

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications -- Department of English

English, Department of

2016

Biopolitical Education: The Edukators and the Politics of the Immanent Outside


Roland Vegso

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, rolandvegso@gmail.com

Marco Abel

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, mabel2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishfacpubs>

 Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), and the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

Vegso, Roland and Abel, Marco, "Biopolitical Education: The Edukators and the Politics of the Immanent Outside" (2016). *Faculty Publications -- Department of English*. 198.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishfacpubs/198>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications -- Department of English by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature

Volume 40

Issue 2 On 24/7: Neoliberalism and the Undoing of
Time

Article 7

1-1-2016

Biopolitical Education: The Edukators and the Politics of the Immanent Outside

Roland Vegso

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, rolandvegso@gmail.com

Marco Abel

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, mabel2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://newprairiepress.org/sttcl>

 Part of the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), [German Literature Commons](#), and the [Modern Literature Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Vegso, Roland and Abel, Marco (2016) "Biopolitical Education: The Edukators and the Politics of the Immanent Outside," *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature*: Vol. 40: Iss. 2, Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1885>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.

Biopolitical Education: The Edukators and the Politics of the Immanent Outside

Abstract

The article examines the relationship of biopower and cinema through the analysis of a specific film, Hans Weingartner's *The Edukators* (2004). It argues that in the age of biopower, resistance to power cannot be conceived of in terms of a radical outside to power. Rather, biopolitical resistance must take place on the terrain of this power itself, that is, within the field of life. Therefore, what we call the "viral" politics of *The Edukators* must be interpreted precisely in this context. The film argues that the exhaustion of political paradigms inherited from the past century forces us to take the logic of biopower seriously. It presents a dual critique of the neoliberal exploitation of life and the politics of death that defines contemporary terrorism. In place of these two, it offers the audience the model of a certain "biopolitical education" that imagines resistance as fully immanent to the field of power.

Keywords

biopower, biopolitics, terrorism, realism, distribution of sensible, resistance, neoliberalism, German, cinema, *The Edukators*

Biopolitical Education: *The Edukators* and the Politics of the Immanent Outside

Marco Abel and Roland Végső
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Over the last couple of decades, the concepts of biopower and biopolitics have emerged as omnipresent, if not quite indispensable, tools for the interpretation of our historical present. The assumption that our history is the history of biopower appears to be the tacit common denominator of many attempts to come to terms with the current global situation. In fact, the heuristic power of these categories has proven to be so strong that they have been used to explain the political catastrophes of the twentieth century as well as the current “global war on terror.” Not surprisingly, then, the proliferation of these attempts to understand power in terms of “life” has necessarily led to an increased preoccupation with the precise meaning of these terms. Given how elusive seemingly simple terms like “life” and “power” are, it might not be an exaggeration to state that the idea of biopower itself is well on its way to becoming a genuinely overdetermined category. But what remains common to the different definitions and usages of the term is the basic Foucauldian assumption that the moment when power takes life as its object, politics itself moves beyond the classical paradigms of sovereignty, and political struggles have to respond by staging their own interventions in relation to this new object (*History of Sexuality* 145).

So the question we want to raise here is a contemporary paraphrase of the classic question raised by André Bazin: what is cinema in the age of biopower? How can we conceptualize the relationship between cinema and power at the precise historical moment when the latter, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue, has set its eyes on the complete colonization of “social life in its entirety” (*Empire* xv)? Needless to say, these questions are loaded with a number of ambiguities whose complexities do not necessarily allow for easy answers. Does cinema have a politics that is inherent to its technological apparatuses? Is it possible or in any sense useful to attribute a historical function to an artistic technology that would also determine its political uses? Is cinema merely a tool of power itself or does it, in fact, carry emancipatory potential?

We might find a few preliminary answers to some of these questions by mapping the history of cinema onto the history of power as Michel Foucault outlined it. Upon first glance, it might appear that cinema is, historically speaking, coeval with what we call, following Foucault, panoptic power. At least, this is the most common interpretation of cinema’s relation to power: the birth of cinema introduces to the aesthetic field a new principle of vision and visibility that corresponds to practices of perpetual surveillance within the social and political

fields.¹ Seen from this perspective, then, cinema could be defined as the very expression of the fundamental principle of a specific type of power. But, given the fact that the Foucauldian scheme imagines the emergence of biopower as the intensification of panoptic power, the question emerges: is it now necessary to define cinema's political relevance beyond the principle of panopticism? Does the biopolitics of cinema necessarily move us beyond the logic of surveillance?²

The rudimentary periodization outlined here, however, can be quite misleading. When we speak of "cinema in the age of biopower," our language might suggest that cinema has preceded this age and, having survived its birth in the age of panopticism, it is now looking for a new purpose under the current global regime of power. But even a basic historical survey will necessarily confirm that the emergence of cinema belongs to an age in which biopower has already superseded panopticism as the dominant mode of power in the West.³ After all, the Foucauldian definition of panoptic power works with examples that often long predate the actual invention of cinema. Thus, if we follow Foucault's historical scheme, we would have to conclude that while cinema was anticipated by the logic of panoptic power, its actual birth took place under the ascendancy of biopower in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. According to this logic, then, we would have to start with the hypothesis that cinema has always already been in some kind of relation to biopower and has been "biopolitical" from the very start. We might even go so far as saying that cinema is in fact an artistic form that is more appropriate for the age of biopower than that of panoptic power.

Thus, if we accept the proposition that cinema is just as much a biopolitical as a panoptic phenomenon, a common mistake in our treatments of cinema's relation to power becomes clearly visible: in the past, we tended to pay attention only, or at least primarily, to the panoptic possibilities of cinema. As we know from Foucault, a crucial aspect of panoptic power was the full visibility of the subject and the invisibility of power. To be more precise, if we follow Jeremy Bentham's model, we should say that the basic principle of panopticism is what we might want to call the visibility of the invisibility of power. After all, the ominous watchtower in the center of Bentham's prison is obviously visible even if we do not know whether or not guards occupy it. Couldn't we say, then, that biopower slightly modifies this formula by instead switching our focus to what we might want to call the invisibility of the visibility of power? In other words, the moment power becomes fully immanent to life, power is put on visible display in every gesture and every moment of life. Take, for example, the way we relate to cell phones. Their phenomenological closeness renders them almost completely invisible as tools of power in everyday usage. In fact, as extensions of our bodies, they are mostly experienced as tools of private life. This complete visibility of power, however, is masked in a way that is different from the logic of the Panopticon. We do not need the threat of the visibility of the invisibility of power,

since we have now fully internalized the justifications of this power. We want to act in accordance with biopower precisely because we accept that it is acting in our best interest: so even though we understand how smartphones can be used for surveillance and control purposes, we are not willing to give them up, not least since we perceive this technology as actually enhancing our capacities to communicate and, ultimately, live our lives. As a result, we do not see power for what it is, since it appears to us simply as life.

We can, therefore, paraphrase our opening question in more precise terms: is cinema in its most general form, which exceeds the classical theatrical exhibition space, a potential instrument of or a possible antidote to this invisibility of the full visibility of power?⁴ The source of the problem here is that in the age of biopower, every depiction of life is at the same time a representation of power, but this coincidence of life and power is no longer directly visible. We can see life, and, on occasion, we can see power at work in this life. But the fact that power aims at the complete saturation of life is difficult to put on display. In such an age, by virtue of representing a snippet of life, every film is necessarily also about power (even if only in a displaced sense). But this fact (that every representation of life is a representation of power) is not necessarily visible anymore. Society becomes a Panopticon in which the guards' tower has been demolished—not by the violent revolt of the subjects, but by power itself. It is precisely this moment—when the guards' tower is no longer necessary—that marks, in Foucault's analysis, the moment of transformation when biopower takes the place of panoptic power as the dominant mode of power (with panoptic power continuing to exert its effects as a residual mode of power). The inmates have learned to live in accordance with this power without the threat of the visibility of the invisibility of power.

This shift of focus from panoptic power to biopower, however, raises an important question: is it in fact true that the aesthetic force of cinema must be analyzed exclusively in terms of visibility? Is it true that cinema's relation to power must be interpreted exclusively on the level of vision? Can we not argue that the shift from panopticism to biopower also means that we need to examine cinema on a much broader *affective* level precisely because on the "biopolitical terrain," as Negri argues, "labor finds its value in affect, if affect is defined as the 'power to act' (Spinoza)" (79)? The fact that films become part of life in more complex forms than just through the visibility of life is hard to question. In other words, people go (and, arguably, have always gone) to the movies not just for the visual experience, but also in order to immerse themselves in the haptic, affective, auditory, and even social dimensions of cinema, which together in their totality directly inform life outside the movie theater. Could we, then, argue that cinema's function is not exhausted in visibility itself: its task, rather, is to tie the domain of visibility to a whole set of other affective domains. In such a case, the analysis of

cinema should also necessarily be shifted from an exclusive focus on visibility to the links cinema establishes between visibility and other fields of human experience.⁵

Nostalgia for the Outside

One way of paraphrasing our opening questions would be to inquire if it were possible to move beyond the logic of the permanent war that, according to Hardt and Negri, constitutes the essence of global biopower today (*Multitude* xi). Is there an outside to the system that has turned war into a “permanent social relation” (12)? And what is the function of cinema in relation to this outside? We can understand why many theorists and critics who locate themselves on the left on the political spectrum remain suspicious of, and often exhibit overt hostility to, the biopolitical paradigm that has been formulated with the greatest discursive force by Foucault. Indeed, in the end their rejection of this immanentist paradigm merely mirrors the embrace of the biopolitical paradigm by those who nevertheless remain attached to the idea of resistance grounded in an outside (located either in the here and now of the present or in an elsewhere that awaits us at the horizon). Both groups remain attached to the idea that an effective politics against oppressive forces in the present has to be a politics that affirms not only the possibility but also availability of a position outside those forces. It is, however, our position that a strong version of what Foucault teaches us—what his diagnosis of the present reveals—is precisely that a politics grounded in the assumption of an outside is predicated on a fundamentally erroneous nostalgic understanding of power. As appealing as it might be—intellectually, emotionally, aesthetically, or morally—such a conceptualization of politics simply costs us too much.

One of the most compelling formulations of the topology that we would like to articulate here can be found in Gilles Deleuze’s monograph on Foucault: “When power becomes bio-power, resistance becomes the power of life, a vital power that cannot be confined within species, environment or the paths of a particular diagram. Is not the force that comes from outside a certain idea of Life, a certain vitalism, in which Foucault’s thought culminates? Is not life this capacity to resist force?” (92-93). It is precisely under the conditions of biopower, Deleuze argues, that the power of resistance *is* life (comes from it and is of it). But life’s capacity to resist force is an immanent capacity. In other words, life is immanent to the very force field within which biopower is constituted as a force that takes life as its object. As a result, life is this immanent force of resistance whose relation to force can no longer be understood on the model of a simple exteriority. Resistance is a force whose exteriority is *intensively* immanent to the field of interiority that is life (86). This immanent outside, then, is a

fundamentally different outside from a dialectically conceived otherness since it is “farther away than any external world and even any form of exteriority, which henceforth comes infinitely closer” (86).

Yet, the desire for a position outside of the force field that has been variously called Empire, neoliberalism, or biopower should, in our view, be taken seriously as a symptom of the problem at hand, one that is affective in nature.⁶ The affective force carried by the sheer idea of an outside to capitalism, including its current iteration (neoliberalism), is considerable and must be heeded. We might say: it is one of *the* problems of the present, which Deleuze already expressed in prescient ways when in the early 1990s he noted the pleasure people experience in the very act of participating in closing the noose around their necks ever more tightly (“Postscript”). The pressing political problem, in other words, is neither that people somehow “want” to be repressed nor that they are tricked by ideological lure into passive submission to power. Rather, as Daniel W. Smith argues, the problem is that people invest serious stakes in social systems (such as neoliberal capitalism)—despite the fact that these systems thwart their interests—because our desires (drives, affects), far from being owned by us as subjects, are part of the capitalist infrastructure itself (Smith 74).⁷

Thus, because it is affective in nature—a matter of desire—we might further hold that the problem of contemporary biopower is best approached through the framework of aesthetics. As Jeffrey T. Nealon convincingly argues, the post-postmodern present of just-in-time neoliberal capitalism is best theorized as an intensification of the aesthetic paradigm of postmodernism (which as a cultural logic was, according to Fredric Jameson, fully immanent to the economic regime of late capitalism) (*Post-Postmodernism*). If Nealon is right, then we can see why many so insistently hold on to the memory of an outside as if that outside were (still) real and not something the existence of which might have been in the process of waning just at the time of what we still remember (often with nostalgia) as the last great political era (at least in the so-called “First World”): that of the 1960s (that decade when late modernism gave way to early postmodernism, if we can go along with Jameson’s famous periodization scheme). To put it differently, while the desire for the outside appears to be the abstract form of this longing, its actual content can be clearly identified as the more or less mythical memory of a concrete historical moment.

We find ourselves in a strange situation today: the memory of the 1960s continues to exert a strong influence on popular conceptualizations of political action.⁸ In fact, the affective force of this memory is so strong that, under its spell, we continue to believe that a mode of power that has in fact become residual is still dominant. It is precisely the positively charged affective nature of this memory that sustains the belief in the persistence of this older form of power. For if the once dominant regime of power can still be said to be in a hegemonic

position today, then the dream of the outside (which remains dialectically related to the system from which it is said to be apart) can be maintained and thus be allowed to fulfill an apparently fundamental desire that seems so essential that it might as well be considered natural to human life.

If this brief sketch of our state of affairs—notwithstanding its brevity and intentionally provocative bend—has some validity, then we have to ask how we can account for and even combat the reality of the affective force that is attached to this desire for the outside—for autonomy, authenticity, or whatever name is given to this outside. This is perhaps the fundamental question governing, in one way or the other, our present—and it is a question that a number of contemporary films appear to have engaged in intriguing but also often unacknowledged ways. As we would like to argue, then, it is precisely here that an analysis of the biopolitical horizon of contemporary cinema could get underway. In order to answer our questions about the relationship between cinema and biopower, we would need to examine the way contemporary cinema defines its relation to this power and the various affective investments in the mythical outside from which the critique of this power is imagined to be possible.⁹

Of course, such an analysis would demand a systematic engagement with a wide variety of films. For the purposes of this essay, however, we will single out one (perhaps even a somewhat unusual) example. Hans Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (*The Edukators*, 2004) is certainly one of these films that appears to address the issue of biopower in an oblique way. The film has solicited a number of persuasive critical responses, especially in the field of German Studies.¹⁰ Our goal, here, is not to dispute those arguments, but instead to reframe what we think this film is doing so obviously that this very obviousness might have obfuscated the uniqueness of its intervention in the mid-2000s. Notwithstanding the numerous arguments that examine the film for its politics, the particularity of its own post-9/11 *biopolitical* context has oddly remained, at best, in the margins.¹¹ As a premise, then, we want to proceed by suggesting that films such as *The Edukators* render sensible in their own “margins” the political and aesthetic consequences of the biopolitical paradigm that governs the present.

Of course, when we consider the fact that the director of *The Edukators* is well-known for harboring strong allegiances with a leftist political and moral project invested in the existence of an “outside,” our reading of *The Edukators* might seem like a dead end from the very start.¹² Nevertheless, we insist on pursuing this counterfactual interpretation, since we think that it will afford us the opportunity to shed some light on the question this special issue poses about the role that aesthetics and art—including cinema—might play in relation to the 24/7 regime: whether or not it is (still) possible to find “new ways of beating the timeless time of neoliberalism” (as the prompt for this special issue on 24/7 formulates the question). We turn in this essay to *The Edukators* not only because

we think that it answers the question in the negative, but also because it seems to suggest that the question itself might already be shaped by a nostalgia for an outside in that it heavily invests in the notion of the “new.”¹³

As many contemporary films with a biopolitical focus, *The Edukators* turns to the question of *terrorism* at the very moment when the so-called “war on terror” had become the organizing principle of the permanent state of exception that we live in—to wit, an allegedly temporary affair that is, nevertheless, in effect 24/7 and has achieved temporal transcendence precisely by assuming the fullness of time.¹⁴ What strikes us about the film is that it conceptualizes terrorism in an unusual way.¹⁵ First and foremost, it forces us to reflect on the paradoxical nature of a terrorist act that lacks any public representation. As a result, the film identifies the political force of this kind of terrorism not with brute power or physical violence but, rather, with an affective force. Differently put, the film suggests that this kind of political action does not belong to the disciplinary or panoptic regime of power, but to that of control societies or, in Foucault’s sense, to the regime of biopower. Indeed, we might go so far as to say that the film imagines a viral politics as an immanent mode of response to the regime of biopower. We can evoke here the model of a virus precisely in the sense that these political actions “jump” from one subject (or group of subjects) to another without conscious or intentional communication between those subjects: their actions, the film suggests, exert a degree of effectivity, or force, that allows them to be imitated elsewhere, in a different place and by different people who are not connected to the original Edukators (since no traditional communication, via representation, takes place).¹⁶ Such a politics, contrary to what most might think about the film and its director, is not predicated on either the need or hope for an outside (that would remain nothing but the dialectical other to the inside of the system). Instead, we view *The Edukators* as an attempt to imagine in dramatic form something that is still in need of more consistent theorization: an affirmation of a politics of a radical outside that paradoxically remains purely immanent.¹⁷

The Viral Politics of *The Edukators*

The central question posed by *The Edukators*—whether in the age of neoliberal capitalism it is still possible to engage in meaningful political action—is formulated early on by Jule (Julia Jentsch), the film’s Catherine to Jan’s (Daniel Brühl) and Peter’s (Stipe Erceg) Jules and Jim.¹⁸ Jule is disillusioned by the ineffectiveness of the classical political activism in which she engages, such as protesting the sale of sneakers produced under exploitative conditions in Southeast Asian sweatshops. She is furthermore dejected by her dire financial situation resulting from a car accident she caused while driving without insurance. In other words, both her public actions and private concerns are responses to

corporate forces that show no interest in the effects they have on individual fates. This, of course, hardly qualifies as news. But what is remarkable about *The Edukators* is that it takes seriously the consequences of this reflection on this state of affairs.

Unlike the viewers, who have already seen her boyfriend, Peter, and Jan break into mansions in Berlin's wealthy neighborhoods only to rearrange furniture without appropriating anything for their own purposes, Jule is still ignorant of the true nature of their occasional night excursions when she is sitting with Jan on the rooftop of her apartment building from which she is about to be evicted. Reflecting on her own dismal state of affairs, Jule remarks to Jan: "that's why there aren't any more youth movements. Everyone has the feeling it's all been done before. Others tried and failed. Why should it work for us?"



At this moment, the scene is staged so that it invites us to generalize Jule's predicament as *the* state of affairs governing the present. It does this both by using cinematic shot compositions that give us a sense of intimacy with the protagonists (as if we were with them—both spatially and emotionally—at this moment) and by reinforcing the fact that the film has already successfully presented Jule as the primary locus for spectatorial identification. Having fallen victim to what the film affirms as a systemic case of injustice endemic to the neoliberal capitalist system, Jule is a smart young woman who is played by an actress skilled enough to convincingly infuse her character with the sincere convictions of someone who yearns to be an idealist but who has been disappointed by her "traditional" political actions one too many times. Jan's response—that the best ideas of all revolutions survive and that, similarly, what is good in private revolts survives and strengthens the individual—foreshadows the plot development. Jule soon joins Jan on an "edukating" excursion while Peter is on vacation in Spain—an excursion that, in turn, goes awry when she later discovers that she left her cell phone at the house of the man whose car she had wrecked.¹⁹ Searching for her

phone, they are surprised by Hardenberg's return, which ultimately leads all three to kidnap him to a hut in the Austrian alps, the setting for the film's long middle part.

What is noteworthy about Jan's response to Jule, however, is that he does not contest the fundamental insight of her analysis: that the conditions of possibility for rebellious youth movements—and by implication any mass movement—are no longer available because the political actions associated with mass movements have all been tried.²⁰ And this is where a biopolitical reading of the film can get underway. As Roger Cook astutely argues, the political actions in which the *Edukators* engage are based on a rejection of “more traditional forms of radical opposition in favor of a biopolitical solution that can yield self-liberation from this pervasive regime of control” (320). Put differently, the protagonists' actions are not driven by a nostalgia for the 1960s—often thought of as the last “golden” age of student and workers protest and mass movements—notwithstanding the fact that many commentators seek to situate their actions in the context of Situationist *détournement* praxis (Palfreyman), the *Spaßguerilla* concept of West-Berlin's Commune I in the late '60s (Homewood), or postmodern pop politics (McCarthy). Without wanting to contest any of these astute readings, we nevertheless want to take the discussion of the film in a slightly different direction by foregrounding two aspects that have essentially gone unnoticed (or in any case have not been deemed worth discussing): first, we will insist on the fact that for the *Edukators* the target of political action is no longer what it used to be for the activists during the period of the “long '68” with its violent legacy; and, second, we will try to draw the consequences of the fact that, according to the film's plot, this new kind of terrorist action remains without any public representation.²¹

Underlying both of these points is the dissolution of the public-private binary or, in the terms of this special issue, the idea that there is private time and public time, with the former being the very time that remains outside of, and therefore has to be defended against, capitalism's relentless efforts to valorize human activity. The film, in other words, takes seriously Jonathan Crary's argument that “capitalism cannot limit itself” (128). But unlike Crary, who posits “the restorative inertness of sleep” as an antidote to the “deathliness of all the accumulation, financialization, and waste that have devastated anything once held in common” (128)—he argues that “sleep can stand for the durability of the social, and that sleep might be analogous to other thresholds at which society could defend or protect itself” (25)—*The Edukators* does not posit sleep as the last remainder of an outside. Contrary to the “nostalgic longing, not for a calm, beautiful, and orderly life but for a time when political activism and movement still seemed to ‘make sense’” that Maria Stehle attributes to Weingartner (415), the film's protagonists show no nostalgia for this (lost) outside. Instead, as Cook

posits, they proceed from the premise, seemingly in agreement with Hardt and Negri, that “the first question of political [action] today” is “not if or even why there will be resistance and rebellion, but rather how to determine the enemy against which to rebel” (317). Whereas in the ‘70s, the RAF explicitly sought to target public figures such as captains of industry and politicians, the film’s activists target wealthy people regardless of their public—that is: representative—function. We do not gain the impression, for example, that prior to Jan and Jule’s breaking into Hagenberg’s home Peter and Jan even knew about their victims’ jobs. And even though Jule persuades Jan to break into Hagenberg’s home, her motive for doing so is private revenge rather than any public, representative function he may serve. When Jan wants them to leave the house, she requests that they do something more substantial than merely rearranging some furniture and decor because, as she puts it, “ich muss ein paar Agressionen abbauen” ‘I need to work off some aggression.’

Indeed, up until his unintended encounter with Hagenberg, Jan (together with Peter) has always managed to leave the homes they “educated” before their owners’ return (and without destroying anything but breaking a window). While they left traces of their former presence—rearranged objects and notes stating, “You have too much money” or “The years of plenty are over,” signed “Die Erziehungsberechtigten” (The Edukators, or, more literally: those who have the right to educate)—those traces were not meant for public consumption. Indeed, even when a small paragraph reporting on their activities appears in the back pages of a Berlin newspaper, Peter and Jan, though pleased, neither celebrate nor even linger on the fact that their actions have acquired a small measure of media attention. Instead of dwelling on the representational effect of their actions, Peter is more interested in showing Jan the negligee he bought for Jule, not yet knowing that his girlfriend has fallen in love with his best friend. Indeed, at no time does the film suggest that the Edukators desire public notoriety: unlike their terrorist predecessors, the Edukators neither seek to communicate with the public via video recordings nor attempt to persuade a readership through publishing manifestos or declarations in which they would justify their actions, as the RAF’s Ulrike Meinhof famously did. Note, too, that their actions are not “spectacular” in the sense that, for example, the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 were. Whereas the Edukators’ actions certainly evoke an activist tradition that includes the Commune I and the Situationists, the Edukators nevertheless limit their actions to private spaces that are invisible to the public. Just as they do not seek self-representation by communicating through newspapers, television, or the internet, they also do not seek with their home invasions to create what one might call a “representative” act—one whose targets exceed those who are most immediately affected, as was the case with the 9/11 attacks. In short, their actions remain essentially *invisible* to the public: their

terrorism works without this kind of representation, and for this reason it neither is predicated on symbolic meaning nor does it aspire to create such meaning.

To put this differently, the traces left behind by the Edukators are not *representational* traces, or, better, the primary function of these traces is not public symbolism. Instead, as Jan explicitly claims in a statement that has largely been ignored by commentators, the goal is to ensure that their wealthy victims “sich nicht so sicher fühlen in ihren privaten Hochsicherheitszonen. Das ist doch das gruseligste Gefühl: du kommst nach Hause und jemand war da und hat dich beobachtet, und wird dich auch weiterhin beobachten” ‘don’t feel so safe in their private high security zones. It’s the most horrifying feeling: you come home and notice someone was there and observed you—and will continue to observe you.’



Instead of taking goods and passing them on to the needy, as Jan continues to explain, they do not steal anything because their victims are used to robbers: “Ne, die sollen richtig Schiss kriegen. Wenn die nämlich am Bankschalter stehen, flüster ‘ne leise Stimme: ‘Sie haben zu viel Geld. Sie haben zu viel Geld.’ Und in dem Moment sind sie ganz alleine. Und dann kann ihnen keiner mehr helfen: weder das Geld, noch die Frau, noch die scheiss Bullen” ‘No, they need to be really afraid. For when they are at an ATM machine a quiet voice whispers: ‘You have too much money’. And at this moment they are all alone. And then no one can help them—not their money, their wife, or the shitty cops.’ (When Jan discovers that on one occasion, contrary to their agreement, Peter actually did take an expensive watch, he gets upset at his friend and throws the watch out the window as they are driving in their old VW bus through Berlin.)

Notwithstanding the film’s appropriation of cinematic strategies typical of Hollywood films (Cook 324) or its possibly troubling gender politics (see note 19), what makes the film interesting is that by taking seriously how neoliberal power works, it ends up revealing that the classic (public) targets of terrorism (the state, the police, or public figures) are no longer appropriate targets for politics in the age of biopower.²² Instead, the Edukators’ terrorist acts withdraw from public symbolism to a physical or visceral attack on the everyday life of their targets. The ultimate goal of these acts is to produce a double critique of the dialectical co-dependence of contemporary capitalism and the violent and suicidal form of terrorism that is conceived of as its other. In effect, the Edukators’ actions aim to

deconstruct this opposition by formulating the coordinates of a biopolitical form of resistance to both extremes. We might even say that what the film (unwittingly, perhaps) begins to conceptualize for us is a new form of terrorism: a properly biopolitical form of terrorism that we propose, with due caution, to call “bio-terrorism.”²³

However, our coinage should not be mistaken for the kind of terrorism based on bio-chemical warfare. Indeed, as we just noted, the properly biopolitical “bio-terrorism” at work in *The Edukators* is opposed to the other kind of bio-terrorism, for whereas the latter seeks to de-capacitate and even destroy life, the former is not about destroying life. Unlike the terrorism that takes the life of the enemy, this kind of political action aims to infiltrate the life of its targets. The point of bio-terrorist actions, then, is not to physically harm or even kill their targets in order to assert the power to take life. Rather, this bio-terror contests neoliberalism on its own grounds by responding in kind: it challenges power to assert its power to make life. The goal of bio-terrorism is to make its targets live a particular life by intervening in their lives on a micro-level; in so doing, it performs what we might want to call a micro-bio-politics. In other words, the goal of bio-terrorism is to produce a new kind of life, thus contesting the very operational principle of the age of biopower on its own terms, which Foucault has famously defined as “a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (*History of Sexuality*, 138). And this power to foster life operates, as imagined by *The Edukators*, very much akin to a virus.²⁴ It affects the subjects that have been exposed to it on the level of life itself: paradoxically for a film whose English title foregrounds education and a group who call themselves, in the original German, die *Erziehungsberechtigten* (which refers to people who have been granted an institutional or formal right to educate but who are not necessarily the parents of those whom they have the right to educate), they actually do not aim to educate their targets—not, at least, if we think of educating in the more traditional leftist sense of consciousness raising. Once the wealthy victims’ home has been revealed as susceptible to invasion by “the force of the outside,” their owners will no longer be able to shake the resulting sensation—of violation, of danger, of the unknown, of the invisible that may always already be with(in) them.

This, then, also explains why we purposefully retain the term “terrorism.” In an age when every resistance to capitalism is potentially coded as a form of terrorism, it might appear that the politically useful task would be to not rely on this category to describe the actions of these young people. But it is impossible to deny that the *Edukators*’ goal is to instill fear in a specific segment of society: the message of the movie appears to be that the rich should be scared of the masses. The ultimate insult today is that the rich are not even afraid of the people whose lives produce their wealth. The problem is that characters like Hagenberg are too

comfortably entrenched in their fortresses of power and live their lives in absolute indifference toward the lives of the majority.

Arguably, however, the film's intriguing insights about politics in the age of biopower might have gone unnoticed (or been reduced to a discussion of the legacy of the '60s) because of its relatively traditional cinematic form, which, as Homewood points out, "might be said to speak to the 'pop' sensibility of a consumerist youth-driven society" (342). Unlike for the film's critics, however, this is not a problem for Homewood, who argues that the film offers "'pop'-based protest with content" and defends this strategy because "the productive dialogue which the director sets up with the beleaguered memory of '1968' ultimately challenges a prevailing trend towards its commodification by restoring its significance as a politically symbolic episode" (342). From his perspective, the politics of the *Edukators* and the film are rooted in an affirmation of the slogan widely associated with '68: "all power to the imagination." Indeed, the film's critique of media—especially TV—provides substantial fodder for such a reading, which is why it would be wrong to suggest its incorrectness.²⁵ Still, we might say that the problem with defending the film's aesthetic by suggesting that it ultimately seeks to keep alive or re-actualize the '60s demand to give "all power to the imagination" might very well be that such a program would merely consist of seeking new art forms and a new aesthetic that might be able to elude appropriation by capitalism. The *Edukators*' own actions, however, are not about creating new forms of art, nor, it must be said, are they about *not* doing so. Rather, they remain indifferent to the demand for novelty and as such could be seen as in fact rejecting the (aesthetic) ideology of the new—perhaps exactly because of the insight that today the new and its glorification fuel the engine of the very system that such a politics of the new seeks to combat. Cook, who is the only one to discuss the film alongside its biopolitical context, hints at this problem in his reading of the film when arguing that the "biopolitical philosophy put into practice by the *Edukators* extends to all aspects of life, including film aesthetics. Weingartner applies it when he appropriates the cinematic strategies of Hollywood and turns them back against the capitalist system that invented them" (324). Instead of aggressively attacking his audience's viewing habits, that is, the director "embraces aesthetic elements that Leftist filmmakers in the past have generally rejected as manipulative tactics of commercial production unsuitable for their political purposes. [He] chooses, rather, the heightened realist style of representational narrative film that has become the lingua franca of global cinema" (324).

It is precisely this representational realism that seems at odds with the film's diegetic (and implicitly also extra-diegetic) radical politics. For the assumption is that such a mainstream form is unable to live up to the politics that is encapsulated by the film's English title: to educate. Indeed, is it not the case

that the very title suggests that the function of art might be pedagogical in nature, that art is political action with a pedagogical goal? Perhaps what needs to be attended to with regard to the film is that the concept of education it offers is not really commensurate with the classic paradigm of “consciousness raising” in which the paradigm of representational realism traditionally trades.

The Politics of the Radical Inside (A Speculative Conclusion)

So what kind of an education takes place in *The Edukators*? We might be able to use this question to formulate a highly speculative conclusion that goes beyond common interpretations of the film. Our discussion so far has suggested that the critical consensus concerning the film pits the form of the film against its political content. As long as we think in traditional terms about the film’s educational dimensions, this contradiction indeed cannot be reconciled. But our reading has tried to show that it is not entirely correct to assume that on the level of its form the film is simply an unqualified affirmation of the currently hegemonic form of cinematic realism. In order to be able to make sense of this alleged contradiction, we might first have to take seriously what the movie teaches us on the level of its content. On this level, as an initial step, we could argue that the film gestures towards an a-representational politics of affect through its dramatization of a terrorist act without public representations. We should, of course, heed the contradictions of this proposition: on the one hand, the film argues on the level of representation (on the level of its plot) for an a-representational politics; on the other hand, it stages a terrorist act without public representation in the form of cinema (a form of public representation).

These contradictions, however, are not as detrimental to the educational mission of the film as some would like to believe. For if we start with these contradictions on the level of the content, we might have to ask whether the choice of form for the film was not already determined by these speculations. That is, the real question is not whether realism in general is an appropriate form of political radicalism in the age of contemporary capitalism; rather, we need to ask whether the choice of form for this specific film can be made consistent with the politics put forth on the level of its content (namely, the argument in favor of an a-representational political act). Seen from this angle, then, our concern is not to pass judgment on realism *in toto* but to examine if there are possible tactical uses of realism today.

On the level of its content, then, the film provides us with two basic paradigms of political action. Relying on a set of old categories, we could call these the paradigms of *redistribution* and *re-education*. The first applies to the fact that the Edukators break into houses and leave without directly engaging in the classic political program of the re-appropriation of wealth. They enter the

homes of the class enemy, but only to reorganize objects. They are, no doubt, criminals, but they are not robbers. This is where the classic meaning of redistribution breaks down: while the Edukators are certainly interested in the redistribution of wealth, what they actually redistribute is merely the spatial organization of the enemy's dwelling. All they do is leave behind traces of their very existence. By doing so, they affect the space and those inhabiting it with a (signaletic) force.²⁶ The meaning of this force—what it signifies or communicates—is less important for the effectiveness of their actions than what they in fact do, namely, they begin to govern their targets' mode of being in the world from the very moment of the discovery of these traces.

If we were to take this politics of reorganization seriously, we could read this part of the plot as an allegory of a specific kind of political action. What is the essence of this reorganization? On this allegorical level, the film suggests that political action must take place within the enemy's house: the act of resistance itself is internal to the system that it opposes. The Edukators do not appeal to a radical outside but to a radical inside.²⁷ We might even conclude that, rather than stepping outside the system that they criticize, they suggest that we need to go further inside beyond the superficial interiority that is understood under the name "privacy" today. Taking this logic a step further, we could say that the film proposes an immanentist politics of the radical inside that identifies the nature of political action as the reorganization of already available resources (against the politics of the radical outside that defines political action exclusively as the invention of the absolutely new). As Deleuze once argued, "any society is defined not so much by its contradictions [inside/outside] as by its [immanent] lines of flight" ("Control and Becoming" 171)—virtual lines that can be actualized by rearranging, or redistributing, the very real forces that in any given distribution block them.

It is this reading of the politics of redistribution (as the redistribution of the sensible) that might allow us to give a different interpretation of the surprise ending of the film. The film's narrative logic initially leads us to believe that the protagonists will be caught by a highly militarized police force; but just as we ready ourselves for their (genre-typical) final showdown with the police, the film reveals that they are already *elsewhere*, outside Germany, on route to a new educating mission involving an attack on communication satellites in the Mediterranean. As all surprise endings, this one is also predicated upon the assumption that some information was withheld from someone (the audience or specific characters) along the way. As the plot was unfolding before our eyes, we lost sight of the simple fact that we are being manipulated and are given only strategically structured information that will not allow us to correctly guess the film's ending. Arguably, in this particular case, the ending forces us to reconsider the long middle section of the plot that assumes the form of a drawn-out

ideological discussion between the Edukators and their kidnapped class enemy. For what the ending suggests is that somewhere along the way some crucial information was withheld from us, and we cannot exactly identify the point in the plot from which this ending can be deduced logically. In other words, somebody was not telling the truth.

A close analysis of the film's last minutes, following the moment when the Edukators return to Berlin and release Hagenberg at his house, would reveal significant logical inconsistencies that severely undermine the film's overall representational realist aesthetics, including its insinuations of verisimilitude and logical consistency. For example, the film's editing links images of Hagenberg seemingly struggling to decide whether or not to call the police on his erstwhile captors, of the Edukators asleep together in a bed in a (momentarily) unspecified location, of a militarized police force storming an apartment while Hagenberg awaits the result of their action in a police car, of Jule waking up in response to a knock on the door, and of the police finding the apartment evacuated.

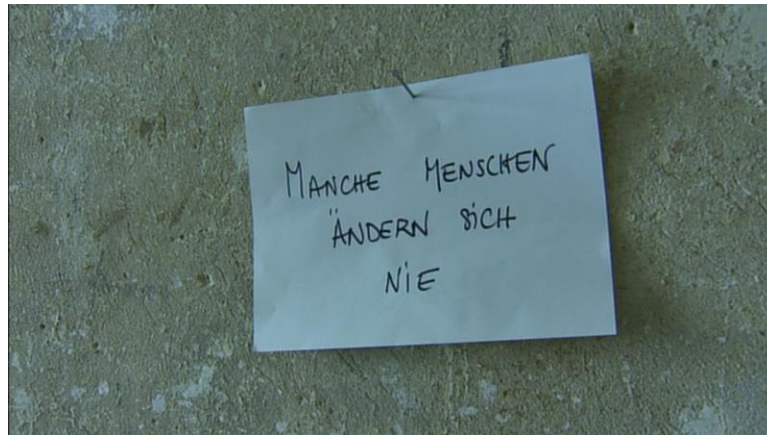


But the temporal logic of this series of events does not add up at all. It appears that two different temporal dimensions of the story are being edited into one single sequence: one that narrates Hagenberg's decision to call the police and the subsequent raid on the apartment and the other that represents the Edukators' escape from Germany. In spite of what the editing suggests, these two series could not have been simultaneously unfolding parallel events.

Moreover, the apartment the police—and we—find emptied is not one we have seen in this manner before. It is certainly reasonable to assume that it is Jule’s apartment. For one, Hagenberg has access to her address due to the car accident in which both were involved and that caused Jule to be seriously indebted. (Furthermore, if we pay close attention, we notice the same ceramic tiles that we already might have noticed earlier when Jan spent time with Jule in her apartment). However, when we last saw the apartment—before they abducted Hagenberg to the Alps—we witnessed how Jan and Jule vandalized it in an act of youthful exuberance, splashing paint at her apartment’s walls instead of repainting it in an orderly fashion as Jule’s landlord, who evicted her, required of her. Indeed, this entire scene ends with an image that we surely remember: namely of the slogan, “Jedes Herz ist eine revolutionäre Zelle” ‘Each heart is a revolutionary cell,’ written in red paint on the vandalized wall, “signed” with their handprints.

Logically, it makes no sense to assume that the Edukators would have returned to Jule’s apartment to clean it up, given that they must have at least considered the possibility that Hagenberg would call the police; and if the apartment had already been cleaned of any traces of their vandalism before their return to Berlin, then we would have to ask: when, by whom, and why? We are thus inclined to offer the following proposition (regardless of the filmmaker’s intentions): while not relying on Brechtian or modernist alienation effects, the film confronts its viewers with the provocation that the cinematic form it appeared to mobilize precisely in order to play out realistically the ideological debates during the film’s long middle section has never been realist at all; or rather: it simultaneously was and was not a realist lens that granted us access to the goings-on.

It is precisely this immanentist rearrangement of its realist form that in turn also provokes us to consider the possibility that the film’s content has been rearranged with regard to its most crucial message. Could it not be the case, that is, that the message “Manche Menschen ändern sich nie” ‘some people never change,’ as the handwritten sign the police find hanging on a wall in the otherwise empty apartment states, might in fact not be addressed to Hagenberg, as viewers likely assume, but to *us*? Or, might it not at least be addressed to those of us who actually harbored hope that Hagenberg would in fact live up to his promise not to rat on the Edukators and, in so doing, evidence that he has truly changed: that his old ideals from his socialist student days have not died and that they have been re-awoken from their long slumber during his days as a captain of industry as a result of the sheer persuasive force of the ideology critique to which his young interlocutors exposed him in the mountain hut?



In other words, what we are saying is that such an affective investment on the part of the viewers is at this moment rendered sensible by the film as the very symptom that, like a virus, has infected the left-liberal viewer who believes consciousness raising is capable of undoing the systemic damage the affective force of neoliberalism has done to its subjects, including the damage it has done to those who are among its “victors” (the one percenters, to use a term that emerged only some years after the film’s release).

It is here then that the second political paradigm depicted in the film, that of classic political re-education, has to be put in relation with the paradigm of redistribution. The possibility of a counterfactual reading emerges here. *The politics of re-education must be preceded by a primary act of redistribution.* On a theoretical level, this claim means that before the production of a specific kind of knowledge can get underway, an act of redistribution (in the form of reorganization) needs to set the stage for this education. Put differently, a primary act of aestheticization (in the sense of first establishing the very coordinates of sensible action) must precede effective political action. First the redistribution of the sensible must define the parameters of what is visible and invisible, sayable and non-sayable, before the political act of (re-)education can be effectively put in place.

The truly provocative conclusion that we might reach based on this insight about the film is that the long middle section that is set up as a classic sequence of political re-education was not what it appeared to be. In spite of appearances, what was at stake in this part of the film was not at all classic consciousness raising. Rather, we could see this section as an elaborate ruse put on by the Edukators who anticipated that Hagenberg (a veteran of the ‘60s who boasts of his friendship with Rudi Dutschke) would still only be capable of politics in these outdated terms. Thus, according to this speculative reading, what took place in the Alps was actually political theater rather than classic propaganda: the Edukators pretended to go along with the script that they themselves created because they

knew that this kind of old-fashioned education would, in fact, fail. The ending of the film seems to suggest that the Edukators knew in advance that Hagenberg would turn them over to the police. The real education, therefore, that takes place here is the proof that the old kind of education necessarily fails. Hagenberg is once again left with the knowledge that his world is not as secure as he had believed.

It is this take on education that might allow us to reconcile the apparent contradiction between the film's form and content. For if we take seriously the co-existence of the two political paradigms, the contradiction ceases to exist. The film's realist form follows the logic of the redistribution put forth by the film: it is a way for cinema to enter the house of the enemy and reorganize the furniture that it already finds there. It is part of the immanentist politics of the radical inside: rather than criticize realism from the outside, it shows us a way of undermining it from the inside. What appears on the screen for us only appears to be realism. In reality, it is a staged realism that maintains a certain distance from the realist form itself. This minimal distance is precisely the location of the displacement that allows for a resistance that does not imagine this possibility only from outside. Might we say, then, that this minimal distance constitutes an example of those "vacuoles of noncommunication" Deleuze had in mind when he tried to envision strategies for resistance in the age of control ("Control and Becoming" 175)? Might the film be seen as aesthetically "hijacking" realism, creating an aesthetic "circuit breaker," a storage bubble within realism that redistributes what is and is not (im)possible as a means to elude control?²⁸

Notes

1. For a classic discussion of the historical change in vision that takes place in the nineteenth century, see Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990). In addition, see Paul Virilio's *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (New York: Verso, 1989).
2. In *Foucault Beyond Foucault*, Jeffrey T. Nealon argues that "the shifts of Foucauldian emphasis are more productively understood as a series of 'intensifications'" and that by "tracing this logic of intensification in Foucault's work" we can discover "ways we might respond to the mutations and intensifications of power that we've seen since Foucault's death in 1984" (5).
3. Here we follow Nealon's "Williamsian" reading of Foucault's genealogy of power: "Although these modes exist alongside each other in the late eighteenth

century and beyond, one might say (importing some diagnostic terminology from Raymond Williams) that at any historical juncture, certain modes and practices of power are emergent, others dominant, still others residual” (*Foucault Beyond Foucault* 28-29).

4. We recognize that the category of the cinema is in flux in an age when moving images and their production, exhibition, and circulation are undergoing significant changes. However, for the purposes of this essay we limit our analysis to a filmic example that belongs to this classic tradition of moving images. In our larger research project, of which this essay is simply a first step, we plan to examine the relationship between cinema in its traditional form and representations of terrorism in what we claim is and always has been a quintessential biopolitical medium.

5. Of course, we acknowledge that not all engagement with cinema has given primacy to the image. On the role of sound in cinema, see for instance Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia UP, 1994); on cinema’s haptic aspects, see Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000). Notwithstanding such work, it strikes us as inarguable that most of the time when we think of cinema, we frame our discussions through the logic of (in)visibility.

6. Such desire clearly manifests itself not only in many of the more popular and powerful social causes, including those pursued by the ecological and environmental movements, but also in the popularity among the liberal bourgeoisie of the farm-to-table phenomenon.

7. Or as Deleuze writes with some bewilderment, today “Many young people have a strange craving to be ‘motivated’, they’re always asking for special courses and continuing education” (“Postscript” 182) and thus exhibit a desire (“craving”) that, in Deleuze’s view, fuels control societies that run on the imperative that “you never finish anything” in contradistinction to disciplinary societies, which would force its subjects to always start all over again (179). Some twenty years further into the reign of neoliberalism, Lauren Berlant’s analysis of what she calls a “relation of cruel optimism,” which, she argues, “exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing” (*Cruel Optimism* 1), echoes Deleuze’s diagnosis. Berlant argues that the question of “how to talk about [exploited subjects]’ need to maintain binding to the normal in the context of crisis is a theoretical and political problem of more than consciousness” (170-71). She therefore seeks to “understand collective

attachments to fundamentally stressful conventional lives” and asks “how it is that forms associated with ordinary violence remain desirable.” Berlant suggests that this might be precisely because “of a kind of narcotic/utopian pleasure” that these forms, due to “their very familiarity” (167-68), offer subjects who are in fact violated and exploited by the very normative forces to which they seek to remain bound.

8. The persistence of this memory can be articulated in politically opposing ways: the right-wing insistence of the failure of the project of '68 is simply the inverse of the leftist nostalgia for the mass movements of the 60s. Both, in effect, are ways of memorializing the 60s.

9. One film that strikes us as rich in possibilities for such an investigation is Michael Haneke's *Caché* (*Hidden*, 2005), but our analysis of this film will have to be done elsewhere.

10. In addition to the texts we refer to below, see also Paul Cooke and Rob Stone, “Transatlantic Drift: Slackers, Flâneurs, Idiots and Edukators,” Lucia Nagib and Anne Jerslev, eds., *Impure Cinema: Intermedial and Intercultural Approaches to Film* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014): 82-101; Rachel Palfreyman, “Links and Chains: Trauma Between the Generations in the Heimat Mode,” Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman, eds., *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (Rochester: Camden House): 145-164; and Nicole Thesz, “From *Jugendbewegung* to RAF: Youth, Friendship, and Protest in Post-Wall German Cinema,” *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature* 34.1 (winter 2010): 23-46.

11. The one exception is Roger Cook's essay, which we reference below; ultimately, however, Cook takes his analysis in a somewhat different direction than we do.

12. It is well known that for a while, Weingartner lived “off the grid,” as it were, as a squatter in post-unified Berlin in the mid-1990s.

13. For a more detailed discussion of the concept of nostalgia as a non-normative political concept, see Roland Végső, “Stalin's Boots and the March of History (Post-Communist Memories),” *Cultural Critique* 83 (Winter 2013): 31-62.

14. For the permanent state of exception, see Giorgio Agamben's book *State of Exception*. Some films that can be said to have a biopolitical focus and turn to the problem of terrorism to dramatize it include Haneke's *Caché*, Christian Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* (*The State I Am In*, 2000), Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise*

Now (2005), Kelly Reichardt's *Knight Moves* (2013), and Zal Batmanglij's *The East* (2013).

15. The film explicitly frames the anarchic activities of its protagonists in the context of “terrorism”—specifically that of the Red Army Faction (RAF). This question is explicitly dramatized at the beginning of the long middle section of the film set in the Austrian mountains, when the Edukators debate with their “victim” whether or not their actions differ from those of their famous—and more visible—predecessors, the RAF. Roger Cook and Chris Homewood also discuss the Edukators’ actions in the context of the (West-) German lineage of internal (left-wing) terrorism, arguing, respectively, that “*The Edukators* brings the history of terrorism in the Federal Republic into play” (Cook 313) and that it is necessary to “examine the encounter of the ‘Edukators’ with the memory of urban terrorism in Germany” (Homewood 336); and Jaimey Fischer sees the film as part of a “remarkable wave of German films about domestic terrorism and radical politics” ushered in by Petzold’s *The State I Am In* (38) at the start of the millennium.

16. Indeed, in a deleted scene (available on the US DVD of the film), we see the three protagonists respond with amazement to a *Bild-Zeitung* report that informs readers of six attacks by “The Edukators” in various cities that apparently took place during the very night when our protagonists left Germany for the Mediterranean. Jule comments: “Woher haben die das? Woher haben die die Information?” ‘Where did they get this from? From where did they get the information?’, meaning: how is it possible for *others* to imitate our protagonists’ actions given that they themselves did not engage in the traditional representational politics of groups such as the RAF (the Edukators did not produce any pamphlets, communiqués, videos, etc.) The fact that Weingartner chose to cut this particular scene from the finished film lends support to our arguments that a) the Edukators’ “terrorist” activities are not predicated on a representational logic and b) their political actions work like a virus, jumping from host to host, infecting and thus affecting them in such a way that the new hosts are provoked into action, into engaging in a mimetic action that is nevertheless a-representational and instead responds across time and space without first having been exposed to a representation of a prior action.

17. One could conceptualize this politics along the lines of what Deleuze once called “transcendental empiricism,” which rather than aiming at formulating the conditions of action through the lens of re-presentation, seeks to find and foster the conditions of creative production by redistributing the terms of the situation in an immanentist fashion. As Daniel Smith and John Protevi gloss Deleuze’s paradoxical notion, “the aim of philosophy,” for Deleuze, “is not to rediscover the

eternal or the universal, but to find the singular conditions under which something new is produced. In other words—and this is a pragmatic perspective from which Deleuze never deviated—philosophy aims not at stating the conditions of knowledge qua representation, but at finding and fostering the conditions of creative production” (“Gilles Deleuze”).

18. One of the film’s many intertexts is François Truffaut’s *Jules et Jim* (1962), as Margret McCarthy (522) points out.

19. That it is the female protagonist’s desire for revenge that undermines the “cold rationality” of Jan and Peter’s actions, and that it is her mistake that forces Jan to return with her to the scene of their crime, can of course be seen as a sign of the film’s problematic gender politics. However, Rachel Palfreyman’s analysis of the role Jule plays complicates such an overly reductive reading of the film’s gender politics. In her view the film positions Jule precisely to undo Jan’s and Peter’s conventional, indeed bourgeois, (sexual) morality.

20. Here, we might have to recall the fact that the film’s release precedes the Encampments and Occupy movements emerging a few years later in response to the global financial crisis; but at least in the context of the (still) wealthy countries such as Germany and the US, these movements can hardly be said to have succeeded, and have in fact not survived their most immediate context.

21. Scholars have persuasively argued that ’68 needs to be thought of in terms that exceed 1968. See especially Daniel J. Sherman and Ruud van Dijk, ed., *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2013).

22. Was this, in the end, not the RAF’s most fundamental mistake: to believe that targeting state representatives would still matter *at the very moment* when—behind their backs, as it were—the regime of power underwent a transformation in kind from disciplinarity to control? The RAF missed power’s “head-fake” in the early 1970s, but the effects of its fatal oversight have been so compelling that the then-emerging and subsequently new dominant regime of neoliberal biopower has been able to return time and again to the specter of the RAF whenever it proved opportune for its own purposes: the neoliberal society of control has nothing to fear from either the RAF or its regular discursive returns precisely because the “enemy of the state” serves, as such, a productive disciplinary function that works quite well for purposes of control rather than against it. Marco Abel makes this point as well in his discussion of Petzold’s *The State I Am In* (80).

23. While it is true that the Edukators' actions have a *symbolic* quality insofar as they rearrange objects of considerable financial value in the homes of the rich, it must be kept in mind that diegetically they nevertheless do not "represent" themselves to anyone but their immediate targets. Thus, their actions affect their victims regardless of what we, as the audience, might also perceive as symbolic action. Indeed, while they do rearrange financially valuable objects, they also put photographs in the fridge or move mundane toys to unusual locations, thus indicating that their "politics" is not reducible to the symbolic quality expensive consumer goods might have: in the end it does not matter what kind of objects they re-arrange for their action to have affective force on their victims. Their actions, in fact, have a leveling effect and point in the direction of deleting the very difference between "symbolic" and "non-symbolic" objects.

24. The link between the way a virus operates and the politics of contemporary terrorism has been established by Jean Baudrillard in *The Spirit of Terrorism* (10). But Baudrillard still interprets suicidal terrorism exclusively from the perspective of the politics of death (in other words, as he argues, in suicide death becomes a form of resistance against biopower). Our interest, however, lies somewhere else, as we aim to examine here a form of politics that is neither suicidal nor murderous in nature and that instead turns life (rather than death) into a form of resistance to biopower.

25. As Jan informs Jule (and us) in a brief sociological excursus, central Europeans watch on average four hours of television per day. Consequently, "da bleibt nicht mehr viel Zeit für revolutionäre Gedanken" 'not much time for revolutionary thoughts remains.' Weingartner's follow-up feature, *Free Rainer—Dein Fernseher lügt (Reclaim Your Brain, 2007)*, is a satirical indictment of the role TV plays in our lives.

26. For the language of signaletic versus signifying, we are drawing here on the work Marco Abel has done in *Violent Affect: Literature, Cinema, and Critique After Representation* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2007).

27. With the idea of the "radical inside," we mean to refer once again to Deleuze's reading of Foucault. We understand this term here to refer to the immanent outside that needs to be distinguished simultaneously from an exteriority that supposedly transcends the inside as well as from a simple interiority that defines the inside as a purely homogeneous domain.

28. In "Control and Becoming," Deleuze writes the following: "Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted. They're thoroughly permeated by

money—and not by accident but by their very nature. We’ve got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control” (175).

Works Cited

- Abel, Marco. *The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School*. Rochester: Camden House, 2013. Print.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2005. Print.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Trans. Chris Turner. New York: Verso, 2013. Print.
- Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke UP, 2011. Print.
- Crary, Jonathan. *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. New York: Verso, 2013. Print.
- Cook, Roger. “Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei: Edukating the Post-Left Generation.” Brad Prager and Jaimey Fisher, eds. *The Collapse of the Conventional: German Film and Its Politics at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2010: 309-32. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles. “Control and Becoming.” *Negotiations 1972-1990*. Trans. Martin Joughin. New York: Columbia UP, 1995: 169-76. Print.
- . *Foucault*. Trans. Seán Hand. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1988. Print.
- . “Postscript on Control Societies.” *Negotiations*. Trans. Martin Joughin. New York: Columbia UP, 1995: 177-82. Print.
- Fischer, Jaimey. *Christian Petzold*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2013. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990. Print.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000. Print.
- . *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Press, 2004. Print.
- Homewood, Chris, “Have the Best Ideas Stood the Test of Time? Negotiating the Legacy of ‘1968’ in *The Edukators*.” Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters, eds. *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*. New York: Peter Lang, 2010: 321-42. Print.
- McCarthy, Margaret. “Edukating ‘Pop’: Hans Weingartner’s *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* and the Legacy of ’68 in Contemporary Germany.” *Monatshefte* 103.4 (2011): 517-36. Print. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mon.2011.0105>
- Nealon, Jeffrey T. *Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and Its Intensifications Since 1984*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008. Print.

- . *Post-Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012. Print.
- Negri, Antonio. "Value and Affect." Trans. Michael Hardt. *boundary 2* 26.2 (Summer 1999): 77-88. Print.
- Palfreyman, Rachel. "Play for Today: Situationist Protests and Uncanny Encounters in Hans Weingartner's *The Edukators* (2004)." Paul Cooke and Chris Homewood, eds. *New Directions in German Cinema*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2011: 166-85. Print.
- Smith, Daniel W. "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics." *Parrhesia* 2 (2007): 66-78. Print.
- Smith, Daniel and John Protevi. "Gilles Deleuze." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013). Edward N. Zalta, ed. Web. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/deleuze/>
- Stehle, Maria. "Two Generations in Motion: Negotiating the Legacies of the West German Student Movement." *Seminar* 46.4 (November 2010): 402-18. Print. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/smr.2010.0011>
- Végső, Roland. "Stalin's Boots and the March of History (Post-Communist Memories)." *Cultural Critique* 83 (Winter 2013): 31-62. Print. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5749/culturalcritique.83.2013.0031>
- Weingartner, Hans. *The Edukators*. DVD.