

CILECT NEWS

April 2004

Issue No 40



NAFTI 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

THEME: FILM AND TELEVISION TRAINING IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- MAIN ACTIVITIES**
- *Anniversary Float* Feb. 25th '04 • *Anniversary Launch* Feb. 27th '04
 - *Film & Television Festival* March 8-12 '04
 - *Congregation of first Batch Degree Graduands* March 13th '04
 - *Anniversary Lectures* April 28-29 '04 • *Launch of Endowment Fund* May 26th '04
- Join us in Celebrating this memorable Occasion*

CONGRESS
and

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
17 - 23 May 2004
hosted by
UIAH, Helsinki

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Film and Television Training in Ghana

NAFTI 25 Years

NAFTI, the National Film and Television Institute of Ghana, is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2004. NAFTI Director, Martin Loh, invited the CILECT Executive to take part in the celebration and attend the graduation of NAFTI students.



Martin Loh, NAFTI Director

The National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) which was established in 1978 by the Ghana government as a public Institution of Higher Education, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

The Institute, upon receiving technical assistance from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation when it was established, set out to train young men and women in the effective use of the medium of film and television to promote national development. It also had as its aim the continued orientation of its students in order to meet the ever-changing need in the effective communication for human development in the African society.

The training programme is designed to provide the student with the right conditions and facilities within his own environment so that his orientation is not disturbed by alien cultures and values. The student is encouraged to develop his creative talents to be able to produce materials, which reflect the spiritual and intellectual aspiration of the African society.

In line with the need to use the me-

diuum of film and television to promote socio-cultural development on the African continent, NAFTI has been successful in training students from several African countries including: Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

On the local front, the Institute has for decades been the human resource base of the Ghanaian film and television industry. Thus far, it has trained two-hundred and forty-two students in the various fields of film and television production such as: Film Directing, Television Production, Motion Picture Photography, Animation, Art Direction and Editing. The Institute, which is now affiliated to the University of Ghana, switched from its conventional Diploma to the Degree

It is the permanent venue for the biennial African Students Film and Television Festival (ANIWA), which organizes workshops, seminars and screenings for the various training centres in sub-Sahara Africa. The main objective for the institution of ANIWA is to lay solid foundation for the production and promotion of films and television programmes as tools for the social development of African societies and an expression of their cultural identities.

The booming **Video Film Industry** could not have been realized today but for the pioneering role NAFTI played when about 20 years ago it introduced into Ghana the technique for the production of video feature films as an alternative to celluloid film production.



Graduation Ceremony, University of Ghana

Programmes in Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in October 1999. In this regard, NAFTI has 87 students currently pursuing the Degree Programmes.

2004 is a landmark year when we in NAFTI celebrate our 25th anniversary, looking back with pride and looking forward to new challenges.

Imaginative and ambitious projects have been launched, through the ingenuity and foresight of the current management, to mark the occasion.

The projects include the updating of the NAFTI Library facilities, setting up of digital editing workstations and sound dubbing/design facilities, and establishment of the African Cinema Research and Documentation Centre.

The **new NAFTI Library** now houses the largest book stock and film and television materials in Africa. It subscribes to sixteen professional serials (periodicals, journals, magazines). The Library's collections also cover

it is exceedingly obvious that although films from Africa have made a mark in the international sphere, we are yet to find a onestop-point in Africa where there are a collection of African films/videos, papers and books for research purposes.

The African Cinema Research and Documentation Centre aims to:

1. be an information hub for research and studies into African cinema/culture;

2. encourage in-depth studies into African cinema and to portray Africa from an African rather than an European (Western) perspective;

of research seminars, collaborative projects, academic exchanges. etc..

The Centre has outstanding resource facilities. The Library's eight hundred and eighty six volumes consisting of three hundred and sixty titles of books and fifty five volumes of periodical holdings, makes it the largest exclusive location in Africa for African cinema studies. Other materials relevant to the Centre's academic interests such as African culture, history, literature, music and folklore are also contained in the Library. The Library also holds an extensive collection of videotapes and DVDs. These may be viewed in the video view-



other branches of the arts, related to film and television studies and training.

The **African Cinema Research and Documentation Centre**, was established to safeguard Africa's documentary heritage and to work towards a language of film and television which can contribute to notions of socio-cultural development by researching into, and documenting indigenous African story telling for the screen.

The establishment of this Centre has become a priority area of NAFTI's current development as

3. construct and promote an alternative popular cinema, one that is more in harmony with the realities, the experiences, the priorities and desires of the societies which it addresses;

4. use cinema to critically engage, celebrate and interrogate African cultural beliefs and traditions;

5. debate the relevance and indeed agency of an understanding of African cinema/culture/history for the questions of the present day;

6. foster links with other departments and institutions, by means

ing facilities provided in the Library.

Each of the three research staff offices located in the building is equipped with a personal computer and a printer to facilitate research work. The Centre's production unit has a digital editing and sound workstations, digital movie camera and CD writers.

One of the many strengths of the Centre is that it will positively encourage the mix of academic and professional users, and such interaction is what we in NAFTI believe will give the Centre its vibrancy. The levels of



study to be undertaken at the Centre will span across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The Centre will prove useful to students, scholars and anyone interested in the development of African cinema studies and/or African affairs and culture.

Since the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) is, until recently, the only film and television training institute in sub-Saharan Africa, we believe that the establishment of this Centre will further boost NAFTI's status and thereby promote NAFTI's philosophy of 'using cinema as a tool for development and a means of safeguarding African culture and heritage'.

We also hope that NAFTI will play an important role in the development of Ghana's and Africa's rich culture, film and television being important contributors to our culture, with a practical contribution from the Centre for cine-cultural policy research.

We anticipate that the establishment of the Centre will stimulate researchers into conducting research into relevant issues such as infrastructure, funding, production and distribution, which confront cinema in Africa. These research works will prepare the ground and serve as a guide for decision and policy-making in this sector.

NAFTI



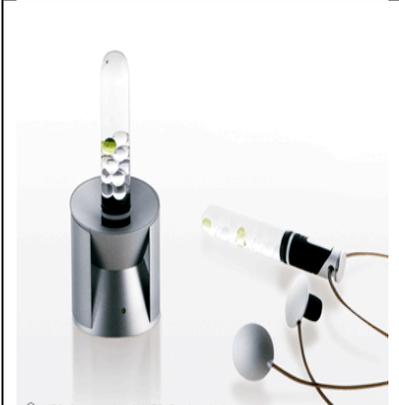
NEW TECHNOLOGIES UPDATE SPECIAL EDITION!

We are teaching in the schools – this means that we are dealing with the future. Because of that, in this edition of the Update I am not going to present any of the new cameras, editing systems or other existing AV devices. Instead of that, let's sneak a quick look into the future technology the way famous Japanese company NEC sees it! I am sure that the following pieces of the **Resonantware will inspire you to see the future in a slightly different way**. NEC designers have created these *design possibilities* with a simple paradigms in mind: the world where humans and machines resonate with one another.

Nenad Puhovski

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Chair Standing Committee for New Technologies

 <p>© NEC Corporation & NEC Design, Ltd.</p>	<p>TAG: Soft-shell mobile phone. "tag" is a new, malleable, casual communicator. It is not only soft but also flexible. It can, for example, be hung from a belt or wrapped around the user's arm. Shape-memorizing material and multiple pressure sensors allow the phone to change its shape according to the mode. The user can also alternate the mode by changing the shape.</p>	 <p>© NEC Corporation & NEC Design, Ltd.</p>
 <p>© NEC Corporation & NEC Design, Ltd.</p>	<p>FLACON: Virtual storage bottle. We already have the means to store a massive amount of images in our various devices, so many that we cannot possibly see them all in a lifetime. "flacon" offers the ways to casually enjoy such a volume of visuals. The images emerge on an inorganic electro-luminescent display. Among them, images selected according to anniversaries and the user's emotions are projected outward through a projector.</p>	
 <p>© NEC Corporation & NEC Design, Ltd.</p>	<p>GUMI: Ubiquitous media chip. In this service proposal, RFID chips hold the usage rights to images and music available on the network. The chips are covered in a gummy capsule, and are edible after use. When the play unit is connected to the container, the basic unit, it can be used as an audio player. By setting it in the cradle connected to the display through wireless LAN, users can also enjoy visual contents. Blank chips on which users can allocate data will also be available.</p>	 <p>© NEC Corporation & NEC Design, Ltd.</p>



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WACCA: Visual Memory in a Bracelet. Just like our memories come alive when we take our favorite objects in our hands, visual memories and their tools should be more closely related. They will be worn like accessories rather than highly functional tools. Looking into the landscape through an opening, this bracelet will capture visual images in the angles adapting to the distance from the viewers' faces through distance sensors installed in the device. Furthermore, users can browse through the visual images on its viewer and also display them just like a picture frame.



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P-ISM : A Pen-style Personal Networking Gadget Package. It represents the connection between the latest technology and the human, in a form of a pen. P-ISM is a gadget package including five functions: a pen-style cellular phone with a handwriting data input function, virtual keyboard, a very small projector, camera scanner, and personal ID key with cashless pass function. The whole set is also connected to the Internet through the cellular phone function.



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NAVE: 360-Degree Visual Communication Device - Why can't we act naturally in front of video-phone cameras? Conventional visual communications at a distance have been limited due to the display devices and terminals. This terminal enables showing of the surrounding atmosphere and group-to-group communication with a round display and a central super-wide-angle camera.



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DUO-PC: A mobile PC with dual displays. Using short range wireless connection and COG technology, a laptop PC will have more flexibility just like paper. This mobile PC has a multiple-layer hinge structure that allows users to open it as one large display on the desk and to use it as a tablet PC and a book browser for mobile use. It adapts to users' environments and situations.



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DUO-PHONE: A cellular phone with dual displays. "duo-phone" is installed with a detachable display, which enables users to enjoy a videophone in a more natural manner, and a photo sensor adapting the next-generation barcode. It can be also used as a "duo-pc" mouse and remote control.



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**CONGRESS
and
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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The Executive Council will propose following changes to the Statutes and Rules at the next General Assembly, Helsinki, May 2004.

Composition of the Executive Council

The Executive Council is currently composed of a President, four Vice-Presidents and up to four Committee Chairs (previously known as Project Chairs).

The notion of Project (Committee) Chairs was introduced at the General Assembly, Blois, fourteen years ago. Committee Chairs are elected by the membership to carry out specific projects, rather than to represent the membership in the Executive Council.

When the current statutes were written, it was the intention to provide for a broader and more representative Executive Council by including the Committee Chairs. In all the years since then, the attention of the Committee Chairs has been consistently and properly focused on their projects, rather than on the “business” of the association.

A number of Committee Chairs have pointed out that attendance at Executive Council meetings is difficult, and that they would rather be free to concentrate on their projects.

Therefore, the **Executive Council proposes statute changes that would:**

- a) allow the Committee Chairs to concentrate their energy and time on the development of their projects.
- b) reinforce the regional representation of the CILECT membership inside the Council.

The Executive is of the opinion that the geographical diversity of CILECT should be better reflected in the composition of the Executive.

The Executive Council proposes that the chairs of CILECT's five regional associations: Africa (CARA), Asia-Pacific (CAPA), Europe (GEECT), Latin America (FEISAL/ CIBA), North America (UFVA) – who are ex-officio members of the Executive – should participate in at least one meeting of the Executive per year. In order to ensure that all chairs can participate in the statutory meetings, the costs incurred by travelling to one meeting per year of the Executive will be covered by CILECT.

Under the proposal, the Committee Chairs would be relieved from the burden of attending to the business of CILECT and allowed to concentrate fully on what they volunteered to do: their project.

The Executive Council

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CONGRESS AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2004

CHANGES TO STATUTES AND RULES

Nenad Puhovski, ADU, Zagreb has put forward the following proposal for changes to the Statutes and Rules.

Dear Colleagues,

I read carefully the proposal for the changes in the Statutes and Rules of our organization. I understand that the major change is the fact that Project chairs as the members of the Executive are replaced by the "chairs of CILECT's five regional associations". While I understand the logic behind this proposal, I have a slightly different view. Here it is:

1. CILECT is an association of its members. Members of our association are schools, not countries or regions. Only schools pay the fee and are voted to become members.
2. Our members have different interests. One could divide them in ones that are issue based (Projects) and ones where the members share interests and problems in the region in which they operate.
3. Both of these interests have to be presented in the work of the Organization and, consequently, in the Executive. Putting more emphasis on either projects or regions could (at least in my mind) misbalance the work of the organization.
4. The basic efficiency of the organization lays in the synergy between the Executive and the members – with the Executive bearing the major responsibility for the work of the organization between the congresses.
5. While it is rather clear what are the responsibilities of the VPs for Publishing and Finance, the job descriptions for the other two were always, and in a way still are, somewhat vague.
6. It is also rather well known fact that Executive meetings with 10 or more people present are not really efficient by the nature of the democratic procedure that takes a lot of time.
7. There is also another important, although maybe formal issue – until now, all of the members of the Executive were voted by the whole membership, which is the core element of a democratic organization. If in the future five chairs of the regional associations would become voting members of the Executive (and the new paragraph 4.8.1 seems to confirm this), it would mean that 50% of the highest governing body of our organization was not voted by direct majority of the members.
8. This becomes even more complicated because of the huge imbalance in the number of members in different regional associations.
9. In fact, this could be seen as an introduction of a two-house system in the Executive with one house elected directly and the other on the regional basis. Although this could have its advantages, this is an important step which is, I am afraid, not well explained to all of the members.
10. Consequently, **my proposal is the following:**
 - a. The Executive should be composed of the President and four Vice-Presidents. This would mean that only five people should be voting members and be responsible for governing of the organization between congresses.
 - b. In the Executive, VP for Programme Development should be in charge of the issues in which our members are interested (Projects, Conferences, Congresses, Festivals) and VP for Regional Liaison should deal with regional organizations.
 - c. Chairs of the Projects and Regional associations should be invited once in the biennium to report to the Executive about their work.
 - d. Because of the importance of the issue, I would suggest a small Standing Committee to be formed to take over the responsibilities of the "late" TDC. Its work should be facilitated by the VP responsible for regional associations.

That's it. Surely not perfect but simple and (at least in my mind) balanced.

Best
Nenad Puhovski



CILECT 50th Anniversary Congress, Helsinki 2004
Monday 17 to Sunday 23 May 2004

	Monday 17	Tuesday 18	Wednesday 19	Thursday 20	Friday 21	Saturday 22	Sunday 23
9.30		Presentation of Hosts Walk through Programme	Presentation: Motion Picture Association	Regional Association Meetings	Presentation: Kodak	General Assembly Alternatives to TDC Q&A	
10.30		coffee break	coffee break	coffee break	coffee break	coffee break	
11.00	Arrivals Registration	General Assembly New Members New Statutes Voting	CILECT 50 Years Panel: <i>Mobility of Students and Teachers</i> Chair Victor Valbuena V.P. for Regional Liaison	CILECT 50 Years Panel: <i>Festivals</i> Stanislav Semerdjiev V.P. for Programme Development	Regional Association Meetings	General Assembly Reports: President, Vice-Presidents, Executive Secretary, Q&A Reports Regional Associations & Panels	
13.00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	
14.30		CILECT 50 Years Panel: <i>Lessons of History</i> Chair Henry Breitrose V.P. Publications & Research	General Assembly Report of Standing Committee for New Technologies Report Project : 1 Digital cinema	CILECT 50 Years Key note: Colin Young, former President The CILECT Movie by Nenad Puhovski		General Assembly Activities for next Biennium Q&A	
15.30		coffee break	coffee break	coffee break		coffee break	Departures and/or Sight Seeing
16.00			General Assembly Reports Projects : 2 Six pack plus 3 Kalos Kághathos 4 The education of filmmaking	General Assembly Presentation of Candidates and Projects and Activities	Culture with Lunch & Fresh Air	General Assembly Elections	
16.30	17.00 Newcomer Session	CILECT 50 Years Panel: <i>Cumtular Trends</i> Don Zirpola, V.P. for Finance	coffee break	General Assembly Presentation of Candidates and Projects and Activities		General Assembly Elections	
18.00		coffee break	coffee break	coffee break		coffee break	
18.30			CILECT 50 Years Film Festival	CILECT 50 Years Film Festival			
19.00	Helsinki City Reception Key note speaker Jörn Donner , Academy Award winner producer	CILECT 50 Years Film Festival	CILECT 50 Years Film Festival	CILECT 50 Years Film Festival			
20.00		Dinner	Free evening	Dinner		The Wrap Party TBA	

HOLLYWOODOO

The Challenge to Commerce – Art or Industry

Prof. Zuzana Gindl-Tatárová, Ph.D., VŠMU, Bratislava

It seems to me that frequently, when we evaluate our students, we forget context, about general developments and trends in the audio-visual environment. By this, I mean the environment in which the emerging generation of young filmmakers is educated. I am not merely speaking about progress in digital techniques and e-cinema, nor about the changes of aesthetic criteria of the moving images, which have already been discussed many times. As a professional in script-writing and script-editing, I can see more changes nowadays, and I think we need to speak about them.

I have been teaching since the fall of the Berlin Wall and I have observed a number of changes in our audio-visual environment over the past fourteen years. The forced cultural isolation and closed system of the former eastern countries was slowly disrupted, and we were unprepared for unexpected and spontaneous changes.

The period before the “Velvet Revolution” became historic in a single night. Audiences, who previously searched for some “truth of life” in dramatic films, became fed-up with politics, and sought new social purpose for the cinema. As the moment for change arrived, new media structures appeared on the scene, and our audiences were eager to reap the fruit that had been forbidden for all the years. They entered the cloud-cuckoo land of *Basic Instincts*, and *Fatal Attraction*, *Lethal Weapon*, and *Terminator*, which soon unreeled on our movie screens.

Hollywood eliminated all other films, because the newly revealed free-market mechanism offered an excellent opportunity to establish the monopoly of American distribution. But in spite of our anger, these films were embraced by the widest audience.

Video stores, satellites, the internet, and the entire network of cable

and commercial television merely completed the destruction of the old communication system in the former eastern european countries. We got rid of the communication blockade without a battle, and changed it into an information slavery. (...)

I am afraid that blaming our governments, which are unable to support our originality and creativity with proper legislation or grants, or accusing film students of wanting to become another Luc Bessons, David Lynch or Quen-

We got rid of the communication blockade without a battle, and changed it into an information slavery.

tin Tarantinos, only blinds us to the significant changes that rolled over the world in the last thirty years, and changed its cultural co-ordinates.

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL BREAKPOINT

As early as the late sixties, there was a cultural and political breakpoint in Western Europe. A shaken European film culture abandoned its previous position in the face of a massive attack by the big Hollywood production companies. Their well-tested strategy, based on technically perfect spectacle and a new type of victorious heroic archetype, brought unexpected results in the seventies. Consistent marketing, including “block booking,” the selling of Hollywood products in collections of films, systematically shattered the European film market and achieved a very high audience penetration in several countries.

We must acknowledge that this high proportion of Hollywood product on our screens has systematically shifted the standard of taste of the audience over the years. We might say that ultimately,

it has created its own audience.

And young people? They cannot know the difference between this kind of film making and anything else, as we could in years past. David Fincher is much more a hero for them than Federico Fellini. Those who produce the most moving images conquer the world.

If we speak about film art and commercial production today, the term “art film” is automatically associated with European films, and similarly, “commercial production” is thought of simply as American. All of this without any thought about genre differences, without any attention to creative resourcefulness. The European point of view was set against the Hollywood primarily because during the development of the cinema they were located on opposite sides of the barricade.

Film in much of Europe was regarded as art. It had a deep cultural influence, connected with the idea of progress and the development of culture on the personal as well on the level of universal civilisation.

In America, movies began as commerce, which meant mainly entertainment, and embraced universality in order to appeal to the largest audience. The American entertainment industry dominates the economic as well as the spiritual face of America. It is obvious why there is such a great effort to expand it, but why is it so easily accepted in different cultures?

We need to realise that the inevitably victorious protagonist of a typical American three-act-structure film script never experiences any negative consequences, thanks to the sophisticated dramatic structure. Even if he takes the wrong social or political path, when he decides to take the right path, he is given a second chance and is forgiven. The hero’s redemption occurs without

such vivid heroes. They are not as unpretentious and comprehensible as the protagonists of the American mainstream cinema. They do not even copy the universally successful model of fairy tale heroes, who get a princess and half of the kingdom because of their positive virtues. They are not as brave, modest and steady as heroes in literature. Their human wisdom earns redemption only with great difficulty. European films often offer deep psychological introspection into the problematic souls of their protagonists, who usually messed themselves up by a terrible past indiscretion, or simply just by failure. They cannot compete in the juggling contest with the basic myths of mankind.

We can reject the commercial products and label them as industrial commodities, nice but not artistic. We can denounce their use of well-trying formulas as a commercial humbug that distracts the audience's attention from any vision of the real world. But life does not stop, whether we like it or not. Instead, we should rather answer the question of why the perception and taste of the audience is in decline.

WHAT IS IT THAT MOST JEOPARDIZES THE CREATIVITY CINEMA NOWADAYS?

Is it scriptwriting based on prefabricated rules, computer-like perfection, and professional ability in service of a common lie, or is it the need for this lie to be the basic impulse of film sensibility? Is it a matter of commerce, and the expansion American distribution, or is it a shift in the perception of the world, and of film as its asymptote?

We need to realise that the very end of the sixties represented the last tremor of the radical revolt, which was based on the belief that the configuration of world power could be changed directly. But the world started to globalise in a different way, thanks to the appearance of new mass media and information systems. The appealing cultural uniformity does not reflect the problems of the turn of the millennium. It represses our natural need of self-reflection, and it ties the hands of artists who try to articulate it. Man, as the creator of common values, loses his central

position. The so-called "truth of life" is not interesting in itself any longer; it is only acceptable in the context of other possibilities. The good old Modernist principle - the imperative of progress and enhancement of old forms - vanishes. High culture and mass cultures are re-contextualized. The old hierarchy collapses, and the entire cultural paradigm is completely changed. We are suddenly transported from Modernism to Postmodernism. This is why film storytelling, which is inseparably connected with Modernism, searches for a new idiom.

The utilitarian character of mass culture, initially rejected as commercial, systematically loses its pejorative meaning and becomes the starting point for a new vision of the world. The audience is not interested in "what" the author wanted to say any more. The most important thing is "how" he said it. Meanings discharge themselves, and many authors become resigned to the statement that if the power of art cannot change man, at least come and play together!

The form of art becomes its content; the age of meta-narrative inflation comes into being. The spread of media throughout the world seems to offer equality to the author and the audience and prepares an obscure transition from a well-defined system to a free play - to a kind of infantilisation of the world.

Moreover, in recent decades, the

Perhaps it is necessary to learn from commercial products how to awaken the interest of the audience without losing our own cultural values.

aesthetic of film has been predisposed to surrender to the pressure of television. It seems as though direct narrative has been abandoned, because it is so very hard to keep it linked to reality. It prefers to assault the audience by adopting the formal aspects of the television advertisement: it is showy, keen and seductive, and it holds the audience like a puppet on a string woven from unusual events and relationships. If there is a psychiatrist, he has at least to be a cannibal, before you can expect an Academy Award.

The aesthetic of sublime advertising, the need to shock people into buying your goods by any means necessary, replaces the art of storytelling. The author does not need a sophisticated subject in order to tell a story. The only really important thing is how it looks. Characters and their problems become two-dimensional simplifications, like those in comic books. Story lines and motivations are kept permanently at basement level, and at best rise only to the ground-level of the television-like story. The specifics of cinematography and film language are defeated by the hectic editing of short shots. We wait for something, but nothing special ever comes. The audience is permanently kept in state of unresolved tension as the dramatic situation is changed every two minutes like the TV news reports. Everything runs too quickly, and there is no time to think about what is happening on the screen. It looks as though the cinematic structure was spontaneously adapted to the structure of TV programs, moreover, adapted to the taste of domesticated TV spectator.

AN ESCAPE FROM REALITY

It looks like an attractive new religion - like an escape from reality in this era of common disillusionment from technical and ideological optimism. The world has changed. Its stability and fragile balance has been perturbed, and in this unbalanced religious field, full of visions about the destruction of our planet, this kind of life model can function as an attractive alternative, passively adopted by other cultures as a cheap and quick "consolation in ontology".

On the one hand, the communication revolution brings the democratisation of culture, and on the other, an irreversible cultural liberalism tending toward the levelling of culture, on the other.

Film production in Europe has begun to be controlled by the same laws as any other industrial enterprise. At this very moment, we are standing at a complicated cultural crossroads, but I am afraid that we cannot eliminate commerce from the cultural sphere. The answer lies in the search for ways of changing the products of mass media into tools for spreading cultural values. Perhaps it is necessary to learn

from commercial products how to awaken the interest of the audience without losing our own cultural values.

SCRIPTWRITING TEACHER

As a scriptwriting teacher, I decided to study the dramatic theory and formal structures of the mainstream commercial Hollywood products, and then offer the results of my analyses to our students. I decided to give them some instructions, in the hope that they will be able to find their own way to escape their "Post-modern" situation. We cannot change their personal software, we can only offer them some context and craft skills, and encourage them to observe all the interesting and outstanding details around them. We can teach them to depict what they really want to tell, and convince them that their attitudes and opinions are not a personal luxury, but a duty towards the eventual audience.

We can recognise some emerging tendencies in cinematic forms mixing attributes of art film and commercial film. Some film makers are able to elevate various of the commercial elements of movie storytelling to a higher, more complex, and more interesting level. Audiences and film critics appreciate those mainstream films that can offer to the spectator—in spite of their popular form— active participation in their content by means of messages hidden in the images code. They demonstrate that with courage and good will, and some talent and invention, we too can look for a way to shoot films about something more. They offer a way that can lead us from mass culture to higher level of artistic expression, to the really productive fusion of commercial and art.

These are strange media times, when we recognise reality much more easily through its industrially produced media image than from our own experience; when the TV moderators, super-models, politicians, chefs, gardeners and media stars of all kinds teach us how to see the world. The question-mark suspended between European cultural tradition and the American definition of audio-visual culture loses its meaning. Neither cinematographic attitude has ever influenced the other as much as nowadays; we can speak about this

as something like "global writing."

It is difficult to recognise the precise border between commerce and the so called higher art in film because many commercially oriented films are creative in such aspects as repeated and serial aesthetics. And of course, dramaturgy is always manipulative, in order to attract and hold the audience. What is important is the purpose— to get the viewers attention for the content and substance of the film, or just to sell simple entertainment as a product .

There is no instruction book or user's manual to help us. The battle goes on, and important is that moment of synthesis, when invisible changes occur in the elements of story-telling structure.

The circle is not yet closed. Its space is opened for new variations. Despite everything, there is a hopeful Hegelian spiral sparkling in the background of contemporary developments, e.g. Milos Forman: three-act-structure of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*; Quentin Tarantino: sophisticated structure of *Pulp Fiction*; Luc Besson: three-act-structure of *Leon*; Stephen Daldry: sophisticated structure of *The Hours*.

Further to the contributions to script guru Frank Daniel published in the Newsletter, November 2003, here is a rather unique piece by Frank himself, which was originally printed in the CILECT Newsletter, June 1989.

AN INFORMAL TALK WITH FRANK DANIEL

Part I

When it was announced that Frank Daniel was leaving Columbia University, the students from the first year (graduate programme) asked to spend an afternoon with him.

They had all had two semesters of script-writing in which they first wrote about ten different types of assigned scenes, developed six to eight outlines of short scripts and wrote one of them into a 20-30 minute script. In the next semester they developed a 30-40 page treatment of an original feature script. At the same time, they attended the script analysis class (2 semesters), acting/directing class and the directing workshop, where they shot and edited several types of scenes and a short story on video. They knew that they would not have Frank as their teacher in the second year's scriptwriting III and IV, and, therefore wanted to hear at least a brief -summary of the method and approach that he was using in his classes.

The Informal, improvised talk was taped and the following pages are edited transcript.

*Columbia University, School of the Arts,
Film Division, 5th May 1986*

"First I would like to talk about the way we designed the programme here at this school and that will give you some understanding of why we did it the way we did.

DRAMATURGY

Scriptwriting like directing, can be divided into two basic parts. One is the actual writing and the other is what's usually called dramaturgy.

I had an interesting experience recently at the Sundance Film Institute where the seven selected filmmakers arrived for conferences with our seven script advisers. In about forty minutes the seven wizards, Waldo Salt; Frank Pierson, Tom Rickman, etc., made an assessment of what each of the seven

scripts needed. And there was no real disagreement. Everyone knew what was wrong and what needed to be done. In just forty minutes all seven scripts were x-rayed and examined. Then the filmmakers met with each adviser separately and during those meetings there were about one hundred and fifty suggestions on how to solve the problems, from each of the advisers were totally different from the suggestions of the others. That's why there is always one adviser assigned to help the writer sort out which suggestions best fit his intention, and this adviser stays with him for the six months before he comes and begins working on the project at Sundance, examining and shooting the scenes. So that for me was a vivid demonstration of those two parts of scriptwriting.

One part is the dramaturgy, which is practically a scientifically defined line. It's not difficult to find out what's wrong with a script and to see how the story is built and what its needs are and which points need to be stressed. That's the cerebral part of writing. Writing itself is for artists to do, and there are no rules, there are no ready made recipes that you can apply. That's why in our programme there are the writing classes and the analysis classes. In the analysis we deal with the dramaturgy, the scientific part, the theoretical, the cerebral, the rational inquiry. You've all had two semesters of the script analysis so today we won't talk about structure acts, sequences, sub-plots, genres, style, etc.

What I would like to stress is that there is a difference between creative thinking and analytical thinking. For a creative person analysing may occasionally be a little dangerous. If you start using critical thinking too early, you can get into a situation like one of the second year students was for almost

a whole year. He has read and studied theatre, dramaturgy and theory, and he's a wonderful critic. But this critical thinking was fighting his creative thinking. His standards and the things he thought he could achieve were constantly in conflict. Nevertheless, I hoped that by the end of the semester he would have a finished script, and he did. He overcame the hyper critical and self critical thinking, and put together a complete first draft, something that in no time can be polished into a good, if not very good, piece of writing. So that's one thing to realize.

Analyzing films, reading scripts, trying to figure out what makes the story move, makes the scene work, that's a necessity. Critical thinking means that you apply certain standards and moral judgements and that's a little bit different kind of mental activity.

Unfortunately our education stresses only the critical thinking. We are always learning how to-do things right. We know that one and one are two, out in creative thinking, it can be eleven. It. Can be couple. You have to look at things from different sides and angles, and free your mind, try things that nobody has tried before.

PERFORMING

The way scriptwriting is taught here, in groups and by reading aloud in class, is something that didn't happen by accident. It would be much easier if you typed your pages and handed them in. Then the class would read them and make remarks. But that wouldn't have the other effect that is necessary.

The fact that you are sitting in the group and listening to different approaches means that you are constantly keeping your mind working. It begins in the first few classes when the as-

signed scenes are read in the class and you see how many solutions there can be for the same problem. And when you concentrate and follow what your colleagues are reading, you are actually working, because you have to imagine things, you have to see the scenes appear before your inner eyes. That's an important part of the development of the art of scriptwriter's technique.

Besides, reading in class has another very significant purpose: it helps you to free yourself of your inhibitions, fears, and anxieties. You have to perform in front of your colleagues. That's also why the acting/directing class is added. It's not to make actors of you, and it's not just so you see what an actor can do for you. Of course the class is to let you hear how dialogue sounds when it is spoken, what can be left out, what can be expressed in another manner without words, but that's just one part of the class.

The other part is that at the beginning of the acting/directing class you have to make fools of yourselves. You have to stand up in front of everybody and act. I know that Brad Dourif's class is not a truly pleasurable experience, but it helps you to develop step by step into professionals. You will always end up with something that's being shown, and you have to take responsibility for it. The sooner you start realizing it the better, because then you start eliminating your inhibitions and fears.

Writing is a very scary, very lonely, and very difficult job. When you have the task of writing one hundred and twenty pages; when you look at the pile of blank paper, you don't believe you'll ever be capable of covering those pages with scenes, dialogue, descriptions, and all that. But you'll find that it's not that much. Actually it's very little. In fact you will feel that you'll eventually need at least fifty pages more for all the ideas that you'll have when the story begins to grow.

DIRECTING

So that's the reason you take the acting class. Scriptwriting, if it were taught only in the writing classes, would just be writing, but it's more: It's filmmaking on paper. Only when the other elements, the proper use

of language of the medium, are included does it begin to really work.

That, again, is the reason why, in the first year, you are asked to take the directing workshop, even when you don't have any intentions of becoming a director.

You must try, at least once, to see what a director can do, what it means to devise an interpretation, to see what the camera and the editing can do for you. Then, even if you never continue directing, it will stay with you.

The problem with many Hollywood writers nowadays is that although they are very often good writers, they have been working since the studio system disappeared, as total loners. They write in their offices and homes and they don't feel the contact that in the old days, the studio days, a writer necessarily did. He was forced to come every day at nine, sit in his cubicle, and type or do whatever. The writers usually played cards and had fun, but they were on the premises of the studio. They had a chance to see what happens when a picture was shot. They were constantly meeting the other professionals, they could ask questions, and they could collect and pick up all the know-how. That's what we are trying to supply in our programme.

CURRICULUM

We hope that having professionals as teachers will give you the basic idea of what it means to be a scriptwriter. Once you are on the right track and moving forward, you will realize that you will be learning all your life. There's no end to it. (The moment a writer or a director thinks he knows it all he should stop working, because from that moment he will only repeat himself.) So if you learn the basics while you're here, it will be easy to see all the ramifications later.

The other classes and the other parts of the programme, history, theory, etc. just add to your broader vision of your profession. As you know, most of you come to the school with very little education in the history of cinema. For most film students all over the world cinema means what's being shown in the movie theatres now, today, and things that were made before

are seen as prehistory or archaeology, something that nobody needs to know about. Then everyone is surprised when a genre that had existed for at least fifty or sixty years reappears and is revived. Everyone looks at it as if it were a brand new phenomenon, a miracle. However, if you are familiar with the history of cinema you will be aware of the other forms, other genres, other types of narrative structures, and styles that filmmakers have explored in the past. And that can help you explore different ideas with a new understanding of your own writing.

Now, let me try to explain what the reasons behind the design of the curriculum at Columbia were. It took several years to put the program into shape. Both Miloš Forman and I are firm believers in the validity of a solid curriculum.

Curriculum for us means a step by step outline of the tasks and the problems that the student should go through and solve. That means that if the curriculum, in this sense, is clearly designed any professional who comes in to teach can start functioning. He doesn't need to invent anything. He just follows the outline and uses his professional expertise to help the students. It makes me happy that we have achieved it, and that I am leaving the school with a sound curriculum in existence, functioning and working.

COMMERCIAL?

Now let's go back to the two parts of screenwriting: the writing and the dramaturgy. In the writing process the main educational problems are usually connected with the fear that everybody brings in the writing classes. Most of the beginning students don't believe they have anything to say, and they feel like the director in Fellini's *8 1/2*. Consequently they try to borrow from other people, and when they begin to write treatments, you can immediately tell who is scared to death, and thinks of avoiding the inevitable and who is trying to collect the courage to jump into the cold water and try something really new, original and personal.

Those who come with a genre story are usually trying to protect themselves, believing that the genre

formula will help them put together some acceptable plot and that they will be in an area that's foolproof. Which means that they start "plotting". The only things they are concerned with are: where does my first act end and, what's the culmination of the middle of the second act, etc. They concentrate on all these purely technical and cerebral questions which don't help the imagination at all. And what they usually end up with is something quite empty. They aren't in their story, and they are not in the chosen genres. What they end up with are clichés, empty plots, flat characters and dull dialogue.

There is a belief that if you write a genre story, a thriller, a mystery story, etc. you are working on something that is commercial. This consideration, what's commercial and what isn't, is something you better forget about completely. All the marketing specialists, and I have a chance to see them every summer when they come to Sundance, are masters at telling you what was successful last year. They believe it will be successful next year, again, but it never works. If you look at those Columbia graduates whose scripts were acquired by the producers or made into films, you'll see that they succeeded because they came with something that was original; that was not like anything that was made recently. (...)

The only thing you really need when you write is a feeling of total freedom. That's why questions like; is this too expensive or, should I make it smaller so that maybe some independent producer will like it, should be forgotten. To make a film less expensive is something that you can do when the first draft of the script is finished. There are always ways of finding the easier and less expensive solutions for scenes and sequences, or the whole scope of the picture.

There is a big difference between a cheap movie and a low budget movie. A low budget movie is a picture that's designed to cost a certain amount of money that is not overwhelmingly high. A cheap movie is Ben Hur made with two horses and a few extras. Again, this idea of what's expensive should not be on your mind at the time you are writing the script. It's another form of censorship, and you don't need that.

YOU'VE GOT STORIES TO TELL

The most difficult thing, especially in the beginning years, is to trust in yourself and to discover that you've got stories to tell, and a lot of stories at that. That realization usually come as a surprise for most of the students at the moment when they begin to deal with only material that's theirs and that nobody else can take, i.e. when they start utilizing their own experience, when they begin to see that everybody they meet and talk to is a possible story or at least a character for a story. You can sit on an airplane and next to you sits a lady or man, and if you encourage them, if you help them a little bit, and show that you are willing to listen, you get a story immediately. You can do that every day when you meet people.

You should learn to listen and create this absolutely genuine interest in people around you, because that is the material that you write about. It's not a bad habit to keep files. You can make notes about the interesting originals that you meet, and you can put them into the files that say, characters. It's not necessary to write long treatises. You just need to make a couple of notes, but you must put it in writing. You cannot rely upon, your memory. You need to create this habit of verbalizing your observations, one file of characters, one file for sets and locations and things, one file for gags, one file for lines that you overheard, one for titles, one for situations, etc. You don't need to know what the situation is going to be used for, just that there was something interesting that you saw, happening. Make notes and collect these observations. Titles are difficult to find. Sometimes you suddenly get an idea of a title that has nothing to do with anything you are writing at- the moment. So you put it in the file. It can be the first step of a foresight of a story coming off.

IDEATION

You know what the first ideas usually look like, they are often just germs of ideas. It's a scene that's not a scene yet. It can be a sensation of some fragments of character that asks to be put in a story. An atmosphere of a place or

environment that attracts you, whatever. These beginnings of ideas are coming from your subconscious mind, so they can have any kind of a form. And before those dim silhouettes of characters, imagined bits and pieces of scenes or elements become alive and interesting enough, before they begin to make some sense and create some whole, it takes a long, long time and you have to help the process. So these notes, and a constant alertness in which you need to train yourself, help the first step, the ideation of the story.

In my classes, I always spend several weeks at the beginning of the year just getting the germs of ideas from the students and trying to see where an idea leads and finding out why the writer has a desire to deal with it. The fact is that the students very often don't know the answers clearly. It takes time to figure all those factors out. You might have had an experience that I've had very often. Suddenly you start reading strange stuff. You go into the library and browse through volumes on. biology, history, horticulture, or something else that evidently doesn't have anything to do with what you're working on. I never stop myself when this happens, because I know that there is a need for it. You just read whatever strange book you feel like reading, and then suddenly, when the idea comes, you see why it was necessary. Maybe, from a three hundred page book you have read, there is just one idea, maybe just one line that appears in the script at the end. But it helped you to explore the territory, the subject matter, maybe the character or relationships. In other words, the ideation can be helped, and that's what you need to learn, to play games with your subconscious creative mind.

PLAYING TRICKS

You constantly trick yourself, you put yourself into difficulties and solve problems that you have created for yourself.

You play other kinds of games as well. For example, it's well known that your desk, the place where you write should be used only when you work, when you really sit down and write. When you think and when you have what's called "writer's block" (which is

just a very kind word for what's called laziness in other professions) you don't use your "creative" niche: Because your desk should be the place where the pleasure of writing occurs. You sit down when the scene is clear and when you can start typing. It's a trick, sure, but try it, and you'll see that it works.

Another way to help yourself – it may sound crazy, but it has worked for many people and I didn't invent it – when you have an idea that is still unclear, when it still is more of a feeling of emotion, and you know that you have got something you feel like doing, something you want to write, take a sheet of paper and write everything that you can tell about it: why this script will be the greatest piece ever written, how it's going to shake the world, in other words, brag on paper as much as you can. Use all the superlatives that you can imagine. Tell how people will stand in line to see it. Tell about all the festivals that will be astonished by it, whatever. And the moment you start writing these gasconades some strange things will begin to happen. There will be some ideas that still may not have any specificity, but they'll still be ideas that express the push and pull of the story. When you finish this bravado take an envelope, fold the paper, put it in the envelope, seal the envelope, lock it up so that nobody can ever read it, and then forget about it.

Then the work starts, the ideas start to become clear, and you get into the drudgery of writing. It becomes a question of how the scenes connect, and what the next sequence is going to be, what to tell now, what to reveal later, and all that. Then, usually when you are approaching page seventy to seventy five of the first draft of the script, there comes a moment when you are getting at least fifteen new ideas for better scripts than the one you are working on.

Don't throw those ideas away, make notes about them and by so doing get rid of them, for the time being, but if you reach that moment when you sincerely believe that the script you have been working on really stinks, and that it's a piece of you know what, then take out the envelope, open it, read the paper that you wrote at the time of the prime inspiration, and

you'll be surprised. The tormenting problems that you have had with your script have been there in the envelope, solved. You begin to see answers, keys, the locks start opening. Now you can finish the script and then you can go back and improve it, make it into what it was originally dreamed to be. Try it. Those who have used it have never regretted it. It doesn't cost anything. It's an old trick that I've learned from old script writers years ago.

FINDING STORIES

There are millions of approaches. You can overhear something, you can meet somebody, you can read something in the newspapers, you can have a conversation with somebody and suddenly an idea for a certain type of a story that no one has done comes to you. These beginnings aren't something that can be prescribed, that you can rationally categorize, but once begun there are always certain obligations that you have to assume towards your story. The best stories are stories about human beings, and if you find a character that you believe should be shown and seen, start the exploration of this person.

Those who begin to work on plots first always abominate this part. They think that you don't need to do it. They fancy that you just select some fixed character units and move them around like puppets, manipulating them so they do what's necessary to be done, fast and easy. They think you don't need to involve yourself in the story. But when they finish, the first draft there's the problem of what to do next. They finally have to go back and start thinking about the characters, and then all the plotting becomes questionable. The characters begin to determine the direction in which the story, should move. That's why it's much better to just accept this unpleasant must. You need to know your character, backwards, forwards, and in depth. That's the reason why we put together the character questionnaire. You've got it, and it helps you to ask all the questions about the character, about his or her relationship to his or her family, to himself, or herself, to his co-worker, to his or her class, work, na-

ture, art, etc. etc. They are all on the list to help you when you start exploring the relationships of the character. The moment you begin to imagine how your character dealt -with and deals with his parents, how he gets along with his brothers. and sisters, what are the conflicts with his co-workers, and all that, you begin to explore the world of your. story, and suddenly scenes begin to-emerge. You start putting the character in different situations in your mind, and you begin to hallucinate, to imagine him in the most mundane and most exciting moments of his life. The courage and audacity to deal with trivia and banalities is something you should develop. Because the best stories are made from the most banal material and if you don't know how your character pays bills, does his laundry, what he likes for lunch and dinner, and what his little vexations are, his petty likes and dislikes, a lively, juicy story will never happen.

I had a wonderful experience this year with one of my students. You know her... She wrote a treatment last year that she brought into class at the beginning of the semester. It was dreadful. It was really very bad, and I had to tell her. So I did, and she was, as you can imagine, quite devastated. And then we sat down and talked for a good three hours. And now that she has a finished script. which is really wonderful, I asked her what helped her to write it. She said that she was seared of banalities and trivialities; and that's why the people in her first year story were cardboard figures. And then there was a moment when she tried to see her characters as real, familiar, ordinary people and suddenly she felt free. She came to me with the first outline of a new story, and I told her: right, use the people whom you know best. Sell all your friends, neighbours, relatives. Everybody has done it. They will never recognize themselves. They have a totally different idea of themselves, and besides you use them in a different context and there's no danger that they will accuse you of anything. They'll love the stories, really. Tolstoy's diary and the notes he kept while he was writing his novels are full of notes how he has combined his cousins and friends, his relatives and acquaintances into the fictional

personages! Some of them he used directly as he knew or remembered them, some of them he mixed with other people. That's one of the best ways of finding characters that feel real. The people, the things, that are familiar, the trivialities, the banalities of life as you observed them are always the spices in a story, in a sequence, in a scene. They make the script believable, they make it come "from somewhere". The worst stories are stories that don't have their roots in an environment; in a certain type of life. Such contes are just pure concoctions and no one can relate to them. You can avoid that by starting with exploring that one character that attracts you.

End of Part I

FESTIVALS

PLOVDIV October 2003

Category "First Steps"
student feature films,
documentaries and animation

THE GOLDEN CHEST GRAND PRIX:

"Let's Go Home", director Lisa Monthe, Drama Institute Stockholm, Sweden

THE SPECIAL PRIZE FOR ORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENTS, ex aequo:

"40 Days of Life", director Radoy Nikolov, NATFA, Bulgaria &

"In The Name Of The Father", director Julio Maria Pessoa, University of Sao Paolo, Brazil

THE SPECIAL PRIZE OF NATFA:

"The Portrait", director Lucie Simkova, FAMU, Czech Republic

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

"Tenue", director David Cardona, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

"I Have To Tell You Something", director Dragomir Sholev, NATFA, Bulgaria

"Cluck Cluck", director Olaf Enke, HFF "Konrad Wolf" Potsdam, Germany

BOLOGNA, November 2003

BEST FILM

Mellem Os, Lauritz Munch-Petersen, Den Danske Filmskole, Denmark

SPECIAL MENTION

Kontroler, Peter Vogt, PWSFT, Lodz, Poland

PRIZE OF THE TOWN OF BOLOGNA, SPECIAL PRIZE OF THE JURY

Izlet, Martin Turk, AGRFT, Ljubljana, Slovenia

SCHOOLS

VCA

Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne

Adam Elliot, a graduate of the VCA School of Film and Television (1996) won an Academy Award for his short animation "Harvie Krumpet"!

Adam has already won numerous other awards for his work including an Australian Film Institute award for his student production "Uncle".

SCHOOLS

The Mexican Government wanted to cut all federal funding to the CCC, Mexico City. This would have meant the death of the school. CILECT sent a letter of support to the school, which was printed in a leading Mexican daily newspaper.

Ultimately, the Mexican government not only dropped their plan to cut financial support but actually increased the budget allocated to the school. Here is the letter of thanks from Angeles Castro, CCC Director. Next page: the CILECT letter of support as published in the Mexican daily, Reforma.

México, D.F. a 29 de enero de 2004

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Dear Caterina and Executive Council Mem-
bers

I want to tell you about the results of our campaign of opposition to the proposal of the Federal Government remove support for our school from the federal budget.

We are pleased to inform you that the proposal of the federal government was rejected by the House of Representatives, where we not only received great support for our work, but also the approval of a significant increase to our budget.

In order to achieve that outcome, we found it necessary to take a number of actions, including a student mobilization, multiple meetings with legislators, and a mass media campaign during the months of November and December. At the same time, the cultural community of the country strongly supported us with many articles in the press and a lot of appearances in radio and television.

The international filmmaking community expressed its solidarity with us and opposed the attempt of the government of Mexico to destroy many institutions of Mexican cinematography. The publication of the statement of support from the Executive Committee of CILECT, which noted all the member schools, published on November 22, 2003, was particularly important. I am attaching a copy of this crucial document.

I want to express deepest gratitude, in my own name and in the name of the community of our school. We recognize that the CILECT document allowed us to present the importance of our work in an international context of high quality.

The CILECT statement was an important influence that came at the moment when the representatives were making their decision. It was so effective that not only did we avoid disappearance, but we received an encouraging vote of confidence expressed in terms of a significant important additional budgetary support.

For us this means a renewed commitment to Mexican society. We will initiate a vigorous process to strengthen our academic work in a direction that, among other things, allows us to extend our educational resources to support the efforts of other educational institutions in our country, and to strengthen our links with schools of cinema in other nations.

Finally, I just want to tell you how proud we are to belong to an organization so generous and supportive.

My gratitude to you, to the Executive Council, and the member schools of CILECT.

My best regards.

Angeles Castro Gurria
Centro de Capacitacion Cinematografica



CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE LIAISON
DES ECOLES DE CINEMA ET DE TELEVISION

Un Mensaje de las Escuelas de Cine del Mundo

En nombre de las escuelas de cine del mundo, el Consejo Ejecutivo de CILECT, el *Centre International de Liaison des Ecoles de Cinéma et de Télévision*, desea hacer patente su gran preocupación por la posible desaparición del *Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica*. El CILECT, fundado en 1954, es una organización mundial de las principales escuelas de cine del mundo con más de 100 miembros en más de 50 naciones.

Creemos que esta medida es fruto de una asesoría equivocada, pues en el caso de muchos otros países, la inversión, relativamente modesta, dispuesta para la capacitación de realizadores de cine y televisión, es retribuida con creces a la nación por los ingresos domésticos y foráneos generados por los jóvenes que han ido a estas escuelas.

Los valores culturales inherentes al sostenimiento de un sector fuerte de cine y televisión son obvios y existen evidencias muy claras de que los mercados internos prefieren materiales culturales producidos localmente, siempre y cuando estos estén disponibles y que sean de calidad. En el caso de México, los ingresos adicionales del sector de cine y televisión también derivan hacia realizadores extranjeros que emplean las facilidades y talentos de producción mexicanos para beneficio de ese país.

Sin dejar de lado que los indicadores culturales son muy importantes, el valor económico de la capacitación de cineastas y realizadores de televisión se ha vuelto obvio en muchas naciones. En Noruega, recientemente, se abrió una escuela nacional de cine, y en Finlandia y Suecia se han fortalecido sus escuelas nacionales, esto se debe en gran parte al enorme éxito que la industria fílmica danesa ha tenido, impulsada por los talentos de la Escuela Nacional de Dinamarca.

La República de Irlanda estableció recientemente una escuela de cine, influida por el éxito de la Escuela Nacional de Cine y Televisión de Gran Bretaña, que ha capacitado a estudiantes revitalizando las industrias del cine y la televisión británicas, convirtiéndolas en exportadoras de imágenes en movimiento. Como resultado de esto, la República Irlandesa, con tan sólo una población de tres millones de habitantes ha creado decenas de miles de empleos en el sector audiovisual con importantes beneficios económicos colaterales en el sector turístico y otros servicios.

La fundación de la Escuela Australiana de Cine, Radio y Televisión se generó como iniciativa del gobierno con la doble intención de crear importantes ingresos por exportación de material audiovisual y para entrenar nuevas generaciones de profesionales capaces de colaborar en las producciones extranjeras que atraen grandes fondos a la nación. Esta decisión obtuvo resultado asombroso, con producciones exitosas y espléndidas; los Estudios Fox en Sydney y los Estudios Warner en Brisbane son rentados por productoras extranjeras a lo largo de todo el año.

Naciones como Israel, Alemania, Francia, Bélgica y muchos otros, han fundado nuevas escuelas para fortalecer las existentes, por dos razones importantes: la primera es que el entrenamiento de profesionales de la industria de cine y televisión es una inversión muy rentable en el futuro cercano por los beneficios económicos que fluyen desde estas industrias. Esto es bien sabido y seguramente el gobierno mexicano ha registrado los ingresos de exportación de las producciones cinematográficas y televisivas mexicanas. Lo que parece no ser tan obvio para ellos es saber dónde aprendieron estos realizadores su profesión.

La segunda razón es un imperativo cultural. Cada nación tiene derecho a su propio idioma, su propia historia y su propia cultura y el cine y la televisión son los principales medios a través de los cuales la cultura se expresa para la mayoría de la gente. Y mientras es posible que existan argumentos generales sobre las fuerzas del mercado, también hay una excepción cultural muy importante. Los mercados pueden autocorregirse en plazos más o menos largos, pero el día realizado a la cultura sucede en un corto plazo y es virtualmente irreversible.

Queremos subrayar que el *Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica* es una inspiración entre las escuelas de cine y televisión de Ibero-América. Su estructura y plan académico es admirado y ampliamente imitado, y es justo indicar que existen rasgos de los métodos e ideas del CCC en los planes de estudio de escuelas en Europa, Asia y Estados Unidos.

Desde nuestra experiencia, el estatus de las escuelas de cine es un indicador fiel de la visión económica de una nación y del auto respeto nacional. Tenemos la impresión que México es un país al que le importa y le preocupa su identidad nacional y que el gobierno del Presidente Fox tiene una visión de largo alcance respecto del desarrollo económico y social de la nación.

Muchos de nosotros hemos sido maestros invitados al CCC o hemos participado en eventos de la escuela en años recientes y siempre nos impresiona la extraordinariamente alta calidad de la escuela. Por eso no podemos más que destacar la asombrosa energía y motivación de sus maestros y cuerpo directivo y de sus estudiantes, tanto nacionales como extranjeros.

Por lo anterior, y en nombre de las 110 escuelas miembros del CILECT alrededor del mundo, les solicitamos con urgencia mantener y fortalecer al *Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica*, que en verdad es la joya de la corona de la educación cinematográfica iberoamericana.

El Consejo Ejecutivo

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