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Why a formal training for TV and Filmmaking?

Yvonne Fritze, Geir Haugsbakk & Yngve Nordkvælle

Abstract

Training future producers of movies and TV is a very exclusive type of education, with a very high demand on entrance qualifications, and with a sophisticated and critical public interest, not only because the training of artists is a culturally sensitive and sometimes controversial topic, but also because it is a very expensive type of education. In spite of the high costs and prestige of those types of education, there seem to exist little formally described knowledge about what is considered a good education, effective training methods, norms and rules of teaching, supervision and assessment. Informal knowledge is most often situated and carried with the instructors and supervisors as embodied knowledge that unfolds in situations and contexts. The success or failure of the training is measured by the number of students who make their careers in the entertainment industry after graduation. There seems to be a considerable lack of descriptions and analysis of what it takes to develop the talent of students, and the “hows” and “whys” of alternative methods, strategies and processes. The research literature on the subject is moderate and rarely put forward as prescriptive or suggestive for improvements.

The main focus of this article is to identify the trends that influence the construction of film schools and their curricula and to elicit explicit reflections and discussions concerning the intentions and basic values underpinning film schools. Based on historical perspectives we have found it interesting to differentiate between educational institutions and relate them to three separate positions or approaches in a curriculum triangle: the arts, the profession and the academy as nodes.

Media education at tertiary level – what is the purpose?

Having a long experience in the field of media education as a general area of study, we, the authors, felt that it was about time to focus on how media education looks like in tertiary education. Working at Lillehammer University College with two distinct schools: one for television and one for film, we also felt obliged to gather more knowledge about the area to understand the development of our own institution. The project was framed as a pilot-study, and we received support from the “Norwegian Council for applied media studies”. Media studies have three shapes and forms at our institution: In 1986 a two year study on TV-production started up. In 1993 an academic Film- and TV-science study was established. Third, the Norwegian Film School was established in 1998. Today, these are organised as separate entities: Department of TV-studies, The Norwegian Film School and Film and TV-science as subject under the Department of Social Science. They offer BA-programmes in their respective areas, as well as Master studies. In 2014 the Film- and TV-science section had a PhD-programme accredited (in collaboration with Norwegian University of Science and Technology).

Interestingly, the Film school at our own institution rejected our request to include them in our study. This gave us a suspicion that the field might be controversial and turbulent. We bypassed the problem by including interviews with retired personnel from the Film school, and studying reports and websites presenting the school. In contrast the TV-school welcomed our curiosity, and embraced our efforts with great interest. In addition, we included a brief study of the Danish Film School in Copenhagen.

Most of the literature we have studied for this project has a character of being biographical, or broad overviews of trends and histories of national and international perspectives on film and tv-education (Hjort 2013a, b; Petrie & Stoneman 2014; Bro 2010; Skretting 2014). The more focused and empirical studies are few and rare to find. The nature of our project also limited our research to doing interviews and studying documents.

Historical perspectives on the field

Efland stated in his book about the social history of art, that: “as long as the arts have existed, artists, performers, and audience members have been educated for their roles” (1990, p. 1). The tradition of training was established in the informal setting of the elder advising the younger in how to exercise certain skills. The oldest institution for training artist, has been found in China, dated to 1104 (Stankiewitch 2007, p. 10), and in Europe, the art academy of Medici was established in 1488. “Accademia del Disegno” established in 1563 in Florence, was both an art education institution as well as a guild, but with an emphasis on theoretical perspectives, while most guilds gave precedence to practice (Stankiewitch 2007, p. 12). The guilds became formal settings for training where the young artisans studied under the master, undergoing tests to, gradually, demonstrate that a mastery was well deserved. The master-novice relation is still considered a vital impulse for training in vocational as well as artistic training (Eikseth 2011). In the discourse about film education, the tradition of learning the trade in practice is still highly regarded (Hjort 2013a).

Many countries in Europe established national art academies throughout the 18th century, first and foremost to establish a national tradition, and to counter the strong Italian influence. According to Stankiewitch, the government interest in controlling the style and purpose of the arts, was a strong argument for the State to finance and supervise training of artist (2007, p. 13). In Germany, even local Governments established art academies, also to stimulate the design and production of new industrially produced artifacts, like in Breslau (Barnstone 2008). The division between “high and low” culture, and the rivalry between conservative and radical ideologies of art is a perennial topic. The famous art school in Berlin, the Bauhaus, established in 1920, was an example of an art education, which merged the conflicting ideas about theory versus practice into a consistent workshop-method (Christie 2012).

While the visual arts education has a long history, the issue of film education is a child of the 20th century. The concern for how audiences, particularly children, responded to moving im-

ages, gave way to a strong public debate already before World War 1 (Diesen 1995). The first government to acknowledge the possibility of using the art of filmmaking as a tool for the State, was the Soviet government. They established the world's first film school in Moscow in 1919, the VGIK (Vserossiyskiy Gosoudarstvenni Institut Kinematographii), tightly connected to the state and the Communist party. They pronounced a clear political analysis and argument for bringing filmmaking to the forefront of the cultural policy. Lenin had seen the power of moving images and how this new medium could play an important part in developing the new Russian citizens and building the Communist state. The Russian film school turned out to be highly influential in the development of film schools in other parts of the world. To some extent because they demonstrated the propagandistic potential of films, but also because of the experimental artistic forms and new teaching methods.

The film schools that emerged in Europe followed the same kind of model, first the "Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia" established in Rome in 1935 by the fascist government. The national socialists/fascists in both Italy and Germany saw the movie as a propaganda instrument of enormous power. Just after the Second World War, Eastern European countries (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland) quite soon established their National film schools. Spain in 1947, the Netherlands in 1958, Sweden 1964, Denmark 1966, West Germany in the mid 1960s, UK 1971, while the private institution London Film School dates back to 1956. Although the values underpinning the establishment of film schools initially was politically motivated, it was always connected to a set of aesthetical arguments expressed as a policy for art and cultural institutions. The nature of these arguments oscillates between paternalist and "high culture" aims of educating the masses to pragmatic views of art and culture being a shared and common value (Snævarr 2008).

A national film policy in Norway was first established in the early 1950-ies, built on the accept of film being an important artistic expression, which was significant for the building of a national cultural identity. The desire to cultivate and imbue the public with the values and information of the enlightened and educated elite was taken care of by an institute providing films for educational institutions (Statens Filmsentral). Films were seen as a cultural good, that should reach all parts of the public in order to raise their level of education. The film policies developed by the Norwegian authorities took a great responsibility for supporting the Norwegian film production, both feature films, short films and documentaries. The film historian Gunnar Iversen regards the production of film in Norway, from 1950 and onwards as an important governmental project of cultural politics, that reaches a preliminary peak by the establishment of a national film school in 1997. In the first 20 years the film policy was first and foremost a project that emphasized the production of quality films for the masses, and for children in particular, with the greatest concern for the constant nurturing of a national cultural identity, and, needless to say, as a counterforce to the strong commercial influence from the USA (Iversen 2013). The establishment of the Norwegian Film School was clearly a project undertaken to support a national film industry, which supposedly was cultivating a national film culture. When the Ministry chose the University College of Lillehammer as location, two arguments were important: The TV-school was already well established, recruited well and had reached a position as an important provider of personnel to the industry. The government spent

a shameless amount of money on organizing the 1994 Winter Olympics, and filling the Media Center with more media studies seemed to be economically rational. In spite of the entire industry tried to convince the Ministry it should be set up in Oslo, the capital, it ended in Lillehammer with the first students admitted in 1998.

The making of film schools in history: industry, the conservatoire and the academy

This confluence of political and cultural forces was important for the development of national film policies, in smaller as well as larger countries (Hjort & Petrie 2007). Since 1950, hardly any film has been produced in Norway without financial support from the State. The same goes for a number of other countries, such as Germany (Byg & Torner 2013). The national film policies are generally seen as quite formative for the profile of film schools. Byg & Torner (2013) describe the relationship as “a deep structural logic” between the national cinema and its film education. They call the connection “dirigisme” following the close companionship between State regulation and use of incentives on a broad basis to assure that business follows public interests (2013, p. 105). The dirigisme does not end at the front door of film education. German film education, both public and private institutions receive substantial funding from the State.

There are, however, several other forces that contribute to the direction of how film education is designed and organised. The Scottish film historian Duncan Petrie points at, primarily how the tradition of art education in Europe, as well as film schools developed as an academic area, predominantly in the US, influenced the film education in the UK (2010a). For the case of Germany, Byg & Torner points at the influence German educational traditions put their mark on how things are run in film schools. Last there is a huge influence from the practical hands-on training that has taken place in the industry since the handcraft of film-making started (Hjort 2013b).

A number of autobiographies of famous filmmakers describe how “learning the trade” took a long time. Alfred Hitchcock was one of many who made his way from modest positions in drawing and production design to make his own career as successful filmmaker (Taylor 1978). Learning the trade by working with experienced filmmakers is the closest we can get to the informal learning that historically took place in the guilds. The London Film School, first established in 1956, named itself a “technical school” for the first years. For many years, the school had an image of being producing candidates that would quickly find a proper job in the industry.

The “conservatoire” was a metaphor used to describe the tradition of film schools that lended some vital traits from the established art schools, as described above, but adjusted to the specific field of film making. Apart from serving more or less specific political aims, as in the Soviet union, and Italy, the tradition in Europe which developed in the 1950-ies and 1960-ies, devel-

oped approaches which included topics like the history of art, aesthetics, philosophy, film critique and political and psychological topics. In the US, film schools were established within universities, first at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1932. “The academy” is a contrast to the conservatoire in the sense that the training took place with stronger influences from intellectual fields and subjects that flourished in the aftermath of the new social criticism in the US (Petrie & Stoneman 2014).

To stay with the British example, when the British government established an independent Film school in 1970, they sought inspiration rather in the conservatoire model, than in the industrial model. When they recruited the Scottish born, and academically trained Colin Young from a leading position at UCLA to become the leader of the National Film School, this school developed quite differently than the London school. The London Film School was built on a very structured programme, where courses followed a strict succession and progression set by the teachers, who were most worried about following the technical requirements of the industry. In the National Film School, little formal teaching took place, seminars were organized when needed, students were active producing film in various genres and in system that was difficult to identify, even for those well versed in the industry (Robertson 1975). In 1985, Young described the difference between the industrial model and alternative he was in charge of in the following manner:

“There is a difference in attitude and technique between a person who has qualified through industry and one who has gone through school. The person who has learned in the industrial environment entirely, will have his or her time directed by others in a workplace which is keyed to a production of artefacts of somebody else's requirements. The other type will have their time directed by themselves in a school environment which is keyed to their development and will leave within them a spirit of an inner-directed development as opposed to the industry's outer-directed one.” (Toyeux, p. 26, quoted from Petrie 2004, p. 84)

Similar ideas were important also to the German film schools. Byg & Torner (2013) points at the importance the German academic tradition has played, both in former East-German and West-German film schools. Most notable, they point at the ideas of how filmmaking should be construed as a part of a process of “Bildung”. In West-Germany, The University of Television and Film Munich was established in 1966, directed by professor Dr. Otto Roegle, whose educational philosophy epitomises the German idea of Bildung: “to give young free-thinking and artistic German filmmakers freedom to experiment before pushing them into the media industry” (Byg & Torner 2013, p. 113). Similar to Young, Roegle was a well established academic of both medicine and media studies, with the firm belief of the ideas of European higher education, stemming from Humboldt.

According to Basil Bernstein (1975), the visibility of structures and frames for teaching and learning in the industrial model, such as the London model of the mid-70-ies, would fit into what he would name a “visible pedagogy”. Subjects were clearly described, criteria and demands were clearly defined, teaching was frontal and predictive, and the evaluation of student performance was clearly stated. Similar, the National Film School would fit a description of an

“invisible pedagogy”: implicit control exercised by the teachers, limited focus on learning specific skills, strong beliefs in the ability of the student to organize his/her own learning process, and a wide and imprecise set of criteria for evaluation and assessment of learning outcomes in terms of process and product.

As we see, there are significant influences from the three sources: the interests of the professional community, the interests of the arts and of the intellectual field. Secondly, the interaction between government policies has important consequences for how curricula of the film schools are designed. Duncan Petrie presents the distinction between practice on one hand and theory on the other as the main topic of curriculum design: “the relationship between the provision of hands-on technical training and a wider intellectual and cultural education that remains one of the most interesting and pressing issues” (Petrie 2010a, p. 40). He points out that the conservatoire and the university department, have both been trying to handle the challenge in different ways, but they have sought a combination “that embraces the theory, criticism, and history of cinema, providing students with a context for locating and understanding their own creative practice” (p. 35). In the next section we will try and look closer to types of influences that are important for the film schools we have investigated.

Film schools in the age of globalisation

The curricular model emanating from, among others, Petrie’s work, suggests that the taught curriculum at any film school will position itself somewhere in between the three corners of a triangle, representing art, academy and the profession. While the political background of the early film schools, (as well as policies guiding both arts, academia and the professions) was closely tied to the interests of the state as a nation builder, the changes of the latter two decades (at least) have come about as the result of the globalisation of the economy.

After the fall of the iron curtain, in particular, a totally new global economic agenda has been set up, in former Soviet states, as well as in European countries. Neo-liberalism has changed the political contexts of film making, and the economic goals of the national film industries have been expanded not only to serve a national culture, but to reach out to a bigger market. In 2007, a government white paper in Norway stated that the imminent goal of Norwegian film industry had changed from serving the Norwegian public primarily, to become the economically and artistically most successful in the Nordic countries. The conventional argument about preserving and supporting a national culture was now sharing attention with a substantial emphasis on economic concerns. Reaching out to an international audience, capturing a larger segment of the national market, competing with the international production groups, primarily in the US and the UK, became important part of the goals for the national film production (Iversen & Solum 2010; Iversen 2013). Duncan Petrie shows how similar tendencies have influenced British film policies and film education. The “Creative industries”, which is the new term after New Labour’s influential political leadership in the previous decade, has gained a strong influence on what types of skills are needed in the profession, and how entrepreneurial

training and developing new business areas are new curricular areas. The discourse is now more or less seated in the needs and demands of the industry, leaving cultural critic to the esoteric premises of academic journals and colleges (Petrie 2010a, 2012).

The British/American professor of cultural studies, Toby Miller (2013), offers a structuralist/marxist critique of the same tendency. Studies of creativity, and the efforts to uncover the dynamics of creative arts as pivotal in the artistic and economic success of making film and similar cultural artifacts, comes from liberalist economics of the 1960-ies, which most noticeably, governor Ronald Reagan promoted. He sees the emergence of film education as an unholy merger of technology and humanism/liberal arts, because movie making recruits from both areas.

As an overall, but preliminary analysis, we see that the aim and purpose of national film schools is strongly entangled with government policies regarding film and television. In countries like Germany, Norway and UK, the film schools have a strong government support and are regulated by both higher education policies, as well as cultural politics.

Another dimension of globalization is the international coordination of educational policies (Haugsbakk 2012). In all these countries there has grown up a large number of private institutions, which are regulated by national policies for accreditation. For Norwegian film and TV-education this implies that the studies are inspected and accredited by the Norwegian Council for accreditation, meaning that the Bologna policies, as well as the subsequent regulations imposed by the EU has been followed by the book. In Denmark, the Film School is funded by the Ministry of Culture. The Danish Film School has been left untouched by the policies aiming at harmonising with the Bologna agreement, which means their course description follows a quite different rhetoric (Hjort 2013a). We see that policies regarding art and culture, the film professionals as well as higher education have high stake interests in shaping the curriculum of film education. Policies for the arts and culture, and film more specific, change as well as does higher education policies and even more influential might be the role of the professional community of filmmakers.

The curriculum triangle in Norwegian and Danish Film training

Petrie's model is two-dimensional in the sense that the design is torn between the theoretical or practical interests. Based on our empirical research and analysis of the curricula of the Norwegian and the Danish institutions, we will suggest that there is a gulf between "the academic" and "the arts" of what Petrie initially describes as "intellectual". In his most recent work (with Stoneman 2014) he describes that the conservatoire model by and large is under pressure in many countries, and that academic subjects is losing terrain to the interests of the industry. They describe this as a trend towards "anti-intellectualism".

The anti-intellectualism can take many shapes and forms. In Philipsen's account of teaching and learning in the Danish Filmschool, published as her PhD-thesis (Philipsen 2005), we find

one example. Philipsen described the formal teaching of the subjects Petrie outlines above as restricted to one day per week, and performed by invited guest speakers from the university. Students generally loathe this teaching, and Philipsen assumes very little is learnt from it. At the Norwegian TV-school teachers do their utmost to invite speakers who are conceived of as highly relevant, have a high standing in the practical field and are able to speak to students where they have their focus in their process of learning film-making. The institutions we investigated were clearly most focused on the teaching and learning of the practical craft of making film. The possible guest lecturers from the academic branch of Film- and TV-studies are rarely consulted or invited to give lectures.

A blog maintained by the director of curriculum of the Norwegian Film School, F. Graver states that “[...] the kind of fine arts training offered by the Norwegian Film School does not have a relationship to knowledge in the academic sense” (Graver 2012). Along with the Danish Film School, their curricular texts contain a huge number of references to their efforts to maintain a very professional approach to training as well as developing the artistic expressions of the media. The conception of the filmmaker as an artist is strongly supported throughout their curricular texts. In the rejection of our attempt to include the present Filmschool in our research, the argument was made that academics, like ourselves, would be incapable of understanding the teaching of arts, and therefore would have little to gain from doing research.

The Danish Filmschool has a line of study for TV integrated. The curriculum text for the study of making TV is equally immersed in references to artistic development, and a range of TV-genres are mentioned as areas where artistic development can take place. The Norwegian context is different. In spite of years of efforts to merge the TV and Filmschool which are two different departments at the Lillehammer University College, the latter has resisted such a process. Because the Filmschool since its inception has been classified as an art institution, it receives almost four times the money per student as the TV-school. Subsequently, the Filmschool would, probably, be severely punished if they stepped out of the “arts” discourse, and has, obviously, a strong interest in keeping the TV-department outside their own realms. However, the Filmschool has lately taken up interest in doing TV-drama, as well as developed a parallel study to the TV-school’s study of documentary, but naming it “Creative documentary”. The TV-school was developed primarily as training for producing critical documentary for television, in 1986 (Pryser 2001). Critical theory, project method, groupwork and problem-based learning was the hallmark of its pedagogy, and closely linked to the academic Film- and TV-study that was established since 1992. The academic connection was therefore much stronger for the TV-school. The curriculum texts of the TV-school hardly have any references to “arts”, but do refer to notions such as “creative” or “innovative”.

These types of expressions support our interpretation that the two-dimensional model between theory and practice needs to be expanded to three dimensions. Where Petrie found a peaceful and happy coexistence of arts theory, film theory, criticism etc., the Nordic film education present us with a much clearer distinction between the arts and what we might call humanities and social sciences on the other.

Dirigisme and the purpose taken for granted in Norwegian/Danish Film Schools

Reading the curricular texts and interpreting the interviews, we see that there are some presumptions that do not come to the fore. The aim and purpose of training to become producers of TV and Film is very little described, let alone discussed in curricular texts. In interviews, many ideas and viewpoints about the purpose are espoused. The most common idea, is similar to the quote of professor Roegle above, to create a cradle for development of individual ideas, creativity and expression. Another strongly shared idea is what we might call “the death of the auteur”. The social character of making TV- and Film is strongly underlined, and therefore the interdependence between the various actors: sound, photo, production design, director, producer etc. in the act of producing a piece of audiovisual expression is strongly emphasised. The collaborative nature of modern filmmaking is a common denominator of the ideas and beliefs of the institutions investigated. These two phenomena are quintessential as expressions of what “Bildung” in this education contain. However, when it comes to societal or ethical issues, the curricula say little about such matters. There are hardly any references to the meaning and functions of media in society in the texts. In the interviews, however, the desire to educate students who want to offer critical reflections to the public, come to the fore. The former dean of the Norwegian Film School, Malte Wadman, expresses that the hardest thing of film education is to motivate students to make films of significance to society. The question of “how” in training filmmakers is relatively easy compared to questions of “why” and “what”, according to him. A documentary teacher expressed a worry about two of his former students playing essential roles in the production of documentaries running up to the coming election for the parliament. They were both employed in the national broadcasting company (NRK- the state funded broadcaster), and his concern was that they, who have received a rather scarce training and acquisition of knowledge about politics and economy, could take on themselves such ambitious tasks.

It is a question well worth asking if film education and the film profession are both so entangled in each other, and so structurally connected to film- and TV-policies of the government, that the “actual” purpose of the training is rather expressed in those discourses, and are taken for granted in the texts we have discussed. If so, this might support a thesis of a “dirigisme” being strongly present in these institutions, notwithstanding being regulated by a ministry of Culture, as in Denmark, or Education, as in Norway. The idea of higher education is, nevertheless, relatively independent and responsible to induce students to other and more critical idea about State, government and profession.

The espoused curriculum

All the more interesting is it to note that the strongest expressed aim in the curricular texts is the desire to teach students “to tell stories”. The art of storytelling is considered the heart of the matter in filmmaking, and the professional value is given to how this is performed, via the variety of genres. For the case of the Danish Film School, Philipsen describe this fixation of

“the story” as stemming from Danish avantgarde-academics and artists in the late -60-ies, most notably Mogens Rukov, who brought ideas from linguistics and the presumption of the “natural story” into the theorizing about film-making (2005). Offerings from theory of literature about narration, storytelling, about dramaturgy and the strive for developing original approaches to storytelling gave way to the new “Danish wave” of filmmaking. The presumption that human beings conceive of the world in narratives, and that the ambition of filmmaking should be to identify and reveal the stories that exist, lead to a minimalist approach: to seek the stories through simple technologies, and through fixed rules about how to document the stories in sound and vision. Producing short stories, with strong ramifications, under constraints of time, equipment and collaborators, with shifting relations to the other roles in filmmaking is considered a hallmark of the Danish Film School. These principles are also strongly supported by the present regime of the Norwegian Film School. Although students are recruited to specialized studies of screen writing, sound, editing, production design, producing etc. the idea is that all persons involved contribute to the production of the artistic material.

In the Norwegian TV-school we found that the set-up in the weekly plans are very detailed and prescribed. On the face of it, teaching seems to be planned well, and with long periods of independent work for students. Also here is the group as a collaborative entity in focus, and every sequence of making productions is followed up with supervision and guidance. Although not expressed in the same ideological manner, sequences, pace and rhythm of work, the going back and forth between planning and outlining ideas to pre-production, filming, editing, screening, feedback from fellow students as well as tutors, revision and then completing a production, seem to be quite similar to those of the respective film-schools. One distinct difference is that the TV-school has a very close cooperation with production companies. While the Film-schools to a large extent keep their students in-door over the three (HiL) or four (DFS) years and only send selected productions to internal competitions on student festivals etc., the TV-school involves their student in actual productions from early on. The teachers express a huge belief on letting students try their ideas out, not only in a secluded practice, but in high stakes contexts. In recent years, streaming video via the Internet provides an arena for publicising that is both public and can be watched by many, and is much used. But they also produce in cooperation with national broadcasters, such as NRK and TV2, and individual production companies. This orientation towards the “real world” corresponds well with their ideas of creating innovative and robust students for the profession. The dean of the TV-School claims that their school is the best in the country in this respect, and that the relation to the profession is quite seamless.

Learning by doing?

In our reading about film education, there are very few references to educational theory, or if they occur, they do so in a rather erratic or naïve form. The ideas we identify in the written and orally presented descriptions of how teaching goes on – as well as those we observed, quite resembles what Young has called “the project method” (Petrie 2010b, p. 312), which most educators adhere to the American pragmatists and educators Kilpatrick and Dewey of the first

half of the 20th century (Knoll 1997). The slogan “learning by doing” is often used to describe the method of defining a problem, finding information, planning an action, performing relevant acts, collecting information about the process and then reflecting on the outcomes. The method is generally described in many ways and with certain specificity, relevant to the educational setting. In law education, in the US predominantly, it has been coined as the “case method” (Shulman 2007), or in medical education as “problem based learning” (nursing, MD, radiology and many more). It is generally associated with politically radical methods of teaching and learning in higher education, which came to prominence during the student revolt (1960-70 in northern Europe). John Dewey and the project method was one of many inspirations, along with reform pedagogy from European educators like Pestalozzi and Rousseau, from Soviet influences (like Anton Semjonowitsch Makarenko), as well as adult education (Malcolm Knowles, David Kolb) and critical theorists and practitioners like Paolo Freire, Oscar Negt and Alexander Kluge.

While all studies seem to be well founded in the realm of practice, the importance Dewey gave to not only “doing” but also “reflecting” is well worth using in this context. The balance between providing a technically proficient background in order to produce significant artistic or academic material is therefore a topic much debated in the institutions. Generally, they agree that technical proficiency without clue of the purpose is useless, and much emphasis is given to assist students to reflect on their product and process. The aim is to invoke ideas about how the material could have been presented differently. Teachers often talk about how “the good teacher” solve this task, and how crucial this part of teaching is to raise the quality of students’ work. Students also distinguish teachers who make them reflect without “loosing face” or feeling inferior to “the master”. Having observed one colleague who proved to be brilliant in this respect, former dean Malte Wadman got the idea to provide the teachers with a textbook on how to teach, a task assigned to professor Dick Ross. The work, called “training the trainers” is a collection of ideas, descriptions, cases and examples of how to provide good teaching in film schools.

Conclusion

*Art for art's sake
Money for God's sake (10cc)*

The three institutions we have had a closer look at, educate students for making films and moving images for TV, cinema, Internet and - in the future - also games. We see they work under three different contexts, because in Denmark producing TV is considered, along with producing short and feature movies, a task best undertaken under the Royal Ministry of Culture. The school is a definite art school, and the studies are equally well funded. In Norway, TV-studies is considered a subject belonging til professional studies, and is organised under the Ministry

of Education. Film-education is also a study administered by the Ministry of Education, but is classified as an art school, with a much better funding.

The relationship between the practical and theoretical is troubled. There is, to our judgement, an inherent anti-intellectualism in film schools, which stems from both the financing system, as well as a conception of theory as pointless and irrelevant. Both students and teachers in the field have strong visual or auditive interests, and probably less talent for reading. The principal of the Danish Film School uttered that there is probably a number of people in the industry who have problems reading at all, and suggested that their lack of interest in scholarly work coincides with an audiovisually inclined style of learning. A number of students admitted to film schools also have a theoretical background from previous academic training: media studies, language, economics or other types of higher education.

All the persons we interviewed supported the idea that learning the professional handcraft of filmmaking is essential, and they would feel embarrassed if they sent poorly trained students to the market. The basic qualifications need to be in place. They continually discuss how to train the students to combine practical and social skills in a way that they seem competent and useful for the industry. This requires a flexible attitude towards persons and settings, experience of work from a variety of settings, mastery of genres, willingness to experiment etc. They all seem to be confident that although most students reach this level of competence, there is a higher level of creativity, which only few students will reach into.

The lack of explicit texts about the purpose of the film school is an interesting finding. One might interpret this as an expression of how the aims are taken for granted. The curricular texts also give few hints as to which intellectual traits and qualifications are needed to give students a context for locating and understanding their own creative practice. The Norwegian TV-school has a background of educating critical documentarists and is persistent in upholding this tradition. The Norwegian Film School and the Danish Film School are positioned in an art discourse, in which producing “art” represent the highest peak of their performance, with little or no references to what art means or represents in society.

Instead of teaching in the formal sense, e.g. lecturing, teaching is performed by producing films from the very first days on. The three institutions we have looked into, have devised methods for giving students the mastery of filmmaking in quite similar ways. There is a strong emphasis on “storytelling”, and they are anxious to prepare students to work in shifting contexts, with appreciation of all the roles of filmmaking. One might interpret this as an expression of a socialist/social democratic ethos, of the equality of everyone who takes part, and where the creative or artistic product is a result of collaborative efforts, rather than something developing from one person, the auteur, alone. One cannot fail to see how this reflects professional rather than artistic ideas (Mortveit 2010).

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