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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
FILM STUDIES**

**The Films of Peter Lilienthal. Homeless by Choice**

by

**Claudia Sandberg, M.A.**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2011

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**  
**ABSTRACT**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**FILM STUDIES**

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**THE FILMS OF PETER LILIENTHAL. HOMELESS BY CHOICE**  
**by Claudia Sandberg**

My thesis focuses on the German-Jewish-Uruguayan filmmaker Peter Lilienthal, whose experience of exile in Latin America during the Nazi period informed his subsequent career. Lilienthal's films address issues of collective resistance to political oppression in Latin America and elsewhere. In depictions of individuals responding to outside threats, the filmmaker renders the perception of a protective and stable home as arbitrary and volatile. While Lilienthal is usually associated with the New German Cinema of the 1970s and early 1980s, my thesis explores his position as an author who is (dis)-located between national and ethnic borders. Lilienthal's problematic relationship with Germany, his eventful biography and the hybrid character of his films has led me to hypothesise Lilienthal as a *homeless* filmmaker.

My study is informed by recent scholarly debates examining the impact of migratory processes, diaspora, and transnationalism on national cultures. I consider Lilienthal's film as a form of diasporic cinema: while the idea of diaspora as migrational phenomenon informs current research of diaspora as cultural and discursive practice, a variety of notions, such as 'diasporic and migrant cinema', 'cinema of displacement' or 'accented cinema' bring diaspora to film studies. Using these ideas as a backbone, my assessment is rooted in Lilienthal's production methods, the narrative and aesthetics of his films and their reception in different cultural contexts.

As a result, I suggest a conception of diasporic cinema, which amends and challenges previous theories. I argue that experiences of displacement structure not only the film text, but inform cross-cultural and collaborative modes of filmmaking. I focus in particular on relations of diasporic film to national cinema. The meaningfulness of Lilienthal's films in a multitude of national contexts is evidence of their cultural mobility. Moreover, I propose to differentiate diasporic discourse and exilic cinema. While the latter negotiates issues of identity and belonging, and consequently, emphasizes links between author and film text, my understanding of diasporic cinema accentuates the vertical process of filmmaking including production, distribution, exhibition and reception practices.

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## Declaration of Authorship

I, **Claudia Sandberg**, declare that the thesis entitled *The Films of Peter Lilienthal. Homeless by Choice* and the work presented in it are my own, and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published as:

“Facing the Forests (1996). Landscapes of Israeli Identity”, in *Pluralism, Inclusion and Citizenship*, edited by Catalina Botez and Kwoh-Jack Tan. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2011 (forthcoming, provisional ISBN 978-1-904710-88-2)

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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*To*  
*Richard*  
*David and Viggo*

## List of Abbreviations

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AKO    | <i>Akademie der Künste Ost</i> (Academy of the Arts in East Germany)   |
| APO    | <i>Außerparlamentarische Opposition</i> (Extra Parliamentary Opposition)   |
| ARD    | <i>Allgemeiner Rundfunk Deutschlands</i> (Joint organisation of public-service broadcasting institutions and name of public-service television broadcaster in Germany) |
| BFI    | British Film Institute   |
| CDU    | <i>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands</i> (Christian Democratic Union)  |
| CPOTC  | <i>Calm Prevails Over the Country</i>  |
| DEFA   | <i>Deutsche Film AG</i> (East German state-owned film production company)  |
| DFE    | <i>Deutscher Fernsehfunk</i> (State television broadcasters in East Germany)   |
| dffb   | <i>Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin</i> (German Film and Television Academy Berlin)   |
| FBW    | <i>Filmbewertungsstelle Wiesbaden</i> (Film Assessment Office)   |
| FFAT   | <i>Film-Fernsehen-Autoren-Team</i> (Film Televisions Writers Team)   |
| FSLN   | <i>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional</i> (Sandinista National Liberation Front)   |
| IAIC   | <i>Instituto de Arte e Industria de Cinematografico</i> (Cuban Institute of Arts and Industry of Film)   |
| INCINE | <i>Instituto Nicaragüense de Cine</i> (Nicaraguan Institute of Cinema)   |
| ORF    | <i>Österreichischer Rundfunk</i> (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation)   |
| SED    | <i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i> (Socialist Unity Party Germany)  |
| SPD    | <i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Social Democratic Party of Germany)  |
| SFB    | <i>Sender Freies Berlin</i> (Radio Free Berlin, public-service radio and television broadcaster)   |
| SWF    | <i>Südwestfunk</i> (South West Broadcasting, public-serve television broadcaster)  |
| WDR    | <i>Westdeutscher Rundfunk</i> (West German Broadcasting, public-service radio and television broadcasting)   |
| ZDF    | <i>Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen</i> (Second German Television Broadcasting)   |

## Chapter 1

### Introduction. Sources of Cinematic Homelessness

This thesis investigates the work of filmmaker Peter Lilienthal, whose work reflects the diverse cultural, social and political contexts which have shaped his biography since his childhood. Born in 1929 in Berlin, Lilienthal had to flee persecution from the Nazis and he grew up in Montevideo (Uruguay), remigrating to Germany after WWII. He started as an assistant director for the television channel *Südwestfunk* (SWF) in Baden-Baden in 1959, and directed television plays and films during the 1960s. Associated with surrealist approaches, Lilienthal won recognition as a socio-critical filmmaker in and beyond West Germany with his first feature film in 1969. *Malatesta*, a story about the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, was awarded the German Film Award in Gold and nominated for the Golden Palm in Cannes. Subsequently, Lilienthal's films addressed social and political issues in numerous locations, such as the USA and Israel. However, Latin America has been a thematic focus in five feature films and a documentary.

The reception of Lilienthal's work in West Germany in the 1960s coincided with the rise of the New German film movement, which brought about a general awareness of film as a political medium. Lilienthal profited from the unique funding opportunities set up at the time, and all of his films have been produced, distributed and exhibited in West Germany. He became a prominent figure alongside Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff, Wim Wenders and Werner Herzog, who set the parameters for filmmaking in West Germany for more than a decade. Lilienthal frequently cooperated with the best-known protagonists of contemporary German film. His collaboration with cinematographer Michael Ballhaus began in 1964, when both worked for SWF in Baden-Baden. Ballhaus, who also cooperated frequently with Fassbinder, photographed four of Lilienthal's films.<sup>1</sup> Cinematographer Robby Mueller, known for his partnership with Wenders, worked on *Calm Prevails Over the Country* (CPOTC, 1976).<sup>2</sup> Editor Heidi Genée teamed up with Lilienthal on three of his films.<sup>3</sup> Hanna Schygulla, a regular of Fassbinder's films, acted in *Jakob von Gunten* (1971). Hanns Zischler, another prolific actor, who starred in Wim Wenders's *Summer in the City* (1970) and *Im Lauf der Zeit/Kings*

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<sup>1</sup> Ballhaus worked with Fassbinder on *Die bitteren Tränen der Petra Kant/The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Mutter Küsters Fahrt zum Himmel/Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* (1975) and *Deutschland im Herbst/Germany in Autumn* (1978), among other films.

<sup>2</sup> Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 155-156.

<sup>3</sup> As 'one of the top two editors of the New German Cinema', Heidi Genée edited *Deutschland im Herbst/Germany in Autumn*. See Renate Fischetti, "Interview with Heidi Genée," *Jump Cut*, no. 30 (1985).

of the Road (1976), had roles in *David* (1978) and *The Autograph* (1984). Conversely, Lilienthal acted in Wenders's film *Der amerikanische Freund/The American Friend* (1977) and in Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* series.

Contemporary West German media and film critics evaluated Lilienthal's films within the thematic dimensions of the New German Cinema. And while no comprehensive study about the filmmaker exists, German film scholars align him with this movement to this day. In his widely-acclaimed text *New German Cinema: A History*, Thomas Elsaesser classified Lilienthal as a director who 'has one of the most solid reputations and track records as a left-liberal director with an excellent knowledge of Latin American issues'.<sup>4</sup> When I attended a module on New German Cinema taught by film scholar John Davidson in 2003, he included Lilienthal as an author responsible for so-called 'Third-World themes'. These are all instances which perpetuate the view of Lilienthal as protagonist of the New German Cinema.

Seeing Lilienthal as part of German cinema aligns his filmography to specifically national perspectives, themes and approaches. I will challenge this idea and argue that Lilienthal is an exception within German film of the 1970s and 1980s. The New German Cinema focused on themes which dealt with reconstructing German identity; social and political matters beyond West German borders occupied only a marginal place. Lilienthal's films address the needs of people in regions of the world who are in more pressing need of advocacy than West Germany. His films are concerned with essential human problems. As Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler comment on Lilienthal's films, '*La Victoria* (1973) and *The Country is Calm* (1975) are practically the only feature films [...] in the New German Cinema that have taken up current problems and conflicts in the Third World.'<sup>5</sup> Other film critics and scholars have noted this too:

It is noticeable that, in contrast to his Latin America trilogy, Lilienthal's films *Malatesta*, *Hauptlehrer Hofer* and *David* are all situated in the past. (...) This makes Lilienthal the only politically aware director of the New German Cinema who has not yet examined contemporary German reality.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond thematic differences between other New German films and Lilienthal's, his personal relationship with Germany has also always been problematic. Despite success and public recognition, *David* remained Lilienthal's only comment on German-Jewish matters. And notwithstanding Lilienthal's long-standing commitment to an active

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (London: BFI, 1989), 113.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany. The New German Film Origins and Present Situation. With a Section on GDR Cinema*. (Bonn: Internationes, 1993), 94.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Fischer and Joe Hembus, *Der Neue Deutsche Film 1960-1980* (München: Goldmann Verlag, 1981), 114.

film culture in Germany, he regards himself as a 'stateless' director. In my interview with him in 2007 Lilienthal remarked:

It never crossed my mind to see myself as a German director. I don't have a nationality as a director. Of course, answering the question where I was born, I say 'Berlin'. Therefore, I am German but a German director - this has an altogether different connotation. As an example, I did not participate in the Oberhausen Manifesto, I don't belong to the generation of Reitz and Kluge. Well, I belong to the same generation but I have not had the kind of experiences they had. After all, I was not brought up in Germany, which is a crucial requirement for defining oneself as a German director as Reitz does, for example. I don't know what I would call myself but most likely, if there was such a concept, it would be a stateless director. Though this is not correct in the legal sense, in a metaphorical sense it is.<sup>7</sup>

Another problem of attempting to fix Lilienthal within the parameters of New German Cinema is that this chronologically locks the focus of an examination to the heyday of the movement (1968-1982) neglecting Lilienthal's work before and after this period. However, Lilienthal's television plays and films before 1968 are essential for understanding his oeuvre because they establish his aesthetic toolset and his thematic foci. Likewise, Lilienthal's filmography after 1982 forms an important part of his filmography.

I will attend to these issues over the course of this study in a systematic manner. For this, I will adopt a transnational framework, which I find most fruitful for an analysis of Lilienthal's filmmaking. My study will examine Lilienthal's relationship with various geopolitical and cultural contexts in order to determine what the term 'stateless' implies in terms of film production, exhibition and reception. This includes, but is not limited to an analysis of Lilienthal's position within the West German cultural context. As aspects of Latin American and Jewish culture are integral to Lilienthal's biography, I will examine their impact on his work. It is precisely these multiple influences which provide an important insight into his views, aesthetics and filmmaking practices.

### **Homelessness, Exile and Diaspora**

Uprooting is often a traumatic experience, especially when provoked by forces which pressure individuals to leave their country of origin. A person's or community's way of life is disrupted: a farewell from friends and family, from a particular climate, from a stretch of land. Throughout history, people have had to leave the place of their birth. The Jewish and Armenian Diasporas are prominent historical examples of migration on a massive scale, while countless other political, economic and religious conflicts in recent times have made millions of people refugees and exiles. In the 1970s

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

and 1980s for example, the military dictatorships in Central and South America made thousands of politically persecuted persons seek asylum in North America and Europe. A decade later, the conflicts in the Balkans and in Rwanda caused the displacements of ethnic communities. Time and again, Palestinians have had to negotiate the ever-shrinking sites they inhabit.

Anthony Smith suggests what meaning land holds for an ethnic community:

Attachments to specific stretches of territory, and to certain places within them, have a mythical and subjective quality. It is the attachments and associations, rather than residence in or possession of the land that matters for ethnic identification. It is where we belong. It is also often a sacred land, the land of our forefathers, our lawgivers, our kings and sages, poets and priests, which makes this our homeland.<sup>8</sup>

Smith emphasises that it is the mythical and symbolic character of a particular territory, rather than its possession, that makes it significant to an ethnic group. The most prominent ethnic community whose traditions cite such a bond is the Jewish diasporic community. *Eretz Israel* has played a central role in Jewish collective memory and imagination throughout its history.<sup>9</sup> Until the beginning of the twentieth century, only small numbers of ethnic Jews had inhabited their traditional 'homeland' at the East end of the Mediterranean Sea.

With the rise of the nation state in the seventeenth century, the idea of ownership became a forceful link between ethnic community to territory, a nexus that was formative for the idea of a national homeland. As Benedict Anderson has argued, the newly formed European states seized on words such as *belief* and *destiny*, previously grounded in religious tradition, and transformed them into *national mission* and *national destiny*, thus replacing religious belief with national belief.<sup>10</sup> This idea justifies the existence of nations as communities of 'chosen people' which accomplish national missions in their ancestral 'homeland'. In bolstering the formation of a nationally conscious population that sees itself as the offspring of great national traditions, the connection to the land became an important constituent in nationalistic aims. An *ethnoscape*, that is, the intrinsic relationship of communities to geography as 'part of a community's distinctive character and destiny',<sup>11</sup> created not only the notion of a homeland but also demarcated borders with

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<sup>8</sup> See Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 22-23.

<sup>9</sup> Affected by the enlightenment spirit of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and pioneered by Spinoza and Mendelssohn, the Jewish religion underwent a reformation: political and religious concerns of the time promoted an awareness of exile as spatial displacement. See Arnold Eisen, *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflections on Homelessness and Homecoming* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1986), 43.

<sup>10</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991), 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony D. Smith, "Sacred Territories and National Conflict," in *Israel: The First Hundred Years. Vol I Israel's Transition from Community to State*, ed. Efraim Karsh (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 513.

the outside world. Nationality is based on the ethnoscape and the ethnies, as the people who 'belong' to this land. Anderson maps this group of people as an imagined community, imagined because the connection between land and people is not primordial, but an idea fabricated by the nation to justify the land as the nation's property.<sup>12</sup> This community is held together by the bonds of traditions, a myth of their descent, a shared history. In turn, these elements form the basis for a national identity.

In contrast, homelessness implies a physical separation, which is also captured by the term exile. Exiles, according to Edward Said, are those who are prevented from returning home.<sup>13</sup> Homelessness often indicates loss, defeat and bereavement. As Liisa H. Malkki points out, 'Clearly, many people who have become (or have been) refugees suffer profoundly from having been tortured, raped, terrorized, spied upon, militarily attacked, separated from friends and families, and often, having been left alive to witness death'.<sup>14</sup> Said delineates the dimensions of this loss, 'Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for, and bond with, one's native place; what is true of all exile is not that home and love of home are lost, but that loss is inherent in the very existence of both'.<sup>15</sup>

Majorie Agosin, a writer born in Chile, who fled the Pinochet regime with her parents and was raised in the US, comments about her split identity as exile:

I think of myself as being from a long, narrow and far-off country, but also as being from everywhere. When I go back to Chile people call me "la gringa" or they say "You're from there now." When I go to the United States they tell me, "It must be so sad to leave your country and be a foreigner." Such comments are part of my reality, a hybrid complex reality, a bicultural and bilingual reality caught between two countries, two languages, and two heritages – Christian and Jewish.<sup>16</sup>

Agosin's quote illustrates how exilic cultural identification processes one cultural experience in terms of the other. There is an urgency to mediate the present experience and location through a magnifying glass rooted in the context of original values, religion and classes of another place. The reference to origins and places in exile discourse reveals its affiliation to national discourses. Sofia McClennen notes: 'For the exile, a sense of

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<sup>12</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>13</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 135.

<sup>14</sup> Liisa H. Malkki, "Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 510.

<sup>15</sup> Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 185.

<sup>16</sup> Majorie Agosin, "Always from Somewhere Else. Reflections on Exile," *NACLA Report on the Americas* XXVIII, no. 6 (1995): 15.

both nationalism and national identity are necessary. Without the belief that there is a connection between an individual and a place, exile has no meaning'.<sup>17</sup>

The idea of a homeland lost that is associated with exile suggests that living within the boundaries of a specific place is favoured over travelling and migration. Salman Rushdie warns us against such a notion:

To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers, would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which in South Africa is called the 'homeland'.<sup>18</sup>

Taking up this view, my study departs in significant ways from the subject, mode and direction of exile discourse and hopes to refocus on travelling and border-crossings as an impetus for cultural production. In this context, I find the term *diaspora* productive. A link to diaspora, I suggest, lends homelessness a positive and facilitating connotation. It advocates a constructive and forward-looking perspective that can be uncoupled from concerns of homeland and (split-) identity issues. While acknowledging experiences of loss and rupture, homelessness should stand for the potential to create other, flexible forms of belonging.

Current sociological studies support this shift towards a positive connotation of homelessness. Let me briefly historicise an understanding of diaspora as an experience of spatial displacement in sociological terms. Here, diaspora studies revolve around concepts of 'home' in the dimensions of space, time and ideology. Diaspora as a specifically Jewish experience describes the loss and search for a homeland at the heart of the Jewish historical condition. Consequently, the Jewish experience is still considered as the diaspora *par excellence*.<sup>19</sup> However, since the 1960s diaspora has come to account for other historical experiences in scholarly discourses. Its use has been extended to the dispersion of the population of the former British Empire in the aftermath of colonialism, and to other dispersed ethnic communities, such as the Greeks, Armenians or Chinese.<sup>20</sup> Unsurprisingly, tensions have developed over the use of the term diaspora and how to differentiate between the Jewish experience and contemporary meanings. William Safran's much debated essay 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', published in the inaugural volume of the newly founded journal

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<sup>17</sup> Sofia McClennen, *The Dialectics of Exile: Nation, Time, Language, and Space in Hispanic Literatures* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2004), 26.

<sup>18</sup> Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands. Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books, 1992), 19.

<sup>19</sup> See Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diasporas. Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1995), 181.

<sup>20</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Introduction: Diaspora Negotiations," in *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, ed. John M. G. Barclay (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1.

*Diaspora* defines parameters for a general understanding of the term.<sup>21</sup> Safran argues that homeland remains a fundamental element for those living in diaspora that seizes their life. Dispersed populations are committed to the reconstruction of their homeland and strive for a return to it.

Scholars in Jewish Studies and Cultural Studies have voiced their criticism of this argument.<sup>22</sup> An opposing view suggests that the Jewish Diaspora does not exist in the omnipresent shadow of a religiously defined homeland, to which the Jewish cultures aim to return. Jon Stratton argues that Safran ignores the religious character of exile for Jewish culture prior to the nation-state. The scholar maintains that the concept of exile did not include a spatial dimension nor was it seen as result of external pressures.<sup>23</sup> According to Stratton, Safran's arguments 'encompass those of the modern diaspora and depend in crucial ways on modern constructions of the nation, the national people, and the space – the land – which the nation claims belongs to it'.<sup>24</sup>

Robin Cohen, who aims to reconceptualise diaspora as a general migrational and cultural phenomenon, attacks Safran for the monolithic importance he assigned to the homeland as the centre of diasporic existence.<sup>25</sup> Cohen accentuates the link to the current place of settlement. Diasporas have a collective 'sense of living in one country' but they look 'across time and space to another'.<sup>26</sup> He acknowledges a shifting meaning that diasporic communities apply to their place of origin. This duality does not ascribe to home the centre of diasporic existence but it expresses tensions between 'here' and 'there' that constitute diasporic identity. Individuals negotiate their living space in a present that is affected by their emotional entanglement in a past or future. As James Clifford puts it:

Experiences of loss, marginality, and exile are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and blocked advancement. This constitutive suffering coexists with the skills of survival: strength in

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<sup>21</sup> William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* 1, no. 1 (1991); Barclay, "Introduction: Diaspora Negotiations," 1.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Brah, *Cartographies of Diasporas. Contesting Identities*; James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994); John Stratton, "(Dis-)Placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora," *Diaspora* 6 (1997).

<sup>23</sup> This is not to say that the notion of exile pre-nation state was not seen in terms of loss of home or land. Think of Yehuda Halevy's poem "My heart is in the East and I am the furthest West," that was written approx. 1140.

<sup>24</sup> John Stratton, "(Dis-)Placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora," *Diaspora* 6 (1997): 307.

<sup>25</sup> Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas. An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 22-25.

<sup>26</sup> John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 207.

adaptive distinction, discrepant cosmopolitanism, and stubborn visions of renewal. Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as defining tension.<sup>27</sup>

The trajectory of diasporic discourse reflects changing motivations and conditions worldwide after WWII, which assign positive values to life in diaspora. For example, many assimilated Jews in the Western world since 1948 do not aspire to 'return' to the 'homeland' Israel, despite the opportunity to settle there now. Diaspora has become a voluntary condition. In fact, a considerable number of Jews outside Israel's borders belong to Jewish communities but do not feel affiliated to the Jewish state. Shlomo Avineri explains the phenomenon of the Jewish post-Diaspora in a changing self-understanding as Jew: contemporary Jews might not be faithful to Judaic traditions and customs but to their diasporic existence.<sup>28</sup> In the situation where assimilation seems to threaten Jewish identity, and adherence to Jewish traditions and customs are a relic from the past, the collective, ethnic nature of the Jewish Diaspora might crumble. Yet, diaspora remains the overarching feature of Jewish existence.

The voluntary nature of the Jewish post-Diaspora applies to other historical and modern diasporas as well. Much has been written about the push-factors, which is to say the adverse social, economic, or political reasons, which drive people out of their home countries.<sup>29</sup> However, there are also the pull-factors, which are attractions that invite populations to migrate, among them 'easy access, weak regimes, and appealing political and economic conditions in host countries'.<sup>30</sup> Due to changes in the global political landscape and technological advances, economic motivations have been decisive in triggering migration waves and thus shifting centres of life from underdeveloped parts of the world to more developed ones, from agricultural areas to urbanised regions. Cohen argues that an important impetus for Jewry to stay settled in the Western world is the promise of a more affluent lifestyle than that which Israel could provide.<sup>31</sup> The consideration of pull-factors weakens the assumption that diasporic communities are necessarily victims of adverse social and political processes that force them to migrate, but rather illustrates their proactive behaviour.

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<sup>27</sup> James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994): 312.

<sup>28</sup> Shlomo Avineri, "Zionism and the Jewish Religious Tradition. The Dialectics of Redemption and Secularization," in *Zionism and Religion*, ed. Almog Shmuel, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira (Hanover: Brandeis University, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return."

<sup>30</sup> Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics. At Home Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51.

<sup>31</sup> Cohen, *Global Diasporas. An Introduction*, 122.

The presence of pull-factors also indicates that the significance of and association with a place of origin has lesser value than is generally assumed by scholars such as Safran. Sheffer maintains that among diasporas, tensions between homeland and host country evolve, develop, and change with time and according to the maturity of the diasporic community.<sup>32</sup> In these processes, attachment to a homeland is often less pronounced for second and third generations. Born and raised in the host country, their association with the host country is developed to a much higher degree. Moreover, diasporic communities are often dispersed in different locations or they have migrated from host country to host country, as is the case for the Jewish or the Armenian diasporas. According to Cohen,

[m]embers of a diaspora characteristically sense not only a collective identity in a place of settlement, nor again only a relationship with an imagined, putative or real homeland, but also a common identity with co-ethnic members in other countries.<sup>33</sup>

Building and entertaining a network of relations with friends and family points to the multi-directionality of diasporas. It can be argued that external coercive forces and the overwhelming importance of the homeland have proven less important for modern diasporas. Current diaspora discourse stresses the voluntary nature of diasporic existence and people's willingness to migrate to places where they find favourable living conditions.

In addition to their historical significance, diasporic movements and migration are signifiers of the twentieth century. Besides constant warfare, colonisation and decolonisation, the disintegration of old nation states and the founding of new ones, advances in communication technologies as part of global capitalism in the latter half of the century all contribute to a decreasing relevance of physical boundaries, home and host nations. As Nico Israel notes:

It is through the logic of globalization that this dynamic of modernization is most powerfully articulated. Through proliferating information and communication flows and through mass human migration, it has progressively eroded territorial frontiers and boundaries and provoked ever more immediate confrontations of culture and identity.<sup>34</sup>

In a similar vein, Arjun Appadurai argues against the pre-eminence of nation states.<sup>35</sup> He suggests extending the validity of diaspora studies in order to account for transnational activities which, aside from the physical border-crossing of humans, include technology,

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<sup>32</sup> Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics. At Home Abroad*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Cohen, *Global Diasporas. An Introduction*, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Nico Israel, *Outlandish. Writing between Exile and Diaspora* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>35</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Annita Manur (London: Blackwell, 2003).

money-flow, commodities, media and the translation of images in the different ideological settings involved in forming a global culture economy. The forms, expressions and consequences of these flows affect not only society and the community at large but have an impact on smaller social units, such as families.

Concepts of home come to stand for cultural and social nostalgia, which expresses anxieties about political, economic and cultural realities. David Morley and Kevin Robbins note, 'Whether 'home' is imagined as the community of Europe or of the national state or of the region, it is drenched in the longing for wholeness, unity, integrity. It is about community centred on shared traditions and memories'.<sup>36</sup> The construction of national discourses, traditions and histories conveys the illusion that cultural identities are authentic, unchangeable as well as coherent. This widespread strategy is based upon 'shared cultural codes' and 'unchanging and continuous frames of reference of meaning' which foster stable affiliations to certain historic events, but also to groups or classes.<sup>37</sup> Such identity politics set ideological and spatial boundaries, which define who and what is included. At the same time, it is a view which put itself at divergence with that what is outside, thereby creating binarisms such as us/other, inside/outside, native/foreigner.<sup>38</sup> Difference is defined as a polar opposite instead of exploring 'the potentialities of meaning'.<sup>39</sup> Such static images of home constitute a form of fundamentalism, a holding on to something that does not exist anymore.<sup>40</sup>

In the wake of the twentieth century as an era of travelling and migration, the meaning of home and culture must be rethought. As I have suggested, diaspora and homelessness are timely ideas because they acknowledge and make sense of the current condition in which places are increasingly unable to embody identities. Diasporic experiences are informed by multi-sited, multi-layered and multinational influences and inspirations, which evade essentialist ideas about identity. As Homi Bhabha maintains, the views, values and practices of cultural minorities challenge 'genealogies of 'origin' that can be found behind claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority'.<sup>41</sup> As diasporic

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<sup>36</sup> David Morley and Kevin Robbins, "No Place Like *Heimat*: Images of Home(land) in European Culture," *New Formations* 12 (1990): 4.

<sup>37</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity. Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 223.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Rutherford, "A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference" in *Identity. Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 21-22.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Robbins, "No Place Like *Heimat*: Images of Home(Land) in European Culture," 5.

<sup>41</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Dissemination: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 307.

experience has a fractured nature and results in identity formations that are shifting and transforming, diasporic identity is an ongoing process rather than an endpoint. Cultural hybridity has the potential of defying binary oppositions by seeking alternative strategies and flexible ways of existence, communication and expression.

John Durham Peters points out that diaspora as a form of social and discursive practice is an 'appropriate and timely cultural paradigm responding to the totalling character of Western thought'.<sup>42</sup> Diaspora discourse can offer 'a public sphere, not a smashing of images; a conflict of representations, not a purity of depictions'.<sup>43</sup> Allowing diaspora perspectives to enter the public sphere adds a discursive space that questions conventional assumptions of group membership, affiliations, associations and attempts of assigning places, locations, origins, identities.

As it seizes and values conflicting positions and criticises essentialism, diaspora facilitates communicative strategies between different groups. James Clifford's idea of a hotel illustrates this idea. According to Clifford, the locale of a hotel incorporates dwelling and traveling, is residence as well as a 'site of travel encounters'.<sup>44</sup> This perspective brings to the fore as much the native dweller as the one who passes, enters and exits. In this respect, the hotel becomes an inclusive social living space. Because of the multitude of social and cultural encounters it allows, its meaning is one of possibility and ongoing learning experience. Given the dynamics of individuals coming, staying and leaving, this structure keeps changing. Positions and roles need to be defined and redefined, confrontations happen unexpectedly, and require constant negotiation of perspectives and viewpoints.

The idea of diaspora as oppositional cultural practice and alternative discursive strategy shall establish the basis for a concept of diasporic cinema that I will outline in the following section.

### **Conceptualising Diasporic Cinema**

A conceptualisation of diasporic cinema acknowledges filmmaking that has been motivated by experiences of travelling, migration and displacement and is a product of various cultural and artistic influences. In setting up my study about Lilienthal's films in

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<sup>42</sup> John Durham Peters, "Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora. The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon," in *Home, Exile, Homeland. Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. Hamid Naficy (New York: Routledge, 1999), 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>44</sup> James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), 24.

terms of home/homelessness and exile/diaspora, however, my aim is not to bring about another set of binary terms. I do not value one over the other, because exile studies and exilic experiences are as valid as they are interesting and productive. Rather, I attempt to reveal tensions and interdependence between these conceptions and their concomitant features. For this endeavour, diaspora or homelessness should be a magnifier to examine national phenomena, providing a 'denaturalizing', 'questioning' perspective.<sup>45</sup> As Malkki argues, 'it is in the context of this order [the national order of things] that such phenomena as diaspora, hybridity, and postcoloniality are set'.<sup>46</sup> As a study of diaspora receives its meaning in response to national-cultural phenomena, it is not sensible to understand diaspora or diasporic cinema as being located at the other end of the spectrum.

Conventional ideas of national cinema organise film according to the spatio-temporal borders of a given region or state. While in the 1960s the term national cinema was used to recognise and organise the output of acknowledged filmmakers/auteur figures, a decade later, films became analysed in terms of nationally circulating concerns and discourses.<sup>47</sup> The national was used as an umbrella term that united actors, institutions and film texts. According to Philip Rosen, films came to be analysed

for mythical narratives of origin; for metaphors, allegories and/or other kinds of tropes of nationhood; for stylistic and formal practices peculiar to a given national cinema; for translations and transformations into filmic discourses of popular cultural elements associated with given nation-states; for modes of address or interpellations of a national audience or spectator.<sup>48</sup>

From the late 1980s, however, film studies began to engage with the concept of national cinema as a political category. The scope of analysis includes the impact of contextualising components that made films perceived to be national-cultural products. Hence, what a national cinema is and how it functions in a certain nation state depends on manifold conditions, dynamics and pressures. Andrew Higson suggests that national cinemas need to be explored not only in relation to production, but also in relation to the questions of distribution and exhibition, audiences and consumption'.<sup>49</sup> These processes uncover how a national-cultural identity is formed, which groups, classes, or regions this construct favours – and which ones it represses.

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<sup>45</sup> Malkki, "Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things," 517.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 516.

<sup>47</sup> Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, "Introduction," in *Cinema and Nation*, ed. Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.

<sup>48</sup> Philip Rosen, "Nation and Anti-Nation: Concepts of National Cinema in the "New" Media Era," *Diaspora* 5, no. 3 (1996): 388.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Higson, "The Concept of National Cinema," *Screen* 30, no. 4 (1989): 42.

Higson's paper 'The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema', which was published in 2000, is a response to his original thoughts about national cinema that were published a decade earlier. This latter work accounts for the increasingly dynamic environment in which film is produced, exhibited and consumed. It reflects an awareness of unstoppable and ongoing processes of social and economic transformation, which weaken the impact of the nation state and its capacities to govern images and imaginings. Higson suggests that there are multiple ways to create imagined communities. He proposes film as border-crossing and suggests that the international nature of film defies ideas of clear-cut demarcated geopolitical and imaginary boundaries.<sup>50</sup>

Other film scholars have also acknowledged the changes that a concept of national cinema needs to respond to.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Higson, who suggests that an exclusive focus on national dimensions has become problematic, they remain adamant that research within frameworks of national cinema is still useful. Rejecting the idea that we have entered an era of 'post-nationhood,' scholars point out that although film may be conceived and produced transnationally, other aspects of film funding, production, distribution and exhibition are still regulated at the national level. Susan Hayward, for example claims that the national needs to be analysed in order to expose the sources of power and knowledge which nation states rely on: 'It [writing of a national cinema] is one which delves deep into the pathologies of national discourses and exposes the symbolic practices of these forms of enunciation'.<sup>52</sup> In this way, national cinema becomes a *mise-en scène* of dissembled identities and fractured subjectivities in the effort to guarantee a form of cultural democratisation. Stephen Crofts notes that cultural hybridity should be part of such methodologies, which are concerned with class, gender and ethnicity and the politics that govern them.<sup>53</sup> He notes that politics need to be a key element in studying national cinema: 'In considering national cinemas, this implies the importance of a flexibility able, in some contexts, to challenge the fictional homogenisation of much discourse on national cinema, and in others to support them'.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Andrew Higson, "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema," in *Cinema and Nation*, ed. Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 66.

<sup>51</sup> See for example Rosen, "Nation and Anti-Nation: Concepts of National Cinema in the "New" Media Era."; Stephen Crofts, "Reconceptualising National Cinema/s," in *Theorising National Cinema*, ed. Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemsen (London: BFI, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> Susan Hayward, "Framing National Cinemas," in *Cinema and Nation*, ed. Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 101.

<sup>53</sup> Crofts, "Reconceptualising National Cinema/s," 54-55.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Could such views of national cinema account for experiences, traditions and values of travel which usually exceed or even criticise the national as a reference frame? How does such a framework describe perspectives which are not culturally specific and nationally significant? A concept of diasporic film challenges views of national cinemas as 'would-be-autonomous cultural business'.<sup>55</sup> It is in the nature of the term diaspora that belonging is an elusive matter; so which categories determine this fitting in one or another national and cultural context? Though Hayward's and other scholars' revised understanding of national cinemas is able to expose hegemonic power structures, its study has to align film to the territorial, imaginative or ideological agendas of the nation state, otherwise the term national would become superfluous. Since diaspora derives its meaning from a link *between* nations, regions and cultures and it embodies criticism of the nation, a suitable framework for diasporic cinema needs to enable an examination of the (power) struggle between the conceptions of the national and diaspora. Hence, a theoretical framework needs to be able to account for the hybrid, multi-ethnic character that the term diaspora embodies. This involves a rethinking of identity in histories of travel, and exploring the dynamics of such meeting points of traveller and community. Tim Bergfelder's notion of European Cinema offers such a perspective:

Rather than focusing exclusively on separate national formations, a history of European Cinema might well begin by exploring the interrelationship between cultural and geographical centres and margins, and by tracing the migratory movements between these poles. In this context, the various waves of migration into and across Europe, motivated by the two world wars, national policies of ethnic exclusion, and the post-war legacy of colonialism and economic discrepancy between Europe and its other, are fundamentally linked to the development of European cinema.<sup>56</sup>

Such a *transnational* project, that is a study of connections, offers an anchor point to a study of diasporic cinema. Bergfelder's idea of a European cinema contains the fluidity and mobility of diasporic cinema, embedded *between* national cinemas - between various cultural and national contexts, meanings and intentions.

As transnationality refers to the exploration of links, connections, networks beyond, below and between nations, it opens seemingly endless ways of mapping spatio-temporal cinematic relations. The term transnational can mean 'anything and everything', as Mette Hjort notes.<sup>57</sup> Some scholars define transnational cinema as a phenomenon that

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>56</sup> Tim Bergfelder, "National, Transnational or Supranational Cinema? Rethinking European Film Studies," *Media, Culture & Society* 27, no. 3 (2005): 320.

<sup>57</sup> Mette Hjort, "On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism," in *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Natasa Durovicova and Kathleen Turner (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 12.

has only arrived with the digital age.<sup>58</sup> I see this view as rather restrictive. Hailing transnationalism as a novel trend ignores the fact that filmmaking has always been an international endeavour. Transnationalism, as Natasa Durovicova writes, is not a replacement of national film histories but presents the 'historical condition' of cinema that enables comparisons between different cinematic temporalities and spaces.<sup>59</sup> This view supports filmmaking that has been a border-crossing, international endeavour throughout its existence. Such a wide scope, then, includes a cinema of migration in a larger historical frame.<sup>60</sup>

Transnational film studies pursue film in dynamics of its various economic and cultural influences and creative forces. As Kathleen Turner describes transnationalism:

The assumption that the export of European and US cinema to the rest of the world, from the silent period onward, inspired only derivative image cultures has been replaced by a dynamic model of cinematic exchange, where filmmakers around the world are known to have been in dialogue with one another's work, and other cultural political exchanges to form the dynamic context of these dialogues.<sup>61</sup>

This quote indicates a transnational perspective as one focused on *exchange*. Transnational approaches counteract the thesis of cultural imperialism - the American film industry as culturally hegemonising and therefore threatening the indigenous film market. Instead, they afford an examination of Hollywood as inspiration of national film production, and a negotiation of cultural identities as shaped by any number of imaginary realms. Moreover, a transnational perspective assumes relations between centre and periphery to be more evenly distributed. It dissociates itself from beliefs which privilege certain social, economic or cultural groups of society. In this respect, a transnational viewpoint increases the complexity of any given film study because it calls attention to the various political and cultural influences, which, as Bergfelder puts it, are 'locked in a reciprocal process of interaction'.<sup>62</sup>

Drawing on these dynamics of exchange and dialogue, my concept of diasporic cinema also benefits from recent scholarship in world cinema. Giving a voice to

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, "General Introduction," in *Transnational Cinema, the Film Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>59</sup> Natasa Durovicova, "Preface," in *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Natasa Durovicova and Kathleen Turner (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), xiv.

<sup>60</sup> See for diasporic cinema in an historical context Sabine Hake, "Transatlantic Careers: Ernst Lubitsch and Fritz Lang," in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter, and Deniz Göktürk (London: BFI, 2002) and Nick Smedley, *A Divided World. Hollywood Directors and Émigré Directors in the Era of Roosevelt and Hitler, 1933-1948* (Bristol: Intellect, 2010).

<sup>61</sup> Kathleen Turner, "Notes on Transnational Film Theory. Decentred Subjectivity, Decentred Capitalism," in *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Natasa Durovicova and Kathleen Turner (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 4.

<sup>62</sup> Bergfelder, "National, Transnational or Supranational Cinema? Rethinking European Film Studies," 320.

historically marginalised groups and communities, including feminist, queer or subaltern voices, world cinema criticism questions rigid and binary terms such as centre/periphery, West/non-West.<sup>63</sup> Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* is generally viewed as ground-breaking for such a conceptualisation of world cinema. The work criticises Eurocentrism, a network of oppressive relations that Europe engages with its many Others, as a longstanding and unquestioned philosophy of the Western World.<sup>64</sup> As Eurocentrism implies the mythic belief of an origin, Shohat and Stam suggest abandoning the term centre altogether. This radical shift helps to articulate resistance to a politics of integration, homogenisation and essentialism and thereby empowers marginalised individuals and groups. Stam and Shohat's ideas emphasise an understanding of film as political and social practice. With it, discourses of resistance examine 'actual processes of resistance, the forces at work, the aim and the realistic prospect of achieving it'.<sup>65</sup>

A view of film as form and practice of resistance aligns world cinema to notions of Third Cinema. Aside from Third Cinema's political understanding of film, the link to exile makes it relevant for diasporic film. As Crofts puts it, 'Another conceptual dividend of Third Cinema is its decisive refutation of the easy Western assumption of the coincidence of ethnic background and home.'<sup>66</sup> Third Cinema filmmaking is in itself a story of displacement. Born out of national-cultural liberation movements in Latin America in the 1950s, remote from metropolitan centres in ideological as well as in linguistic terms, Third theory had suffered the fate of neglect in the Western canon of film-theoretical discourses precisely because the latter is Eurocentric in nature.<sup>67</sup> With its most fervent proponents fleeing repression and persecution, Third Cinema ideas came to reside in Europe and North America in the 1970s. These circumstances made original notions of Third filmmaking, which had defined Third Film *against* First World (Hollywood) and Second World (European auteur cinema), an ambivalent und unrealistic endeavour.<sup>68</sup> Its militant and ideological character made way for flexible ways of

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<sup>63</sup> Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim, "Introduction: Situating World Cinema as a Theoretical Problem," in *Remapping World Cinema. Identity, Culture and Politics in Film*, ed. Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>64</sup> Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism. Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 3.

<sup>65</sup> Dennison and Lim, "Introduction: Situating World Cinema as a Theoretical Problem," 6.

<sup>66</sup> Crofts, "Reconceptualising National Cinema/s," 49.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony R. Guneratne, "Introduction. Rethinking Third Cinema" in *Rethinking Third Cinema*, ed. Anthony R. Guneratne and Wimal Dissanayake (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 10.

<sup>68</sup> Julio García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema" in *New Latin American Cinema*, ed. Michael T Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1997); Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, "Towards a Third

cinematic resistance, created to respond to and resist institutional, economic and political environments. As Anthony Guneratne notes, the current idea of Third Cinema denote polymorphous aesthetic forms of resistance in different cultures and settings, including filmmaking which copies and subverts Hollywood aesthetic and narrative forms, or auteur cinema which successfully avoids becoming exploited by national-cultural politics.<sup>69</sup>

Given the adaptive character of cinematic resistance that Third Cinema suggests, I see diasporic films as 'subtle', idiosyncratic forms of resistance, which respond to a given cultural and institutional framework. Hence, the notion of diasporic hybridity is imbued with a complexity of modes and signifies political resistance. Laura Marks's idea of Hybrid Cinema articulates this nexus which I want to employ for diasporic cinema:

The term 'hybrid cinema' ... implies a hybrid form, mixing documentary, fiction, personal, and experimental genres, as well as different media. By pushing the limits of any genre, hybrid cinema forces each genre to explain itself, to forgo any transparent relationship to the reality it represents, and to make evident the knowledge claims on which it is based. Hybrid cinema is in a position to do archaeology, to dig up the traces that the dominant culture, and for that matter any fixed cultural identity, would just as soon forget. One cannot simply contemplate hybrid (or a work of hybrid cinema): one cannot help but be implicated in the power relations upon which it reflects.<sup>70</sup>

I will now draw closer to issues which concern the position of the diasporic filmmaker and the way their experiences structure diasporic cinema. According to Philip Rosen, Third Cinema includes not only filmmaking in postcolonial nation states, but also the diasporic and socio-political concerns in the work of groups and committed political filmmakers in Western metropolises'.<sup>71</sup> He locates diasporic cinema as a form of political filmmaking conceived and/or created in the Western World. As Bergfelder notes, the ways in which diasporic experience structures cinematic images depends on the ways filmmakers assimilate into host cultures: blending in, identifying with, rejecting the host culture, or engaging with it in cross-cultural manners.<sup>72</sup> According to this taxonomy, a number of scholars view diasporic film as a straightforward product of a filmmaker's personal experience.

Links between filmmaker and film text are analysed as causal and coercive. Bishnupriya Ghosh and Bhaskar Sarkar accentuate home and homelessness in a

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Cinema. Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World" in *New Latin American Cinema*, ed. Michael T Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997).

<sup>69</sup> See Guneratne, "Introduction. Rethinking Third Cinema," 10.

<sup>70</sup> Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>71</sup> Philip Rosen, 395.

<sup>72</sup> Bergfelder, "National, Transnational or Supranational Cinema? Rethinking European Film Studies," 320.

taxonomy which they call 'cinema of displacement'.<sup>73</sup> Negotiating past and present in spatial terms, Ghosh and Sarkar's film analyses explore spatiotemporal characteristics in films where, in narrative and aesthetic terms, individuals and land cannot become one.<sup>74</sup> Ghosh and Sarkar's study links to an understanding of home as part of one's (national) identity, and homelessness as fractured relationship between individual and land. Laura Marks's *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* is an example of a comprehensive work which analyses film as articulation of displacement.<sup>75</sup> She examines films which express cultural memory in terms of bodily experience and she argues that cultural memory is articulated through sensory modes. Another contribution to exile and diaspora in film, Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg's work contains a number of essays which are included under the umbrella term *Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*.<sup>76</sup> Adopting a broadsheet approach to diasporic film, the scholars concentrate on filmmakers in Europe as a second generation of migrants and exiles into Western Europe. The scholars deem displacement, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality as issues most 'pertinent to contemporary migrant and diasporic cinema in Europe'.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, Eva Rueschmann, in her anthology *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities*, is concerned with the 'immigrant filmmaker'. She defines diasporic film as representing personal experience of 'displacements and cultural relocations of their [the filmmaker's] families and communities'.<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to these approaches, in my understanding of diasporic cinema migration, exile and displacement act as source of knowledge. I will demonstrate with reference to Lilienthal's work that diasporic film is not a straightforward communication of personal experience. Rather, the relationship between diasporic filmmaker and subject of diasporic film is one of mediation, intervention and reconciliation. Hjort's definition of 'cosmopolitan transnationalism' highlights this link:

Multiple belonging linked to ethnicity and various trajectories of migration here becomes the basis for a form of transnationalism that is oriented toward the ideal of film as a medium capable of strengthening certain social imaginaries. The emphasis is on the exploration of issues relevant to

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<sup>73</sup> Bishnupriya Ghosh and Bhaskar Sarkar, "The Cinema of Displacement: Towards a Politically Motivated Poetics," *Film Criticism* 20, no. 1-2 (1995-1996): 108.

<sup>74</sup> Ghosh and Sarkar examine the following films: *Perfumed Nightmare* (Kidlat Tahimik, 1978), *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (Stephen Frear, 1988), *Close to Eden* (Nikita Mikhalkov, 1989) and *Canticle of Stones* (Michel Khleifi, 1990).

<sup>75</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*.

<sup>76</sup> Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>78</sup> Eva Rueschmann, "Introduction," in *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities*, ed. Eva Rueschmann (Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2003), xxi.

particular communities situated in a number of different national or subnational locations to which the cosmopolitan auteur has a certain privileged access.<sup>79</sup>

Hjort explains the experiences of the cosmopolitan auteur/filmmaker to enable access to other cultural communities. Their status within these communities is fluid; they enter and exit these groups effortlessly and even occupy an insider status. Critical voices warn that this mobility makes diasporic filmmakers belong to intellectual and social elites whose experiences are championed over those of a majority who are less flexible, less educated and less affluent.<sup>80</sup> I would argue against such a view. The filmmaker might be privileged in the sense that he/she is in contact with a number of social and cultural groups.

However, diasporic cinema, and this is another link to Third Cinema, needs to act as a go-between between top and bottom, linking groups who have political power and those who do not.<sup>81</sup> In this regard, filmmakers may act as spokespersons for a community and assume responsibility to represent political and social issues.

I understand diaspora predominantly as a cultural practice that structures the filmmaking proper. Therefore, diasporic cinema needs a conceptualisation that shifts attention from the filmmaker to embraces horizontal and vertical dimensions of filmmaking. Hamid Naficy's *An Accented Cinema. Diasporic and Exilic Filmmaking* moves beyond a discussion of exile and diaspora as an act of narrative and visual enunciation.<sup>82</sup> Naficy is interested in cinematic practices originating in cultural traditions not native to the western world, which comment on and subvert traditional perceptions of time, space and causality. Drawing on seminal thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, Naficy's text offers a theoretical backbone to a study of diasporic cinema and will form part of my own taxonomy of diasporic cinema. According to Rueschmann, Naficy's work is 'able to combine political, aesthetic, narrative, historical and production aspects of exile and diasporic cinema.'<sup>83</sup> Exploring production methods, distribution, marketing aspects and the constraints of film productions related to the filmmaker's cultural position, Naficy aims for a conceptualisation of what he calls 'accented cinema'. *Accent* is a key term that 'emanates from the displacement of the filmmakers and their

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<sup>79</sup> Hjort, "On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism," 20.

<sup>80</sup> Tim Bergfelder, "Love Beyond the Nation. Cosmopolitan and Transnational Desire in Cinema," in *Europe and Love in Cinema* ed. Jo Labanyi, Karen Diehl and Luisa Passerini (Intellect 2011, unpublished manuscript).

<sup>81</sup> Rey Chow, *Ethics after Idealism: Theory-Culture-Ethnicity-Reading* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 113.

<sup>82</sup> Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>83</sup> Eva Rueschmann, "Introduction," in *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities*, ed. Eva Rueschmann (Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2003), xvii.

artisanal production modes' and is antagonistic to dominant cinema.<sup>84</sup> Exilic and diasporic conditions in filmmaking generate an accented style. The accent cuts through the visual style, biographical and sociocultural location of the filmmaker, their personal and social experiences, and includes modes of production, distribution, exhibition and reception.<sup>85</sup> This style is a result of political, economic, financial and social characteristics specific to each country.

My study shall adhere to this approach of filmmaking as a vertically integrated process. I agree with Naficy that the oppositional nature of diasporic film is established at various points in the course of filmmaking and later on in the channels of their distribution and exhibition patterns. As Naficy notes, pointing to areas where diasporic cinema resists dominant patterns, accented films 'refuse conventions of funding, production, storytelling, and spectator positioning so naturalized by mainstream cinema. Criticism is, therefore, embedded in both their mode of production and in their visual style'.<sup>86</sup>

On the other hand, as Naficy presents a theory about filmmaking, which views displacement and deterritorialisation as a lived experience, he is concerned with the diasporic filmmaker as the primary site of enunciation. For him, diaspora as a migrational process is connected to diasporic cinema as a process of identity formation. Naficy's methodological route via the identity of the filmmaker as a premise for the creation of diasporic cinema involves his recourse to auteurism.<sup>87</sup>

Naficy's case study of the ethnic Armenian-Canadian director Atom Egoyan demonstrates how an accented style develops and changes with the experiences of the filmmaker:

It is important to emphasize that the identification of his accented style in no way diminishes the heterogeneity of his films and the multiplicity of their meanings. My intention is not to reduce him to an essential exilic or ethnic subject. There is none! Rather, it is to analyze his accented style and

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<sup>84</sup> Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>87</sup> The *politique des auteurs* was launched by a group of film critics in the 1950s, among them Francois Truffaut, who wrote for the French film journal *Cahiers du Cinema*. Truffaut attacked French cinema tradition for not paying enough attention to the qualities of the cinematic medium. Subsequently, Andrew Sarris articulated auteurism as an approach to films as a director's personal vision that can be traced in his oeuvre as consistent and recurring stylistic features or textual references. In 1972, film theorist Peter Wollen developed an auteur analysis. This analysis is based in a network of cultural and ideological codes akin to a filmmaker, with methodological reference to linguistics, Marxism and psychoanalysis. See Marvin D'Lugo, "Authorship and the Concept of National Cinema in Spain," in *The Construction of Authorship. Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 329-330 and Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).

the hitherto more or less latent currents, crosscurrents, and structures in his public image and films.<sup>88</sup>

For Naficy, the relationship between film and filmmaker is one of performance and parenting and as such, films need to be viewed as conceived and created predominantly by their authors. He emphasises:

[B]y putting the author back into authorship, I counter a prevalent postmodern tendency, which either celebrates the death of the author or multiplies the authoring effect to the point of de-authoring the text. Accented filmmakers are not just textual structures or fictions within their films; they are also empirical subjects, situated in the interstices of cultures and film practice, who exist outside and prior to their films.<sup>89</sup>

Authorship is an integral part of accented filmmaking, in that the filmmaker is involved in all stages of the filmmaking process up to its distribution and consumption.<sup>90</sup> Naficy even extends a definition of authorship of a film that, beyond reading the author into the text, includes production, distribution and exhibition, and, thus, presents the 'total control of the film'.<sup>91</sup>

Naficy's approach opposes methods that concentrate on a text without referring to the author as a historical, social or political being. More specifically, he resists a poststructuralist approach that de-authors a text and turns over the authority of interpretation to the spectator. A poststructural approach eliminates the political, social, historical or cultural details of the author. As the French philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes, an influential representative of poststructuralism, states in the well-known paper 'The Death of the Author':

A text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture.<sup>92</sup>

In this debate about the position and significance of the author, which resurfaced in the 1960s, Barthes recognises that the text is a compilation of sources and ideas prior to it. An author's articulation is never novel but a reprocessing and imitation of other texts and realities. Barthes claimed that efforts to reconstruct an author of a text would empty out the many meanings that the text can offer. The reader should be the one who gives meaning to the text, not the author:

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<sup>88</sup> Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>92</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 211.

A text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.<sup>93</sup>

Naficy resists this position vehemently, as for him an understanding of the author 'outside and prior to the texts' is necessary.<sup>94</sup> Artistic representations cannot be comprehended from a spectator's perspective without knowledge of the author. This relationship between text and author also suggests that a diasporic text allows only for a finite number of readings.

Certainly, accented cinema's indebtedness to authorship theory acknowledges that authorship can be a marker of empowerment of formerly oppressed voices. In the 1970s, feminists remarked that they were allowed to communicate their opinion as subjects just at the moment when subjecthood was declared problematic.<sup>95</sup> Pam Cook comments, on the limitations of a poststructural viewpoint, that it discards women as authors as well as their texts. Traditionally excluded from public forms of communication, their private forms of discourse, such as diaries or letters, are not considered in a methodological framework that does away with the author.<sup>96</sup> For women, and more recently gay and lesbian theorists, and for postcolonial scholars, their positions as authors continue to be important as sources of non-canonical voices.

However, there are dangers in Naficy's tying cinematic oeuvre and cinematic practices to the filmmaker as a means of his/her identity construction. For one, Naficy's position presumes, in line with the *auteur* theory, that a director is seen as a coherent and self-reflexive individual.<sup>97</sup> As a result, a filmmaker's oeuvre comes to be seen as complete and unified. Moreover, the focus on the author gives less room to consider other, external factors which the filmmaker is not in command of. Cook gives an example of where external forces create limitations for internal intentions (auteurship).<sup>98</sup> Examining small-scale artisanal cinematic ventures, she notes that they occur on the margins of the dominant film industry, a profile and position similar to that of diasporic cinema. As Cook maintains, personal vision is fundamental to these projects. As oppositional statements to dominant forms of cinema, they operate in a 'private language, or idiolect,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>94</sup> See Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 4.

<sup>95</sup> Janet Staiger, "Authorship Approaches," in *Authorship and Film*, ed. David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 49.

<sup>96</sup> Pam Cook, "The Point of Self-Expression in Avant-Garde Film," in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>97</sup> Jan Distelmeyer, *Autor Macht Geschichte* (Gottmadingen: Edition text + kritik, 2005), 22.

<sup>98</sup> Cook, "The Point of Self-Expression in Avant-Garde Film."

[...] and the work becomes strongly autobiographical, poetic, and/or epistolary in form'.<sup>99</sup> Since these productions are small-scale, the filmmaker usually has oversight of and participates in all stages of film production. Nevertheless, the 'self-inscription' of filmmakers is limited due to industrial practices in which production, distribution and exhibition of artisanal production take place. The filmmaker's degree of autonomy depends on and is limited to these given industrial and ideological structures.

I side with scholars who see the author as a construction. Cook notes: 'The more complex, historical approach to authorship demonstrates the partiality of different methods of studying cinema, rather than posing one method as more adequate than others'.<sup>100</sup> A multifaceted and therefore more reliable perspective values a more mediated form of authorship and includes reception practices because this dimension, too, might result in ideas vital to determine a filmmaker's cultural position.

The work of Michael Foucault offers a resolution to the conflicting principles of poststructuralist theory and auteurism. In a response to Barthes' death-of-the-author theory, Foucault is concerned with the function of the author, who determines how, where and which kind of discourse can take place.<sup>101</sup> In doing so, Foucault realigns text and author, narrowing interpretations down to the social spaces that an author inhabits. What makes Foucault attractive for minority discourses is the question of positioning:

Under what and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what positions does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse?<sup>102</sup>

This is a valuable approach in that it brings to the fore by means of the text the kinds of limitations, injustice and oppressions which an author as a social being endures.

Stuart Hall, whose work is concerned with Caribbean cinema as a context in which to process the colonial experience and enunciate a position that counters dominant Western discourses about Africa, views the cinematic text as a means of producing cultural identity. He echoes Foucault in his declaration that 'we all write and speak from a particular place and time, from history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', positioned'.<sup>103</sup> In other words, a text would reflect a cultural self-

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>100</sup> Pam Cook, "Auteur Theory after Structuralism," in *The Cinema Book*, ed. Pam Cook (London: BFI, 2007), 461.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Foucault, "What Is an Author (Extract)," in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 284.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>103</sup> Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 222.

understanding created by the social position of the author. David Gerstner's summary of scholarly work on the African-American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux reads as follows:

The recording of the author's experience as valid, as worthwhile, not only grants privilege to the writer, but provides a site where author and spectator/reader might convene in a cultural sphere in which such pleasures of identification are in short supply.<sup>104</sup>

Gerstner's realliance with poststructuralism includes both of these perspectives - that of the author and that of the spectator. He opens up a new way of approaching the cinematic text; not in terms of only author or only spectator but as a location where author and spectator can meet.

Similarly, Janet Staiger asserts that authorship studies are vital for and important as voices of the subaltern, 'where locating moments of alternative practice take away the naturalised privileges of normativity'.<sup>105</sup> Based on Foucault's ideas, she proposes that studies in auteurism take their point of departure from poststructural theories of subject and agency. Staiger's so called 'authorship as signature' approach traces an author through various texts that underline the idiosyncrasies of the author's work. Contrary to Naficy's theory of accented cinema, this approach does not assume causality in an author's personality on the basis of psychoanalytical explanations but pays attention to 'insistent cultural, social, and political contexts' to which an author is exposed, and the positions they inhabit in these contexts.<sup>106</sup> This view accounts for the cultural environment that has shaped an author's view, but does not deny conscious or intentional effort on the part of the author either. It avoids a trajectory that assigns meaning to the text solely by means of the author but traces the text as an artefact of circumstances to which an author is exposed.

According to Foucault, 'the author's name characterizes a particular manner of existence of discourse. [...] its status and its manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates'.<sup>107</sup> This notion brings the perspective of the spectator back as a valuable component of this debate. A poststructural viewpoint combined with auteurism views the artistic text as a site that discloses the social and cultural positions of an author by the kind of discourses that take place around his texts. This both devalues authorship in its monolithic significance and assigns the spectator a more limited function. As Hall notes, an author positions himself as much as he finds himself

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<sup>104</sup> David A. Gerstner, "The Practices of Authorship," in *Authorship and Film*, ed. David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 19.

<sup>105</sup> Staiger, "Authorship Approaches," 27.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>107</sup> Foucault, "What Is an Author (Extract)," 284.

positioned.<sup>108</sup> An approach to diasporic cinema, therefore, should evaluate cinematic projects from diverging perspectives, including the filmmaker, their cultural environment and the discourses in and around his texts, in order to obtain a picture that discloses the interferences and discrepancies between those positions. These elements will structure my thesis.

### **Diasporic Cinema and National Cinema - Convergence, Difference and Criticism**

As I have argued previously, diasporic films are not made in a vacuum, but are confined by the dynamics of nation states. Cultural and political institutions, regulations and practices have great impact on the modalities under which these films are produced, distributed and exhibited, and determine the potentials of diasporic cinema. Naturally, this environment can restrict the effectiveness of diasporic cinema. On the other hand, hegemonic structures can propel the distribution of diasporic films within and outside of national borders, and find them additional audiences. The various points of interaction with hegemonic cinematic structures, the communication, the collisions, and also overlapping between the interests of national cinema and diasporic cinema form a focus of my thesis on the work of filmmaker Peter Lilienthal.

I will demonstrate that diasporic films do not merely inhabit a niche position in national cinema, but can become part of a group of films which establish the centrepiece of national cinema. Naficy, describing the production, distribution and exhibition modes of accented cinema, mentions a number of outlets typically associated with independent, alternative and avant-garde films, such as television cables Channel Four, ARTE, PBS or the Sundance Film Channel.<sup>109</sup> Preferred exhibition sites of accented cinema are film festivals and educational settings, among them university film classes and courses. This suggests that diasporic films acquire positions within the art cinema circuit.

Steve Neale notes that art film has been utilised in post-war European cinemas to mark national territory in cultural and economic competition with other national cinemas and against the American film industry.<sup>110</sup> Films are classified as art film when they follow national-cultural traditions, are aesthetically sophisticated and/or textually intricate, and therefore able to cater to an educated, typically middle-class audience. The selection and utilisation of films as part of the canon of national cinema happens through award

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<sup>108</sup> Hall, p. 225.

<sup>109</sup> Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 43-44.

<sup>110</sup> Steve Neale, "Art Cinema as Institution," *Screen* 22, no. 1 (1981).

schemes, prizes, grants and loans and in 'specialist distribution channels and exhibition venues',<sup>111</sup> such as film festivals, specialist television slots, and rare modes such as campus screenings. With this, art film becomes the favoured route to express and perpetuate a national-cultural identity.

Recent scholarship has attacked art cinema for its adherence to high culture, Western bourgeois values and its Eurocentric tendencies.<sup>112</sup> Thus, the position of diasporic film in the networks and formations of art cinema is a mixed blessing. Diasporic films might be subsumed in the national film canon, which infringes on and weakens their fundamental nature as alternative cultural practice. They become part of the discursive formations of art cinema, that is located in well-defined, narrow boundaries; high art versus popular genres, addressing a certain faction within audiences, a national-cultural product that defines itself against the 'cultural mesh' and 'popular trash' of the Hollywood industry. Moreover, as art cinema privileges auteurs, and prefers authorship as a championed discursive means, this distracts from the function of diasporic film as social and political counter-practice rather than art and/or entertainment. As Neale argues:

In giving a coherent rationale both to the policies and to the films they produce (they are all instances of 'self-expression' — hence their eclectic heterogeneity), authorship serves partly as a means by which to avoid coming to terms with the concept of film as social practice.<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, the name of the author is utilised to perpetuate films as national ambassadors within and outside of domestic borders. Neale notes, "The name of the author can function as a 'brand name', a means of labeling and selling a film and of orienting expectation and channeling meaning and pleasure in the absence of generic boundaries and categories'.<sup>114</sup> Films produced in these structures become part of national identity constructions at home, and are sold to an international audience as 'sign of their national origin'.<sup>115</sup> Diasporic filmmakers, willingly or not, are part and parcel of promoting national concerns and selling a national identity to domestic and foreign audiences through their linkage with dominant production, distribution and exhibition practices.

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<sup>111</sup> Crofts, "Reconceptualising National Cinema/s," 45.

<sup>112</sup> Bergfelder, "National, Transnational or Supranational Cinema? Rethinking European Film Studies," 316-18.

<sup>113</sup> Steve Neal, "Art Cinema as Institution," *Screen* 22, no. 1 (1981): 37.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

Nevertheless, there are a number of ways in which diasporic film by its very nature disrupts such processes of aligning film with national identity. Higson noted in his original paper on national cinema that it is structured by elements such as subject matter, narrative themes, traditions and sources, the use of a certain aesthetic tool set, the structure of space and time, and how it engages spectators' knowledge.<sup>116</sup> By occupying the same distribution channels, such as art films, diasporic film is likely to distract from rather than perpetuate national identity myths or cultural narratives. Actors with various cultural backgrounds participate in making a film, which affect its themes and style. Hence, diasporic films attend to stories, people and landscapes often 'marginalised' by the nation's concern, and in this way revise gender representations and stereotypes. The films are likely to operate with forms which do not adhere to Western cinematic patterns of structuring time and space.

Art cinema has to negotiate and uphold the idea of film as national product, smoothing over the transnational nature of film. Mark Betz notes:

European art films have ... been left free to carry on as signifiers of stable national cinemas and identities or as gleaming expressions of their auteur's vision, somehow not blurred by the quite specific determinants of cross-national cooperation that leave their marks everywhere on the film, from its budget to its shooting locations to its cast to its soundtrack.<sup>117</sup>

In an effort to safeguard the notion of art films as national-cultural product, authorship and language function as two mutually supporting strategies. According to Betz, the national language in the soundtrack and the national character of the director 'form an almost inviolable bond'.<sup>118</sup> While authorship serves to provide the film as authentic national-cultural product, language executes this association on the level of the film text. Moreover, language is an ideological tool used to address a specific audience. According to Stephen Heath, 'Sound... sustains certain class definitions of cinema, confirming a normalization of the audience in terms of the generalizing of middle-class ideology'.<sup>119</sup> Language structures and gives sense to the image and organises, even monopolises its space and time.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Higson, "The Concept of National Cinema," 37-38.

<sup>117</sup> Mark Betz, "The Name above the (Sub)Title: Internationalism, Coproduction and Polyglot European Art Cinema," *Camera Obscura* 16, no. 1 (2001): 9.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.: 17.

<sup>119</sup> Stephen Heath, "Questions of Property. Film and Nationhood," in *Explorations in Film Theory. Selected Essays from Ciné-Tracts*, ed. Ron Burnett (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 183.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 184.

The multilingualism of diasporic film is one of the features, which threatens the efficiency of hegemonic cinematic strategies. Often, parts of or the entire soundtrack is dubbed and/or subtitled for domestic exhibition. The use of a non-national language, then, to take Heath's argument in the reverse direction, circumvents class classification and pulls audiences out of their comfort zones, thereby providing various image-sound associations rather than stipulating the meaning of the image. Diasporic films have the potential to break the dichotomy between high and low, because as hybrids, the films are amalgams of various cultural traditions and linguistic spheres. Moreover, the use of different languages draws attention to film as transnational venture rather than national vision – as the politics of art cinema wants national audiences to believe.

The self-reflexivity of diasporic film reveals *ex negativo* what national cinema and national identity is at a given moment. An analysis of the reception of diasporic film, for example, can provide information about current, favoured subjects and discourses. It is in the conflict of expectations and what is presented on the screen that diasporic film magnifies the desires and anxieties which structure national-cultural identity. Philip Rosen has put it aptly, 'The experience and politics of diaspora and hybridity make the processes and strains of constructing unities more overt and exposed'.<sup>121</sup>

While diasporic cinema has the potential to unsettle formations of art film as a signifier of a stable national identity from within, these characteristics might be bought and sold as the nation's own in the international film circuit since the term national is made and remade there. Film festivals are sites where national film product and international audiences meet. In other words, the expectations of what a German, French or Italian film is converge with national strategies to assign films these values.<sup>122</sup>

This can create a situation where more than one country claims diasporic films and/or filmmakers as their national property, particularly when the film is successful. Senta Siewert has noted that Fatih Akin's film *Gegen die Wand/Head-On* (2004), after winning the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, was appropriated by both the German and Turkish press as a national achievement.<sup>123</sup> It is an instance that makes overt diasporic film's double occupancy, a term which Elsaesser has coined to define 'a

<sup>121</sup> Rosen, "Nation and Anti-Nation: Concepts of National Cinema in the "New" Media Era," 398.

<sup>122</sup> D'Lugo, "Authorship and the Concept of National Cinema in Spain," 337. See also Thomas Elsaesser, "European Culture, National Cinema, the Auteur and Hollywood," in *European Cinema. Face to Face with Hollywood*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 38.

<sup>123</sup> Senta Siewert, "Soundtracks of Double Occupancy. Sampling Sounds and Cultures in Fatih Akin's *Head On*," in *Mind the Screen. Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser*, ed. Jaap Kooijman, Patricia Pisters, and Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 198.

filmmaking and film-viewing community that crosses cultural and hyphenates ethnic borders'.<sup>124</sup> The double occupancy of diasporic film might even be a national selling point. Apart from strategies that promote national-cultural values, economic issues are at stake - in order to be of interest for foreign buyers, a representative national film has to negotiate not only national specificities but engage with extra-national discourses and issues at the level of text and/or form.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, nations need to select original and creative films, which make sense in a cross-cultural context rather than be too culturally particular. On the downside, Alan Meek warns us that in an international circuit socio-political films might be prone to processes of depoliticisation: 'The role of cinema in dramatising localised political struggles – including those of immigrant communities and ethnic minorities – has in some respects been subverted through the internationalising of film production and distribution'.<sup>126</sup> As diasporic cinema rarely addresses *local* power struggles, their text is foreign to most audiences. There is always the danger that the political nature of the films might not come across.

Despite these pitfalls, in the dynamic between national aims and transnational forces, the circulation of diasporic film in international film festivals creates additional economic, cultural and academic venues, which propel the films out of a national straightjacket and bestow on them meaning in other discursive contexts. Marks maintains that in the circulation of intercultural cinema, each context of exhibition adds another layer of meaning through different spectatorships.<sup>127</sup>

To conclude, the national appropriation of diasporic films can open up a space for oppositional enunciation. Once diasporic filmmakers acquire auteur status, a heightened recognition of their work results, which in turn facilitates their access to funding sources, distribution channels and exhibition sites. In this regard, diasporic filmmakers differ from other displaced filmmakers who do not enjoy such a status; they are displaced because they struggle to find funding, locate their audience and altogether strain to survive in a global market.<sup>128</sup> But diasporic filmmakers, as I will demonstrate in the case of Lilienthal, might utilise their acknowledged position within national-cultural networks to bring in

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<sup>124</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "Introduction," in *European Cinema. Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 27.

<sup>125</sup> Crofts, "Reconceptualising National Cinema/s."

<sup>126</sup> Allan Meek, "A Century of Exiles. National Cinemas and Transnational Mediascapes," in *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities*, ed. Eva Rueschmann (2003), 12.

<sup>127</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 20.

<sup>128</sup> Marvin D'Lugo, "Transnational Film Authors and the State of Latin American Cinema," in *Film and Authorship*, ed. Virginia Wright Wexman (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 113.

exilic film personnel. Thus, they open institutions of national cinema further to include Other experiences and perspectives.

Resulting from these deliberations, my study will address the following questions: How does diasporic cinema function as oppositional practice? In what ways is diasporic cinema embedded in hegemonic economic, financial structures and institutions? How do these frameworks propel, support or limit its strength?

### **Thesis and Chapter Outline**

This thesis situates Peter Lilienthal's films within a diasporic framework. I propose that Lilienthal's cinematic works promote homelessness as a survival strategy of living with and in-between other cultures. This notion of homelessness as a strategy originates in Lilienthal's own diasporic autobiography and shapes his production methods, aesthetics and themes. Film and filmmaking are vehicles for stories of anxiety, awareness, solidarity and hope in place where social turmoil has its grip on individuals.

In chapter 2 I begin my discussion with an overview of Lilienthal's life which is informed by an interview, which I conducted with the filmmaker in May 2007 (see a shortened version of this interview in Appendix A). Relying partly on Naficy's approach that pursues filmmakers as 'empirical subjects, situated in the interstices of cultures and film practise, who exist outside and prior to their films',<sup>129</sup> I also draw on Foucault and Staiger's insights, which, as discussed earlier, identify the cultural environment and social position of the author as instructive to the understanding of his texts. While Lilienthal's themes invite comparisons with filmmakers such as Werner Herzog and Edgar Reitz, his repertoire and perspectives differ from these authors in significant respects. Chapter 2 will examine these differences in greater detail. Lilienthal's practices are a reaction to social, political and cultural developments in Western Europe: the engagement with social realities outside of West Germany embodies resistance to a film culture whose thematic interests and aesthetic parameters became increasingly settled in German traditions and hegemonic discourse structures. I suggest an alternative epistemological framework for Lilienthal's films, demonstrating that Third Cinema beyond its original political and cultural context can account for Lilienthal's cinema in terms of a 'politics of otherness', which is a questioning of dominant cultural discourses from the viewpoint of the cultural outsider.

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<sup>129</sup> Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 4.

The commitment to a diasporic lifestyle, which is favoured over kinship in national terms, is a recurrent theme in Lilienthal's films. Chapter 3 emphasises the filmmaker's awareness of and engagement with Jewish issues. The analysed films, *David* and *Angesichts der Wälder/Facing the Forests* (1994) introduce protagonists with issues of historical conditions to the Jewish Diaspora in Germany and representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *David* and *Facing the Forests* discuss figures which are 'nomadic,' but also those which appear to be more 'settled'. These films' main characters, David (*David*) and Noach (*Facing the Forests*), hold unorthodox views which clash with and break the rigidity of an established culture. I will analyse specific textual strategies in these films which establish channels of communication between individuals who belong to different groups and cultures.

The films discussed in chapter 4 deal with Latin America. While *La Victoria* and *The Uprising* specifically document the rise of left-wing parties in Chile and Nicaragua, the majority of Lilienthal's projects comment on everyday life in violent and uncertain conditions, which became Latin America's predicament in the 1970s and the 1980s. *Calm Prevails over the Country* (CPOTC), *The Autograph*, *Der Radfahrer* and *Camilo* draw attention to political crises and social repercussions caused by fascist or authoritarian regimes and condemn the oppression of liberal and democratic voices. I will explore the context and circumstances of the making of CPOTC and *The Uprising*, which chart a transformation from conditions of exile towards practices of diaspora. While offering more extensive film analyses of CPOTC and *The Uprising*, I will talk about all of the above mentioned films. Tropes of the early films re-appear in subsequent ones, and altogether, contain analyses of the Latin American society from the early 1970s up to the present.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, the reception of Lilienthal's films in different cultural contexts and different circles of spectatorship produces interesting results. Drawing on film reviews and interviews of the time, I compare the reception of CPOTC in West and East Germany. The diasporic character of Lilienthal's films promotes their appropriation and (mis-)use for national strategies and ideological agendas in both Germanys. In terms of reception, both East and West Germany claimed the film as part of their respective national cinema: for West German film critics the film matched the socio-critical agenda of the New German Cinema whereas East German film reviews valued its portrayal of capitalist power structures. I will argue that diasporic films are culturally migrating entities. Moreover, I will illustrate how diasporic cinema is being 'adopted' in different contexts to serve hegemonic ideologies.

Chapter 6 concludes this study. Summing up the most important findings, here I explain again how diasporic homelessness guides Lilienthal's work and practices and how it is present in the narratives and aesthetic of his films. I will discuss a definition of diasporic cinema that is specific to Lilienthal's cinema but also contains ideas which might advance this theory. This chapter ends with suggestions on further research projects for which the present study provides a point of departure.

## Chapter 2

### Locations. Lilienthal's Cinema in and beyond Germany

In this chapter, I aim to explore Lilienthal's position in West German film and television culture. While over the last forty or so years Lilienthal has been a driving force in setting up institutional frameworks to support cinematic culture in West Germany, his filmmaking practices, subjects and style suggest that he often resisted the West German cultural zeitgeist.

Lilienthal's biographical background sets the parameters for his cultural position and defines his agenda as filmmaker. Born to German-Jewish parents, Lilienthal fled the Nazi regime in 1939 and settled in Montevideo, Uruguay. Uruguay's social and cultural environment marked his later childhood years.<sup>1</sup> Lilienthal always perceived this country in terms of freedom and liberation from the racist reality of Nazi Germany and remarked, 'Whatever these cultivated Europeans said to me, I didn't understand. I really loved the Latin Americans.'<sup>2</sup> Being fluent in Spanish, the first language of his maternal grandmother, a Sephardic Jew, probably facilitated and accelerated his integration into the Uruguayan context. For his mother and grandmother and many other Jewish émigrés, however, their move was a loss – loss of their home country, family members and friends, material possessions and social status. Going to South America represented a brutal uprooting of their lives. While Lilienthal's mother had enjoyed an affluent lifestyle back in Germany, in her new life she occupied a lower social status, which came as a shock to her.<sup>3</sup> Alongside her friends, most of them German emigrants, she bemoaned their loss of social status and poor economic subsistence.

Lilienthal spent his formative years in a guesthouse that provided the source of income for his family. In this environment he encountered social inequalities, cultural differences and individual predicaments. The *Hotel Pension Brazil* became a dwelling for

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<sup>1</sup> Uruguay accepted Jewish migrants much more willingly than other South American countries, such as Brazil or Argentina. Between 1933 and 1939, approximately 6,000-9,000 Jewish immigrants arrived here. The political structures in the country provided a tolerant environment for the German Jews. Uruguay's long-standing democratic tradition was unique in Latin America. The country's legislation had set into place pluralist political structures that also empowered lower social classes. The country's foreign affairs took a direction which offered another reason for the Jewish community to feel secure. Sided with the Axis powers until 1936, with the election of a new president the country broke off their diplomatic relations with Nazi Germany, and instead, strengthened their political and economic relations with the United States and the United Kingdom. See Sonja Wegner, "German-Speaking Emigrants in Uruguay 1933-1945," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 42, no. 1 (1997): 239 and Aidin Rankin, "Reflections on the Non-Revolution in Uruguay," *New Left Review*, no. 211 (1995).

<sup>2</sup> Annette Insdorf, "A Passion for Social Justice. An Interview with Peter Lilienthal," *Cineaste* 11 (1982).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

the uprooted and displaced, a community in constant flux; new guests, many of them emigrants from other South American countries and Europe. With responsibilities in the kitchen, running errands and serving the guests, Lilienthal was involved in the daily hotel routines from an early age. He felt most attracted to the people working in the kitchen. As the son of an upper class, educated, albeit impoverished family, Lilienthal felt privileged compared to the kind of problems and sorrows lower social classes need to solve.<sup>4</sup>

Both the exile status of his family and his upbringing in South America provide a point of departure for an understanding of Lilienthal's filmmaking philosophy. This environment is determined by negotiations between his identity as a Jew, as a German, as a European and as son of a middle class family, among others. Having grown up as part of an uprooted community started his lifelong, deep-felt compassion for individuals who are at the mercy of, and often fail to benefit from dominant political powers. The stories, dreams and traumas of exiles with their fractured personalities affected Lilienthal's distinctive social and political views. And his filmmaking comes to reflect an everlasting fascination with the phenomenon of exile.

### **Lilienthal's Involvement in German Film Culture**

Lilienthal's status as one of the most important alternative filmmakers in West Germany originates in his work for television. After his return to West Germany in 1956, he studied at the *Hochschule der Künste* in Berlin with sculptor Hans Uhlmann. *Im Handumdrehen verdient* ('Earned in no time', 1959), a film he made during this time about an organ-grinder, gained him employment at the SWF in Baden-Baden. There, he served as assistant director to Ludwig Cremer, an actor, director and radio playwright.

In the early 1960s, the narrative formats of West German television moved between radio play, theatre and cinema. Lilienthal was one of the pioneers of this medium. His skills as a filmmaker matured in an environment that allowed for experimenting and required improvisation. Lacking a proper studio, filming often took place in a sports hall. Lilienthal and his colleagues put ideas into practice without much interference from artistic directors or directors of programming.<sup>5</sup> His first pieces for the SWF were television dramas (*Fernsehspiele*). Modelled on theatre and radio plays, television

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Egon Netenjacob, "In paradiesischen Zeiten. Interview mit Peter Lilienthal," in *Es geht auch anders. Gespräche über Leben, Film und Fernsehen*, ed. Egon Netenjacob (Berlin: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Bertz+Fischer, 2006), 108-112.

dramas were live recordings of plays in a theatre or studio.<sup>6</sup> Lilienthal, who initially filmed stage productions by Heinz Hilpert and Gustav Rudolf Sellner,<sup>7</sup> recalls that people with a theatre background often lacked understanding of the technicalities and terminology of television.<sup>8</sup> By the early 1960s, television films came to resemble the narrative conventions of cinema and were about to replace television dramas. Lilienthal befriended Benno Meyer-Wehlack, a television playwright, whose works *Die Nachbarskinder* ('Neighbour's Children', 1960) and *Stück für Stück* ('Piece after Piece', 1962) were the earliest two television films (*Fernsehbfilme*) which he directed on his own. *Stück für Stück* initiated cooperation between Lilienthal and photographer Michael Ballhaus, who was employed at the SWF as well. By the mid-1960s though, SWF had introduced more rigid structures, which caused Lilienthal to leave. Subsequently, in 1964 he worked as freelance director for the *Sender Freies Berlin* (SFB), a local broadcasting service that had just been launched.

Lilienthal became affiliated with the *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) in 1970 as commissioned filmmaker, which was his longest standing professional association. Since then, most of his work has been produced by this broadcaster. Lilienthal's commitment to the ZDF was a *carte blanche* arrangement that gave him great freedom for the execution of his ideas. He was free in the choice of his subjects, given the financial means to produce his films and provided with audiences, as the finished project was guaranteed broadcasting. In this fashion, the ZDF co-financed all of Lilienthal's films throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As result of the Film and Television Agreement, signed by the channels *Allgemeiner Rundfunk Deutschlands* (ARD) and ZDF and the Film Subsidies Board in 1974, which committed both television and cinema to the funding and financing of films, *La Victoria* (1973), *CPOTC* and *The Uprising*, parallel to their television broadcasting, were also screened in cinemas.<sup>9</sup> Some of Lilienthal's films were selected as official German entries in international film festivals, such *The Uprising*, which was in competition in Venice in 1980. As a result, Lilienthal's films found a much wider distribution, and a more diversely structured spectatorship beyond television. These arrangements boosted Lilienthal's recognition in the international film circuit.

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<sup>6</sup> Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2005), 91.

<sup>7</sup> Both were important figures in the German theatre scene from the 1920s onwards. Hilpert acted for the *Berliner Volksbühne* in the 1920s and was stage director of *Deutsches Theater Berlin* in the 1920s and 1930s. Sellner was dramatic advisor for a number of German theatres.

<sup>8</sup> Netenjacob, "In paradiesischen Zeiten. Interview mit Peter Lilienthal."

<sup>9</sup> Roswitha Müller, "From Public to Private: Television in the Federal Republic of Germany," *New German Critique*, no. 50 (1990): 47-48.

The framework in which Lilienthal's films were conceived and realised, was the niche series *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*, in whose structure and programming he became actively involved. *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* was headed by Eckart Stein, who aspired for it to be a 'showcase for new talent' in West Germany and beyond.<sup>10</sup> Stein worked closely with a number of filmmakers in order to find and support such talent, and Lilienthal's collaboration with the editor shaped the programme considerably. In effect, the series accommodated national and international filmmakers. *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel* was important for the career of a number of German filmmakers, including Werner Schroeter and Christian Ziewer.<sup>11</sup> The worker's film (*Arbeiterfilm*), a genre that is primarily associated with Ziewer (*Liebe Mutter, mir geht es gut* / *Dear Mother, I'm ok*, 1971) blossomed through this series.<sup>12</sup> It was also a platform for women directors such as Ulrike Ottinger (*Madame X- eine absolute Herrscherin* / *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, 1978; *Bildnis einer Trinkerin. Aller jamais retour* / *Portrait of a Female Drunkard. Ticket of No Return*, 1979) and Helke Sander (*Die Allseits reduzierte Persönlichkeit-Redupers*, [\*The All-Around Reduced Personality\*](#), 1977; *Der subjektive Faktor*, 1981). Films by Theo Angelopoulos from Greece, Sohrab Sahid Saless from Iran and Jakov Lind from Israel were screened in the series. Arguably, Lilienthal introduced a number of his Chilean colleagues to Stein because *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* broadcast films by Valeria Sarmiento, Helvio Soto, Raoul Ruiz and Antonio Skarmeta. Thus, in their weekly late evening slot and thanks to Lilienthal's contribution, *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* provided a creative forum for novel artistic forms, covering a range of topics from various cultural perspectives, such as '... racism, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, the yellow press, the penal system, state surveillance, prostitution, urban redevelopment, or unemployment'.<sup>13</sup> Roswitha Müller comments on the great breadth of socio-political themes covered in West German television at the time, as 'a spectrum of view- points large enough to accommodate programs to which even Brecht would have subscribed'.<sup>14</sup> Elsaesser has described television, in particular *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*, as the second tier of New German Cinema.<sup>15</sup> I would argue that this observation is not quite correct. The fact that the ZDF (co)-financed a number of films made by non-German

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<sup>10</sup> Sheila Johnston, "Eckart Stein in an Interview with Sheila Johnston. The Radical Film Funding of ZDF," *Screen* 23, no. 1 (1982): 66.

<sup>11</sup> See Michelle Langford, *Allegorical Images: Tableau, Time and Gestures in the Cinema of Werner Schroeter* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2006), 34. For the women filmmakers of the New German Cinema see Julia Knight, *Women and the New German Cinema* (London: Verso, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Müller, "From Public to Private: Television in the Federal Republic of Germany," 48.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (London: BFI, 1988), 215.

<sup>14</sup> Müller, "From Public to Private: Television in the Federal Republic of Germany," 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, 32-35.

filmmakers and exhibited their work in *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* suggests that this was a forum that extended beyond the more limited national focus of the New German Cinema. A further examination of the transnational character of the programme falls out of the scope of this study, however.

Aside from his work as a filmmaker, Lilienthal contributed to the shape and public image of German film culture in other roles and functions. He was a lecturer at the *Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin* (German Film and Television Academy Berlin, dffb) and co-founded the *Filmverlag der Autoren* (Film Authors Distribution Cooperative), an initiative to finance and distribute films. Lilienthal was also director of the department for film and media art at the *Akademie der Künste* (Academy of Arts) between 1985 and 1996.

Inaugurated in 1966, the dffb was the first film school in West Germany and was intended as a creative workshop for film students. Lilienthal's appointment lasted for less than a year, however. Disappointed by the lack of collaboration between colleagues, he felt the increasing bureaucratisation of the academy to be in contrast to the open-minded artistic spirit in which the school was initially set up.<sup>16</sup> He resigned from his post in 1968. A similar pattern marks Lilienthal's following engagements. In 1971, Lilienthal co-founded the *Filmverlag* with Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Thomas Schamoni, among others, in an effort to seize the potential for collaboration that the *Autorenkino* presented at that time.<sup>17</sup> This could have transformed filmmaking in West Germany into an autonomous scheme independent of subsidies from the German government. However, the *Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (Young German Film Committee), a governmental funding scheme established in 1965, guided film production increasingly according to national interests and monopolised resources. In effect, many more burning subjects became neglected. This tendency seized the *Filmverlag* as well. Lilienthal left the institution in 1974 because his experiences as well as his beliefs departed from a cinematic culture which, as a result of fierce competition for subsidies, failed to produce joint efforts, but instead merged cinematic ventures into single-person businesses.<sup>18</sup>

During his appointment as director of the *Akademie der Künste*, Lilienthal founded the European Summer Academy in collaboration with Siegfried Zielinski, professor at the *Universität der Künste Berlin* (Berlin University of the Arts), philosopher Dietmar

<sup>16</sup> Michael Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden* (Frankfurt: Verlag der Autoren, 2001), 31.

<sup>17</sup> For more information see Dominik Wessely's documentary *Gegenschuss – Aufbruch der Filmemacher* (Reverse Angle – Rebellion of the Filmmakers, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden*, 31-33.

Kampner and Eckhart Stein, the creative mind behind *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel*.<sup>19</sup> The team invited people from various backgrounds for interdisciplinary discussions and art projects. However, questioning the validity of culture as a national concern - what public memory should include and exclude - Lilienthal held views which caused frictions and conflicts within the Academy.<sup>20</sup> The dissent became public when he stepped down from his post in 1996. With this decision, his objections to the type of events planned for the 300-year anniversary of the Academy became public. Lilienthal had voted for venues that would reflect self-criticism and argued for less self-celebration of the *Akademie der Künste*, which included exhibitions about artists not admitted to the *Academy* over the centuries, and revealing the instances where this institution had been compliant with contemporary political power. His resignation was also an act of protest against the planned move of the *Akademie* to the *Pariser Platz* in Berlin, which he judged to imply 'too much historicism and an inaccurate representation'.<sup>21</sup> Instead of hosting the *Akademie* in a charged historical spot, Lilienthal suggested a tent. In an interview with the *Berliner Zeitung*, he says:

One can rent such a nice, big, inflatable tent, and set it up sometimes in Potsdam, sometimes in Bonn. Sometimes we take it to Paris, do a lecture here, a workshop or a performance there [...]. That is the mobility we need. That is the philosophy of placelessness, modern nomadism. If we tie ourselves down – this is the culture of the past.<sup>22</sup>

This quote indicates how Lilienthal views cultural production as something that needs to be free from constraints, across and between national borders. I will use these ideas as a bridge to the thematic and aesthetic patterns of Lilienthal's cinema from the early 1960s up to the present, which I outline in my next section.

### **Towards a Political-Realist Cinema**

From early on in his career, West German audiences felt uneasy about Lilienthal's films. In the 1960s, a company called *Infratest* measured audience satisfaction by having viewers evaluate television programmes on a scale between -10 and +10. Film critic

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<sup>19</sup> Siegfried Zielinski – Biography", [www.egs.edu/faculty/zielinski.html](http://www.egs.edu/faculty/zielinski.html), last accessed on 29 September 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Volker Müller, "Diese Akademie hat ein krankes Herz," *Berliner Zeitung*, 5 March 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. The *Pariser Platz* is just adjacent to the Brandenburger Tor. Before WWII, The Academy of Arts was situated at the *Pariser Platz*, alongside grand buildings and fine hotels which flanked the plaza, being a centre spot of Berlin. In the last days of WWII, the *Pariser Platz* and most of its buildings were heavily bombarded by air raids. After the erection of the Berlin Wall, the territory was part of the death zone. In the 1990s, the plaza was rebuilt in order to revive the glamour that it once had.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Peter W. Jansen noted in a newspaper article in 1970 that Lilienthal's films were notoriously located in the lower part of this spectrum.<sup>23</sup> He mentions in the same text:

Television can afford to hold on to an author like Lilienthal even though spectators show an evident disaffection, who from their viewpoint, is difficult, arid, and unwilling to adjust [to ideas of contemporary television]. The cinema would have tamed Lilienthal long ago.<sup>24</sup>

During his time at the dffb in Berlin, Lilienthal's students complained that his films did not fit in with the zeitgeist.<sup>25</sup> But what was the zeitgeist of German television at the time? Lilienthal's films commented on the social environment that the filmmaker perceived and observed in contemporary West Germany. His first films with the SWF, *Biographie eines Schokoladentages* ('Biography of a chocolate day', 1961), *Der 18. Geburtstag* ('The eighteenth birthday', 1961), *Stück für Stück, Schule der Geläufigkeit* ('School for familiarity', 1962), *Martyrium des Peter O'Hey* ('Martyrdom of Peter O'Hey', 1964) and *Seraphine* (1964) trace familial conflicts as a problem caused by the trauma of WWII, which was all too familiar to most West German families.<sup>26</sup> Yet, having grown up amongst marginalized, displaced individuals, Lilienthal's work, which was often based in the work of authors with similar life experiences to his own, had a character which was incompatible with that of contemporary West German television. The latter shifted towards popular and entertaining themes over the course of the 1960s. Hollywood productions became increasingly part of television programming, which introduced American narrative models to West German audiences.<sup>27</sup> With these developments towards lighter narrative and aesthetic formats, Lilienthal's films hardly matched the contemporary experiences, expectations and viewing habits of ordinary West German audiences.

Lilienthal's early television work drew on authors of his generation who had experienced and articulated a fractured relation to their 'home' country that mirrored his own. Lilienthal adapted two plays by Spanish playwright, novelist and poet Fernando Arrabal, *Picknick im Felde* ('Picnic on the battlefield', 1962) and *Guernica - Jede Stunde verletzt und die letzte tötet* ('Guernica – Each hour harms and the last one kills', 1963). An opponent of the Franco regime, Arrabal had emigrated to France. *Martyrium des Peter o'Hey* is based on a play by Slawomir Mrozek, a Polish dissident. The latter's protest against Poland's involvement in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which was printed in a

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<sup>23</sup> Peter W. Jansen, "Negationen des Mediums. Zu den Filmen von Peter Lilienthal," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 30 May 1970.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden*, 16.

<sup>27</sup> Bergfelder, *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s*, 88.

number of European newspapers, had resulted in his plays being banned by the Polish government in 1968.<sup>28</sup> Mrozek lived outside Poland for over thirty years. *Verbrechen mit Vorbedacht* ('Forethought crime', 1967) and *Die Sonne angreifen* ('Attacking the sun', 1970/71), are based on the novel *Verführung/Pornografia* by Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz. Gombrowicz, whose work remained overlooked, underappreciated and banned for most of his lifetime, resided in Argentina for over two decades. Apart from the similarities in their personal circumstances, Arrabal, Mrozek and Gombrowicz's works are all classified as absurd theatre, a form of experimental drama that expresses the isolation of the individual in conditions of displacement and exile, especially through aesthetic forms.<sup>29</sup> Absurd theatre relies on the 'belief that life itself is an absurd condition'.<sup>30</sup> Techniques such as fragmented dialogue, and farcical *absurd* situations, played out in a conventional middle-class milieu that is inhabited by seemingly 'normal' families, are formal features used to convey notions of alienation and fragmentation.

Lilienthal's films replicate the themes and aesthetic of absurd theatre. A helpless, isolated individual, confronted with events beyond their control and unable to articulate themselves, is a common theme to his early films.<sup>31</sup> While in *Stück für Stück* this theme is evoked only in a minor character as mental schism, themes of voicelessness and powerlessness become central in subsequent productions. Protagonists cannot let go of their life as it once was even in the most hopeless situation. This is a behaviour that recalls Lilienthal's description of his own mother and other friends and suggests that his personal experiences are closely interwoven in these texts. In *Guernica - Jede Stunde verletzt und die letzte tötet*, a married couple sits in a half-bombed house and awaits their death. They talk in set, worn-out phrases and ignore their ruined existence.<sup>32</sup> Film critic Ulrich Gregor commented on the protagonists of *Seraphine*, a surrealist fable about the fates of a tyrannical aunt and a mysterious sea monster: 'The persons seem to be introverted, serious and locked out of the world because of their unfathomable suffering'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Halina Filipowicz, "Fission and Fusion: Polish Émigré Literature," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 33, no. 2 (1989): 163.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Esslin coined the *theatre of the absurd* in 1961. He had borrowed the term *absurd* from Camus, and utilised it for a new form of dramaturgy. See Tamara Holzapfel, "Evolutionary Tendencies in Spanish American Absurd Theatre," *Latin American Theatre Review* (1980): 38.

<sup>30</sup> Paul J. Hurley, "France and America: Versions of the Absurd," *College English* 26, no. 8 (1965).

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Schröder, "Das Individuum und die Macht," *Die Welt*, 3 February 1968.

<sup>32</sup> Ulrich von Mengershausen, "Lilienthal - Die Faszination des Abgelebten," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 16 April 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Ulrich Gregor, "Skurriles Märchen Seraphine," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 24 March 1965.

Adapting absurd theatre to the television screen, Lilienthal's early films employ set design and montage as a means of communication. The minimalist mise-en-scène of *Picknick im Felde*, a story about a soldier visited by his parents on a Sunday afternoon, suggests that figures feel isolated in their environment. *Guernica*, at the other end of the spectrum, is extensively decorated with objects and ornaments.<sup>34</sup> The film draws on Soviet montage techniques, for an example in an assemblage of snippets, for which Lilienthal used material from weekly newsreels. *Guernica* quotes Luis Bunuel's documentary *Las burdas: tierra sin pan/ Land without Bread* (1932).<sup>35</sup>

Jansen said in 1970, 'Anyone who searches for contemporary political references in Lilienthal's films, will find none, there is nothing about Vietnam, nothing about repression, nothing of the troubles that cripple liberal societies'.<sup>36</sup> Yet, a transformation of Lilienthal's cinema was already underway. With *Abschied* ('Farewell', 1965), a film about a community, which mourns one of its members, Lilienthal's cinema departs from the hopeless and gloomy mood of his previous productions. The film indicates a shift towards a proactive attitude that aims to comment on contemporary social and political events.

Lilienthal's experience of the student movement in 1968 triggered a growing awareness of film as a social and political matter. As a lecturer at the *Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin*, Lilienthal was confronted with radical tendencies in West Germany first hand. The revolts of the late 1960s, which had divided students against 'the authorities', seized this institution as well. Among Lilienthal's students were Holger Meins and Rudi Dutschke, prominent left-wing activists. Lilienthal did not take part in repressive actions against rebellious students but on the other hand, he did not want to become involved in the affairs of the student body either. These events and conflicts prompted, as he said, 'an introspective look and a question addressed to myself, where, when and under which conditions people have committed themselves to fight for freedom'.<sup>37</sup> Rather than enthusiastically jumping onto the bandwagon of the student movement, Lilienthal questioned its objectives and demands. I would argue that he came to see their activities as naïve and self-righteous, ignorant to massive social problems

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<sup>34</sup> Peter W. Jansen, "Der Weg des Peter Lilienthal," *Die Zeit*, 2 February 1968.

<sup>35</sup> Schröder, "Das Individuum und die Macht."

<sup>36</sup> Jansen, "Negationen des Mediums. Zu den Filmen von Peter Lilienthal."

<sup>37</sup> Ulla Ziemann, "8 Filme von Peter Lilienthal," (Berlin: 28th Berlin Film Festival, 1978).

facing people in the Third World.<sup>38</sup> Michael Töteberg, whose book *Lilienthal – Befragung eines Nomaden* is based on interviews with the filmmaker, notes:

The vicious and reality-denying debates of the Extra Parliamentary Opposition [APO], who with Marx and Mao slogans wanted to reanimate class struggle in West Germany, seemed to him like a thing of the previous century.<sup>39</sup>

*Malatesta*, Lilienthal's film about Errico Malatesta, who is most closely associated with anarchism as a political philosophy in Italy around the turn of the twentieth century, not only accentuates the filmmaker's own interest in anarchism.<sup>40</sup> The film pictures Malatesta as an anarchist-turned-philosopher, who calls for an end to violence, while his followers are carried away by their passion. Involved in criminal actions, they are eventually shot and killed by a police force that by far outnumbers the revolutionaries. *Malatesta* was Lilienthal's first project after having resigned from his post in Berlin. Though the film was set in Italy at the turn of the twentieth century, it is a response to the contemporary political dynamics in West Germany. *Malatesta* suggests the fanaticism and aberrance of the *Außerparlamentarische Opposition* (Extra Parliamentary Opposition, APO) in West Germany that eventually developed a dangerous dynamic. In 1974, Holger Meins was the first member of the RAF to die in prison as the result of a communal hunger strike. Rudi Dutschke passed away in 1979, due to health problems caused by an assassination attempt on him that had happened eleven years earlier. In the wake of the social and political uproar in Western Europe and North America, the events of the student movement and the self-centred fashion of the debates, which Lilienthal had witnessed at the *Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie*, the filmmaker turned to places where other momentous political transformations were underway.

Since the early 1970s then, Lilienthal's filmmaking has been focussed on social and political issues, usually outside of a German context. There are two main strands to his work. One cluster of films concerns Jewish issues and questions, and the other deals with South America. As I focus on a selected number of Lilienthal's Jewish and Latin American films in the next two chapters, I will mention them here only briefly.

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<sup>38</sup> Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden*, 32-33.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>40</sup> Bernd Drücke, "Anarchismus, eine Philosophie des Friedens. Ein Gespräch mit dem Filmemacher Peter Lilienthal," in *Ja! Anarchismus. Gelebte Utopie im 21. Jahrhundert. Interviews und Gespräche* (Berlin: Karin Kramer Verlag, 2006).

*Figure 1.* Scene from *Dear Mr. Wonderful*: The young Joe Pesci as bowling alley owner Ruby Dennis

*David* is the earliest of five Jewish-themed films. *Ruby's Dream/Dear Mr. Wonderful* (1981) explores the disintegration of Jewish life in the United States, while *Das Schweigen des Dichters* ('The poet's silence', 1986), *Wasserman. Der singende Hund* ('Wasserman. The singing dog', 1994) and *Facing the Forests* criticise Israel's self-righteousness as a nation and the fragmentation of a society which is crippled by an ongoing war. The second major strand in Lilienthal's oeuvre is established by films about Latin America. *La Victoria* (1973) marks Lilienthal's first cinematic engagement with Chile. After that, *Calm Prevails Over the Country* (CPOTC) was an exercise in solidarity with the resistance movements against social and political oppression in Latin America, while *The Uprising* comments on the struggle for liberation that the Sandinista movement fought against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. In the 1980s, at a time of ongoing political oppression in Chile and elsewhere, Lilienthal's films *The Autograph* and *Der Radfahrer vom San Cristóbal* ('The cyclist of San Cristobal', 1987) explore different forms of violence in everyday life. More recently, the documentary *Camilo – The Long Road to Disobedience* (2007) revisits Nicaragua twenty five years after Lilienthal's first cinematic engagement with the country.

### ***Not reconciled: Lilienthal and the New German Cinema***

I have just argued that Lilienthal's films are marked by political urgency. Historical themes and stories rarely play a role in his films unless they significantly relate to current events, as in the case of *Malatesta* or *David*. In contrast to Lilienthal, an exploration of the past is a much-explored area of 1970s and 1980s German film.

Scholars agree that the 1968 student movement established a general conflict between the Young German Cinema and the New German Cinema. The former had come into existence at the Oberhausen Film Festival in 1962, when twenty-six young and ambitious West German short-film directors proclaimed a radical break with German cinematic traditions and the immediate post-war cinema.<sup>41</sup> Four years later, some of this generation of filmmakers had achieved their first critical acclaim in the international film circuit. Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's *Nicht Versöhnt/Not reconciled* and Ulrich Schamoni's *Es/It* (1965) were shown at the Cannes Film Festival in May of 1966, where Volker Schlöndorff's *Der junge Törless/Young Törless* (1966) won the International Critics Award. Later that year, Alexander Kluge's *Abschied von gestern – (Anita G.)/Yesterday Girl* (1966) was awarded the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival.

Born just around 1945 in West Germany, the next generation of directors were the first post-WWII generation, whose problems determined the focus of the New German Cinema. Searching for alternative forms of identity, exploring and portraying the subjective experience of reality: all of this reflected the scope of the concerns of the student movement. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog and Wim Wenders are usually regarded as the main protagonists of this tendency, though their cinematic approaches are diverse and dissimilar.

Lilienthal's cinematic awareness had moved away from West German concerns. However, the New German Cinema perceived a loss of personal and collective history in the wake of WWII, an event that had invalidated German history, and with it their cinematic traditions. An unproblematic access to the latter had become impossible. Wenders said about the post-war generation of filmmakers as a body:

I don't think that any other country has had such a loss of faith in its own images, stories and myths as we have. We, the directors of the New German Cinema, have felt this loss most keenly: in ourselves as the absence of a tradition of our own, as a generation without fathers; and in our audiences as confusion and apprehension.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See Knight, *Women and the New German Cinema*, 31.

<sup>42</sup> Wenders in Alexander Graf, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: The Celluloid Highway* (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), 8.

West German filmmakers saw themselves as victimised by historical processes that predated their own existence. John Davidson notes about the effects of this loss:

Because of Germany's past, the filmmakers' language had been violated, their subconscious colonized, their ability to develop an identity fully impaired, and their traditions fragmented. In this self-stylization, they became colonized subjects engaged in a 'minor discourse'.<sup>43</sup>

This minor discourse or exile discourse describes the disenfranchised relationship of the filmmakers to their country. This disenchantment has a long-standing tradition in German culture. From the early nineteenth century German intellectuals and artists have continuously claimed a form of inner exile to demonstrate political opposition.<sup>44</sup> New German film revived this stance, in which the tendency of looking to the past and a problematic alliance to Germany are central.<sup>45</sup> Marc Silberman notes that the New German Cinema was 'one of the main sites in which this often nostalgic yearning for a lost history was worked through both with seriousness and pathos'.<sup>46</sup>

Returning to my argument about diaspora as a forward-looking way of thinking which I have discussed in Chapter 1, Lilienthal's experiences as part of a family who was exposed to physical exile, resulted in a cinema that resists notions of loss and rejects viewpoints which are anchored in the past. In contrast to the New German Cinema, his films are focussed on imminent social problems, and as such connect to the future. His films offer solutions, even if they seem naïve, unrealistic or utterly utopian. Hence, an understanding of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* or coming to terms with the past as unconnected to political pressure in the present does not figure in Lilienthal's films. As he says: '[O]ne can talk about the past, one can be astonished, exhausted, perturbed, but there is nothing to overcome'.<sup>47</sup> This quote reads as criticism of an approach that neatly segregates past, present and future and the assumption that, once 'worked through', one can be released from guilt or responsibility.

Another demarcation between Lilienthal's cinema and the New German Cinema is the sources and models each follows. Lilienthal was largely unfamiliar with German art and cinema before his return to Germany in 1956. Instead, he has an interest in anarchist, existential and humanist literary and cinematic traditions. As I noted before, his early

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<sup>43</sup> John Davidson, *Deterritorializing the New German Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 51.

<sup>44</sup> See Michael Geisler, "Heimat and the German Left: The Anamnesis of a Trauma," *New German Critique* 36 (1985).

<sup>45</sup> Inga Scharf, *Nation and Identity in the New German Cinema. Homeless at Home* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Marc Silberman, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 201.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

films are based upon authors such as Arrabal and Mrozek. The neorealist movement also had a strong influence on Lilienthal, especially Vittorio De Sica *Ladri di Biciclette/Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and *Miracolo a Milano/Miracle in Milan* (1951). While neorealism is influential for European Cinema in general, the suffering of the protagonists in the dire economic and living conditions of post-WWII Italy, their compassion and sensitivity towards others around them may have struck a chord with Lilienthal because their actions reiterated his own experiences.

In contrast, West German filmmakers such as Wenders and Herzog realigned themselves with Weimar cinema in search of an 'uncontaminated' national cinematic past.<sup>48</sup> While a filmmaker like Kluge, who belongs to the earlier generation of Young German Cinema, rejected a return to German cinematic traditions, German film after 1968 headed in this direction. Elsaesser notes that there was 'an almost imperceptible shift in attitude towards a common cinematic heritage, transforming hostile rejection into either camp celebration or cautious reappraisal of that legacy'.<sup>49</sup> Herzog, for example, went on a symbolic walk from Munich to Paris, honouring Weimar film critic Lotte Eisner and her writings about Lang and Murnau. His film *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht/Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) pays homage to Friedrich Murnau's *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens/Nosferatu, a Symphony of Terror* (1922).<sup>50</sup> Wenders pays tribute to Fritz Lang in *Kings of the Road*, regarding the director as the legitimate father of German Cinema.<sup>51</sup>

The validation of Weimar film corroborated the national character of the New German Cinema. This, moreover, was complemented by the recourse of filmmakers to German literary traditions. In fact, much of New German Cinema is based on literary works which come out of Germany's romantic and humanist heritage. Theodor Fontane's texts were particularly favoured for film adaptations (*Fontane Effi Briest*, 1974, *Grete Minde – Der Wald ist voller Wölfe*, 1976) and also those by Heinrich von Kleist (*Michael Kohlhaas – Der Rebell*, 1969; *Erdbeben in Chile/Earthquake in Chile*, 1974; *Die Marquise von O...*, 1976; *Heinrich*, 1976).<sup>52</sup> In addition, the work of post-WWII writers such as Heinrich Böll (*Nicht versöhnt oder Es hilft nur Gewalt, wo Gewalt herrscht/Not reconciled*,

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<sup>48</sup> See Brad Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog: Aesthetic Ecstasy and Truth* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007) and Scharf, *Nation and Identity in the New German Cinema. Homeless at Home*.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "The New German Cinema," in *European Cinema*, ed. Elizabeth Ezra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199.

<sup>50</sup> Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog: Aesthetic Ecstasy and Truth*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> Graf, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: The Celluloid Highway*, 11-12.

<sup>52</sup> Elsaesser, "The New German Cinema," 199. See also Alexander Kluge, *Fontane - Kleist - Deutschland - Büchner. Zur Grammatik der Zeit* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2004).

1965; *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*/*The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, 1975) and Günther Grass (*Die Blechtrommel*/*The Tin Drum*, 1979) was adapted. Filmmakers infused German classics with contemporary viewpoints. In effect, the cinematic versions added another dimension to the German cultural canon and thus perpetuated its validity.

Another major theme in the films of the 1970s and 1980s was the reappraisal of the notion of *Heimat* (home), which typically focused on Germany as a disputed site for individual and collective selves. The ambiguous fascination with home as a thematic strand of the New German Cinema illustrates that their homelessness was to be overcome by a revival of German cinematic traditions. Moreover, the manner of engagement with home in films of the time runs parallel to contemporary public discourses which analysed the recent German past. As I will show by reference to Edgar Reitz's film series *Heimat*, this analysis maintains its focus on the gentile German population as victims of WWII and fails to include Jewish voices.

As Anton Kaes notes, the *Heimatfilm* is a German genre through and through, from its predecessors to its oppositional transformation by New German Cinema authors:

Under Hitler the Heimatfilm was an arch-German film genre, with all its negative connotations: national chauvinism, 'blood and soil' ideology, and overwrought emotionalism. Nevertheless, despite their contempt for the genre, young German filmmakers considered it a challenge to tackle the Heimatfilm, which was, after all, one of the few indigenous film genres.<sup>53</sup>

The critical *Heimatfilm* or for that matter the *Anti-Heimatfilm* of the New German Cinema re-examined the *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s.<sup>54</sup> Long viewed as a genre of simple narrative structures and ever-happy couples set against the backdrop of mighty mountains, conventional notions have accused the *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s of perpetuating conventional gender relations and moral concepts.<sup>55</sup> Condemned as bad and tasteless, this genre also became a target of criticism by filmmakers of the New German Cinema because of its alleged alliance to the mountain film (*Bergfilm*) of the 1920s and 1930s, which itself was seen as precursor to a nationalist idea of *Heimat* in later Nazi productions. While some spatial features of the 1950s *Heimatfilm* go back to films such *Der heilige Berg*/*The Holy Mountain* (1926), *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü*/*The White Hell of Piz Palu* (1929) and *Das blaue Licht*/*The Blue Light* (1932), scholars such as Johannes von Moltke and Tim Bergfelder maintain that there are substantial differences between the

<sup>53</sup> Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return to History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 17-18.

<sup>54</sup> Chris Wickham, "Representation and Mediation in Reitz' *Heimat*," *The German Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (1991): 35.

<sup>55</sup> Bergfelder, *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s*, 41.

two genres.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the body of 'critical' *Heimatfilm* of the New German Cinema includes examples where reaching back to uncontaminated German traditions of the pre-WWII era without lapsing into traces of Nazism and fascism becomes a problematic, if not unrealistic, aim. Niklaus Schilling's *Nachtschatten/Nightshade* (1972) and Herzog's *Herz aus Glas/Heart of Glass* (1976) focus on the emotional quality of the landscape and the mythical, inexplicable character of nature. The films reveal a connotation of *Heimat* that goes back to Arnold Fanck and Leni Riefenstahl.<sup>57</sup> Herbert Achternbusch, who wrote the screenplay for *Heart of Glass*, is a filmmaker more critically involved with the theme of *Heimat* in *Servus, Bayern/Bye-Bye, Bavaria* (1977).<sup>58</sup> While Achternbusch's ideas of *Heimatfilm* 'concentrate on the microcosm, on the nightmares and dreams of an immediately experienced reality', Herzog's films 'strive for the gargantuan, the exotic, the supernatural and the mystical, attempting to evoke metaphysical answers'.<sup>59</sup> I will come back to this quality of Herzog's work and his tendency for images to explore geographies of the/his mind later on.

Edgar Reitz's epic film series *Heimat* has received by far the most scholarly attention because of its contentious notion of *Heimat*. *Heimat – Eine deutsche Chronik* ('Homeland. A German chronicle', 1980-1984) was followed by *Die zweite Heimat* ('The second homeland. Chronicle of a youth', 1988-1992) and *Heimat 3 – Chronik einer Zeitenwende* ('The third homeland. Chronicle of the turn of an era', 2004). As I will show, *Heimat* returns to traditions, values and experiences that Lilienthal did not share, and that neither of his films speaks to. Moreover, the making of and the structure of the film series suggests that Reitz subscribes to the perspective that German society should not be made responsible for the Holocaust.

Whether this film trilogy epitomizes the critical *Heimatfilm*, is a return to the 1950s *Heimatfilm* or offers a variation thereof, remains a disputed matter.<sup>60</sup> Kaes comments on the ambivalent nature of the film:

*Heimat* is a classic Heimatfilm to the extent that it adopts a stock narrative pattern and evokes sentimental pictures of regional life. Yet at the same time it runs counter to the traditional Heimatfilm because it ultimately undermines any spurious idyllic façade by its ending. But even in

<sup>56</sup> Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 14.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>59</sup> Jan-Christopher Horak, "W.H. or the Mysteries of Walking on Ice," in *The Films of Werner Herzog: Between Mirage and History*, ed. Timothy Corrigan (New York: Methuen, 1986), 40.

<sup>60</sup> See for example Geissler, "'Heimat' and the German Left: The Anamnesis of a Trauma," 26.

his polemic scenes Reitz manifests an ambivalent love for his Heimat, a nostalgic longing for identity and security that was not part of the critical Heimatfilm of the Left.<sup>61</sup>

Reitz's approach to the film series suggests a re-appropriation of German history as an exclusive right of a German author. This attitude can be witnessed by Reitz's reaction to the American TV series *Holocaust* (1978), which was produced by the TV channel NBC and broadcast on West German television in 1979.<sup>62</sup> An agitated Reitz condemned the series as a reductive, simplistic and market-oriented exploitation of German history.<sup>63</sup> Though the series was made for a mass audience, and its presentation was market-oriented,<sup>64</sup> it seems that Reitz's exasperated reaction was in fact that of an offended German director who felt expropriated of his own history.

Authors worldwide try to gain ownership of their own history and therefore, the history of the group they belong to. But often they have to experience that their history is being pulled out of their hands. The most profound process of expropriation that can happen is expropriating the human being of their own history. With *Holocaust*, the Americans have stolen our history.<sup>65</sup>

The filmmaker's retort to *Holocaust* suggests that only Germans are authorised to access and evaluate German history. He proved his point by plotting his *Heimat* series as a 'cinema of memory directly communicating individual experience.'<sup>66</sup> The *Heimat* script is based upon his own recollections about the time of WWII as well as that of actors involved in the making of the series, many of who grew up in the rural *Hunsrück* region. Such accounts of the past are erratic in what they contain, and more importantly, what they omit. In this regard, it is telling that the Holocaust in *Heimat* is, apart from narrative references, absent. Moreover, Jewish voices remained unacknowledged. Scholars go so far as saying that the Jewish figures in Reitz's film and his rhetoric about the Jews indicate a rather problematic, and some suggest, antisemitic attitude.<sup>67</sup>

These narrative patterns suggest that *Heimat* evades an acknowledgement of social guilt or responsibility. Michael Geisler said that, 'he [Reitz] suspends the traumatizing question of responsibility in exchange for an unobstructed, personal look at historical

<sup>61</sup> Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return to History as Film*, 167.

<sup>62</sup> I will discuss *Holocaust* in relation to *David's* reception in West Germany in Chapter 5.

<sup>63</sup> Wickham, "Representation and Mediation in Reitz' *Heimat*," 36.

<sup>64</sup> Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6.

<sup>65</sup> Edgar Reitz, "Unabhängiger Film nach Holocaust," in *Liebe zum Kino: Utopien und Gedanken zum Autorenfilm 1962-1983*, ed. Edgar Reitz (Cologne: Verlag Köln 78, 1983).

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "Edgar Reitz's Heimat. Memory, Home and Hollywood," in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2005), 385.

<sup>67</sup> See Eric Santner, "On the Difficulty of Saying 'We': The Historian's Debate and Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*," in *Perspectives on German Cinema*, ed. Terri Ginsberg and Kirsten Moana Thompson (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996) and Gertrud Koch, "How Much Naivete Can We Afford? The New Heimat Feeling," *New German Critique* 36 (1985): 15.

continuity'.<sup>68</sup> In fact, *Heimat* seems occupied with self-inspection and self-pity. Elsaesser suggests that in the series, the German population is depicted as victim of its historical circumstances. He comments:

[T]he trauma of burying and repressing the past – the collective amnesia – which had characterised German society for the first three decades after the war seems to have been lifted only at the price of nostalgia, of a gratifying identification with victims, and with oneself as victim, if not of history, then of time itself.<sup>69</sup>

Though Elsaesser is not entirely correct to imply that German society suffered from a 'collective amnesia' until the late 1970s,<sup>70</sup> it is important to note the nostalgic mood and self-centred fashion of the Holocaust debates in West Germany at that time. Moreover, his quote suggests that Reitz is part of this community of mourners and victims. Memorising and analysing the Third Reich in such a discriminating way, is symptomatic of German film during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>71</sup>

In this respect, Lilienthal's *David* could be read as an antithetical counterpart to Reitz's *Heimat*. Approaching the Holocaust as a Jewish experience, *David* exemplifies the narrative of a Jewish victim told by a Jewish filmmaker. In this respect, Lilienthal breaks the dominant and authoritative mode of Reitz's *Heimat* discourse. I will talk in detail about these features in *David* in Chapter 3 and examine the contemporary, critical reception of the film in chapter 5.

## Home and the Foreign

Lilienthal's films engage with people and regions of the world which experience more existential problems than the identity crises of West Germany, as one of the wealthiest European countries. Wilhelm Roth of the German-Jewish newspaper *Jüdische Allgemeine* takes note of Lilienthal's thematic nonconformity to the contemporary German filmscape:

<sup>68</sup> Geisler, "Heimat and the German Left: The Anamnesis of a Trauma," 28.

<sup>69</sup> Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, 278.

<sup>70</sup> Germans were confronted with the atrocities committed in WWII from 1945 onwards: think of the Nuremberg Trials 1945-46, the Eichmann Trial in 1961 or the *Verjährungsdebatten* (debate over extension of the statute of limitations on crimes of murder), which was a series of four debates in the German parliament (1960, 1965, 1969 and 1979). See Jeffrey Herf, "Politics and Memory in West and East Germany since 1961 and in Unified Germany," *Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 23 No.1 (2004), 42.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "New German Cinema and History: The Case of Alexander Kluge," in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter, and Deniz Göktürk (London: BFI, 2002), 182-184.

The Latin American films about repression and revolution in Chile and Nicaragua were of some significance to the political debates of the FRG. However, Lilienthal never addressed the political and social problems of the former West Germany itself.<sup>72</sup>

Roth's quote acknowledges also that the so-called Third World is of marginal interest to the contemporary cinematic discourse in West Germany. Even the few films which engage 'foreign' subjects are linked to explorations of a German past and present.<sup>73</sup> Marie-Hélène Gutberlet, examining the small number of texts in the 1970s and 1980s which deal with Africa, detects thematic links to National Socialism in each of them.<sup>74</sup> I will come back to this link to German history later.

It is useful at this point to draw on a comparison between Lilienthal's films and Herzog's cinema. When the *Münchener Abendzeitung* asked him, among other West German filmmakers in 1977, 'Are the conditions such that you find the necessary freedom only outside of Germany?', Herzog replied: 'I have made almost all of my films outside of Germany and still have never left my culture'.<sup>75</sup> As one of the most celebrated filmmakers of the New German Cinema, he made a number of films in Latin America and Africa, such as *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes*/*Aguirre, The Wrath of God* (1972), and *Cobra Verde* (1987). Herzog and his filmmaking practices are a prime example of the habitus as New German *Autor*, part and parcel of which is a heightened self-awareness as artist. The circumstances at the set of *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), for example, have led to as much controversy as the film itself.

In Herzog's films, countries such as Peru, Colombia or Brazil function as colourful and exotic spaces, backdrops and settings, feeding a romantic, Eurocentric idea of otherness, an interest in the exotic celebrated as spectacle. Ever since the nineteenth century, Latin America has occupied the position of the exotic in the German imagination, and the *Europamüdigkeit* of philosopher Friedrich Schlegel - a fatigue in the face of western values and traditions<sup>76</sup> - is essentially Herzog's. A twentieth century

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<sup>72</sup> Wilhelm Roth, "Chronist auf Zehenspitzen. Peter Lilienthal, der große Filmemacher und Wanderer zwischen den Kulturen," *Jüdische Allgemeine*, 26 November 2004.

<sup>73</sup> A handful of films describe Latin America either as a point of destination for Germans during and after WWII, or Germany as a place of residence for political exiles from Latin America. They stage powerless (German) protagonists in pursuit of their German and/or multicultural selves. *Blauäugig/Blue-Eyed* (1989), for example, is the story of a Czech boy who was kidnapped by a German couple and brought to Argentina. The films of Jeanine Meerapfel, on the other hand, address identity formations between Germany and Argentina, such her critically acclaimed melodrama *Malou* (1981).

<sup>74</sup> Marie-Hélène Gutberlet, "In the Wilds of the German Imaginary: African Vistas," in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter, and Deniz Göktürk (London: BFI, 2002), 244.

<sup>75</sup> "Aus Illusionen erwachen. Unsere Freiheit nützen," *Münchener Abendzeitung*, 27 August 1977.

<sup>76</sup> Gustav Siebenmann, "Das Lateinamerikabild in deutschsprachigen literarischen Texten. Ein Arbeitsgespräch an der Herzog-August-Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, 15.-17. März 1989," in *Das Bild*

wanderer, he is, as Martin Robert remarks, one of the 'postmodern descendants of Baudelaire's *flâneur*, [that are] rootless cosmopolitans threading their way throughout the globe in search of the ever new and different'.<sup>77</sup> Renato Rosaldo calls this self-referential tendency imperialist nostalgia that grieves the destruction which western civilization has caused.<sup>78</sup> In this sense, Latin America, Africa or even North America are negotiable locations, projection planes to be contemplated by their lonely European protagonists.

When a 1988 film review of Herzog's *Cobra Verde*, Wenders *Tokyo-Ga* (1985) and Percy Adlon's *Out of Rosenheim/Bagdad Café* (1987) noted about German films in foreign settings, 'not all directors of the New German Cinema were preoccupied with domestic issues or national history,' it ignored that it was precisely the foreign and exotic that had to stand in for a negotiation of German matters.<sup>79</sup> Michael Atkinson summarises the reception of Herzog's films thus, 'they are patronized and praised faintly, as ethnography, as parables on fascism, as expressions of a tortured German psyche struggling with its position in the post-WW II world'.<sup>80</sup> Elsaesser notes about *Fitzcarraldo* that it transposes Bavaria to the jungle and that the persona of the filmmaker follows in the footsteps of Germanic heroes.<sup>81</sup> The foreign environment in *Fitzcarraldo* serves, according to the scholar, as 'metaphoric constructions of a cultural 'other' in order to say something about the 'self' [which] cannot be easily distinguished from a genuine concern and sympathy for the world's victims of the West'.<sup>82</sup>

I want to accentuate my deliberations about Herzog's filmmaking by drawing on his documentary *Ballade vom kleinen Soldaten/Ballad of the Little Soldier* (co-directed with Denis Reichle, 1984), which is interesting for its thematic and historical similarity with Lilienthal's *Uprising*.<sup>83</sup> The documentary deals with a highly controversial issue in post-revolutionary Nicaragua regarding the Miskito Indians, a community of Native Americans located on the Atlantic coast between Nicaragua and Honduras. They fought on the side of the Sandinistas in the guerrilla war against the Somoza dictatorship. The film reports how children - hence the title *Little Soldier* - were trained in warfare. In

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*Lateinamerikas im deutschen Sprachraum*, ed. Gustav Siebenmann and Hans-Joachim König (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992), 192.

<sup>77</sup> Martin Roberts, "Baraka: World Cinema and the Global Culture Industry," *Cinema Journal* 37(1998): 67.

<sup>78</sup> Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 69-70.

<sup>79</sup> Peter Green, "Germans Abroad. Herzog. Wenders. Adlon," *Sight & Sound* LVII, no. 2 (1988): 126.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Atkinson, "The Wanderings of Werner Herzog," *Film Comment* 36, no. 1 (2006): 17.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "Hyper-, Retro-, or Counter-Cinema: European Cinema and Third Cinema between Hollywood and Art Cinema," in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 476.

<sup>83</sup> See Chapter 4 where I undertake a film analysis of *The Uprising*.

Herzog's portrayal, the Miskitos were ill-treated and their interests neglected after the Sandinistas came to power in Nicaragua in 1979.

However, *The Ballad of the Little Soldier* demonstrates that Herzog's cinema exploits political issues for the sake of the filmmakers own notion of truth. As Brad Prager notes:

His [Herzog's] goal is not to use the real world, its ethnographically or historically determined facts, to underscore his positions. Politics is something Herzog sets aside as a simulacra, something that can only distract from or diminish aesthetic ecstasies. ... Although he has spoken about things such as the division of Germany, wars and Central American history, Herzog seems to feel less his political obligations than his obligation as an artist to reveal poetic truths.<sup>84</sup>

When Herzog researched his film, he visited only Miskito settlements that had been tormented by the Sandinistas. In the finished documentary, Herzog stages the Miskitos as naïve victims of a power play between two political opponents. As the foreign is assigned to play a role in the Herzog's cinema, so are the Miskitos in *Ballad of the Little Soldier* assigned a place. The scholarly response to the film attested Herzog an 'insensitivity to the specific history and politics of the region he had chosen to document'.<sup>85</sup>

Besides, the political and social context of the documentary becomes a platform for 'working through' German history. Prager notes, in response to a comment that co-director Denis Reichle made about his experiences as child soldier in the last days of WWII:<sup>86</sup>

[T]he Miskito soldier, and thereby by analogy the young German soldier, is here seen as a victim of forces beyond his control. Viewed in this light, the film is an exculpatory narrative about victimised German fighters, ones that might otherwise be understood as the perpetrators of violence.<sup>87</sup>

Shifted onto a remote native tribe in Central America, a reading that connects Miskito Indians to Germans soldiers fighting in World War II this links Herzog's documentary with Reitz's narrative patterns in *Heimat*.

To conclude this section: though they 'staged' a reticent attitude towards Germany/Germanness, West German filmmakers searched for a collective cultural identity and analysed German history to find it. In this process, rather than 'programmatically positioning themselves outside of the national hegemonic realm',<sup>88</sup> as Inga Scharf suggests, New German Cinema adopted dominant discursive patterns. The difference between 'home' and 'foreign' then, is just one of spatial nature, while both

<sup>84</sup> Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog: Aesthetic Ecstasy and Truth*, 11.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>86</sup> See George Csicsery, "Ballad of the Little Soldier: Werner Herzog in a Political Hall of Mirrors," *Film Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (1985/86).

<sup>87</sup> Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog: Aesthetic Ecstasy and Truth*, 150.

<sup>88</sup> Scharf, *Nation and Identity in the New German Cinema*, 35.

negotiate German cinematic traditions, German history and German identity. Lilienthal's cinema, on the other hand, acts against a solidarity that is limited to sameness of identity or experience. The advocacy for urgent political action is part of a committed philosophy of filmmaking with a scope that goes way beyond West German concerns and self-reflection. Rather than being part of German National Cinema, I see Lilienthal's work as a form of resistance to the fascination with the past and the authoritative cinematic approaches of accessing it.

### Politics of Otherness

For reasons outlined in the previous section, I suggest that Lilienthal's approach shares more with the principles of Third Cinema than with the politics of the West German *Autorenfilm*. I shall now be investigating in what ways a Third Cinema framework can be productively used for Lilienthal's films. In this context, I take up and exemplify the link between diasporic cinema and Third Cinema which I introduced in Chapter 1 as part of the theoretical framework of diasporic cinema.

Inspired by the guerrilla war in Cuba during the 1950s and the Cuban revolution in 1959, South American filmmakers such as Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Cuba), Fernando Birri (Argentina), Julio García Espinosa (Cuba) and Nelson Perreira dos Santos (Brazil) initiated regional offshoots of progressive filmmaking in the mid-1950s. They promoted a cinema that traced its cultural identity, and tackled the violent heritage of colonialism and the ongoing dependence of the Latin American countries of the Western World. The efforts of the filmmakers merged into a continental project a decade later. The 1967 Viña Film Festival in Chile gave momentum to what became, 'a pan-American cinematic movement dedicated to the people of the continent and their struggles for cultural, political and economic autonomy'.<sup>89</sup> Films such as *La Hora de los Hornos/The Hour of the Furnaces* (Fernando Solanas, 1968), *Memoria del subdesarrollo/Memories of Underdevelopment* (Gutiérrez Alea, 1969) *Lucia* (Humberto Solas, 1969), and *La Tierra Prometida* ('The Promised Land', Miguel Littin 1971) established the *New Latin American film*. Anna M. Lopez notes about the character of these films:

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<sup>89</sup> John King, *Magical Reels. A History of Cinema in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1990).

They were films which showed Latin Americans the faces of their peoples and the problems of their nations, that celebrated national characteristics and popular culture, that sought to contribute to the end of all shared ills of the continent.<sup>90</sup>

Various cinematic manifestos underpinned the aims and objectives of political filmmaking in contemporary Latin America. One of the most influential among them is Solanas's and Octavio Gettino's *Towards a Third Cinema* (1968).<sup>91</sup> The ideas that this essay articulates are based on Solanas's and Gettino's practices making *The Hour of the Furnaces*. They view Third Film as resistance against conventional film industries, which they divide into First Cinema (Hollywood) and Second Cinema (author cinema). Informed by Karl Marx and Frantz Fanon, Solanas's and Gettino's manifesto views the filmmaker as a type of guerrilla fighter, gun in hand. Film is their weapon in opposing neo-colonialism and film productions done by the 'system', that is a media system serving ideologies of 'imperialism and capitalism, whether in the consumer society or in the neo-colonialised country'.<sup>92</sup>

*For an Imperfect Cinema* (1969) is another critical intervention that feeds into Solanas and Gettino's ideas. Written by the aforementioned García Espinosa, a Cuban filmmaker and theoretician, it attends to the filmmaker's role in a revolutionary society and illuminates the link between author and film in the context of Third Film.<sup>93</sup> Espinosa suggests that filmmakers should stay clear of narcissistic tendencies, and instead, approach filmmaking as a series of collaborative ventures. Here, authorship is shared among the participants in filmmaking and film viewing.<sup>94</sup>

Lilienthal's filmmaking is influenced by Solanas's and Gettino's propositions for a Third Cinema via his collaboration with progressive filmmakers in and of Latin America.<sup>95</sup> It is in this manner that Third Cinema philosophy and practices inevitably became part of Lilienthal's cinema.

Lilienthal was present in key moments and at key places of progressive filmmaking in Latin America: Chile during the Allende years, Nicaragua right after the victory of the

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<sup>90</sup> Ana M. López, "An "Other" History: The New Latin American Cinema," in *New Latin American Cinema: Volume One. Theory, Practices and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 150.

<sup>91</sup> Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema. Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World" in *New Latin American Cinema*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1997) and Julio García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema" in *New Latin American Cinema*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1997).

<sup>92</sup> Solanas and Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema. Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World," 45.

<sup>93</sup> Jonathan Buchsbaum, *Cinema and the Sandinistas. Filmmaking in Revolutionary Nicaragua* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 226.

<sup>94</sup> Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema", 77.

<sup>95</sup> I will explore these connections in Chapter 4.

Sandinistas or in Cuba in the 1980s, where Latin American's committed filmmakers met in times of social hardship. This was a time when most Central and South American countries were ruled by right-wing governments, which called a sudden end to progressive filmmaking in most Latin American countries. This in effect 'caused the very concept of the Third Cinema, along with its key protagonists, to go into exile', as Ashish Rajadhyaksha notes.<sup>96</sup> Lilienthal offered a life-line in Europe that became essential to the physical and artistic survival of his Latin American friends. For instance, shortly after the military coup in Chile, Raul Ruiz and Antonio Skarmeta arrived in West-Berlin. Lilienthal had secured visas and work in Berlin for them.<sup>97</sup> West Germany provided his Chilean colleagues one of the many European homes which was representative of Chilean progressive cinema during the 1970s and 1980s.

Another point of contact for Lilienthal was the Havana Film Festival in Cuba, which he attended frequently. Founded in 1979 by the Cuban *Instituto de Arte e Industria de Cinematografico* (IAIC), the festival played a critical role in ensuring the continued existence of progressive filmmaking.<sup>98</sup> At this time, Cuba was about the only country in Latin America with a viable committed cinema.<sup>99</sup> The IAIC, established just months after Fidel Castro's inauguration as Cuban president in 1959, had been a driving force for progressive filmmaking in Latin America ever since, not least because it nourished extensive collaborations with filmmakers all over the continent. Throughout the 1980s, the film programme in Havana featured a large number of films that were co-produced by European, Canadian and American film companies, which is evidence to the widespread scattering of Latin American film personnel. Alongside the Latin American and European filmmakers, producers and distributors who met in Havana, Lilienthal welcomed the exchange with like-minded colleagues to discuss ideas for future film projects and find partners with whom he could collaborate or who would support ventures financially. In fact, *The Uprising* was screened at the Havana Film festival in 1980 and was honoured as Notable Contribution to the festival.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "Realism, Modernism, and Postcolonial Theory," in *World Cinema. Critical Approaches*, ed. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.

<sup>97</sup> Ruiz came to West Germany alongside author Antonio Skarmeta. See Mili Rodríguez Villouta, "La Leyenda Ruiz," *El Mercurio*, 27 November 1999.

<sup>98</sup> López, "An "Other" History: The New Latin American Cinema," 136.

<sup>99</sup> Carmen-José Alejos Grau, "La liberación en el cine latinoamericano," *Anuario de historia de la Iglesia* XI (2002): 167-68.

<sup>100</sup> Teresa Toledo, *10 Años del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano* (Madrid: Verdoux/Sociedade Estatal Quinto Centenario, 1989), 113.

If we see Lilienthal's cinema in proximity to Gettino and Solanas's *Third Cinema* and Espinosa's *Imperfect Cinema*, this link explains the interventionist quality of Lilienthal's films. Alongside *Third Cinema*'s demarcation against Second Cinema as author cinema, Lilienthal's notion of authorship contrasts with the approaches by filmmakers such as Herzog or Reitz. As Herzog's case makes clear in particular, theirs is a conception of authorship around ideas of personal vision and style. As I have outlined earlier, Lilienthal's various endeavours within West German film culture demonstrate his inclination towards working in a collaborative manner, and his belief in sharing resources and expertise. Likewise, Lilienthal's filmmaking reflects a participatory approach to authorship. In line with Espinosa's idea of filmmaking as collaborative venture, his texts should be analysed as works which integrate creative contributors of diverse backgrounds, visions and talents. This is the crux to an understanding of the text and context of *Calm Prevails over the Country* or *The Uprising*. Lilienthal's manner of collaboration is exemplified in his approach to literary authors. Instead of making sense of the works on his own, he seeks the individual behind the material. As he describes the process:

I get in touch, not with a scriptwriter as such but with a literary writer, an author. We talk about his work, sit together and ponder what we can do collaboratively. For this we start with a source that is located in the character of this writer, his style, his aesthetics, but jointly we make something novel that is related to his work and mine.<sup>101</sup>

Literary authors often also function as co-scriptwriters on his films. As a result, they become vehicles for stories that incorporate the view of the literary author as well as that of the filmmaker.

Original ideas of Third Film saw it as an asset in the struggle for liberation from colonial oppression and military tyranny. As such, cinema was a didactic means for oppressed communities, which explains their position within larger social and political power structures and encourages them to take action.<sup>102</sup> For this, films utilise formats which 'show the process which generates the problem',<sup>103</sup> and guide spectators to ponder problems on their own. Third Cinema accuses author cinema to spoon-feed solutions and, therefore, to act authoritative on audiences (Herzog's approach to *Ballad of the Little Soldier* would be a perfect target of such criticism). Third Cinema and, I would suggest, Lilienthal's films, establish a dynamic between text and spectator rather than between

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<sup>101</sup> Lilienthal in Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden*, 156.

<sup>102</sup> Buchsbaum, *Cinema and the Sandinistas. Filmmaking in Revolutionary Nicaragua*, 233.

<sup>103</sup> Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema," 81.

text and author. The thematic and aesthetic transformation of Lilienthal's cinema at the end of the 1960s can be viewed in these terms. Initially, aesthetics seemed to have priority over content. Surrealist dialogues and set designs in *Guernica*, *Picknick im Felde* or *Seraphine* were Lilienthal's preferred means of communication. For this reason, film critics had labelled Lilienthal as an esoteric, eccentric and melancholic filmmaker, who made films only for an elitist minority.<sup>104</sup> *Malatesta* is the first film which clearly communicates a political objective. This could be understood as Lilienthal's motivation to address and convey ideas to a spectatorship instead of playing with the medium film.

The transformation of Lilienthal's cinema runs parallel to the essential aim of Third Film that functions as a 'political tool, not an aesthetic product'<sup>105</sup>. Third Cinema allows for whatever form is appropriate to and effective for tackling the subject at hand. In other words, the subject matter determines the aesthetic tool set. In terms of Lilienthal's filmmaking, it is the participants who decide on the formal means by which a film theme should be tackled. Each of his cinematic projects has been shaped by a different group of people. The participants, their own cultural background, ideas, interests and perspectives on the subject establish the formal features of the cinematic venture at hand. Hence, a given film's aesthetic is the result of this *joint* effort. In effect, this means that there is no Lilienthal 'signature' that runs throughout his oeuvre; each of Lilienthal's films is unique. Lilienthal's filmscape reflects a number of political perspectives and aesthetic features, which cannot be blended into one, single voice. While including the filmmaker, this makes Lilienthal's films comprehensible as collective products that are hard to pinpoint in terms of an auteurist approach. On the other hand, this lack of an 'auteurist signature' may explain why Lilienthal has been marginalised in discourses on New German Cinema.

Having established Lilienthal's cinema in relation to the philosophy and practices of Third Cinema, an understanding of his filmmaking philosophy also needs to account for his position in between cultural and social boundaries. In this regard, a reading of Third practices beyond their original political and historical context proves to be useful. In chapter 1, I addressed the fact that Third Cinema, in the wake of becoming exiled, was taken up by filmmakers in Western metropolises, who extended its applicability as political

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<sup>104</sup> See for example Jansen, "Negationen des Mediums. Zu den Filmen von Peter Lilienthal".

<sup>105</sup> Buchsbaum, *Cinema and the Sandinistas. Filmmaking in Revolutionary Nicaragua*, 228.

cinema to other cultural contexts.<sup>106</sup> This expanded idea and location of Third Cinema comes to be of assistance in framing Lilienthal's filmmaking in-between cultural communities. In *The Third Cinema Question: Notes and Reflections*, Paul Willemen has approached Third Cinema theory in combination with Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of creative understanding as a practice of cultural politics, in which the position as outsider is decisive.<sup>107</sup> According to Bakhtin, only an artist who is not part of the same cultural circuit that his texts describe can attain an enhanced comprehension of processes happening within this culture. Bakhtin notes about the nexus between a subject and the location of its viewer:

*Creative understanding* does not renounce itself, its own place and time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing. In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding – in time, in space, in culture. In the realm of culture, outsidedness is a most powerful factor in understanding. [...] We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise for itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths. Without *one's own* questions one cannot creatively understand anything other or foreign. Such a dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched.<sup>108</sup>

Willemen reads Third Cinema manifestos by Latin American filmmakers as aligned to Bakhtin's ideas in order to establish a 'politics of otherness'. In this understanding, *Third Cinema* is, instead of a voice of and/or for the oppressed, becomes a cinema 'made by intellectuals, who for political and artistic reasons at one and the same time assume their responsibility as socialist intellectuals and seek to achieve through their work the production of social intelligibility'.<sup>109</sup> According to this understanding of Third Cinema, Lilienthal functions as *committed intellectual* and *cultural outsider*, both of which define his relation to cultural, historical and political pathways of different nations.

I have previously noted that it is an unproductive venture to view Lilienthal's work as part of a national or cultural movement. Instead, in Bakhtin's terms, his films engage in a dialogue that enquires about prevalent traditions, values and themes. Surmounting the 'one-sidedness'<sup>110</sup> of their meanings, the interventionist quality of Lilienthal's cinema reveals tensions and conflicts hidden in discourses originating from within. Therefore, his

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<sup>106</sup> Philip Rosen, "Nation and Anti-Nation: Concepts of National Cinema in the "New" Media Era," *Diaspora* 5, no. 3 (1996): 395.

<sup>107</sup> See Paul Willemen, "The Third Cinema Question: Notes and Reflections," in *Questions of Third Cinema*, ed. Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (London: BFI, 1989).

<sup>108</sup> Mikhail M Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. W. McGhee (Austin University of Texas Press, 1986), 6-7.

<sup>109</sup> Willemen, "The Third Cinema Question: Notes and Reflections," 27.

<sup>110</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 7.

cinema is an antidote to dominant languages and views that disclose and criticise networks of power structures, wherever these may be located.

## Chapter 3

### Tracing the Jewish Diaspora

In this chapter, I focus my attention on two of Lilienthal's Jewish themed films, *David* and *Facing the Forests*. These texts explore the dichotomy between 'settled' and 'nomadic' in a specifically Jewish context and illustrate Lilienthal's understanding of diaspora as a counter-discourse to a settled existence. *David* and *Facing the Forests* are set in different historical and political contexts. *David* depicts Jewish life in Nazi Germany during the Holocaust, and the ways of dealing with the growing risk of losing homes, belongings, and finally, one's life. *Facing the Forests* is set in present-day Israel and gives an account of a society in crisis due to its unresolved dispute with Palestinians. Despite their different subject matter, both films view the crisis of the Jewish community as a result of cultural introspection. Pursuing materialist and individualist aims, the priority given to a settled existence means that characters fail to grasp the danger they face in a larger context.

#### ***David* – Jewish Life in Hiding**

*David* tells the story of the Jewish Singer family from 1933 onwards. They live in Liegnitz, a town near Breslau (today's Wrocław, Poland). The family invite friends to their home when, for the first time, they become aware of hostility towards them. From their balcony they witness Hitler Youths marching by, shouting 'Jews out'. David (Mario Fischel), their son, grows up in a world that becomes increasingly restrictive. But without complaining, he adapts to this hostile environment and seizes one of the few educational opportunities still open to him and trains as a sewing machine mechanic. With David's vocational training starting, the narrative shifts to Berlin in 1938. Experiencing increasing violence and aggression, David becomes the driving force behind his family's efforts to leave Germany and go to Palestine. He takes his hesitant father (Walter Taub), a rabbi, to the emigration bureau to discuss the remaining options of escaping the country, and takes upon himself the burden of fulfilling the obligation to train in an agricultural camp before the family can obtain a visa to Palestine. Despite David's efforts, his father refuses to leave Germany. In danger of getting caught and being rounded up, David's parents go into hiding. David relies on the solidarity of a few friends, with whom he finds shelter, hidden behind wardrobes and in small windowless rooms. David's father's persistence in using the subway, though forbidden to Jews, leads to his and his wife's arrest.

Subsequently, David hides in his parents's looted house and teaches himself Hebrew. He and his sister Toni (Eva Mattes) find shelter at a shoemaker's house, a gentile and friend of the family, but not long after, they feel that they have to move again. Hiding in an empty train wagon at night, David does small jobs for a manufacturer before finally managing to escape from Berlin and making his way to Palestine.

*Figure 2.* Scene from *David*: The young David (Torsten Henties) and his mother (Irena Vrkljan)

*David* is based on Joel Koenig's autobiographical novel *Den Netzen entronnen. Die Aufzeichnungen des Joel König* (1967). Jurek Becker, a Holocaust survivor known for his script work on *Jakob der Lügner*/*Jacob the Liar* (Frank Beyer, 1975), collaborated with Lilienthal and Ulla Ziemann on the screenplay.<sup>1</sup> Although the film was co-produced with the East German production company DEFA, it was never exhibited in the GDR.<sup>2</sup>

Coinciding with the beginnings of a public discourse about the Holocaust in West Germany, *David* won the Golden Bear award at the 1979 Berlin Film Festival. This consolidated Lilienthal's status as an important director in and beyond West Germany, which his previous films, such as *La Victoria* and *CPOTC* could not quite achieve. German film critics had encouraged Lilienthal to turn to a subject matter that critically treated Germany's past or present.<sup>3</sup> According to them, *David* finally attended to the discourse on identity formation and questions of ethnicity and multicultural reality prevalent in Germany during the late 1970s. Because it gives an account of one of the

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<sup>1</sup> The GDR production *Jacob the Liar*, a film about a Jewish ghetto, located somewhere in Eastern Europe during the final years of the Holocaust, was nominated for an American Academy Award in the category Best Foreign Film. The story was readapted as a Hollywood production in 1999, starring Robin Williams as main protagonist.

<sup>2</sup> Egon Netenjacob, "In paradisischen Zeiten. Interview mit Peter Lilienthal," in *Es geht auch anders. Gespräche über Leben, Film und Fernsehen*, ed. Egon Netenjacob (Berlin: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Bertz+Fischer, 2006), 112.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Fischer and Joe Hembus, *Der Neue Deutsche Film 1960-1980* (München: Goldmann Verlag, 1981), 114.

darkest chapters in German history the film has been acclaimed as an important contribution to German cinema.<sup>4</sup>

However, as I have already mentioned in Chapter 2, it is debatable whether the text offers an analysis of German identity during the Holocaust or could inspire a related discussion. Lilienthal does not stage a confrontation of Jewish characters with non-Jewish ones, nor does he involve characters whose actions or behaviour allow for an analysis that explores the rationales behind the Holocaust as part of a 'coming-to-terms with the past'. In *David*, the events that lead up to the extermination of the Jewish minority are stated not in terms of individual or collective motivation but as narrative signposts that establish the historical context for the story. The film focuses on the Jewish community itself and how it copes with the crisis as individuals and as members of a cultural group. With few exceptions, *David's* features Jewish characters, plotting Jewish marginalisation and their strategies of survival as self-contained actions of a minority culture that inhabits cultural spaces in their private or communal surroundings. Lilienthal himself commented that *David* was 'the first Jewish film about Jewish people made by a Jewish director in a country where there is no Jewish audience'.<sup>5</sup> This observation reflects the character of a cinematic dialogue in German film of the 1970s and 1980s that set out to explore Germany's past but did so without actually featuring the Holocaust nor its Jewish victims.

Interestingly, *David* was to remain Lilienthal's final film that was set in Germany. During the shooting of the film in the streets of West Berlin, the filmmaker became disappointed by the lack of interest which passers-by revealed in some of its most moving scenes, including one that staged the round-up of Jewish youths. Personally affected by some scenes and images that evolved in the process of making the film, these experiences discouraged Lilienthal from pursuing other cinematic ventures in Germany.<sup>6</sup>

### Securing Survival

The film's two main protagonists are David and Rabbi Singer, and the narrative is concerned with their father-son relationship. Lilienthal creates these two characters as being closely related to each other. Annette Insdorf has commented that, 'although the

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<sup>4</sup> Robert C. Reimer, Reinhard Zachau, and Margit Sinka, *German Culture through Film. An Introduction to German Cinema* (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2005). See Chapter 5 for an extended discussion of David's critical reception in 1970s West Germany.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Lilienthal in an interview with Annette Insdorf, "A Passion for Social Justice," *Cineaste* 11, no. 4 (1982): 37.

<sup>6</sup> Netenjacob, "In paradiesischen Zeiten. Interview mit Peter Lilienthal," 113.

boy progressively loses members of his family, David celebrates the spirit that binds him to his rabbi-father, and thus to a rich – if vulnerable heritage'.<sup>7</sup> What she calls 'spirit' is Rabbi Singer's cheerful and seemingly careless attitude towards the threat that faces this family. According to Robert Liebman, David's reason to live was the Jewish religion that was his familial heritage.<sup>8</sup> Liebman interprets Rabbi Singer's manner as a role model for his son. He notes:

His father taught him that when the authorities forbid you to pray, you can outsmart them by praying to yourself. His father also declared that a swastika on one's head is insignificant if one is alive to talk about it: 'I am here, I am here, that's all that counts.'

Liebman refers to a scene in which Rabbi Singer has just returned home after being arrested following the Nazis burning down his synagogue. Sitting at the dining table surrounded by his family, he reports that while having to stand on his feet for hours he silently recited poems. In this way he demonstrated his inner resistance to this act of cruelty. His family's concerned look conveys the feeling that something terrible must have happened to him. Singer humorously covers up his desperation because he is yet to show the worst. When he removes his hat, his bald scalp reveals a tattooed swastika, a powerful image of violence and indignity. This behaviour reveals a mental survival strategy, affirming that even this inhuman act could not take away Singer's dignity as a human being. David's personality shows this character trait as well, if in varying ways.

Insdorf and Liebman understand the father-son relationship in terms of a continuation of Jewish traditions and heritage, but they fail to acknowledge the varying attitudes with which both figures encounter their environment and how they react to the threat. Singer's inaptitude to deal with the situation, his passivity and perplexity is sharply contrasted with David's awareness and quick reaction. Singer's belief in God – his last resort of hope - is not shared by David, who does not place his life in faith but takes things into his own hands. When the family stands in front of the door, Singer says 'God is testing us. His trials are hard but He will never forsake us'. His wife, daughter and David look at him in disbelief and lack of empathy about this comment that cannot give them any consolation.

Rabbi Singer's different perception is partly due to the tradition of Jewish suffering that a religious observant Jew might regard as an ordeal put on him. Another reading

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<sup>7</sup> Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 90.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Liebman, "Two Survivors: Lilienthal and His Film David," *Long Island Jewish World*, 30 October 1981, 21.

explains his attitude as a sense of false security, which he acquired over a lifetime as a German citizen. Singer exemplifies the emancipated German-Jewish citizen who grew up with the German humanist heritage.<sup>9</sup> He stubbornly holds on to expectations and convictions acquired as an ostensibly emancipated member of German society. He is reluctant to leave the country even when the threat to his life becomes tangible, and remains loyal to Germany.<sup>10</sup> Singer has experienced a pre-Nazi Germany that tolerated and accepted him, and believes this country and their citizens to be reasonable and civil. For him Nazism is only a temporary and transitory phenomenon. As he says, 'Anti-Semitism is a God-given blessing which forces Jews to reflect. Who will still hate us?' As a rabbi, he is highly intellectual. In one of his sermons he retells an episode from the Book Esther about a conversation between Haman and the Persian king Ahasveros that is a historical account of the unprotected political standing of the Jewish community in Persia, reflecting, at the same time, the current Jewish condition in Nazi Germany.

Then spoke Haman, the cruel enemy of the Jews to King Ahasveros: 'They are scattered among the peoples of your kingdom and separate from them: their laws are different from those of all other people. They do not obey the laws of the king. Yet it shall bring the king no advantage to tolerate them. If it so please him, let the king issue a wit that this people shall be exterminated, and I shall pay them thousand talents of silver into the purse of the king.'<sup>11</sup>

Singer ignores the early signs of the Nazi threat in everyday life and shuts his eyes to what happens around him. When he witnesses members of Hitler Youth from his window, whose audible shouts 'Jews get out' catch his and his Jewish friends' attention, he mishears these shouts as 'Youth get out'. This apparent mistake demonstrates his refusal to understand the political and social processes in Nazi Germany that will be lethal to German Jews.

Scholar Avtar Brah has noted: 'The question of home ... is intrinsically linked with the way in which processes of inclusion or exclusion operate and are subjectively experienced under given circumstances.'<sup>12</sup> This observation matches David's character who, unlike his father, has never been able to be at home in Germany. Inhabiting a secure place in a welcoming environment is an unfamiliar phenomenon to him. His

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<sup>9</sup> See David Ellenson, *After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity* (Michigan: Hebrew Union College Press, 2004), 144.

<sup>10</sup> Ruth Klüger, an Austrian-Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, is Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Irvine. Her autobiographical report *Weiter leben* (1994) states that German and Austrian literature became a survival strategy to her in an otherwise nihilistic environment. See Pascale R. Bos, *German-Jewish Literature in the Wake of the Holocaust: Grete Weil, Ruth Klüger, and the Politics of Address* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Part of one of Rabbis Singer's sermons.

<sup>12</sup> Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diasporas. Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1995), 192.

whole childhood and adolescent years have been overshadowed by experiences of isolation and segregation, and public spaces have already proved dangerous for the young child. In 1933 Liegnitz, he first becomes victim to a xenophobic attack: when he returns from school one day, two Hitler Youths call him 'Jew pig' and knock him down, leaving him with a bloody face and a black eye. Nevertheless, in Lilienthal's film, David's experiences of homelessness are turned into a productive force. They let David comprehend the magnitude of the current threat to his fellow Jews and himself. As a child, he is attentive to his immediate surroundings and sensitive to comments adults make about the current political situation. This is an ability that he still possesses as an adult. Exposed to stories of his Jewish fellows, who feel sorry for themselves, David is an attentive listener but he does not share their desperation or their self-pity. This is a trait that might be a self-reference to Lilienthal.

David's moving between different locations and institutions cultivates his flexibility and ability to adapt and gives him the required energy to turn his dreams into reality and find a place where he is accepted. Early in the film, a street acrobat performs an escape from chains wrapped around his body, a metaphor for the condition of the Jews and for the strength necessary to break their chains. David's staring at the man reveals that he is deeply impressed by him and maybe implies that he, as well, will be able to break the chains on his own. A medium shot of the performer turns into a close-up profile of a camel standing nearby, which hints at Palestine as the destination where such a liberated existence might be possible.

Later in the film, the older David reveals an aptitude for 'breaking his chains'. His curiosity and courage, supported by technical skills, are the characteristics necessary for establishing an autonomous community in Israel. Unlike his father, who is an intellectual and holds a well-respected position as a rabbi, David trains for a non-academic job, which can be seen as another example of a disrupted chain of tradition in these two generations. Disregarding the fact that he is banned from higher education as a Jew, it seems to be David's *choice* to learn about repairing sewing machines or cultivating plants, which he does with enthusiasm.

Hence, David takes the remaining chances presented to him, and steers his own fate and that of his family. Becoming a driving force behind efforts to rescue his family, he attempts to convince his father to leave for Palestine and prepares their departure. Together with his father he goes to buy appropriate shoes for the hot climate in the desert, and he takes Singer's photograph for the visa application. With these activities, he

takes on the function of the head of the family which his father is not able to fulfil anymore. Sitting in the emigration office, David is enthusiastic hearing details about the application procedure and of the voyage to Palestine, even when the officer warns them about possible complications when crossing the seas.<sup>13</sup> Singer, on the other hand, is hesitant. He takes the application papers back for a moment after he has handed them to the lady, revealing the indecisiveness symptomatic of this character. In the end, the plans never materialise because Rabbi Singer is too afraid to make a move and leave Germany. The family has also applied for a visa to America, but each time someone asks about the status of their application, Singer retorts, 'Things take their time.' His allegiance to Germany delays a possible departure until it is too late.

Singer's desperation kills him. He cannot concentrate anymore, he is impatient and about to lose his senses. David and Singer stand near a tram bridge in Berlin, observing from a distance friends being arrested, who they are about to visit and ask for help. Singer is at a loss as to what to do next. This medium shot that frames David and Singer's upper bodies against the shadows of a wall, gives a premonition of their fates. David, standing upright and a head taller than his father, looks sideways but holds his head high. This posture reveals an unbroken and proud person who thinks about a solution to his problems. Looking to the ground, his scarf carelessly tied around his neck and the Yellow Star of David on the left side of his jacket, Singer, by contrast, has given up.

Separated from each other, their position no longer suggests a close relationship between these individuals. Instead, it points to the isolation that each faces, a miserable situation in which families cannot give any more support and people have to secure their own survival. This scene stages David's and Singer's last parting (see figure 3). Singer insists on taking the tram home knowing that this is highly dangerous. Even David's words of advice, 'You cannot take the street car. It is too dangerous', do not stop him and he runs down the stairs. His deliberate decision to do so despite his son's warnings read like a desire to turn himself in because he cannot cope with the tension, stress and indignity of this life any longer. David's more mature reasoning, which comprehends that survival is only possible in emigrating, outlives Singer, whose unconditional adherence to

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<sup>13</sup> See the work of Joachim Schlör, i.e. "Konstruktionen und Imaginationen vom Heiligen Land im deutschen Judentum. Berichte von unterwegs," *Aschkenas. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 17, no. 1 (2009): 167-183 and "Auf dem Schiff," in *Zweimal Heimat. Die Jekkes zwischen Mitteleuropa und Nabost*, ed. Yotam Hotam and Moshe Zimmermann (Frankfurt a.M.: Beerenverlag, 2005), which explores the many connotations and religious meanings linked to the trope of the *voyage* to Palestine.

his alleged homeland Germany is interpreted as the senile thinking of a confused old man.

*Figure 3.* Scene from *David*. David (Mario Fischel) and his Rabbi Singer (Walter Taub) at the train station just before they split up

### Spaces of Jewish Existence

Indicating the diminishing existence of the Jewish community in Nazi Germany, *David's* spatial compositions illustrate their narrowing chances of survival.<sup>14</sup> Open spaces and opulent houses in *David* convey the wellbeing of the German Jewish community before the Nazis came to power. These places reflect their respected, middle-class status in Germany. At the beginning of the film, the Singer family host a luncheon in their dining room. The family owns a big house, equipped with old, heavy furniture, and thick carpets. A chandelier illuminates the dining room, where friends and family sit at the dining table eating, laughing and playing with the children. The Singers are a cultivated family, whose children read books and play the piano. In contrast to the later scenes, the Jewish community appears well settled and feels comfortable in its surroundings as well as in the Jewish culture and faith. A friend who is talking to Rabbi Singer before

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<sup>14</sup> See Jacob Boas, "The Shrinking World of German Jewry, 1933-1938," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 31, no. 1 (1986): 241-266. For the spatial dimension in Jewish history in general see the following publications: Julia Brauch, Anne Lipphardt and Alexandra Nocke (eds.), *Jewish Topographies. Visions of Space, Traditions of Place* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) and Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Vered Shemtov, "Introduction: Jewish Conceptions and Practices of Space," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 3 (2005), 1-8.

attending a service in the local synagogue notes: 'It is good to be a Jew. What greater pleasure can there be?'

In contrast, after David's arrival in Berlin in 1938, the film's locations shift to private rooms either in the Singer's home, or to other rooms and flats, indicating the narrowing frame of existence of the Jewish community. They are reduced to small, private spaces because the Jewish community's own public places have been destroyed so that no communal Jewish life is possible anymore: Nazi soldiers have vandalised Jewish shops and the synagogue is burned down. Jews are not allowed to take part in gentile German life. When Singer sits in a café with his sons Leon and David, the waiter ignores them until they finally leave.

The portrayal of diminishing spaces that Jewish characters are allowed to live in coincides with the disintegration of the Jewish community and their subsequent extermination. Introduced as a lively and strong community that met at the Singer's home, afterwards only single characters reappear, such as one of David's teachers and another friend he met in Berlin. Both look for shelter. Another friend of the family, who was in the Singer home in 1933, is pictured as a broken man five years later in his shabby Berlin flat. Having suffered from severe frostbite while temporarily detained at the local police station, the same person is later on shown lying on a bed in even worse surroundings. It is the last we see of this character, as well as of the others, including David's family, one by one. The modified character of their house documents this process in spatial terms. Previously shown as a comfortable home, close shots and low-key lighting make it appear narrower and dilapidated later on. The scene of David's parents' final detainment behind barbed wire follows that of their looted house, anticipating their annihilation.

The film switches locations frequently without apparent motivation and leaves them unidentified, a strategy that adds to a shifting function of space, away from privacy to highlighting survival. *David* is temporally divided into events taking place in Liegnitz after 1933 and in Berlin/Liegnitz 1938-1943. The narrative in the latter period takes place in seemingly random locations either in the Singer's family home or in rooms of unidentified flats, with no indication as to where exactly these places are located and to whom they belong. The anonymity of these environments conveys the volatility of Jewish life dependent solely on the security of the next hiding place. In this situation, spaces no longer function as private habitations but are important simply for physical survival. Location is irrelevant so long as it can provide security, if only temporarily. In

this sense, the film touches upon an overarching theme of Lilienthal's cinematic oeuvre that is the volatile nature of home as private and protective shelter. As I will show in Chapter 4, the Latin American films, in particular *CPOTC* and *The Uprising* take this trope further into the political realm.

Portraying fragmented existence as a function of lost space, many places indicate an endpoint of Jewish lives, such as the Singer's house or the dark room which a friend inhabits, suffering from pain that is due to his recent detainment. David's alignment to spaces conveys a different idea, however. Though he is searching for hiding places and resides in ever smaller living quarters, these places do not indicate finality but have a transitory nature – they are stepping stones that bring him closer to Palestine. His move to Berlin, a city that had been a transit place for Jewry from East and West after 1918, marks one of those places.<sup>15</sup> Attending the vocational school in Berlin, David learns a craft that is needed in the Middle East where he sees himself participating in establishing a new existence along with other committed Jews.

*Figure 4.* Scene from *David*: David on his way to the Zionist Camp

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<sup>15</sup> Tobias Brinkmann, "Topographien der Migration - jüdische Durchwanderung in Berlin nach 1918," in *Synchrone Welten. Zeitenräume jüdischer Geschichte*, ed. Dan Diner (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 176.

Combining these two aspects - acquiring valuable skills important to build Palestine as Jewish living space and meeting like-minded fellow Jews - David's stay at the agricultural training camp points to a future for the Jewish community. Situated on the outskirts of Berlin, young Zionists are being prepared in this place for the hard physical work that awaits them in Palestine.<sup>16</sup> The film depicts this location as an open, rural area that, in contrast with small rooms, conveys an immediate feeling of relief and liberation. David walks along an alley lined with leafless oak trees, gazing at an early morning, misty landscape that opens up in front of him: a green meadow and in the distance, the roofs of some houses in a village. This peaceful and idyllic view provides an imaginary outlet for him that suspends the prevalent images of the narrow and dark surroundings. The Zionists are housed in a mansion that features high ceilings, big doors and windows that leave rooms flooded with light, surroundings reminiscent of David's parents' home, suggesting an unrestricted Jewish existence in a liveable space, in which Jewish culture becomes filled with meaning and appreciation again.

The ample interior space provides David with comfort and gives him the feeling of belonging to a community that shares his ambitions and dreams. This is already apparent as he arrives, standing alone at the door to the dormitory, as a group of ten or so young adults pass by with a friendly *Shalom*. He is part of a group who prays together, shares meals and learns about agriculture. Here, Lilienthal's film recreates the image of the intact Jewish community David last enjoyed as a child in his parent's house. As in the opening scenes, a Jewish community sits united around a long, festively decorated table. Shot from the front, the table seems to be never-ending, hosting innumerable people. It is an image that portrays a community that, in sharing its food is committed to the project of creating for themselves the kind of life they are denied in contemporary, Nazi Germany.

Even in hiding, spaces become meaningful because David keeps pursuing his goals. After his parents' detention, he hides in their house but he still plans ahead to realise the dream he will not give up. Writing down sentences in Hebrew and putting up index cards all over the wall, he teaches himself this language. In light of his losses and his isolation, this activity might simply be read as a desperate survival strategy. Nevertheless, it signifies David's ability not to give up even in the most adverse circumstances. Interestingly, this scene that takes place in David's parent's house creates another shift in meaning for this place. What was a signifier of a well-respected, comfortable life indicated a destroyed

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<sup>16</sup> These camps were referred to as Hachsharah, see Herbert and Ruth Fiedler, *Hachschara. Vorbereitung auf Palästina. Schicksalswege* (Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2010).

Jewish existence later. Now this location has a transient nature, as it houses David's preparations for a life in the Middle East.

David's last hiding place is a train wagon that will become his vehicle to freedom.<sup>17</sup> The wagon is stationed on unused rails at the local railroad station. David is in constant fear that passing guards and their watch dogs may discover him there. A metaphor for mobility, trains will finally allow David to escape – first to Austria with a false identity card. The film, however, traces another association with these scenes. The dark wooden wagons and German soldiers walking alongside the rails evoke well-known images of people being deported to the concentration camps, hundreds of them crammed into the smallest of spaces.

Bringing together thoughts of death and escape in these final scenes, hope prevails. Accompanied by joyous music, we see a close-up of David through the back window of the train wagon as it leaves the station. After that, the film cuts to images of the sea, and a boat laden with people and luggage, David one of them. On arrival, people are dancing in shallow water. David has finally reached his destination, Palestine.

### ***Facing the Forests – Landscapes of Israeli Identity***

Almost two decades later, Lilienthal's *Facing the Forests* takes up questions which evolve around home in the context of Israel as settled Jewish community. It is based on a short story by Israeli writer Abraham B. Yehoshua. Again, the film features a young man as its central protagonist. Noach (Rusty Jacobs), an Israeli history student, does odd jobs in order to finance his studies. His girlfriend Lucienne (Adi Nizan), and her son, offer him the option of family life but he is hesitant to get settled. Through his friends, he lands a summer job as a fire warden in one of Israel's national forest parks. Based in a watchtower that overlooks the park, his task is to notify the local authorities of fires. Unprepared for the isolation he encounters, he is surprised to learn that he is not on his own. A Palestinian, Abdul Karim (Muhammad Abu Site) and his daughter Nahida (Raha Abu Site), live in a shack right next to the tower and bring him food every day. Abdul is mute as his tongue was cut off in the Yom Kippur War. At first, both parties do not know how to interact with one another, but Noach persists in his communication efforts despite the lack of a common language – he only speaks a couple of Arab words and Abdul and Nahida understand only a bit of Hebrew. Noach learns of a destroyed Arab

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<sup>17</sup> For the image of the train see Todd Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

village in the area and enquires about its location from Abdul, which he points out to him on a walk. By then, Abdul and Nahida have become regular visitors at Noach's home and workspace, the watchtower.

Wandering around the area, Noach observes Israeli soldiers who escort Palestinian men to a nearby Israeli military camp. The men are blindfolded and their hands tied. The camp is headed by a young army officer who surprises Noach with a visit during Noach's first night in the forest. They meet for the second time when Noach seeks out the army officer in order to speak up for the Palestinians. Despite Noach's vigilance, a fire erupts, during which he saves Nahida from the flames. In the morning, the Israeli investigators accuse Abdul of having started the fire, while Noach is dismissed from his job.

Set in Israel around the time of the Oslo Accords of 1993 between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat, the film focuses on two related issues: Israel as a settled community and an Israeli national identity inscribed in landscape.<sup>18</sup> In order to understand how the film deals with these themes, I will briefly explain Zionist aims and ideals.

Zionism, having transformed the diasporic nature of Jewish identity into a society bound by national characteristics, is a movement that 'lends justification to the return of the Jews to their ancient, subsequently abandoned, but never forgotten homeland, to the reconstruction and resettlement of the country, and the revival of an Israeli nation there'.<sup>19</sup> Zionism has adopted the desire for a Jewish homeland in the form of autochthonous and territorial claims over Palestine. Relocating or expulsing Palestinians and expropriation of Palestinian land and resettling it was part of a strategy to create sites that fitted the image of an Israeli national homeland. Israeli society is held together by the belief in the worry and protection of 'their' homeland.<sup>20</sup> However, in present day Israel this is an issue that divides Israelis. The dedication to the Zionist project was a force that unified the first generation of Jewish settlers, without whom the formation of a Jewish nation would not have been feasible. Recently, however, this belief has led to a controversial dynamic in Israel's society that causes segregation. Israel's domination over Palestinian territory produced not only a perpetual state of war but also a society under constant threat. The ongoing disputes with Palestine, especially during the Six Day War

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<sup>18</sup> See for the idea of an Israeli inscription in landscape Maoz Azaryahu and Arnon Golan, "(Re)naming the Landscape: The Formation of the Hebrew Map of Israel 1949-1960," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 2 (2001), 178-195.

<sup>19</sup> Eva Etzioni-Halevy, *The Divided People. Can Israel's Breakup Be Stopped?* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 131.

<sup>20</sup> Derek J. Penslar, *The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2007), 105-106.

in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 split Israeli society politically into liberal and conservative camps on the issue of the importance of peace with Palestine versus the importance of territory.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, their politically divergent attitudes are associated with an array of other views and beliefs. Many liberal Israelis feel less committed to the Zionist idea, which was a common denominator of collective Israeli identity before. Besides, in recent years, individualism – personal achievement and happiness – has taken hold in Israeli society and undermines the collectivist core of the Zionist idea.<sup>22</sup>

The following analysis will explore how these issues are addressed in *Facing the Forests*.

### **Social Commitment versus Private Affairs**

Directing attention to the problems of creating a settled Jewish culture, *Facing the Forests* draws a bleak picture of Israel's society as intolerant and neurotic. The psychological composition of the characters suggests that the ongoing political conflict with the Palestinians, and with it, the war-like conditions in the country have deeply affected Israeli society. The figures of the army officer, the manager of the forestation department and Noach's girlfriend Lucienne are involved to differing degrees in perpetuating Israeli predominance in Palestine, but nevertheless share a feeling of hopelessness in relation to Zionist ideology.

Eva Etzioni-Halevy notes that Zionism prioritises the collective goal of creating an Israeli nation over individual values and private life.<sup>23</sup> The manager of the forestation department (Rami Danon) comments on his own life thus: 'I could have married again. But domestic life is not for us.' Yet, his sarcastic character and expressive body language casts doubt as to whether accomplishing collective values instead of focussing on personal happiness was the right decision. Noach's conversations with the manager reveal a broken man who cannot fathom his personal losses. Divorced and having lost his son in one of the Israeli-Arab wars, his private life is disturbed, if not wrecked, by the ongoing disputes between Israel and Palestine. There is yearning and regret in his eyes when looking at family photographs stuck around the edges of a mirror, containing images of a woman, a young child, a family. Framed by the family photographs, his doubled self before and behind the mirror, this image suggests two paths; the one he has

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<sup>21</sup> Dan Bar-On, "Israeli Society between the Culture of Death and the Culture of Life," *Israeli Studies* 2, no. 2 (1997): 104.

<sup>22</sup> Etzioni-Halevy, *The Divided People. Can Israel's Breakup Be Stopped?*, 131.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

chosen, to take part in the struggle of the Israeli nation, or the one he could have chosen - to be a family man.

Though disillusioned about his own wasted life and about the direction in which his country is heading, the manager belongs to a generation that felt obliged to sacrifice personal dreams for the collective aim of securing the Israeli homeland. Noach's girlfriend Lucienne, on the other hand, is mainly preoccupied with protecting her private life. In *David*, retreating into the security of the private realm proved dangerous for Rabbi Singer as a sense of security inhibited his ability to correctly estimate the extent of risk to which he was exposed. In Lucienne's case, caring about one's private life only has become a concern for younger members of Israeli society who do not share the vision, dreams and experiences of the founders of the state. Amos Elon, one of Israeli's leading journalists, who researches the generational gaps in Israeli society, views generational differences as perpetuated in feelings of individual responsibility towards Israel's political past, present and future:

Older Israelis were baffled and frightened by the Arabs. Younger Israelis are at once more rational and more honest with themselves. Older Israelis often fall prey to an act of grandiose, pious self-delusion. Younger Israelis are more inclined to look squarely at the facts. They were born into a situation they did not themselves create. They are, of course, deeply involved in it; yet they are also less compelled to moralize their own, personal biographies.<sup>24</sup>

Representing a younger Israeli generation, Lucienne appears to be satisfied and content in moments shared with Noach and her son. She is not happy about Noach's plan to take the job in the forest because his leaving could spoil the private idyll she has created for herself. Indeed, when she visits Noach at the watchtower later on, she finds her worries confirmed. Continually gazing over the forest and listening to the sounds of passing cars and screaming soldiers in the distance, he is unsettled and nervous. Even when making love to her, he cannot take his eyes and ears off the things that happen outside. Her comment, 'what you plan to do is insane', shows her understanding of Noach's deep concern about the military's detainment and treatment of the native Arabs; however, she is neither ready to nor willing to take action against this injustice. Dressed in a bright summer dress and high heels, Lucienne looks out of place in the outdoors. Indicating her lack of interest in the collective aims and objectives put forward by Zionism, she leaves it behind and returns home.

The spatial separation of private and public terrain, the mise-en-scène of another scenario alludes to the neutral, uninvolved attitude of the characters towards the affairs

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<sup>24</sup> Amos Elon, *The Israelis. Founders and Sons* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 260.

that happen around them. On her birthday, Lucienne, her father, son and Noach enjoy a pleasant evening, sitting on the terrace of their home, a mansion that opens on to the street in front of them. The low angle, medium position of the camera marks its lower horizontal frame as an old and sturdy marble balustrade. This barrier offers a shelter for the family from the things that happen below and outside it. Shootings in the distance remind them of the disturbing events happening but their position indicates their sense of security inside an environment that protects them from any exterior threats.

Lucienne and her family's disinterest in Israeli public affairs is complemented by the army officer's hidden tension and his cracking faith in the future of his country and fears for a disintegrating society. The presence of soldiers in most scenes – whether in the desert, city or the forest – illustrates Israel's contested existence and acknowledges the everyday militarism that structures Israeli society. The hostile, assertive manners of the officer along with his strong physical appearance give an air of supremacy. He perceives and acts towards Noach as intruder and, hence, potential threat. An encounter between Noach and the army officer takes place when Noach and Nahida come to enquire after Nahida's brother, who has been detained overnight along with other Palestinians. All of them are suspected for having wounded a soldier with a stone. The officer is comfortably seated on top of a table, his body reclining, legs resting on another table. This relaxed posture is meant to convey that his subordinates and in fact, the entire forest are subject to his absolute power. The self-confidence of the officer intimidates Noach who, nevertheless, is courageous enough to speak up for the Arabs. Nahida's brother is brought in. He has to kneel on the floor and is asked for the name of the perpetrator. The question, remaining unanswered, follows a moment of silence in which the camera pans upward to catch Noach and Nahida's reaction, and then back to the officer who suddenly hits the table with his pencil. The noise of the breaking pencil interrupts the silence and undermines the pretence of self-control the officer wants to project. The image of his fist clenching then hitting the pencil on the table communicates suspense and reveals the restrained violence that his posture had until then concealed.

Yet, despite his powerful position defending Israeli territory, the army officer has his own doubts about the meaningfulness of his task. The phrases he uses in an earlier conversation with Noach shows that he perceives the current situation as life under constant threat and that he predicts a catastrophe of monumental magnitude ('Samson's times'; 'The last days of Pompeii'; 'we face a growing menace'), revealing Israel as a nation that has to yield to its destiny.

### On the Ruins of the Palestinian Village

Visually explored as contested spaces in which Palestinian and Israeli senses of belonging clash with each other, landscapes are an important textual and aesthetic feature in *Facing the Forests*. The film takes different spaces - desert, forest and city as locations that represent conflicting identities. Already the opening credits allude to an ambiguity that is related to the landscapes of desert and forests: the German title *Angesichts der Wälder* appears across a panoramic view of a mountain in the desert, a stylistic device that creates an odd contrast between this image and the word *Wälder* (forests).

The opening scenes of the desert as rural environment establish the backdrop to images of Arab daily life and their rituals. A long shot reveals an open, vast landscape that is sparsely populated. The next shot cuts to a close profile of Abdul Karim who kneels in the sand and prays. Another long shot - Abdul is sitting in front of his shed while camels in the background move from the top left corner of the screen to the top right. His daughter Nahida pulls a donkey uphill, while in another long shot a man seated on a camel gazes into the countryside opening out before him. Abdul bows down to the soil and up to the skies, a gesture that suggests his deep religious connection with nature. Lilienthal's film portrays the Palestinians as people who live in balance with nature – in the sense of knowing the soil and being grateful for the resources it offers. In this context the desert is a natural place of settlement for the Palestinians who adapted their ways of life to this environment.

The images of the open plain visually contrast with those of the city, a place specifically designed to accommodate the needs of human beings.<sup>25</sup> Signs in Hebrew confirm that this is an Israeli city but it stays an anonymous place. Lilienthal's film tags this urban space with negative connotations. It appears as narrow and constricted and essentially as artificial, indistinguishable from the surface of a Western city. American flags in the forest administration, English signs and trendily dressed people point to a lifestyle that rests on individuality, work and materialism. *Facing the Forests* describes the city as an uncomfortable place to be in. Camera angles create a sensation of restriction. Cars create barriers and take up screen space. Positioning the camera on the opposite side of the street, the lens is directed at parked cars, which obstructs the view of pedestrians in the back of the image. Omnipresent traffic noise drowns human voices.

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<sup>25</sup> In Yehoshua's short story, the city described is Jerusalem. The film does not make this clear, however.

Interestingly, images of the forests invoke a similar sense of artificiality. Against Noach's assumption of finding peace and calm for his studies far away from the hustle and bustle of life in the city, the forest comes across as an unnatural environment. He soon realises that this national park is as busy as the urban surroundings he has left. There are families who have barbecues on the dry grass and run the risk of starting a fire, as well as tourist groups and hikers, while official delegations hold commemorative events. The forest is a noisy place that remains restless even at night. Noach observes a commemoration act, marking this national park as a treasure the state of Israel is proud of. An American car enters the forest, flagged by a police escort on motorbikes and in a helicopter. Panama's ambassador to Israel inaugurates a memorial honouring Panama's late president Omar Torrijos. He donates a thousand trees to Israel.

The forest becomes the emblematic space where an Israeli identity asserts itself, without quite managing to eradicate traces of the past. The depiction of a destroyed Palestinian village draws attention to the temporal and spatial dimensions of a cultural identity that precedes the foundation of Israel. Abdul Karim and Nahida, the two solitary figures living in this area, attest to the existence of Palestinians here and other, time-defying reminders appear in the form of stone walls and the ruins of houses. The watch tower, for example, is erected on the structures of older, traditional Palestinian dwellings. There are remains from a house wall with an arched entrance, indicating an earlier human presence. The trope of the destroyed Palestinian village serves as a powerful political metaphor in Lilienthal's film.

Sociologists have pointed out that the village plays an important role in Palestinian culture and identity. As the nucleus of family relations and social networks before the foundation of Israel in 1948, it was the core of Palestinian political and religious power. According to political anthropologist Julie Peteet, who has written on Palestinian identity and its disruption after the foundation of Israel in 1948, Palestinian villages and their destruction are linked to the disappearance of Palestinian culture.<sup>26</sup> Thus, within Palestinian consciousness, the village and its loss have come to symbolise the trauma of expulsion.<sup>27</sup>

In Israeli official rhetoric the Arab identification with actual places (vs. clearly defined geopolitical units) is seen as a pre-modern concept, however. Arabs are portrayed

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<sup>26</sup> See Julie Peteet, *Landscapes of Hope and Despair. Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2005), 195.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

as being incapable of feeling a metaphysical belonging to a homeland in the same geopolitical or historical way as Jews do. Since the former are not emotionally attached to a 'homeland', relocating activities or even expulsion from Palestine are not morally questionable because it does not imply an exclusion from any homeland.<sup>28</sup> The Israeli army destroyed most of the Palestinian settlement areas after the flight of Palestinians in the aftermath of the war in 1948 in order to prevent their return. These places were subsequently repopulated with Jewish settlers, turned into artists' colonies or transformed into tourist sites and national parks, as shown in Lilienthal's film. Repopulating former Palestinian sites with Jewish settlers who have an understanding and awareness of the worth of such a homeland seemed a more valuable option.<sup>29</sup>

Drawing on a Palestinian understanding of land as traditional and pre-national, *Facing the Forests* challenges a national definition of land. The film brings to surface the arbitrary nature of Israeli identity, challenging practices that allocate an ethnic group to a specific place, and that forges a history which connects land and people. Lilienthal's film promotes the concept of sharing spaces in the sense of Clifford's notion of the hotel as a 'travel encounter' between individuals with different social and cultural 'baggage', which I have described in Chapter 1. Political sovereignty over territory, the film suggests, generates an attitude of exclusivity, which in turn is bound to an inability to tolerate other cultures.

### **Noach: Excavating History and Preserving the Mythical Nature of Jewish Culture**

Noach's character is the catalyst that exposes problems with which contemporary Israeli society struggles: Lucienne's involvement in private affairs and her lack of interest in the precarious political situation, the manager's desperation about losing son and wife to the ongoing fight with Palestinians and the army officer's disbelief in peace.

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<sup>28</sup> See Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape. The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 246-251.

<sup>29</sup> Of 475 inhabited Palestinian villages that existed in 1948, the Israeli army destroyed almost 400. See Mohamed Kamel Dorai, "The Meaning of Homeland for the Palestinian Diaspora. Revival and Transformation," in *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*, ed. Nadjé Al-Ali and Khalid Koser (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 95. See also Helena Lindholm Schulz and Juliane Hammer, *The Palestinian Diaspora. Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London: Routledge, 2003), 77.

*Figure 5. Scene from Facing the Forests: Actor Rusty Jacobs as social outsider Noach*

Noach holds an elusive status on the periphery of Israeli society. In the process of discovering the origins of the forested area he becomes a social outsider, whose views clash with those of other Israelis until he is isolated altogether. Noach is neither a proper Israeli nor a Palestinian. Though he speaks Hebrew, he is from the outset characterised as cosmopolitan. He comes from an affluent background - his parents live in Florida and call him now and then. Leaving doubt about Noach's affiliation, his origins and his citizenship, the film presents him as being disengaged from Israeli society. Lilienthal's film values this trait positively, as Noach functions as mediator between cultures.

Noach is driven by the desire to discover forgotten history. Having taken the job as fire warden in order to find more time for his studies, he spends an afternoon studying a history textbook. This scene in the watchtower cuts into underground surroundings when Noach has an imaginary conversation with his history professor. Noach explains to him the reasons for delaying his research on the crusaders. His professor comments on the fictional nature of historiography that has to be accommodated with an approach that forgoes prejudices and stereotypes:

In order to realise that all history is pure fiction, we have first to engage with it and understand that we always create history according to our own beliefs and merely seek the confirmation of those beliefs. Unfortunately, this insight will make you a lonely person.

With his wide-brimmed hat and a knotted scarf around his neck, unshaven, Noach's professor is depicted as an adventurer. The cave-like location of their encounter reads like a metaphor for a manner of research that is not based on reading and summarising, or taking the truth of written documents for granted. Rather, it represents the finding of truth as an excavation process. Searching for facts beneath the surface and seeking a personal relationship with the matter studied is the way in which truth can be 'unearthed'. In light of Noach's own observations that contradict his former knowledge and views,

this imagined encounter causes him to become aware of his false trust in written documents and in the deceptive stories which people are fed. He comes to the conclusion:

[W]hat people call history does not exist. All we have is a few texts and inscriptions. All further research is completely useless. Newspapers, radio, television, utter madness. Everything has perished. The metaphors, the commandments, the prophets.

Noach's digging for the truth may be interpreted as uncovering fabricated accounts of history, which in the process brings to light and values other versions – such as the Palestinian side of the story. Abdul Karim's mutilation, for example, is a symbol of an oppositional voice that has been silenced, not able to impart what he might have witnessed. In a wider sense, the mutilated tongue marks a disruption of Palestinian cultural tradition. Oral history is an important part of that tradition, which at the same time provides a different angle on the Palestine-Israel historiography. Mahmoud 'Issa, a Palestinian refugee and author of many articles on the oral history of the Palestinians, suggests:

[O]ne major aspect is still absent from the discourse: namely the recording of Palestine history on the basis of Palestinian 'voices' and 'actors'. Throughout much of the twentieth century the majority of the Palestinians were *fellahin*, peasants. Their experience in the fields, in their villages, in wars, and in exile are almost totally absent from history writing and much of recent historiography; in this sense they are, to use the Kafkaesque term coined by the Israelis '*present absentees*'. Not only men's voices, but women's too are absent, neglected and marginalised.<sup>30</sup>

Because of Abdul's muteness but also because they speak different languages, Noach needs to find alternative ways of communication.

*Figure 6. Scene from Facing the Forests: Noach (Rusty Jacobs) and Abdul Karim (Muhammad Abu Site) on the watchtower*

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<sup>30</sup> Mahmoud 'Issa, "The Nakba, Oral History and the Palestinian Peasantry: The Case of Lubyā," in *Catastrophe Remembered. Palestine, Israel and the Internal Refugees*, ed. Nur Masalha (London: Zed Books, 2005), 180. You can find a vast amount of material at the oral history archive at [www.palestineremembered.com](http://www.palestineremembered.com).

Appearing unsure of his own worth and place in life before, Noach's discoveries about the Israeli military's treatment of the Arabs and the truth about the forestation of this area make it obvious to him that digging up Arab history has become his personal responsibility. In the process, his outward appearance changes as well as his character. Noach's findings bring him closer to Abdul Karim. The explorative approach to history echoes his professor's claim to see truth as fictional – imaginary and story-bound – that is interested in and values different cultural perspectives.

Religious references turn the figure of Noach into an allegorical character. His journey into the forest becomes a mission that was predestined for him. When Noach finds the right bus to get to Shilat, the bus driver is already expecting Noach. Without a greeting, he points to the door for him to get in. His eyes observe Noach through the rear view mirror. They depart and drive high up into the mountains. The camera follows the bus on steep paths passing stretches of forested mountains. At last, the driver asks for Noach's name and, on Noach's response, begins to quote a passage about the sacred biblical figure with the same name:

Noach, a sign for God's mercy. His cheeks as white as snow, his lips tender like roses, his eyes as radiant as the rising sun, his hair long and curly. Noach's character was found to be perfectly just and at the time of anger he found mercy. Because of him something remained on earth when the great flood came.

In the biblical account, God, who is enraged with the wickedness of mankind, punishes them in the form of a flood. He recognises Noach as a just human being and bestows on him the task of saving his family and other worthy creatures.<sup>31</sup> While the driver speaks, the camera switches to a close-up of Noach as if to confirm that the words spoken indicate his fate. The driver's voice becomes a voiceover that now accompanies images of the passing mountains, creating the effect of a prophecy that Noach is to fulfil.

Noach's spirituality is in opposition to what the film sees as faith in the state of Israel. Jewish traditions and customs have become substituted by the state religion of Zionism. Yet, Zionism, which had given Israeli existence a meaning in the early years no longer provides social cohesion. The diminishing importance of and belief in this ideology deprives Israelis of a shared basis.

Jonathan Boyarin comments on the nature of Israel's nationalism, 'Ideology and the local account of history are the cracking glue that binds the Israeli nation'.<sup>32</sup> Taking

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<sup>31</sup> The Book of Genesis, chapters 6-9.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise. The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 127.

up Boyarin's integrationist approach to history, Noach's mythical character transforms scholarly observation into oppositional practice. This is a recourse to values that favours diasporic existence over territorial possessions. Exercising respect and tolerance for other cultures, diaspora becomes a cultural quality that has secured Jewish existence at all times, an idea that corresponds with Daniel Boyarin's and Jonathan Boyarin's portrayal of it. Defining diasporic cultural identity as a stable entity that survives despite antagonistic forces, the scholars restore diaspora as a distinguishing element and inherent feature of Jewish identity. Throughout history, the connection between territory and people was foremost of spiritual nature. Yet Jewish identity has not only survived but also thrived despite and because of its mixing with other cultures.<sup>33</sup>

Such a diasporic cultural identity is illustrated through Noach. Looking for challenges, he gives up his safe existence in the city for life in a tower that is open to everyone. He is frequently visited by tourists and surprised by a visit from the army officer. There is no private place to which he could withdraw. Instead, he lives in a public place that forces him to open his eyes and ears to his surroundings. As a result, he is aware of and interested in other individuals and their stories. Noach is the utopian figure in *Facing the Forests* because with him, Lilienthal endorses an integrative Jewish existence that includes that of others.

### **Conflict, Enemies and the Other in *David* and *Facing the Forests***

The subject matter of *David* and *Facing the Forests* inevitably results in depictions of aggression and brutality. Yet, Lilienthal's cinematic approach manages to deal with conflict without visually depicting it. In *David* and *Facing the Forests*, there are no scenes that visualise violence. Various authors have observed that *David's* main quality is not to employ melodramatic techniques, and that it manages to convey a strong impression by not picturing but alluding to violence. Insdorf calls Lilienthal's cinematic style 'a respectful distancing from the subject'.<sup>34</sup> Lynne Layton identifies this technique as a 'non-reflexive strategy' that sometimes comes across as crude and uninvolved, referring to *David's* emphasis on activities of characters rather than their emotional condition.<sup>35</sup> David, for example, does not show any signs of sadness, mourning or aggression when

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<sup>33</sup> Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (1993): 721.

<sup>34</sup> Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, 88.

<sup>35</sup> Lynne Layton, "Peter Lilienthal. Decisions before Twelve," in *New German Filmmakers. From Oberhausen through the 1970's*, ed. Klaus Phillips (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1984), 243.

he realises that his parents have been arrested. Seated at the table and resting his forehead on the edge of the table, Lilienthal merely grants him a moment of fatigue. Leaving emotions at bay, this approach can be read as an emphasis on survival strategies of the German Jews that left no space for emotionally processing their experiences at the time.

Moreover, in *David*, Lilienthal avoids identifying Nazi villains or sketching Nazi characters. Through absence, he denies spectators the possibility of imagining individual profiles of personality and motivation. Though Nazis destroy buildings, batter in windows, and force Jews out of houses and into waiting trucks, the long-shot technique renders them as anonymous figures. In contrast, the film introduces German characters who contribute to David's survival. The shoemaker provides a temporary hiding place for David and the factory tolerates him as a worker with a fake identity. These figures raise ambiguity about tagging all of German society as being complicit with Nazi politics and practices. *David* resists such an oversimplified interpretation because there are always other expectations, pressures, and intentions involved, which complicate the allocation of guilt and responsibility.

Lilienthal's ambiguous portrayal of Germans assigns the actual conflict between non-Jews and Jews a backseat. Instead, he emphasises moments of humanity and solidarity, even in the face of death. Again, his quiet and unobtrusive manner makes such scenes effective. As a group of young Jews is being led away, the camera films them from the front and then from behind as they enter a building. They put their arms around each other's shoulders in a gesture that seem to affirm that what they are about to experience, will be experienced in solidarity with each other. The group disappears into the building, away from bright sunshine outside. After the last one is gone, the entrance door closes, leaving only darkness behind.

In contrast to *David*, for *Facing the Forests* conflict is a central theme but circumventing spectacular scenes, this film once again demonstrates a practice of representing conflict and confrontation through subtle textual and aesthetic strategies. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is alluded to by soldiers, while weapons and fences serve as its constant visual reminder. In order to convey the impression of a hostile environment, the film uses two related themes; surveillance and observation. The film portrays a society whose members observe others and find themselves observed at the same time. Noah's position as a fire warden, a job for which binoculars are the most important tools, gives evidence of the centrality of this theme. Of course, his job is not about watching for fires in the forest but keeping an eye on rebelling Palestinians who

hide in this area. At the same time, he is being monitored; the army officer comes to check on him, a soldier from the nearby military camp watches Noach wandering through the forest.

*Facing the Forests* depicts strategies of observation and surveillance as predominant activities of the Israelis, who either watch members of their own society or watch Palestinians. Yet, the cinematography makes the Palestinian Abdul Karim also an observer in a world that usually monitors him. He watches Noach, who has just arrived in a truck that is to bring him to his new workplace. Incidentally, this is the only scene that provides a Palestinian perspective and an intimate glimpse into their immediate surroundings. Originating from the inside of Abdul's small shed, this image offers an intimate perspective of his narrow and simple living quarters. In contrast to earlier images, in this composition the direction of the focus from within Abdul's living quarters positions the viewer as part of his world and values, and sharing the glimpse, sympathises with Abdul. This mise-en-scène provides for a spatial division that separates a light and spacious outside world from what is Abdul's dark and constricted living space, indicating Abdul's marginalised social status.

Again, Lilienthal distinguishes the adversaries in terms of victim and perpetrator. Of course, the film, as a parable, speaks of the political oppression of one cultural group by the other. It could be people like David who fifty years earlier escaped attempts at their extermination, and whose offspring are now in the favourable position of power. Yet, in Lilienthal's portrayal of Israeli society as a fragmented group of people, he also reads them as victims of their own political aims and ambitions. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, therefore, becomes highlighted in terms of cause and consequences for both sides. Spectacular scenes of conflict would merely distract from such an aim.

To conclude, *David* and *Facing the Forests* attest to Lilienthal's concern about people in shifting positions of guilt. His strategies and metaphors indicating conflict and his ways of depicting adversaries imply criticism of the Jewish community as victim and perpetrator. Lilienthal's careful, well-balanced compositions of both sides reveal that it is not the Jewish community he is predominantly concerned about. Instead, his films provide room for human gestures, even if originating in the group of perpetrators.

Both films illustrate Lilienthal's inclination to portray acts of solidarity and a commitment to those who have been treated unfairly and unjustly. *Facing the Forests* is a

text that comes out of this awareness, which in 1979 he articulated in an interview about *David*:

Although we were the most terrible victims of history, we were also the most idealistic people about German culture, about being assimilated and accepted. Blinded by this hope, we did not believe in our own identity... This was a strong lesson about what we have to do in the future: to be committed to other people's future, not only our own, because other people's future will be our future. There's no Jewish life in the world without social justice.<sup>36</sup>

Originating in the painful experiences Jews had to endure, the nomadic figure plays a crucial role in both films. Figures like David and Noach guarantee survival and facilitate inter-cultural communication. Through such characters, Lilienthal ultimately proposes that the diasporic element defines the potential to mediate differences and is therefore aware of and willing to take on social responsibility. Depending on historical conditions, this responsibility takes various forms. David's efforts to get his parents out of Germany are one way of showing his concern and commitment to his environment. Furthermore, the young Zionists in the agricultural training camp who, as a collective, prepare for a Jewish existence in Palestine, indicate their sense of responsibility towards the survival of the Jewish community.

Owing to political conditions and concerns, Lilienthal's demand for social responsibility has a different urgency. In a world that encourages but also puts pressure on global and regional movements of communities, people of different origins have to negotiate their existence in the same space. In the context of *Facing the Forests*, this is a message that obligates Israel. As historical victor and against the backdrop of their own past experiences, the Jewish community in Israel has a responsibility vis-à-vis the Palestinians, the minority culture, to find means for their political involvement and social integration.

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<sup>36</sup> Lilienthal in an interview with Annette Insdorf. Insdorf, "A Passion for Social Justice," 36.

## Chapter 4

### Lilienthal's Latin American Films. Diaspora as a Cinematic and Social Practice

*La Victoria* was the first of Lilienthal's films in collaboration with Latin American artists. The film gives a sense of the vibrant cultural atmosphere that had spread throughout Chile following the election of the socialist party *Unidad Popular* and the inauguration of Salvador Allende as president in 1970. It tells the story of the young secretary, Marcela (Paula Moya), who finds employment with Carmen Lazo, a *Unidad Popular* party member and candidate for the Senate. Together they tour the country in order to win votes, a journey that makes Marcela sensitive to the different parts of and social groups in Chile. The photographer and later director Silvio Caiozzi, one of the driving forces behind the progressive film movement in Chile, photographed *La Victoria*.<sup>1</sup> Lilienthal's collaboration with Caiozzi established further contact with Chilean artists, which paved the way for his cinematic engagement for and in Chile over the next two decades.

Figure 7. Scene from *La Victoria*: Marcela (Paula Moya) on her way to Santiago

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<sup>1</sup> Caiozzi photographed *Caliche sangriento/Bloody Nitrate* (Helvio Soto, 1969), *Nadie dije nada* ('No one says anything'; Raul Ruiz 1970) and *Palomita blanca/Little White Dove* (Ruiz, 1973), and *Ya no basta con rezar/Enough Praying* (Aldo Francia, 1972). Moreover, Caiozzi was part of the camera team for *État de siège/State of Siege* (Costa-Gavras, 1972), a film about struggle of local guerrilla troupes against the Uruguayan government that was filmed in Chile. Caiozzi was one of the few artists who remained in Chile during Pinochet's dictatorship and for a couple of years, had to make television advertisements for a living. He made his return as a director with *Julio comienza en Julio/Julio begins in July* in 1977, which alludes to the events in contemporary Chile. The film was an exceptional achievement in the contemporary Chile filmscape stripped of talented and committed film personnel.

Lilienthal's friendship with the Chilean writer Antonio Skármeta, who scripted *La Victoria*, became a vital component of his cinematic ventures in Latin America. Skármeta was a literary scholar and already an acclaimed writer when Lilienthal first met him in 1972.<sup>2</sup> Sharing similar childhood experiences, more importantly, at the time of their first meeting both authors had just found their political voice.<sup>3</sup> Lilienthal had turned to political subjects in his filmmaking due to the politicisation of public life in Europe. Skármeta, on the other hand, became acutely aware of and interested in politics with the inauguration of Salvador Allende's left wing government which 'altered his vision of himself as a writer and affected both his choice of themes and techniques'.<sup>4</sup>

In their subsequent collaboration, Skármeta's own exile experience would help initiate and shape Lilienthal's cinematic projects. After the coup in Chile, Skármeta had to flee the country. With Lilienthal's assistance, he obtained a residence permit to live in West Berlin from 1975. Skármeta's stay in Germany, along with the aggravated political circumstances back in South America, gave a personal meaning to the concept of exile. The sense of dislocation, financial strains, and emotional turmoil, came to affect the person and writer in most creative ways. German culture, language and literature had a strong impact on Skármeta which, as he said himself, moderated his South American temperament, urged him to discipline his ways of expression and modified his stylistic preferences.<sup>5</sup> In her study about Latin American cinema in exile, Zuzanna Pick remarks about the productive impact of exile:

The intellectuals and politicians, artists and writers banished from their countries of origin or forced into exile have produced an extensive body of work through which they have envisioned new approaches to identity and nationhood... [T]extualized responses to exile represent a productive space in which to identify the impact of exile on discursive formations. By responding to the conjunctural elements which forced them into exile, the practices of these Latin American expatriates have been stimulated by exchanges, encounters, and confrontations otherwise impossible under normal conditions.<sup>6</sup>

Exile became a dynamic condition for Skármeta. As a response to the cultural and political changes presented to him, he developed into a prolific writer and a theorist of the Post-boom, a literary movement of left-wing writers who were committed to social

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<sup>2</sup> Rachel J. Halverson and Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi, "La Insurrección/Der Aufstand. Cultural Synergy, Film and Revolution," in *The Lion and the Eagle. Interdisciplinary Essays on German-Spanish Relations over the Centuries.*, ed. Conrad Kent, Thomas Wolber, and Cameron M. K. Hewitt (London: Berghahn Books, 2000), 446.

<sup>3</sup> See Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

<sup>4</sup> Donald L. Shaw, *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 74-75.

<sup>5</sup> Andrea Pagni, "Entrevista con Antonio Skármeta," *Discurso Literario* 1(1985).

<sup>6</sup> Zuzanna M Pick, *The New Latin American Cinema: A Continental Project* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 158-59.

and political change in Latin America.<sup>7</sup> Skármeta's narratives are situated in the here and now, in a tone that is progressive and positive, anti-elitist and non-dogmatic. Skármeta's collaboration on *Calm Prevails Over the Country* (CPOTC) and *The Uprising* brought out his aptitude in creating plots adaptable into the narration patterns of different media. His intermediality has been commented on by literary scholar Monika Walter, among others, who remarks that Skármeta's narrative style is an interplay of drama, emotion and visuality that creates an obvious proximity to the narrative parameters of film scripts.<sup>8</sup> Skármeta's work *Ardiente Paciencia* is probably the climax of his intermediality. In its first version a radio play (1982), the text was adapted as a film (1983), a theatre play (1984) and finally, a novel (1985).<sup>9</sup> According to Hermann Herlinghaus, this play with different media is due to Skármeta's perception of the fragmentary and provisional character of life in exile that prompted him to combine the aesthetic principles of different genres in his works.<sup>10</sup> To Skármeta as to many fellow Chileans in exile, daily life and melodrama existed parallel to each other.<sup>11</sup>

Skármeta's experiences and their artistic outlets are a prime example of exilic experience, which left visible traces in *CPOTC* and *The Uprising*, the two films I will explore now in terms of their participants and the conditions of their makings.

### ***Calm Prevails Over the Country***

Financially and ideologically supported by the US in the so-called Operation Condor, the military coup in Chile on September 11, 1973, destroyed Chilean democracy and left the incumbent president Salvador Allende dead.<sup>12</sup> The democratically elected socialist party *Unidad Popular* was replaced by a military dictatorship under the leadership of General Augusto Pinochet. *CPOTC* relates to the aftermath of the military coup,

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<sup>7</sup> Donald L. Shaw, "Contexto e ideas literarias," *Revista Iberoamericana* 168-169 (1994): 1053. Skármeta belonged to a league of young writers in predominantly Spanish America who 'define themselves in terms of a rupture of break with the past' - the Boom writers. See Philip Swanson, "The Post-Boom Novel," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*, ed. Efraín Kristal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 81. Important representatives of the latter literary movement are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes and Julio Cortázar. Criticising these authors for their missing engagement with human reality, amidst using experimental forms of narration, the post-boom writers retorted with a return to a more classical way of storytelling and an engagement with popular culture.

<sup>8</sup> See Monika Walter, "Die kleinen Melodramen des Lebens - zu einigen Erfolgsgeheimnissen des Antonio Skármeta," in *Exilbilder. Lateinamerikanische Schriftsteller und Künstler in Europa und Nordamerika*, ed. Sebastian Thies, Susanne Dölle, and Ana Maria Bieritz (Berlin: Tranvia Sur 2005).

<sup>9</sup> See Hermann Herlinghaus, *Intermedialität als Erzählerfahrung. Isabel Allende, José Donoso und Antonio Skármeta Im Dialog mit Film, Fernsehen, Theater* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang 1994), 70-81.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>11</sup> It might be worth while looking at Skármeta's novel *La Insurrección/The Uprising* (1982) to examine how the film gave shape to the book.

<sup>12</sup> Lucy Komisar, "Operation Condor and Pinochet," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 November 1998.

depicting violence and oppression as an everyday condition in a military dictatorship. The events in the film take place in a fictional South American town called Las Piedras. In the opening scenes an older man, Paselli (Luciano Noble) arrives to see his daughter Maria Angelica (Henriqueta Maya), who is detained in a prison in the outskirts of the town. Residing in a small hotel, he shares his grief with its owner, Parra (played by veteran French actor Charles Vanel). This is how Parra's family and then the population of Las Piedras learn about the existence of this prison. Shocked, but also politicised by the increasing terror that the regime directs against them, the citizens organise resistance activities. Following an unsuccessful escape attempt by some of the prisoners, the local military government mercilessly kills those left. The funeral becomes a mass demonstration, during which the town people openly express their protest. One person after another is arrested until the entire population is imprisoned, except for granddad Parra. He decides to join his family.

*Figure 8.* Scene from *CPOTC*: Soldiers round up the local population of Las Piedras

Around the same time that Lilienthal and Skármeta worked on *CPOTC*, filmmakers from Chile, Europe and even Hollywood captured the Chilean uproar and its aftermaths in a number of films.<sup>13</sup> Chilean political filmmaker Patricio Guzman finished in France the trilogy *La Batalla de Chile: La Lucha de un Pueblo sin Armas/The Battle of Chile* (part I in 1975/part II in 1977/part III in 1979) that he had started back in Chile. In a

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<sup>13</sup> Julianne Burton, "The Camera as 'Gun': Two Decades of Culture and Resistance in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (1978): 70.

dialectical style, Guzman's documentary aimed to enlighten audiences about the contradicting interests of social and political groupings in Chile that led to the *coup d'état*.<sup>14</sup> Guzman's film became a key text of cinematic cultural memory in contemporary Chile.<sup>15</sup> Another filmmaker from Chile, Orlando Lübbert, who resided in East Germany after 1973, made *Der Übergang/ Border Crossing* (1978), a film about an escape attempt of three Chilean men to cross the border to Argentina.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, East German documentary filmmakers Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann who had contributed footage to Guzman's *La Batalla de Chile*,<sup>17</sup> made *Krieg der Mumien/ War of the Mummies* in 1974 and *El Golpe Blanco - Der weiße Putsch* (1975).<sup>18</sup> Heynowski's and Scheumann's documentaries addressed and criticised US foreign politics during the Cold War. The filmmakers had been highly controversial figures on account of the ideological dimension of their films. For some, such as media scholar Rüdiger Steinmetz, Heynowski and Scheumann revolutionised the documentary genre.<sup>19</sup> According to other scholars, such as Martin Brady and Helen Hughes, the filmmakers brought the 'agitational propaganda film' to a new level.<sup>20</sup> *Missing* (1982), *Under Fire* (1983) and *Salvador* (1986) presented Hollywood productions which addressed the political situation in Central and South America.<sup>21</sup> As Neil Larsen suggests, these films had the function to mediate the situation in Central America to a North American audience by way of a 'gringo photojournalist', that is, a hero they can identify with.<sup>22</sup>

In sharp contrast to these Hollywood productions, which, as Catherine Grant notes, 'have no need to identify with, or address themselves directly to, the real people who live in their film locations,'<sup>23</sup> *CPOTC* was an act of resistance for an audience that

<sup>14</sup> ———, "Patricio Guzman. Politics and the Documentary in People's Chile " in *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Austin University of Texas Press, 1986).

<sup>15</sup> Ralf Schenk, "Verlorene Erinnerungen," *Film-Dienst* 56, no. 19 (2003).

<sup>16</sup> Bettina Bremme, *Movie-Mientos: Der lateinamerikanische Film: Streiflichter von unterwegs* (Stuttgart: Schmetterling Verlag, 2000), 85.

<sup>17</sup> María Luisa Ortega, "La batalla de Chile/The Battle of Chile," in *The Cinema of Latin America*, ed. Alberto Elena and Marina Díaz López (London: Wallflower Press, 2003), 154.

<sup>18</sup> Rüdiger Steinmetz, "Heynowski & Scheumann: The GDR's Leading Documentary Film Team," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 24, no. 3 (2004).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Brady and Helen Hughes, "German Cinema" in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture*, ed. Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 312.

<sup>21</sup> A number of films were released only after the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the outbreak of civil wars in Salvador and Guatemala in the early 1980s. See James Dunkerley, "'All That Trouble Down There'. Hollywood and Central America," in *Mediating Two Worlds. Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*, ed. John King, Ana M. López, and Manuel Alvarado (London: BFI, 1993), 95-96.

<sup>22</sup> Neil Larsen, *Reading North by South. On Latin American Literature, Culture, and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 42.

<sup>23</sup> Catherine Grant, "Camera Solidaria," *Screen* 38, no. 4 (1997): 328.

had been personally affected by the political circumstances in Latin America. The film focused on a population under siege to restore its self-confidence and belief in power through unity. Skármeta notes how they perceived this fight in 1976:

The power of this film lay in witnessing the potential of a peaceful, democratic, revolutionary, unarmed and majority population that opposes an enemy which is in the minority but reactionary and armed to the teeth. It was supposed to be the film of one phase of resistance, even if the least developed.<sup>24</sup>

Much like an asylum seeker's search for a secure refuge and their dependence on the generosity of others, the project needed a secure setting and supportive political structures in which to realise it. As things stood at the time, Lilienthal and Skármeta were unable to film in fascist Chile or, for that matter, in any other South American country. Skármeta explains the impossibility of making a film in South America during the early 1970s:

The problem was where to shoot a film about the brutal repression of the extreme right in Latin America against its own people. If you looked at a map of Latin America in 1973, there was nowhere to do it.<sup>25</sup>

Besides finding a film location, the authors tried to elicit support of an army which, firstly, they could convince to take on the role of the repressor in the film. This army would hopefully provide the necessary equipment, such as military vehicles, uniforms and weapons, and open their premises for filming.<sup>26</sup> After a year-long search in Europe, the authors finally received help from the Portuguese army, which supplied them with vehicles and equipment. In addition, a number of actual soldiers participated as extras. These fortunate circumstances evolved 1974 in Portugal because of the Carnation Revolution, a military coup which had defeated the decade-long oppression of the *Estado Novo* regime. The turn to democracy and peace established a supportive political climate for Lilienthal's and Skármeta's undertaking. In view of these processes of searching and finding 'refuge', *CPOTC* can be read as an exilic film and, as Skármeta remarks, an adventurous one, "To talk about the cinema of exile and how it is done is to talk about the feats of a magician".<sup>27</sup> In other words, the realisation of this cinematic

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<sup>24</sup> Antonio Skármeta, "Filmen in Portugal," *Forum* 3(1976): 14.

<sup>25</sup> Skármeta in Silvina Frieri, "Letras: Antonio Skármeta, su formación en Buenos Aires, los caminos de exilio y la aventura de escribir. "Para una novella, lo mejor es zarpar y ver qué pasa", " *Página 12*, no. 192 (2004), [www.gacemil.com.ar/Detalle.asp?NotaID=6528](http://www.gacemil.com.ar/Detalle.asp?NotaID=6528), last accessed on 12 September 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Skármeta, "Filmen in Portugal," 14.

<sup>27</sup> Skármeta in "Letras: Antonio Skármeta, su formación en Buenos Aires, los caminos de exilio y la aventura de escribir. "Para una novella, lo mejor es zarpar y ver qué pasa"."

venture relied on luck, chance, and the selfless support of people in a situation where the authors did not have much to offer in return.

Finding like-minded companions is important as a means to survive the painful experience of living outside of one's home country. Amy Kaminsky suggests that exile 'intensifies identification with others from home'.<sup>28</sup> In search for the location of *CPOTC*, Skármeta tracked down an exile community that lived in Setúbal, Portugal.<sup>29</sup> When he and Lilienthal visited the émigrés, the Chileans talked to Skármeta first and came to trust him and the film project that he and Lilienthal had in mind. Eventually, the men and women understood this film as an opportunity to communicate their predicament, calling attention to the injustice in their home countries. Skármeta recalls: 'For all of them, this film was something mythical and now, in the worst moment of their lives, it [the film] came into their reach'.<sup>30</sup> The 'mythical' resonates with the notion of chance and coincidence that I have just mentioned.

Originally an idea of two authors, with the involvement of émigrés cast as actors and extras, *CPOTC* evolved into a collective project, a film with dimensions of shared authorship. Moreover, the celebrated Chilean folklorist Ángel Parra and son of political activist and singer Violeta Parra composed the score for *CPOTC*. He was another participant in making the film who was living in exile at the time.<sup>31</sup>

Communal exchange of painful memories, hopes and aspirations made the film a type of diasporic community that had found a transitory home. Viewing this film as significant for their lives and their wellbeing, the émigrés became involved to a degree that exceeded mere acting roles. Most of them had experienced episodes of torture, death and isolation, which became the source of invaluable input. The exiles' contribution as actors and 'assistant script writers' altered the script frequently and made *CPOTC* close to experienced reality in a dictatorship. Skármeta recalls:

Among them we found experienced counsellors for the escape of political inmates, an event portrayed in the film. And so it happened that whenever we referred to fiction they provided us with documentary material and acted out of their own reality. Originally meant to be extras, their characters developed and outperformed the script.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Amy K. Kaminsky, *After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>29</sup> Skármeta, "Filmen in Portugal," 14.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Parra was detained in a Chilean concentration camp, but was able to escape to Mexico in 1974. He has been living in Paris since 1976. See Parra, Ángel. "'Meine Arbeit ist mit der eines Briefträgers vergleichbar'" *CafeBabel.com. Das Europamagazin*, [www.cafebabel.com/ger/article/22410/angel-parra-meine-arbeit-ist-mit-der-eines-brieftraegers-vergleichbar.html](http://www.cafebabel.com/ger/article/22410/angel-parra-meine-arbeit-ist-mit-der-eines-brieftraegers-vergleichbar.html), last accessed on 7 October 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

The émigrés ‘staged their own fate’, as Michael Schwarze, journalist for the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, put it.<sup>33</sup> This was an emotionally and psychologically draining experience, since they relived traumatic events which they had endured under the pressure of hostile regimes. But this process also had therapeutic effects. Talking about and replaying emotions while filming traumatic scenes was a form of agony and suffering.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the shooting of specifically emotional scenes brought out acts of humanity and solidarity among the participants. In one scene members of the army brutally terminated a demonstration. With the actor-demonstrators still lying on the floor after shooting was finished, their opponents, the actor-soldiers, embraced them spontaneously.<sup>35</sup>

I started this discussion by arguing that *CPOTC* was, in terms of its making, an exilic film. I would like to finish my discussion of *CPOTC* with thoughts on its geopolitical setting, which opens up a reading of the film in diasporic dimensions, and bridges my discussion to *The Uprising*. The film includes documentary footage of street fights between the military and civilians in Chile. The detention of citizens in the local stadium of Las Piedras also alludes to real events in contemporary Chile, where political opponents were locked up in Santiago’s *Estadio Nacional* in 1973. In addition, Miguel Neira’s funeral (one of the prisoners who escaped, and was shot and killed, played by Eduardo Duran) can be seen as reference to the funeral of the Chilean poet and Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda in 1976, which also evolved into a mass gathering despite Pinochet’s prohibition of turning it into a public event. The surname *Parra* establishes another narrative element that has symbolic value for progressive creativity in Chile. Singer Violeta Parra and her brother, the poet Nicanor Parra, are just two members of this prolific Chilean family.<sup>36</sup> All of these references to Chile in *CPOTC* are palpable. Yet, a second reading seems viable. In that the film avoids pinpointing its time and place, it gives *CPOTC* a broader validity beyond the specific Chilean case to include more broadly, Latin America and its history. Allowing the multitude of exilic voices and experiences from various countries of Central and South America to enter this film is

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Schwarze, "Es herrscht Ruhe im Land," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 March 1976.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

<sup>35</sup> Schwarze, "Es herrscht Ruhe im Land."

<sup>36</sup> Violeta Parra’s famous song *Gracias a la Vida* ('Thanks to life') that became popular throughout Latin America, accompanies the concluding credits of *La Victoria*. Parra was an active member of the Socialist Party of Chile, who revived the *peñas*, communal centres for art and political activism. See Gina Cánepa-Hurtado, "La canción de lucha en Violeta Parra y su ubicación en el complejo cultural chileno entre los años 1960 a 1973. Esbozo de sus antecedentes socio-históricos y categorización de los fenómenos culturales atingentes," *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana* 9, no. 17 (1983).

part of Lilienthal's inclusionary practice. As I have mentioned above, these individuals collectively devised the film's narrative and aesthetic patterns, which in effect determines the film as a form of shared cultural memory. This should bridge my discussion to *The Uprising*, whose making presents a variation of participative authorship practices and an excellent example of a diasporic film.

### *The Uprising*

Living amidst fellow exiled Latin American artists in West Berlin, Skármeta learned about social and political matters elsewhere, including in Nicaragua. While working on both sides of the German wall, and frequently travelling to East Germany,<sup>37</sup> he met an author and intellectual, Sergio Ramirez.<sup>38</sup> Ramirez was a fellow DAAD scholar, and as Skármeta, a writer committed to social change. Reading his novel *A te dio miedo la sangre?/Did the Blood Scare you? (1977)*, Skármeta and Lilienthal became first aware of the power struggle between the Somoza regime and Sandinista rebels.<sup>39</sup>

The Sandinista triumph in 1979 was of course a victory of epic dimensions for the Nicaraguan population. Ramirez, who later became vice president of the Sandinista government, recalled the feverish atmosphere that accompanied the liberation:

And the 19<sup>th</sup> of July dawns. [...] Breakfast time so rushed in the kitchen, once again eating on your feet your ration of beans and rice, you begin to realize that today is the day; such days don't exist until they are over, but today is the day; the music of The Women of Cua on all the radio stations of the little black radio that blares on top of the pantry tiles; The Guerillas' Tomb, that music is dominating the air waves; Radio Tiempo of Managua at the head of a chain of stations is like a gentle magic, a cordial but firm little touch to shake your incredulity, open your eyes; listen, you can walk and you don't feel the floor, a mattress of clouds on the floor; today is the day; [...] the arrival of the first trucks, bulging with Guerillas; they are entering Managua; you hear the shouts, the slogans..

And everyone in the house is suddenly crowded around the television screen where the image of Sandino repeatedly takes off his hat and puts it back on, again and again, to the chords of the Sandinista hymn; and that was the best proof that this day really existed. [...] Who was going to deny that we had triumphed and from now on there would always be a 19<sup>th</sup> of July, 1979.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Martina Polster, "Zweite Heimat DDR, zweite Heimat BRD - Erfahrungen lateinamerikanischer Exilierter und Autoren im geteilten Deutschland " in *Exilbilder. Lateinamerikanische Schriftsteller und Künstler in Europa und Nordamerika*, ed. Sebastian Thies, Susanne Dölle, and Ana María Bieritz (Berlin: Tranvia Sur 2005), 89.

<sup>38</sup> Sergio Ramirez, *A Hatful of Tigers*, trans. D. J. Flakoll (Willimantic: Curbstone Press, 1995), 34.

<sup>39</sup> Salman Rushdie used Ramirez's novel as travel companion for his journey through Nicaragua at the beginning of the 1980s. Salman Rushdie, *The Jaguar Smile. A Nicaraguan Journey* (London: Vintage, 2000), 124-31.

<sup>40</sup> Ramirez, *A Hatful of Tigers*, 80-81.

The Sandinista victory presented an enormous boost to the liberation movements of Central and South America and shifted the Cold War power balance.<sup>41</sup> But most of all it conveyed an air of optimism that resistance against oppression could be achieved when different sectors of society act jointly.<sup>42</sup> Skármeta and Lilienthal were in an elevated emotional state:

For Lilienthal and myself, Nicaragua served as a counterbalance to so many painful experiences. A tyranny as we had described it in our last film [CPOTC] was eventually destroyed thanks to the situation where for the first time in Latin America, in Nicaragua, the armed avant-garde received the support of all democratic sectors.<sup>43</sup>

Lilienthal and Skármeta wanted to communicate this success story because it suggested the potential for and hope of freedom for other parts of the world. While they understood Nicaragua as a paradigm, they produced a text of significance to the Nicaraguans themselves. *The Uprising* is a historical document of the contemporary social and political events in Nicaragua and a landmark of Nicaraguan cultural memory.

The plot of *The Uprising* charts the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza Debayle's dictatorship in Nicaragua by the Sandinista liberation movement in July 1979. The film was completed only months after the events.<sup>44</sup> Skármeta and Lilienthal co-wrote the screenplay for *The Uprising*, which Skármeta turned into a novel in 1982.<sup>45</sup> The film restaged certain events that took place in the town of León, a location with symbolic importance to the struggle. One of the last strongholds of Somoza's National Guard, León witnessed bloody street fights between the regime and the rebels. The Sandinistas finally took over the city and held it until the end of Somoza regime. Somoza himself was assassinated in León. *The Uprising* focuses on the fictional character of Agustin Menor (Agustin Pereira), a Somoza soldier with divided loyalties. A dark-skinned young man from a proletarian background, he works as a radio operator in Somoza's forces. His family is poor, and his father, Antonio (Carlos Catania), works in road construction. Agustin wants to become a telecommunications engineer, and the enlistment in the army is his only way to finance his studies. Having a regular income, he pays the rent and the fees for his sister's studies. Agustin's sister Eugenia (Vicky Montero) is a member of the

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<sup>41</sup> Sergio Ramírez, *Adiós Muchachos. Una memoria de la Revolución Sandinista* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1999), 15.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*. Revised edition (New York and London: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 166.

<sup>43</sup> Antonio Skármeta, "Notizen zu *Der Aufstand*," in *Press Information for The Uprising*, ed. Basis Filmverleih GmbH (1980), 7.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden* (Frankfurt: Verlag der Autoren, 2001), 251.

<sup>45</sup> Jürgen Bevers, "Über Konzeption und Erfahrungen bei den Dreharbeiten. Jürgen Bevers im Gespräch mit Peter Lilienthal," in *Press Information for The Uprising*, ed. Basis Filmverleih GmbH (1980).

guerillas, Antonio works in the underground, and his mother ([Maria Lourdes Centano de Zelaya](#)) openly protests against the regime. Having a few days off, Agustin's visit at home becomes a tense affair. After discussions with his father and the local padre, who try to convince him to desert, he does not return to his post. His superior, Captain Flores (Oscar Castillo), personally comes to collect him. Heavily armed and protected, Flores demands Antonio to surrender Agustin to him. When Antonio refuses, Flores threatens to retaliate and has Antonio's neighbours lined up against a wall. Agustin eventually gives up and drives off with Flores. However, eventually Agustin joins his father and sister in their resistance activities. As a consequence of Agustin's renewed desertion, Antonio and his brother are taken hostage by Flores's men. They are led through the town in front of tanks. In the ensuing combat both Flores and Agustin die but the rebels win. Celebrating their victory, the local population crowds the streets of León.

*Figure 9. On the set of *The Uprising*: Actors Maria Lourdes Centano de Zelaya (Agustin's mother), Agustin Pereira (Agustin) and Carlos Catania (Antonio, Agustin's father)*

Lilienthal teamed up with Peruvian photographer Alejandro Legaspi and the Costa Ricans Antonio Yglesias, Óscar Castillo and Mario Cardona (as assistant director, co-producer, actor and assistant cinematographer, respectively) and German cinematographer Michael Ballhaus. Claus Bantzer composed the score for *The Uprising*, which was the first of several joint projects with Lilienthal. *The Autograph*, *Der Radfabrer vom San Cristóbal* and also the Jewish films *Das Schweigen des Dichters* and *Facing the Forests*

relied on his expertise.<sup>46</sup> Shot right after the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979 in a time when the country was undergoing a fundamental social restructuring process, *The Uprising*, was a means to support a national film industry that was yet to be established. With the *Instituto Nicaragüense de Cine* (INCINE) founded in September of 1979, the newly founded Nicaraguan Ministry of Culture brought to life the first independent Nicaraguan film institution.<sup>47</sup> INCINE was one of the institutions that coproduced *The Uprising*, along with the Costa Rican group *Istmo Films*.<sup>48</sup> Aiming to create a viable Central American film industry, *Istmo* developed a funding structure that had helped INCINE come to life in the first place.<sup>49</sup> When Lilienthal started shooting *The Uprising* in November 1979, it was only the second film in which INCINE was involved. INCINE received much needed support from foreign filmmakers, in this early stage still short of technical expertise. Formerly workers and peasants, most of the Nicaraguan film staff had not been in touch with film before.<sup>50</sup> Aside from Lilienthal, the Chilean filmmaker Miguel Littin trained Nicaraguan natives in lighting and camerawork.

Lilienthal and Skármeta wanted Nicaraguans to participate as actors and extras in order to seize their personal experience and emotions. The timing of the venture - Lilienthal and Skármeta travelled to León almost right after the uprising in order to familiarise themselves with the situation in Nicaragua post-Somoza – turned out to be important in order to rehash the events still recent and the surroundings still carrying the marks of the recent struggle.<sup>51</sup> Ballhaus notes that, '*The Uprising* came into being at a point in time when the events were perfectly fresh and the emotions all still there'.<sup>52</sup>

Lilienthal was concerned about the psychological effects the close proximity of real event and film might have on potential participants and whether they were willing at all to take part in this film. Contrary to his assumptions, many Nicaraguans agreed to

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<sup>46</sup> Bantzer also composed the soundtracks for *40qm Deutschland/Forty Square Meters of Germany* (Tevfik Başer, 1986), *Abschied vom falschen Paradies/Farewell to False Paradise* (Başer, 1989) and *Drachenfutter/Dragon Chow* (Jan Schütte, 1987), films which treat issues and problems of minority groups in West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>47</sup> Howard Dratch and Barbara Margolis, "Film and Revolution in Nicaragua," *Cineaste* 15, no. 3 (1987): 28.

<sup>48</sup> *The Uprising* was co-produced by several German and Central American companies; in addition to *Istmo-Film* and INCINE, ZDF, *Independent Film*, *Von-Vietinghoff Filmproduktion* and *Provobis* were involved in the production of the film.

<sup>49</sup> See an account of the early days of INCINE Julianne Burton, "Emilio Rodríguez Vázquez and Carlos Vicente Ibarra (Puerto Rico and Nicaragua), Filmmaking in Nicaragua: From Insurrection to Incine," in *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Austin University of Texas Press, 1986).

<sup>50</sup> Nicaraguan film personnel also received training in socialist countries such as East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Cuba. See Dratch and Margolis, "Film and Revolution in Nicaragua," 28.

<sup>51</sup> Lilienthal in Bevers, "Über Konzeption und Erfahrungen bei den Dreharbeiten. Jürgen Bevers im Gespräch mit Peter Lilienthal."

<sup>52</sup> Ballhaus in Tom Tykwer, *Das fliegende Auge. Michael Ballhaus, Director of Photography* (Berlin: Random House, 2002).

partake in this venture and replay frightening, life changing experiences just months old. Nevertheless, the shooting did provoke startling reactions. David Whisnant reports that ‘some of the extras posing as FSLN troops (Sandinist National Liberation Front), were still so traumatized by the war that when other extras dressed in National Guard uniforms appeared in the streets, they fired on them instinctively’.<sup>53</sup> As a positive side effect, the film had a cathartic effect on some of the participants. For a young girl, who had trouble sleeping due to her family’s house being frequently bombarded during the war, restaging the events helped in settling her torments.<sup>54</sup> Altogether, due to the close proximity of the real events and the making of the film, it became reality in the memory of their participants. When Lilienthal returned to Nicaragua on an occasion years later, people talked about the film as if it was something they had experienced *during* the actual uprising.<sup>55</sup>

Having a definite idea about the ways of involving the locals and using the localities, in staging the events in León Lilienthal was nevertheless respectful to the material and the culture he drew on. He adopted a relaxed attitude in making the film, an approach that Skármeta, familiar with Latin American cultural styles, had convinced him to take on.<sup>56</sup> This allowed for the Nicaraguans themselves to tell the story of León. Lilienthal took a backseat role and merely recorded their story, and made sure that the film in the end reflected the events the way they were told.<sup>57</sup> In this process, the filmmaker acknowledged and accepted that components of the accounts might be exaggerated, his subject matter might become one of heroic deeds. Moreover, Lilienthal’s filmmaking practices incorporated a high degree of spontaneity and flexibility. *The Uprising* was shot in the streets of León, often in crowded areas. In order to record unforeseen situations and goings-on there, the team made use of hand-held cameras. Almost half of *The Uprising* was filmed this way. Ballhaus said about his work in the film: ‘A given situation determined the visual style of the images, there was nothing calculated or planned about these shots.’<sup>58</sup> Catching the unexpected and unforeseen became a film practice that in turn became part of the visual and narrative structure of the text. As a result, some film scenes have poor sound quality and the images are grainy, blurry or off-

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<sup>53</sup> David E. Whisnant, *Rascally Signs in Sacred Places: The Politics of Culture in Nicaragua* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 216.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

<sup>55</sup> Ballhaus in Tykwer, *Das Fliegende Auge. Michael Ballhaus, Director of Photography*.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in December 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ballhaus on an event at the Akademie der Künste Ost in East Berlin in 1982. See Chapter 5 for more information about these venues.

focus. These practices nevertheless enhanced a realist and documentary quality of the films.

*Figure 10.* Scene from *The Uprising*: Inhabitants of León gather in the streets

In effect, the making of *The Uprising* adheres to Nicaraguan cultural traditions and yields to local practices of historicising culturally meaningful events. The film visualizes oral traditions and, in this way, preserves the events of León in a fictional, story-bound format. As the film witnessed and recorded the beginning of a new era in the Nicaraguan nation, it captured a Nicaraguan legend.

After this discussion of *CPOTC* and *The Uprising* in terms of collaborators and film practices, in the following section I will examine the content and aesthetics of both films, and those of *La Victoria*, *The Autograph*, *Der Radfahrer* and *Camilo*.

### **Soldiers – Compromised between all Frontiers**

The military is an ever-recurring trope in Lilienthal's films as a major cause of social problems in Latin America. The army figures nearly always as an antagonistic force but the filmmaker portrays soldiers as compromised individuals.

In *CPOTC*, the members of the military and other executive forces are exchangeable figures. The officer in the prison is a plump, middle-aged man. His shirt and trousers are tight-fitting; the grey-black uniform looks like a costume on him, making this character appear ridiculous. The soldiers look almost identical, the more so

as Lilienthal filmed them from the back, so that one cannot make out individual faces. Moving back and forth on the roof of prison, opening and closing the gates of the premises, they move like puppets operated by remote-control. There is no enthusiasm, haste, or intent involved in their actions. Instead of being depicted as outright evil, they appear rather disinterested and uninvolved. They ignore the impact of their actions, and are unaware of the kind of actions they are involved in. There is one scene in *CPOTC* in which this naïveté and imbecility, coupled with power, becomes a dangerous mixture. Raiding people's houses, a group of officers enter a room, where a teacher and other opponents of the regime hold a meeting. The officer in charge, chubby-faced, and wearing thick glasses, possesses almost childlike facial features. He greets his former teacher with a respectful 'Goday!'. Proud of his position as officer and wanting her approval for what he has become, he reminds her that he was her pupil. She, on the other hand, refuses to recognise him. Yet, occupying both the roles, as obedient pupil and as officer in the position which permits him to exercise his power over her, he advises her to be compliant with his demands. Wrapping his command in a polite, almost deferential phrasing, 'I ask you respectfully, please do me this favour and pack a few clothes!', he tells her to come with him. The friendly and respectful manners towards his former teacher reveal the soldier to be good-natured, the son of people she might know and respect. The words he uses are almost a plea to convey to her that he is only following a command from above, being in a situation where he cannot but be obedient; otherwise he might get fired. This scene provides a viewpoint onto the soldier that deviates from staging the military as a 'Greek choir in the background', as Lilienthal once put it in an interview about his way of depicting the Nazis in *David*.<sup>59</sup> Instead, this scene acknowledges the soldier as an individual, someone who does not fulfil his role because he is convinced that he is fighting for the right cause. Despite being caught in an emotional dilemma, this is a job that pays him money and allows him to live. In fact, 1970s Pinochet Chile saw an increasing number of applications for the armed forces, because, as Lübbert explains, the military was one of the few employers which guaranteed children from poorer families a job and earn a living.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Lilienthal in Jutta Voigt, "Terrassendialog. Begegnung mit dem Regisseur Peter Lilienthal," *Der Sonntag*, 19 September 1982.

<sup>60</sup> Orlando Lübbert, "Der Film in den Zeiten des Zorns," in *Grenzüberschreitungen. Eine Reise durch die globale Filmlandschaft*, ed. Erwin Reiss and Siegfried Zielinski (Berlin: Wissenschaftsverlag Spiess, 1992), 188.

*Figure 11.* Scene from *CPOTC*: Soldiers guard prisoners about to climb into a truck

Relatively underdeveloped as a topic in *CPOTC*, soldiers became more foregrounded in *The Uprising* as the authoritarian political structures in Latin America became better established, and the military became an ordinary part of public life. Travelling through South America, Lilienthal and Skármeta suddenly found it to be a burning issue within their societies. Skármeta reports that they met two soldiers in a train station in Buenos Aires in 1974. Being granted a free weekend, they asked the authors for some money to travel home. Skármeta reports:

When we noticed the proletarian faces, the shyness of the voices, the crooked line of their spines, Peter Lilienthal and I wondered about the sad destiny of these young men; men from the streets becoming soldiers who would have to shoot their own brothers one day.<sup>61</sup>

This observation triggered their conviction to process this issue cinematically. The outcome is *The Uprising*. The film unmask the military as an inhuman institution, and questions the motives that make the protagonist Agustin become a soldier and fight for the Somoza regime, that is, for the 'wrong' side.

In a key scene of the film, a group of young soldiers are seen carrying out physical fitness training in military barracks. Following rigid commands, they run in an orderly fashion. The camera lingers on four of the soldiers, and we get a close-up of handsome, childlike faces. Each one holds a weapon close to their naked, skinny chest. The shining metal against bare skin emphasises a notion of powerlessness and vulnerability. At the

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<sup>61</sup> Skármeta, "Notizen zu *Der Aufstand*," 7.

same time as the young are marching, a group of middle-aged women get in an open truck and depart en route to the barracks. Heavily armed soldiers encircle and point their guns at them when they arrive at the gates. This image is one of opposition. Dressed in black, the women appear as a uniform and powerful group, who face the soldiers without apprehension. Among the soldiers is Augustin, the main protagonist of the film while on the other side of the barracks, his mother protests alongside others. The parallel editing of the two sequences – the boys in the barracks and the women outside – suggests their relation as mothers and sons. In effect, this association strips the former of their role as soldiers and discloses them as children in need of protection.

*Figure 12.* Scene from *The Uprising*: Protesting mothers of soldiers in the military barracks. In the center of the group of women is Augustin's mother (Maria Lourdes Centano de Zeleya)

The connection between mother and son hints at Lilienthal's and Skármeta's approach of framing subjects within the context of the family. This is a device that Skármeta had developed in the short story *Primera Preparatoria* ('First Preparation') of his story collection *Tiro libre/Free Shot* (1973), where the political conflict is placed in the intimate surroundings of a single family.<sup>62</sup> In *The Uprising*, Augustin's dilemma is that of a conflict between father and son. Film critic Hans C. Blumenberg has commented on the

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<sup>62</sup> According to Donald Shaw, *Tiro libre* was Skármeta's first work whose form and theme reflect the author's preoccupation with social and political issues. See Shaw, *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*, 74-76.

narrative frame of *The Uprising* as a 'classic father-son-conflict'.<sup>63</sup> This is, however, not an accurate enough observation because the father-son-conflict in this film is turned on its head. Unlike *CPOTC*, *David* and *Facing the Forests*, among other of Lilienthal's films in which the young protagonists act as progressive forces, in this film Agustin's father, Antonio takes on this role. Alongside his wife and their daughter, he is involved in underground activities for the Sandinista Liberation Front. Although struggling to find the financial means for the family to survive, Antonio has made a decision, which signals that a compromise is not an option – one has to risk all in order to liberate society. He wants Agustin to desert the army. Yet, Agustin hesitates. His father is unemployed, and his action would deprive the family of the last reliable financial source. Deserting the army means death to him as well as to the other members of his family. In a discussion between Augustin and Antonio which erupts when Augustin comes home for a visit, Antonio demands: 'I won't have you wear this filthy uniform in my house', whereas Augustin retorts, 'This uniform is paying for this house. Try to understand. I am a technical engineer. One more year and they'll be sending me to the USA so I can become an electrical communications engineer. I don't want to be a soldier and kill. What am I going to do?' Aggravating Augustin's dilemma, Augustin's superior Captain Flores feels personally responsible for him. Flores serves as a father figure to him but this relation also has a homoerotic nature.<sup>64</sup> Drawing a personal relationship to Flores ties Augustin to the other side more than just a job because it shows him what he could gain and attain. Flores, who knows about Augustin's inner conflict about staying in the army, promises him the prospect of a great career and financial independence, when moving with him and his family to the USA. He invites him into his house, where Augustin helps packing the family's furniture for their departure. The luxurious surroundings of this place, filled with heavy, expensive furniture, promise him a carefree life as well. Yet, Augustin is portrayed as a responsible character who can tell right from wrong and, again, he is not a follower of the regime. If anything, he endures the practices and responsibilities his job entails. In scenes that show him as part of the army, he is quiet and seems without any emotions. His eyes, on the other hand are the most vivid part of his face: They betray calmness and consent but show his inner turmoil, if not disgust, about the activities he is a part of.

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<sup>63</sup> Hans C. Blumenberg, "Revision of *Der Aufstand*," *Die Zeit*, 10 October 1980.

<sup>64</sup> A scene earlier in the film suggests that Flores is attracted to Augustin. When Augustin hands a bottle of beer to him, the camera captures in a close-up two of Flores' fingers, which touch and linger on the back of Augustin's hand.

As metaphor for two ideological pathways that split Nicaraguan society, the father-son-conflict pictures Agustin at its crossroads. Agustin has, as Rachel J. Halverson and Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi suggest, 'to choose between two 'fathers', just as his nation must choose between two governments.'<sup>65</sup> Flores represents the ideology that aims for personal gain and advantage, money and wealth. It serves a small minority and leaves the majority in destitute conditions. On the other hand, Agustin's biological father, Antonio, embodies the virtues that choose the well-being of his country over individual and material needs. The filmmakers take Antonio's side. Flores's death at the end of the film has a symbolic value. Agustin's motives to stay with the army are without value as far as Antonio is concerned because they are based on individual, insignificant needs ('feed the family') which bear no comparison with the greater needs of society. The responsibility Agustin shows for his family does not have any value in these times of political turmoil. Hence, Antonio is the politically progressive character, to which Agustin needs to live up to. The predicament that Agustin faces – the choice between protecting his family or his country has been solved already in Antonio's character. This means that the film does not deliberate what is the right thing to do, but instead follows Augustin's process of developing political consciousness. At the end, he deserts the army and joins his friends and family in resistance to Somoza.

Three decades later, the story of a conscientious objector is still the focus of Lilienthal's attention. In 2005, Nicaraguan-born Camilo Mejía deserted the US army during a two-week leave after having been deployed in the Iraq War for six months. This made him the first official deserter of the Iraq war, a story that was of media interest worldwide. Researching the case, conversations with Camilo and his family and following Camilo's activities as peace activist resulted in a documentary entitled *Camilo - The Long Road to Disobedience*. The conscientious objector Camilo Mejía echoes his fictional predecessor, Agustin. Agustin's desire was to attend college and get a degree, the reason he served in Somoza's army. Camilo's case is similar. Born during the time of Somoza's dictatorship, Camilo's family left their home country. His father, a famous Nicaraguan poet and singer, and his mother were Sandinista partisans. Lacking money to pay for studies, Camilo took up an offer to serve in the US army which would pay for a college degree in psychology. However, shortly after he joined the army, Camilo was deployed in Iraq. The peacekeeping operations of the US army, its ways of treating

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<sup>65</sup> Halverson and Rodríguez-Vivaldi, "La Insurrección/Der Aufstand. Cultural Synergy, Film and Revolution," 449.

civilians and employing violence, became an eye-opening experience to the soldier, Camilo, up to the point where they became irreconcilable with his personal morals and beliefs. Upon deserting the army in 2004, he was convicted to serve a one-year sentence in prison.<sup>66</sup>

*Figure 13. Carlos Mejía campaigning in Seattle, Washington in 2006*

Like Agustin, Camilo is an ambiguous character. In spite of his pacifist activities he has not yet come to terms with his violent past. The parallels between Agustin and Camilo and in fact, between *The Uprising* and *Camilo* confirm Lilienthal's observations about practices in the army, which he had made in the context of South American military regimes, to be valid in another cultural framework. The strategies of the military then and now to fill its ranks, for instance by recruiting young people from poor backgrounds with the promise of an action-filled job, a good salary and the prospect of paying for college expenses, are current practices of the US army.

While the documentary criticizes US practices, Lilienthal maintains the focus in documenting their effects on Latin America. This is illustrated by the textual focus on the Nicaraguan, Camilo, and various other individuals from a Hispanic background. Camilo's case illustrates that recruitment strategies reach far beyond national US borders into the homes of families in Central America. Parallel to Camilo's case, Lilienthal

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<sup>66</sup> Camilo reflected on his experiences in a book called *Road from Ar Ramadi. The Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Mejia* (2007).

follows the story of Fernando del Solar, father of the 12-year old Jesús. The US military kept phoning the Mexican in his native Mexico. Their promise to pay for immigrant visas, and the prospect of a good education for his son made them finally move to the US. After he had finished high school, Jesús became a US marine and one of the first soldiers to serve in the Iraq War. He was killed by friendly fire soon after.<sup>67</sup> As a result of these tragic events, his father Fernando became a relentless political activist. Taking his personal tragedy as an example, he teaches young people with a Hispanic background in American schools, colleges and universities, not to fall prey to the promises of the military recruitment officers. Lilienthal accompanied him to Mexico and Iraq, the respective sites of his son's first school, and of his later death. Lilienthal's style of avoiding pictures of violence but having Camilo, Fernando and others report about their experiences, dreams, hopes and losses, instills a deep-seated empathy for these individuals. Scenes of a journalist reading the report of Jesús's last hours of his life on an open field in Iraq, Fernando's account of the last minutes that he had spent at his son's coffin, inspecting his injuries, are most painful and, in effect, establish the emotional climaxes of this documentary. Others, such as Camilo's anecdote of how he and his subordinates raided the flats of Iraqi civilians, lined them up in their own homes, while helping themselves to water from their fridges, give rise to an uneasy feeling about Camilo's character, because of the activities he was involved in.

Jesús's and Camilo's cases suggest that their parents are partly responsible for what has happened to them. Many scenes around Camilo's situation show him within domestic surroundings, in which his parents talk about Camilo's ambitions and dreams when young, and their reaction to their sons' decision to serve in the military. Fernando's apologising to his son at the coffin is a confession of liability for his death. And this admission of guilt draws a line to Camilo's parents because they are at fault, too. In addition, the documentary explores the pros and cons of the decision to exchange their lives in Nicaragua or Mexico for an American 'homeland' as the way to give children the best possible future. In essayistic form, *Camilo* follows various perspectives in individual stories, which examines Latin American immigration to the United States. Pointing to the poor living conditions, which the majority of the population in Nicaragua has to master day in, day out, the documentary includes interviews with Sandinista veterans.

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<sup>67</sup> See for Jesús's case Hector Amaya, "Dying American or the Violence of Citizenship: Latinos in Iraq," *Latino Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007). Jesús, and two other soldiers who died early on in the Iraq War in 2003, were no US citizens. They were given posthumous US citizenship. Amaya argues that this action is an illiberal practice that disguises illegal ways of staffing the US army.

Among them is Ramirez, whose novel inspired Lilienthal for *The Uprising*. He reflects on the problems in current day Nicaragua. In this respect, *Camilo* displaces the optimistic and hopeful mood right after the revolution in 1979 – the images that *The Uprising* had concluded with.

### **Social Life under Oppression: Victims and Perpetrators**

Military and society constitute an oppositional coupling in Lilienthal's films - rigid structures and the demand for conformity deprive individuals of essential human rights. Hence, society under such a rule becomes imprisoned. *CPOTC* and *The Autograph* draw well-articulated pictures of this collective condition. *CPOTC*'s narrative structure reminds us of social life under a military regime in that it emulates its unexpected and unforeseeable nature. At first sight, the editing of the film seems to be abrupt, because scenes follow each other without establishing a coherent narrative progression. Yet, as events unfold, acts, people and situations relate to each other, but in a non-linear manner. A secondary story (that of Miguel Neira's underground work and his subsequent arrest), interrupts the main narrative in the fashion of a visual jigsaw puzzle, time and again. Characters appear and then disappear without further explanations of their whereabouts. The editing throughout the film leaves a disorienting and disturbing effect that indicates danger and arbitrariness as conditions of 'ordinary' daily life in this society. The spectator is, like the citizens of this town, unprepared, because they cannot predict the events. The theme of imprisonment is another narrative element. The inmates are filmed in small, narrow rooms isolated by windows, panes and doors from the outside world. The town people experience similar limitations. The idea of imprisoned versus free people collapses in a sequence that captures the first encounter between a party of Las Piedras citizens and the detainees. Shot from behind the backs of the imprisoned, they see the visitors wait, separated by glass walls all around them. This image in these surroundings makes them not only appear physically constrained, but also depicts a striking comparison with the prisoners.

*Figure 14.* Scene from *CPOTC*: Miguel Neira (Eduardo Durán), one of the political prisoners, about to eat under the surveillance of heavily armed prison guards

A German film critic once noted about *CPOTC* that it portrays a 'climate of vague anxiety, lurking danger, and utmost caution'.<sup>68</sup> The film's title alludes to what became a hallmark of Lilienthal's style, which places him, as Karsten Witte describes, at the opposite end of Costa-Gavras's political thrillers.<sup>69</sup> Characters, camera, and mise-en-scène especially at the beginning of the film create a picture of idleness, even boredom that has, at the same time, an explosive quality. Mario Parra working at the airport and the paediatrician, Cecilia Neira, examining a patient appear as ordinary people in an ordinary society, who go about their ordinary jobs. In these scenes, the camera functions merely as recording device. Throughout, limiting the use of dialogue to an absolute minimum, the film puts emphasis on the visual, which requires active observation in order to notice that, indeed, there is something happening. The sparing use of words and sounds and the minimalism of acting indicate a manner, which contrasts sharply with how the military communicates. Blaring noises and commands characterise the military's conduct, an 'absurd coexistence of loud propaganda hype and meaningful silence', as Bettina Bremme describes this dichotomy.<sup>70</sup> Messages come through loudspeakers attached to the roof of buildings and moving cars. Commands expect complicity and aim to shut down any objection, consistent with the philosophy by which the rulers govern

<sup>68</sup> Wolf Donner, "Gemeint ist Chile," *Die Zeit*, 16 January 1976.

<sup>69</sup> Karsten Witte, "Wer beherrscht Die Ruhe?," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 5 March 1976.

<sup>70</sup> Bremme, *Movie-Mientos: Der lateinamerikanische Film: Streiflichter von unterwegs*, 246.

this society. The behaviour of high-rank officers in a press conference that follows the escape of inmates, emphasise that they see the population as group of anarchists. The officers are oblivious to individual questions; their demeanour is stiff, and their eyes can never meet those of their interlocutors. Lies and half-truths contribute to a pattern of indoctrination. The officers lie blatantly about the cause and circumstances of Miguel's death. These practices seek to showcase power and intimidate citizens, in order to discourage potential resistance. Kaminsky remarks that the military dictatorships in Latin America of the 1970s subsumed the individual into the state as a 'national subject', and to this end, manipulated public media such as radio and television.<sup>71</sup> The manipulative use of the media is a topic that is also at the centre of Lilienthal's later film *Der Radfahrer*, suggesting that this strategy seems to carry on well into the 1980s.

In *CPOTC*, a government that rules through fear and terror essentially distrusts its citizens. Surveillance is overt and obvious in images where soldiers watch the civilians. The roof of the prison is patrolled by heavily armed watch guards who walk from one end to the other. Soldiers watch entrance points closely, checking papers and the content of every vehicle entering the premises. Ubiquitous observation is also a reason for economy of words and the use of coded language: When Maria's father visits his daughter Maria Angelica, an officer watches, whom the camera shows as a third party in the back of the room. Maria's responses and gestures are a mismatch to her father's questions. This way of communicating, which recalls the manner of dialogues typical to Lilienthal's 1960s television films, appears almost surrealist. What seems like an awkward conversation to the viewer makes perfect sense to father and daughter. The spectator, however, finds himself in the position of the guard who is not likely to decipher the true gist of this apparently meaningless talk. Beside acts of overt surveillance, *CPOTC* suggests more obscure ones. Technically accomplished as medium-close shots in open spaces with a camera that follows people from the back, the camera indicates well organised monitoring patterns. The scene with Grandfather Parra's and his grandchild as they walk across the local *Plaza de Armas* presents a significant example of this technique, which produces the impression that eyes follow them from a safe distance.

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<sup>71</sup> Kaminsky, *After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora*, 25.

*Figure 15.* Scene from *The Autograph*. A local police officer (Vito Mata) threatens Rocha (Ángel Del Villar, sitting to his left) and Galván (Juan José Mosalini, on the right)

The film *The Autograph* that Lilienthal made in context of the Argentine military dictatorship, is based on Osvaldo Soriano's novella *Cuarteles de Invierno/Barracks of Winter* (1980), and offers striking similarities with *CPOTC*. Like *CPOTC*, the film was shot in Portugal, and a fictional small town presents the microcosm of a society under oppression. In *The Autograph*, Andrés Galván (Juan José Mosalini) and Tony Rocha (Ángel Del Villar), a musician and a dark-skinned boxer, who are invited for local festivities, arrive in Colonia Vela. Between the two different characters, Galván, an introspective person, and Rocha, an extrovert type, a friendship develops that is initially based in their perceived otherness. The mayor provides them with specific instructions about their social conduct while in town. However, in their different ways they contravene the local laws and as a consequence become physically threatened. Galván refuses to attend church service on Sunday morning, and therefore, is banned from giving his performance and asked to leave the town. Rocha has become a local favourite but is set up by the authorities to lose his boxing match. He fights against Sepulveda (Dominique Nato), an opponent who has been rigorously prepared for this fight. The match becomes a metaphor for the struggle of the Argentine population against an enemy who is much better equipped. At the end, Rocha is severely injured and does not

get any treatment at the local hospital. Galván takes him away and they both leave with the same train they arrived on.

Bringing in an artist and a black sportsman, and further on another outsider, a Jewish character, the film addresses social and racial segregation. The local authorities have invited the boxer, Rocha, in order to provide a spectacle for the masses, whereas Galván is supposed to play for a 'selected audience'. Access to Galván's tango music is restricted to the upper classes of this system. The ways in which the local festivities are edited and captured by the camera identify the social hierarchy. With marching music playing in the background, the soldiers on the roof look downwards off-screen onto what is supposedly the orchestra. The subsequent shot pictures the orchestra playing and, this time, the camera is positioned below and in front of the band, while the vigilant soldiers comprise the backdrop. In the next scene the camera focuses on the local population as a compact group separated by barriers from the site of the performance. One of the following images reveals another group of listeners. The highest local civil and military representatives are seated on the stage high above all other spectators. Lastly, a procession of soldiers marches by the stage. This manner of editing makes for social segregation while the location of the camera in relation to the party filmed (upward, downward, horizontal) conveys an idea of their hierarchical position.

*The Autograph* captures the dogmatism and impenetrability of rigid social structures. This film has a much more pessimistic undertone than *CPOTC* because the population of Colonia Vela has effectively given up on resistance to the regime. In Lilienthal's rendering of the city that like *CPOTC* seems deserted at first, silence and emptiness do not stand for a hidden dynamic but for anxiety and emptiness. When Galván and Rocha have a late dinner and go to a bar, many chairs in both places are unoccupied or being put away. The empty chairs suggest that people are missing. Ignaz Zuckerman (Pierre Bernard Douby), a Jewish character and social outsider who lives in a shack in the nearby forest, tells Galván: 'Almost everyone has lost someone. Watch, take note and be quiet. One calls it hibernating.' The threat against the population is as evident and as ever-present as in *CPOTC*, however. In a low angle shot the camera is directed at watchful soldiers, who walk back and forth on the roof of the local military headquarters. They are heavily armed, suggesting that they would not hesitate to shoot if they spotted any irregularity. As in *CPOTC*, almost all scenes feature an armed soldier, who is positioned to the side of or behind the protagonists. Zuckerman's premonition

becomes real for him. After commandant Suarez (Hanns Zischler) has expelled Galván from town, Ignaz grants him shelter. He will have to die for this act.

The terror has subdued the townspeople who, as a consequence, have adjusted to set rules and principles. Doubt and distrust dominate their conduct with other fellow citizens, and consequently, this behaviour oppresses and suffocates individuals who still believe in the struggle against the loss of liberty and dignity. Lilienthal depicts a number of characters who are compromised by the system. Their high rank prevents them from returning to principles they may have had earlier in their lives. It is only a throwaway sentence, or an otherwise inexplicable act of violence that reveals their inner conflict.<sup>72</sup> The mayor is one of these characters, and so is the commandant Suarez. After the latter informs Galván about the ban on his performance and eviction from town, he smashes a chair furiously against the floor (a similar scene appears in *Facing the Forests*, see my film analysis in Chapter 3). Equipping such a high-profile character with this ambiguity suggests a reading that might be seen as the utopian moment in this film. The military regime increasingly fails to find true believers who put their ideology into practice, and the resulting cracks might break it from inside.

### Leaving the Past Behind

For *Der Radfahrer*, Lilienthal returned to Chile in 1987, where he made the film under the watchful eyes of the local military government. In the Chile of Pinochet, at the end of the 1980s in a neo-liberalist phase, Lilienthal surveyed and portrayed a country that is disguised as a settled and normalised and having achieved economic wellbeing. The film is based on Skármeta's short story *El Ciclista del San Cristóbal* and reflects this altogether different face of Chilean society.<sup>73</sup> Its protagonist is a young and talented cyclist, Santiago Escalante (René Baeza). All of a sudden, their sponsor cannot support the team financially any longer. Santiago who is being treated as the next champion of the Chile Tour leaves his team in order to become sponsored by Bruno Picado (Javier Maldonado), an affluent businessman and director of a cosmetics company. In exchange for his support, Picado expects him to become the new face of the company and use his person in marketing a new perfume. Santiago appears on posters throughout town and is a guest in talk shows. In the actual Chile Tour, he is in the lead until he has an accident

<sup>72</sup> See chapter 3: the officer or the manager of the forest in *Facing the Forests* experiences similar conflicts.

<sup>73</sup> Written in 1969, *El Ciclista del San Cristóbal* belongs to Skármeta's early literary works. Shaw discusses the novella as a subverted performance of reality. See Shaw, *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*.

and falls way behind. Miraculously, he comes back to the tour and is about to win the race. Yet, right before the finish line, he stops and lets his old team mates pass.

Lilienthal and Skármeta draw a picture of a new Chile that has developed a westernised lifestyle. Economic interests and material values lull the Chilean population into a state of mind that is oblivious of the inhumanities on which this prosperity is based. Santiago embodies the ambiguity of past and present in his persona. He is torn between the pleasures of money and the moralities of his upbringing. Making use of his chance to move upward, he switches to a new sponsor. However, he realises soon after that he is only utilised for advertisement purposes. His boss Picado, on the other hand, has benefited from the neoliberal economic structures. During the tour over the Andes, this emotionally volatile man hurries alongside Santiago's bicycle in his convertible car, chauffeured by two attractive young ladies, and eggs him on to move forward - another hunt for economic success. *Der Radfahrer* ridicules superficial materialistic tendencies. At his birthday, Santiago's father tries on the new pair of sunglasses that his new sponsor has given Santiago. They seem silly on the old man's face.

*Figure 16.* Scene from *Der Radfahrer*. Chilean actor René Baeza as Santiago Escalante

Lilienthal's film considers the visual media as important components of this social and economic system and as a means of mindless distraction. Watching flashy game shows on TV deflects from real concerns and problems. The topic of the media connects *Der Radfahrer* to *CPOTC*. Yet, other than in the early years of the dictatorship where the use of radio and television attempted to shut down resistance against the regime, their manipulative adoption now intends to make the population stop thinking about the past. Lübbert notes that the contemporary, neoliberal Chilean world of consumption and materialism saw the rise of the commercial as predominant visual

medium, while the film industry was in a time of crisis.<sup>74</sup> A talk show called *Exito* (success), a name that indicates the social leitmotif, records a spot with him. In the spot, Santiago, 'the cyclist of San Cristóbal', rides on a tightrope all the way from the moon down to a statue of the Virgin Mary.<sup>75</sup> The slogan is subscribed with 'The Scent of the Andes –A scent of the chosen ones' against a background of a starry skyline of the city drawn in cold, purplish colours. When Santiago enters the TV studio for the recording, there is chaos. Panning the entire studio, the camera catches various elements of this event: the audience; backstage personnel running back and forth; a group of women in silver overalls practising a routine. Santiago sits down to play the piano, which adds another tune to the cacophony. Once the talk show airs, however, the camera shows only a polished cutout: the shiny stage with a prominent *Exito* sign overhead, accompanied by flashing lights. Everything happens in neat order; the silver-dressed women are positioned in the background equidistant from one another, each with a bouquet of flowers in their hands. A host dressed in a dark suit and pink bow tie announces the talk show guests, who enter the stage and position themselves into the spaces left for them by the women. The garish colours and the stiff and formal manners of the host and his guests characterise this show as artificial. The neat images that appear on TV contrast with the chaotic conditions before and behind the production of *Exito* and could serve as approximation to the character of current public life in Chile. Glitzy, clean and thoroughly organised it tries to conceal the fragmentary character of reality.

In criticising such superficiality, *Der Radfahrer* contrasts with a picture of Chilean society that is oblivious to the cruelties on which the regime is based. Again, Lilienthal chooses the microcosm of the family in which to play out the contradictory paradigms – looking into the future versus mourning the past. Santiago, marketed as embodiment of success in public life, finds a difficult situation at home. His dissident brother, Sergio, had disappeared during the early years of the dictatorship, and his mother (Luz Jiménez) is the only one mourning his absence. Engrossed in her prayers, she spends hours at the graveyard, carries around personal belongings of her lost son and refuses to eat. The camera catches her almost exclusively in medium or long shots, indicating her alienation.

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<sup>74</sup> Lübbert, "Der Film in den Zeiten des Zorns," 192. As Catherine Grant notes, in almost all countries of the Southern Cone 'filmmakers seem to have been faced by somewhat reduced possibilities for political and aesthetic freedom in a changed context where the old forms of oppositional political activism, and therefore of some of the non-commercial production and distribution structured associated with New Latin American Cinema, had in many cases been crushed by years of military rule. Grant, "Camera Solidaria," 312.

<sup>75</sup> This statue is a landmark of Santiago de Chile that sits high on the Hill of San Cristóbal. The latter is a favourite for tourists and locals alike.

Separated by windows frames and open doors, she seems to belong to a time that most people have eliminated from their memory. Her refusal to eat reads like a refusal to be part of the greed around her. In one of the rooms she escapes to, the door opens to a dream of her son. Images in black and white show her ill on a sofa in this room, with bunches of flowers on the table. Her son, Sergio, looks at her worryingly, while crunching wrapping paper in his hands. This scenario, which is accompanied by solemn organ and saxophone music, resolves into newsreel footage of police forces arresting people on the street and directing water guns at a group of women and children, who are huddled together alongside a wall, trying to protect themselves. The music switches to an atonal tune that is so piercing as if to convey the pain. In sharp contrast to the otherwise colourful images and pleasant tunes, this stark audiovisual contrast gets ‘under the skin’ and suggests the deep-rooted problems of this society.

At the end of the film, Santiago returns to his old team and his former coach, while his mother gets treatment at the local hospital and starts to eat again. Santiago comprehends that group support and solidarity between friends and family are worth more than economic success and achievements as an individual.

### **Homelessness Revisited**

In this chapter, I have examined how diaspora and exile find expression in Lilienthal’s Latin American films. How does homelessness figure in these works, a concept that that I have argued as an essential cinematic strategy of Lilienthal’s? Declaring himself homeless, Lilienthal nevertheless feels ‘at home’ in Uruguay and more generally, in Latin America and is familiar with its social and political ills. The number of his films that find their thematic focus within this geopolitical frame, reveal a special affinity to this continent and its population. Lilienthal’s Latin American films have a melodramatic structure. Situations, in which his characters are most at ease, are scenes when together with family and friends: talking, eating, dancing, laughing. Those are precious moments that seem to be threatened. Yet, the framework for these encounters is not limited to the members of an ordinary family. Instead, other members of the community are part of this family, such as Santiago’s coach and his colleagues, depicted in *Der Radfahrer*. In the last scene of this film, upon release of Santiago’s mother, they all wait in front of the hospital and embrace each other, and these images reveal them as people who have known each other for a long time, been through good and bad, but nevertheless continue to care about each other.

For Lilienthal, the family in the traditional sense of the word excludes non-family members and moreover, does not represent reality. Families are rarely complete and whole. A scene in *La Victoria*, in which Marcela has a heated debate with an instructor about the meaning of home, depicts this notion as illusory. Sitting with other women in a shack at the outskirts of Santiago, he instructs them on methods of teaching illiterate people. There is a picture pinned against the wall that shows parents and children and a grandmother, a family in peaceful harmony. Below the image in capital letters it says *hogar* (home). She disagrees with the image that, for her, conveys an idea that is inconsistent with her own experiences. She, herself grew up with only her mother and no siblings. Her colleagues' experiences match Marcela's viewpoint. All women in the room report that they either live on their own, with their children, or as single parent, and maintain that these conditions are perfectly normal to them. This suggests that *normal* family conditions are the exception rather than the rule. As home means something different to each one of them, it reveals a shifting character.

Being the ones who make the social composite of home work; women crisscross the threshold between family and community effortlessly. Therefore, it is no coincidence that in this scene from *La Victoria* Lilienthal portrays a group of women who speak about their fragmented families. Women are a progressive social force in most of Lilienthal's films: The pediatrician and the teacher in *CPOTC* are central to the resistance activities in Las Piedras. In *The Uprising*, Agustín's sister is a guerilla fighter; his mother belongs to a group of women who openly protest the regime. The scenes, in which Agustín's and other mothers stand as a united force at the gates of the military barracks, hint to the important role women had in resisting the dictatorships, such as the Argentinian women's movement *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo*.<sup>76</sup> Ignoring bans that prohibited any means of public protests they became a symbol of resistance to the military dictatorship. Up to the current days, the mothers and now grandmothers, persistently meet once a week demanding to know the fate of disappeared family members and friends and insist on a public discourse about this dark chapter in Argentina's history. As Majorie Agosin notes in reference to the women's movement and their resistance activities in Chile: "They [the women] are they repositories of the nation's

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<sup>76</sup> Marysa Navarro, "The Personal Is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo," in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Susan Eckstein (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2001).

memory, which essentially feminine'.<sup>77</sup> The reference to the *Madres* movement and their aims to prevent oblivion of the past deeds is represented by Santiago's mother of *Der Radfahrer*. A singular and frail figure, she nevertheless protests in her own way.

Women have played an important role in Lilienthal's own life. He grew up with his grandmother and his mother, who accompanied him on the journey to Uruguay, and raised him. And the two women in Lilienthal's life were part of a larger imagined family. Living in a hotel, a bigger group of individuals constituted a loose-bound community that shared a common denominator of displacement. The affinity for such a community finds an outlet in almost all of Lilienthal's films and reflects his inclusive notion of family. Others can enter this sphere, so that it expands to include ever more people. In this regard, the citizens of Las Piedras come to view the political inmates as part of their community, for whose causes they become engaged. In this sense, *CPOTC* tracks such as family as a formation in process, while in *The Uprising* a community has already been established. In their collective strength the people are able to overthrow a common oppressor.

Applying this insight to the political arena in Latin America, for Lilienthal conflicts are based in diverse economic and other interests that keep people from finding a common base. Fragmentation of society had allowed foreign/US based economic activities to hold sway over this continent for decades. Visually, this social fragmentation and lack of common interest finds their representation in Lilienthal's images of cities, whether in *CPOTC*, *The Autograph* or *Der Radfahrer* – the films that directly address this issue. Images of long, empty streets, lined with houses that show no sign of life, symbolise a civilization that lives behind closed doors, each one as a single unit. Moreover, in *CPOTC*, the narrative structure divides people at first: the film pictures the main protagonists on their own; Cecilia Neira examining a child, Gustavo Parra working at the airport, Maria Angelica's father arriving in *Las Piedras*. Yet, the characters find themselves together in activities of solidarity, whereby this is a prerequisite in order to mobilise effective resistance. As such, solidarity is a strategy of inclusion, of focusing on commonalities that unite communities. In the context of *CPOTC*, in the process of activating their power as community, people first form small groups; the handful of citizens of Las Piedras come to meet the political inmates and, in joining them, they become a bigger, stronger group. The funeral of one of inmates who had escaped, and

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<sup>77</sup> Majorie Agosin, "Patchwork of Memory," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 27, no. 6 (1994).

had been shot and killed by the police, evolves into a mass demonstration. Finally, the film culminates in the metaphor of detaining the population in the stadium, which posits them as a majority with common interest, indicating their potentials and chances if acting upon this strength. The vitality of the final scenes of *The Uprising*, in which people populate the streets, comes to state their liberating force.

Efforts of solidarity and resistance can be productive in that they attempt to shape a liberated and enlightened society. This can be understood as Lilienthal's vision of a home. But this concept of home is an ongoing process, a utopia. It involves people opening their doors, and allowing others to enter their world so that their matters and problems become everyone's concern. Within this liberated society, there must be space and understanding for individuals who had chosen contradictory pathways. In his films, Lilienthal negotiates ambiguous characters, and allows for their development, i.e. their enlightenment process. They usually have chosen the wrong side but he trusts their ability to reflect and act morally. This is an offer of reconciliation – a call upon the community to support these figures because of and in spite of their past deeds. Agustín, Santiago or Camilo have given in to some kind of seduction and false promises. These characters have a choice to serve either their own needs or the needs of a bigger group. Lilienthal himself is torn in his feelings for Camilo Mejía but nevertheless tries to understand his motives:

The complicated and interesting aspect of this figure is the scepticism and antipathy one harbours for such a character because he had betrayed so much. ... He is dependent on people's sympathy but the way I see it, he gets sympathy primarily from his mother and me.<sup>78</sup>

In his films, Lilienthal outlines a society that lives through the involvement and awareness of their members. This quality makes them meaningful beyond their immediate geopolitical context. Lilienthal said in an interview with a German newspaper about *CPOTC* that the film 'reduces a political situation to the consequences they have for the individual.'<sup>79</sup> This simplification of political situations is a strategy that pays attention to essential social activities - a concern, incidentally, that Lilienthal's cinematic work once again connects with the socio-critical agenda of the Post-Boom writers. When granddad Parra prepares and wraps sandwiches for his beloved ones who are detained in the stadium, and walks there to join them, this is an act of compassion that becomes

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<sup>78</sup> Lilienthal in Bernd Drücke, "Anarchismus, eine Philosophie des Friedens. Ein Gespräch mit dem Filmemacher Peter Lilienthal," in *Ja! Anarchismus. Gelebte Utopie im 21. Jahrhundert. Interviews und Gespräche* (Berlin: Karin Kramer Verlag, 2006), 26.

<sup>79</sup> "Gespräch mit Peter Lilienthal über seinen neuen Film. Nur im Gefängnis herrscht Ruhe," *Münchener Abendzeitung* 1976.

intelligible to people everywhere. In that diverse groups and communities can identify with Parra, Lilienthal portrays and addresses them as well. It could be individuals everywhere who suddenly find themselves in such a situation. With this narrative strategy, Lilienthal calls on the spectator to get engaged politically and become aware of those in need for help. Reaching out to others and participating in the society – which means erasing the threshold that separates private and public worlds - defines acts of homelessness in Lilienthal's terms. Hence, homelessness becomes a social practice for the aim of refiguring home as a broad, inclusive idea.

I would like to conclude this chapter in exploring Lilienthal's thematic and spatial focus on Latin America once again. Skármeta once said about his friend:

It is the patient, optimistic human beings who fight for human rights all over the world, who with their small means support political goals that are by no means feasible, who have not yet given up acting upon the intellectual weakness in Germany, who are ready to share the suffering of many thousand exiles, who time and again attend meetings for Chile, Bolivia and El Salvador, because they are so generous to feel this injustice as their very own suffering.<sup>80</sup>

In the framework of positioning Lilienthal as a homeless filmmaker this statement indicates that in spite of and because of his otherness, Lilienthal is a valued part of the Latin American society. Therefore, he does not only share their pain but endures it himself. Filmmaking becomes Lilienthal's way of exercising solidarity and resistance with the aim of mobilising more people to join him.

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<sup>80</sup> Antonio Skármeta, "Verteidigung des *Aufstandes*. Das verunglückte Comeback von Gaston Salvatore in seiner Kritik von Peter Lilienthals Nicaragua-Film," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 November 1980.

## Chapter 5

### Critical Reception of Lilienthal's Films in West and East Germany

What did audiences make of Lilienthal's films? In other words, is the diasporic quality I have linked to Lilienthal's filmmaking practices and established in the texts, verified by contemporary film criticism? In the following chapter, I will examine how *Calm Prevails Over the Country* (CPOTC), *David* and *The Uprising* reflected West and East German discourses during the 1970s and early 1980s and determine the relation of these films to national cinema. The first part of this chapter discusses the West German critical reception of *David*. Then I turn to the East and West German reception of CPOTC, which I contextualise with references to the political significance of the so-called Third World. The third part studies the West German reception of *The Uprising*.

In my approach, I follow film theoretician Janet Staiger. In her analysis of reception practices, she focuses on the dynamics between text and reader - as opposed to looking at either one in isolation -, which brings contemporary cultural concepts to the surface.<sup>1</sup> Staiger states:

When considered from the perspective of reception studies, a number of traditional approaches to film and television studies take on new life. Specifically, notions such as auteurism, national cinemas, genres, modes, styles, and fiction versus nonfiction become significant historical reading strategies.<sup>2</sup>

As Elizabeth Lee-Brown notes, Staiger is 'concerned with the ideological and material results of the viewing process and the ways in which cultural meaning systems impact audience responses'.<sup>3</sup> These components give way to certain expectations that viewers hold for a film. In this, I am concerned with viewpoints of professional spectators, that is film criticism. Hector Amaya views film criticism as part and parcel of national-cultural and political modalities:

Criticism is a professional activity and thus bound by institutional conventions, templates of professionalism, and an array of cultural, economic, social, and political expectations that define the particular role of the critic and of criticism at any given time in any given setting.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films. Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>3</sup> See analysis of Staiger's work *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception* Elizabeth Lee-Brown, "Performativity, Context, and Agency: The Process of Audience Response and Its Implications for Performance," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2002): 141.

<sup>4</sup> Hector Amaya, *Screening Cuba. Film Criticism as Political Performance During the Cold War* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2010), xvi.

Considering the political subjects of Lilienthal's films and the highly politicized atmosphere in West and East Germany at the time of their screening, my reception analyses will touch issues such as national identity, political beliefs, current cultural discourses and essential ideas about the function of cinema in East and West Germany, which all affect interpretations of Lilienthal's films.

Tim Bergfelder finds that, 'once filmic texts enter the context of transnational transfer and distribution, they become subject to significant variations, translations and cultural adaptation processes'.<sup>5</sup> This is all the more interesting here as the two German states belonged to opposite sides of the Iron Curtain, and some of Lilienthal's films acquired meanings in West and East that reflected this ideological conflict. All of Lilienthal's films have been at least co-produced and distributed in West Germany. CPOTC, *The Uprising*, *Ruby's Dream* and *The Autograph* were also screened in East Germany. The German states treated Lilienthal's films as malleable material to be utilised in safeguarding ideology. In West Germany, the films became part of promoting a democratic image to the world. East Germany exploited the cinematic texts to communicate socialist values.

However, when studying the contemporary West and East German critical reception, a different picture emerges. Lilienthal's films challenged dominant expectations and modes of *how* political issues were handled in public discourse and *who* had a say in this. Film critics became concerned with Lilienthal's aesthetics and symbolism, and saw these aspects as irreconcilable with perceptions of West German or East German 'reality'. Consequently, the films were only cautiously accepted or rejected outright. In addition, West German critics identified in Lilienthal's films aesthetic violations, which reveal their ideas of the contemporary West German *Autorenfilm*. Thomas Elsaesser defines the *Autorenfilm* as 'an example of an ideological concept and a discourse functioning as a form of coherence for the cultural mode of production'.<sup>6</sup> Views of *David*, CPOTC and *The Uprising* explain *ex negativo* how West German audiences understood the presence of the *Autor* in and for a cinematic text.

Altogether, the reviews of *David*, CPOTC and *The Uprising* illustrate what I believe is valid across Lilienthal's filmography: the films use a language that, to quote filmmaker

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<sup>5</sup> Tim Bergfelder, "Reframing European Cinema - Concepts and Agendas for the Historiography of European Film," *Läbikawa* 4 (1998): 12.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (London: BFI, 1989), 44; Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel, eds., *The BFI Companion to German Cinema* (London: BFI, 1999), 33.

and post-colonial theorist Trinh T. Min-Ha, is outside of the 'Master's sphere of having'.<sup>7</sup> In West and East Germany, Lilienthal's films confused film critics and encouraged them to look for meaning outside of national and ideological boundaries. This corroborates the argument which runs through this thesis: the diasporic character of Lilienthal's films defies attempts to classify it as (German) national cinema.

Before I begin my analysis, I will outline the material I have researched for this chapter. Having studied 1970s West German print media reviews of *La Victoria*, *David*, CPOTC and *The Uprising*, I have included comments published in regional, more conservative papers such as the *Kölner Rundschau*, *Münchener Merkur*, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, *Schwäbische Zeitung*, or *Weser-Kurier* alongside those appearing in papers with a nationwide circulation, including the left-liberal *Frankfurter Rundschau*, the centre-left *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Die Zeit*, the liberal *Tagesspiegel*,<sup>8</sup> and the conservative centre-right *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The weekly mainstream news magazine *Der Spiegel* published interesting material on Lilienthal's films. Unsurprisingly, left leaning and liberal papers, such as *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Tagesspiegel* featured unorthodox opinions about Lilienthal's films, where the regional papers and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* measured a film's relevance against West German culture and society.

In East Germany, alongside the newspaper *Neues Deutschland*, the official organ of the state's ruling SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*/Socialist Unity Party), reviews of CPOTC appeared in a number of unavoidably politically aligned papers, organs of satellite parties to the governing SED, such as the *Bauernecho* (organ of the Democratic Party of the Peasants), *Neue Zeit* (organ of the Lutheran Democratic Union), and *Mitteldutsche Neueste Nachrichten* (organ of the National Democratic Party of Germany). The *Bauernecho* and *Neue Zeit* were published nationwide, while the *Mitteldutsche Neueste Nachrichten* was a newspaper for the precincts Leipzig, Halle and Magdeburg. The *Filmspiegel* and *Film und Fernsehen* were two subject specific magazines in East Germany, which I draw from.<sup>9</sup> The latter featured articles whose authors, among

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<sup>7</sup> Trinh T. Min-ha, "All-Owning Spectatorship," in *Otherness and the Media. The Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged*, ed. Hamid Naficy and Teshome H. Gabriel (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993), 191.

<sup>8</sup> The *Tagesspiegel* is based in West Berlin inhabiting a vibrant counter-culture at the time. An arena and a sounding board for the most extreme, 'way-out' political opinions and ideas, the terrorist group Red Army Faction (RAF) operated from this city. See Klaus Wasmund, "The Political Socialization of West German Terrorists," in *Political Violence and Terror: Morifs and Motivations*, ed. Peter H. Merkl (London: University of California Press, 1986), 197.

<sup>9</sup> Rosemary Stott, "'Letting the Genie out of the Bottle': DEFA Film-Makers and *Film und Fernsehen*," in *DEFA. East German Cinema 1946-1992*, ed. Seán Allan and John Sandford (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999).

them East German film directors such as Konrad Wolf and Heiner Carow, examined the East German filmscape from a (more) technical perspective less anchored in socialist terminology than the dailies. The weekly cultural-political magazine *Sonntag* featured a number of page-long articles about Lilienthal and Skármeta, and like *Film und Fernsehen* analysed their motivations in a way that deviated from a strictly ideological viewpoint. That said, reviewers for the East German papers and magazines still operated within the narrow thematic and aesthetic boundaries set by socialist realism.

### **Exposition: The West German Critical Reception of *David***

In the 1970s, West German cultural politics promoted films which represented the vigour of German society and culture, an image that was portrayed both to the West German population and the western world. According to John Davidson, a strategy of ‘coming-to-terms with-the-past’ did not favour ‘films that painted a positive image of Germany, but rather ... those that continually evoked the problems of German identity in Germany history’.<sup>10</sup> *David* won the Golden Bear in the 1979 Berlin Film Festival, which suggests that the film belonged to the preferred category of ‘problematic films’. The subject matter of *David* certainly contained challenging aspects, which encouraged discussions about the Holocaust and provided a contribution to reconciling the troubled German-Jewish relationship. In this debate, *David* was identified as a West German response to the American film series *Holocaust* (Marvin Chomsky, 1978). As Gottfried Knapp of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote:

That this film has won a Golden Bear in Berlin should be seen as a timely gesture, a reaction to the shock the TV series *Holocaust* provoked in Germany, and, therefore, is also a wider acknowledgment of German films which [with *David*] deliver a committed contribution to the taboo subject ‘Jews in Germany’ at a time when, under altered circumstances, the world recalls the annihilation of the Jews during the Third Reich.<sup>11</sup>

Because the West German reception of *Holocaust* provides the discursive framework for *David*’s reception too, I will briefly describe the impact that *Holocaust* had in West Germany before analysing Lilienthal’s film.

*Holocaust* was produced by the TV channel NBC and broadcast on West German television in January of 1979. A ‘public event of the first order’,<sup>12</sup> it is credited with

<sup>10</sup> John Davidson, *Deterritorializing the New German Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 44.

<sup>11</sup> Gottfried Knapp, "Beobachtungen eines Überlebenden," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 14 March 1979.

<sup>12</sup> Siegfried Zielinski, "History as Entertainment and Provocation: The TV Series ‘Holocaust in West Germany’," *New German Critique* 19, no. 1 (1980): 89.

bringing the atrocities of the Holocaust to the attention to Germans of almost all classes and ages. *Holocaust* plots the fate of the Jewish family Weiss to represent the Jewish genocide that had been inflicted by National Socialism during the Third Reich. Though the violent history of the Third Reich had been a subject of West German documentaries and plays, films had not dealt with it up to this time.<sup>13</sup> Siegfried Zielinski maintains that 'fictional and dramatic treatments of German fascism remain conspicuous by their absence from the cinematic screen'.<sup>14</sup> It was *Holocaust* which brought the German responsibility for the Jewish genocide into the ordinary West German household via television.

Despite these merits, *Holocaust* was still seen as an American version of German history and followed the conventions of a Hollywood melodrama. In light of the matter being a highly sensitive one in West Germany, the public was divided over its aesthetic qualities and their effects. Some voices objected to the melodramatic representation, which they dismissed as a clichéd and trivialised version of the Holocaust, saying that a cheap popularization of complex historical processes could not possibly help Germans overcome the burden of the past.<sup>15</sup> Others saw melodrama as constructive. Emotional identification with the Jewish victims was said to be of educational value, because it sparked interest for discussions about guilt and responsibility in the Third Reich. Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, the chief editor of the highbrow weekly newspaper *Zeit*, was among the advocates of *Holocaust*: 'Emotional identification with the characters had 'finally' created a confrontation with the past that had eluded the efforts of scholarship and documentary film.'<sup>16</sup> In fact, over twenty million Germans watched the series, and it provided for innumerable debates about the common fascist past in talk shows, universities and classrooms.<sup>17</sup> In the months following the screening of *Holocaust*, magazines such as *Spiegel* were filled with reports and diaries of concentration camp survivors and discussions about German Jewish relations then and now. Andreas Huyssen notes that especially the Left argued:

The series' success could and should be used to start a post 'Holocaust' campaign of rational political enlightenment which would focus on the roots of anti-Semitism and, more importantly, on

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<sup>13</sup> In West Germany, the Holocaust and the Jewish genocide were the focus of a number of documentaries and plays, among them *Andorra* (Max Frisch, 1961), *Der Stellvertreter/The Deputy* (Rolf Hochhuth, 1963) and *Die Ermittlung/The Investigation* (Peter Weiss, 1965).

<sup>14</sup> Zielinski, "History as Entertainment and Provocation: The TV Series 'Holocaust' in West Germany," 84.

<sup>15</sup> See for the following Jeffrey Herf, "The 'Holocaust' Reception in West Germany: Right, Center and Left," *New German Critique* 19, no. 1 (1980).

<sup>16</sup> Gräfin Marion Dönhoff as cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> "Holocaust: Die Vergangenheit kommt zurück," *Der Spiegel* 5 (1979).

the social, economic and ideological roots of National Socialism under which the problem of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust could then safely be subsumed.<sup>18</sup>

In the wake of *Holocaust*, the public consciousness realised that West German filmmakers had not addressed this subject. *David* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in March 1979, two months after *Holocaust* was broadcast on West German television.<sup>19</sup> Zielinski classified *David* as a 'post-*Holocaust*' film, as part of the mission to enlighten the public about the Holocaust and the roots of National Socialism, generated from within West Germany.<sup>20</sup> Hence, as a West German cinematic version of German-Jewish matters, the film was supposed to fill the gap that was made recognisable with *Holocaust*.

*David*'s critical reception helps to elucidate expectations about modes and direction of the public Holocaust discourse in West Germany. In light of these assumptions it will become clear the film escaped the desire that it should represent *the* German response to the series and the subject.

According to critics, *David*, as the 'first Jewish film from a Jewish director for a Jewish audience,'<sup>21</sup> a phrase of Lilienthal's that I have mentioned before, did not provide enough space and representation for Gentile Germans. Regina M. Feldman notes that, by means of *Holocaust* and the public debate about the German past, the Holocaust became the central negative reference point of German identity.<sup>22</sup> This perspective regards Germans as its main protagonist. Zielinski documents that *Holocaust* and the ensuing debate encouraged public figures to speak openly about their own Third Reich past.<sup>23</sup> After thirty years in which a positive relationship to the Nazi period was taboo, it became of public interest that the incumbent SPD chancellor Helmut Schmidt had been a member of the *Wehrmacht*. *Spiegel* founder Rudolf Augstein admitted he had known about the existence of the gas chambers but was concerned with protecting himself and his family. These public confessions of moral ambiguities were met by public sympathy, with the effect of outweighing interest in the Jewish side.

With the public eye on perpetrators, film critics noted their absence in *David*. Not even the shoemaker and the factory owner, the only Gentiles in the film, could be

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<sup>18</sup> Andreas Huyssen, "The Politics of Identification: Holocaust and the West German Drama," *New German Critique* 19, no. 1 (1980): 117.

<sup>19</sup> Chapter 3 contains the historical context, a plot summary and film analysis of *David*.

<sup>20</sup> Zielinski, "History as Entertainment and Provocation: The TV Series 'Holocaust in West Germany,'" 85.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Lilienthal in an interview with Annette Insdorf, "A Passion for Social Justice," *Cineaste* 11, no. 4 (1982): 37.

<sup>22</sup> Regina M. Feldman, "German by Virtue of Others: The Search for Identity in Three Debates," *Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (2003).

<sup>23</sup> Zielinski, "History as Entertainment and Provocation: The TV Series 'Holocaust in West Germany,'" 91-92.

grasped along the lines of good or bad German. Critics wished that this figure and his motivations had been explored in depth so that his intentions, as an ordinary German person, would be revealed:

Was it pure philanthropy or friendliness towards Jews; this would be interesting to know in view of the image of Germans which the film promotes, at least indirectly.<sup>24</sup>

Why does the shoemaker act in this way? Is greed a motive for behaviour that could be punished with the death penalty? What motivates the actions of the factory owner, philanthropy or a first act of reinsurance? *David* leaves many questions unanswered.<sup>25</sup>

Other reviews went even further and evaluated the absence of gentile Germans as a missing component for a comprehensive social analysis of the Holocaust. Wolfram Schütte of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* regarded the film's focus on the experiences of the persecuted as a narrow perspective which challenged an understanding of the past.<sup>26</sup> This feeds into another critic's opinion, which was that maintaining an exclusively Jewish perspective was insufficient:

One perceives as a major flaw that the opposite side, demonised in *Holocaust*, is completely absent here. Apart from a few extras in brown shirts, nothing is seen of the Nazi regime. It might be that the victims felt precisely the anonymity of the power which held them at its mercy. However, a film these days does not satisfy with the Rabbi's opinion 'God imposes a heavy burden upon us'.<sup>27</sup>

Not portraying German perpetrators, according to Michael Beckert of the *Saarbrücker Zeitung*, meant leaving unanswered the question of 'How could the Holocaust have happened?'<sup>28</sup> Altogether, West German critics regarded *David's* reconciliation strategy as inopportune (see my film analysis of *David* in chapter 3). Instead, they expected the film to make a statement about German guilt.

The view of the film at the time of its release suggests that in the public debate Jews featured as the subject of discussion rather than as emancipated contributors. The aforementioned voices, which maintain that a portrayal of German perpetrators was significant in a film about the Holocaust, found it more appropriate and 'realistic' to have *David's* protagonist suffer death instead of having him escape. Christian Schultz-Gerstein of *Der Spiegel* is one of the few contemporary critics who recognised that audiences were unable to deal with a representation of history that contravened the prevailing viewpoint:

Because the main protagonist does not arrive where one expects him to, because the young David is not being positioned in our required guilt about National Socialism, one is suddenly at a loss in

<sup>24</sup> Birte Larsson, "David und der deutsche Goliath. Ein jüdisches Familienschicksal von Peter Lilienthal," *Der Report*, 22 March 1979.

<sup>25</sup> "Auf der Leinwand: David," *Weser-Kurier*, 2 April 1979.

<sup>26</sup> Wolfram Schütte, "Die zerstörte Gemeinschaft der Liebenden," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 1 March 1979.

<sup>27</sup> "Unauffälliges Leid zwischen den Braunhemden," *Münchener Merkur*, 9 March 1979.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Beckert, "Wie David Goliath überlebte," *Saarbrücker Zeitung*, 24 May 1979.

Lilienthal's film, where until now one had faced the established if scarcely believable details that defy ready comprehension - Auschwitz, gasification, six million.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, most critics found it unacceptable to contemplate the figure of a Jewish survivor. Sabine Schultze of the *Rhein Neckar-Zeitung* read *David's* optimistic ending as a desire to repress reality ('*Wunsch nach Wirklichkeitsverdrängung*').<sup>30</sup> For Beckert, this scenario trivialised the Jewish fate ('*Verharmlosungseffekt*'). Since it sheds a negative light on the majority of the Jewish population, he finds David's successful survival strategy problematic.<sup>31</sup> If he could save his life, why not them? This, according to Gert Berghoff of the *Kölnische Rundschau*, showed up the German Jews as either ignorant or inactive.<sup>32</sup> Another critic deliberated whether David embodied the idea that the danger to which the Jews were exposed was minimal and escaping it was possible.<sup>33</sup>

*David's* perspective on the Jewish population and their handling of this lethal crisis clashed with normative ideas of how Jewish life in the face of death should appear. This process needed to be dramatic, shocking and emotionally draining and as such readable in the activities and emotions of the film's characters. Andreas Huyssen argues that *Holocaust* was so successful with (German) audiences because accessing the emotions of the Jewish characters allowed for a total identification with the victims that West German fiction and drama had not been able to elicit, and therefore, had never reached the mainstream reader and spectator.<sup>34</sup> One wonders whether German spectators needed a similarly constructed David in order to sympathise with him and accept him as an 'authentic' character. David's character challenged this expectation because his unresponsive manner resisted emotional access, to the disapproval of film critics. In light of Huyssen's findings this is not surprising. Many critics reasoned that David was a static and uninvolved character, who is not affected by the loss of his family. On a death-defying escape trip, he acts 'optimistically' and in a 'carefree' manner.<sup>35</sup> Gert Berghoff of the *Kölnische Rundschau* wrote: 'One cannot warm to the figure of David, who is presented

<sup>29</sup> Christian Schultz-Gerstein, "Ende der Berührungsangst," *Der Spiegel*, 5 March 1979.

<sup>30</sup> Sabine Schultze, "David, der durchkommt," *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung*, 29 June 1979.

<sup>31</sup> Beckert, "Wie David Goliath überlebte."

<sup>32</sup> Gert Berghoff, "Einer, der dem Feuersturm entkam," *Kölnische Rundschau*, 24 März 1979.

<sup>33</sup> Hans-Christian Winters, "Im Überleben sind die Sterbenden gegenwärtig," *Göttinger Tageblatt*, 30 March 1979.

<sup>34</sup> Huyssen analyses how audiences identify with Jewish protagonists in the plays *Andorra* and *The Deputy*. See Huyssen, "The Politics of Identification: Holocaust and the West German Drama."

<sup>35</sup> See Schultze, "David, der durchkommt" and Larsson, "David und der deutsche Goliath. Ein jüdisches Familienschicksal von Peter Lilienthal."

as a specimen under a microscope'.<sup>36</sup> Wolfram Schütte of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* viewed David's character as emotionally flat:

The figure of David, touchingly played by Mario Fischel, is still too bland and constructed too optimistically. During the course of the film he loses sight of everyone he loves and who have protected him. If he does not know what happened to them, these losses, alongside everyday threats and anxieties and his own isolation, do not cause any emotional or mental wounds, which could alter or overshadow his positive character.<sup>37</sup>

David's resistance to ready understanding means German critics could not identify with the character and it collided with the way the German *Autorenfilm* wove the German spectator into their texts. According to Elsaesser, the philosophy of the *Autorenfilm* was to assign West German audiences 'a coherent or meaningful place in the fiction'.<sup>38</sup> This approach assumes shared experiences between filmmaker and spectator, which offer the latter a space for positive or negative identification.<sup>39</sup> *David*, in contrast, established no shared horizon between filmmaker and spectator but challenged the latter to see and understand a reality and experiences not theirs. Hence, the negative comments for David's character also suggests empathy with German Jews was not a given and stands as evidence that a dialogue between German Jews and German Gentiles in West Germany at the end of the 1970s had yet to take place.

Revealing stereotypical expectations of how the Holocaust must be structured as a cinematic text, *David's* aesthetic qualities once more clashed with the opinions of some critics. To many, especially the aforementioned Knapp of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the subject of the Holocaust demands telling the story in an intelligible manner that follows the rules of conventional narrative cinema.<sup>40</sup>

He [Lilienthal] has not managed to turn the reconstructed details into a coherent narrative, to streamline the memories and thus, to link everything as personally significant. Obviously still relying on the additive principle that organises documentaries, he neglects the simplest rules of narrative cinema. He fails to establish a connection between new figures and familiar ones; he rarely announces, defines or identifies the shifting plot locations. Temporal leaps between scenes remain unexplained. Hence, his editing rarely defines the temporal or spatial distance that is necessary to recreate the events as a dramatic unit, as epically tiered form.<sup>41</sup>

*David's* temporal and spatial leaps irritated some critics, who felt the non-linear editing patterns disturbed the narrative flow of the story, to the effect that 'information goes

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<sup>36</sup> Berghoff, "Einer, der dem Feuersturm entkam."

<sup>37</sup> Schütte, "Die zerstörte Gemeinschaft der Liebenden."

<sup>38</sup> Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> See also *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>40</sup> Knapp, "Beobachtungen eines Überlebenden."

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

missing'.<sup>42</sup> Critic Birte Larsson wanted to see a greater emphasis on individual scenarios, which, she argued, would enable closer viewer attention.<sup>43</sup> *David's* monotonous editing patterns did not add momentum to the story; critics saw a building up of tension towards a climax as a more appropriate narrative solution. Expecting the film to reach a point of culmination, the *Kölnische Rundschau* wrote that, 'one misses the moment when the Jews meet the terror face to face'.<sup>44</sup>

In measuring *David* against conventional narrative forms, film critics seemed to favour, after all, the aesthetic patterns of the American series *Holocaust*. This is perplexing since they, among other voices, had initially called for a film that sets itself apart from *Holocaust*. I would argue that *David* represents an instance of West Germany's love-hate relationship with American pop culture and Hollywood cinema, in a relationship that Elsaesser describes in his publication 'American Friends: Hollywood Echoes in the New German Cinema'.<sup>45</sup> Though contemporary West German filmmakers criticised Hollywood's overwhelming presence in German cinema/s, it was an influence to which some clearly succumbed. American films were popular with German audiences anyway and this had a knock-on effect in the film industry. As Joseph Garncarz notes, Hollywood conventions became part of German popular cinema from the early 1970s:<sup>46</sup>

Popular German and American films ... have at least one thing in common. Practically all films follow the classical model, incorporating genre conventions, stars, and fictional plots which follow a clear linear narrative. Plots are generally driven by a cause- and effect chain and generally concentrate on a particular character who sets out to achieve a goal by overcoming obstacles.<sup>47</sup>

Garncarz's description of the formal similarities between German and American popular cinema can be equated with Knapp's criticism of *David*. Thus, *David's* reception may illustrate critics' expectations of a popular film format. This might be based in the fact that the Holocaust as a subject was highly significant at the time, hence *David* was expected to be easily accessible to a mainstream German spectatorship. Given that *Holocaust's* melodramatic, linear narrative form accounted, in part at least, for the series'

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Larsson, "David und der deutsche Goliath. Ein jüdisches Familienschicksal von Peter Lilienthal."

<sup>44</sup> Berghoff, "Einer, der dem Feuersturm entkam."

<sup>45</sup> See Elsaesser's paper about the ambiguous relationship of New German Cinema and Hollywood: "American Friends: Hollywood Echoes in the New German Cinema," in *Hollywood and Europe. Economics, Culture, National Identity: 1945-1995*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (London: BFI, 1998).

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Garncarz, "Hollywood in Germany. The Role of American Films in Germany, 1925-1990," in *Hollywood in Europe. Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 95.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 102.

unprecedented success and wide-reaching social impact in Germany, *David* should have approximated its representational strategies.

Incidentally, it is interesting that scholars until this day demand of 'Holocaust films' such conventional narrative structures, which offer narrative and aesthetic structures spectators can identify with. Catrin Correll's study *Der Holocaust als Herausforderung für den Film* proposes that popular feature films are more effective because they avoid emotional and visual overburdening of spectators, as in the case of *Au revoir les enfants/Goodbye Children* (Louis Malle, 1987) and *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993).<sup>48</sup> Correll suggests that the fictional structure of these films provides the audience with necessary guidance, and in articulating the Holocaust in terms of individual trajectories, the event becomes more intelligible to the spectator. Echoing the perspective of West German film critics in the 1970s, her imagined spectator is a gentile community, thus perpetuating a victim-perpetrator relationship anew.

To conclude this discussion, my analysis of *David's* critical reception suggests that the film occupied a position that was both inside and outside of contemporary West German cultural discourse about the Holocaust and a first indication that, in terms of their aesthetics, the film operated outside of the conventions of West German *Autorenfilm*. In the next part I will explain how *David's* curious cultural position is amplified in Lilienthal's Latin American films.

### **Chile – Latin America – Third World: Lilienthal's Latin American Films as Part of a Contested Discourse between East and West Germany<sup>49</sup>**

By establishing relations with developing countries which did not belong to either the socialist or capitalist camp, East and West Germany competed against each other for the rank as the true and legitimate German nation.<sup>50</sup> Culture became a tool to prepare and accompany political strategies. In this campaign, West and East Germany viewed Lilienthal's Latin American films as excellent texts to communicate their respective democratic or socialist values.

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<sup>48</sup> Catrin Correll, *Der Holocaust als Herausforderung für den Film. Formen des filmischen Umgangs mit der Shoah seit 1945. Eine Wirkungstypologie* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> I use the term Third World based on its original intention to accommodate the nations, which remained unaligned with capitalism (also known as First World) and communism (Second World) during the Cold War era.

<sup>50</sup> Frank Möller, "Der Kampf um "Frieden" und "Freiheit" in der Systemrivalität des Kalten Krieges. Ein Gespräch mit Prof. Dr. Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, Tübingen " in *Abgrenzung und Verflechtung. Das geteilte Deutschland in der zeitgeschichtlichen Debatte*, ed. Frank Möller and Ulrich Mählert (Berlin: Metropol Verlag 2008), 33.

In West Germany, the Hallstein Doctrine regulated the hostile political relationship during the first two decades of the existence of the two German states. West Germany, aiming to isolate East Germany politically, threatened to break off diplomatic or economic relations with any country that recognised its Eastern neighbour as sovereign state.<sup>51</sup> There was little danger that the Western European countries would do so but countries in the South and the Near East (Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Egypt) and newly independent nations (India, Pakistan, Algeria) were addressed by this policy. As a consequence, the two Germanys were racing to establish political and economic relations with countries of the Third World and to outperform each other. Lacking financial resources, East Germany established fraternal relations with other socialist states (e.g. Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Chile and Nicaragua). West Germany, economically in a much better position than East Germany, assisted Third World countries with financial aid and offered them trade partnerships.<sup>52</sup>

In line with West Germany's political aspirations, Lilienthal's films became vehicles in efforts to establish cultural channels of communication with and about the Third World. From the early 1960s, film had an important function for the cultural restitution of West Germany. According to Davidson, such an aim intended to demarcate its social and political reality as the German 'original'.<sup>53</sup> Beginning with the erection of the Wall in 1961, throughout the 1960s the governing party CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, Christian Democratic Union) and from 1969 the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, Social Democratic Party of Germany) promoted domestic cinema. The declared intention was to fend off potential socialist propaganda that DEFA productions (*Deutsche Film AG*, East German state-owned film production company) might have on West German citizens, and moreover, prevent negative images of West Germany being promoted in the developing nations.<sup>54</sup> Film as part of West German culture, as laid out in a 1960s SPD conference on culture and politics, performed distinct tasks along Cold War frontiers: to find its place in the Western world, be influential in the Eastern bloc, and become a cultural collaborator in the political self-

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<sup>51</sup> See Amit Das Gupta, "Ulbricht am Nil. Die deutsch-deutsche Rivalität in der Dritten Welt," in *Das doppelte Deutschland. 40 Jahre Systemkonkurrenz*, ed. Udo Wengst and Hermann Wentker (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett, *Romanian and East German Policies in the Third World. Comparing the Strategies of Ceausescu and Honecker* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992).

<sup>53</sup> Davidson, *Deterritorializing the New German Cinema* 40-45.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 41.

determination process of the developing nations.<sup>55</sup> Film became the medium that would culturally restore West Germany's place as part of 'the West' and among other *Kulturnationen*, which Davidson defines as 'an internally differentiated but unified collective of those Western nations which were economically at odds with each other, yet united in imperialism against the 'non-West'.<sup>56</sup> In light of these ideological functions and neo-colonial assertions, West German cultural politics used film as an ambassador for their cultural national identity at home and abroad. As Davidson notes:

The initial push to set up the institutions of NGC [New German Cinema] took place within a climate of Kulturpolitik, recognizing the need to construct an image of West Germany commensurate with its rejuvenated economic status. The aim was to re-establish the exportable and recognizable cultural tradition disrupted by the Nazi period, which would help relegate West Germany as an active member of the *Kulturnationen*, a status it had lost at the end of World War I.<sup>57</sup>

A number of cultural institutions became involved in West Germany's strategy to rebuild its national identity within a democratic political system. It is through these channels that Lilienthal's texts became exploited as messengers of a vital German democracy inside of and beyond West Germany. The *Bundesfilmpreis*, for example, annually awarded by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, recognised particular films as outstanding contributions to particular social and cultural discourses within West Germany. This award also provided for recognition of German films on the international cinema circuit.<sup>58</sup> Lilienthal's films won numerous prizes, such as the *Fernsehpreis der Deutschen Akademie für Darstellende Künste* (Teleplay Award, for *La Victoria*, 1974), and the *Goldene Schale* (Golden Bowl, for CPOTC, 1976). *The Uprising*, *The Autograph*, and *Das Schweigen des Dichters* also received German film prizes, which is evidence that the subject of these films were an important part of portraying a democratic self-image.

The *Filmbewertungsstelle* (Film Assessment Office), located in Wiesbaden, was and still is another channel which identifies films as cultural ambassadors. Described as artistic and cultural consciousness of the film industry, it is a public rating scheme that identifies high-quality films, which then facilitates their distribution in cinemas. It is a

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<sup>55</sup> Heinz Kühn, 'Kulturpolitik im Ausland', in *Kultur und Politik in unserer Zeit: Dokumentation des Kongresses der SPD am 28. und 29. Oktober 1960 in Wiesbaden*, ed. Parteivorstand der SPD (Hannover: J.H.W. Dietz, 1960), p. 96, as qtd. in *Ibid.* 42.

<sup>56</sup> John Davidson, "Hegemony and Cinematic Strategy," in *Perspectives on German Cinema*, ed. Terri Ginsberg and Kirsten Moana Thompson (London: Hall & Co, 1996), 55.

<sup>57</sup> Davidson, *Deterritorializing the New German Cinema*, 44.

<sup>58</sup> Hans Joachim Meurer, *Cinema and National Identity in a Divided Germany 1979-1989* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 63.

means by which educational and cultural institutions select films for their venues.<sup>59</sup> This process is motivated as a guide for the film to find its proper audience. It supports high-quality indigenous films, informs professional circles about high-quality indigenous and foreign productions and motivates spectatorships to see these films. This not only speaks to the economic function of the *Filmbewertungsstelle* but also reflects their task of pre-selecting and positioning films in the German cultural sphere. The *Filmbewertungsstelle* awards one of two seals of artistic quality; the rating *wertvoll* (valuable) or *besonders wertvoll* (particularly valuable). Almost all of Lilienthal's films were classified as either valuable or particularly valuable. CPOTC, for example, was placed as political thriller, a category which also hosted the American productions *All the President's Men* (1976), *Missing* (1982) and *In the Line of Fire* (1993).<sup>60</sup>

The wealth of awards for Lilienthal's films indicates that their themes were in line with the cultural-political zeitgeist. In particular, his Latin American films could further a dialogue with Central and South America and in this way support the establishing of economic relations. For this reason, the filmmaker himself was a valuable cultural link between West Germany and Latin America. Lilienthal frequently travelled to Latin American countries in order to participate in film festivals, to take part in cultural events and to accompany screenings of his films. Goethe-Institutes in Montevideo, Santiago de Chile and Salvador-Bahia (Brazil) have been organising and promoting such venues over the years.<sup>61</sup> The institute, an ambassador for German language and culture, provided a framework that ensured the filmmaker and his films were perceived in reference to West German culture and society. With *The Autograph*, for example, Lilienthal toured through Columbia, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.<sup>62</sup> Screenings of the films took place in settings such as universities, schools and churches. From this perspective, Lilienthal was a cultural asset, having grown up in Latin America and being fluent in Spanish: local audiences probably felt he was effectively one of 'theirs', while in official terms he was appropriated by West Germany as one of 'us'.

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<sup>59</sup> Horst von Hartlieb, "Der wertvolle Film und die Filmwirtschaft," in *Filmförderung oder Zensur? Von Der Dritte Mann bis Otto - Der Film; Gedanken zum Film, zur Filmbewertung und zur Filmförderung. 35 Jahre Filmbewertungsstelle Wiesbaden (FBW) (1951-1986)*, ed. Steffen Wolf (Ebersberg: Edition Achteinhalb Lothar Just, 1986), 44-45.

<sup>60</sup> Steffen Wolf, ed. *50 Jahre FBW - 50 Jahre Filmgeschichte* (Wiesbaden: KG Verlag Horst Axtmann, 2001).

<sup>61</sup> Email communication with Goethe-Institutes in Chile, Uruguay and Brazil in September 2008. The Goethe Institute is a German non-profit cultural institution that offers German language courses and propagates information about German culture and society to promote cultural exchanges with the local population.

<sup>62</sup> Lilienthal's protocol of his journey through Latin America is documented in Heiko Blum's article, "Peter Lilienthal in Lateinamerika," *Spektrum Film*, Oktober (1984).

West German *Kulturpolitik* promoted awareness of and compassion for foreign political issues in order to illustrate West Germany's democratic self-understanding, predominantly to the outside world. By contrast, East German culture as determined by the ruling Socialist Unity Party was engaged in promoting the merits of socialism to its own population. It was in this context that Lilienthal and his films were utilized by the state. Because political relations with West Germany changed in the early 1970s, East Germany needed to carve out a self-understanding against West Germany's 'cruel' imperialism. In 1972, East and West Germany agreed to recognise each other as sovereign states in the so-called Basic Treaty (*Grundvertrag*) and a year later, both became members of the United Nations. The Basic Treaty normalised German-German relations previously ruled by the Hallstein Doctrine. As a result, East and West established political and economic relations with each other. From then on, West Germany provided its Eastern neighbour with financial aid and credits, measures which eventually raised the living standard in East Germany.<sup>63</sup>

This new proximity to its enemy, however, left East Germany with an increased fear of becoming ideologically 'polluted'. The attraction of the East German population to its neighbour had been a perpetual problem for the East German state. The attractions of a Western life style and material goods were high, not least because East Germans could see them on West German television, which could be received in most of East Germany.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, East Germans had remained in touch with their West German relatives ever since their separation with the erection of the wall in 1961. East Germans maintained an awareness of a common origin and past precisely through this division and the ban on visiting their family and friends in the West.<sup>65</sup> The fissures between government and population became aggravated from the beginning of the 1980s as the second generation of East Germans, born after the erection of the Wall, began to reject the socialist state, which would eventually lead to the demise of the German Democratic Republic in 1989. Limiting the attraction that West Germany exercised on the East German population and building a stronger bond to East Germany's administration were

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<sup>63</sup> Barnett, *Romanian and East German Policies in the Third World. Comparing the Strategies of Ceausescu and Honecker*, 6. See also Hermann Wentker, "Für Frieden und Völkerfreundschaft? Die DDR als internationaler Akteur," in *Friedensstaat, Leseland, Sportnation? DDR-Legenden auf dem Prüfstand*, ed. Thomas Großbölting (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2009), 166ff.

<sup>64</sup> Wentker, "Für Frieden und Völkerfreundschaft? Die DDR als internationaler Akteur," 157.

<sup>65</sup> Horst Möller, "Worin lag das 'national' Verbindende in der Epoche der Teilung?," in *Koordinaten Deutscher Geschichte in der Epoche des Ost-West-Konflikts*, ed. Hans Günther Hockerts and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), 312.

vital tasks of East German politics.<sup>66</sup> Under Erich Honecker, who ruled the country from 1971, East Germany adopted a strategy of domestic legitimacy. In this strategy, East German relations with selected countries of the Third World showcased the East as pacifist, humanist and moral, and in this way aimed to convince the East German population that socialism was a superior political system.<sup>67</sup>

In the campaign to align citizens with the East German state, film played an important role. It educated viewers about socialist ideology, its values and virtues. This was all the more important as cinema was popular among the younger generation, so that films could provide their lives with a sense of direction.<sup>68</sup> Lilienthal's films played a role as official, educational means to overcome the distance between the East German population and their government by kindling solidarity with Chile. The East German state also promoted Lilienthal's films as West German imports, for which they exploited the magnetism innate in all things West German.

Arguably, *CPOTC* and *The Uprising* were useful in an East German political and cultural context because the films responded to the values of antifascism and solidarity, key concepts for an East German self-understanding as socialist state. Antifascism was fundamental to East German national identity and part of a selective approach to German history that was handled differently than in West Germany.<sup>69</sup> There, the Nazi legacy led to a process of democratisation which was channelled into processes of coming to terms with the past during the 1970s,<sup>70</sup> which had its own problems (see the discussion around *David*). East Germany, in contrast, declared itself cleared of the Nazi past. The ruling Socialist Unity Party dismissed any responsibility for the crimes committed by Nazi Germany.<sup>71</sup>

With regard to the portrayal of fascism on screen, early DEFA-produced films had explored the fascist past, of which the best-known examples are *Die Mörder sind unter uns/The Murderers Are Among Us* (1946) and *Ehe im Schatten/Marriage in the Shadows* (1947). In these films, guilt was approached as something that all Germans had brought upon

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<sup>66</sup> Barnett, *Romanian and East German Policies in the Third World. Comparing the Strategies of Ceausescu and Honecker*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>68</sup> Barton Byg, "Generational Conflict and Historical Continuity in GDR Film," in *Framing the Past. The Historiography of German Cinema and Television*, ed. Bruce A. Murray and Christopher J. Wickham (Carbondale Southern Illinois University Press 1992), 198.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>70</sup> Möller, "Worin lag das 'National' Verbindende in der Epoche der Teilung?," 317.

<sup>71</sup> Patrice G. Poutrus, "Die DDR als 'Hort der internationalen Solidarität'," in *Friedensstaat, Leseland, Sportnation? DDR-Legenden auf dem Prüfstand*, ed. Thomas Großbölting (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2009), 136.

themselves, were traumatised by and responsible for. After the founding of the two German states in 1949, however, the approach to the Nazi past in DEFA films changed in accordance with views adopted by the East German state. Christiane Mückenberger notes that the function of antifascism in film now was to assign guilt to individuals and to polarise films along the lines of their resistance to and complicity with war crimes.<sup>72</sup> Films such as *Nackt unter Wölfen/Naked among Wolves* (1963) and *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt/The Adventures of Werner Holt* (1965) approached antifascism in terms of ethics and moral standards. These latter pictures avoided addressing the complex and ambiguous nature of the relationship between Jewish victims and Gentile perpetrators. This might be a reason why *David*, which challenged these stereotypes, was not screened in East Germany.

Mary Fullbrook describes antifascism as one of the myths that East German national identity was based upon:

The GDR was a country in which innocent workers and peasants had been oppressed by nasty capitalists and Junkers, imperialists and Fascists, until at least they were liberated by the glorious Red Army of Soviet Union in conjunction with resistance fighters of other nations.<sup>73</sup>

Along this separation pattern of the anti-/fascism in spatial and national terms, East German official rhetoric linked fascism to capitalism and imperialism as its decayed moral heritage. In stigmatising West Germany as following the footsteps of National Socialism and as 'colony of American imperialism', East Germany outranked West Germany as ethically clean and, therefore the 'true' German nation.<sup>74</sup> From this perspective, the conflict in Chile represented a case study for East Germany to present the Third World as victim of imperialist, colonialist practices, of which West Germany was a part.<sup>75</sup> The West German foreign policy towards Latin America was portrayed as continuing that of Wilhelm II, Weimar Germany and Nazi Germany. East Germany accused West Germany of profiting from the political conflicts in Latin America. They suggested that West German economic relations with corporations in Chile had been part of a conspiracy against Allende.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, the terror of a Somoza regime in

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<sup>72</sup> Christiane Mückenberger, "The Antifascist Past in DEFA Films," in *DEFA. East German Cinema, 1946-1992*, ed. Seán Allan and John Sandford (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 66.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Fullbrook, "Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the G.D.R.," in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 74-75.

<sup>74</sup> Poutrus, "Die DDR als 'Hort der Internationalen Solidarität'," 138.

<sup>75</sup> Barton Byg, "Solidarity and Exile. Blonder Tango and the East German Fantasy of the Third World," in *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities*, ed. Eva Rueschmann (University of Mississippi, 2003), 59.

<sup>76</sup> Barnett, *Romanian and East German Policies in the Third World. Comparing the Strategies of Ceausescu and Honecker*, 147.

Nicaragua or that of General Pinochet in Chile could be read into Lilienthal's texts as extensions of German National Socialism. Rachel J. Halverson and Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi comment on a possible understanding of *The Uprising* in a German context: 'Given Germany's National Socialist past, a German audience would condemn the excesses of a dictatorial regime and would resonate with the insurgents' political awareness.'<sup>77</sup> East Germany probably took this angle in their reading of the film with the twist of linking the dictatorship to West Germany and equipping the revolutionaries with noble, communist aims. Moreover, the conflicts in Chile and Nicaragua, and by extension CPOTC and *The Uprising*, fed into an argument that the threat of an attack emanating from the imperialist world was imminent and, therefore, the socialist world had to be alert and united against its common enemy.

This brings me to another essential element of East German identity, namely international solidarity. Chile especially was a buzzword for resistance to imperialism and solidarity among and support of socialist allies. Throughout the 1970s, many journals, especially *Sinn und Form*, the official organ of *Akademie der Künste Ost* (Academy of Arts in East Germany, AKO) published articles, songs, prose and lyrics about Chile and by Chileans.<sup>78</sup> East Germans felt personally connected with Chile and its population.<sup>79</sup> After the uprising, about 1,500 opponents of the Pinochet regime came to live in the East Germany for shorter or longer periods of time. As Barton Byg puts it, 'Solidarity with Chile became, in official pronouncements, almost synonymous with the self-definition of the GDR'.<sup>80</sup> A strategy of ideologically supporting Third World countries in lieu of economic assistance, solidarity created a sense of identity among the East German population. According to Hans-Joachim Döring, showing solidarity with countries such as Chile could be an effective strategy of inclusion because, drawing a parallel to the East Germany's own disadvantaged position in political and economic terms, it fostered

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<sup>77</sup> Rachel J. Halverson and Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi, "La Insurrección/Der Aufstand. Cultural Synergy, Film and Revolution," in *The Lion and the Eagle. Interdisciplinary Essays on German-Spanish Relations over the Centuries.*, ed. Conrad Kent, Thomas Wolber, and Cameron M. K. Hewitt (London: Berghahn Books, 2000), 451-52.

<sup>78</sup> The *Akademie der Künste Ost*, located in East Berlin, was the East German counterpart to the *Akademie der Künste West*, situated in the Western part of the city.

<sup>79</sup> Arlene Teraoka, "Das Unbehagen in der Solidarität. Lateinamerikanische Revolutionen in DDR-Dramen," in *'Neue Welt'/'Dritte Welt': Interkulturelle Beziehungen Deutschlands zu Lateinamerika und der Karibik*, ed. Sigrid Bauschinger and Susan L. Cocalis (Tübingen: Francke Verlag 1994), 202.

<sup>80</sup> Byg, "Solidarity and Exile. Blonder Tango and the East German Fantasy of the Third World," 61.

socialism as a shared humanist concern between countries and people who supported each other.<sup>81</sup>

Apart from the subject matter of CPOTC and *The Uprising* supporting socialism, antifascism and solidarity with Latin America became linked to Lilienthal himself. A filmmaker who originated from the 'other side' and voiced criticism to imperialism was highly valuable in strengthening the righteousness and plausibility of socialism. In 1977, for example, Lilienthal appeared on the East German cultural programme *Kulturmagazin* to talk about CPOTC. The East German film journal *Filmspiegel*, a publication with popular appeal, wrote a profile of Lilienthal which set him against 'an increasingly fractured, contradictory, objectively ever more degraded environment', that is West Germany.<sup>82</sup> The author, Günter Agde, explains how the filmmaker's worldview and practices oppose those of his West German colleagues. Because of the alleged political-philosophical worldview that Lilienthal shared with socialism, Agde seized on the filmmaker as a socialist partner:

His work and his artistic intentions interlink with two elements that make him a particularly valuable ally: his honest anti-fascism and his passionate partisanship with the popular uprisings in Latin America.<sup>83</sup>

Because East Germany saw Lilienthal as sharing their ethos, it was eager to appropriate him as a like-minded fellow who would validate the state's rhetoric. Agde, in the early 1980s employed as a research assistant at the *Akademie der Künste Ost* (AKO) had met the filmmaker at film festivals in Berlin, Moscow and Taschkent.<sup>84</sup> He knew Lilienthal's films and was the driving force behind efforts to organise two events with the filmmaker at the AKO. In September of 1982, Lilienthal and Ballhaus came to East Berlin for a public screening and discussion of *The Uprising* and *Ruby's Dream*.<sup>85</sup> In 1984, Lilienthal introduced his film *The Autograph* to the members of the AKO, that is to East German artists, among them singers, actors, writers and directors. This way, Lilienthal befriended East German filmmakers Heiner Carow and Konrad Wolf. In 1989, he was invited by the AKO to join as a 'corresponding member'.

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<sup>81</sup> Hans-Joachim Döring, *Es geht um unsere Existenz: Die Politik der DDR gegenüber der Dritten Welt am Beispiel von Mosambik und Äthiopien* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1999), 9.

<sup>82</sup> Stott, "'Letting the Genie out of the Bottle': DEFA Film-Makers and *Film und Fernsehen*," 45.

<sup>83</sup> Günther Agde, "Ein Beunruhiger," *Filmspiegel* 3(1983): 30.

<sup>84</sup> Telephone conversation with Günter Agde in December 2010.

<sup>85</sup> See "Akademie der Künste zeigte Lilienthal-Filme," *Neues Deutschland*, 30 September 1982.

*Figure 17.* Peter Lilienthal at the *Akademie der Künste Ost* in 1984. To the right of the filmmaker: Günter Agde, Wolfgang Kohlhaase, Heiner Carow and Michael Gaißmayer

Travel limitations and lack of contact with foreign natives fed a yearning in the East German population to experience cultures outside of East Germany and Eastern Europe. Cinema was a popular medium that could satisfy this desire and film became an instance where the attraction to West Germany/the foreign was willingly accepted and even economically exploited.<sup>86</sup> Imports from capitalist countries constituted one third of all new releases in East Germany and, drawing large audiences, earned the biggest revenues.<sup>87</sup> Among them, West German films accounted for 22-23% of all Western imports in the 1970s and the 1980s. Some drew a gloomy picture of West German society, media, politics and immigration policies, such as *Lina Braake* (1975), *Die verlorene Ehe der Katharina Blum/The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (1976) or *40 Quadratmeter Deutschland/Fourty Square Meters of Germany* (1986).<sup>88</sup> These films meant pointed a finger at social ills in West Germany. However, in the 1980s, East Germany tended to import more lighthearted, entertaining films from Western Europe and Hollywood, which were not supposed to indoctrinate.<sup>89</sup>

While presenting social criticism, Lilienthal's films might have been part of the mass appeal that drew East Germans to watch foreign films. An appreciation of CPOTC

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<sup>86</sup> Rosemary Stott, "Entertained by the Class Enemy: Cinema Programming Policy in the German Democratic Republic," in *100 Years of European Cinema*, ed. Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 27.

<sup>87</sup> Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge 2002), 139.

<sup>88</sup> Stott, "Entertained by the Class Enemy: Cinema Programming Policy in the German Democratic Republic," 30.

<sup>89</sup> Hake, *German National Cinema*, 139.

and *The Uprising* left room for an exotic subtext by which the films could be sold to East German audiences. The films offered a glimpse into spatial particularities that might have been striking to an East German eye – domestic and public places and, if to a lesser degree present in Lilienthal's films, landscapes of Latin America. A transcript of the above mentioned film retrospectives with Lilienthal at the AKO in 1982 and an audio recording about the event which took place in 1984, give an idea about the scope of issues that fascinated East German audiences. Lilienthal's films were able to mesh exoticism, issues of socio-critical relevance, while also offering solutions to questions of a more personal nature. I will briefly sketch out these discussions, which seemed to have found a most attentive and interested audience.

In both venues, Lilienthal talked about the making of his films in Southern Europe, Latin America and the US, his working experience with people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, and the social and political issues of life under a repressive regime in countries such as Uruguay and Argentina. Arguably, Lilienthal's anecdotes and stories met the desire of an East German audience to hear about foreign places. Furthermore, the kind of questions raised by the audience suggest an interest in the details about contemporary politics and society in Latin America that went much beyond film and filmmaking there, for which Lilienthal's first-hand knowledge served as a source of information that for East Germans was not available otherwise.

A number of contributions from the East German audience read Lilienthal's films through a conceptual filter given by the socialist system, reflecting the East German conception of capitalism and imperialism in Western Europe and the United States. For example, the general East German public, for which the venue in 1982 catered, criticised the fact that *Ruby's Dream*, which Lilienthal shot in New York, does not capture social issues in the U.S., such as unemployment, to a higher degree.<sup>90</sup> Other comments refer to Lilienthal's portrayal of fascism in *The Uprising*, the revolution in Nicaragua as well as the difficulties of building up a socialist nation and they highlight the solidarity among the population. A member of the audience referred to *Ruby's Dream* as 'the ordinary capitalism', in analogy to the Russian documentary *Obiknovennii Fashizm/The Ordinary Fascism* (1965).<sup>91</sup> However, and most interestingly, Lilienthal's films provide a platform

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<sup>90</sup> Audio recording of discussion about *Ruby's Dream* and *The Uprising* with Peter Lilienthal, Michael Ballhaus and members of the public in AKO, Berlin, September 1982.

<sup>91</sup> The film investigates fascism and National Socialism in Nazi Germany. The text makes use of extensive footage of Nazi newsreels, propaganda documentaries and photographs, materials which were held in the Reich Film Archive and subsequently confiscated by the Red Army. The film had a controversial status in

for a discussion of the social and political drawbacks of the East German system by displacing them onto military dictatorships in Latin America. In the discussion about *The Autograph*, a venue that took place in 1984 with East German artists at the AKO, it was deliberated what and who it takes to abolish a military dictatorship.<sup>92</sup> This could well be seen as political criticism of East Germany. As one member of the audience noted about the film:

Isn't it interesting that power always choose sports and the arts to adorn themselves with. And when the autograph is not being granted [...], one is hit with a stick, so to say. This is a pattern, I think, which is not only valid for Latin America.<sup>93</sup>

In fact, the figure of the military trained boxer in *The Autograph* invites this association with the East German system that throughout its history tried to compensate for its economic inferiority with excellence in athletic competitions.

Moreover, Lilienthal's films seemed to hit a nerve with the East German population which, as I have said before, felt increasingly alienated in the East German state. In particular, *Ruby's Dream* invited comments which suggest that many of the East German spectators identified with Joe Pesci's figure and his personal situation as hapless bowling alley owner. The ticket for the event read, 'If you want, you can read the film as American counterpart to Konrad Wolfs/Wolfgang Kohlhaase's *Solo Sunny*'. *Solo Sunny* (1980) is the story of the young woman Sunny, an aspiring and talented singer, who sports a rather bohemian lifestyle. She stands out against the monotony of a 'normal', disciplined (East German) existence. The film was part of the so-called *Gegenwartsfilme* of the 1980s, plotted around individuals who questioned the value of life in East German society.<sup>94</sup> And indeed, *Ruby's Dream* connects to this sensation, because the discussion generated precisely these kinds of questions. Having felt touched by the film, one person read the film as motivation to be 'happy about the small things', and not reaching for 'the big things', and also as morally strengthening in the aim to find one's own position.<sup>95</sup>

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East Germany. It premiered and received a prize at the Leipzig International Documentary Festival in 1965 but was later shelved in East Germany. See for a comprehensive work about the film in its political and cultural-historical context Wolfgang Beilenhoff, Sabine Hänsen, in collaboration with Maya Turovskaya, eds., *Der gewöhnliche Faschismus. Ein Werkbuch zum Film von Michail Romm* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2009).

<sup>92</sup> Transcript of discussion about *The Autograph* with members of AKO, Berlin, November 1984, 15. Aside from Heiner Carow who led the discussion, filmmakers Wolfgang Kohlhaase and Gerhard Scheumann, theatre actress and singer Gisela May and film critic Rosemarie Rehan took part in this venue.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Andrea Rinke, "From Models to Misfits: Women in DEFA-Films of the 1970s and 1980s " in *DEFA. East German Cinema 1946-1992*, ed. Seán Allan and John Sandford (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003).

<sup>95</sup> Audio recording of discussion of *Ruby's Dream* and *The Uprising* with Peter Lilienthal, Michael Ballhaus and members of the public in AKO, Berlin, September 1982.

Someone else said, 'The film negotiates our situation'. Though *Ruby's Dream* was not released for general distribution in East German Cinemas, it shows that Lilienthal's films meeting the East German zeitgeist of the early and mid 1980s.

As Agde notes, the East German population as well as culture officials received Lilienthal's films with a lot of interest.<sup>96</sup> For the latter, they worked in an ideologically deviant but, nevertheless, effective way. The many dimensions of attraction to Lilienthal's films created an even wider base of people that could be 'educated' about being a socialist citizen. With their hybrid characteristics, Lilienthal's films could arguably achieve what East German filmmakers could not: '[...] to make films that would be as popular as Hollywood productions, but that would at the same time support the state's political agenda and be of considerable artistic merit'.<sup>97</sup>

Against this background, the next part will show how the German-German delineation is embedded in the film criticism of CPOTC.

### **Readings of *Calm Prevails Over the Country* in East and West Germany**

The reviews of CPOTC in West and East Germany provide an example of an ideological feud in which tropes and metaphors in the film were interpreted to opposite ends. Above all, reviewers debated the viability of political activism and optimism.<sup>98</sup> Though critics on both sides of the border acknowledged CPOTC as an expression of their worldview, to a degree, many articulated the film as ideologically 'deficient'. As measured against narrative and aesthetic requirements of socialist realism, most East German critics praised its revolutionary potential. Some expressed reservations because they felt the film's West German director lacked deeper insight into the propositions of socialism. In West German reviews of CPOTC, one can trace a lethargic sentiment that, aside from reviewers aiming to dissociate themselves from a socialist ethos, catches the cultural mood of the time.

In West Germany during the 1960s, Latin America carried the European hope for a worldwide liberation from capitalist evil. The reception of CPOTC was filtered through this notion, however outdated or even ridiculous. In the 1960s, for West German, European and American students, intellectuals and artists, countries such as

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<sup>96</sup> Telephone conversation with Günther Agde in December 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Daniela Berghahn, *Hollywood Behind the Wall* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 23.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 35.

Vietnam or Algeria, which at the time fought wars against powerful Western armies and/or colonisers, embodied their idea of a revolution of the disenfranchised and poor. In this view, Latin America had a leading role in initiating a worldwide social transformation according to a neo-Marxist philosophy that rejected lavish Western lifestyle, consumerism and greed.<sup>99</sup> As Siebenmann describes:

For the 1968 youth and many left-wing intellectuals in Europe, the images of Latin America become sharply narrowed into one, simplified macro image of a victimised continent, where the disenfranchised, hoping for a social utopia, strike back violently and successfully.<sup>100</sup>

However, a decade later, in the wake of military dictatorships in Latin America, the Left had given up their hopes for social change in Europe through revolution in Latin America. The uprising in Chile was only another instance of a worldwide tendency to resort to violence and aggression. In 1976, when the film was released, news about political violence and violation of human rights in Chile was already overshadowed by cataclysms in other parts of the world. As a critic notes, 'Two and a half years after the violent removal of Allende's democratically elected government, Angola, Lebanon, Portugal and other burning global issues pushed the subject of Chile from the front pages of the newspapers'.<sup>101</sup> It is in this context that Thomas Petz of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* calls CPOTC an 'amusing dream of class struggle that verges on the grotesque'.<sup>102</sup> In other words, Petz finds the film to be 'stuck' in the mood of the late 1960s.

Cautious about the potential of revolution, critics voiced doubts vis-à-vis Lilienthal's optimism in respect of collective political action and engagement in the political realm. This reaction to the film is also due to contemporary political events in West Germany. The ideas and activities of the student movement had proved unsuccessful in breaking rigid political and social structures. In the early 1970s, a small section of the movement became radicalised and established the terrorist group Red Army Fraction, turning to aggression and violence. This resulted in a lack of belief in political activism. Rather than being politically active, people expressed their views outside of political organisations and parties, in women's movements, citizens' action

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<sup>99</sup> Frank Möller, "Mentalitätsumbruch und Wertewandel in Ost- Und Westdeutschland während der 60er- und 70er-Jahre. Ein Gespräch mit Prof. Dr. Edgar Wolfrum, Heidelberg," in *Abgrenzung und Verflechtung. Das geteilte Deutschland in der zeitgeschichtlichen Debatte*, ed. Frank Möller and Ulrich Mählert (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2008), 52. These ideas were theoretically underpinned by intellectuals such as Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Peter Weiss.

<sup>100</sup> Gustav Siebenmann, "Über das Lateinamerikabild der Deutschen ab 1950," in *Suchbild Lateinamerika. Essays über interkulturelle Wahrnehmung. Zu seinem [Gustav Siebenmann's] 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Rössner (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003), 64.

<sup>101</sup> Günther Kriewitz, "Terror in Uniform," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 13 February 1976.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Petz, "Dem Leben nicht mehr entwendet," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 January 1976.

committees, and environmental organisations.<sup>103</sup> The country entered a phase of social and cultural introspection, the so-called *Tendenzwende*. West German contemporary cinema reflects this pessimism by engaging in themes of loss and mourning. The films share a gloomy outlook on the future and a pessimistic tone.<sup>104</sup> In judging CPOTC's proactive style as outdated, reviewers saw the film as ignoring current political and cultural developments in Western Europe that informed its contemporaries.

Apart from a general political pessimism that informed the commentary on CPOTC, critics could not quite ignore its real-political content. As Michael Stolle notes about the sensitivity of the subject in the West German press, 'Anyone reporting about the contentious subject of Chile ran the risk of offending either the Left or the Right.'<sup>105</sup> The perception of Pinochet's dictatorship in the German mediascape happened parallel to a discussion of CPOTC. Stolle documents that the news agencies pre-selected and interpreted details about the events in the Southern Cone, so that in effect the situation in Chile became a cover, which left and right wing parties exploited for internal debates about terror, human rights and propaganda politics.<sup>106</sup>

The film was already aligned to a leftist viewpoint. Film critics, who worked for newspapers such as *Die Zeit*, *Süddeutsche* and *Der Spiegel*, had to make sure not to overstep what for CPOTC was a fine balance between film criticism and political correctness. Rather than connecting the film to the political situation in Chile itself, critics treated it as a parable for violence and aggression, avoiding direct discussions of the Pinochet government and/or political and social measures that violated human rights. Many West German newspapers stated that the intentions of this film are 'communicating compassion', 'shunning disinterest' or 'evoking solidarity'.<sup>107</sup> These phrases illustrate that for them, the film has mere symbolic character for a military uprising somewhere outside of Europe. In light of the function of Chile and the Third World as amplifying the East-West conflict, reviewers possibly wanted to avoid exercising sympathy for Chile as *socialist* country too directly. Karsten Witte, from the left-liberal newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau*, makes an interesting observation that indicates that this film, which proclaims openly its

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<sup>103</sup> Möller, "Mentalitätsumbruch und Wertewandel in Ost- und Westdeutschland während der 60er- und 70er-Jahre. Ein Gespräch mit Prof. Dr. Edgar Wolfrum, Heidelberg," 56.

<sup>104</sup> Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, 40.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Stolle, "Inbegriff des Unrechtsstaates. Zur Wahrnehmung der Chilenischen Diktatur in der deutschsprachigen Presse zwischen 1973 Und 1989," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 51, no. 9 (2003): 793.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Inge Bongers, "Helden-gibt's die?," *Der Abend*, 16 January 1976; Gunther Dahinten, "Eine Parabel der Unterdrückung," *Schwäbische Zeitung*, 17 December 1976; Kriewitz, "Terror in Uniform"; Wilhelm Roth, "Trauer und Zorn aus der Stille," *Spandauer Volksblatt*, 16 January 1976.

sympathy with Chile, is a mixed blessing in the West German mediascape: 'The film claims a fictional status that in reality it does not have but that it maintains in the distribution system of [our] culture in order to be broadcast.'<sup>108</sup> Arguably, CPOTC's fictional character made it possible to screen it on West German TV and in theatres. But this was not the case outside of West Germany. The German Embassy in Canada saw a West German director judging the political conditions in Chile, and thus interfering with the political and economic connections that Western countries maintained with Pinochet's government. They therefore cancelled a showing of CPOTC at the Goethe Institute in Montreal. Since Canada had foreign relations with Chile, it did not want to criticise Chile's political affairs.<sup>109</sup>

East Germany had its own agenda for CPOTC when acquiring distribution rights to the film in 1976. The film was purchased by *DEFA-Außenhandel*.<sup>110</sup> *Progress Film Verleih* was in charge of its distribution to film theatres and gave permission for its TV broadcast. Both institutions reported to the *Hauptverwaltung Film* at the ministry for culture and their activities were aligned with East German economic and cultural political interests. CPOTC was in East German cinemas from 1 April 1977 and premiered on the East German television channel DFF 1 (*Deutscher Fernsehfunke, Channel 1*) on 12 July, 1977, repeated on 13 June 1979 in DFF 2. Broadcasting a feature film just three months after its premiere in cinemas was exceptional: in order to warrant that films generated sufficient revenues at the box office, contracts between the distributor *Progress* and East German TV stipulated the regular *Karenzzeit* (waiting period between circulation in cinemas and TV broadcast) at eighteen months.<sup>111</sup> This guideline could be sidestepped only for political films deemed exceptionally valuable, of which CPOTC was clearly an example. The rank-and-file of East German culture supported CPOTC's early TV broadcast. Hans Joachim Seidowsky, at the time programme director of the DFF, put in a request addressed to the current director of *Progress Film*, Wolfgang Harkenthal. Harkenthal agreed after consulting with Horst Pehnert, Vice Minister of Culture and head of the *Hauptverwaltung Film*. In an early evaluation of CPOTC, *Progress Film* reasoned

<sup>108</sup> Karsten Witte, "Wer beherrscht die Ruhe?," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 5 March 1976.

<sup>109</sup> "Botschaftsveto gegen Chile-Film," *Der Spiegel*, 2 May 1977.

<sup>110</sup> *DEFA-Außenhandel* was responsible for all economic, financial and legal issues of film import and export. Telephone conversation with *Progress Film* Press Office in September 2010. See also [www.defa-stiftung.de/cms/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=1022](http://www.defa-stiftung.de/cms/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=1022). For more information about the structures and of GDR film see Günter Jordan, *Film in der DDR: Daten Fakten Strukturen*, ed. Filmmuseum Potsdam (Potsdam: Brandenburgisches Ministerium Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur, 2009).

<sup>111</sup> [www.defa.de/cms/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=1023](http://www.defa.de/cms/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=1023), last accessed on 21 September 2010.

that the film would evoke ‘strong emotional effects’. Therefore, they assessed the film as ‘a valuable contribution with an anti-imperialist subject’. To mark the significance of the film further, CPOTC was assigned a broadcasting spot at prime time for its TV premiere (Tuesday at 8pm).

The announcement which introduced the film in DFF 1 stated that CPOTC was a ‘cinematic historical document that illustrates the cruel deeds of the fascist military dictatorship in Chile but also signifies the revolutionary will to liberation of the Chilean population’.<sup>112</sup> This reference to Pinochet’s Chile neatly separated the fascist oppressor from the resistant population, which complied with official rhetoric pervading the discourse about CPOTC in East Germany. *Progress*, which was in charge of film programming, marketing and public relations, published another, extended document that evaluated the film’s strengths and weaknesses. Accessible to cinemas and the print media, it contained a plot summary of CPOTC, information about production details, suggestions for film discussion (*Anregungen zum Filmgespräch*) and tips for use of the film (*Einsatzhinweise*). This text underlines the film’s virtue in portraying the repressive climate in countries of the South American continent and the political awakening of a previously apolitical population, and in drawing attention to acts of solidarity with the imprisoned revolutionaries. Approved by the *Hauptverwaltung Film* in the East German Ministry of Culture, the document can be seen as a meta-narrative that guided public venues utilising the film.

In accordance with the *Progress Film* guidelines, discussions of CPOTC in the national and regional press were limited to the scope of its worth in a socialist reality. Film criticism in East Germany was strongly monitored and linked in with socialist beliefs and values. As mentioned, film was to promote the virtues of socialism, to educate East German citizens to become responsible socialist citizens and in this way appreciate socialist views over Western ‘imperialist’ ones.<sup>113</sup> Accordingly, film criticism needed to question films for their ideological value and the clarity of their expression in this regard. Amaya remarks about Cuban film critics:

The critic played the role of the vanguard; she/he was the only cultural worker whose sole duty was to monitor the way aesthetics were properly used in cultural work. The critic’s labor was thus at the conjuncture of politics and culture, policing others’ practices while publicly performing the role of citizen.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Text of the announcement that was broadcast just prior to the film CPOTC on 12 July 1977.

<sup>113</sup> Meurer, *Cinema and National Identity in a Divided Germany 1979-1989*, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Amaya, *Screening Cuba. Film Criticism as Political Performance During the Cold War*, 59-60.

Film critics in East Germany were similarly positioned as mediator between revolutionary theory and its appropriate transformation into artworks.

This demand inhibited film criticism in East Germany from moving beyond an ideological reading of film texts. As Sabine Hake notes, 'The pressure on film criticism and scholarship to participate in the advancement of socialist culture and its changing strategies of self-legitimation prevented more extensive and historical investigations'.<sup>115</sup> Even film journals such as *Film und Fernsehen*, to which critical filmmakers such as Heiner Carow contributed articles, needed to exercise criticism cautiously.<sup>116</sup> Analysing a review of *Insel der Schwäne* ('Swan island', 1982) that appeared in *Film und Fernsehen*, scholar Harry Blunk remarks 'how uncertain people [film critics] were regarding those areas which were open to critical scrutiny and those which remained taboo'.<sup>117</sup> There must have been even greater pressure on film critics to toe the party line when reviewing films from capitalist countries such as CPOTC.

Depending on the proximity of the newspaper to the party, most critics praised exactly the aspects mentioned in the CPOTC guidelines produced by *Progress Film*. The weekly cultural-political newspaper *Sonntag*,<sup>118</sup> which over the years published a number of articles about Lilienthal and his films, echoes the official line: 'The film talks about the process of developing political awareness in apolitical people, of a growing anti-fascist popular front; it shows the different phases of political consciousness in different individuals'.<sup>119</sup> Similar readings of the film appeared in a number of other newspapers, such as the *Bauernecho*, *Neue Zeit*, and *Mitteldutsche Neueste Nachrichten*.<sup>120</sup>

Both East and West German critics commented on the same aspects of the film but evaluated them in ideologically divergent ways. In contrast to the earnestness with which East Germany saw CPOTC as an example for a socialist struggle, a number of West German reviews ridiculed narrative details that conveyed the passion of its director for the subject. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, for example, described the themes of political awakening and acts of solidarity in the population as amusing, if not grotesque

<sup>115</sup> Hake, *German National Cinema*, 131-32. See also D Becker, *Zwischen Ideologie und Autonomie: Die DDR-Forschung und die deutsche Filmgeschichte* (Münster: LIT, 1999).

<sup>116</sup> Carow was the director of *Die Legende von Paul und Paula*/*The Legend of Paul and Paula* (1973), *Bis daß der Tod euch scheidet*/*Until Death Do Us Part* (1979) and *Coming Out* (1989).

<sup>117</sup> Harry Blunk, "The Concept of 'Heimat-GDR' in DEFA Feature Films," in *DEFA. East German Cinema, 1946-1992*, ed. Seán Allan and John Sandford (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), 215.

<sup>118</sup> See Ernst Michael Brandt, "Das Wort vom Sonntag. Journalismus in der DDR vor der Wende zum Beispiel in der Wochenzeitung 'Sonntag'," *Die Zeit*, 9 February 1990.

<sup>119</sup> Jutta Voigt, "Es herrscht Ruhe im Land," *Sonntag*, 1 May 1977.

<sup>120</sup> See [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tageszeitungen\\_der\\_DDR](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tageszeitungen_der_DDR), accessed 2 July 2010.

illusions.<sup>121</sup> Taking issue with the film's unswerving association with political struggle is a response that reads as a clash with the dominant political outlook in West German film. Though the latter engaged in portrayals of social ills of the West German past and present, Elsaesser notes that 'very few films give a convincing idea of West Germany's political reality or the workings of its social institutions'.<sup>122</sup> This practice recalls the particular condition of the *Autorenkino* in the *Kulturnation*. In a cinema that was financed by the West German state, filmmakers were expected 'not to bite too fiercely the hand that feeds them'.<sup>123</sup> This more or less stipulates a neutral ground between art and politics, one not interfering with the other, but implying that films stay clear of *serving* political aims.<sup>124</sup> In this light, the reception to CPOTC reads as if the film has transgressed the threshold of what was appropriate.

In a larger perspective, the criticism of CPOTC reveals expectations that are part of a Western take on cinema. According to Min-Ha, Western films are cultural products which have the function of informing spectators and giving the impression of being free of judgment. The scholar calls this delivering of facts and weighing of benefits and disadvantages a scientific-knowledge approach, which conditions filmmakers to be dispassionate towards their subject in order to warrant fairness to the subject and clarity of presentation. Min-Ha describes the 'appropriate' style of cinematic representation, which CPOTC obviously failed to maintain, as follows:

[A]lmost never is there any question of challenging rational communication with its normalized film codes and prevailing objectivist, deterministic-scientific discourse; only a relentless unfolding of pros and cons, and of 'facts' delivered with a sense of urgency, which present themselves as liberal but imperative; neutral and value-free; objective or universal'.<sup>125</sup>

In Min-Ha's terms, CPOTC, not abiding by such regulating communication patterns, lacks clarity, specifically ideological clarity, because clarity of communication depends on the ruling ideological system:

Since clarity is always ideological, and reality always adaptive, such a demand for clear communication often proves to be nothing else but an intolerance for any language other than the one approved by the dominant ideology. At times obscured and other times blatant, this inability and unwillingness to deal with the unfamiliar, or with a language different from one's own, is, in fact a trait that intimately belongs to the man of coercive power. It is a reputable form of colonial discrimination, one in which difference can only be admitted once it is appropriated, that is, when it

<sup>121</sup> Inge Bongers, "Helden-gibt's die?," *Der Abend*, 16 January 1976, 451-52; Petz, "Dem Leben nicht mehr entwendet."

<sup>122</sup> Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, 62.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>124</sup> See for the term *Kulturstaat* and its historical contextualisation Meurer, *Cinema and National Identity in a Divided Germany 1979-1989*, 59-61.

<sup>125</sup> Min-ha, "All-Owning Spectatorship," 193.

operates within the Master's sphere of having. Activities that aim at producing a different hearing and a renewed viewing are undifferentiated from obscurantism and hastily dismissed as sheer incompetency or deficiency. They are often accused of being incoherent, inarticulate, amateurish.<sup>126</sup>

To support this argument: the ending of CPOTC is a key element that illustrates the conflicting social and cultural reference frames in West and East Germany from which they evaluate the film. In these scenes, some of the prisoners meet again somewhere in the countryside and, embracing each other, they enter a white house. Some critics in West Germany found the optimistic character and the revolutionary pathos in CPOTC objectionable. Quite possibly, they linked these qualities to a committed cinema. Moreover, as Michael Schwarze of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* notes, the contemporary reality of a besieged Chile did not match up to the film's ending: 'The fiction has to resolve something for which the political reality offers no direction whatsoever. The end, if one takes it at face value, is as touching as it is far from reality.'<sup>127</sup> The patronising style of this comment suggests that its author found the ending to be rather ludicrous from his point of view.

*Figure 18.* Screenshot from CPOTC: Former prisoners are headed towards a white house

Politically committed art was, on the other hand, part of East German cultural philosophy and this view of CPOTC gained the film access to East German screens. Hence, East German reviewers understand the text in terms of its correspondence to

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Schwarze, "Es herrscht Ruhe im Land," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 March 1976.

socialist realist principles and see this final scenario as utopia.<sup>128</sup> H. Grienitz argues that this ending symbolises socialism as a historical struggle, which will end in a triumph over imperialism and fascist evil.<sup>129</sup> East German reviewers saw CPOTC as in line with a description of 'reality' in socialist art that is 'a reality in its revolutionary evolution and continuous change', which includes past, present and future.<sup>130</sup> Since evolution according to socialist belief happens via an ultimate and inexorable social revolution that will bring unity and peace in communism, the depiction of the future in socialist art was always optimistic. Scholar Daniela Berghahn calls this idea 'revolutionary romanticism', a term that denotes its dreamy and utopian character.<sup>131</sup> Hence, CPOTC, which was created to illustrate resistance to Pinochet's repressive measures and the hope for his regime's demise, as noted in Chapter 4, was promoted in East Germany as foreshadowing a massive social transformation. A comment in the East German *Bauernecho* is almost a retort to the uninvolved understanding of the film that West German readings reflect: 'A solidarity based solely on empathy for victims of dictatorships without turning against the oppressors cannot achieve anything.'<sup>132</sup>

Evaluating CPOTC as outdated, wishful thinking, or too close to socialist terminology, West German voices dismissed the film as irrelevant from a Western political and social perspective. But as a film which originated in the 'imperialistic' West, East German critics closely scrutinized the text on the honesty of its intentions and its depiction of a socialist reality. Interestingly, the West German line of argument matches opinions in East Germany, which regarded the film to be outside of *socialist* reality and ideology. Some East German film critics found that CPOTC depicted power relations between imperialistic aggressors and socialist forces inaccurately. In other words, the film was unable to properly grasp the essence of antagonistic power structures.<sup>133</sup> In many publications, among them the *Neue Zeit*, *Der Morgen*, *Filmspiegel* and *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, reviewers criticised the film's lack of comment on the agenda of the fascists and failure to identify the revolutionaries as communists. The aforementioned *Progress Film* document judges CPOTC as follows:

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<sup>128</sup> See Manfred Haedler, "Aktuelles Gleichnis," *Der Morgen* 3 April 1977 and H. Grienitz, "Auch Mut kann anstecken," *Bauernecho*, 14 July 1977.

<sup>129</sup> See Grienitz, "Auch Mut kann anstecken."

<sup>130</sup> Manfred Berger et al., "Sozialistischer Realismus," in *Kulturpolitisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Andrée Fischer (Berlin Ost: Dietz Verlag 1978).

<sup>131</sup> Berghahn, *Hollywood Behind the Wall*, 35.

<sup>132</sup> Grienitz, "Auch Mut kann anstecken."

<sup>133</sup> "Von politischer Brisanz," *Filmspiegel* 1977.

In that this film does not socially classify the political players, the plans and aims of the revolutionaries remain unclear; in that it excludes the masterminds behind and beneficiaries of fascism - the cosmopolitan monopolistic powers - from its accusation, and, on the other hand, in that it disavows the biggest enemies of social exploitation by remaining silent about them, greatly diminishes its political potency.<sup>134</sup>

Accusing CPOTC of examining socialism in a superficial manner, the *Neue Zeit* mentioned that by portraying the bourgeoisie (teacher, hotel owner, doctor), the film did not abide by the socialist dichotomy of the exploited versus fascists.<sup>135</sup> The critic added that this does not quite capture contemporary social and political actualities.

An ideal socialist work of art includes a positive role model and East German film critics looked for such a figure in CPOTC. They suggested that the narrative would be richer if the film included a main protagonist whose political development could be traced in response to the intrusion of political events into their private life.<sup>136</sup> Reviewers also raised the point that the film was not passionate about its subject, a fact that would inhibit spectators from becoming emotionally engaged with the characters.<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, the latter argument matches the idea of West German critics about the main character in *David* being emotionally inaccessible.

CPOTC's shortcomings as a socialist realist work are partly explained on grounds of its director being West German, bourgeois and intellectual.<sup>138</sup> Film critic Wolfgang Lange of *Film und Fernsehen* suggested that Lilienthal authors CPOTC from a 'viewpoint of someone who is merely observing'. Lange's opinion connects to my observation about the filmmaker's position at cultural frontiers between Latin America and Europe, but he regards Lilienthal's outsider position as reflecting a lack of commitment to socialism. In order to avoid mentioning the West German origins of the filmmaker, an article published in *Sonntag* did not mention him in their headline.<sup>139</sup> The newspaper titled it '*Der chilenische Autor Antonio Skarmeta über seinen antifaschistischen Film 'Es herrscht Ruhe im Land'*' (The Chilean author Antonio Skarmeta about his antifascist film 'Calm Prevails in the Country'). This article, containing an account of the personal and collective motivations for the film project, suggests that Skarmeta was its director. Misguiding the readers of this paper, the presentation of the *Sonntag* article is an example of how the East German

<sup>134</sup> Progress Film Verleih information document (no. 42/77) for *Calm Prevails Over the Country*.

<sup>135</sup> "Die trügerische Ruhe," *Neue Zeit*, 21 April 1977.

<sup>136</sup> Haedler, "Aktuelles Gleichnis" and Wolfgang Lange, "Es herrscht Ruhe im Land," *Film und Fernsehen*, no. 8 (1977).

<sup>137</sup> Lange, "Es herrscht Ruhe im Land."

<sup>138</sup> See also "Gefängnisrevolte, Liebestragödie und ein unbequemer Lehrer," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 3 April 1977.

<sup>139</sup> Antonio Skarmeta and Monika Walter, "Gegen die Ruhe im Land. Der chilenische Autor Antonio Skarmeta über seinen antifaschistischen Film 'Es herrscht Ruhe im Land'," *Sonntag*, 15 March 1977.

press exploited CPOTC as a cinematic text and elides authorship issues. Aside from failing to mention Lilienthal in the headline of the article, Skármeta's ideas were translated from Spanish.<sup>140</sup> In this process, his text about CPOTC was most likely amended to fit in with socialist conceptions and terminology.

To conclude this analysis, the reception of CPOTC in East and West Germany illustrates that the hybrid nature of the film make it a malleable material in antagonistic cultural and ideological contexts. At the same time, the film cannot be fitted in with either ideological system completely.

### **Frustrated Views of Reality: *The Uprising***

In this last section, I want to focus on *The Uprising*. The exasperated reactions to this film in the contemporary West German press will round off my argument that Lilienthal's films were seen as outside of Western Cinema.

Amaya has noted about US film critics of Cuban Cinema that their readings were often framed by Cold War hermeneutics or Western cinema aesthetics, which was due to lack of knowledge of Third Cinema.<sup>141</sup> In evaluating formal and narrative devices as improper or primitive instead of valuing these features as aesthetic statements, film criticism was often close to 'an aesthetic and political parochialism'.<sup>142</sup> As I have demonstrated throughout this chapter, film reviewers in East and West examined Lilienthal's cinema in reference to their respective social and cultural context and aesthetic norms (which in analogy to Amaya's case was represented by the East-West conflict). This resulted in set expectations which Lilienthal's films did not fulfil. Film critics became frustrated that Lilienthal's films refuse to stick to dominant viewpoints of a political subject. The protagonists in these films behave in ways that challenge political, cultural or social explanation patterns, which resulted in critics' failure to understand their intentions. *David's* main character annoyed viewers because, as a survivor, he did not share the destiny of the majority of the Jewish population in Europe. Likewise, identifying with characters in CPOTC seemed to be difficult because their motivations cannot be readily discerned from the context. West German reviewers praised the

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<sup>140</sup> Skármeta's work published in West Germany was usually translated from Spanish into German. Supposedly, he had translator(s) in East Germany as well. Here, this could have been Monika Walter as the article signs her name.

<sup>141</sup> Amaya, *Screening Cuba. Film Criticism as Political Performance During the Cold War*, 154-55. See his analysis of contemporary film criticism of *Memorias del Subdesarrollo/Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968) in Cuba and the U.S.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 117.

collective performance of the cast as a strong message for solidarity, while in East German reviews this strategy was criticized because socialist realist art features an individual who serves as socialist role model. Thus, the reviewers argued from ideological frameworks that explained reality in different ways, and Lilienthal's films did not conform to either type of reality.

Let me return to the primary, West German cultural context in which *David* and CPOTC circulated and bring in my examination of *The Uprising*. Despite the problems reviewers had with *David* and CPOTC, the films linked with cultural and political discourses of the time and were, thus, meaningful for a contemporary West German audience. CPOTC, alluding to the uprising in Chile, also raised concerns for Cold War Europe. Stolle notes about the kind of questions that circulated in the West German media after the event:

The commentators were interested in the question of whether one could learn a lesson from the case of Chile that could be relevant for the political landscape in Europe or Germany. In particular, there was the question whether the *Unidad Popular* experiment would have been doomed in other countries as well... In other words: Was Allende's governmental crisis a home-made Chilean affair or the product of an inexorable process, which concerned socialist politics in Europe too?<sup>143</sup>

In contrast to a view of the events in Chile and their potential implications for both sides of the Iron Curtain, the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua portrayed in *The Uprising* failed to raise similar questions. Due to it being set in a small Central American country, as well as the film's proximity to a revolutionary pathos and socialist ideas, *The Uprising* did not overlap with West German political interests. Thus, a certain air of impatience with this film was a subtext of many articles. Who is the supposed audience for this film and what does this film have to do with us? A comment in the *Berliner Morgenpost* articulates the alleged lack of relevance for the West German spectator in an unmistakable manner: 'It is a joke that *The Uprising*, a Spanish-language film about the upheaval in Nicaragua, partakes in the Biennale in Venice as the official contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany'.<sup>144</sup> Reiterating this view, reviews of the film following its screening in West German cinemas indicate that most critics disapproved of *The Uprising*. Critiquing the narrative and formal structure of the film, and moreover, Lilienthal's shared authorship approach, reviewers were unable to place this film within the traditions of European auteur cinema. To some degree symptomatic of the reviews for all of Lilienthal's films, the discussion about *The Uprising* reflected little on the

<sup>143</sup> Stolle, "Inbegriff des Unrechtsstaates. Zur Wahrnehmung der chilenischen Diktatur in der deutschsprachigen Presse zwischen 1973 und 1989," 799.

<sup>144</sup> "Einfältiges zur Geschichte," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 25 October 1980.

qualities of the film, revealing instead the Eurocentric attitudes and expectations of West German reviewers. Mainly describing *The Uprising* in terms of its perceived flaws, West German critics established the film as Other.

Critics viewed Central America as geographically and geopolitically so remote that it could hardly be expected to be mapped by a Western European. For this reason, reviewers demanded that *The Uprising* be tailored to their needs, that is, they required a film that was informative and representative. It seems that they asked for a protagonist whose motivations one could follow, such as is the case in popular cinema – for example the Hollywood productions *Under Fire* (1983) and *Salvador* (1985). Neil Larson notes about the approaches of these films to the political riots in Nicaragua to their American audiences:

By structuring the journalistic narrative around the familiar, sympathetic, and neutral figure of the gringo photojournalist, the film narrative is meant to perform a kind of mediating function. The Central American situation is represented to us in 'terms we can understand' and 'identify with'.<sup>145</sup>

Such an argument connects the critical reception of *The Uprising* with that of *David*, where critics favoured narrative and aesthetic patterns utilised in American popular cinema.

Carla Rhode of the West Berlin based *Tagespiegel*, who wrote one of the first reviews of *The Uprising*, projects about spectator expectations for *The Uprising*, "The chronicle of events linked to an account of the full background, added by precise analysis, and all this in a preferably perfect artistic format."<sup>146</sup> Confirming Rhode's prediction, some contemporary reviewers, such as Hans Günther Pflaum of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, felt the film lacked sufficient information. For these reviewers, the film failed to brief the West German spectator on the political and economic interests of both antagonists in the revolutionary struggle. Instead of picturing the conflict between Sandinista rebels and Somoza soldiers as a private affair, the film should rather explain the part that political powers such as the U.S. play in it. Reviewers had argued already for *David* and CPOTC that more background information was needed in order to appreciate the motivations and intentions of its main characters. Wolf Donner, film critic and director of the Berlin Film Festival 1976-1979, maintained that *La Victoria* failed to cater for a West German audience for this reason:

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<sup>145</sup> Neil Larsen, *Reading North by South. On Latin American Literature, Culture, and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 42.

<sup>146</sup> Carla Rhode, "Menschen in der Masse," *Der Tagespiegel*, 23 October 1980.

Lilienthal excludes the context to all political events, activities and dialogues as rigorously as ever, as if in this case the film was not produced by the *Filmverlag der Autoren* but solely by and for Chileans with the necessary knowledge and insight.<sup>147</sup>

A second point of criticism concerned the blatant political sympathies in the film, something critics were at odds with when discussing CPOTC. While for the latter, this criticism was put obliquely, in regards to *The Uprising* there was evident unease about Lilienthal's overt enthusiasm for the Sandinistas. The director's emotional engagement was perceived to threaten a neutral perspective on the subject and destroy its credibility. As Peter Buchka of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* put it:

But the bad thing is that with political enthusiasm he [Peter Lilienthal] has surrendered any artistic objectivity. The passion of a people with whom he sympathises openly, because he grew up there, is not described analytically, but is enthusiastically shared.<sup>148</sup>

Amplifying Buchka's opinion, Gaston Salvatore's critique contains scorching criticism of *The Uprising*. The Chilean author, who resided in West Germany from 1965, wrote an article about the film for the magazine *Spiegel*.<sup>149</sup> Salvatore's criticism of the film accused Lilienthal of abandoning his responsibilities as filmmaker. Because he celebrated the Sandinistas, Salvatore regarded Lilienthal's political analysis as a simplified good-against-bad dichotomy. He dismissed the film as an 'artistic disaster', which neither addressed a European audience nor the Nicaraguan population.<sup>150</sup> Lilienthal had relinquished his aesthetic, political, intellectual, and moral control over *The Uprising*, which implied he had lost his integrity as an artist.

It is debatable whether Salvatore saw in *The Uprising* yet another example that perpetuates Latin America as synonym for war, revolution and political unrest or if the acerbic tone of the text was due to a personal feud with fellow Chilean Skármeta.<sup>151</sup> In any case, Salvatore's and Buchka's comments measure the film against European auteur cinema where filmmakers exercise ultimate command over the content and aesthetics of 'their' film. As critics put it, Lilienthal's sharing the direction of the film with local Nicaraguans was an approach that violated this 'rule'. In structuring, streamlining, highlighting, and editing the 'raw' story that was presented by Nicaraguans, Lilienthal needed to tailor it to the requirements of a European audience. With this, the director could have purged the text from any partiality. In Min-Ha's words, this process is a form

<sup>147</sup> Wolf Donner, "Allendes und Marcelas Sieg," *Die Zeit*, 21 September 1973.

<sup>148</sup> Peter Buchka, "Wenn Atmosphäre die Handlung ersetzt," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6 September 1980.

<sup>149</sup> Gaston Salvatore, "Das Heldenlied des Sandinismus," *Spiegel* 41 (1980).

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> See Siebenmann, "Über das Lateinamerikabild der Deutschen ab 1950" and Amaya, *Screening Cuba. Film Criticism as Political Performance During the Cold War*, 85.

of self-constraint that reflects a Western approach to oral accounts with the aim of eradicating any inherent ambiguity.<sup>152</sup>

I have described Min-Ha's notion of clarity as ideological construct earlier. In view of her arguments, I would like to elaborate on some findings I have made in this chapter. Overall, it is fair to say that most reviews of Lilienthal's films in West Germany reflect an unwillingness to deal with his cinematic language on its own terms. Antonio Skármeta put this succinctly in his retort to Salvatore's grave critique.<sup>153</sup> In an article published by the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, he discredited Salvatore's viewpoint on *The Uprising*, arguing that he isolated the film from its political and aesthetic context. Skármeta defended Lilienthal's filmmaking by saying, 'One's expectations and aspirations are at odds with the sensual and compassionate nature of Lilienthal's images'.<sup>154</sup> The validity of Min-Ha's concept can be extended to the socialist context because in East Germany critics want CPOTC to fit a socialist terminology and since this was not always feasible, the text was labelled as ideologically deficient by some. Hence, reviewers on both sides of the border articulate that the film 'does not fit reality'.

I would argue that Lilienthal's films are effective and powerful because of their in-betweenness. Their double position of being part of a political discourse but outside of the prevailing ideology means first of all that they fit badly into a 'Master's sphere of having'.<sup>155</sup> This enables Lilienthal's cinema to reach audiences across national boundaries. Most importantly, because of their ambiguous perspective, Lilienthal's films challenge realities – assumptions, values and expectations - that the ideologies in East and West were based upon at the time. In this regard, *David's* reception, for example, makes obvious that the Holocaust debate in West Germany was a soliloquy of German voices. The confrontation that CPOTC and *The Uprising* presented to West Germans was based in the films' 'foreign' political subjects being linked to the anachronistic idea of collective political action. The virtue of CPOTC in East Germany was the presentation of a 'socialist' liberation revolution organised by apolitical non-heroes, a struggle which managed without portraying an imperialist enemy.

To conclude, what many critics at the time indicated as an unsettling viewing experience, demonstrates that the films were able to expose spectators to foreign

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<sup>152</sup> Trinh T. Min-ha, *Woman, Native, Other* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 125.

<sup>153</sup> Skármeta, "Verteidigung des *Aufstandes*. Das verunglückte Comeback von Gaston Salvatore in seiner Kritik von Peter Lilienthals Nicaragua-Film."

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Min-ha, "All-Owning Spectatorship," 191.

environments and social milieus. Therefore, audiences now and then are forced to develop questions and narratives which quite often requires putting aside their own beliefs. Naturally, these are high demands on audiences, which means that the interest in Lilienthal's films has never become mainstream. But for individuals willing to engage with his films, the reward is substantial.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions. Concept of a Diasporic Cinema

Lilienthal's problematic relationship with Germany, his eventful biography and the hybrid character of his films led me to call Lilienthal a *homeless* filmmaker. My theoretical backbone is a study of sociologically and culturally interrelated concepts of diaspora, which cultivate the term homelessness. While the idea of diaspora as migrational phenomenon informs current research on diaspora as cultural and discursive practice, a variety of notions of diasporic cinema, such as 'diasporic and migrant cinema', 'cinema of displacement' or 'accented cinema' bring diaspora to film studies.<sup>1</sup> In the following, I will reiterate my findings and answer the questions which this thesis set out with: what is the diasporic character of Lilienthal's cinema? How does this study contribute to or amend existing concepts of diasporic cinema?

I have explored the connections of Lilienthal's cinema to a number of national cultures. Chapter 2 compared and contrasted Lilienthal's films in relation to German national cinema. For this, I charted Lilienthal's biography in relation to his career as a filmmaker. This chapter established a striking difference between Lilienthal and fellow contemporary German filmmakers such as Edgar Reitz or Werner Herzog. As the sons of a generation of perpetrators, their films were set in relation to notions of a collective German past and present, which they located in themes such as *Heimat* and the foreign. Lilienthal's cinema, in contrast, evaded such pursuits. Instead, Lilienthal's films are inspired by works of exilic authors and are committed to political and social questions of the day.

Chapter 3 focussed on two of Lilienthal's films with a Jewish subject, *David* and *Facing the Forests*. My discussion focussed on an exploration of diaspora in the aesthetic and narrative strategies of these films. The films portray the Jewish Diaspora as a culture that thrives on its nomadic character, indicating that an alliance of the Jewish community to a nation state is unproductive if not dangerous. While the nation state requires Jews to settle down, this demand takes away their agility as a spatially independent culture and destroys the essence of Jewishness. In this, the younger generation appears more perceptive to threats of a settled existence. The young protagonists of *David* and *Facing the Forests*, David and Noach, have qualities that reflect the filmmaker's own curious

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<sup>1</sup> See Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*; Berghahn, Daniela, and Claudia Sternberg, *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*; Ghosh and Sarkar, 'The Cinema of Displacement: Towards a Politically Motivated Poetics'.

position on the threshold between the values and beliefs of different cultural groups. Because of their aptitude, they are able to challenge and re-evaluate what appears to be the 'truth'. The films describe them as missionaries, who have the responsibility to protect others less strong, and to initiate social changes. In addition, *David* and *Facing the Forests* address the mythological and religious nature of Zionism. Returning to the Holy Land figures as escapist strategy in *David*, whereas *Facing the Forests* criticises Zionism as Israel's state religion. This suggests that the films value Zionism as utopia rather than performing as part of a national meta-narrative.

While *David* and *Facing the Forest* depict tensions between a peaceful, settled existence that is ultimately unattainable, and the erratic and fractured state of humankind, in other words, homelessness as the greater reality, other Lilienthal films focus on social and political ills aside from a Jewish historical-cultural framework. *La Victoria*, *The Uprising*, *Calm Prevails Over the Country*, *The Autograph*, *Der Radfahrer* and *Camilo* trace Lilienthal's interest for the political and social instabilities in the 1970s and 1980s in Latin America and form the focus of Chapter 4. These cinematic texts evoke Third Cinema philosophy to use film as weapon against social injustice and criticise the claim of hegemonies over the mind and body of individuals.<sup>2</sup> I argue that the films propagate homelessness as a social strategy of inclusion.

Apart from performing film analyses, I looked at the production context of CPOTC and *The Uprising* in order to determine, which role exile and diaspora played in making the films. Accordingly, I mapped CPOTC as an exile film, which describes the fate of its Chilean participants and their motivation to make this film a means of confrontation and resistance to Pinochet's dictatorship. In contrast, I found *The Uprising* to be a diasporic project that witnesses Lilienthal's and Skármeta's awareness for Nicaragua as another political hotspot in Latin America.

Motivated by the question about the validity of Lilienthal's cinema across cultural and political contexts, chapter 5 examined the critical reception of *David*, CPOTC and *The Uprising* in East and West Germany. I discovered that the films and the filmmaker played a vital role in the cultural-political landscapes of East and West Germany at the end of the 1970s and 1980s. Both German states made use of the subject matter Chile and Nicaragua to illustrate their political points of reference. In this regard, film critics in East Germany were bound by the aesthetic and linguistic parameters of socialist realism

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<sup>2</sup> See Solanas and Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema. Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World".

in readings of CPOTC, while West German reviewers enjoyed more autonomy in articulating their opinion about Lilienthal's film. Nevertheless, film criticism in East and West Germany was linked to respective Cold War perspectives. Many reviewers argued that Lilienthal's films handled their subject matters in disagreement with manners and styles that guided related political and cultural discourses. Thus, the ideologically non-aligned nature of Lilienthal's films appear to be valid for spectator across diverse cultural contexts.

### **Diasporic Cinema as a Mirror: National Cinema, Exile, Authorship**

Diasporic cinema, an offshoot of transnational cinema, is based in experiences of displacement, which inform a cross-cultural and participative mode of filmmaking. This endeavour structures the film text. I have come to this definition of diasporic cinema through my examination of Lilienthal's films. Here, I will analyse ideas of national cinema, exile and aspects of authorship and how they inform my notion of diasporic cinema. In this discussion, I will re-evaluate some of the theories that I have previously introduced as a framework for this project.

I have argued that Lilienthal's cinema has the quality of contesting hegemonic aims and strategies. Nevertheless, the relationship of Lilienthal's films to national cinema is complex and at times ambiguous. As Elsaesser has said about national cinema, it is 'a complex negotiation of cultural meanings, of ideological interventions, and the struggle of who speaks to whom, and on whose behalf'.<sup>3</sup> With this in mind, my observation of Lilienthal's film needed to scrutinise the various ways in which his films and their production were indeed embedded in a national framework. In West Germany, for example, the filmmaker utilised resources and was part of institutional frameworks which became central in supporting the New German Cinema movement, such as the television channel ZDF and its programme *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*. On the other side of the Atlantic, Lilienthal has worked with leftist artists such as Alejandro Legaspi and Silvio Caiozzi, who are linked to new waves of socio-critical film in Peru and Chile, respectively. Because of the cooperations with Latin American film personnel, there are a number of parallels between Lilienthal's films in terms of the motivations, aims and aesthetics of the New Latin American cinemas.

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "Holland to Hollywood and Back or: Do We Need a National Cinema?," in *De Onmacht Van Het Grote: Cultuur in Europa*, ed. J.C.H. Blom, J. Th. Leerssen, and P. de Rooy (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1992), 4.

Moreover, the proximity to national cinemas is palpable when examining the critical reception of Lilienthal's films. I highlighted in Chapter 5 how Lilienthal's cinema became part of the national film canon in East and West Germany. An analysis of Lilienthal's films within the Chilean cultural context, an example of which I have mentioned above, would probably corroborate this phenomenon. The Latin American films have come to play a role in contemporary Chile in historicising the changed political circumstances and celebrating the country's turn to democracy. 2003 saw the thirtieth anniversary of Pinochet's violent military strike, and Lilienthal's films were selected to mourn these events: The 7th Film Festival Valparaíso, under the auspices of the Goethe-Institute Santiago, presented a retrospective of Lilienthal's films (including *La Victoria*, *CPOTC*, *Der Radfahrer* and *The Uprising*).<sup>4</sup> These films were selected as part of a series of film, of cultural-historical value to Chile. Likewise, Lilienthal's films became part of an event that took place in 2009. Again, it was the Goethe Institute Santiago, this time in cooperation with the Kinemateca Universidad de Chile, which screened *La Victoria* and *Der Radfahrer* as part of an event that commemorated twenty years of democracy in Chile.<sup>5</sup>

Because the films portray a Chile on the verge of drastic social and political changes, they became important documents of the country's democratic understanding and with this, part of Chilean cultural memory. Lilienthal himself was awarded the Bernardo O'Higgins Medal in 2001, the highest national prize with which the Chilean government honours foreign citizens who have rendered outstanding services to Chile's society, culture or economy.<sup>6</sup>

Does the applicability of Lilienthal's films within discourses of national cinema contest their status as diasporic cinema? I do not think so. Instead, I would suggest that the meaningfulness of Lilienthal's films in a multitude of national contexts is evidence of their cultural mobility. This quality challenges a view of diasporic cinema that sees it situated in liminal social spaces and measures the efficacy of Lilienthal's films. Since they have managed to obtain a space inside of dominant cultures, this site allows them to access a multitude of audiences across social, cultural and national backgrounds. Their textual strategies undermine hegemonic strategies from precisely this position.

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<sup>4</sup> Goethe Institute Press release on a retrospective of Lilienthal's films on the 7th Film Festival in Valparaíso, Santiago de Chile, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Email Conversation with Isabel Mardones of the Goethe-Institute Santiago de Chile on 9 September 2008.

<sup>6</sup> See Antonio Skármeta's speech on this occasion. See Töteberg, *Peter Lilienthal. Befragung eines Nomaden*.

In addition to a discussion of their affiliation to national cinema, I want to clarify the meaning of exile for Lilienthal's films in order to further conceptualise diasporic cinema. The biography of the filmmaker, which I touch upon in Chapter 2, suggests that in sociological terms, exile and diaspora are interconnected. First generations of migrants have a stronger connection to and recollections of a specific geographical place they call home than following generations.<sup>7</sup> The latter often understand home not as lived experience. With this in mind, I have argued that Lilienthal's mother belongs to the category exile, and described the filmmaker himself as an individual with a diasporic worldview.

I have argued that both exile and diaspora figure in Lilienthal's cinema. However, exile and diaspora perforate text and context of Lilienthal's productions in noticeably different ways. In terms of production, I have charted CPOTC and *The Uprising* as performances of exile and diaspora. In CPOTC, exile surfaces as 'coherent subject or author and a more circumscribed, limited conception of place and home'.<sup>8</sup> Diaspora informs *The Uprising* as a cultural practice, which 'aims to account for a hybridity or performativity that troubles such notions of cultural dominance, location and identity'.<sup>9</sup> In this, I disagree with Hamid Naficy, whose work overlooks these ideas as distinct from each other. When he determines that accented cinema, 'define[s] and create[s] a nostalgic, even fetishized, authentic prior culture – before displacement and emigration',<sup>10</sup> he collapses exile and diaspora in a concept of cinema that is primarily based in the perspectives of exilic individuals. Naficy identifies exile in categories such as 'Imagined Homeland' or 'Life in Exile', which champions a cinema of loss and nostalgia. Such categories are unproductive for diasporic cinema, which is less concerned with questions of identity and belonging.

It seems to me that Naficy excessively stresses links between author and text. This is also a problem in other conceptualisations of cinemas with regard to exile and diaspora. In their anthology *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic film in Contemporary Europe*, editors Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg emphasise that their idea of migrant and diasporic cinema forgoes 'an essentialist notion of identity' by including filmmakers who deal with migration and diaspora but have not experienced

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<sup>7</sup> Peters, "Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora. The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon."

<sup>8</sup> Israel, *Outlandish. Writing between Exile and Diaspora*, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 31.

displacement.<sup>11</sup> They nevertheless adhere to the notion, 'that migrant and diasporic filmmakers occupy a specific subject position'.<sup>12</sup> Most of the contributions to this edition assume a relatively uncomplicated notion of authorship that, parallel to Naficy, seek displacement in representational strategies.

Without doubt, an understanding of a cinema of displacement is enhanced by recourse to the filmmaker. One cannot fully avoid the filmmaker as creator of their cinema. My own study approaches Lilienthal's authorship as an important component in making statements about his films, which I draw from my interview with him (and my talking about Lilienthal's films or Lilienthal's cinema makes evident that I view the filmmaker as vital). Moreover, I have ascribed certain themes, tropes and metaphors to the filmmaker's biography, with which I concur with the view that experiences of displacement are manifested in cinematic texts. But more than authoring a film text, Lilienthal's cinema exists as a result of limitations, chances and coincidences. In the progression of my study I have come to understand that the scope of the term *diaspora* goes beyond an approach that explores the filmmaker as ethnic and hybrid individual and a manifestation of this term predominantly in the film text. The results of my study suggest an accentuation of displacement in the vertical process of filmmaking; in production, distribution, exhibition and reception practices. Research on diasporic cinema can be, as Jan Distelmeyer describes it, 'a form of montage, a producing of links, which is not carried by the idea of one, true origin of images and sounds'.<sup>13</sup> As he maintains, this understanding of the term film text as cultural *product* refers to the relation of a film to the condition of its production and distribution, the syncretic character of the medium, its social, political and medial and cultural environment, and the input of a number of people.<sup>14</sup> This plurality of what a text can be offers an access to a variety of approaches which diasporic cinema can take. This will, hopefully, open up new directions for research rather than narrow down the potential of diasporic cinema as a field of study.

Further to my attempt of conceptualising diasporic cinema, I see my case study as part of a transnational cinema. Some scholars accuse transnational cinema of being too broad a category because they associate it with culturally mixed products with no identifiable origin, claiming that 'a transnational film is simply a film whose national and

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<sup>11</sup> Berghahn and Sternberg, *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>13</sup> Distelmeyer, *Autor Macht Geschichte*, 39.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 40.

cultural provenance is no longer discernible because its creation is shaped by the confluence of many different cultural identities'.<sup>15</sup> An often-cited example of this cultural mixing are the so-called 'Euro-Puddings', that is films, which smooth over cultural differences. Despite this, I argue that the umbrella term *transnational* is productive for an access to diasporic cinema because it places emphasis on the vertical process of filmmaking. Will Higbee comprehends transnational cinema as 'the global networks of production, distribution and exhibition with which national cinemas function'.<sup>16</sup> These aspects in Higbee's definition need to be incorporated in research on diasporic cinema, which again highlights what I have suggested above. A placing of diasporic cinema within transnational cinema would illuminate its comprehensive scope.

An understanding of cinema in a transnational framework is a relatively recent phenomenon that came about at the beginning of the 1990s, and which recognises 'the decline of national sovereignty as a regulatory force in global existence'.<sup>17</sup> In the wake of Europe's political opening, companies situated in the former East and West Europe were able to expand their economic operations. This also provided opportunities for international film productions.<sup>18</sup> Hence, caused by the turn of film to be cross-border, transnational ventures, it became less viable to understand film as linked to national-cultural terms. Yet, film has been a transnational venture ever since the beginnings of filmmaking. Recent historical film studies pre-1989 which emanate from a transnational viewpoint, acknowledge this fact. Tim Bergfelder's work about popular cinema in the 1950s and 1960s is such a project that fills a gap left by approaches which have studied film as national phenomenon. As he states, 'the 1950s and 1960 are still relatively under-researched, perhaps precisely because they do not conform in the same way to traditional research agendas in German studies'.<sup>19</sup> In this manner, my transnational cinema study, which is chronologically located in the Cold War era, reflects filmmaking as a venture even across antagonistic ideological frontiers. Given that diaspora is precisely a crossing of borders between hostile beliefs and practices, diasporic cinema studies integrates the potential of a much extended understanding of the practices of transnational filmmaking.

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<sup>15</sup> Berghahn and Sternberg, *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Will Higbee, "Beyond the (Trans-)National: Towards a Cinema of Transvergence in Postcolonial and Diasporic Francophone Cinema(s)," *Studies in French Cinema* 7, no. 2 (2007): 82.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Luisa Rivi, *European Cinema after 1989. Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 39.

<sup>19</sup> Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 6.

### Future Research Projects

There are additional pathways one could take in exploring Lilienthal's films and themes that could be accentuated in more detail. Much of my attention has gone into researching the relationship of Lilienthal's cinema to the politics, culture and populations of Latin America. While Latin America presents crucial points of reference for Lilienthal's cinema, a number of Lilienthal's films have dealt with Jewish issues, which suggests that Lilienthal's philosophy has also been shaped by Jewish religion and culture. Aside from *Facing the Forests* and *David*, which I engaged with in Chapter 2, there are three other Jewish films which need further attention, namely, *Ruby's Dream*, *Das Schweigen des Dichters* and *Wasserman. Der singende Hund*. Hence, subsequent studies might wish to draw attention to the Jewish character of Lilienthal's cinema.

In my text analyses, I have talked about the role of women in a rather cursory manner. Though I have mentioned the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* movement and the function of women in *The Uprising* and CPOTC in Chapter 4, I have not paid much attention to the driving force of female protagonists in other Lilienthal films. Marcela and Carmen Lazo (*La Victoria*), Frau Singer (*David*), Santiago's mother (*Der Radfahrer*) are astute female protagonists, who are more aware of threatening social and political developments than their male counterparts. Juggling domestic duties and communal tasks, their strategies of intervention aim to protect and reunite their immediate social environment; family members, friends and the local community. An analysis of the different women figures in Lilienthal's filmography will reveal that many strategies of social inclusion are anchored in female figures.

I have limited my reception analyses to the two German states. An examination of the critical reception of Lilienthal's films CPOTC and *The Uprising* in Chile or Nicaragua would have provided for a comparative analysis across the European and Latin American contexts. Unfortunately and according to my knowledge, documents for a contemporary film reception in Chile and Nicaragua do not exist. In Nicaragua at the end of the 1970s a national film industry was only just beginning to take shape, thus, film criticism was only in its infancy. On the other hand, Pinochet's totalitarian rule in Chile wiped out socio-critical cinema completely.<sup>20</sup> Evidently, a screening of Lilienthal's films in 1970s Chile was impossible, the more so as Lilienthal's film contained an outright criticism of the

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<sup>20</sup> Orlando Lübbert, "Der Film in den Zeiten des Zorns," in *Grenzüberschreitungen. Eine Reise durch die globale Filmlandschaft*, ed. Erwin Reiss and Siegfried Zielinski (Berlin: Wissenschaftsverlag Volker Spiess, 1992), 193.

regime. Since there was no freedom for film production, distribution and exhibition, there was no critical reception either. As I was able to gather though, the Goethe-Institute in Santiago organised a clandestine screening of *La Victoria*, which happened in the early years of Pinochet's government.<sup>21</sup> Lilienthal and Skarmeta attended it, as well as the father of actress Paula Moya (Marcela), who took her own life shortly after the shooting was finished. For the victims of the regime, the film must have elicited rather emotional responses.

In view of the lack of contemporary responses to the films, a consultation of the recent critical reception is a potential pathway to unlock the meanings of the films in Chile at least retrospectively. An article by journalist Roka Valbuena of Chile's newspaper *La Nación* provides an insight into how natives view Lilienthal's Chile of the 1970s.<sup>22</sup> The article describes a screening of *La Victoria* that took place in Valparaíso as part of the aforementioned retrospective in 2003. Valbuena's article describes the viewing experience of this film as an amalgam of familiar and strange elements.

[T]he Chilean participants speak German (dubbed, with Spanish subtitles). This makes for a quirky impression, especially when a political demonstration was staged by the movement MIR [*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*/ Revolutionary Left Movement, a Chilean party and left-wing guerrilla organisation active from 1965 until 1989]... And there are other curiosities: the role of the professor is played by a young person who has hair – that is Antonio Skarmeta [he is now almost bald]. Later, a leftist hippie appears with wild hair that is Raul Ruiz, and later there is a woman who converses in German. This is Carmen Lazo.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the Chileans who acted in *La Victoria* have become key public figures in Chile's culture and politics after the return of the country to a democratic government in 1989. Valbuena noted that the film stages social problems in an excessive manner. In addition, the critic described the revolutionary pathos of this film as somewhat ludicrous. On the other hand, the article emphasises that the participants of the film are dark-skinned, not tall and white Chileans, which I read as praising the film to address the problems of common people rather than depicting its upper social class. This suggests that in today's Chile, *La Victoria* could be a film that assists in reconstructing the Chilean national past.

Lastly, in this section, I will discuss ways in which the results of this study can inform related research projects in the framework of exile and diaspora. Within a German language context, the cinema of German-Turkish filmmaker Fatih Akin presents its most popular example. Some scholars have appropriated Akin predominantly as an

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Lilienthal in May 2007 (see Appendix A).

<sup>22</sup> Roka Valbuena, "La Victoria de 'Herr' Peter," *La Nación*, 7 September 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Valbuena, "La Victoria de 'Herr' Peter." Carmen Lazo was a Chilean politician and member of the socialist party who died in 2008.

ethnic filmmaker and his films to stage issues of (un-)belonging.<sup>24</sup> The title of Berghahn's paper, 'No Place like Home? Impossibility of Homecoming in the Films of Fatih Akin', already indicates that the scholar maps the cultural hybridity of Akin's films tied to tropes of *Heimat* as their overarching aesthetic feature. Yet, I find that attempts to find ethnicity and identity as consistent components of Akin's oeuvre overemphasise the connection of the film to the filmmaker, which in effect loses sight of the films as cultural products, to use Distelmeyer's term again.

Akin's case presents several parallels to Lilienthal's. While Lilienthal's films cross ideological barriers in Cold War Europe, Akin's films offset dominant voices in debates about integration and multiculturalism in today's reunited Germany. His films have brought the problems of Turkish minority in Germany to the attention of a mass audience and he has raised awareness of the so-called guest workers more in general (see *Solino*, 2002). Like Lilienthal, Akin is an acknowledged filmmaker in Germany, who has a number of film awards under his belt. *Gegen die Wand/Head On* (2004) won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in and was honoured with the European Film Award. *Auf der anderen Seite/The Edge of Heaven* (2007) was praised in Germany and Europe. Aside from prizes won in international festivals, Akin's films have been honoured by a number of German film awards issued by the German government, which probably suggest that the popularity of Akin's films is helpful in perpetuating a positive image of Germany – which echoes the function Lilienthal's films played in the 1970s and 1980s. A related research question could be, how are Akin's films used with German cultural politics? What is their critical reception in and beyond Germany? Who are his actors and what impact do their cross-cultural experiences have for their performances in Akin's films? These are just some of the aspects, which redirect attention from Akin's German-Turkish identity to the text and context of his productions.

Beyond arguing my understanding of the term diasporic cinema to be useful for methodological approaches to other filmmakers and their films, the results of my research could be used for projects which further enquire into the transcultural connections between Germany and Chile, such as the presence and impact of Chilean artists in Germany and Europe. Caused by Pinochet's dictatorial rulership, the haemorrhaging of talent into various Eastern and Western European countries, Cuba, the

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<sup>24</sup> See Daniela Berghahn, "No Place Like Home? Or Impossible Homecomings in the Films of Fatih Akin," *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 4, no. 3 (2007). See also Alev Adil, "Longing and (Un)Belonging: Displacement and Desire in the Cinematic City" (paper presented at the INTER: A European Cultural Studies Conference in Sweden, Norrköping: Sweden, 2007).

US and Canada, paved the way for an immensely productive phase for Chilean culture in exile. The vitality of this culture in countries such as Canada and France has been well documented, yet up until now scholars have largely ignored the influence and artistic activity of Chilean exiles in East and West Germany.

An interesting subject within this framework is manifested by examining the Chilean cultural production with regard to the context of the cultural and ideological conditions of the Cold War between East and West Germany. Previous studies have often focused on the traumatic personal experience of exile as impetus for creative activity, while the wider impact of the political, cultural and social climate of exile cultural production are of additional interest. A unique aspect of the Chilean exile culture in Germany is the fact that it thrived across the political divide. In this, Berlin's prominent position during the Cold War offered a unique social and cultural infrastructure in which Chilean cultural production could flourish. Therefore, Berlin's topography in the 1970s and 1980s most likely provides a key to understanding the hybrid forms of Chilean culture in German exile. In illustrating the adaptation of and resistance to East and West German cultural, social and ideological structures, it would be fruitful to have Berlin serve as 'text' itself. The visual and literary accounts Chileans produced in and about Berlin as an urban space express exile as a personal predicament. Beyond exploring the trauma of exile that structures these texts, one can examine them as statements created by outsiders to see whether they question prevalent traditions, values and themes and in this way, reveal tensions and conflicts hidden within dominant discourses. Such an investigation could further highlight Antonio Skármeta's work in Germany. As I have addressed in my thesis, Skármeta was successful and well-known in both Germanys as a director, scriptwriter, and playwright, and is central to an understanding of Chilean exile culture in Germany.

A few years back, a screening of CPOTC prompted my interest in wanting to know more about the filmmaker Peter Lilienthal and his films. I could not fathom then that CPOTC is part of a much bigger project. Lilienthal's films exist through the passion and talents of the people who are part of his cinematic (ad-)ventures. His is a philosophy of cinema in which the making of the film is a social and cultural practice, and deserves as much attention as the finished work.

The films I have examined in this study were created at a time when Europe was divided by antagonistic belief structures and political actions guided by hostility against and anxiety of the other side. What Lilienthal's films performed within these structures,

was visionary. Disregarding ideological frontiers and thinking in binary terms, the texts contained symbols and metaphors which were valid across ideological divides. Hanns-Georg Rodek notes that through spatial distance Lilienthal's films were able to criticise the West German democratic government and reach over to the other side of the Iron Curtain:

These films were located far from here. Yet, there was a home front, where the right government lobbied for the wrong regime and vice versa: Franz-Josef Strauß [at the time head of the Christian Social Union, the Bavarian sister party to the Christian Democratic Union, and minister president of Bavaria 1989 to 1988] fawned over Pinochet, and Erich Honecker offered asylum to the victims of Pinochet's regime.<sup>25</sup>

Lilienthal's films breathe universal values: compassion, morality and philanthropy. This comes prior to an adherence to other, more abstract values. The films address how ideologies impact the lives of common people, who have to perform roles in these systems as a necessary evil to survive and bring bread to the table. These are performances which depend on social, cultural and political factors. Therefore, Lilienthal approached others as human beings, not as citizens or members of an ethnic or religious group.

With his ideas, Lilienthal has been promoting a film culture in Germany that is broad-minded, experimental, and interdisciplinary. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday in November of 2009 film critics praised Lilienthal's long-standing cultural contributions. Dubbing the filmmaker a 'poet' and a 'realist', they also labelled him a 'nomad of the New German Cinema', a term which catches the ongoing tensions between the filmmaker and Germany and establishes the heart of this thesis.<sup>26</sup> As Lilienthal is a homeless filmmaker, so is his filmmaking and the message of his films: cultural difference is not threatening but a chance to expand your own horizon.

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<sup>25</sup> Hanns-Georg Rodek, "Der Regisseur Peter Lilienthal wird 80," *Die Welt*, 29 November 2009.

<sup>26</sup> See "Peter Lilienthal: Einer der Großen des deutschen Films wird 80," *Mainpost*, 26 November 2009; Britta Gürke, "Der Filmregisseur Peter Lilienthal wird 80 Jahre alt," *Schwäbisches Tagblatt*, 27 November 2009; "Peter Lilienthal: Poet & Realist," *Tagespiegel*, 27 November 2009; Hans-Helmut Prinzler, "Der Traum von den fünf Sekunden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 November 2009; Rodek, "Der Regisseur Peter Lilienthal wird 80."

## Appendix A

### Interview with Peter Lilienthal, 6-7 May 2007 in his Munich home (shortened)

*Woher kommt Ihre Familie, Ihre Großeltern, ich habe gelesen, das Sie Spanisch gesprochen haben, als Sie noch in Berlin lebten?*

Ich lebte in Berlin. Die Großmama konnte ja, die ja auch in Deutschland eigentlich aufgewachsen war, sprach Spanisch, und zwar Sephardisch. Das war sozusagen die Sprache der Zärtlichkeit für sie. Ich weiss nicht, ob sie das so bewusst machte, damit ich zweisprachig aufwachse, aber mit mir sprach sie eben Spanisch. Also ein sehr altmodisches Spanisch, ich glaube das ist z.T. so wie das Spanisch vom Quichotte, vom Cervantes und da das für mich sehr schön klang, und hat sie mit mir dann Spanisch gesprochen und mit meiner Mutter dann Deutsch und Deutsch war die Sprache der Erziehung.

*Gab es zu dem Zeitpunkt noch andere Verwandte in Uruguay?*

Eine Tante. Es war die skandalöse Tante der Familie, die in den letzten Jahren in Berlin einen Botschafter aus Honduras geheiratet hatte und als sie dann zu ihm kam nach Tegucigalpa, stellte sie fest, dass, sie kannte weder Tegucigalpa und Hondura noch die Sitten des Landes, stellte sie fest, dass Ihr Mann, also der Botschafter, so eine Art Harem hatte, also mindestens drei oder vier Frauen, und da sie sowieso das schwarze Schaf der Familie war und wir immer Angst hatten, dass sie unbedingt mit uns leben wollte, was sie dann auch getan hatte, gibt es natürlich sehr kuriose und verrückte Anekdoten mit dieser Tante, also das war die, die sich noch retten konnte und die sehr alt starb. Ich hatte zwei Cousins, die nach San Francisco über China ausgewanderten waren, von denen übrigens einer mit einer Chinesin jetzt verheiratet ist, der andere ist ziemlich früh gestorben, die haben ein Hotel gehabt und eine Reinigung.

Es gab zwei große Familien, die nichtjüdische und die jüdische, die Lilienthal hießen. Die einen kamen aus Schweden, waren Leute der Landwirtschaft und sind nach irgendeiner Hungerepidemie nach Deutschland gekommen, und lebten in Pommern, in der Nähe von Anklam, wo auch der Flieger Lilienthal lebte. *Und das sind auch Verwandte von Ihnen?* Ja, das ist sehr kompliziert, weil es einen getauften Teil gab, es gab ja immer Zeiten, wo sich jüdische Leute taufen lassen haben, und darauf achtet ja wirklich niemand und es

spielte damals nur eine Rolle für sehr Religiöse, dass die dann plötzlich Abtrünnige in der Familie hatten, aber das war angeblich nicht in der Familie von meinen Vorfahren, jedenfalls wussten wir alle dass es da Getaufte gab, die dann für die Nazi wiederum echte Arier waren und der jüdische Teil, der sich nicht taufen ließ, lebte z.T. in Berlin, auch in anderen Städten, den Überblick habe ich überhaupt nicht. Ich weiss, dass es seine sehr große nichtjüdische Familie gibt, die in einem Städtchen lebt, das Lilienthal heisst in der Nähe von Bremen, aber Ahnenforschung war nie meine Sache.

*Können Sie sich noch an die ersten Eindrücke erinnern, die Sie hatten, als Sie nach Montevideo kamen?*

Da ich immer den Traum hatte, irgendwo am Meer zu leben, und sicherlich zu dem Zeitpunkt als ich da ankam, noch nicht wusste, dass dieses Land eigentlich ein sehr europäisches ist, wo jede Art von tropischen Abenteuern gar nicht vorhanden war, also ich dachte es gäbe dort Tiger und Elefanten und so was, nichts davon. Das hat mich aber nicht enttäuscht. Als ich ankam, musste ich in einem dunklen Zimmer ein paar Tage verbringen, weil ich Scharlach bekam und es hing damals damit zusammen dass man damals erstmal im Dunklen sein muss und da durfte ich nicht auf die Straße. Es war genau zu dem Zeitpunkt als der Karneval war, nämlich im Januar/Februar und draussen hörte ich die fantastische Musik, den Samba weil der uruguayische Karneval sehr stark geprägt war vom brasilianischen und ich konnte weder ans Meer noch auf die Straße, das waren meine ersten Eindrücke, das dunkle Zimmer, während draussen die Sonne schien, die Leute tanzten, das Meer rauschte. Wir waren erstmal in einer kleinen Pension, weil noch kein Geld da war und in dem Moment als ich auf die Straße ging, war ich gar nicht mehr zu halten. Dann bin gleich ans Meer gegangen und dann musste ich ja bald in die Schule, weil ich ja Spanisch schon konnte, allerdings ein sehr altmodisches und merkwürdiges wo die Leute mich auslachten. Das hat mich nicht besonders beeindruckt, also ungefähr nach drei Monaten fühlte ich mich zu Hause, mehr als ich mich je zu Hause gefühlt habe. Ich wusste das ist das Land meines Leben und ich war einer von ihnen und war nur überrascht über die Älteren, die dieses Land nicht erkannten. *Die Älteren, Ihre Mutter, Familie?* Ja ja Freunde, Leute mit denen man zusammen kommt an Deutschen, für die waren die Uruguayer nicht die Wilden, aber sie hatten nicht ihre Kultur und das spürt man schon als Kind, diese Art von Verachtung.

*Gab es Probleme zwischen Alleingesessenen und Neuankömmlingen?*

Dieses Land ist ja geprägt durch so eine multikulturelle Gesellschaft, wie z.B. große Emigration aus dem Osten, Italiener, Spanier, aus dem Baltikum. Gleich zu meiner Zeit, als wir ankamen, gab es so was wie 20 verschiedene Radiostationen in anderen Sprachen. Ich habe bei den Menschen auf der Straße nie sowas wie Antisemitismus gehört, das war in Argentinien vorhanden, das ist ja aber eine ganz andere Situation, und wäre auch nicht darauf aufmerksam gewesen, aber zumindest ist das Wort für Juden - judeo – das wurde benutzt für Türken, für alle, die ein bisschen geizig sind und bedeutete, dass man einen Krämerladen hat und geizig ist und war anwendbar praktisch auf alle und insofern hatte das überhaupt nicht die Konnotation, die es für uns hat. Ich war sehr groß und sehr stark und insofern hätte es auch niemanden gegeben hat, der mich so ohne weiteres in Verlegenheit gebracht hätte, eher umgekehrt, ich kann nur sagen, ich fühlte mich so zu Hause, wie ich mich überall zu Hause gefühlt habe bis zu dem Zeitpunkt, - nur die Sorge der Erwachsenen, die in sehr früher Kindheit immer wieder mich auch dann bedrückte, die erzählen einem nicht, wieso, wenn man eine Mama hat, die traurig ist, und die Großmama, die Sorgen hatte, dann spürt man das ja. Die erzählen einem dann auch nicht, wieso, etc. Die waren da [in Uruguay] nicht weg, Wir hatten finanzielle Probleme, sie waren Fremde, ich war nicht fremd. Jetzt, wo ich das sage, muss ich mir überlegen, wo ich mich als fremd empfand. Eigentlich nirgends, weil ich ja immer auf Entdeckungsreise war, da kommt man gar nicht dazu, sich fremd zu fühlen. Wenn ich etwas suche.. und als Kind, da gibt es Foto, da sagt mir die Mama, ich bin morgens losgezogen, mit einem kleinen Eimer und einer Schippe habe da irgendwo rumgebuddelt, sie wusste nie was, wo, kam zurück war ein bisschen schmutzig, wurde in die Badewanne gesteckt. Wenn sie fragte, "Wo warst du?", " habe ich gesagt, "Ich war buddeln ". Ich kann mich nicht erinnern, was ich da gemacht habe, aber es gab für mich nie diese Reflektion, die es für einen Erwachsenen gab zur der Zeit, und da die ganz große Tragödie. Bis 1943 hatten die Leute überhaupt keine Vorstellung von dieser absoluten Katastrophe, die da passierte, die nahmen nur an, dass diese Art der Verfolgung, die sie bis dahin erlebt hatten, schon der Gipfel war. Aber was dann kam, wer sollte sich das vorstellen. Und als man dann alt genug war, sich das vorzustellen, da war es dann für viele im Grunde genommen ein theologischer Bruch, das hatte ganz besonders für die, die so sehr überzeugt waren von der deutschen Kultur, die ihr ganzes Leben als assimilierte Juden und gute Deutsche

verbracht hatten, was weiss ich, die Alten waren im ersten Weltkrieg und hatten einen Orden, naja für die war Hitler ein vorübergehendes Phänomen, und die empfanden das alles als schrecklich, inclusive Nürnberger Gesetze, aber dann der Horror von Auschwitz, wer sollte sich so was vorstellen. Weder in Deutschland, noch in Polen, noch in Uruguay noch irgendwo auf der Welt konnte man das glauben, als die BBC dann plötzlich mit solchen Nachrichten kam, als die polnischen Widerstandsbewegungen ihre Leute da inzwischen hatte, die das vermitteln konnte, da haben das viele Leute als Propaganda deklariert, weil diese Art von Wahnsinn, Verbrechen, das konnte man sich nicht vorstellen. Und deswegen... ich weiss nicht, wie das auf mich gewirkt hat, denn das kam ja nicht von einen Tag auf den anderen, das war eine lange Entwicklung. Zuerst sprach man nicht mehr Deutsch, das war klar.

*Man hat sich von Deutschland distanziert?*

Ja noch nicht mal, das war so beschämend. Und dazu muss man sagen, Uruguay von 1943 an gehörte es zu der Gruppe von südamerikanischen Ländern, die Deutschland den Krieg erklärt haben. Argentinien nicht, Argentinien war auf der Seite Deutschlands. Und ich wollte, da ich ja groß und und fast so blond war wie sie, plötzlich auf keinen Fall als Deutscher erkannt werden. Und denen zu sagen, ja ich bin kein Deutscher sondern Jude und kein Deutscher, was sollen die darunter verstehen? Also haben wir sowieso nicht Deutsch gesprochen, mit der Großmama sprach ich sowieso nicht Deutsch und mit der Mutter, die einigermaßen gut Spanisch sprach, auch nicht und das war wie ein Symbol. Man hatte die Spuren verwischt, man wollte nichts mehr wissen. Das war zu katastrophal das Ganze, um da noch irgendeine Verbindung aufrecht zu erhalten. Das muss ich sagen, das war bei uns Dreien so, aber für viel andere, die hatten natürlich ihren Schiller und Goethe in der Bibliothek, falls sie den überhaupt mitnehmen konnten, das war ihr Land, das war ihre Sprache, das war ihre Kultur, aber doch nicht bei mir. Ich habe nur die Sorgen gespürt der Erwachsenen und habe versucht, sie zu trösten, auf irgendeine Art, die Großmama, wenn ich sie sehr traurig sah. Und dann glaube ich, dass man den Rest seines Lebens oder überhaupt bis heute, sowohl mit Deutschen, mit Juden oder Nichtjuden immer wieder darüber spricht, aber wie über ein Rätsel, das man sowieso nicht lösen kann. *Weil es so unfassbar ist.* Ja, weil es so unfassbar ist, vor allen Dingen, ich habe vorhin gesagt, dass es einen theologischen Bruch gibt, dann, woran soll man dann

glauben, man verliert den Glauben an die Menschen. Da Sie mich gefragt haben, ich von mir sprach, ich war so von Natur aus jemand, der immer was zu tun hatte, und immer was entdecken wollte und dadurch habe ich das anders empfunden als die Erwachsenen.

*Wie war das denn mit Ihrer Mutter, Ihrer Großmutter. Haben sie sich als anders, als Fremde in Uruguay empfunden?*

Die Großmutter, die ja als Lehrerin sowieso nicht praktizierte, hat ein kleines Häuschen gemietet, wo sie zwei Zimmer untervermietete, die haben Ihren Alltag gehabt. Die Mama hatte ja ein Hotel mit meinem Stiefvater, von dem sie sich dann später trennte, und die waren so sehr mit ihrer Existenz beschäftigt, mit dem Alltäglichen und neigten natürlich nicht zu Gesprächen, wie sie vielleicht Historiker oder Soziologen untereinander führen. Da bestimmte der Alltag, der sehr schwierig war für die meisten Emigranten, der war schon schwierig, weil sie wenn sie erwachsen waren, stellten sie Differenzen fest, zwischen dem, was die Leute dort taten, bis hin zum Essen, was weiss ich, ist ja klar, aber man muss sagen, so haben es bis heute alle interpretiert: Es war das großzügigste Land und das europäischste Land, das es überhaupt in Lateinamerika gab zu dem Zeitpunkt und das ist so bis heute geblieben. Nehmen wir mal an, ich stecke Sie in ein Flugzeug und Sie wüssten gar nicht, wo es hin geht und kommen dann irgendwo an und ich sage, wir sind jetzt hier in Nordspanien gelandet und ich zeige Ihnen jetzt hier eine Stadt, die Sie noch nicht kennen. Dann gibt es gar keine Anhaltspunkte, nicht zu glauben, wir sind nicht in Nordspanien, in Italien oder in Deutschland, das könnte auch sein, Strand, nichts Exotisches, Menschen die, ... es gibt ganz wenige Farbige, in Italien gibt es jetzt mehr Farbige als zu dem Zeitpunkt als wir dort ankamen, Indios auch nicht, die sind alle vertrieben worden, zwischen achtzehnhundert und achtzehnhundertfünfzig. Also eigentlich, wenn nicht diese Last gewesen wäre für die Erwachsenen, und ihr Leben in einer Kultur, die sie so geprägt hat wie die deutsche, Ihre Ahnen waren ja Deutsche, wenn das nicht gewesen wäre, dann hätten sie das eigentlich erkennen können, natürlich nie wie ein Kind das einfach Freunde hat, gern am Strand spielt und gerne schwimmt, was bei mir der Fall war, und das dazu noch eine sehr nette Schule hat, die nebenan, neben dem Hotel meiner Mama war, von einem Toilettenfenster konnte ich direkt in mein Klassenfenster schauen, musste nur raus gehen. Das war das Paradies.

*Wer waren die Hotelgäste im Hotel Ihrer Mutter?*

Ein Drittel waren europäische Emigranten, die Dauerpensionäre waren und zwei Drittel kamen aus Argentinien in der Saison, und die Gäste, die das ganze Jahr über blieben.

*Sind da Freundschaften geschlossen worden? Waren das die Leute, mit denen Ihre Mutter zu tun hatte?*

Es liegt nahe, das Sie sehr viel zusammenkam mit deutschen Emigranten. Es gab im Hotel einen kleinen Bridgeclub, meine Mama spielte sehr gut Bridge. Da tauchten dann so Damen und Herren auf, die so um die Vierzig, Fünzig waren und die dann am Abend, es gab sehr große Dirigenten, die zu dem Zeitpunkt nach Argentinien und Uruguay kamen, die hörten dann die Übertragung vom Kolon, von was weiss ich, von irgendeiner Oper, machten dann einen Halbkreis, was ich sehr merkwürdig fand und diskutierten über das Übliche, was so Erwachsene tun, wenn sie mal ein besseres Leben hatten, "Stell die vor, unser Haus war so und so, wir hatten einen ganz großen Garten und ein Steinway und zwei Hunde und hier, was hat man hier". Also nicht bei allen, aber es gab natürlich Leute, die nur von Nostalgie lebten.

*Also Sie beziehen sich jetzt darauf, dass Leute von Erinnerungen leben an den Ort, von dem sie kamen, aber eigentlich nicht wirklich da sind, wo sie sind.*

Ich habe Ihnen ja erzählt, dass ich unter Emigranten aufgewachsen bin, was ja auch meine Mama war, Freunde, die waren zum Teil sehr nostalgisch und haben mich erstaunt und manchmal gelangweilt. Nostalgische Menschen sind ja ein bisschen langweilig. Entweder sind es Leute, die sich auf die Zukunft vorbereiten, was vorhaben, oder sind solche, die nur von der Vergangenheit leben, die die Vergangenheit idealisieren oder ganz schrecklich empfinden. Also mir liegen mehr Menschen, die sich Gedanken machen über die Zukunft und vielleicht ist das ungerecht. Ich selbst bin nicht nostalgisch, weitgehend, so dass ich mich eigentlich für meine Vergangenheit überhaupt nicht interessiere. Ich guck mir auch nicht meine Filme an und bin beschäftigt mit dem bisschen Leben, was mir noch bleibt und rede gern mit Menschen, die ganz ähnlich sind, also die mit mir zusammen nachdenken, was kann man tun innerhalb dieser Welt, wo es soviel Gemetzel gibt und wo ein paar Leute vielleicht auf unsere Freundschaft angewiesen sind. Und das ist vielleicht das, was mich trennt oft von dem Grundgedanken der sesshaften jüdischen

Kultur, die Gemeinden, die sich sehr auf die Vergangenheit ihrer Arbeit beziehen, jetzt wieder das Museum, das hier gegründet wurde in München. Während ich im Gespräch mit diesen Leuten oft Fragen stelle, was können wir für andere tun. Denn wenn wir etwas für die Millionen von ermordeten Menschen tun können, das klingt jetzt komisch, dann nehme ich zumindest diese Botschaft auf, denkt an die anderen, tut für sie was, denn euch geht es ja jetzt gut. Da wird nicht verstanden, wird als Utopie verstanden, man macht es einfach nicht.

*Hatten Sie zur jüdischen Gemeinde in Uruguay Kontakt?*

Nein, also es ist einfach so, dass ich sowieso nicht dazu neigte, in die Synagoge zu gehen, irgendeine Ritualisierung, das lag mir nicht. Ich wollte nicht, ich bin dann von allein, weil Freunde, die Bar Mitzwah machen wollten, da bin ich da mal mitgegangen und habe gedacht, es ist wie beim Geburtstag, da bekommt man dann Geschenke, das lohnt sich eigentlich, das sollte ich mal versuchen, ob ich das auch mache. Beim zweiten oder dritten Unterricht bekam ich einen Lachkrampf, weil dieser komische Rabbiner, das war ein Hebräisch-Lehrer, der kam mir sehr komisch vor, da wurde ich rausgeschmissen, und das wars.

*Sie sind also nicht religiös aufgewachsen?*

Also ich muss Sie enttäuschen, ich bin überhaupt nicht erzogen worden und schon gar nicht in dieser Hinsicht. Wir feierten Weihnachten, wir feierten Hanukkah, wir feierten Pessach, was weiss ich, wie die Feste alle hießen. Und das war immer schön, man bekam Geschenke. Ich wusste, dass der Chauffeur von meinem Großpapa den Weihnachtsmann spielte, da wäre ich gar nicht auf die Idee gekommen, dass es ein echter Weihnachtsmann ist. [...] Und dann wusste ich, mich interessierte das Jüdischsein, weil ich wusste, die sind verfolgt, die sind in die Minderheit, das war es noch, warum es mich interessierte. Es war eine Solidarität, wie man sie haben kann, da wird jetzt vielleicht komisch klingen, für einen drittklassigen Fußballclub, wo man sagt, die Armen, die immer verlieren, die werden immer ausgepiffen, immer ausgebuht, so war ich einfach veranlagt, wenn es Schwächere gab, dann war ich für sie. Insofern waren für mich die jüdischen Menschen nicht die Schwächeren, aber die Verfolgten, und die Mißachteten, und die Mißhandelten

und so weiter und so weiter. Deshalb war mein Jüdischsein einfach ein Akt der Solidarität.

*Wer waren Ihre Vorbilder, wer hat sie geprägt?*

Oh, da muss ich mal überlegen, das verändert sich ja. Sie können sich vorstellen, dass man mich das öfter mal gefragt hat. Ich bin mir nicht so ganz sicher, weil es so verschiedene Einflüsse gibt. Es ist ja nicht nur immer eine Person. Ich spreche mal von einer Person, die mich geprägt hat. Das war ein Kunde in diesem Hotel, es war ein spanischer Schriftsteller, der bei Garcia Lorca eine Zeitlang war, zusammen mit seinem Puppentheater und der dann wie viele durch den Krieg, die Auseinandersetzung mit Franco das Land verlassen hat und erst nach Argentinien ging, und dann nach Uruguay kam. Und der saß im Hof und schrieb an einer Novelle. Jetzt vor kurzem gab es übrigens in Spanien, das hörte ich von einem Freund, von Skármeta, gab es eine Versammlung von Literaten, die ihn feierten, wie der 100. Geburtstag oder so was. Der schrieb an einem autobiographischen Roman, der hieß "Die Kathedrale". Ich sah ihn jeden Morgen wenn das Wetter einigermaßen gut war, dort sitzen. Natürlich habe ich mich dann mit ihm unterhalten und ihn gefragt, was er da macht, und der hatte die Fähigkeit, mir zu erklären, was Literatur ist. Der hiess Eduardo Blanco Amor, also allein der Name ist sehr schön, die weiße Liebe und war der erste, der mir erklären konnte, was eine Metapher ist. Also, wie ich vorhin sagte, wir lebten ja da in der Nähe vom Meer und wir gingen runter die Straße ging etwas bergab und dann rezitierte er Gedichte von Garcia Lorca und von irgendjemand und ich fand es ein bisschen komisch, lachte, dachte wie affektiert. Aber dann dachte ich, das ist irgendwi etwas Höheres, die Vergleiche, das hat mich immer interessiert, also eine Metapher. Ich hab ihn zwar erst ausgelacht, aber dann merkte ich, das ist was Schönes, die Metapher....Ich habe das schon mal jemandem erzählt... Und weil ich da arbeiten musste im Hotel, brachte ich ihm morgens das Frühstück. Das war ein sehr großer Raum, den er hatte, nicht so groß wie dieser hier insgesamt, aber so die Hälfte. Es war ein sehr altes Haus, dieses Hotel, so um die Jahrhundertwende gebaut, hatte große Fenster, aber es gab einen dunklen Teil von seinem Raum, und ich brachte ihm Frühstück und dann zeigte er irgendwo hin und sagte, "Schau mal, das sitzt ein Apoll." Ich guckte und sah irgendeinen Knaben, den er da mitgebracht hatte vom Strand, Matrose, ein Fischer oder was weiss ich, bärtig und so,

dachte, das ist ja schrecklich, mit was für einem Typ lässt der sich ein. Und dann sprach er und sagte also, "Du weißt nicht, was ein Apoll ist, das ist ein griechischer Gott ". Das waren unsere Gespräche. [...]

Ja also was hat mich geprägt? So ein Schriftsteller, was Kunst betrifft, aber eigentlich das Küchenpersonal, das interessierte mich sehr, weil die immer schöne Geschichten hatten, und ganz im Gegensatz zu den Freunden und Kunden meiner Mama in meinen Augen was Echtes hatten. Ich komme jetzt bewusst auf dieses Wort "echt ". Es ging zwar manchmal sehr, sehr heftig zu, die rissen sich an den Haaren, und schrien und tobten und machten alles mögliche, aber es war für mich immer ein Ereignis. Es war für mich die Filmschule, diese Küche, und der russische Koch, den wir hatten. Der war auch ein Mytomane, genauso wie ...?? Ich weiss nicht, am Wochenende gab es ja was einigermaßen Originelles, aber von Montag an gab es nur das Aufwärmen von dem Essen, das ist übriggeblieben ist, und das bekam immer einen ganz phantastischen Namen, also wirklich ganz exotische Namen, so dass irgendeine Misere, die empfand man als was ganz Besonderes, weil sie französische Namen hatte, das das ist ja auch eine Schule.

*Ihr Interesse, ihre Sensibilität für Themen wie Humanität und Solidarität, ist das in den Erlebnissen ihrer Kindheit begründet, den Menschen, mit denen Sie aufgewachsen sind?*

Also ich sagte ja schon vorhin, es ist weniger, was die Amerikaner *compassion* nennen. Es ist mehr Interesse, ich war immer mehr interessiert an den Entmachteten, an den Armen, an den Arbeitenden, an den simplen Leuten, nennen wir es mal so, als an den anderen. Das waren meine Akteure. Ob das meine Vorbilder... ich empfand die als echt, und ich fand, das man ihnen helfen muss, denn ich hatte immer das Gefühl, mehr zu besitzen als sie, also ich meine es nicht nur im materiellen. In der Küche.. Ich glaube die Hälfte konnte nicht lesen und schreiben und manchen Frauen habe ich dann ein bisschen Schreiben beigebracht, und das fand ich dann schön, also für mich schön. Ich habe ihnen was vorgelesen, eine wollte mich verführen, das war zwar alles kein Drama, und dann habe ich wieder jemanden verführt.. Also es gab chaotische Verhältnisse, aber es war lebendig, sehr lebendig. Es gab keinen Tag, den ich als langweilig empfand. Ich habe sehr früh dann ein bisschen Musik gemacht, habe Cello studiert, also erst Geige und dann Cello. Dann ging ich eine Zeitlang ins Abendgymnasium, wo man mit Erwachsenen zusammen saß. Da hatte mich mit einem Offizier und einer Hebamme angefreundet, die

mir von ihrem Leben erzählte. Das war schon ein Teil von meiner Schule, die Erzählungen von diesem Leuten, die hatten keine Komplexe, die haben mir alles erzählt, was ich wissen wollte. Wir hatten dann später noch eine Frau, als meine Mama sich trennte, und alleine mit mir wohnte, die kam zu uns, um sauberzumachen. Das war eine Halbschwarze, also eine Farbige, aber nicht ganz dunkel. Alaides hiess sie, und die hatte acht Schwestern, da wurde ich bei denen eingeladen ab und zu und wurde wie ein König empfangen, zum Essen. Eine von den Schwestern spielte Geige und nach dem Essen hatte die extra für mich Geige gespielt, und das war natürlich schrecklich, die kratzte, aber die Art, wie sie das machten für mich und wie sie sich freuten, dass ich sie besuche und wie ich mich wiederum über sie gefreut habe und auch die Mama, die am Tischende saß und ziemlich alt war, und Alaides, die wirklich ein einmaliges Wesen war. Der Karneval ist dort sehr lange, zwischen sechs bis acht Wochen und sie lebte das ganze Jahr, um während dieses Karnivals zu verschwinden. Dass heist, sie hat sich da Kleider gemacht und man wusste nicht mehr, wo sie ist. Sie feierte zwei Monate. Sie kam dann erschöpft wieder zurück, wir wussten genau, diese Zeit ist sie nicht mehr bei uns, das ist ihr Leben, einmal im Jahr Karnival zu feiern. Und dann erzählte sie, wo sie getanzt hat und wo sie hinging, und... Dann wurde ich eingeladen zu ihrem Geburtstag, das war auch ein Tumult, sie wohnte in der Nähe von einem Friedhof. Das Haus hatte zwei Etagen, aber die obere Etage, die hatte Balken aber die waren nicht so ganz fest und bei ihrem Geburtstag waren so viele Menschen da, dass die Balken durchhingen, da bestand die Gefahr, dass alles zusammenbricht und da das sehr laut zuing und mit viel Musik und Tanz das hat auch etwas Unvergessliches an Feiern. Deswegen habe ich immer so große Abneigung gegenüber all diesen sogenannten kultivierten Cocktails, Filmfestivals, Zusammenkünften von Leuten der Branche. Das ist für mich völlig fremd, kein Elefant würde mich dazu bringen, da mitzumachen.

*Würden Sie sagen, dass Sie eine glückliche Kindheit hatten?*

Also mit der Ausnahme von der Begebenheit mit meinem Stiefvater, den ich umbringen wollte, nebenbei bemerkt, ich habs nicht getan, sonst würde ich nicht hier sitzen, nehme ich an, habe ich eigentlich eine sehr glückliche Kindheit gehabt. Also, was man so allgemein..., die Menschen, die das sagen, glückliche Kindheit natürlich... in der Adoleszenz: Ich war nicht der typische Jugendliche, der Liebeskummer hat, und damit wirklich so eine Art Werther-Vorbild ist, ne, ich war eigentlich, ich war immer unterwegs, ich machte was. Ich hatte sicherlich auch mal eine Verliebtheit, das funktionierte dann nicht, aber insgesamt war ich schon glücklich. Nein, anders gesagt, ich war privilegiert, ich empfand mich als privilegiert, jetzt, und damals hätte ich es nicht so ausgedrückt, aber wenn mich jemand gefragt hätte, "Bist du glücklich? ", ich glaube ich hätte gesagt "ja", natürlich - heute. Ob ich es morgen bin, weiss ich nicht.

*Warum haben Sie sich entschieden, nach Deutschland, gerade nach Deutschland zurückzukehren?*

Also es war nicht die Absicht, irgendwohin zurückzukehren, sondern ich wollte Gebrauch machen für ein Stipendium, das ich hatte, allerdings nicht für Deutschland, sondern für Paris, für das Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques und da war ich kurz, zwei drei Monate, fand für mich, dass es zuviel Theorie ist und mein Französisch sehr schlecht war. Zur selben Zeit war meine Großmutter in Berlin, die alleine war, die in Behandlung war, ein Herzleiden und ich hab sie besucht. Bei der Gelegenheit habe ich, was ganz in der Nähe war, die Hochschule der Künste kennengelernt, und dort einen sehr ungewöhnlichen Professor. Allerdings hatte der nichts mit Fotografie oder Film zu tun, sondern mit Bildhauerei und das war Professor Uhlmann. Und ich hatte ein paar Skizzen mit, weil ich auch so nebenbei ein bisschen Design machte, zeichnete und der sah das und sagte, "Naja, warum kommst du nicht zu uns? ". Er war selbst ein sehr politisch engagierter Mann und wir verstanden uns fantastisch, waren beide Schütze, am selben Tag geboren, er viel älter als ich und ich lernte seine Werkstatt kennen und war mir plötzlich sicher, dass, egal, was wir gemeinsam machen, dass ich mich da einschreiben soll. Also habe ich die Grundlehre da gemacht, mit allem möglichen, was dazu gehört, zeichnen, und zum selben Zeitpunkt gab es in Berlin in der Hochschule der Künste, nicht zu verwechseln mit meiner Akademie der Künste, die ja keine Lehrakademie ist, zur selben Zeit gab es eine Werkstatt für experimentelle Fotografie und

der Lehrer wiederum der experimentellen Fotografie sagte: Es gibt hier keine Filmschule in Berlin, aber du machst hier einfach deine Versuche und machst das, was dir richtig erscheint und wir rechnen das sozusagen an zum Studium. Da habe ich dann zwei Jahre gemacht bis jemand vom Südwestfunk einen Kurzfilm von mir entdeckte, der im Programm lief und zwar war das die Geschichte von einem Leierkastenmann. Jemand hat vor kurzem das ausgegraben, eine Annonce oder eine Kritik und das war interessant, weil dieser Leierkastenmann gleichzeitig Filmvorführer war und auf der Straße war und das für mich eine sehr neue Erfahrung also mit einem Leierkastenmann, der viel von Film versteht. Deshalb bin ich erstmal zweieinhalb Jahre geblieben, immer mit der Absicht, zurückzukehren nach Uruguay, aber nun war inzwischen meine Mutter auch gekommen wegen meiner Großmutter und sie wollte mich sozusagen ablösen, damit einer von uns dort ist. Und jetzt hatte ich, weil ich für mein Studium in Uruguay und für meine Mutter etwas Geld für mich dazuverdient hatte, war ich angestellt in einer Bank, Transnational City Bank of New York und dann in der Bank Hollandaise, einer holländischen Bank. Das war in Montevideo, ja ja natürlich nicht in Deutschland und da hatte ich noch einen Vertrag offen mit einem sehr großzügigen Urlaub und ich wusste, dass ich noch einmal ein Jahr zurückgehen muss. Also bin ich nochmal ein Jahr zurückgegangen, um dann definitiv in die Hochschule zu kommen für mein letztes Jahr und anschließend zum Südwestfunk zu gehen, der mit mir sprach und mir angeboten hat, Regieassistent zu werden. Und insofern war das Verhältnis zu Deutschland und ich will da gar nicht weit ausholen, für mich kam überhaupt nie in Frage, in Deutschland zu bleiben, so wie ich es dann später gemacht habe, aber jetzt nicht aus irgendeinem Gefühl der Unsicherheit oder einem Trauma. Es war einfach so, dass ich eine sehr viel stärkere Beziehung hatte zu hispanischen Ländern, Frankreich, Italien und mir insofern eine ständige Arbeit in Deutschland nicht vorstellen konnte, aber das Angebot vom Südwestfunk war so sympathisch und ich wusste überhaupt nicht, wo Baden-Baden ist. Ich bin dahin gekommen, hatte ein Gespräch vielleicht von einer Stunde mit einem sympathischen Herrn, es war Ludwig Krämer, der eigentlich Hörspielleiter war und der sagte, "Ja, wann kannst du kommen," und einen Monat später war ich da. Habe meine Mutter mitgenommen, die eigentlich kam, um meine Großmutter abzulösen, die dann starb und insofern waren wir dann allein. Und meine Mutter, die hatte sich entschieden, da zu sein, wo ich bin und ich hatte mich entschieden, sie möglichst bald wieder zurückzubringen nach Uruguay oder nach Italien oder sonstwohin, auf jeden Fall in den Süden. Aber die Arbeit wurde zunehmend interessanter, und Baden-Baden ist eigentlich

eine Enklave. Ich kann natürlich sagen, Baden-Baden gehört zu Deutschland, aber was ich dann kennenlernte, ja war in meiner Studienzeit Berlin. Die Stadt hatte damals noch viele Ruinen und ich glaube, ich hatte mich damals, vom ersten Tag, als ich nach Berlin kam, so wie Robinson Crusoe gefühlt. Weil wir Entdeckungsreisen machen mussten. Ich hatte keine Beziehungen zu Menschen, die älter sind als fünfundzwanzig oder so was, weil dann doch immer wieder mal das Gefühl war, naja, vielleicht hatten die irgendeine Verbindung zu den Nazis. Aber es war nicht, und mit diesem Wort Rückkehr ist natürlich verbunden, dass Emigranten gemacht haben, die aus Entschädigungsgründen, die aus Sehnsucht oder Nostalgie oder Zugehörigkeit zur deutschen Kultur, dann nach Deutschland kamen. Da war bei mir überhaupt nicht so. Da war ein Studium, das mich interessierte und später ein Arbeitsplatz. Während dieser Zeit, ich wusste nicht, wieviele Menschen mich gefragt haben, "Warum bist du hier in Deutschland? ". Und die Antwort war immer, "Ja, weil ich hier eine Arbeit habe, weil ich immer mehr Freunde habe und freundliche Leute und weil mich dieser Prozess, der jetzt in Deutschland passiert, ganz besonders interessiert ". Nirgends auf der Welt könnte ich soviel erfahren, und ich muss sagen, bis heute täglich, über die Verfolgung der Juden, die Entwicklung des Nationalsozialismus und das Gewissen der Deutschen, der neuen Generation und das habe ich auf meine Art eigentlich die ganze Zeit verfolgt. Kompliziert wurde es, wenn mich israelische Freunde fragten, "Ja, warum bist du in Deutschland? ". Damit ist dann verbunden so ein Gefühl, er ist schon mal gescheitert, dieser jüdische Kosmopolitismus, du bist wieder einer, der sagt, ich will überall sein und nirgends und meine Heimat ist da, wo meine Freunde sind, oder was weiss ich wo meine Katze lebt, irgendeine Ausrede dieser Art. Da wird es dann kompliziert, das zu erklären, weil sie von einem nationalen Stolz ergriffen sind oder von einem Zionismus, damit hatte ich nie etwas zu tun. Also man muss sich immer rechtfertigen. Also das ist die Antwort auf Ihre Frage, eine ständig wechselnde Form von Rechtfertigung, wo man sich selbst nicht unbedingt von etwas überzeugen will oder muss, sondern nochmal darüber nachdenkt, was ist eigentlich die Möglichkeit, dass hier diese Katastrophe, von der wir auch gestern gesprochen haben, das hier mit Leuten zu besprechen. Ich wusste niemand in Uruguay, der an dieser Situation besonders interessiert ist, der weiss das, aber das ist auf eine Art und Weise entfernt von den Dingen und natürlich spricht man dann die Leute nicht an und wie Sie wissen, in jüdischen Familien gab es so eine Distanz, erst dreißig Jahre später haben mal die Leute mit ihren Kindern darüber gesprochen und in Deutschland war es ja interessant, weil mich immer die Situation der Söhne mit den Vätern interessierten. Hier

haben die Söhne keine Auskunft von den Vätern bekommen, also von denen, die in irgendeiner Weise kompromittiert waren mit den Nazis und weil ich von Israel sprach, oder auch von den jüdischen Menschen in Deutschland, passierte dasselbe mit ihren Söhnen, sie sprachen nicht mit ihnen aus den verschiedensten Gründen, es gab vielleicht keine Gemeinsamkeit, Scham, Scham darüber, was passiert ist, es gab diesen theologischen Bruch, von dem ich gestern sprach. Und das alles habe ich ein bisschen wie und da komme ich zurück darauf, wovon wir gestern sprachen, was vielleicht mit meinem Charakter zu tun hat, das habe ich so ein bisschen wie ein Ethnologe, Religionsforscher und ein Abenteurer betrachtet.

*Sehen Sie sich selbst als deutschen Regisseur?*

Ich wäre überhaupt nicht auf die Idee gekommen, mich als deutschen Regisseur zu sehen, ich habe überhaupt keine Nationalität als Regisseur. Natürlich, auf die Frage, wo ich geboren wurde, sage ich "Berlin ". Also infolgedessen bin ich Deutscher, aber deutscher Regisseur, das hat eine ganz andere Konnotation. Denn beispielsweise habe ich nicht am Oberhausener Manifest teilgenommen, gehöre nicht zur Generation von Kluge und Reitz, also ich gehöre zwar zu der Generation, aber ich habe nicht die Erfahrungen gemacht, die sie gemacht haben, letzten Endes bin ich auch nicht in Deutschland aufgewachsen was ganz entscheidend ist, um sich als deutschen Regisseur, wie es der Edgar Reitz tut, zu definieren. Ich weiss nicht, wie ich mich bezeichnen würde, aber höchstwahrscheinlich, wenn es sowas geben würde, als staatenloser Regisseur. Im juristischen Sinn stimmt das nicht, aber im metaphorischen schon.

*Sie haben sicher eine ganz ambivalente Beziehung zu dem Begriff Heimat. Gibt es eine Art Heimat für Sie?*

Wir haben sicher einiges gelesen über diesen Drang einiger Regisseure in Deutschland, den Begriff Heimat zu definieren. Und diese ganze Auseinandersetzung in den Zeitungen, was ist Heimat, wie sehen die Deutschen Ihre Heimat, und so weiter. Ich hab daran nicht teilgenommen, weil ich erstens diese Heimat nicht brauchte, nicht suchte. Natürlich kann ich sagen, dass, weil ich dort aufgewachsen bin, zu Uruguay... Aber ich würde nie auf die Idee kommen, von dem Begriff Heimat zu sprechen. Homeland, das klingt schon besser, ist auch eine Frage der Musik. Aber wo ist es, wo man sich

wohlfühlt? Mit den Freunden irgendwo auf der Welt und diskutiert oder ich in irgendeinem Dorf in Italien, wo ich niemand kenne, wo ich die Leute beobachte, die Glocken läuten, ich sehe die Natur, rieche Italien, das ist auch eine Heimat. Für eine Woche, für einen Monat, mehr nicht. Was würden Sie von mir denken, wenn ich sage, nachdem wir uns ein bisschen kennen, ja, Deutschland ist meine Heimat. Da würden Sie sagen, "Wie bitte? Das steht ja im Widerspruch zu allem, was Sie bisher gesagt haben und was ich vermute". Aber ich bin auch nicht besonders stolz darauf, heimatlos zu sein in dem Sinne von der Heimat, die andere behaupten oder sehen. Und die Studenten, mit denen ich zusammenkomme, ich wäre nie auf die Idee gekommen, sie zu fragen, wo ist Ihre Heimat. Aber die kamen sehr häufig aus der Provinz, oder zum Beispiel aus Ostdeutschland und waren froh, dass sie woanders waren. Also Heimat ist immer irgendein Ort woanders, den man nicht kennt, den man idealisiert und der besseres Essen hat, eine schönere Wohnung, irgendwie einen Frühling, ja wo ist das schon.

*Wohin fühlen Sie sich zugehörig, zu den Künstlern...? Gibt es irgendeine Art Zugehörigkeit?*

Wenn man das auf das praktische reduziert, dann kann ich sagen, mich interessieren in Gesprächen besonders Architekten. Und ich bewundere Architekten. Und ich fühle mich wohler mit Architekten als mit Filmemachern oder mit Schriftstellern, und finde viele Gemeinsamkeiten. Da gibt es Begriffe wie Funktionalität, und eine Art von Lebensgefühl, also, ich spreche jetzt von denen, die ich kennengelernt habe und die mir besonders sympathisch sind, also nehmen wir mal an, Libeskind, der schon seit Jahren keine Zeit mehr hat, mit mir zusammenzukommen, weil er in New York ist oder nur im Flugzeug, wie seine Frau sagt, aber da findet man unendlich viele Gemeinsamkeiten. Er ist jemand, der sich sehr viel mit Musik beschäftigt hat und ein sehr reicher Mensch ist, der kabbalistisch denkt, der Dinge zusammenbringt, dass niemand darauf kommt, dass sie zusammengehören. Dann interessieren mich Lehrer sehr und Ärzte. Und da haben wir uns anscheinend gegenseitig immer viel zu erzählen, also mit denen fühle ich mich wohl. Und da sie von Zugehörigkeit sprechen, alle Leute, die bereit sind, mir etwas zu erzählen, über ihr Leben und die gastfreundlich sind, von denen habe ich selber viele Geschenke bekommen, im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes, weil sie sich mir anvertrauen, und ich kann nicht sagen, ich gehöre zu ihnen, jetzt zum Beispiel die mexikanischen Familien in San Diego [in order to prepare the documentary *Camilo*], aber als ich bei ihnen war,

dachte ich, das ist wie meine große internationale Familie, zu der ich gehöre, so wie Sie manchmal mit einem Fremden zusammenkommen und denken, "Ach, eigentlich glaube ich, den schon mein ganzes Leben zu kennen und fühle eine Zugehörigkeit."

*Wo sind Ihre Freunde, wo leben sie, sind sie überall verstreut, oder sind sie in Lateinamerika. In anderen Worten: Was ist Ihr Netzwerk?*

Also das hat ja was mit Nähe und Distanz zu tun, aber die meisten sind im Ausland und einige sehr gute in Deutschland und dann ganz besonders drei Frauen, die mit mir gearbeitet haben und denen ich mich sehr nahe fühle. Die sind in Deutschland, und eine, meine Assistentin war jetzt wieder mit mir zusammen in den USA und Nicaragua, aber ich vermisste die Möglichkeit, die beispielsweise französische Kollegen haben. In Paris, da kommt man in einem Café zusammen mit allen Menschen, die einem am Herzen liegen. Die sind auch manchmal weit weg, aber die kommen wieder zurück. Das kann ich nicht in Deutschland so empfinden und wenn ich in New York bin, dann leide ich darunter, dass die Leute immer weniger Zeit haben, wirklich getrieben sind von Unruhe und Angst, was weiss ich, und dann hängt es ja auch zusammen mit..., mit Gleichaltrigen bin ich sowieso selten zusammen, meist mit sehr viel Jüngeren und die Zeit in der Akademie der Künste, wo ich ja Direktor der Abteilung Film und Medienkunst war, die war kein Ersatz für eine Familie. Ich hatte mehr Gespräche als je zuvor und danach, aber das vermisste ich... Söhne oder Töchter, Großmütter, die ich in meinem Alter nicht mehr haben kann, Leute, die sich Zeit nehmen, um ein Thema eine Woche lang mit mir zu diskutieren. Ja, das kann ich nicht haben, aber deswegen bin ich auch nicht todtraurig und das nehme ich so in Kauf. Die ist sehr verstreut, die Familie und beinahe unerreichbar und manchmal durch diese schrecklichen Geschichten wie Cellphone, Handy, Email, und so weiter. Das ist alles kein Ersatz, denn es kommt ja auch selten vor, dass sich jemand soviel Zeit nimmt wie Sie, um mir so schöne Fragen zu stellen, ansonsten kommt man nicht dazu, also sich auszusprechen oder sich anzusprechen.

*Ist es Zufall, dass Sie zum Film gekommen sind, oder denken Sie, das ist die richtige Ausdrucksform für Sie, um Ihre Botschaft zu übermitteln, oder sich auszudrücken?*

Ja, also wie bin ich dazu gekommen? Logischerweise hat jemand, der beispielsweise dreizehn oder vierzehn ist, der hat keine Ahnung von der Branche, von der Arbeit an sich, der geht ins Kino, und denkt sich, das ist schön, da sind Schauspieler, dann sagt er,

"Möchte ich Schauspieler werden oder möchte ich das sein, was man mir erklärt hat, was jemand macht, der zwar nicht sichtbar ist, aber der das Ganze zusammen hält, organisiert und der verantwortlich ist". Das wiederum hat etwas zu tun mit dem Naturell, das man hat, also wenn ich - ich habe wenig gespielt als Kind, aber ich habe das Spiel beobachtet, und dann versucht, den anderen zu sagen, wie sie zu spielen haben. Also ich verstand mich mehr als Organisator als als Mitspieler *Als Drahtzieher?* Ja so ungefähr (lacht). Es gab einen guten Theaterregisseur, der heisst Tabori, Kennen Sie den? Der hat im literarischen Kolloquium Übungen gemacht in Berlin mit Schauspielern und Bühnenbildnern, also jungen Bühnenbildnern, Theaterübungen, die waren auf einer Wiese, und ich sah es von weitem, und er hatte mich wiederum gesehen, weil ich im Schneiderraum war da im literarischen Kolloquium, und dann sagte er, komm doch zu uns, wenn du Lust hast, dann mach mit und ich sah, dass sie sich so, das ist eins von diesen Übungen im Actorstudio, auch zusammengetan hatten. Dann sagte er: "Ich möchte jetzt, dass ihr eure Hände in die Luft streckt und euch dann berührt und dann dieses Fluidum erfasst von dem anderen, aber ich möchte auch, dass ihr dann tut, was euch gerade einfällt". Das hat er mir so erklärt und ich bin hingegangen und ich hab in dem Bewusstsein, dass ich kein Schauspieler bin, inzwischen war ich ja schon Regisseur, eine Schauspielübung gemacht, und hab mich an das gehalten, was er gesagt hat. Also ich habe die Hände gespürt, ich weiss nicht mehr, wieviel es waren, vielleicht fünf oder sechs, es war sehr schön, wenn man so die Hände hat, aber dann überkam mich plötzlich der Drang, alle Hände an mich zu reissen, wie ein Bündel von Blumen hat oder so, ich hatte die Hände so, und das machte krr und Tabori guckte mich entgeistert an und sagte, "Das war aber nicht beabsichtigt, du bist eben kein Schauspieler, sondern ein Regisseur sozusagen" und das meinte ich physisch jetzt. Es ist etwas, und darum erzählte ich das auch von dem Verhältnis zu meiner Mama. Wo ich die Mama meiner Mutter sein wollte, ja der Regisseur eben. Das habe ich natürlich sehr früh nicht gespürt, sondern gesagt bekommen, und dann wusste ich auch, das ich die Nähe eines Schauspielers, einer Schauspielerin, wenn ich einen Film sehe, sehr intensiv empfinde, so dass ich zum Beispiel nach dem Kinoerlebnis, ... in Uruguay können Kinder sehr früh ins Kino, da gibt es keine Verbote und am Samstag Sonntag kann man sich jeweils vier Filme anschauen. Und meine Beziehung waren nicht zu Stoffen, nicht zu Themen, sondern zu Schauspielern. Und dann war die Bette Davis, die eine sehr merkwürdige Frau war, in den Filmen, ich weiss nicht mehr, wie ich sie damals empfand, aber ich glaube, dass es nicht so anders war als das was ich es jetzt empfinde, wenn ich sie sehe: Eine, die nicht

dahin gehört, wo sie war weder als Kaiserin von Mexiko oder eine Art Horrorfilm, wo sie mitspielt. Es war immer so, als ob sie sich umschauen würde und fragen würde, wo bin ich eigentlich, also mit euch habe ich gar nichts zu tun. Von einer enormen Konzentration und Stolz könnte man es einfach nicht nennen, Erkenntnis, dass sie eigentlich ganz anders ist als die anderen. Und in jeder Rolle war das zu spüren, es war ja keine Schöne, die Augen standen so etwas raus, sie war eine dramatische Schauspielerin, also wenn ich einen Film von ihr sah, dann habe ich die ganze Woche sie nachgespielt. Dann sollte man mich Bette nennen oder irgendwas, das war einfach mein Vergnügen, weil ich sie in mir fühlte, sie hatte mich dann sozusagen verzaubert und ich konnte gar nicht anders als die ganze Woche an sie denken.

*Wie haben Sie Antonio Skarmeta getroffen und wie kam es zu den zahlreichen Kollaborationen? Was hat Sie an seiner Arbeit und Person fasziniert?*

Ich war eingeladen vom Goetheinstitut in Santiago und habe da den Antonio Skarmeta besucht, der damals Professor für Literatur war an der Katholischen Universität und Anhänger einer politischen Fraktion, die sich Mapu nannte/nennt, bei der sehr viele Künstler teilnahmen, obwohl es eine Arbeiter/Bauernpartei war. Also ich besuchte ihn und war eingeladen zum Essen bei seinen Eltern und ich glaube, das war so Liebe auf den ersten Blick von uns allen gegenseitig. Dann haben wir überlegt, was wir machen könnten, wir haben viel von unseren gemeinsamen Erfahrungen als arbeitende Kinder gesprochen oder Jugendliche, denn während ich, älter als er, in einem Hotel arbeitete, hat er als Bote in einem Gemüseladen gearbeitet und für seinen Vater, der Nylonstrümpfe von Argentinien nach Chile schmuggelte, die Nylonstrümpfe innerhalb alter Zeitungen zur Post gebracht und sie verschickt. Aus dieser Situation ist übrigens die Kenntnis von Briefträgern und der Post in dem berühmten Film von ihm "Il Postino" entstanden. Wir hatten uns dann geeinigt, dass wir gemeinsam etwas schreiben, das basierte nicht auf einer Erzählung und mir schwebte vor, etwas von einer Person zu machen, von einer weiblichen Person, die nicht jetzt eine Erziehung hatte innerhalb des Sozialismus oder irgendeine Parteinahme, sondern nur irgendeine Sekretärin werden wollte in der Hauptstadt. Deshalb ging sie in ihrem kleinen Dörfchen oder Städtchen, das sich Corico nannte, das berühmt ist für die Chilenen, weil dort eine Keksfabrik ist und für jeden, der dieses Wort Corico nennt, verbindet sich das mit der Erinnerung an Kekse, die ging also in eine Sekretärschule und die fiktive Figur der Geschichte machte da ihre Erfahrungen

mit Freundinnen, die auch Sekretärinnen werden wollten. Die fuhr dann in die Hauptstadt und lernte eigentlich in der ersten Zeit ihrer Arbeit Büros kennen, wo sie Arbeit vermitteln und durch Zufall kam sie dann zu einer Dame, einer Frau, die Sozialistin war, die kandidierte für die kommenden Wahlen und bei der sich die Hauptdarstellerin von *La Victoria* angeschlossen hatte, um sie zu begleiten und auf diese Art und Weise die Stadt kennenzulernen und politische Bewegungen und so weiter. So beschreibt eigentlich der Film die Situation von diesem Mädchen, deren Onkel ein Koch ist bei der Eisenbahn und zeigt, wie sie zum Bewusstsein kommt, wo sie überhaupt ist, und mit wem sie es zu tun hat in dieser unbeschreiblich interessanten Zeit, wo alles auf der Straße passierte, wo die großen Erkenntnisse, wie kann man die Ungerechtigkeit beseitigen im Volk, wo Landbesetzung stattfand, naja das zeigt alles der Film und Antonio hat, wie in den weiteren Filmen, mit denen wir jetzt zu tun hatten, immer alles mitgemacht. Er war nicht nur der Autor, sondern er hat mit mir die Orte gesucht, wo man was machen kann und viele Familien kennengelernt. Wir waren also den ganzen Tag gemeinsam unterwegs und die Geschichte wuchs und das gilt auch für die Arbeit in Nicaragua, wuchs mit dem Kennenlernen der Geschichten von den Familien und der Beobachtung der Straße, was alles los war und so dass wir, ich musste nochmal zurück nach Deutschland, um mit der Produktion zu sprechen, und mit dem Fernsehen, ob die uns unterstützen würden und das war damals sehr einfach, fanden die gut, das ZDF. Und dann fuhr ich mit einer Person von der Produktion, in diesem Fall war das die Person, die in dem neugegründeten Verlag der Autoren die Gelder verwaltete und da habe ich dort ein Team zusammengestellt und dann fingen wir an zu drehen und haben während des Drehens ständig das Buch verändert, erweitert, je nachdem, was gerade los war, Streiks, und so weiter. Es war und deshalb wird es oft als eine Art semidokumentarischer Film gesehen, das was wirklich zum Teil, das, was da passierte in dem Moment, weil die Hauptdarstellerin die Wahlkampagne dieser Senatorin oder Kandidatin zur Senatorin begleitet und die [Senatorin] effektiv für uns spielte, was ja auch ganz selten ist und gleichzeitig ihre Kampagne machte und das wusste, so dass ich einfach sie zusammenbrachte mit meiner Darstellerin, die ich in den fiktiven Rahmen einer Geschichte integrierte und das war für mich eine sehr interessante Sache. [...]

Ich habe übrigens nie mit Film-Drehbuchautoren gearbeitet, sondern mit Schriftstellern, die dann auch nicht am Drehbuch teilnahmen, aber mit mir zusammen Ideen entwickelten oder wie Antonio während des Films eine kleine Rolle spielten oder sich um Kostüme kümmerten, alles eigentlich, weil wir die Zusammenarbeit immer verstanden als

Teamarbeit und wie er sagt, na also weisst du wir sind sehr unterschiedlich und eigentlich ist alles ein Missverständnis, *malentendido*. "Was verstehst du unter einem Missverständnis zwischen uns?" Er wollte damit sagen, also was du glaubst, was ich weiss und erkenne und was ich bin, das ist deine Sache, aber das ist ein Missverständnis. Umgekehrt sicherlich auch. Und insofern haben wir immer auf der Grundlage großer Freundschaft und dem Missverständnis zusammengearbeitet. Dazu kommt es, dass er ein Mensch ist, der nie aus der Fassung gerät, immer guter Laune ist, sehr sinnlich, gerne isst. Damals als wir *La Victoria* machten, halb so voluminös war wie jetzt und der dann eine glänzende Karriere als Schriftsteller machte und nach wie vor bin ich mit ihm befreundet. Sein Vater starb vor kurzem und ich war vor einem Jahr eingeladen in Chile um einen Workshop zu geben in der Filmschule und da hatte er mich überrascht mit einem Abendessen, wo seine politischen Freunde da waren, von denen ich einige kannte, aber die Carmen Lazo, so hieß die Senatorin, die damals im Fall eben kandidiert hat und mitgespielt hat und die ich nie erwartet hätte dort und die mich glücklich machte, weil sie sich überhaupt nicht verändert hatte in nichts, auch nicht in ihrer politischen Position und die mit derselben Resolutheit und demselben Enthusiasmus über ihr Exil auch sprach, denn sie war in Peru lange im Exil, wo sie als Köchin gearbeitet hat, weil sie sehr versiert war mit Kochkunst, was übrigens sehr dazu beigetragen hat, dass sie ein her gutes Wahlergebnis hatte. Sie gab im Radio Beratung für Kochrezepte.

*Ihre Beziehung zu Chile ist offensichtlich sehr von Skármeta geprägt. Hatte er auch die Idee für Den Aufstand in Nicaragua?*

Nachdem wir in Chile zusammen gearbeitet haben, gab es ja kurz danach, ein halbes Jahr später die Ermordung von Allende. Die meisten von seinen Kollegen wurden verhaftet, er hatte das Glück, er hielt sich zu Hause auf und entweder fanden sie ihn nicht oder hatten die Fahndung noch nicht ausgeschrieben, jedenfalls hatten wir ständig Gespräche von Deutschland aus. Ich hab dann alles versucht, dass er nach Deutschland kommen kann und er bekam die Ausreise, die Möglichkeit nach Deutschland zu reisen und wir haben uns dann wiedergesehen in Marocco, weil ich zu dem Zeitpunkt einen Film vorbereiten wollte, der nicht zustande kam, weil der italienische Koproduzent das Geld nicht brachte und das ZDF ohne diesen Koproduzenten nichts machen konnte. Wir waren schon an der Vorbereitung, Skármeta tauchte auf und wir fuhren dann oder er fuhr dann nach Berlin, wo er Freunde hatte, die schon im Exil waren und blieb in Berlin.

Dann hatten wir natürlich in Berlin gleich angefangen, nachzudenken, was machen wir jetzt. Und da tauchte eine Anekdote auf, die bestimmt eigentlich war für alles, was wir später machten und die genau übereinstimmte mit dem, was ich vorhin als das Epizentrum ansprach, einer Beziehung zu Geschichten und so weiter. Und das war nichts anderes als die Vater-Sohn-Beziehung, und die entstand aus einer ganz merkwürdigen Situation, die mir Antonio schilderte. Ich habe ihn gefragt, was er gemacht hat, als er versteckt war mehr oder weniger zu Hause und nicht rausgehen konnte, an welche Stories er gedacht hatte nach dieser furchtbaren Katastrophe, die ihn und seine Familie und die vielen Freunden völlig veränderte und wo sie jetzt mehr oder weniger in Gefangenheit waren. Und dann sagte er, "Du wirst erstaunt sein, ich habe nachgedacht über die Geschichte von Pinocchio." Und dann sagte ich, "Pinocchio, diese Kindergeschichte," die eigentlich von allen Älteren, die das heute lesen oder Jugendlichen als was ziemlich Reaktionäres empfunden wird. Es ist eine pädagogische Story, die davon ausgeht, dass der Sohn sich entfernt von Zuhause und das dann bereut und Angst hat vor dem Papa und dann zurückkommt, also auf die simpelste Formel gebracht. Und dann sagte ich, du denkst an sowas, das ist ja merkwürdig, das ist ja das Gegenteil von dem, was uns interessiert. Ich hab dann, ich weiss nicht, politisch reagiert. Und dann sagte ich, gut, drehen wir mal die Geschichte um: Es ist nicht der Sohn, der zurückkommt, sondern der Vater, der versucht, das Schicksal des Sohnes zu verstehen und der sich auf den Weg macht, ihn zu finden und beide treffen sich im Gefängnis. Das war die Ausgangsposition für *Es herrscht Ruhe im Land* und auch für *Den Aufstand*, wo ich ja auch, ich hab da kurioserweise nochmal reingeschaut, das ist auch die Geschichte eines Deserteurs, der erst auf der Seite von Somoza ist als Soldat aus ganz ähnlichen Gründen wie die Soldaten, mit denen ich mich jetzt beschäftige und dessen Vater im Gegensatz zu der Tradition, dass nämlich der Vater auf der rechten Seite stand, der Sohn auf der linken, in diesem Fall haben wir das umgedreht, weil ich sagte, nein, es ist wichtig, zu zeigen, was sein könnte, was nicht ist und was in sich eine Dialektik birgt, die uns die Augen öffnet, sagen wir mal so. Warum ist der Vater nicht auf der Seite des Sohnes, warum sind die Gründe vielleicht die, die auch in Uruguay vorherrschten, nämlich das der Vater Angst hat um das Schicksal des Sohnes, der auf die Straße geht, protestiert, verhaftet wird, und dann glaubt, dass eine Regierung, die für Ordnung sorgt, also die rechte, das Leben seines Sohnes bewahrt, das die Geschichte später zeigt, dass es nicht funktioniert hat, dass es ein Fehler war. Ja gut und mit diesem Grundgedanken sind wir dann erstmal nach Argentinien gefahren, weil die Geschichte, die uns interessierte, die in Verbindung stand

mit dieser Gundsituation, war die, das ist eine wahre Geschichte, von einer ganzen Stadt, die verhaftet wurde im Süden von Argentinien, die Stadt heisst Trelew. Da war es so, dass diese Stadt ein Gefängnis hatte, in der sehr viele Studenten waren und Linke, weil damals die Leute von den Montoneros [left-wing Peronist group] und die Sympathisanten in dieser Stadt, die diese Leute besuchten, die wurden eingesperrt von der Militärregierung. Dann wurden eingesperrt die Familie der Sympathisanten, der Studenten und Schritt für Schritt, innerhalb ganz kurzer Zeit, eigentlich alle, bis die Arbeitgeber auftauchten und dem Gouverneur sagten, naja so geht es eigentlich nicht weiter, denn jetzt sind alle verhaftet und wir brauchen ja die Arbeiter, um diese Stadt am Leben zu halten. Das war ein sehr interessanter Konflikt für eine Geschichte, die uns inspirierte und die dann später in Portugal gedreht wurde, aber um ein Land zu finden, wo wir das drehen konnten, sind wir durch ganz Lateinamerika gereist, um dann zu sagen, Argentinien unmöglich, da hatte sich schon die Situation verschärft mit dem Militär, Chile sowieso nicht, Peru schien uns nicht so geeignet, da waren wir und hatten auch Freunde von ihm besucht und landeten dann in Portugal und da dort sehr viele Leute im Exil lebten, also Chilenen, Argentinier, Brasilianer, die waren ja auch betroffen von der Militärdiktatur, haben mit all diesen Exilanten in einer kleinen Hafenstadt, ganz in der Nähe von Lissabon, Setúbal heisst die Stadt, den Film gedreht in einem echten Gefängnis, mit unendlich vielen Laiendarstellern und einem wunderbaren Schauspieler, der den Großpapa gespielt hat, der Charles Vanel war da. Naja, wir sind also auf der Spur geblieben von diesem Epizentrum einer Idee, die mich besonders interessierte, erstmal, weil ich keinen Vater hatte, sondern nur Frauen, mit denen ich über Politik sprechen konnte, oder ich war sozusagen das männliche Wesen der Familie und sicher hat man dann Sehnsucht nach einem Vater und dann erfuhr ich die ganzen Geschichten der Deutschen und meiner Landsleute, die während der Diktatur dort blieben, die auch diese Konflikte und in Chile mit den Vätern hatten, die sicherlich oft aus Sorge um ihre Söhne oder Töchter, die für *law and order* waren, und das von der Rechten erwarteten. Über die Konsequenzen waren sie nicht informiert, und alles in allem, wenn ich sage, Epizentrum, dann meinte ich wieder die jüdischen Familien auch in Deutschland, die nämlich, das trifft zu für Chile und Uruguay, die nicht vorbereitet waren auf das Desaster, was auf sie zukommt. Also wenn ich mir oft überlege, mit welcher, so, wie es die Tradition oder die Geschichte vermittelt, mit welchem Leichtsinn und Unkenntnis die meisten jüdischen Familien nach 1934, sogar noch nach den Nürnberger Gesetzen noch immer glaubten, dass sie in irgendeiner Form noch hoffen können, dann ist das nur zu erklären, dass sie

politisch eigentlich nicht interessiert waren. Das ist natürlich eine Lehre und die Hoffnung darauf, dass in der Familie die Bildung vorhanden ist, um die Gefahren zu erkennen oder die wirkliche politische Machtsituation oder was es für die Söhne bedeutet, das ist eine Hoffnung, der ich auch diesmal wieder nachgegangen bin, aber es ist immer wieder dasselbe. Die Väter lassen zu, dass die Söhne Soldaten werden, um das Vaterland zu verteidigen. Wenn sie dann tot zurückkommen, dann stellen sie sich die Fragen, was hat man ihnen versprochen, welche Art von Illusion haben sie gepflegt. All das spielte in allen Fällen eine Rolle und wenn ich ganz ehrlich bin, glaube ich, immer denselben Film gemacht zu haben. Nur einen, mit Variationen.[...]

*Warum haben Sie eher Vater-Sohn-Beziehungen porträtiert, obwohl Ihre eigene Erfahrung eher die einer Mutter-Sohn-Beziehung war?*

Ich habe die Frage nie beantwortet, wenn Freunde mir sagten, schreib doch deine Biografie. Das ist mir zu langweilig und die kenne ich ja. Wenn, dann würde ich das fiktionalisieren, aber dann brauche ich ja nicht von meinen Erfahrungen sprechen, denn irgendwie spielt das ja immer mit, aber es geht darum, etwas zu transformieren, in ein anderes Schicksal, also wenn ich von dem jüdischen Weihnachtsmann sprach und was ich daraus gemacht habe, das Drehbuch, das war natürlich eine Enttäuschung für den Redakteur, der dachte, ich schreib jetzt von mir. Ich bin die Hauptperson, ich halte mich an die Zeit, an die politische Zeit, also das politische Geschehen der damaligen Zeit, der Anfang der Kohlregierung und das habe ich nicht gemacht, weil es mich gelangweilt hat. Ich spekuliere lieber. Ich gehe lieber eine Spekulation ein mit einer Transformation, mit einem veränderten Leben, bei dem andere mich noch erkennen, vielleicht. Aber ich selbst habe nicht die Absicht, bei der Wahrheit zu bleiben, an dem Dokument, an der Realität, oder was auch immer. Habe ich nicht. Gut, diese Geschichte, diese Dokumentation [Camilo] zwingt mich natürlich sittlich zuzuhören, manchmal Fragen zu stellen, aber ich kann nichts verändern. Das ist das große Problem für jemand, der Spielfilm macht und der sich plötzlich vornimmt, eine Dokumentation zu machen, weil er weder an das Dokument glaubt, noch an das, was die meisten Leute als Wahrheit und Realität bezeichnen. Es ist eine andere Welt, eine Welt der Metapher, der Verwandlung, der Phantasien und damit verbunden eine große Skepsis gegenüber dem, was die Leute bereit sind anzunehmen oder zu akzeptieren als Beleg für eine Wahrheit, für etwas Geschehenes und so weiter. [...]

*Als Sie für Es herrscht Ruhe im Land mit Emigranten aus Latein America zusammengearbeitet haben: Wie haben Sie diese Personen rekrutiert und wie war es, mit ihnen zu arbeiten, die dieses Trauma ja selbst erlebt haben?*

Also es gab Leute aus Chile, aus Argentinien, aus Brasilien, die zum Teil in Setúbal, das war der Hafen, in dem wir gedreht haben ansässig waren oder in Lissabon, die alle natürlich nur vorübergehend da waren. Die meisten hatten auch gar keine Arbeit und wir haben dann zusammen mit Antonio viele Leute besucht, die Antonio auch aus Chile kannte, ich kannte ein paar, die mir begegneten durch die vielen Reisen, und die haben dann kleinere Rollen gespielt. Das, was, das habe ich ja auch in Nicaragua erfahren, was eine Katharsis verursacht bei Menschen, die wie zum Beispiel ein Mädchen, das überhaupt nicht mehr schlafen konnte, in Nicaragua, in der Hauptstadt während dieses Kriegsgeschehens sie Zeugin wurde von Tanks, die die Häuser durchschossen haben, Menschen, die auf der Straße ermordet wurden, und so weiter, die konnte einfach nicht mehr schlafen, die war sechs oder sieben. Die hat dann erfahren durch die Mama, dass wir dort einen Film drehen. Und das viele Szenen rekonstruiert wurden, zum Beispiel die Besetzung von einem militärischen Stützpunkt, das taucht ja dann in dem Film auf, die konnte plötzlich wieder schlafen. Die Mama sagte, es ist wie ein Wunder geschehen, die hat euch gesehen, wie ihr auf der Straße dieses Spiel macht, sie hat begriffen, dass das ein Spiel ist und nicht wieder dieser Krieg, und plötzlich ging das.

*Sind Der Aufstand und Es herrscht Ruhe im Land gleich mit Untertiteln gemacht worden? Wurden die Filme zuerst einem deutschen Publikum gezeigt?*

Das ist jetzt eine Tragödie, weil *Der Aufstand* gezeigt wurde im Original mit Untertiteln. Alle anderen Filme, weil sich das Fernsehen weigerte, Originalfassungen zu zeigen, und auch, wie zum Beispiel beim *Radfahrer*, das nicht möglich gewesen wäre, auch wenn sie es genommen hätten, aus technischen Gründen, alle anderen sind synchronisiert worden, was die Hölle ist. Ich habe immer gesagt, wenn ich aus irgendeinem Grund in die Hölle komme, was ich nicht hoffe, erwartet mich dort ein Synchronstudio. Es ist sowas Furchtbares, den Leuten ihre Stimme zu nehmen, auch wenn in Deutschland sehr gut synchronisiert wird, aber das ist nun wirklich entsetzlich. Für Antonio war das auch tragisch, aber es blieb nichts anderes übrig, wir brauchten ja die Produktionsmittel. Und das waren die Grenzen, wir hatten die totale Freiheit, wir konnten machen, was wir wollten, aber in diesem Punkt sagten sie, die Leute in Deutschland sind es nicht gewohnt,

Untertitel zu lesen, und das Kino verweigert sich auch aus ähnlichen Gründen. Was sollte man machen?

*Möchten Sie eine bestimmte Botschaft vermitteln und gibt es bestimmte Themen, für die das Publikum besonders sensibel ist, sagen wir mal der revolutionäre Gedanke in den 70-er Jahren?*

Deutschland war ziemlich solidarisch mit Chile und Nicaragua. Da gab es natürlich eine allgemeine Euphorie, die auch von den Produzenten und vom Fernsehen beobachtet wurde und ein Entgegenkommen, in der Beziehung, die diese Story gerne hatten, die Filme machten über Lateinamerika, über den Kampf, Maos, Allende oder irgendsowas und das wusste man und sofort hatte man auch Redakteure und Produzenten, die auch politisch engagiert waren, das ist klar. Und da machte man sich erst recht keine Gedanken darüber, in Deutschland, werden es viele Leute sehen, wie unterscheidet sich das französische Publikum oder DDR-Publikum? Das wäre eine Einschätzung gewesen, die man dann lieber einem Soziologen überlässt oder einem Politiker, aber wir sagten, wir haben Freunde in Chile, wir haben Freunde in Nicaragua, wir haben Freunde in Deutschland, an jeder zweiten Ecke gibt es ein Komitee für Nicaragua und Chile, die werden sich die Filme anschauen. Und dazu kam, dass ich von meinem doppelten Herkommen dazu auch prädestiniert war, das zu machen, aber nie mit dem Gedanken, erreiche ich jetzt die extreme Linke oder was weiss ich, die Chilenen oder die DDR-Leute. Ich war ja, man sollte es kaum glauben, in der letzten Phase der DDR ein Jahr Mitglied in der DDR-Akademie, weil die mich darein genannt hat. Die haben mir einen Brief geschickt, ob ich da nicht einverstanden bin und da dachte ich, warum nicht. Wer sollte auf so eine verrückte Idee kommen, ausgerechnet mich zu nehmen, ich habe da nicht groß recherchiert.

*Wie hat die DDR da Kontakt aufgenommen, oder ist das über Ihren Produzenten gelaufen? Die waren ja an den beiden Filmen interessiert, oder?*

Da gab es ja Kontakte zwischen den Verleihern, die haben dann gesagt, können wir den Film in den und den Kinos zeigen und da habe ich halt gefragt, in welchen Kinos und ich wurde, ich weiss nicht, ein oder zwei mal eingeladen, um vor dem Publikum zu sprechen, auch in der Ostberliner Akademie, da fand man intelligente Zuhörer, mit sehr viel

besseren Fragen und mit sehr viel mehr politischer Bildung als im Westen, das war klar. Da gab es die Geheimsprache, die ich nicht beherrschte. [...]

Ich habe den Mitgliedern der Ostberliner Akademie, die etwas über Uruguay wissen wollten, erzählt von einer besonderen Episode der Geschichte Uruguyas, die die meisten Länder Lateinamerikas, die Befreiung gemacht haben, in Venezuela haben andere Offiziere der spanischen Armee eben Befreiungskriege geführt, und in Uruguay war es so, das ganze Teile der Bevölkerung, heute sind es etwas mehr als drei Millionen, damals waren es kaum vierhundert-, dreihunderttausend und es gab Partisane der spanischen Armee, die Offiziere waren und so weiter, dann gab es die Landbevölkerung, die Gauchos, und vielleicht 100.000 Menschen in der Hauptstadt oder 150. Ein Offizier der spanischen Armee, der Artigas [José G. Artigas, 1764-1850] heisst, den wir in der Schule dann genau studiert haben, der hat etwas gemacht, das war einmalig in der Geschichte Lateinamerikas, das habe ich den Kollegen in der Akademie [East] erzählt und zwar nannte sich diese Aktion von ihm der Exodus des Volkes. Das Volk von Uruguay nennt sich *Puebla de Oriental* was Ostvolk heist, denn sie sind auf der östlichen Seite Lateinamerikas, so nennt sich das Land auch. *Republica de Oriental de Uruguay*. Dieser Exodus bestand aus folgendem: Am Wochenende, er hatte das genau vorbereitet, als die Offiziere und Soldaten in der Armee schliefen, hat er mit seinen Getreuen und das waren ja auch einige Soldaten gewesen, die gesamte Bevölkerung Montevideo mit Pferden, zu Fuss und so weiter, hat die Hauptstadt verlassen in Richtung Grenze von Brasilien. Sie sind bis zur Mitte gekommen, wo es einen Fluss gibt und haben sich dann den anderen gestellt, die dann kamen, um sie einzuholen und zurückzuholen, das ganze Land befand sich ihm Exodus. Also ich erzählte ihnen diese Geschichte und ich hatte keine Absichten. Und ich merkte plötzlich, dass sie so untereinander tuschelten und dachte, was habe ich da nur falsch gemacht, man ist ja da immer ein bisschen vorsichtig und plötzlich ging mir das auf, dass ich ihnen was beschrieben hatte, was sie eigentlich vorhatten oder was sie immer vorhatten, also einfach aus ihrem Land ausziehen und dieses ganze Pack da von Funktionäre alleine zu lassen, sollen sie machen, was sie wollen, wir gehen. Das lässt sich natürlich nicht vergleichen, Ost und West, aber das, was fast ein Mythos ist für die Geschichte Uruguays war für sie ein praktischer Hinweis. Und ich nehme an, sie haben mir auch unterstellt, dass ich das Ganze absichtlich gemacht habe. Ich habe das aber nicht absichtlich gemacht. Ich weiss nicht mehr, in welchem Zusammenhang, wie verlief die Geschichte Uruguyas im Hinblick auf die Befreiung der spanischen Krone oder irgend sowas. Und naja, da gab es so Blicke und so weiter, und

dann hab ich gesagt, Entschuldigung, aber ich beobachte hier merkwürdige Reaktionen. Habe ich irgendetwas gesagt, dass Sie beleidigt hat oder gefoltert, ich schildere Ihnen ja nur einen Vorgang und dann schmunzelten die und sagten, wir dachten, Sie wissen, warum wir hier so reagieren und da wollte ich nicht weiter insistieren, denn ich hatte keine Ahnung, warum Sie so reagieren, stimmte auch. Deshalb die Rezeption: Auf Ihre Art und Weise haben sie in meinen Augen intelligent reagiert, weil genau wie die Leute im Knast, von denen ich erzählte, oder den Schülern in Boston, sie in einer Krise lebten. Das Publikum in Westdeutschland oder des Westens gehen als Entertainment, gehen ins Kino, ja weil man ins Kino geht, danach geht man vielleicht ins Restaurant oder so. Für sie [East German population] war Film und jede Art der Kunst eine Nahrung, ein Bedarf, eine Notwendigkeit. Das unterscheidet das, für die einen ist es notwendig wie das Brot und für die anderen, heute eins und morgen das andere, das Theater, das Restaurant, die Oper, was weiss ich.

*Haben Sie auch, und zu dem Zeitpunkt [70s and 80s] war das wahrscheinlich schwierig, in Chile in irgendeiner Weise Filme zeigen können?*

Erstmal, während wir dort was machten, waren wir abhängig, also *Der Radfahrer*, waren wir abhängig von dem Direktor des Elektrizitätswerks, der auch General war, denn Pinochet hatte ja in allen großen, wichtigen Institutionen seine Leute natürlich und von dem musste ich die Genehmigung bekommen, für das Rennen mit vorbereiten und alles, dreißig bis vierzig Radfahrer zu bekommen, die als Team, wie das ja so üblich ist, hier auch, wie Sie wissen, da fahren Leute für Telekom und so, der verlangte natürlich ein Drehbuch und wir wussten, dass es natürlich zwei Drehbücher gibt, ein Drehbuch, dass ich realisieren wollte und ein anderes, das ich ihm zeigen wollte. Er wusste wiederum, dass wir ihn ...? Das musste man erkennen, dass es einen Unterschied gibt zwischen einer Diktatur und einem repressiven faschistischen System, das allerdings keine Gesetze hat. Also sagen wir mal, in der DDR gab es Gesetze, dies und jenes. Das war dort Auslegungssache. Der General entschied dies und jenes, und es war auch ein Kunstwerk eines autoritären Regimes, heute sagten sie, ihr könnt das machen, dies und jenes und alle waren ganz glücklich. Am nächsten Tag wurde dasselbe beschlagnahmt und die Leute kamen ins Kittchen, nicht auf der Grundlage von einem Gesetz. Also dieser General, der wusste, dass wir ihn betrügen und wir wussten, dass er Maßnahmen trifft und was das für welche waren, wussten wir nicht. Das war also ein ständiger Kampf, er hatte ziemlich

genau den Drehplan und um seine Macht zu zeigen, hat er mit uns gespielt. Das andere Problem ist die Rücksicht, die man nehmen musste bei Schauspielern, denn, wie ich vorhin sagte, ich komme und ich gehe. Die hatten immer irgendwelche Aufpasser, die zuhören, die auch nur annähernd irgend etwas gesagt haben vom Text, vom geschriebenen Text, was die Schauspieler gefährdet hat, dann war es schon brenzlig. Da musste ich sehr aufpassen, die banalsten Sachen und da wurde ich unsicher. Es ist auch der schlechteste Film, glaube ich, den ich gemacht habe, *Der Radfahrer*, weil ich das nicht kannte, ich kannte keine Halbheiten, keine Rücksichten, keine Angst, andere zu kompromittieren. Wenn ich nun einem Schauspieler sage, hier sag mal den Text, Frau Merkel ist ein Ungeheuer, das ist vielleicht ein dummer Satz, aber niemand kommt ins Gefängnis. Das konnte man dort nicht machen. Also, die Fähigkeiten, in einer Diktatur einen Film zu machen, die hatten einige DDR-Regisseure, die hatten einige chilenische Regisseure, aber ich nicht, weil ich das nicht kannte. Ich habe mich vorbereitet durch Freunde, die mich unterstützen, Antonio war eine Zeitlang während des Drehens dort, man verfolgte ihn nicht, der Film durfte dort nicht gezeigt werden. Er wurde gezeigt in dem Haus vom Goetheinstitutsleiter, Gardinen, die zu waren, weil in dem Film kommen ziemlich laut die revolutionären Gesänge während der Zeit von Allende vor. *Von welchem Film sprechen Sie jetzt? La Victoria*. Das Mädchen, das aus der Kleinstadt kam, das war die ungeheuerlichste Vorstellung, die ich überhaupt erlebt habe in dem Haus von ihm, weil die Familie darum gebeten hatte. Die Hauptdarstellerin hatte sich das Leben genommen und ihre Schwester ein oder zwei Monate davor. Der Vater war Arzt ganz auf der rechten Seite, zwei Söhne links, die auch im Gefängnis waren und die zwei Töchter, die sich das Leben genommen haben. Ich saß also mit der Familie in einem Raum, der nur ein Drittel von diesem hier war auf so einer Projektionsfläche, die das Goetheinstitut hat für 16mm, sah ich diesen Film und traute mich nicht zu atmen, weil ich dachte, die sehen ihre Tochter nun, die tote, und sie sehen, wie tapfer und was für eine schöne Eigenart sie hatte einen Kampf damals für sich zu begleiten, ohne dass sie eigentlich irgendwelche Parolen von sich gab oder so also was ganz Besonderes. [...]

*Lieber Herr Lilienthal, vielen Dank für dieses interessante Gespräch.*

## Filmography

*Im Handumdrehen verdient* ('Earned in no time', documentary 1959)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Rolf Opprower, **Cinematography:** Peter Cürlis, **Production Company:** SFB (Berlin), **Release Date:** 26 May 1959 (ARD).

*Die Nachbarskinder* ('The Neighbours' children', TV short film, 1960)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Benno Meyer-Wehlack, **Editing:** Lothar Regentrop-Boncoeur, **Production Company:** SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Elisabeth Botz (Mutter Denger), Hans Elwenspoek (Peter Heinzelmann), Hanne Hiob (Ulla Denger), Norbert Kappen (Erich Gronzil), **Release Date:** 8 December 1960 (ARD).

*Biographie eines Schokoladentages* ('Biography of a chocolate day', TV film, 1961)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Dieter Gasper, **Art Direction:** Günther Kieser, **Sound:** Wilhelm Keller, **Production Company:** SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Ludwig Thiessen (Herr Rilke), Lilli Schoenborn-Anspach (Frau Bunte), Elke Arendt (Marlene, Frau Bunte's Tochter), Dieter Eppler (Herr Stockhahn), **Release Date:** 5 December 1961 (ARD).

*Der 18. Geburtstag* ('The eighteenth birthday', TV film, 1961),

Based on a novella by Klaus Roehler, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Theodor Kutulla, Klaus Roehler, **Cinematography:** Gerd Suess, **Art Direction:** Lothar Regentrop-Boncoeur, **Sound:** Peter Zwetkoff, **Production Company:** SFW (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Hans W. Hamacher (Herr Kopp), Eike Siegel (his wife), Burghild Schreiber (Justine, their daughter), Stefan Gohlke (Kibus, their son), Wolfgang Schmidt (Ulse, Justine's boyfriend), **Release Date:** 3 January 1962 (ARD).

*Stück für Stück* ('Piece after piece', TV film, 1962)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Benno Meyer-Wehlack,  
**Cinematography:** Wolf Wirth, **Art Direction:** Wolf Wirth, **Production Companies:** modern-art film (Berlin), SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Eva Brumby (Frau Jacob), Jens-Peter Erichsen (Manfred), Heinz Schubert (Günter), Lili Schoenborn-Anspach (Großmutter), Max Haufler (Herr Meissner), Herbert Stass (Herr Jacob), **Release Date:** 4 October 1962 (ARD).

*Picknick im Felde* ('Picnic on the battlefield', TV short film, 1962)

Based on a play by Fernando Arrabal, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Ulrich Burtin, **Art Direction:** Renate Meduna, **Production Company:** SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Friedrich Mertel (Zapo, a soldier), Horst-Werner Loos (Herr Tepan, Zapo's father), Annemarie Schradiek (Frau Tepan, his mother), **Release Date:** 20 December 1962 (ARD).

*Schule der Geläufigkeit* ('School for familiarity', TV short film, 1962)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Leo Wawiloff, **Screenplay:** Dieter Gasper, **Cinematography:** Gert Süss, Ulrich Burtin, Immo Rentz, **Editing:** Joachim von Mengershausen, **Art Direction:** Curt Stallmach, **Production Company:** SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Max Hauffler (Herr Hübenet), Ursula Diestel (Frau Hübenet), Peter Mosbacher (lawyer), Thomas Birkner (Tim), Michael Nowka (Butzel), Ilse Künkele (Bäumchen), **Release Date:** 18 June 1963 (ARD).

*Guernica -Jede Stunde verletzt und die letzte tötet* ('Guernica – Each hour harms and the last one kills', TV short film, 1963),

Based on a play by Fernando Arrabal, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Gert Süss, **Editing:** Annemarie Weigand, **Art Direction:** Renate Meduna, **Sound:** Harry Tietz, **Production Company:** SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Heinz Maier (Fanchou), Annemarie Schradiek (Lira,

Fanchou's wife), Friedrich Mertel (soldier), **Release Date:** 21 February 1965 (ARD).

***Martyrium des Peter O'Hey*** ('Martyrdom of Peter O'Hey', TV film, 1964)

Based on a play by Slawomir Mrozek, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, Günther Kieser, **Cinematography:** Michael Ballhaus, **Editing:** Edith von Seydewitz, **Art Direction:** Günther Kieser, **Production Company:** SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Joachim Wichmann (Peter O'Hey), Angelica Hurwicz (Frau O'Hey), Thomas Rosengarten (Jas O'Hey), **Release Date:** 19 May 1964 (ARD).

***Seraphine*** (TV film, 1964)

Based on a short story by David Perry, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Friedhelm Heyde, **Art Direction:** Günther Naumann, **Sound:** Joachim Ludwig, **Production Company:** SFB (Berlin), **Cast:** Heinz Meier (Daniel), Adolf Rebel (Viktor), Else Ehser (Tante Flora), Annemarie Schradiek (Betty), Käthe Jänicke (Dora), Joachim Röcker (Kontrolleur), **Release Date:** 16 March 1965 (ARD).

***Abschied*** ('Farewell', TV film, 1965)

Based on a novella by Günter Herburger, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Annemarie Weigand, **Screenplay:** Günter Herburger, Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Michael Ballhaus, **Editing:** Annemarie Weigand, **Art Direction:** Günther Naumann, **Sound:** Albert Mangelsdorff, **Production Company:** Production Company: SFB (Berlin) **Cast:** Max Haufler (Kurt), Angelika Hurwicz (Luise), Andrea Grosske (Sonja), Peter Nestler (Horst), Ingrid Mannstaedt (Isolde), **Release Date:** 3 March 1966 (ARD).

***Verbrechen mit Vorbedacht*** ('Forethought crime', TV film, 1967)

Based on a novella by Witold Gombrowicz, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Pete Ariel, **Screenplay:** Pier Paul Read, Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Gerd von Bonin, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger-Uterhardt, **Art Direction:** Günther

Naumann, **Sound:** David Llywelyn, **Production Company:** SFB (Berlin), **Cast:** Andrea Grosske (Cecilia Katz), Maria Schanda (Frau Katz), Vadim Glowna (Anton Katz), Willy Semmelrogge (investigating judge Hopek), **Release Date:** 22 November 1967 (ARD).

***Malatesta*** (feature film, 1969)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Pete Ariel, **Screenplay:** Michael Koser, Peter Lilienthal, Heathcote Williams, **Cinematography:** Willy Pankau, **Editing:** Annemarie Weigand, **Art Direction:** Roger von Möllendorf, **Sound:** George Gruntz, **Production Companies:** Manfred Durniok Produktion für Film und Fernsehen (Berlin), SFB (Berlin), **Cast:** Eddie Constantine (Malatesta), Vladimir Pucholt (Gardstein), Christiane Noonan (Nina Vassileva), Diana Senior (Ljuba Milstein), Heathcote Williams (Josef Solokov), **Release Date:** 26 May 1970 (ARD).

***Die Sonne angreifen*** ('Attacking the sun', TV film, 1970/71)

Based on a novel by Witold Gombrowicz, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Gerd von Bonin, **Editing:** Annemarie Weigand, **Art Direction:** Gianni Longo, Geneviève Kapuler, **Sound:** George Gruntz, **Production Companies:** Iduna Film (Munich), SFB (Berlin), **Cast:** Jess Hahn (Hippolit, Peter Hirche (Maggadino), Isolde Miler (Amelia), Gerry Miller (Karol), Dieter Schidor (Walter), Ingo Thouret (Skuziak), Willy Semmelrogge (Friedrich), **Release Date:** 11 May 1971 (ARD).

***Shirley Holm for President*** (documentary, 1971)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Horst Zeidler, **Editing:** Russell Parker, **Production Company:** Produktion 1 im Filmverlag der Autoren (München), **With:** Shirley Chisholm, Conrad Chisholm, **Release Date:** 14 November 1972 (ZDF).

*La Victoria* (feature film, 1973)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, Antonio Skármeta, **Cinematography:** Silvio Caiozzi, **Editing:** Heidi Genée, **Art Direction:** Cecilia Boissier, **Sound:** Hajo von Zündt, **Production Companies:** Produktion 1 im Filmverlag der Autoren (Munich), ZDF (Mainz), **Cast:** Paula Moya (Marcela), Carmen Lazo (as herself), Vincente Santa Maria (Paula's uncle), Miguel Ángel Carrizo (Cosme), **Release Date:** 17 September 1973 (ZDF).

*Es herrscht Ruhe im Land/Calm Prevails Over the Country* (feature film, 1976)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Eduardo Duran and Luis Filipe Rocha, **Screenplay:** Antonio Skármeta, Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Robby Müller, Abel Alboim, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Sound:** Angel Parra, **Production Companies:** Film-Fernsehen-Autoren-Team (FFAT, Munich), ZDF (Mainz), Österreichischer Rundfunk (ORF, Vienna), **Cast:** Charles Vanel (Granddad Parra), Henriqueta Maya (Angelica), Eduardo Duran (Miguel Neira), Luciano Noble (Paselli, Angelica's father), Zita Duarte (doctor, Miguel's sister), Uberlinda Cordera (teacher), Antonio Skármeta (lawyer), **Release Dates:** 16 January 1976 (West German theatres), 1 April 1977 (East German theatres), 5 January 1977 (ZDF), 12 July 1977 (DFF1).

*David* (feature film, 1978)

Based on a report by Joel König, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, Ulla Ziemann, in collaboration with Jurek Becker, **Cinematography:** Al Ruban, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Hans Gailling, **Sound:** Wojciech Kilar, **Production Companies:** Von Vietinghoff Filmproduktion (Berlin), FFAT (Munich), Pro-ject Filmproduktion im Filmverlag der Autoren (Munich), **Cast:** Torsten Henties (young David), Mario Fischel (David as adult), Walter Taub (Rabbis Singer, David's father), Irena Vrkljan (David's mother), Eva Mattes (Toni, David's sister), Dominique Horwitz (Leo, David's brother), Gustav Rudolf Sellner (factory owner), **Release Date:** 9 March 1979 (West German theatres).

***Der Aufstand/The Uprising*** (feature film, 1980)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Antonio Yglesias, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, Antonio Skármeta, **Cinematography:** Michael Ballhaus, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, Fernando Castro, Maria Victoria Cardona, Mercedes Galeyno Manzanares, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, **Production Companies:** Independent Film Heinz Angermeyer GmbH (Munich), Von Vietinghoff Filmproduktion (Berlin), Provobis Gesellschaft für Film und Fernsehen (Hamburg), (ZDF) (Mainz), Istmo (San Jose, Costa Rica), INCINE (Managua), **Cast:** Agustin Pereira (Agustin), Carlos Catania (Antonio, Agustin's father), Maria Lourdes Centano de Zelaya (Agustin's mother), Vicky Montero (Agustin's sister), Oscar Castillo (Captain Flores), **Release Dates:** 24 October 1980 (West German theatres), 17 September 1982 (East German theatres).

***Dear Mr. Wonderful/Ruby's Dream*** (feature film, 1981)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Ulla Ziemann, Jerry Jeffee and Genie Joseph, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, Sam Koperwas, **Cinematography:** Michael Ballhaus, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Jeffrey Townsend, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, **Production Companies:** SFB (Berlin), Von Vietinghoff Filmproduktion (Berlin), Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR, Cologne), **Cast:** Joe Pesci (Ruby Dennis), Karen Ludwig (Paula), Frank Vincent (Louie), Richard S. Castellano (Agent), **Release Date:** 24 August 1984 (West German theatres).

***Das Autogramm/The Autograph*** (feature film, 1984)

Based on a novel by Osvaldo Soriano, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Ulla Ziemann and Miguel Cardoso, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Michael Ballhaus, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Georgio Carrozzoni, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, Juan José Mosalini, **Production Companies:** Provobis Gesellschaft für Film und Fernsehen (Hamburg), Von Vietinghoff Filmproduktion (Berlin), Euro-America-Films (Paris), **Cast:** Juan José Mosalini (Andrés Galván, musician), Ángel del Villar (Tony Rocha, boxer), Anna Larretta (Ana Gallo), Pierre Bernard Douby (Ignaz Zuckerman), Hanns Zischler (Leutnant Suarez), Dominique Nato (Sepulveda), Vito Mata (local police

officer), **Release Dates:** 12 October 1984 (West German theatres), 3 January 1990 (DFF1).

***Das Schweigen des Dichters*** ('The poet's silence', feature film, 1986)

Based on a short story by Abraham B. Yehoshua, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Justus Pankau, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Franz Bauer, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, **Production Companies:** Edgar Reitz Filmproduktions GmbH (Munich), WDR (Cologne), **Cast:** Jakov Lind (poet Yoram Lifchiz), Len Ramas (Yoram's son Gideon), Daniel Kedem (Gideon as a child), Towje Kleiner (Fayermann), Vladimir Weigel (Avi), Barbara Lass (Janina), **Release Dates:** 9 April 1987 (West German theatres), 29 May 1988 (ARD).

***Der Radfahrer vom San Cristóbal*** ('The cyclist of San Cristóbal', feature film, 1987)

Based on a short story by Antonio Skármeta, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Antonio Skármeta, Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Horst Zeidler, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Juan Carlos Castillo, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, **Production Companies:** Edgar Reitz Filmproduktions GmbH (Munich), ZDF (Mainz), **Cast:** René Baeza (cyclist Santiago Escalante), Luz Jiménez (Santiago's mother), Dante Pesce (Santiago's coach), Javier Maldonado (business man Bruno Picado), **Release Dates:** 26 May 1988 (West German theatres), 6 March 1989 (ZDF).

***Wasserman. Der singende Hund*** ('Wasserman. The singing dog', TV film, 1994)

Based on a novel by Yoram Kaniuk, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Ulla Ziemann and Eylon Ratzkowsky, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Gerard Vandenberg, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Avi Avivi, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, **Production Companies:** Objectiv Film (Hamburg), ZDF (Mainz), **Cast:** Tal Feingold (Tali), Jill Feingold (Selina), Roy Nathanson (Roy), Rami Danon (Max Klepfisch), Yonathan Hova (Johnny), Rusty Jacobs (Dr. Sunshine), **Release Date:** 14 April 1995 (ZDF).

*Angesichts der Wälder/Facing the Forests* (feature film, 1994)

Based on a short story by Abraham B. Yehoshua, **Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, **Screenplay:** Peter Lilienthal, **Cinematography:** Gerard Vandenberg, **Editing:** Sigrun Jäger, **Art Direction:** Avi Avivi, **Sound:** Claus Bantzer, **Production Companies:** rubicon Film (Cologne), Israfilm (Tel Aviv), SWF (Baden-Baden), **Cast:** Rusty Jacobs (Noach), Muhammad Abu Site (Abdul Karim), Raha Abu Site (Nahida, Abdul's daughter), Adi Nizan (Lucienne), Rami Danon (manager of the forestation department), Ami Vainberg (army officer), Slomo Sadan (Noach's professor), Avner Peled (bus driver), **Release Dates:** 6 July 1995 (German theatres), 23 August 1996 (ARTE).

*Camilo – Der lange Weg zum Ungehorsam/Camilo – The Long Road to Disobedience* (documentary, 2007)

**Direction:** Peter Lilienthal, assisted by Raffaele Passerini, **Cinematography:** Carlos Aparicio, **Editing:** Julian Isfort, **Sound:** Seraphin, **Production Companies:** steeleht (Offenbach a. M.), Filmwerkstatt Münster (Münster), Triangle 7 (Brussels), **With:** Camilo Mejía, Fernando Suárez del Solar, **Release Dates:** 24 April 2008 (German Theatres), 23 September 2009 (ARTE).

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