THE EDUCATION OF THE FILMMAKER IN AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THE AMERICAS

EDITED BY
METTE HJORT

The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas

GLOBAL CINEMA

Edited by Katarzyna Marciniak, Anikó Imre, and Áine O'Healy

The **Global Cinema** series publishes innovative scholarship on the transnational themes, industries, economies, and aesthetic elements that increasingly connect cinemas around the world. It promotes theoretically transformative and politically challenging projects that rethink film studies from cross-cultural, comparative perspectives, bringing into focus forms of cinematic production that resist nationalist or hegemonic frameworks. Rather than aiming at comprehensive geographical coverage, it foregrounds transnational interconnections in the production, distribution, exhibition, study, and teaching of film. Dedicated to global aspects of cinema, this pioneering series combines original perspectives and new methodological paths with accessibility and coverage. Both "global" and "cinema" remain open to a range of approaches and interpretations, new and traditional. Books published in the series sustain a specific concern with the medium of cinema but do not defensively protect the boundaries of film studies, recognizing that film exists in a converging media environment. The series emphasizes a historically expanded rather than an exclusively presentist notion of globalization; it is mindful of repositioning "the global" away from a US-centric/Eurocentric grid, and remains critical of celebratory notions of "globalizing film studies."

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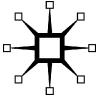Edited by Mette Hjort

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For Gaston Kaboré

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The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas is dedicated to Burkinabé filmmaker and founder of the alternative film school Imagine in Ouagadougou, Gaston Kaboré.

Introduction: More than Film School—Why the Full Spectrum of Practice-Based Film Education Warrants Attention

Mette Hjort

Adapting Simone de Beauvoir's well-known phrase, one is not born a film-maker but becomes one.[1] To ask about the nature of practice-based film education as it has emerged around the globe and exists today, is to begin to understand how filmmakers become filmmakers. Inquiry along these lines sheds light on the process not only of becoming a filmmaker, but also a particular *kind* of filmmaker, where "kind" encompasses skills, as well as narrative and aesthetic priorities, preferred modes of practice, and understandings of what the ideal roles and *contributions* of film would be.

A few suggestive anecdotes from the field of film practice help to set the stage for a more scholarly account of the questions, commitments, and aspirations that are behind *The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia* (vol. 1) and *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* (vol. 2). Evoking both a desire to make meaningful, authentic choices, and questions having to do with what counts as a genuine justification for the costs of filmmaking (in terms of money, effort, and time), Danish director Lone Scherfig reflects as follows on the process of selecting her next script from among an array of possible choices: "I'm quite marked by an experience that I've had twice, uncannily. My father died while I was shooting *Italian for Beginners* and my mother died while I was shooting *An Education*. When I watch these films I can't help but ask myself whether they were worth it. When you start to look at the whole film-making process with those eyes, there are really a lot of scripts that life is simply too short for."[2]

In an exchange about *The Video Diary of Ricardo Lopez* (2000), documentary filmmaker Sami Saif—who, like Scherfig, is a graduate of the National Film School of Denmark—foregrounds his commitment to taking his responsibilities as a filmmaker seriously. Saif's film is based on Lopez's webcam recordings, which had been sensationalized by the media, inasmuch as they captured his suicide shortly after having mailed a bomb to Icelandic singer Björk with whom

he was obsessed. In response to a question as to why *The Video Diary of Ricardo Lopez* remains difficult to get hold of, and why the filmmaker prefers to be present when audiences watch the film, Saif says: "I have a lot at stake in being able to stand by what I've done with the material. I want to be able to explain why I edited it the way I did, why I saw it as important to make the film, and how I understand Ricardo Lopez. My desire to engage very directly with the audiences who see the film also has to do with the fact that Ricardo Lopez is dead.…I want to be there when people see the film, because there are all sorts of things about Ricardo Lopez on the internet. I like to be able to talk to people about what it is they've actually seen."[3]

One last anecdote, this one referring to developments in Hong Kong, on the Chinese mainland, and in South Korea, suffices to draw attention to filmmakers as agents of moral deliberation with significant choices to make that extend well beyond the punctual craft-based decisions required by any given filmmaking project. The year 2012 saw well-known sixth-generation Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke "installed as the dean of the Busan International Film Festival's Asian Film Academy (AFA)." Called on to describe the experience of working with 23 young filmmakers in workshops and seminars spanning 18 days, Jia spoke of his commitment to "mak[ing] honest films and films that will make people think." Jia sees his values as reflected not only in his films, but also in his efforts to mentor young filmmakers through his company Xstream Pictures. His ongoing efforts to establish a funding program called The Renaissance Foundation in Hong Kong, in collaboration with "fellow filmmaker Pang Ho-cheung, author Han Han, and musician Anthony Wong Yiu-ming," are similarly an expression of an understanding of the film practitioner as an agent of moral choice. As Jia puts it, "It is all about giving young artists the freedom to create. Through that comes honesty—and artists should be honest."[4]

Over time, what emerges through filmmakers' professionally relevant and publicly available actions—by no means limited to the actual making of films—are patterns of choice that are indicative of certain values and thus amenable to assessment in broadly ethical terms. That is, filmmakers have decisions to make, not only about whether a given story (if the film is a narrative one) is really worth telling and warrants the time, cost, and effort needed to articulate it in moving images, but also about how to treat the actors and other practitioners with whom they work, about the environmental costs of their filmmaking practices, the possible ideological implications of their work, and the terms in which they choose to discourse about it. Examples of filmmakers having made poor choices are not at all difficult to find. Titles that come to mind include Danny Boyle's *The Beach* (2000), James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997), and fifth-generation Chinese filmmaker Chen Kaige's *The Promise* (2005), all three of them for reasons having to do with a failure to take the environmental duties of filmmakers seriously. Duties, after all, may be moral in nature rather than strictly legal, requiring considered action even in the absence of (enforcement of) rigorous laws preventing the remodeling of beaches in the Phi Phi Islands National Park in Thailand (*The Beach*), the chlorination of sea water in Baja California (*Titanic*), or the killing of trees in the gardens of Yuanmingyuan, China (*The Promise*).[5]

Filmmaking is usually an intensely collaborative process, making it difficult to draw firm inferences about a specific practitioner's values, and equally so to assign responsibility for decisions made and for the consequences arising from them. Furthermore, every instance of filmmaking takes place within a series of larger, interconnected contexts, in environments, for example, shaped by the ethos of a studio as it interacts with the constraints and opportunities of a larger (economic) system. Thus Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller see "the wider background to the ecologically destructive filmmaking" evoked above as being "the message of economic structural adjustment peddled by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation, and the sovereign states that dominate them."[6] Yet, acknowledging the interconnected ways of decision making in the world of film, and the constraints, tendencies, and enticements of larger forces, by no means obviates the need to ask questions about the values of filmmakers—as individuals, but also, just as pertinently, as members of communities where common knowledge and shared practices reflect ways of being in the world through filmmaking.

Burkinabé filmmaker Gaston Kaboré, whose alternative film school IMAGINE in Ouagadougou provides film training for aspiring filmmakers from across francophone Africa, is clearly motivated by a conception of what film is all about that is quite different from that of, say, James Cameron. As Burkinabé actor Serge Yanogo puts it in *IMAGINE FESPACO Newsreel 3*, a 15-minute documentary produced through a training initiative involving filmmaker Rod Stoneman, director of the Huston School of Film & Digital Media in Galway, Ireland and Kaboré's alternative film school, "most films in Africa involve learning."[7] Yanogo, who had a leading role in Kaboré's award-winning *Wend Kuuni* (1983) was responding to a question put to him by a filmmaking student in the context of an outdoor, nighttime screening of the film, which the organization Cinémobile had mounted in a village distant from Ouagadougou and its many well-frequented cinemas. Yanogo's point is borne out by a film such as Ousmane Sembène's *Moolaadé* (2004), which takes a moving and critical look at female genital mutilation. In Samba Gadjigo's documentary entitled *The Making of Moolaadé* (2006), Sembène identifies a desire to have *Moolaadé* function as a vehicle of enlightenment and emancipation in remote villages throughout Senegal and elsewhere in Africa.

A conception of both fiction and nonfiction filmmaking as contributing to authentic cultural memory and to the causes of justice and fairness was like a clear red thread running through conference, exhibition, and screening activities taking place at Kaboré's alternative school during the 2011 edition of FESPACO. One evening, for example, the newly whitewashed wall in the school's courtyard became the screen for animated shorts produced by young Burkinabé children (in the context of training workshops conducted by Golda Sellam from Cinélink and Jean-Luc Slock from the Liège-based Caméra-etc). A feature common to all of the films, which were being screened with the children and their families present, was that they drew on indigenous traditions of artistry—the topic of a fascinating poster exhibition at Kaboré's IMAGINE, which was also hosting a related conference focusing on ancestral myths—and highlighted social issues from

everyday life. *Leila*, a five-minute film produced by eight Burkinabé children, drew attention to the problem of child labor through the figure of a "cut-out" girl who becomes a donkey when the new family in which she finds herself exploits her. The central and clearly educational question asked by the film is: "What has to happen for the donkey to become a girl again?"

But are the values and commitments of a Kaboré or a Sembène, as these find articulation in cinematic narratives or training initiatives aimed at capacity building on the African continent, as the case may be, really connected, in any nontrivial sense, to the paths through which these filmmakers became film practitioners? Do they reflect a specific kind of practical induction into the world of film? Kaboré was trained at the École supérieure d'études cinématographiques (ESEC) in Paris, and graduated with a degree in film production in 1976. Sembène, who was largely self-taught as a filmmaker, spent one year at the Gyorki Film Studio in Moscow, having failed to get into filmmaking programs in France and elsewhere:

> I learned how to make films in the Soviet Union. I didn't have a choice. To get training, I initially turned to people in France, notably Jean Rouch. I had written to America, Canada, etc. and was rejected everywhere without being given a chance. Then I got in touch with Georg Sadoul and Louis Daquin. They suggested the Soviet Union. I spent a year there (1961–1962). It must be said, before I went there I had my ideas and my ideology. I'd been a unionist since 1950. I was very happy that it was eventually the Soviet Union that offered me a scholarship.[8]

So, at one level the paths were very different, in terms of the geography of the training, its institutional environment, and its wider political contexts and social systems. What these filmmakers do share, however, is the experience, among other things, of having had to leave Africa, whether for western or for eastern Europe, in order to achieve the training they saw as necessary. Further common ground is to be found in the experience of making films in sub-Saharan Africa without adequate indigenous personnel to draw on, and in a shared understanding of film as a medium well suited to fostering change in societies where oral traditions, as compared with the written word, are strong.

There can be no one-to-one correspondence between the profile of a given film school on the one hand, and the priorities and values of its graduates on the other. After all, film schools are subject to the full range of complexities that characterize institutional life. Among other things, they are in constant evolution, be it as a result of changes in leadership, incorporation into educational parameters such as the Bologna Accord (Anna Stenport, vol. 1) or the sorts of major historical changes that have affected key institutions in a once divided Germany (Barton Byg and Evan Torner, vol. 1). And then, of course, there is the not-so-small matter of human psychology, which, thankfully enough, can be counted on to generate differences that are anything but trivial. If being a filmmaker is the outcome of a process of becoming, factors shaping that process are not merely to be sought in the institutional landscape of film schools and practice-based training programs. Also, filmmakers may choose, temporarily or over the longer run, to *resist* the training they receive,

including the values that are ultimately driving it. It would be wrong to suggest that Eva Novrup's interview with Phie Ambo in *The Danish Directors 3: Dialogues on the New Danish Documentary Cinema* shows that this award-winning documentary filmmaker has rejected the training she received through the National Film School of Denmark's well-known documentary program (discussed by Hjort with reference to initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa, this volume). At the same time, it is fair to note that Ambo understands herself as having asserted her strong desire at a certain point to counter aspects of her training:

> After film school, I had a real need to undertake a process of "de-film-schoolification." I wanted to do something that involved shooting from the hip....I had a strong desire to put aside all that learning I'd acquired, all those sophisticated ways of articulating things, so that I could just follow my instincts and go for what seemed like fun. When I look at the film now, I can easily identify all the things I'd learnt and that I'd started to do almost automatically, without even being aware of it, the things that had become second nature. But [making] *Gambler* [about filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn, 2006] was about a desire to get film to flow through me again, instead of having constantly to stop the creative elevator for a bunch of obligatory consultations with consultant A, B, and C.[9]

That the question of *values* is important in the context of a consideration of film schools and, arguably by extension, the fuller field of practice-based film education, is clearly suggested by the topic chosen for a recent conference organized by the International Association of Film and TV Schools (CILECT). The organization meets biannually for an "Extraordinary General Assembly," and in 2011 the theme for the conference, which was hosted by the Film and TV Academy of the Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague, was "Exploring the Future of Film and Media Education." Subthemes providing further foci for discussion were: "the fundamental *values* [emphasis added] of film education"; "benchmarking and evaluation"; and "the impact of internationalization."[10] CILECT "was founded in Cannes in 1955 with the intention of stimulating a dialogue among film schools in the deeply divided world of those times. Its membership was drawn from eight countries: Czechoslovakia (presently the Czech Republic), France, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Spain, the USA, and the USSR (presently Russia). By the year 2012, CILECT had grown to include 159 institutions from 60 countries on five continents. A significant number of the world's leading film and television makers are graduates of member schools." CILECT sees itself as "deeply committed to raising and maintaining the standards of teaching and learning in its member schools, and to exploring the potentials of new technologies for education, information and entertainment." What is more, the organization envisages "a new level of international cooperation" made possible by "the relaxation of international tensions among the great powers, the diminishing of national frontiers and the emergence of new technologies."[11] Membership in CILECT involves meeting strict criteria, as verified in a vetting process. Unsurprisingly, membership is a coveted badge of honor in a world where education is increasingly globalized, with student recruitment often a matter of intense competition

on national, regional, and global levels. What membership potentially means is clearly suggested in a press release featured on the University of Auckland's website, which makes reference to "elite CILECT membership" having been secured by the Department of Film, Television, and Media Studies' Screen Production Program, following an "exhaustive audit" and a vote among existing members.[12]

There are of course many reasons for studying film schools, some of them having little or nothing to do with the *values* that are constitutive of what I have called "practitioner's agency."[13] At this stage in the argument, the issue is not one of determining what the full range of research questions looks like once practice-based film education is seen as warranting careful scrutiny through various lenses, including historical, political, ethical, industrial, and institutional ones. Rather, what must first be settled is the question of institutional scope. What kinds of institutions merit attention? Of the relevant kinds, which specific instantiations of the more general types are particularly worthy of study? What sorts of principles might legitimately be invoked to inform decisions regarding inclusions and exclusions when answering both these questions? Let it be clear: it is my firm belief that the questions being asked here have many possible legitimate answers. The answers to which I am committed, and that are reflected in the design of *The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia* and *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, are shaped by a range of factors, including, most importantly, a dogged interest in small nations and their film cultures (including minor cinemas and their various politics of recognition),[14] and in the ways in which systemic constraints are transformed, through practitioners' agency, into creative opportunities and the conditions needed for an entire milieu to thrive. Another factor, relevant in terms of the global reach of this two-volume project published in the "Global Cinema" series, is my own personal and institutional history, which has offered affiliations, networks, and solidarities linked to practitioners, researchers, institutions, and sites of training in Africa, Canada, Denmark, and HK China (where I have lived as a non-local academic for well over a decade).

We have the possibility as film scholars, or as practitioner-scholars (which many of the contributors to the "Education of the Filmmaker" project are) to affirm certain kinds of initiatives, institutions, and organizations, and to bring awareness of valuable and effective practices to a wider audience, including researchers in the first instance, but also filmmakers, policy makers, and practitioners working in sites of training located at a considerable cultural and geographical remove from those under discussion. We have the opportunity to learn from practices that are innovative, hopeful, and in some cases at least partially transferable. Even the discovery of challenges may be promising, for if these turn out to be a matter of shared problems, then they provide a potential basis for new alliances and partnerships.

But what should the focus be, and is it enough to focus on film schools? My response to the second part of this question is emphatically negative, and this, in turn, helps to define the scope of the research efforts contributing to the present project.

Practice-Based Film Education: Sites, Types, and Systems

Anyone interested in investigating (among other things) the impact that practice-based film education has on the values and practices of filmmakers, and thus on the communities and industries in which they work, is faced with a vast array of stand-alone conservatoire style or industry-oriented film schools, as well as professional programs delivered within the context of universities, from which to choose. A US-based Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation publication entitled *Television, Film and Digital Media Programs*, which presents itself as a guide for anyone "hoping for a life in the competitive world of TV, film, and the fast-growing field of digital media,"[15] describes "*556 Outstanding Programs at Top Colleges and Universities Across the Nation*," as the book's subtitle indicates. And then there are the 159 CILECT members, drawn from 60 countries, which further expands the potential field, although paradoxically enough, by no means sufficiently. Indeed, it is the premise of the current project that crucial practice-based initiatives are being run through institutional arrangements that have little of the institutional robustness that is a feature of the CILECT schools, and thus the scope of analysis extends well beyond this network.

   With reference to the first, US-based context of analysis suggested by the above guide, the point to be made here is that the amount of space given to institutions serving as direct feeders of the US film industry has been deliberately limited, in keeping with the aims of the "Global Cinema" series, among others. *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* includes a section on "The Americas," but this has but one chapter devoted to schools in the USA (Toby Miller). Discussion of US schools is, however, also pursued in another section, devoted to the Middle East, where Hamid Naficy (this volume) draws out the ambivalences, values, challenges, and opportunities arising from American branch campus initiatives in such places as Qatar. Like many of the contributors to the "Education of the Filmmaker" project, Naficy is able to speak from first-hand experience of the institutional arrangement about which he writes, having been a key player in Northwestern University's development of programs to be delivered through a branch campus located in Education City (alongside other American, British, and French branch campuses) in Doha, Qatar.

   Included in "The Americas" section are the results of research focusing on a range of initiatives that are neither US-based nor (likely ever to be) captured by the reach of CILECT's network: George Yúdice's chapter focusing on community-based initiatives aimed at promoting audiovisual literacy in Brazil (Central Única das Favelas / Central Union of Slums and The Escola Livre de Cinema / Free Cinema School) and Uruguay (Usinas Culturales / Cultural Factories); Scott MacKenzie's account of the process-oriented Independent Imaging Retreat or Film Farm school established by Canadian filmmaker Philip Hoffman (who is also on the faculty of York University in Toronto); Christopher Meir's discussion of the energies and aspirations driving efforts to build practice-based film cultures in the anglophone Caribbean; and Armida de la Garza's analysis of the contributions made by the Mexico-based civil association known as La Matatena

to the area of practice-based film education for young children, and through this, to society more generally.

As for the second possible context of analysis—that provided by the CILECT network—it should be noted that some of the case studies presented in the two-volume "Education of the Filmmaker" project provide in-depth analysis of institutions linked to CILECT. Toby Miller's contribution, entitled "Goodbye to Film School: Please Close the Door on Your Way Out" (this volume), takes a critical look at well-established American film schools that are part of the CILECT network. The School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance in Cape Town, South Africa (AFDA) figures centrally in the chapter entitled "Audience Response in Film Education," by Anton Basson, Keyan Tomaselli, and Gerda Dullaart (this volume). In Ben Goldsmith and Tom O'Regan's chapter (vol. 1), the histories, profiles, and current roles of Australian members of CILECT (Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, the Australian Film, Television and Radio School in Sydney, and the Griffith Film School in Brisbane) are discussed, as part of a more wide-ranging analysis of the ecology of practice-based film education in Australia. In Nicolas Balaisis's chapter entitled "The School for Every World: Internationalism and Residual Socialism at EICTV," the transnational and ethical commitments of the Cuban CILECT member, Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV, are considered in light of changing historical circumstances (this volume). My own chapter, also in this volume, looks at the one Danish member of CILECT, the National Film School of Denmark, and, more specifically at its efforts, through partnerships with NGOs in the Middle East and North Africa and institution building in Jordan and Lebanon, to make transnational networking an integral part of the school's documentary programs.

References to the work of Yúdice, MacKenzie, Meir, and de la Garza help to evoke what is at stake in expanding the context of discussion beyond the institutional models figuring centrally in the CILECT network. It is not just a matter of trying to be comprehensive by bringing a fuller spectrum of *models* of film education into play, but of trying to ensure that models that are clearly fueled by values having to do with inclusion, fairness, sustainability, and authentic expression are given the attention they deserve. Inasmuch as many of these models are prompted by a clear sense of social, creative, or political needs, they may rely on what Renata Šukaitytė (vol. 1), referring to the specific context of Lithuania within the Baltic region and as a former Republic of the Soviet Union, calls tactical reasoning. One of the defining features of the relevant type of rationality is the awareness of challenges, and of the need for constant adjustment and flexibility, and this in connection with terrain that is anything but stable or secure. Making references to a host of serious social problems in Nigeria, Osakue Omoera makes the case for investing in film training programs, as a means of creating alternative paths for youths otherwise easily absorbed into lives of crime (this volume). Charlie Cauchi (vol. 1) takes up issues arising from the absence of a well-developed system of practice-based film education in Malta, and in the course of her discussion the significance of various forms of self-teaching and of amateur societies becomes clear. Yoshi Tezuka's chapter (vol. 1) looks closely at the role that informal communities of filmmakers in Japan have played in developing

filmmakers' skills, and thus in keeping Japanese filmmaking alive, following the collapse of the studio system in the 1970s. Moinak Biswas (vol. 1) discusses the Media Lab that was established at Jadavpur University in Calcutta, as part of a Digital Humanities initiative that aimed to make space for critical and alternative forms of image production in a landscape almost entirely dominated by industry norms and industrial conceptions of skill. Interestingly, the broader historical perspective that Biswas provides is one that links current developments at the Media Lab to the type of education that Satyajit Ray received in India in the pre-film-school days of the 1940s.

In addition to the issue of geography or location (and what these mean within the larger scheme of things), and that of models, there are *systemic dynamics* to consider. Goldsmith and O'Regan's chapter (vol. 1) is helpful in drawing attention to the benefits of situating the different models of practice-based film education existing within a given national context in relation to each other. The premise, clearly, is that while it is important to achieve clarity about the various types on offer—about their modes of operation, for example—it is equally important to grasp their respective roles within a larger *system*. Is the dynamic governing interaction among the different models one that agents contributing to their operation find productive or are there tensions or outright conflicts within the system, some of them the product of competing values? This is the sort of question that is clearly well worth asking, and not only in the context of Australia.

If we return to Gaston Kaboré, for example, we may note that there are two main sources of film training in Burkina Faso, both of them with a regional role to play in sub-Saharan, francophone Africa: IMAGINE and ISIS (Institut Supérieur de l'Image et du Son). There is a clear division of labor between these two schools, with IMAGINE providing short courses within the context of an alternative and often somewhat precarious set up that contrasts with the model of a well-developed stand-alone school with a full range of programs, all of them accredited and funded. ISIS, which is funded by the European Union, Africalia, and Stockholms Dramatiska Högskola (Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts), is the one Burkinabé member of CILECT. IMAGINE has been dependent on short-term sources of funding, but also on Kaboré's own film earnings and support provided by his wife Edith Ouedraogo, who is a pharmacist. Sources of external funding include the "Danfaso Culture and Development Programme for Burkina Faso" and a grant from the Center for Kultur og Udvikling / CKU (Danish Center for Culture and Development / DCCD).[16] The international networks into which ISIS and IMAGINE tap, as instantiations of two quite different models of practice-based film education, are to some extent shared, with Madeleine Bergh from Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts participating in collaborative initiatives with ISIS during FESPACO 2011, and also eager to be involved in the seminar that Rod Stoneman, Kaboré, and Hjort mounted at IMAGINE, entitled "L'Enseignment et la formation professionnelle au cinéma en Afrique" ("Film Training and Education in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities"). Motandi Ouoba, who has played a central role at IMAGINE, also offered film training courses at ISIS, before going on to mount an independent training initiative focused on children. Teaching at ISIS provided a source of income for Ouoba, but

also made him an important human link between two quite different sites, and indeed models, of training, both of which contribute to crucial capacity building in West Africa. Rod Stoneman has played a significant role in the context of African filmmaking, initially as a commissioning editor for Channel 4 and, over the last ten years or so, through his involvement in workshops at IMAGINE. Drawing on his own experiences with capacity building through short courses at IMAGINE, and also in the Maghreb, Vietnam, and the Middle East, Stoneman's chapter (this volume) provides insight into the workings of a model of film training that has strong elements of the transnational and the peripatetic.

Alia Arasoughly's chapter (this volume), focusing on Palestinian Shashat (which she founded), but also on the features of various university-based programs in Palestine that partly provide the rationale for this NGO's existence, helps to drive home the point that if the full significance of a given practice-based institution, university program, or NGO-driven framework is to be grasped, it must to some extent be understood in relation to the larger system in which it operates. Arasoughly's account of Shashat's pioneering work in Palestine strongly suggests that the success of practice-based film education often depends on the energies and vision of a practitioner whose milieu-building efforts are decisive. It also shows that while peripatetic training initiatives may be valuable in many respects, they can hardly be seen as problem-free.

Entitled "Film Schools in the PRC: Professionalization and its Discontents," Yomi Braester's chapter (vol. 1) is finely attuned to the dynamics between different kinds of practice-based film education in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Braester provides a contrastive explication of the models underwriting the conservatoire-style Beijing Film Academy (BFA) on the one hand, and Wu Wenguang's Caochangdi Station and the Li Xianting Film School, both "unaccredited institutions [that] have repeatedly incurred the authorities' disapproval," on the other. Braester's point, which can be adapted and extended to the larger collective project to which his chapter contributes, is this: "The juxtaposition of these extremes is not intended to condemn one or to show the weaknesses of the other, but rather to foreground the unique set of constraints within which each operates."

Entitled "'We Train *Auteurs*': Education, De-centralization, Regional Funding and Niche Marketing in the New Swedish Cinema," Anna Stenport's analysis (vol. 1) of recent developments in the greater Gothenburg region of western Gotland in Sweden draws attention to the question of how a well-functioning system of film education, consisting of mutually supporting elements, actually evolves. Clearly the answer given to any question concerning the evolution of an entire ecology of film education will vary from case to case, just as it seems unlikely that any one set of causes and causal relations could be identified as the preferred and somehow normative one. The Swedish example discussed by Stenport is especially interesting, however, because of the apparently emergentist nature of its processes, with agents coordinating and calibrating their activities without reference to any overarching blueprint or set of directives. Duncan Petrie's account (vol. 1) of initiatives taken toward the establishment of a Scottish film school, and of the collaboration between Napier University and Edinburgh College of Art, which

has yielded a well-functioning Scottish Screen Academy, sheds further light on the conditions and actions through which a larger system of film education evolves. Entitled "Sites of Initiation: Film Training Programs at Film Festivals," Marijke de Valck's chapter (vol. 1) adds another dimension to the discussion of the causal factors driving change and innovation within a larger system. With access to various interlinked film industries becoming ever more competitive, film festivals, de Valck argues, have emerged as sites where networking and training combine in ways that are critical to the success of aspiring filmmakers, including those who have graduated from well-established film schools.

The ecology of practice-based film education may be balanced or imbalanced, finely differentiated, or dominated by a single model, among other possibilities. In some cases the idea of a system of film training consisting of well-differentiated and mutually supportive constitutive elements is mostly an aspirational one. Indeed, there are contexts where the lacks are so substantial that the nation or subnational entity in question becomes dependent, among other things, on the efforts of mutually supportive amateurs, on the transnational reach of robustly developed institutions situated elsewhere, and on the sorts of boundary-crossing partnerships and solidarities that make collaborative projects possible, and through them, some kind of development of a milieu.

Small Nations and Transnational Affinities

The design of *The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia* and *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* is necessarily a reflection of the editor's interests and even research trajectory. As a film scholar, my research has been intensely focused on small nations, especially Denmark. The study of small nations, including debates about what counts as a small nation, is an entire field of its own. Suffice it to say that there are several measures of small nationhood, including, as Miroslav Hroch has argued convincingly, rule by non-conationals over a significant period of time.[17] Other measures include a country's GDP, its population size, the reach of its national tongue, and so on.[18]

The aim in earlier projects has been to understand the specificity of the challenges that small nations face in their pursuit of filmmaking, and to identify the conditions that have allowed some small-nation contexts, most notably the Danish one, to thrive in a range of different ways. Motivating these pursuits was a desire to see whether partnerships built on affinities derived from small nationhood might help to trouble a world order that often placed large nations at the center of things, and small nations on the peripheries or margins. This same desire is evident in both of the "Education of the Filmmaker" volumes. In *The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia*, for example, Europe is evoked through the lenses that realities in Lithuania, Scotland, Sweden, Malta, Germany, and the European Union provide. And in the case of Germany, the only national or subnational context that does not match crucial criteria associated with small nationhood, much of the discussion concerns key institutions

in the former German Democratic Republic, which clearly did (having involved rule by non-conationals over a significant period of time). The discussion of China in the first of the two volumes brings official and alternative practices in the People's Republic of China into clear focus (Yomi Braester, vol. 1), and thereby the efficacy of various "minor" practices, to use Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's term. The complexity of practice-based film education in a Chinese context is further explored in a second chapter devoted to China in the post-Handover era. Evoking the contributions of Hong Kong Television Broadcasts Limited (HKTVB) up until the late 1980s, and the lacuna that its retreat from the field of training created, Stephen Chan (vol. 1) discusses the promise of such recent initiatives as the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society's Jockey Club Cine Academy. As a player in a "One Country, Two Systems" arrangement, and as a former British colony, Hong Kong, quite clearly, counts as a small nation following some of the most crucial measures of size.

Interest in practice-based film education is, quite simply, an inevitability given the concerns relating to small nations evoked above, as even the most cursory reference to various texts makes clear. The access to filmmakers that film scholars enjoy in small-nation contexts made possible the production, over a period of 15 years, of three interview books with directors: *The Danish Directors: Dialogues on a Contemporary National Cinema* (with Ib Bondebjerg); *The Danish Directors 2: Dialogues on the New Danish Fiction Cinema* (with Eva Jørholt and Eva Novrup Redvall); and *The Danish Directors 3: Dialogues on the New Danish Documentary Cinema* (with Bondebjerg and Redvall).[19] Together these books comprise 55 film directors' responses to research-oriented questions, including ones having to do with the sites of education and training through which the relevant practitioners entered the world of professional filmmaking. Whereas *The Danish Directors*, featuring dialogues with mostly an older generation of filmmakers, underscores the significance of "learning by doing," of mentoring within various production companies, and of training afforded by such "foreign" institutions as FAMU, *The Danish Directors 2* and *The Danish Directors 3* draw attention to the nature of the training offered at the National Film School of Denmark, an institution that must be central to any attempt to explain the various forms of success that Danish cinema has enjoyed for about two decades. Yet, what also emerges from these conversations is the significance of the Video Workshop in Haderslev, the Film Workshop in Copenhagen, the European Film College in Ebeltoft, and the Copenhagen Film and Photo School Rampen—in short, the workings of a rich and diversified landscape of practice-based film education. A section entitled "Learning to become a filmmaker in Denmark: The National Film School of Denmark, Super 16 and the Film Workshop in Copenhagen," in *The Danish Directors 2*, provides a summary account of this landscape, as does the chapter "Denmark," in *The Cinema of Small Nations* (co-edited with Duncan Petrie).[20] In "Denmark" the National Film School of Denmark's emphasis on teamwork, interdisciplinarity, and creativity under constraint are seen as having worked in synergy with effective cultural policy and exceptional artistic leadership in one of the milieus of actual film production to produce unusual conditions of viability for the cinema of a small Nordic nation.

The idea of small nations coming together in solidarity based on affinities having to do with shared culture, values, problems, or aspirations, was explored through analysis of the so-called Advance Party Project. A rule-governed project, which built on the efficacies of the Dogma 95 initiative, Advance Party was initially a three-film effort involving a partnership between filmmaker Lars von Trier and his Copenhagen-based Zentropa Film Town on the one hand, and Gillian Berrie and her production company Sigma Films, based in Govan Town Hall, Glasgow on the other. The point of the rules, and, indeed of the partnership, as expressly stated by Berrie in an interview, was to deliver capacity building and mentoring that was seen as sorely lacking on the Scottish scene. "Affinitive and Milieu-Building Transnationalism: The Advance Party Project" explores the implications of an initiative that was designed to link novices to established filmmakers, for mentorship purposes.[21] Attention, more specifically, is called to the role that innovative film projects have to play, as a vehicle for the articulation of policy-related ideas, in contexts where institutional development pertaining to film training falls short of the aspirations of practitioners.

In 2009, Duncan Petrie hosted "The University of York Film Schools Seminar," which became an opportunity to continue collaboration initiated through *The Cinema of Small Nations*. The seminar included three sessions, one focusing on the historical significance of film schools, a second on film schools today (and especially the international dimension of film education), and a third on education and training. As one of the three partners in this event, Hjort chaired the third session and contributed a paper entitled "Official and Unofficial Film Schools" to the second session. This paper explored the differences and relation between the well-established National Film School of Denmark and the alternative film school Super 16 that was created by a number of applicants who had sought, but failed to gain admission to the official, national school. The point was to expand the discussion beyond a certain institutional model, and to draw attention to what can be achieved in the area of practice-based film education through what I call "gift culture," the gifts—in the case of Super 16—being a matter, among other things, of professionals teaching more or less for free and facilities being lent to the unofficial (but not unstructured) school by the production company Nordisk.

Designed by Petrie and Rod Stoneman, the program for the Film Schools Seminar brought key figures such as Ben Gibson (director of the London Film School) and Igor Korsic (CILECT) into the conversation about film schools, as efforts were made to identify the crucial areas for research.[22] The Film Schools Seminar led to Hjort joining Stoneman at Gaston Kaboré's alternative film school, IMAGINE, in February 2011. Stoneman was conducting a ten-day, practice-based workshop for students at IMAGINE (some of them from Burkina Faso, others from other West African countries). The workshop produced three "Newsreels" focusing on FESPACO, all of which were shown on TV in Burkina Faso and in the cinemas ahead of the FESPACO features. Serving as the team's translator and subtitler, Hjort worked alongside the student editors in the IMAGINE film studio. Stoneman, Kaboré, and Hjort also organized the seminar referred to above, "Film Training and Education in Africa: Challenges

and Opportunities," with speakers including Dorothee Wenner (director of the Berlinale Talent Campus), Golda Sellam (Cinélink), Daphne Ouoba (Cinomade), Motandi Ouoba (IMAGINE), Don Boyd (filmmaker, producer, and governor of the London Film School), and June Givanni (programmer and jury coordinator, Africa International Film Festival), among others.

What has emerged through these various interactions, friendships, and collaborations is a loosely connected series of research projects that will work together, we hope, to develop practice-based film education as a vital and innovative field of research. Petrie's interest in the history of conservatoire-style film schools has yielded key articles, namely: "Theory, Practice and the Significance of Film Schools," "Theory/Practice and the British Film Conservatoire," and "Creative Industries and Skills: Film Education and Training in the Era of New Labour."[23] Petrie and Stoneman are co-authoring a book on the past, present, and future of film schools; Petrie and Stoneman have both contributed chapters to the "Education of the Filmmaker Project" (EOFP); and in 2013, Hjort once again joined Stoneman at IMAGINE, this time for a workshop focusing on film and human rights, organized in tandem with the short-film training program that supports students in their production of Newsreels documenting Africa's largest and most important festival, FESPACO. Projects that take the issue of film education into other networks are designed to provide further density to the research. An example of such a project is *The Blackwell's Companion to Nordic Cinema*, edited by Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist, which includes a section on film education to which the following Nordic scholars are contributing: Heidi Philipsen (University of Southern Denmark), Astrid Söderberg Widding (Stockholm University), Mats Jönsson (Lund University), and Hjort.

The Larger Context: Different Kinds of Writing on Practice-Based Film Education

Linked to the Society of Film Teachers and later the Society for Education in Film & Television, the influential journal *Screen* has been an important space for discussions of film education, especially within schools. The same can be said of the journal *Screen Education*, which was also established in the 1960s. The work published in these two journals provides an historical context for the kind of research that is being pursued through the EOFP. For the most part, however, writing on practice-oriented film education and its institutions has been very limited. Also, the most salient work on the topic can be characterized as narrow in focus. The tendency has been: (1) to focus on the West, especially the US and the UK; (2) to write in a popular, non-research-oriented vein; (3) to focus on well-established film schools and university-based programs where industry needs are served; (4) to neglect the diversity of models of practice-oriented film education; (5) to fail to articulate the core values that are constitutive of various models of practice-oriented film education; (6) to overlook the diverse purposes that practice-oriented film education can serve; (7) to neglect the collaborative educational initiatives that various globalizing processes have

made possible; (8) to focus on practice-oriented film education aimed at relatively mature individuals who aspire to become professional filmmakers; (9) to neglect practice-oriented film education aimed at children and young people; (10) to neglect community-oriented film training initiatives; (11) to neglect practice-oriented film education that aims to provide solutions to specific social and political problems; and (12) to ignore the interest of fostering a transferability of models with significant social contributions to make.

Film School Confidential: Get In. Make It Out Alive by Tom Edgar and Karin Kelly is a good example of popular writing on film schools.[24] Focusing on 29 film schools, this book provides a descriptive account of the curricula and costs associated with specific film training programs in the United States as well as advice to the aspiring filmmaker on how to select a film school, gain admission to it, and make the transition from film school to the filmmaking industry. A more scholarly relevant category of writing on practice-based film education and its institutions draws heavily on two genres: the practitioner's interview and the memoir. The most research-relevant, book-length publications on film schools belong in this category. *Projections 12: Film-makers on Film Schools*, edited by John Boorman, Fraser MacDonald, and Walter Donahue, provides a series of interviews with staff members and former students from such schools as the National Film and Television School in London, the London Film School and film programs at NYU, Columbia, USC, and UCLA.[25] Ni Zhen's *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy: The Genesis of China's Fifth Generation* is a moving instance of life writing that clearly suggests the extent to which the visual and narrative tendencies that scholars and critics discern on the world's screens are traceable, in many instances, to the institutional culture and priorities of specific sites of practice-oriented film education.[26] The existence of such research-relevant books as *Projections 12* and *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy* suggests just how significant a role the institutions of film education play, yet these works cannot fill what is a clear lacuna in the scholarly landscape of film.

With the growing interest in "practitioner's agency," film scholars have begun to see the value of studying practice-oriented film education in a systematic way. Some of the most promising scholarly work on practice-oriented film education, not surprisingly, is being produced by scholars who are located within the kinds of small-nation contexts that facilitate empirical, case-based research that is informed by ongoing exchanges over a significant period of time with policy makers, institution builders, and a whole range of film practitioners, including those who dedicate themselves to the training of others. Working independently of each other, and making good use of the scholarly access to film practitioners that small-nation contexts provide, scholars such as Eva Novrup Redvall, Heidi Philipsen, and Chris Mathieu have published pioneering work that convincingly shows that the priorities and philosophies of institutions devoted to practice-oriented film education have a decisive impact on filmmakers' creative outlook, working practices, and networks, shaping not only the stylistic (visual and narrative) regularities that define distinctive bodies of cinematic work, but also the dynamics of a given film industry. Redvall's "Teaching Screenwriting to the Storytelling Blind—The Meeting of the Auteur and the Screenwriting Tradition

at The National Film School of Denmark,"[27] clearly demonstrates that at the institution under discussion, auteurist traditions have been consciously replaced in recent times with a model of collaborative authorship, to positive effect. Heidi Philipsen's dissertation entitled "Dansk films nye bølge" ("Danish Film's New Wave"), shows that Denmark owes much of its success with film over the past two decades to the values, methods, and principles that figures such as Jørgen Leth, Mogens Rukov, and Henning Camre brought to the National Film School of Denmark, and made an integral part of its institutional culture.[28]

The Institutional Turn in Film Studies

Research on practice-based film education is necessarily oriented toward institutional culture and processes of institutionalization, since the film schools and universities, where much of what counts as film training takes place, are, quite simply, institutions. Yet, it is imperative that research energies also be channeled toward goals, values, practices, and arrangements that are not necessarily well served by the *standard* forms of what I want to call "robust institutionalization." Practice-based film education, it is clear, admits of many models, some of them having a far stronger tendency toward institutional visibility, stability, and persistence than others. Thus, for example, Moinak Biswas (vol. 1) is interested in understanding "humanist [practice-based film] education in its indeterminate relationship with institutions," just as Renata Šukaitytė (vol. 1) evokes the remarkable achievements of "anti-institutionalist" activists such as Lithuanian filmmakers Jonas Mekas and Šarūnas Bartas. At the same time, it is important to recognize that institutions and institution building are phenomena that can themselves be rethought in innovative and creative ways. In some cases, the very process of articulating an alternative model of practice-based film education provides rich opportunities to rethink the ways and means of institution building, and its more standard manifestations. Philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis's ground-breaking work on social imaginaries, creativity, and the work of instituting and world making can be usefully evoked here. As he puts it in *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, "What is essential to creation is not 'discovery' but constituting the new: art does not discover, it constitutes; and the relation between what it constitutes and the 'real,' an exceedingly complex relation to be sure, is not a relation of verification. And on the social plane, which is our main interest here, the emergence of new institutions and of new ways of living is not a 'discovery' either but an active constitution."[29]

It is, I believe, uncontroversial to assert that in-depth, sustained analysis of the practice-oriented educational initiatives that are upstream of actual film production and constitutive of film's institutional dimensions has much to contribute to what might be called the "institutional turn" being encouraged by developments in film studies. On the one hand, there is growing interest in practitioner's agency, understood not in terms of abstract philosophical reflections on the nature of authorship, but in terms of *actual* agents' reasoning about their practices in relation to preferred self-understandings, artistic norms, and the

constraints and opportunities that specific institutions and policies bring to the world in which these practitioners live their personal and professional lives as filmmakers. On the other hand, film scholars have long understood that film policy is an area warranting careful attention if film's institutional underpinnings are to be properly understood. Important work on relevant issues has been done, *Cultural Policy*, co-authored by Toby Miller and George Yúdice, being a case in point.[30] More recently, remarkable efforts by researchers with an understanding of the need for team- and network-based research in film studies have helped to bring the roles and workings of film festivals into sharp relief. I am thinking here of Dina Iordanova and her "Dynamics of World Cinema" team, and of Marijke de Valck and the Film Festival Research Network (FFRN) that she and Skadi Loist established together.[31] Among other things, the findings that emerge from such work depict the institutions and the processes of change where much of the creative work of instituting occurs. Practice-oriented film education deserves the same kind of rigorous scholarly attention that phenomena such as film policy and film festivals have received. Establishing practice-oriented film education as a legitimate and worthwhile area of inquiry is no doubt a task that can be achieved on older models of research that have long dominated the arts and humanities: stand-alone articles and monographs written by scholars working largely on their own. The second task, which has to do with achieving the kind of density of findings that would count as significant progress in the research area in question, will, however, require a commitment to precisely the sorts of principles and practices that are characteristic of the film festival field as a research area: mutually supportive partnerships between researchers and practitioners, team-based research, and loose, yet meaningful synergies among research projects being pursued on a more individual basis.

The Aims of the "Education of the Filmmaker" Project (EOFP)

The EOFP is driven by a number of goals that can only be partly realized through the two volumes published in Kasia Marciniak, Anikó Imre, and Áine O'Healy's Global Cinema series. The hope is that these goals will be further pursued, and indeed, revised as necessary, as new scholars, institution builders, and film practitioners join the conversation about the hows, whys, and wherefores of practice-based film education. Some of the goals informing the design of the EOFP can be described as follows:

1. To establish practice-based film education as a central area of scholarly research;
2. To shed light on the aspiration to establish film schools in contexts where these do not yet exist;
3. To identify the "pre-institutional" modes of practice-based film education that often prepare the ground for full-blown efforts at institution building;

4. To identify the full spectrum of types of practice-based film education and their specificities, including constitutive values, recurring challenges, and characteristic contributions;

5. To chart the impact of historical forces and political change on well-established film schools;

6. To analyze the impact of different kinds of globalization on practice-based film education, as well as the challenges and advantages arising from transnational and network-based initiatives;

7. To examine the motivations for, and significance of, practice-based film education aimed at children and young people;

8. To clarify the implications of new technologies for practice-based film education;

9. To explore the role that practice-based film education plays in the building of sustainable communities;

10. To assess the use of practice-based film education in contexts focused on health, well-being, and social inclusion;

11. To profile practice-based initiatives that have proven themselves to be especially valuable and, through this, to facilitate various forms of knowledge transfer;

12. To draw attention to the agents—the people—who have developed such valuable initiatives;

13. Through all this, to constitute networks and bodies of knowledge that can be mobilized in conversation with policy makers and government representatives, among others.

As books, *The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia* and *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* have a somewhat unusual history, for whereas conferences often lead to publications, in this case a team-based book project involving an advance contract for a single edited volume became the impetus for a conference and then grew into a two-volume project. Prompting the organization of "The Education of the Filmmaker—Views from around the World" conference was the creation of a new research center—The Centre for Cinema Studies (CCS)—at Lingnan University in Hong Kong. The contributions presented at this conference, which was held at Lingnan in the spring of 2012, were seen as breaking new ground in genuinely substantial ways, and thus as meriting the kind of scope for development that only the addition of a second edited volume would provide. That the series editors and acquisitions editors at Palgrave Macmillan agreed to a request along these lines is a reason for considerable gratitude, as is the decision (made by Lingnan's senior management team, especially President Yuk-Shee Chan and Vice President Jesús Seade) to make Cinema Studies a priority area for the University. The latter decision is an unlikely but welcome one in today's academic world, inasmuch as it is never "resource-neutral." Resources—in the form of conference funding, a full-time senior research assistant, and precious space dedicated to the CCS—have helped to bring unexpected momentum to the EOFP. Intense interaction among the contributors to the two volumes, with members of the CCS's advisory board,