain social situations (Keane 1997).

Toward the end of my fieldwork and partly as an outcome of the work that his students had made available online, Martin managed to receive an invitation from the producers of this film to bring his students on a visit to the film set in Munich, where they would have a chance to meet the actors. Many students would likely have been thrilled about such an opportunity, but especially for students who had struggled to achieve even a very basic formal education receiving so much positive recognition for their work must have left a lasting impression.

During the following year, Martin and his students made a short fiction film about Napoleon's visit to their hometown in the early 19th century, using a historically

documented event as the starting point for their film. Filmed in the town's former castle (a place that was usually not easily accessible to film crews), the film featured Napoleon's visit to a local barber and starred a number of the students in period costumes. The plot and setting of the film gave the students plenty of opportunities to show off their clothes design and hairdresser skills, as well as an opportunity to model their creations themselves. At the end of that year, Martin entered the film into the annual student film festival, where it was well received by the audience.

Hence, the film projects in which Martin's students engaged were always closely linked to their vocational training, but he asked them to apply their skills to a new context. Martin told me that while he did not expect his students to become "master filmmakers" in the future, he thought that participating in a filmmaking project provided the students with important learning experiences, and helped them develop social and communication skills that they would need once they entered the labor force and found themselves competing for jobs with students who had stronger academic credentials. In addition, Martin's choices of film topics reflected a strong commitment to legitimizing filmmaking as a middle class and educationally valuable activity. By asking his students to engage with folklore or with historical events that had occurred in their hometown, he tried to inspire their interest in ideas and events that are associated with traditional middle class *Bildung*.

Filmmaking as Moral and Aesthetic Education: Ingrid's Academic Track Students

Ingrid, who was completing the program together with her husband, Holger, worked in a very different academic and social environment. She and Holger lived in a small university town in Northern Bavaria, where both of them taught art to high school

seniors at academic track schools. One afternoon when I visited her at her school and while she gave me a tour of their work spaces, she mentioned that a number of her students were applying to the academy of fine arts in Munich, a prestigious state academy that she and many other art teacher colleagues had attended themselves. Earlier that day, she had had a conversation with one of her best students who had just turned in his final art project to her. According to Ingrid, the student was gifted, but had not yet developed good work habits. She explained to me that his final project, an experimental movie on which he had been working all semester, had many editing mistakes that she had pointed out to him earlier in the semester, but that he had not modified. Ingrid was visibly annoyed that the student had not put more work into his project, and suspected that the student had not made any changes because he knew that even little effort would gain him a high grade. "Being creative, talented, and charming is not enough, you also have to be willing to work hard," she explained to me. She then added that she had advised the student against entering the art academy immediately after graduating from high school. Instead, she had told him that he ought to first learn a trade and apprentice with a photographer, potter, or carpenter, so that he would learn to develop better work habits, and to acquire some of the skills that would provide him with a solid foundation for further artistic expression. Based on the conversations among the other art teachers, I sensed that having one's students accepted to the prestigious state academy of fine arts was one of the greatest honors a high school teacher could hope for. Thus, Ingrid's comments came as a surprise. She considered it her duty as a teacher to encourage her students to work hard and to acquire what she felt were necessary skills for becoming an adult person and, in this case, a good artist.

Ingrid often told me that she thought filmmaking "offered the greatest potential for teaching students to work collectively and to help each other," and argued that "film is an instrument for creating social relations." She explained that the process of filmmaking required many different kinds of talents and forms of collaboration, and hence created a learning environment that fostered and allowed the active participation of all students. She said: "Not everyone gets to be in front of the camera," and pointed out that directing and editing are equally important parts of the process. According to Ingrid, "the complexity of the medium [of film] allows the teenagers to find their space in the community and to develop their talents" (interview, August 2008). For Ingrid, filmmaking thus offered exciting possibilities for teaching students the importance of working together and valuing each others' different aptitudes and skills in a learning environment that was otherwise very much focused on individual accomplishments and competition. She understood her role as a film teacher as that of someone who "guide[s] the students [by drawing on her] knowledge and personality," and supporting the students in their individual and group processes.

Although Ingrid and Martin (who had his vocational students design costumes and filmsets, see above) clearly shared an understanding of filmmaking as a useful instrument for teaching social relations, they welcomed these qualities for different reasons and used them to different ends. Ingrid highlighted the importance of teaching her college preparatory students – students who had already demonstrated high scholarly potential and were used to functioning in a relatively competitive work environment—the importance of working together rather than competing for grades. Martin, on the other hand, focused on the importance of teaching students who had not succeeded in the

regular school system that they had responsibilities toward one another, that each of them had something to contribute to the group, and that they only had a chance at completing the project if they took their responsibilities seriously. Hence, Martin viewed the collective process of filmmaking as an incentive for his students to stay in school—and, in some cases, to experience that engaging in an activity regularly and over a longer period of time could be both rewarding and empowering. As the example of Ingrid's student shows, these kinds of experiences were just as important for privileged and gifted students. By highlighting the inherently collaborative nature of filmmaking both teachers attempted to socialize their students into becoming responsible, caring young adults.

Competition among Teachers: Festival Prizes and Awards

Despite the seriousness of the competition for film prizes, there appeared to be little bitterness or animosity among the community of teachers. Some of the teachers who worked in schools for developmentally disabled students or in vocational track schools worried that movies made by their students – which often looked less polished in terms of camera work and less sophisticated in terms of the script – would be judged less favorably. They often voiced concerns that the jury members did not fully understand the highly different conditions under which these movies had been produced. The teachers' fears that their students would fare worse in a competition were motivated by at least two different sets of concerns:

On the one hand, all teachers wanted their students to succeed. In addition, the teachers working in vocational track and special needs schools frequently told me that unlike their college-track counterparts, most of their students experienced their school careers as a series of failures issued in the form of poor grades. Few vocational students

participated in leisure time activities that allowed them to experience positive recognition by other adults or institutions, e.g., by being a member of a sports team, or playing an instrument. Winning a prize at a local or regional film festival was an especially significant success. Contrary to academic accomplishments or grades, receiving film prize was considered a prestigious accomplishment by teachers and peers alike.

On the other hand, the teachers were concerned about the criteria for prizes because they realized that their students' success was also a measure of their own success as both teachers and as filmmakers. After all, their approach to filmmaking was highly collaborative and often depended on the students' ability and willingness to help each other, to listen to each others' suggestions and criticisms, and to participate in each step of the filmmaking process. If the students failed to meet their teachers' expectations or simply lost interest and did not spend much time on editing the final product, this lack of dedication reflected poorly on the teachers both as pedagogues and as amateur filmmakers in their own right. If the plot was not coherent, or if the movie had been not been carefully edited, the judges might assume that the teachers had overestimated their students' level of interest or abilities.[157] While most teachers appeared cognizant of this risk, the vocational and special education school teachers may have felt particularly vulnerable to this kind of criticism. They frequently complained that their colleagues did not fully understand the challenges of working with a population of students who not only struggled academically, but often also lacked other resources.

At the festivals that I attended jury members generally appeared to take into account the diversity in filmmakers' ages and educational backgrounds, and the jury's

[157] Frow (1995) argues that "The question of our relation to regimes of value is not a personal but an institutional question.

official guidelines explicitly stated that the films ought to be judged on a range of criteria, including the student's ages. However, the relative vagueness of this official definition often gave rise to speculation about whose films might be receiving prizes at an upcoming festival, and to anxieties about whether one's work would be evaluated fairly.

The Teachers' Own Socialization Through Film: Performing Art Criticism

In late July 2007, the group met for the last week of their certification course, followed by a graduation ceremony in August. The first three days were dedicated to reviewing older course material. The last two days were set aside for the "final exams," consisting of individual presentations and group critiques. Self-selected groups of five or six people (often teachers working in the same school type) met with one official examiner and screened one of the movies they had made with their students during the previous year, then engaged in a collective critique of the movie.

This format of critique was not uncommon among the participants. At the annual Bavarian student film festival that many of these teachers helped organize, members of the jury traditionally offered feedback to all the films that had been screened to help the students improve their filmmaking. Throughout my fieldwork, teachers frequently mentioned that they considered this one of the particular strengths of the festival, arguing that there were few other opportunities for students to receive feedback from filmmaking professionals other than their own teachers. During the year of my fieldwork, personal conflicts and organizational changes in the larger group led to the choice of a new venue for the festival, for the first time in over 25 years, and this change inspired the participants to introduce some new concepts. Among other things, the group decided that teachers who were new to the festival ought to be able to receive some extra training in

how to provide constructive and informed feedback to their students. Nonetheless, this did not mean that all participants were equally used to and comfortable presenting their work to a group of colleagues at the end of the program, nor were all of them equally keen on giving and receiving feedback in front of others.

The Circulation of Films as Prestige Objects

The origins of the festival that had brought the teachers together dated back to the late 1970s, and the festival had grown in size and relevance over the years. The festival took place over the course of a weekend during which teachers and their students traveled from across the state (sometimes spending as much as five or six hours on the train, which is considered a significant distance by German standards!), camped out in a school gym, dined in makeshift canteens, and watched all the films submitted by student groups. Movie screenings were followed by long conversations and analyses during which students learned how to talk about their own films and their peers' films. The teachers often told me that while most film festivals focused on screening films and awarding prizes, this festival provided a rare opportunity for students to be socialized into talking about film, and performing film criticism.[158]

Moreover, the festival allowed students from different schools and, importantly, school types to get to know each other. Students generally formed friendship and dating networks with students from within their school type. Friendships between academic track students and vocational students were rare, and students attending special schools often remain an especially marginalized group. This festival represented one of the very

[158]See Lily Chumley's ongoing work on art criticism in China (currently an unpublished paper from the 2009 Michicagoan conference).

few opportunities for students from these different school types to spend an extended period of time together and to get to know each other. Since the festival was an annual event, some of the ensuing friendships and flirts were renewed or renegotiated in subsequent years under the sympathetic and sometimes amused eyes of their teachers. For the teachers, on the other hand, attending the festival provided opportunities for watching movies together, talking about their students' progress, and enjoying the overall festival atmosphere. Participants frequently retold anecdotes from previous festivals while new events developed into future memories. The prominent role that the festival played in conversations and planning meetings throughout the year was striking and indicated that in many ways, this festival provided the social glue for a group of people who shared a passion for film and for teaching. At the same time, the festival also provided an arena for comparison and competition and forced participants to acknowledge social differences and differences in their own and/or their students' abilities while maintaining the balance between evaluating their work and maintaining collegiality despite differences in work conditions.

Circulation, Fame, and Recognition

Despite the diversity of their work environments and of the social and educational backgrounds of their students, all of the teachers whom I have described here skillfully and successfully used filmmaking to engage students' creativity and to facilitate individual and group learning processes. For them, learning how to make films and teaching filmmaking to their students provided professional challenges as well as opportunities. In some cases, the films they encouraged their students to make reproduced social hierarchies and stereotypes, while in other cases, the films created by the students

generated new sets of values whose outcomes could not be determined even by educational or social structures. Filmmaking activities thus both reflected and challenged social arrangements, and provided new ways of thinking about the relationships between value, creativity, and distinction.[159] The teachers' efforts blended a commitment to fostering students' personal development through self-reflection and engagement with other people's stories and texts (much in the tradition of a *Bildungsroman*) with a commitment to making quality films.[160] Moreover, through their approach to aesthetic and moral education and their active involvement in student film festivals the teachers encouraged and enabled their students to see themselves as sharing their work with audiences that existed beyond their immediate experience—in other words, with a larger public of filmmakers and film viewers.

[159] Bourdieu (1984) primarily applied what he called the social judgment of taste to the ways in which people interacted with or consumed the (often artistic) products made by others. In this chapter, on the other hand, I focus on the relationship between social distinctions and the products that people create themselves.

[160] Frow (1995) points out that even seemingly normative standards are always connected to social identities. Indeed, as I have shown above, the values and contents that the teachers promoted were strongly influenced by middle class ideals of *Bildung*. However, contrary to the filmmakers whose work I have described in Chapter Five, the teachers considered it part of their vocation to promote these ideals, and sought to do so in ways that took into account their students' interests and capacities for personal growth.

Chapter Seven

Filmbildung, Moral Education, Media, and the Public Sphere

Introduction

When I began my fieldwork in Germany in the fall of 2006, I was interested in ongoing national debates about film education and film competence that had led to the foundation of the so-called Film Competence Agency in 2005. This agency was comprised of members of the German film industry and of the Federal Agency for Civic Education. Why was the German government so invested in promoting film education, film competence, and film literacy as important civic skills? How did the Film Competence Agency and other agencies define and attempt to convey these concepts?

In speeches and texts about film education, politicians, public intellectuals, and filmmakers frequently emphasized that media competence and film literacy were abilities that were crucial for fostering civic participation. For example, a commercial movie theater chain defined the importance of film education as follows: "Along with reading and writing, the ability to understand films and the effects they employ belongs to the cultural techniques of the 21st century. Film competence becomes increasingly important in a society that is determined by media."[161] While this statement may sound appealing and perhaps even convincing, it neither defines film competence, nor does it explain what

[161] http://www.cinemaxx.com/de/unternehmen/engagement.html, accessed on 06/01/2011, my translation

makes film competence a "cultural technique."[162] Rather, it presents visual media as powerful agents, and suggests that citizens and consumers need to acquire certain techniques in order to be able to engage with the media.

Many will agree that the ability to analyze films is part of a spectrum of critical thinking skills that allow people to engage with media reports in a thoughtful and reflexive manner. In Germany, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*) publishes a wide range of pedagogical materials (both in print and online) that are aimed at children, parents, and teachers, and promote a responsible and informed form of media consumption and. One of these brochures is entitled "Talking about Media," and is directed at parents looking for guidance on how to help their children develop healthy relationships with movies, television, and computer games. While this approach resonates with middle-class notions about the appropriate (and regulated) use of media as part of one's leisure time activities, it does not provide a definition of *Filmbildung* or film competence, nor does it explain why or how these skills contribute to the formation of civic virtues like civic involvement or political participation.

Main Themes and Research Questions

Several themes continued to emerge throughout my fieldwork and informed the different chapters of this dissertation. In this chapter, I identify and discuss two of these themes, and explain how they contributed to some of the unexpected complexities of my

[162] It is unclear to me whether the term "cultural techniques" (*Kulturtechniken* in the original) is a reference to work by Mauss and Bourdieu. Perhaps surprisingly, only the commercial movie theater chain (and none of the government agencies) used this term to argue for the importance of film competence or film literacy.

fieldwork. At the end of this chapter, I discuss my findings in light of some larger questions that are relevant to the anthropology of media and the anthropology of publics.

The first theme concerned the vast differences between official talk about film education and its on-the-ground implementation. I have outlined some of these differences in my ethnographic chapters in greater detail, but would like to illustrate this chasm using yet another example from my fieldwork. Shortly before as well as during my fieldwork, the Film Competence Agency had begun promoting a so-called film canon. The canon had been created by a group of directors, producers, journalists, authors, impresarios, and representatives of different film education programs. It included thirty-five internationally renowned films, ranging from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* to Pedro Almodovar's *All About My Mother*. The Federal Agency for Civic Education recommended that all students watch each of these films as part of their schooling. When I asked teachers whether they planned to use this canon in their work, several of them complained that many of the films included in the official canon were not available on DVD, and therefore difficult to show in the classroom.[163] One teacher said to me "That's typical of the government – they come up with these grand ideas and expect us to follow them, but they are totally removed from reality." Of course, such differences between state rhetoric and daily practice are neither uncommon nor specific to Germany. Anthropologists and other social scientists do not only recognize them, they also develop theories about them. For example, in his study of government-led social engineering efforts, James Scott compares and contrasts mētis (experiential, practical, and contextual

[163] Later during my fieldwork, the *Federal Agency for Political Education* rereleased some of these films and cleared copyright issues so that teachers would be able to show them in classroom screenings.

knowledge) with techne (abstract, technical, universal knowledge), and argues that state projects are doomed to fail if they do not take into account mētis (1998: 8; 309 ff.).

In the case of Germany, what rendered the disjunction between official talk about film education and their actual implementation particularly interesting was the relationship to a second theme I identified in my dissertation, namely the hegemony of *Bildung* as a moral and moralizing project.[164] Despite the disparate nature of the film education programs that I observed during my fieldwork, individuals across my fieldsites consistently claimed that film education was an important aspect of young people's education or formation, namely of *Bildung*. While this may not have been surprising considering that most of these individuals worked in the fields of education and the arts, the fact that people rarely explained why film education mattered was very striking. In fact, as I have already mentioned in Chapter One, this shared faith in film education was so hegemonic that few people ever elaborated on this concept. Even in the first conversations about film education in which I ever engaged my interlocutors quickly established that film education was unquestionably important and worth funding. In fact, most people, including some federal politicians, agreed that film education in Germany warranted more resources and venues. Accordingly, I soon learned not to question this tenet, but rather treated it as belonging to the cultural and political conditions that informed the backdrop of my fieldwork. Having spent the majority of my life in educational settings (both a student and as an instructor), it was difficult to disagree with the tenet that fostering the development of critical thinking skills in young people was a valuable component of their education. Nonetheless, these attitudes and beliefs deserve to

[164] I thank Andrew Shryock for suggesting this term to me.

be carefully examined. After outlining several possible explanations, I discuss how using film education serves as a lens for studying cultural beliefs and practices in Germany, and how the research questions I have addressed in this dissertation speak to the discipline of anthropology.

The Relevance of Studying Film Education in 21st Century Germany

As I argued in Chapters One and Two, in Germany, film has historically been seen as having the potential to both educate and entertain, to enlighten and to seduce. Individuals and institutions have historically attempted to monitor and guide film use, and to render a leisure time activity into an educational and moral endeavor. These tensions continued to inform and shape the forms of education and the conversations about film education that I witnessed during my fieldwork.

Nonetheless, the common complaint that film education in Germany deserved more recognition and funding was not solely economic in nature. Just as this complaint pointed to a lack in funding it also accused the German state of negligence in supporting the principle or, perhaps, the value of promoting film education itself. Many claimed that the German government had not succeeded at adequately teaching children and teenagers film literacy skills.

This claim or phenomenon is familiar to anthropologists who frequently encounter groups of people who claim that the variety of a language they speak is not "good," that the values of their community are deteriorating, whether it is about people no longer having respect, as Jane Hill (1998) has shown in her work on speakers of Mexicano, or whether it is about Jordanian hospitality always being projected onto another group of people or onto a remote time period, as Andrew Shryock (2004) has

demonstrated. My interlocutors in Germany treated *Filmbildung* as an emergent or an asymptotic quality, a quality that people strove for yet never quite acquired.

However, film education programs are not at all unique to Germany. In fact, politicians frequently referred to film education programs in other European countries, and were concerned that those programs were "more advanced" than the models for film education that existed in Germany. For example, a number of speakers at the Film Competence Congress at the beginning of my fieldwork bemoaned the fact that film analysis and general knowledge of film had not yet been integrated into German school curricula whereas France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden had taken those steps much earlier (fieldnotes, 26 October 2006; April 27, 2007). Certainly, at times these comments served as a plea to provide more funding – in other words, they represented an example of the kind of practical and largely local knowledge that James Scott identified as mētis (see above). While funding was a very real problem for many of the individuals and institutions with whom I worked, a number of violent events that occurred in Germany during my fieldwork led to an increased awareness of the importance of film education, as I show below.

Old Vices, New Virtues? Discourses of Film Education and Addiction

Mia, the head of a socialcultural association in a city just outside of Berlin, told me that in recent years, her organization had struggled to obtain funding for a number of youth projects. She and her colleagues provided a variety of filmmaking workshops for teenagers as well as for professionals working with teenagers, including social workers and *Medienpädagogen*. I had hoped to participate in a series of workshops that the

organization offered for teachers, social workers, and other *Multiplikatoren*[165] in early 2007. One workshop was designed to teach these professionals how to incorporate filmmaking into their pedagogical work. Another workshop aimed to provide educators with the necessary skills required for producing animated short films. Each workshop lasted four hours, and participants had a choice of possible workshop dates. The participation fee of less than 20 EUR was affordable even for institutions that were only able to spend limited funds on staff training.[166] When I contacted Mia to sign up for the workshops, I was disappointed to learn that both workshops had been cancelled due to low enrollment. Mia explained that in order to justify the time and expenses of the workshop they needed a minimum of six participants. The fact that the workshop had to be canceled represented yet another example of the gap between the publicly proclaimed need for film education and its on-the-ground implementation.

The difference between the supply and demand in film education trainings for professionals had by far not been the only example of how this association addressed or dealt with the tensions between mētis and techne. Founded as a youth center in 1991, shortly after the German reunification, the association was located in a panel building, an architectural style often derided by Westerners as emblematic of Eastern European mass housing.[167] In the early 2000s, the organization received funding from a European Union

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[165] See Chapter One, footnote 8, for a working definition of this term in English.

[166] As I had learned from my work with similar institutions in Hamburg and Berlin, most socialcultural organizations relied on a relatively small staff. Although staff members are entitled to use a certain number of days per year for professional development, the cost of which is to be paid by their employer, many of these institutions are so understaffed that it is often difficult for them to give their staff members permission to participate in such events. This may also have been one of the reasons why not more people had registered for the workshops.

[167] See Fehérváry (2002) on the public and personal perceptions of panel buildings in post-Socialist Hungary. In reunified Germany, these buildings were originally mocked for their unappealing and uniform design. Their association with Eastern bloc low quality work likely influenced the ability to get funding for

fund for urban youth to renovate the building. However, the funding could only be used toward improving the organization's physical space and for new equipment, rather than for personnel costs and programming. Mia said "I'm not complaining – there are still ways of getting funding for smaller projects for one or two years at a time" (fieldnotes, January 15, 2007). She furthermore explained that funding decisions were often "contingent on a person" (*personenbedingt*), i.e., guided by the personal interests and preferences of the person or persons responsible for allocating funding to state-funded associations in the region: "If someone is more interested in drug prevention work they will take money away from other projects" (field notes, January 15, 2007). Thus far, this had not presented any major problems for her organization, as Mia and her colleagues had tailored their programs to respond to the trends and interests of those in charge of funding decisions. For example, in recent years the organization had obtained funding by framing media competence as civic competence (*Bürgerkompetenz*).

Mia mentioned that especially in the wake of the then most recent school shooting in Germany[168] there had been an increased interest in the role that computer games played in promoting violence. Outraged parents and other members of the public demanded a stricter regulation of computer games while others demanded greater restrictions for young people's access to firearms. At the same time, the German government increased its funding of programs that promoted violence prevention and advocated for a responsible use of computer games. During my fieldwork, the city state

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renovations. However, in recent years German architects have re-evaluated panel housing and have praised it for its relative heat and insulation efficiency.

[168] Just a few months earlier, in November 2006, a high school student in a town in Northwest Germany had shot several of his classmates before killing himself. He had previously engaged in so-called "killer video games." His shooting spree rekindled previous debates about the dangers of computer games.

of Hamburg decreased funding for media education at the same time as it increased funding for addiction prevention. Indeed, some of the Hamburg-based media pedagogues whom I knew received funding for filmmaking and television making programs from foundations or state agencies that focused on addiction prevention, often with a focus on internet and gaming addiction. Similarly, Mia reported that her association had in fact never been financed by the Ministry of Education, but had received funding from the Ministry of Youth instead. These patterns suggest that even at a time when politicians from all across Germany touted film education as a key skill (*Schlüsselkompetenz*) for civic education, the institutions that funded these activities often framed the programs as belonging into the domain of youth or addiction prevention, rather than the domain of education.

As I documented in Chapter Two, during the early 1900s the trope of addiction played a significant role in public discourse about movies in Germany, at a time when the medium of film represented the cutting edge in visual technology. Although this trope did not consistently appear in discourse about youth and film across all historical and political eras, concerns about the perceived potential of addiction continued to inform public thinking about and the political use of film. In the wake of the social uprisings of 1968 and the subsequent educational reforms, leftist educators in West Germany wanted to prevent children from becoming indifferent, emotionally numbed television viewers and mindless consumers. Cartoons and television commercials were seen as particularly seductive and emblematic of the dangers of television in general. Many youth initiatives focused on teaching students how to recognize and resist these formats by encouraging them to make their own films. Approaches that viewed children's active participation in

using media as a key to learning how to interact with media became subsumed under the term *aktive Medienarbeit* (lit., active media work). These trends in hands-on approaches were paralleled by scholarly publications on these topics, and *Medienpädagogik* emerged as a discipline.[169]

During my fieldwork, the trope of addiction resurfaced at a time when changes in digital animation and the increasingly sophisticated use of three dimensional technologies greatly enhanced the quality of digital images. At the same time as digital communication became increasingly common among young people new possibilities and risks emerged because these technologies allowed young people to easily record and subsequently share recordings that showed peers being humiliated, bullied, and physically and sexually assaulted. In fact, during my fieldwork several organizations began to offer a so-called "driver's license for mobile phones" *(Handyführerschein*) for teenagers. The goal of such courses was to teach young people about the responsible use of mobile phones.[170] Hence, these efforts resembled the efforts of an earlier generation of educators who hoped to teach young people an informed and responsible engagement with the latest available forms of mass media. In both cases, education was seen as a key to preventing addictive as well as violent behavior.[171]

Importantly, the discourses and practices about film education I observed could not simply be attributed to the preferred media of today's youth, but were also strongly

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[169] Many of the texts that were written by one of West Germany's leading authors on the topic, Dieter Baacke, remain key texts in applied media studies to this day. Most of my field contacts had read his work; in our conversations they frequently cited his definition of "film competence."

[170] While I saw such courses advertised by several organizations, I did not talk to any organizers or participants, and am therefore unable to compare or contras them to the film education efforts I witnessed.

[171] In her analysis of the linguistic regimes of patient advocates in a drug rehabilitation center, Summerson Carr (2009) identifies institutional expectations about the central role of language in helping individuals

linked to the socialization of their educators and teachers: Most people with whom I conducted fieldwork had come of age or entered the labor force during a time period when the West German government invested in arts education and in the helping sciences, leading to the rise of a number of community arts organizations (see also Stevenson 1999). Many of the professionals whom I met through my fieldwork were born in West Germany between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, which meant that they had either been involved in creating this cultural milieu when they trained as teachers or social workers in the 1970s, or that they had been socialized and taught by people who had created these structures.

Moral Lessons: The Anthropologist and the Educators

In the sections that follow, I want to unpack the complexities that these two themes created and to highlight some of the structural conditions of the film education practitioners' work that I have identified and, in some cases, criticized in this dissertation. As I described in earlier chapters, I had initially planned to do ethnographic fieldwork with groups of people who designed film education programs or who created and organized professional development programs for *Multiplikatoren* who then shared their newly acquired knowledge with other professionals and students. I anticipated that most of these educational programs would involve talking about films, as well as learning how to teach others how to talk about film. I had *not* expected to conduct fieldwork with groups of people who were involved in film*making*, nor had I anticipated doing fieldwork with either teachers or students. As I describe in Chapter Three, due to the ways in which

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overcome their addiction. It would be interesting to examine whether the preventive programs in Germany that I have described here employ similar tenets.

some film education programs were organized and regulated by institutions like the Youth Centre and EduFilm, it was difficult to obtain informed consent from participants and their families prior to film screenings and discussions. I was therefore neither able to record film discussions nor able to follow up with participating students.[172] Moreover, as I described in Chapter Three, when I attempted to contact participating teachers on my own to learn more about their goals and expectations, I learned that I had unwittingly transgressed some of the (perhaps unspoken) rules of the institution. To me, these limitations were sometimes frustrating, but also instructive, as they detailed the complex moral dimensions of engaging in participant observation.

The need to understand and acknowledge the sometimes conflicting sets of interests of various individuals and institutions was further underscored by the multi-sited nature of my fieldwork and the fact that many of the people whom I encountered knew one another through a variety of professional networks. As I described in earlier chapters, I was not always aware of the complex histories, obligations, overlapping or, at times, conflicting sets of interests between different groups of people. George Marcus has eloquently described some of the 'side effects' of multi-sited fieldwork as follows:

> In conducting multi-sited research, one finds oneself with all sorts of cross-cutting and contradictory personal commitments. […] In certain sites, one seems to be working with, and in others one seems to be working against, changing sets of subjects. This condition of shifting personal positions in relation to one's subjects and other active discourses in a field that overlap with one's own generates a definite sense of doing more than just ethnography, and it is this quality that provides a sense of being an activist for and against positioning in even the most self-perceived apolitical fieldworker. [1998: 98-99]

[172] Andrew Shryock (2004) discusses how Institutional Review Boards have influenced ethnographic fieldwork in unexpected ways, arguing that "culture is increasingly public, yet much of it is now off limits" (2004:10).

Marcus's description provides a very astute characterization of some of the moral concerns and conflicts I experienced from time to time, especially when attempting to assess and balance my expectations of and obligations toward the many different groups of people with whom I worked. Like all ethnographers, I had to navigate this terrain with great care, and had to remain mindful of the fact that my understanding of these relationships was always partial, and that my presence was part of an ongoing set of interactions and dialogues among the individuals who invited me to participate in their work. [173]

In the ethnographic chapters of this dissertation I identify some of the aspects that enabled the gaps or disjunctures that I witnessed between official rhetoric about film education and its everyday articulation through different individuals and institutions. In Chapters Three and Four I document film education programs that consisted of one-time visits to movie theaters followed by a discussion. Oftentimes neither the teachers nor the facilitators were able to create an atmosphere, setting, or situation in which all students were able to equally participate in the kind of collective film discussions. Similarly, as I illustrated in Chapter Five, groups of filmmakers who taught one-time filmmaking workshops at schools often had trouble negotiating and communicating their expectations to the teachers and the students. The group of teachers I describe in Chapter Six, on the other hand, used filmmaking as part of their ongoing engagement with the students, and faced fewer challenges in their work.

[173] Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism describes how any conversation and interaction resonates with previous conversations and interactions; this phenomenon certainly applied to the specific context of my fieldwork as well as to the larger context of my research.

Hence, amidst official proclamations about the importance of film education for socializing German youth, the most important and, perhaps, long-lasting socialization of young people occurred in the experience and quality of their interactions with their peers and instructors. Most educators will not be particularly surprised by this fact; nonetheless, it is important to mention here precisely because these influence of personal relationships and group processes remains noticeably absent from official talk about *Filmbildung*. Hence, film education in Germany provides a lens through which we can understand how educators articulated the relationship between filmmaking, film watching, and moral education. Studying film education also allows one to investigate the behind-the-scenes or off-screen processes (see Shryock 2004, Lemon 2009) that inform cultural productions and that make these productions appear consistent rather than fraught with contradictions, tensions, and diverging interpretations.

From Text to Screen: *Filmbildung*, Media and the Public Sphere

Many of the film education programs I studied were predicated on the idea that educated, media-savvy citizens were equipped to participate in political debates. This framework is strongly oriented along the lines of Habermas's (1984) concept of communicative competence. Teaching young people how to engage with media, whether by collectively *watching* films or by collaboratively *making* them represented one option for teaching participants to become educated and active citizens of the future. This proposition is grounded in Habermas' notion of a public sphere into which individuals can enter by participating in a certain kind of discourse. Habermas's understanding of the public sphere draws on historical developments in a particular geographical context, post-Enlightenment Continental Europe. A number of scholars have criticized the

presuppositions and the rather narrow understanding of citizenship on which it is built, for example, by pointing out Habermas's inattentiveness to gender issues (see Fraser 1990 and Benhabib 1992), his distinction of private and public domains (see Gal 2002), as well as his Eurocentrism (see Benhabib 1992). These criticisms nonwithstanding, Habermas's work continues to be relevant to the German national context (and, importantly, is seen as such by many Germans themselves). While neither the politicians proclaiming the importance of film education nor the authors of the texts that the Film Competence Agency published explicitly mention Habermas, the idea of creating educated citizens through responsible media usage is very much inspired by his work. Hence, although the film education efforts I described did not always succeed at addressing the relationship between audiences and the public sphere, they were nonetheless informed by ideas about the relationship between media, audiences, and the public sphere. Michael Warner argues that "[b]elonging to a public seems to require at least minimal participation, even if it is patient or notional, rather than a permanent state of being" (2002: 53). My findings show that the film education programs that I studied did not allow all participants to participate as equals. In fact, the inequalities and differences that surfaced in some of the interactions I witnessed provide important information about the constraints these individuals experienced in their everyday lives precisely *because* official film education programs did not always acknowledge their different lived experiences.

Anthropological Approaches to Literacy and Civic Participation, Media, and the Public Sphere

In the concluding section, I identify a number of current theoretical strands in anthropology and position my own work in their context. I focus on three areas of anthropological research that are particularly relevant to my research: the study of literacy and civic participation, the study of media, and the study of publics.

Recent work by scholars in linguistic anthropology and related disciplines also testifies to a continued interest in studying the public sphere (see, for example, Warner 2002, Woolard 1998, Gal 2002, Hill 2001, Armbrust 2004) and issues of representation and inclusion (see, for example, Lemon 2009, Frekko 2009a and 2009b). While much of the anthropological work on literacy and texts investigates classroom interactions in the United States (see, for example, Wortham 2006; Collins 1996; Street 1995; McDermott and Tylbor 1995, but see Starrett 1998 for an important exception), some recent work examines literacy practices to study civic participation and interactions with institutions and publics in a variety of national contexts. For example, in his work on literacy programs for adult women in rural India, Francis Cody (2009) studies the relationship between literacy and democratic participation. Similarly, Susan Frekko's work on Catalan and Castilian speakers in Barcelona (2009b) examines the relationship between literacy, perceptions of respectability, and the legitimacy of participating in a larger political discourse.

Research on the anthropology of media has grown significantly over the past few years (see Askew 2002a), and includes a wide range of approaches and foci. Some of the most recent work on anthropological research on film and television audiences has focused on the ways in which people watch and talk about films and appropriate them to

various national and political contexts. Much of this work has been conducted in postcolonial settings (see, for example, Hahn (2005) on movie going in Tonga; Wilk (2002) on television consumption in Belize; Kulick and Willson (2005) on Papua New Guinea; Larkin (2002, 2008) on movie screenings in Nigeria; Meyer (2004) on movie audiences in Ghana). Several scholars, including Abu-Lughod (2005) and Mankekar (2005), have been particularly interested in the relationships between gender, television, and the nation state. Other recent work has investigated issues of power and representation by focusing on the production of films, and on the relationships between producers and those depicted (see, for example, Askew 2002, Lemon 2002).

Many of these works share an interest in the relationship between movie consumption and the construction of different public spheres. Walter Armbrust (1998) argues that film and mass media deserve to be studied as cultural practices that provide insight into other discourses and practices. He states that "mass media, if they do nothing else, extend the boundaries of access to discourses and, in doing so, potentially reshape the ways in which discourses are perpetuated or changed" (2004: 87). This approach to the study of mass media emphasizes the ways in which talk about film both reflects and co-constructs social and political practices, and explicitly investigates the relationship between movie audiences and larger publics. The findings about film education efforts in Germany that I presented in this dissertation highlight both the possibilities and the constraints under which audiences can constitute publics. My research reveals how talk about film both reflects and co-constructs social and political practices, and problematizes assumptions about the relationship between media, moral education, and democratic participation.

At the time of this writing, the recent political uprisings in the Middle East have inspired many people to comment on the importance of new media for political protests and democratization processes and the emergence of a possible alternative public sphere. Public discourses have focused on the political potential of new social media like blogs, Twitter, and Facebook. These developments will certainly also inspire future scholarship on the relationship between media and the public sphere. Anthropologists are well suited to provide careful ethnographic analyses that allow a better understanding of the complex social, historical, political, moral, and institutional contexts that inform the relationships between the media and public spheres, and we have a lot of interesting work ahead of us.

Appendix

Cast of Characters

All names are fictional unless otherwise noted.

Cast of Characters Chapter 1	
Mark	Producer, special guest at film screening

Cast of Characters Chapter 3	
Individuals by Institutions	
EduFilm: Corporate Film Education Institution in Hamburg	
Ilona	Co-founder of EduFilm, German and philosophy teacher at academic track school, lecturer at local university and college
Dennis	Co-founder of EduFilm, filmmaker
Natalia	Author of children's books, screenwriter, teacher of German as a foreign language, film facilitator for EduFilm
Youth Info Center: State-Funded Community Center in Hamburg	
Ralf	Media pedagogue
Herr Kordel	Voice on the phone
Cinebureau: State-Funded Institution in Berlin	
Layla	Office coordinator of Cinebureau in Berlin
Annika	Layla's assistant
Freelance Facilitators Working for Cinebureau during the Cineweek Film Festival	
Volker	Author, media pedagogue, Layla's friend
Annette	French teacher at private academic track school, film facilitator
Suresh	Author, teacher, emcee at CineWeek

Cast of Characters Chapter 4	
Ilona	Co-founder of EduFilm, German and philosophy teacher at academic track school
Natalia	Author of children's books, screenwriter, film facilitator for EduFilm
Klaus	Co-founded of EduFilm, filmmaker, film facilitator for EduFilm
Herr Schmied	Vocational school teacher who takes his class to a screening at Harbor Cinema
Cinebureau: State-Funded Institution in Berlin	
Layla	Office coordinator of Cinebureau in Berlin
Annika	Layla's assistant
Annette	French teacher at academic track high school, film facilitator
Dr Feld	Environmental expert, special guest at film screening
Cinemas	
Harbor Cinema	Independent cinema, Hamburg
Krypton	LGBT cinema, Berlin

Cast of Characters Chapter 5	
Institutions	
Film Competence Agency	Federal agency located in Potsdam, co-financed by the German film industry
Shortcuts	Hamburg-based film academy for short films
Filmmakers Working for Shortcuts	
Bernd	
Britta	
Carla	
Teachers	
Herr Weiss	Absent class teacher
Frau Kohl	Supervising teacher
Students	
Thomas	
Matthias	
Mehmet	
Katja	

Cast of Characters Chapter 6	
Teachers	
Mirko	Ethnologist, German literature and theater teacher at academic track school
Franz	Spokesperson and co-founder of the film education program, German teacher at technical school
Sebastian	Latin and German teacher at academic track school
Ulla	Art teacher at academic track school
Oliver	Special education teacher
Martin	Teacher at vocational enhancement program for high school dropouts
Ingrid and Holger	Art teachers at academic track schools

Cast of Characters Chapter 7	
Mia	Staff member at a youth media center outside of Berlin

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