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# Legitimisation in a Small Nation:

*The Making of Film Into Art in Norway, 1945–1969*

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## **Preface**

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## Summary

This thesis examines the development in the status of film in Norway. Asking the question of how film was elevated from mass entertainment into serious art, the thesis traces the various efforts of critics and filmmakers to increase its status. Building on Shyon Baumann's conceptual framework of how an art field for film is created, the thesis investigates how external factors (changes in media and leisure ecology), institutionalisation (trade organisations and interest organisations) and legitimising discourses (development in the critical discourses) served to establish film as an art form. The central assumption is that agents in the field, intentionally and unintentionally, promoted film as art, and that they drew upon international developments and discourses in this process. Using the case of Norway provides an understanding of how an art field of film came about in a "small nation" with a small domestic market, where the state perception of film had a large impact on the field through crucial subsidies. To the Norwegian film history, it has contributed an understanding of how the national cinema in Norway was positioned within an international context, and critically investigated the assumption among scholars that film became art in the 1960s. To the topic of transnational film, this thesis contributes to the understanding of how art discourses are transferred to a national context.



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## Introduction

The early state perceptions of film in Norway saw film as a dangerous and corrupting medium, from which the public had to be protected, evidenced through the focus on censorship and control. It was “primitive and dangerous entertainment for the large and uncritical masses”.<sup>1</sup> However, by the time the state first took an active stance in matters of film in 1946, it was evident that the perception of film as dangerous had waned somewhat. In a parliamentary proposal of 1946-47, the state admitted that “film has become one of the most important factors of both good and evil in the general cultural sphere”.<sup>2</sup> Further, it explained the state had to take an active part in stimulating the production of both “culturally valuable” film and entertainment film for “national” and economic reasons.<sup>3</sup> A good thirty years later, the state’s official perception of film had changed again. Published in 1980, the white paper “Film i mediesamfunnet” (Film in Media Society) defined film as “an artistic story expressed through a pictorial media”.<sup>4</sup> Two years before, the white paper “Filmen og Samfunnet” stated that:

“The film medium has (...) gotten its distinct structure both on the production- and the exhibition-side impacted by it being a mass media, based on commercial exploitation and large investments. Traditionally it has been defined foremost as a medium for entertainment. This situation is largely changed through national subsidies, more affordable production equipment and various forms of ideological efforts”.<sup>5</sup>

The white paper claims that the perception of film as art was a new development, different from the traditional understanding of movies as entertainment. Several scholars claim that film came to be seen as art in the 1960s, but the process in which this change occurred has not been examined.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this thesis asks how the status of film changed in Norway between 1945 and 1970. Assuming that this transformation required active proponents and resources, the thesis answers this question by studying how actors from critics to policymakers, producers and

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<sup>1</sup> Vegard Higræff, *Sensurert: Historien om Statens Filmkontroll*, (Oslo: Kolofon Forlag, 2016), 16. Transl: «primitiv og farlig underholdning for de store og ukritiske massene».

<sup>2</sup> Kirke og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», St.prp. nr. 2 (1946–1947) (Oslo: Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1946), 25–26. Transl: «Filmen er blitt en av de mest betydningsfulle faktorer både til godt og ondt i det alminnelige kulturliv.»

<sup>3</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», 1946–1947, 25–26.

<sup>4</sup> Kultur- og vitenskapsdepartementet, «Film i mediesamfunnet», St.mld. nr. 21 (1983–1984), (Oslo: Kultur- og vitenskapsdepartementet, 1984), 16. Transl: «en kunstnerisk beretning uttrykt gjennom et billedmedium».

<sup>5</sup> Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet, «Filmen og Samfunnet», (1981–1982), (Oslo: Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet, 1981), 22. Transl: «Filmmidiet har som nevnt fått sin spesielle struktur både på produksjons- og visningssiden preget av at det har vært et massemedium, basert på kommersiell utnyttelse og store investeringer. Tradisjonelt er det definert som et medium for underholdning i første rekke. Denne situasjonen er i stor utstrekning endret ved nasjonale støtteordninger, rimeligere produksjonsutstyr og forskjellige former for ideologisk engasjement.»

<sup>6</sup> See for example Higræff, *Sensurert*, 223; Ove Solum and Dag Asbjørnsen, «Den norske kinomodellen», in *Film og kino: Den norske modellen*, by Dag Asbjørnsen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Unipub, 2008), 21; Dag Asbjørnsen and Ove Solum, *Det norske kommunale kinosystemet: Legitimeringsstrategier og filmrepertoar*, (Oslo: Unipub, 2000), 18; Dag Asbjørnsen and Ove Solum, «Public service-kino: Legitimeringsstrategier i norsk kinopolitikk», *Norsk Medietidsskrift* Vol. 5, No. 1 (1998): 121–138.

directors collectively brought this transformation about as they struggled for position in the film field. The thesis pays particular attention to the role international influences had on the establishment of an art film discourse in Norway.

The thesis starts from the observation that the status of film went from being seen primarily as an economic consumer good and entertainment product to being generally acknowledged first as a legitimate cultural form, and eventually as a legitimate art form. This is by no means to say that all film is universally recognised as art. However, there were clear tendencies towards an increased valuation of film in the period. The thesis will argue that organisations, institutions and individual agents, particularly critics, worked towards increasing the societal perceptions of film. These efforts were done both intentionally, through actively participating in the creation of an art discourse for film, and unintentionally, through measures to increase conditions for those working in the field and for film clubs and other volunteer organisations. Lastly it will argue that the state measures towards film support that gradually evolved, institutional efforts, as well as the discourses that film critics employed were derived from international models, both historical and contemporary. This reveals that the use of transnational perspectives such as cultural transfers can broaden the understanding of cultural evolution within national contexts.

## State of Research

This thesis is situated in a research context of the history of film in Norway, transnational approaches to film, as well as studies of how art is created. To write a narrative that encompasses transnational influences in film on a specific national context, it can draw on a by now well-established tradition of research on the history of film with a national, Norwegian focus.<sup>7</sup> The history of film in Norway was missing until the publication of Sigurd Evensmo's *Det Store Tivoli*.<sup>8</sup> Since the publication, scholarly attention towards Norwegian film and cinema history increased, as illustrated by Odd Heide Hald's 1993 compilation of a collected bibliography of film literature until 1991, which includes both academic research and newspapers articles discussing film.<sup>9</sup> The bibliography was part of a "wave" of attention to film history that Helseth has labelled "the 100-year wave", and included the research project

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<sup>7</sup> Henry Bacon, «A Transnational History of Finnish Cinema: Rethinking the study of a small nation cinema», *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2013): 7–14.

<sup>8</sup> Sigurd Evensmo, *Det Store Tivoli: Film og kino i Norge*, (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Odd Heide Hald, *Norsk Filmbibliografi: Litteratur om norsk film og norske filmforhold*, Norges Forskningsråd, Levende Bilder no. 1/93, KULTs skriftserie no. 13. Oslo: Norges forskningsråd, 1993.

“Levende Bilder”.<sup>10</sup> It culminated in a series of research publications in relation to the project (KULTs skriftserie no. 13), and eventually the book *Kinoens Mørke, Fjernsynets Lys* (Cinema’s darkness, television’s light) a grand history of film and television in Norway, which presents both the larger development trends and discusses events along the way.<sup>11</sup>

A tendency within film and cinema history in Norway has been to write a history of “great works”, emphasising what Allen and Gomery label “aesthetic film history”.<sup>12</sup> Scholars such as Iversen, Solum, Hanche and Aas have detailed the developments within film-making and the aesthetic aspects of film.<sup>13</sup> Iversen has also contributed to an understanding of the works of filmmakers, for example Arne Skouen and Erik Løchen.<sup>14</sup> This has established a canon of Norwegian films.

Another strand of scholarly attention has been dedicated to the municipal cinema system and identified a “Norwegian model” of film and cinema.<sup>15</sup> Accompanying the history of the municipal system, attention has also been paid to the structural organisation of film production in Norway, particularly in regards to film policy, state support and cultural institutions.<sup>16</sup> Some of this orientation in the history of film in Norway can be explained by the large public interest

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<sup>10</sup> Helseth, «Norsk filmhistorie i et nøtteskall», *Norsk medietidsskrift* Vol. 4, no. 1 (1997): 191–192.

<sup>11</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, Jostein Gripsrud, Gunnar Iversen, Kathrine Skretting and Bjørn Sørensen, *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys: Levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> See Øivind Hanche, Gunnar Iversen and Nils Klever Aas, *Bedre enn sitt rykte: En liten norsk filmhistorie* (2.edt.), (Oslo: Norsk Filminstitutt, 2004); Gunnar Iversen, *Norsk filmhistorie: Spillefilmen 1911–2011* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2011); Eva Bakøy and Tore Helseth, *Den Andre Norske Filmhistorien* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2011); Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum, *Den Norske Filmbølgen: Fra Orions belte til Max Manus* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2010); Gunnar Iversen, *Til siste åndedrag og den franske nye bølgen* (Oslo: Norsk Filmklubbforbund, 2011); Gunnar Iversen, *Sykkeltyvene og den italienske neorealismen* (Oslo: Norsk Filmklubbforbund, 2007); Jan Erik Holst, *Det lille sirkus: Et essay om norske filmer og produksjonsforhold 1946–2006* (Oslo: Norsk Filminstitutt, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Gunnar Iversen, *Framtidsdrøm og filmlek: Erik Løchens filmproduksjon og filmestetikk* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 1992); Gunnar Iversen «Oslo – åpen by: Arne Skouens Gategutter og den italienske neorealismen», in *Nærbilder: Artikler om norsk filmhistorie*, edited by Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Asbjørnsen and Solum, *Film og kino*; Asbjørnsen and Solum, *Det norske kommunale kinosystemet*; Asbjørnsen and Solum, «Public service-kino»; Mona Pedersen, «Kinoeierskapet under forvandlingens lov», in *Film til folket: Sensur og kinopolitikk i 100 år*, edited by Ove Solum (Oslo: Akademika forlag, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Ove Solum, *Film til Folket Sensur og kinopolitikk i 100 år* (Oslo: Akademika forlag, 2013); Higræff, *Sensurert*; Iversen, *Norsk Filmhistorie*; Iversen, «Fra kontroll til næringsutvikling: En introduksjon til norsk filmpolitikk 1913–2013» *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidsskrift* Vol. 16, No. 1 (2013): 9–24; Holst, *Det Lille Sirkus*; Jan Erik Holst, «Norsk Filmpolitikk: Støtteordningene for Filmproduksjonen», in *Film og kino: Den norske modellen*, by Dag Asbjørnsen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Unipub, 2008); Asbjørnsen and Solum, «Public service-kino»; Jan Anders Diesen, *Film som statlig folkeopplyser: Statens Filmsentral i 50 år* (Oslo: Norsk Filminstitutt, 1998); Tanya Pedersen Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov: Norsk filminstituttets historie* (Oslo: Norsk Filminstitutt, 2006); Kathrine Skretting, «Sensur av sex på film: Nedslag i filmkontrollens virke», in *Film til folket: Sensur og kinopolitikk i 100 år*, edited by Ove Solum. (Oslo: Akademika forlag, 2013); Cecilie Christina Sandberg, «Staten og norsk spillefilm: En analyse av norske myndigheters engasjement i nasjonal spillefilmproduksjon», Master’s thesis, University of Oslo, 2005.

in film policy and institutions.<sup>17</sup> The focus on these aspects of film and cinema has yielded valuable knowledge on film and the “Norwegian system”. However, it has also led to a focus on the particularly “national” features of film and cinema, thus writing a “Norwegian history of film” instead of a history of film in Norway.

While the conditions of film and cinema in Norway were in some ways organised differently, the country’s film field was not isolated from the rest of the world, as Norwegian critics, filmmakers and cultural policymakers operated in a larger context of transnational film and cinema. Kuhn and Westwell have defined transnational cinema as an academic field which builds upon national histories of film and cinema, but also challenges these national perspectives.<sup>18</sup> This is also something this thesis sets out to do.

Some attention has been dedicated to what can be seen as regionalism, where the national framing is replaced with a regional perspective that highlights the common features across national boundaries.<sup>19</sup> Among the regional perspectives are the studies on “Scandinavian Cinema”, including for example Mette Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist’s work on “Nordic cinema” in a globalising context, and Nestingen and Elkington’s work on the relationship between “transnational networks of production” and the national contexts in the Nordic countries.<sup>20</sup> Nestingen and Elkington’s work is also tied to a last category of transnational film and cinema research which highlights the limitations of national perspectives and stresses the importance of transnational influences within a field that has largely been treated as an isolated case.

Much of the literature within the category of transnational cinema studies, however, have focused on diasporic and postcolonial cinema. This has been highlighted by Henry Bacon, who calls for research on “small nation film cultures” and how they are impacted by transnational influences.<sup>21</sup> Using the discourses on film as an entry into the Norwegian film history instead of the films themselves, the thesis provides an angle into the field that allows for transnational influences and parallels. The present study aims to highlight transnational

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<sup>17</sup> Holst, *Det lille sirkus*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, «Transnational Cinema», *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, (Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Kuhn and Westwell, «Transnational Cinema»; Mette Hjort’s «On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism», in *World Cinemas: Transnational Perspectives*, edited by Natasa Durovicová and Kathleen E Newman (New York: Routledge, 2009) is also a significant endeavour into how the term transnational has been used in cinema and film studies.

<sup>20</sup> Mette Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist, *A Companion to Nordic Cinema* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2016); Trevor G. Elkington and Andrew Nestingen, *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic cinema in transition*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Bacon, «A Transnational History of Finnish Cinema», 7–14, 11. Another contribution that employs a similar concept is Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie (eds.), *The Cinema of Small Nations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

connections in the film field in Norway, whereas research has been dominated by an orientation towards the peculiarities of Norwegian film. Furthermore, it will contribute by investigating the assumption that film became art in the 1960. This assumption is mentioned by several scholars, but it has not yet been analysed.<sup>22</sup> As an answer to Bacon's call for research on transnational influences in a national context, this thesis will contribute to the research on transnational film history offering a narrative of agents within a national context who adapted and employed international discourses to further the understanding of film as art.

A last strand of research my thesis will engage with is the study of the legitimisation of cultural products as works of art. Using a constructivist approach to the term "art" this thesis stresses that the perception of something as art is created, and not tied to inherent qualities of a work. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has done ground-breaking work for the understanding of how a cultural product becomes a piece of art through his studies of the literary field. Using the theory of art fields as "autonomous fields" with an internal logic and an internal hierarchy, Bourdieu has developed a framework for analysing the legitimisation of art works.<sup>23</sup>

Building on Bourdieu's theories of field formation, several scholars have highlighted how art world formation has occurred, ranging from studies of literature to video games and tattoos.<sup>24</sup> Several of these highlight the role of critics and discourses in the legitimisation of cultural products.<sup>25</sup> Within the scholarship on film, there has also been endeavours into how an art world was created for film.<sup>26</sup> Particularly relevant for this thesis is Shyon Baumann's

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<sup>22</sup> See for example Higræff, *Sensurert*, 223; Solum and Asbjørnsen, «Den norske kinomodellen», 21; Asbjørnsen and Solum, *Det norske kommunale kinosystemet*, 18; Asbjørnsen and Solum, «Public service-kino».

<sup>23</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on art and literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> For culture in general, see for example Susanne Janssen, «Art Journalism and Cultural Change: The Coverage of the arts in Dutch newspapers 1965–1990», *Poetics* Vol. 26, No. 5–6 (August 1999): 329–348. For popular music see Motti Regev, *Pop-Rock Music: Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism in Late Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); Simone Varriale, «Reconceptualizing Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism: Evidence from the early consecration of Anglo-American pop-rock in Italy» *American Behavioral Scientist* (September 2018): 1–17; Simone Varriale, *Globalization, Music and Cultures of Distinction: The Rise of Pop Music Criticism in Italy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Paul Lopes, *The Rise of a Jazz Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Motti Regev, «Producing Artistic Value: The Case of Rock Music», *The Sociological Quarterly* Vol. 35, No. 1 (February 1994): 85–102. For video games see Felan Parker, «An Art World for Artgames», *Loading...* Vol. 7, No. 11 (2013); Felan Parker, «Canonizing Bioshock: Cultural value and the prestige game», *Games and Culture* Vol. 12, No. 7–8 (2017): 739–763. For tattoos see Mary Kosut, «The Artification of Tattoo: Transformations within a Cultural Field», *Cultural Sociology* Vol. 8, No. 2 (2014): 142–158.

<sup>25</sup> See for example Janssen, «Art Journalism and Cultural Change»; Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*; Regev, *Pop-Rock Music*; Varriale, «Reconceptualizing Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism»; Simone Varriale, *Globalization, Music and Cultures of Distinction*; Felan Parker, «An Art World for Artgames»; Felan Parker, «Canonizing Bioshock: Cultural value and the prestige game».

<sup>26</sup> See Shyon Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow: From entertainment to art*, (Princeton: Princeton university press, 2007); Shyon Baumann, «Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States», *American Sociological Review* Vol. 66, No. 3 (June 2001): 404–426; Tatiana Heise and Andrew Tudor, «Constructing (Film) Art: Bourdieu's field model in a comparative context», *Cultural Sociology* Vol. 1, No. 2 (2007): 165–187;

research on changes in the status of Hollywood film.<sup>27</sup> Baumann examines changes within the film industry in the 1960s, arguing that the development of opportunity spaces, institutional changes and the intellectual discourse among critics resulted in an increased acceptance of films as art.<sup>28</sup> Approaching film history from a sociological stance, Baumann uses discourse analysis to examine sources from American newspapers, sampled at five-year intervals. Thus, he is able to detect changes in the ways in which movies are labelled and the discursive terms critics used to analyse and review movies. At the same time this sociological approach is limiting; while Baumann could see that perceptual changes had occurred, his methods and sources did not enable him to examine what caused these changes.

This thesis will therefore treat changes within the status of film, and thus the discourses on film, as an on-going *process*, and challenge Baumann's relatively ordered and linear narrative by highlighting the dynamic process in which change developed. Furthermore, the thesis will seek to avoid the structural reductionism of Baumann's narrative by "populating" the story, bringing the various actors and their efforts to the foreground.

While taking Baumann's study for methodological orientation, this thesis expects to arrive at different findings. The Hollywood cinema system differs from the conditions of film production in Europe, where most states offer subsidies to support domestic production. State support is often more central to film production in countries where audiences for domestic language films are very small. This makes Norway a relevant case to expand on Baumann's work. Bringing the concept of "small nation" cinema in which the state also serves as an important agent in legitimisation of a cultural product as art through state subsidies,<sup>29</sup> the thesis will develop a narrative that feature the state as a far more prominent actor than it is in Baumann's American account.

In the context of film in Norway, there is also some research that touches upon the topic of cultural evaluation, film discourses and film criticism. Anne-Lise With has dealt with the notion of "quality film" (kvalitetsfilm) in Norway, which she studied with a focus on the

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Andrew Tudor, «The Rise and Fall of the Art (House) Movie», in *The Sociology of Art: Ways of Seeing*, edited by David Inglis and John Hughson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Margareth O'Brien, «The rise of art cinema in postwar film culture: the exhibition, distribution, and reception of foreign language films in Britain 1945–1968», (PhD thesis, Birbeck University of London, Department of Film, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*; Baumann, «Intellectualization and Art World Development».

<sup>28</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 161.

<sup>29</sup> The significance of the state policies on the legitimization of cultural products is shown by John Hill, «UK Film Policy, Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion», *Cultural Trends* Vol. 1, No. 2 (June 2004): 29–39; Merja Heikkinen, «Government Policy and Definitions of Art: The case of comics», *International Journal of Cultural Policy* Vol. 14, No. 1 (2008): 79–93.

1990s.<sup>30</sup> Her dissertation, published as part of the research project “Levende Bilder”, also touches upon the discourses of quality film in the 1960s, particularly in regards to the systems for import of quality film. However, the focus on presenting both empirical and theoretical perspectives on the notion of quality film, as well as the emphasis on the situation in the 1990s limits her discussion of the 1960s and the establishment of an “art film institution” to a backdrop for a more recent situation. However, her framing of post-1969 developments as attempts at preserving an art film institution already established against a “decay” into mass entertainment and “Hollywoodisation” is important.<sup>31</sup> This thesis will add to With’s work by exploring the period before 1969, when film as art became established.

Another relevant contribution to the question this thesis pursues is Servoll’s dissertation on the notion of the “auteur” and its use in Norway. Servoll studies the works of Arne Skouen in the 1950s as well as auteurs in the 1960s and the 1970s, including feminist ones. Her analysis of Norwegian auteurism entails a study of 1950s to 1970s film criticism, thus intersecting with the topic of this thesis.<sup>32</sup> Servoll’s tight focus on the auteur allows for a deeper analysis of different directors and the attention devoted to them in film magazines and reviews. She also ventures beyond discourses, as she studies “auteurism” in relation to conditions of production and state measures. In addition, she links Norwegian developments to the French auteur discourse. All this makes her work highly relevant and useful for the present thesis. However, it is important to stress that “auteurism” was only one strand contributing to the transformation of film into art. Consequently, the thesis will trace these alternative discourses, taking a field perspective.

Similar to Servoll’s work, Gunnar Iversen has studied the film journal FANT and asked how it implemented the French auteurism.<sup>33</sup> Published in Norsk Filmforbund’s journal *Rushprint* and being somewhat unspecific in its referencing, the article has nevertheless proven to be useful for the present thesis. The article traces the developments in film discourses in the

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<sup>30</sup> Anne-Lise With, «Kvalitetsfilm og Norsk Kinopolitikk: Teoretiske og empiriske innfallsvinkler», in Øyvind Hanche, Tone M. Grenness and Anne-Lise With, *Om populærfilm og kvalitetsfilm*, KULTs skriftserie nr. 8, Oslo, Norsk allmennvitenskapelige forskningsråd, 1992.

<sup>31</sup> With, «Kvalitetsfilm og norsk kinopolitikk», 94. The thread of quality film has also been taken up by Elise Søfteland Iversen, who has examined the contemporary film policy goal of preserving “good quality” of Norwegian film, and how the notions of quality and economy is expressed in the position as consultant at the Film Institute. Elise Søfteland Iversen, «Film til folket: En kvalitativ studie av Norsk Filminstituttets konsulentordning og politiske målsetning om høy kvalitet i norsk film», Master’s thesis, University of Bergen, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Johanne Kielland Servoll, *Den norske auteuren: En begrephistorisk analyse*, Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Gunnar Iversen, «Fra Arkivet: Kritikerne som ville Revolusjonere Film-Norge», *Rushprint* 20.06.2018, URL: <https://rushprint.no/2018/06/fant/> (Visited: 21.02.2019); Gunnar Iversen, «Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge: Del 2», *Rushprint* 29.12.2010, URL: <https://rushprint.no/2010/12/kritikerne-som-ville-revolusjonere-filmnorge-del-2/> (Visited: 21.02.2019).

journal FANT, but it does not set this in the context of the film field or investigate how it fits in a larger narrative of legitimisation of film. More research on individual film journals and critics includes Nilsen's master's thesis on FANT, Randi Østvold's thesis on *Filmavisa* and Herbjørg Hoholm Clifford's dissertation on Elsa Brita Marcussen.<sup>34</sup> Particularly the study on Marcussen has been a great help and inspiration for locating some of the most significant organisations and institutions that were established in the first decade after the Second World War.<sup>35</sup>

This thesis will expand upon and add to these perspectives by compiling a narrative based both on the close consideration of primary sources, and seeing secondary research on the Norwegian film history in a transnational perspective.

## Method and theory

The perspective of this thesis sees changes in the status and discourse on film as an expression of gradual legitimisation of film, caused by the efforts of individual and organisational actors. The main theoretical assumption is that this development came about as a result of relevant actors who drew on and adapted international discourses to their purposes.

The inspiration for the methods in this thesis is Shyon Baumann's work on the legitimisation of film as an art. Working from the hypothesis that Hollywood films became legitimised in the 1960s, he analysed which key factors contributed in this change of perception. On the basis of Pierre Bourdieu's work on fields of cultural production as well as Howard Becker's work on art world development,<sup>36</sup> he derived a typology for the causes of change in the status of film as art. Within this typology, three main categories of factors are present; opportunity space, institutionalisation, and a legitimising discourse.<sup>37</sup> The opportunity space is made up of various external factors on a societal level that created favourable conditions for developing a film art world, such as the post-war expansion in higher education which provided a new audience for film, and new leisure time activities which detracted the audience from the cinemas. According to Baumann, this caused a decrease in economic potential of film, which both enabled and forced the film field to reinvent its role in society and as an alternative to

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<sup>34</sup> Britt Medalen Nilsen, «Provokasjon og propaganda: En idéhistorisk studie av filmtidsskriftet FANT», Master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2015; Randi Østvold, «Tidsskriftet Filmavisa 1977–1981: Fri debatt og nødvendig korrektiv?», Master's thesis, Høgskolen i Lillehammer, 2013; Herbjørg Hoholm Clifford, «Film og samfunn: Elsa Brita Marcussen og norsk filmmiljø i 1950 årene», Master's thesis University of Trondheim, 1994.

<sup>35</sup> Clifford, «Film og samfunn», 8.

<sup>36</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*; Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

<sup>37</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 3.



television.<sup>38</sup> His evidence for the correlation between these events and the ensuing development of film as art is somewhat superficial. However, on an abstract level, the inclusion of external factors that enabled a redefinition of film is a highly fruitful concept, particularly in history. A central belief in the historical discipline is the interconnectedness and complexity of chains of events, wherein the societal and temporal context is emphasised.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the concept of societal changes leading to the opening of an opportunity space is a vital insight to this thesis.

Factors within the field of film also have to be brought into the equation. Baumann's concept of the internal changes in the field is *institutionalisation* of resources, in the form of active efforts to promote film as art. More specifically, he refers to the creation of film festivals, the inclusion of film studies within academia and in university curricula, and directors who began promoting themselves as artists through participating in art world activities and portraying themselves as artists in the public eye.<sup>40</sup> However, this section of the work reveals his tendencies towards structural reductionism, and a weak point in the research is the lack of attention paid to the actual efforts of individual agents within the field. This thesis will draw upon Baumann's insights, but will also go further by investigating how some writers in Norwegian 1950s and 1960s film journals explicitly promoted and justified the inclusion of film as art equal to other arts such as literature and theatre. This ties into the intellectualising discourse, as the establishment of a film school in Norway was yet decades away, and the discourse was formed by critics and educated journalists, as well as other cultural personalities.

"The Revolt of the 44", when filmmakers banded together in an effort to reduce the influence of economic interests in film, is an example of what Baumann has labelled as "developments within the film world that occurred primarily for economic or legal reasons but that nonetheless facilitated the growth of an art world".<sup>41</sup> These were the changes within the film field that had promotion of film as art as an unintended consequence. For Baumann, foremost of these were, firstly, changes of the production mode from assembly lines to more director-oriented productions. Secondly, the paramount legal decision to separate cinemas from studios, which enabled cinemas to establish their own programming. Thirdly, the increased incentives for quality production due to the reputation of film as damaging and corrupting entertainment. Fourthly, changes in censorship which allowed for more artistic themes in films,

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<sup>38</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 32–35, 37–47.

<sup>39</sup> William H. Sewell, "Historical Events as transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille", *Theory and Society* Vol. 25, No. 6 (December 1996): 841–844.

<sup>40</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 53–66.

<sup>41</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 53.

and fifthly, better cinemas and more experimentation and audience segmentation in filmmaking.<sup>42</sup>

While the studio system and the conditions around film production were vastly different in the U.S. and Norway partly due to the much smaller scale of Norwegian productions and market size as well as the municipal ownership of cinemas, there were significant changes within the Norwegian mode of production as well. As mentioned, “the Revolt of the 44” was an effort of reducing economic influence in the boards of various film institutions. One of the preconditions of the revolt was the establishment of labour organisations for workers in the film industry in the 1950s. A tendency of the film field in Norway in the 1950s and 1960s was the presence of various organisations to preserve the interests of field actors, be it producers, technicians or cinematographers. This led to an increased professionalization of a field that had earlier been impacted by a lack of formal training, low-budget productions and freelancing, thus elevating the position of those who created the films. Furthermore, the regulations of state subsidies for film production were altered several times in the 1950s and 1960s, which impacted the mode of production and is also evidence of the changing perception of film within state bodies.

A last, but important, factor in elevating film to art status was the intellectualising discourse around film. The essential logic is that the way a phenomenon is talked about influences the way it is perceived – if film is discussed as art, it becomes perceived as an art form. Intellectualisation of the discourse of film is evident through three key changes, according to Baumann: changing language, changing techniques and concepts, and critics self-identification as critics.<sup>43</sup> Baumann sees those changes manifested in the use of language in reviews including “high-art terms”.<sup>44</sup> He also points to changing concepts and techniques reviewers employed in their reviews.<sup>45</sup> The use of these devices imply an approach to film that is vastly different from the descriptive approach used in several of the early film reviews of the 1910s and 1920s. While there are challenges in using the frequency of these terms as

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<sup>42</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 53, 82–108.

<sup>43</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 118–128, 155.

<sup>44</sup> High art terms listed: “art”, “brilliant”, “genius”, “inspired”, “intelligent”, “master” and “work”. Critical terms listed: “composition”, “genre”, “irony”, “metaphor”, “satire”, “symbol” and “tone”. Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 120.

<sup>45</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 124–128. These devices were as following: positive and negative commentary, naming of director (signifying shift towards auteurism), comparisons of directors, comparisons of films (comparisons signal that there is an established canon that films are measured against), interpretation of the film (signals that there is a deeper meaning), merit in failure, evoke a distinction between art and entertainment or serious and commercialised film, and lastly, to imply that film should be complex and should not be “easy”.

measurements of intellectualisation of the discourse,<sup>46</sup> Baumann provides a compelling case for how language shapes cultural fields. This thesis has not built directly on the terms and concepts that Baumann has found, but will nonetheless consider the use of the concept “art versus entertainment” as a signal of increased intellectualisation and promotion of film as art.

Further conceptual guidance for this thesis stems from sociologist Motti Regev’s work on rock music.<sup>47</sup> According to Regev, rock critics as the interpreters of cultural meaning used several discursive strategies to establish rock music as art. Rather than identifying certain phrases and concepts critics used that implied increased understanding of the cultural product as art like Baumann does, Regev found that critics used strategies such as proving that the cultural product had “serious” meaning, locating the “artistic genius” (both individuals and groups) behind the product and promoting an idea of this artistic genius producing “art for art’s sake”.<sup>48</sup> In a similar way, this thesis will seek to identify critics’ strategies to promote film as art. Among the critics of the 1950s, the alignment of film with education and the project of democratisation of culture was an attempt to make film seen as more serious. In the 1960s, filmmakers began to identify with the notion of the artist instead of craftsman and rebelled against what they saw as commercial interests. Critics in the second half of the 1960s used auteurism and the debate on censorship to promote film as serious art.

While the inspiration for methods is derived from Baumann, the approach in this thesis will diverge from his. His research can be criticised for the comparative approach he adapts. Several scholars have highlighted arguments against using a comparative approach when studying entities that are closely intertwined.<sup>49</sup> In his study, Baumann compares institutional arrangements in the U.S. and European countries, as well as the discourse among critics within the film and the literary field. The challenge is that the film field in Europe and the U.S.A., do not necessarily exist separate from each other and might have mutually influenced each other. Particularly within the field of film, which is a transnational medium, these influences should be assumed to exist. As an alternative, I will approach my sources not only with an awareness of these possible transfers, but with an assumption that the developments found within the

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<sup>46</sup> For example, the temporal biases for compiling the list of terms, as well as the mode of selection and use of quantitative methods for word counting instead of a quantitative approach to analyse the context in which the terms were used.

<sup>47</sup> Regev, «Producing Artistic Value».

<sup>48</sup> Regev, «Producing Artistic Value», 85.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, «Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity», *History and Theory* Vol. 45, No. 1 (February 2006): 30–50; Eliga H. Gould, «Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery», *American Historical Review* Vol. 112, No. 3 (June 2007): 764–786.; Kiran Klaus Patel, «Transnations among Transnations: The Debate on Transnational History in the United States and Germany», *American Studies* Vol. 54, No. 3, (2009): 451–472.

Norwegian film industry are derived and connected to developments within the film industries in other countries.

An inspiration for this theoretical approach has been Regev's study of "aesthetic cosmopolitanism". He sees his agents as part of both a domestic art field and an international art field, and thus they are able to draw upon the international trends and adapt them in a given national context.<sup>50</sup> Applied to the context of film in Norway, this theory enables the inclusion of transnational discourses in a national context, and seeing how these are applied and used by domestic critics and filmmakers in their both intended and unintended efforts promoting film as art.

### **Definition of the empirical project**

As the main focus of this thesis is on developments within cultural evaluations, the periodization should follow from key events within the field that sparked, accelerated or changed processes. However, since this thesis is dealing with discursive changes that happen over long periods of time, turning points are difficult to locate. The thesis uses 1945 as a point of departure for the analysis as the reconstructions after the war represented a large shift in Norwegian cultural policy, which entailed a cultural rebuilding of the nation. The state involvement in culture in general increased, and new systems to subsidise culture and art in all forms were instated, including film. Following from the use of state policies as a measurement for the status of film, the thesis regards the 1950s as an era where several state policies for film were instated, displaying varying interest and acceptance of film as culture. It will then move to the 1960s, the years several scholars regard as the starting point for film as art.<sup>51</sup> The endpoint of the thesis will be the film discourses in the late 1960s and the state measures for film at the turn of the decade, which had a clear tendency towards supporting art films over other films. Ending the narrative at the turn from 1960s to 1970s can also be justified because the state measures towards film after this were largely aimed at preserving the established art film field.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the critical debates had shifted from the "art for art's sake" that was pushed by FANT through its auteurism, to art for politics' sake.<sup>53</sup> The strategies of making film as art more seriously through politicisation had caused a shift towards politics that was so profound

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<sup>50</sup> Regev, *Pop-Rock Music*, 14.

<sup>51</sup> Asbjørnsen and Solum, *Det norske kommunale kinosystemet*, 18; Solum and Asbjørnsen, "Den norske kinomodellen", 20–21.

<sup>52</sup> With, «Kvalitetsfilm og norsk kinopolitikk», 94.

<sup>53</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 209.

that critics lost sight of the film art. Thus, the thesis will not go into detail on these discourses, since they fall outside the process of creating an art field for film.

In order to trace the developments in the film discourse, I have chosen to focus on the following key groups of actors: the state and its primarily national departments, the critics, and the filmmakers. In order to trace cultural evaluations, an exploration of different key institutions within the Norwegian film field is needed. This thesis regards state institutions such as the 1955 Norwegian Film Institute as an expression of increased state interest in film. On the other hand, it will also consider non-state organisations, for example the voluntary organisation Norwegian Film Society, film clubs, and trade organisations such as the Norwegian Film Association as a sign of increased professionalisation of the field and agents in the formation of discourses.

A third, important group of actors consists of film critics. To capture their activities, this thesis examines *Filmdebatt* (1951–1955) and *Fant* (1965–1974), tracing the way they promoted the status of film, their arguments for why film was important, and how they drew upon international discourses and film theory in their critical endeavours. The rationale for the choices of these two journals is that they in their respective eras were the only true film journals. While there were other magazines and pamphlets for film, these were either produced by cinemas themselves and meant as advertising, or mainly contained articles on film stars are thus not of primary importance here.<sup>54</sup>

Since this thesis covers a wide range of actors, it relies on previous research in order to synthesise a comprehensive narrative. In addition to this, the thesis is built upon the analysis of two key film journals, *Filmdebatt* and *Fant*, and their connections to the international film discourses and other film journals. *Filmdebatt* was published between 1951–1956, and also had an anniversary issue in 1961. Much of the orientation of the journal was to provide information on films, and thus the journal contains much information on various films in the 1950s. Since this thesis has sought the contribution of *Filmdebatt* to the creation of an art field for film, the sources were analysed with particular attention to international references and theories, as well as the positioning of the journal in the debates on film. *Fant* had a more radical orientation than *Filmdebatt* and placed much focus on auteurism and modernism. It came out between 1965–1974, but this thesis is focused on the years until the radicalisation around 1968.<sup>55</sup> The analysis of *Fant* was similarly to that of *Filmdebatt* oriented specifically towards international connections and underlying discourses, as well as the perception of film.

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<sup>54</sup> Iversen, «Fra Arkivet: Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge».

<sup>55</sup> The issues of *Fant* vary in whether or not they include the volume number and year, so in the bibliography and the notes I have only labelled these by number.

Newspapers were another outlet for film criticism, but as this thesis is concerned with not only reviews of specific films, but also how the discourses were expressed in collision with the conditions of production in the field and the underlying arguments for the artistic and cultural value of film in general, film journals are a more fruitful source. The thesis will, however, include national daily newspapers in the source material to provide extra context or when specific events are concerned.

Lastly, the thesis examines the state discourse on film through analysis of state proposals for subsidies and measures for supporting film.<sup>56</sup> Using Bourdieu's claim that the state figures as a great reserve of symbolic power over a field for orientation, the thesis examines which definitional power the Norwegian state held over what is art and not. Through subsidies and legal and cultural policy, parliamentarians' and bureaucrats' perception of film impacted filmmaking, so the changing status of film in the eyes of the state apparatus was highly significant for those within the field. The proposals have been approached with attention to the perceptions of film, both those explicitly stated, and those implicitly guiding the formulation of state measures towards film.

The thesis has not considered primary sources for the international discourses, as this would necessitate a scope beyond a master's thesis, and the primary focus of this thesis is on how they were used by Norwegian agents. The international discourses and film theories also have well established research, which this thesis will draw upon.

### **Notes on the outline**

The first chapter will detail the developments in state and critic's discourses on film between 1945 and 1955. It opens with a brief discussion on the perception of film as cheap entertainment and a cash-grab for municipalities. It will then analyse the state perception on film in the parliamentary proposals of the 1950s as primarily determined by economic considerations. The chapter will also show how film critic's, inspired by international discourses of film as enlightenment of the masses, promoted film as culture and even art. It ends with the establishment of a Norwegian Film Institute, which would provide film preservation, and fuel the development of film clubs at the turn of the decade.

The second chapter picks up the thread of the Film Institute and shows how its initiative for a film club movement together with the introduction of the television reoriented the position of film. By tracing the elevation of Arne Skouen to the position of artist, it shows how

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<sup>56</sup> The parliamentary documents are quite hard to navigate and locate, so I have added links to online versions in the bibliography for those that this applies to.

filmmakers came to see themselves as artists, which led to demands for more representation within the key positions in the field. This was particularly evident in the “Revolt of the 44”, which will be analysed as an expression of a conflict over art versus commerce in the film field. The conflict ended with success for the filmmakers as they gained access to the key positions in the field.

The third chapter examines how the film journal *Fant* is established to consolidate the belief in film as art that had arisen with the “Revolt of the 44”. *Fant* had a clear foundation in the French auteurism and sought to prepare the grounds for a Norwegian modernist wave, thus intellectualising the belief in film as art. The debate against censorship also mobilised both critics, filmmakers, film enthusiasts and public personas in the fight for film as a free artistic medium. The chapter ends with a discussion of the state acceptance of film as art, evidenced by new film policies aimed at supporting artistic productions.





## Chapter 1

### Commerce or culture? State attitudes to film and the Norwegian Film Society's push for film as culture, 1945 – 1955

In the proposal for the state budget for 1946–47, the need for state subsidies for film was emphasised. It was argued that the film had become a societal factor that had to be taken seriously, both in supporting film of “cultural value” and in supporting “Norwegian entertainment film as a counterbalance to (...) foreign films”.<sup>57</sup> This proposal was the first time film had been discussed as something eligible for state support, as the earlier state involvement in film had been limited to restricting the potential dangerous consequences of film. The inclusion of film among other cultural measures, as something to subsidise, showed a new attitude to film. This should be seen in the context of the immediate post-war efforts to rebuild society and culture – and film would be a part of the process.

This chapter will start with an introduction to the early state treatment of film and the organisation of cinema in Norway. Then it will move on to discuss the revival of the film culture after the war, and how the state took a more active role in order to preserve the film industry. It examines the various attempts at state subsidies systems in the 1950s, exploring the underlying arguments of film as culture that should be subsidised, but not beyond what the state earned on the film industry through taxations. The chapter will go into the notion of “cultural value” which proved elusive since the cultural arguments for film went undiscussed in proposals from the 1950s, while the financial arguments for supporting domestic productions were highlighted.

Meanwhile, the film field itself was also undergoing a process of change, where different groups of agents in the field established new institutions in order to preserve their interests. One of the new institutions were the Norwegian Film Society, established in 1951. The society worked for increased attention to the cultural value of film, particularly in the contexts of education. Among the efforts of the Film Society was the publishing of *Filmdebatt*, the first true film journal in Norway. The writers in the journal worked actively towards promoting film as culture, arguing that it should be seen as a contribution to society equal to other arts. Building on the ideas of enlightenment and democratisation of culture, they saw the potential of film as an educational medium, pushing for film education, and worked for establishing the film critic as an educator of the audience.

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<sup>57</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», 1946–1947, 26. Transl: «norsk underholdningsfilm som en motvekt mot (...) utenlandske filmer».

## Film as a Dangerous Entertainment and Cash-grab for Municipalities

Film was introduced in Norway in April of 1896. Quickly, cinemas realised the potential market for film among the working classes. The definition as working class entertainment combined with low-standard cinemas and increasingly frequent eroticism led to a reputation of cinema as something immoral and dangerous, particularly for younger audiences. Many teachers, women's league members and priests spoke against the cinema demanding governmental regulation of film and cinema.<sup>58</sup> The end result was the "Lov om offentlig forevisning av kinematografbilleder" of 1913,<sup>59</sup> which set forth the basic principles of cinema operation. Firstly, there was to be state-run pre-censorship.<sup>60</sup> In this, the law drew upon international trends, as state censorship was in motion in several other states and already introduced in Sweden.<sup>61</sup> The criteria for censorship were not set, and the censors acted from their own inclinations, which tended towards conservatism and censorship of violence, sexuality and dance.<sup>62</sup> The push for censorship reveals the attitudes to film: it was not seen as an art, but as a dangerous and damaging form of entertainment which the state had to control.

Secondly, the local governments/city councils obtained the responsibility of approving the operations of the cinemas in each given city. This led to a system where the municipalities granted the concessions to themselves, a system often referred to as the municipal cinema system. The municipal operation of cinemas quickly became a source of income for the local governments, and the proceeds were used to fuel their budgets.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the perception of cinema as an industry and a primarily economic value was established.

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<sup>58</sup> Gunnar Iversen, «Den første pionertiden: Norsk filmproduksjon 1911–1919», *Nærbilder: Artikler om norsk filmhistorie*, by Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), 11–12, 18–19; Higræff, *Sensurert*, 12–13.

<sup>59</sup> Transl: «Law on public displays of cinematograph pictures». Usually referred to as the cinema law of 1913.

<sup>60</sup> The work of censorship was to be conducted by Statens Filmkontroll. This was a board of two state-appointed censors who watched through the films, approved, and if necessary censored parts or the entirety of films, before they could be run at the cinema.

<sup>61</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 13–14; Ove Solum, «Kinolov i hundre år: En introduksjon», in *Film til folket: sensur og kinopolitikk i 100 år*, edited by Ove Solum (Oslo: Akademika forlag, 2013), 11.

<sup>62</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 17–19. In the first years, the two censors were Arne Halhjem, a politician and leader of the Norwegian temperance movement, and Fernanda Nissen, a prominent member of the women's right's movement and a theatre critic

<sup>63</sup> Ove Solum, «Kinolov i hundre år», 9–14; Iversen, «Fra kontroll til næringsutvikling», 13. In 1917 the administrators of the local cinemas also established their own interest association, Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund (KKL). In 1932, KKL also founded their own production company, Norsk Film A/S thus enabling the association to produce films.

The income from cinema was also used to fund other cultural means, among these the Vigeland sculpture park in Oslo in the interwar era, and for the Munch museum in the postwar era. Hans Fredrik Dahl and Tore Helseth, *To knurrende løver: Kulturpolitikens historie 1814–2014* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2006), 147–148.

In addition to the censorship, the state also interfered in the film and cinema field through tax regulations, particularly the “luxury tax” on cinema tickets which was implemented in 1920. The luxury tax was a taxation on consumer goods, such as cars, as well as popular entertainment including cabarets, circuses and concerts, with the aim of subsidising “high” or “valuable” culture through taxes on products and entertainment deemed “unnecessary”. Essentially, the cinema was put under extra taxation of tickets, which in turn were used to fund cultural industries for example the theatre.<sup>64</sup> The cinema was seen as a cash-grab, with little to no cultural value, but could at the very least be used to fund other “more valuable” cultural industries.

The station of film in society gradually became somewhat improved in the 1920s, partly due to the rise of literary adaptations and the use of more profiled actors from the theatre, which aligned film closer to other more accepted forms of culture.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, the Labour Organisations also started experimenting with film as a tool for education and propaganda, a development which would intensify in the 1930s.<sup>66</sup>

In April 1940, the occupation of Norway led to strict Nazi control over the cinemas and the film industry. The new regime shut down private import and distribution companies and set up state run import under a new national film directory, Statens Filmdirektorat. It was set up to control all production, censorship, and the operation of cinemas. American and English film became prohibited, and all film had to be produced by film production groups authorised by the government. The luxury tax on film was increased from 25% to 40%, and collected in a fund dedicated solely to film.<sup>67</sup> The state involvement in film was now an active one, with direct state control in production, distribution and exhibition of films.

### **Film as Business and the Elusiveness of Quality**

When the liberation of Norway came in May 1945, the cinema law of 1913 was reinstated, and with it the municipal cinema system. The cinema saw increased popularity, as the audience

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<sup>64</sup> Iversen, «Fra kontroll til næringsutvikling», 14. This form of luxury tax was common in several other states such as for example Sweden and Denmark, and in England the “entertainment” tax and the French tax on film tickets were built on similar ideas. Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt: Otto og Edith Carlmars filmproduksjonsstrategier», *Norsk medietidsskrift* Vol. 24, No. 1 (2017): 1–15, 5; Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, (Boston: University of Wisconsin, 2010), 72, 354.

<sup>65</sup> Anne Marit Myrstad, «Fante-Anne: Det nasjonale gjennombrudd i norsk film», in *Nærbilder: Artikler om norsk filmhistorie*, by Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), 30–31.

<sup>66</sup> Diesen, *Film som statlig folkeopplyser*, 30–31.

<sup>67</sup> Iversen, *Norsk Filmhistorie*, 108–110; Tore Helseth, «Kinoloven under okkupasjon», in *Film til folket: Sensur og kinopolitikk i 100-år*, edited by Ove Solum (Oslo: Akademika, 2013), 170–171; Dahl and Helseth, *To knurrende løver*, 155–156.

gathered to see English and American movies that had been unavailable to them.<sup>68</sup> But there was also a growing realisation that the organisation of cinema and film had to change and film fund from the occupation had left the Norwegian state 10,5 million Norwegian kroner dedicated to film.<sup>69</sup> The first signs of a changed attitude to film came with the parliamentary proposal of 1946-47. It stressed the importance of film in society as an argument for a national film policy for the “modern times”.

“Film has become one of the most important factors of both good and evil in the general cultural sphere (...) It is not sufficient to control the film that is offered by the film industry, one has to actively support the production of films which have cultural value. Besides this, it will also always be a task of national and currency reasons to stimulate the production of Norwegian entertainment film as a counterweight to the overpowering number of foreign films”.<sup>70</sup>

The proposal reveals that film was regarded as part of the cultural sphere. The argument of state support for films of “cultural value” is curious, particularly as the following sentence asserts a distinction between film of “cultural value” and film as “entertainment”, but the significance and meaning behind “cultural value” was never explained. Art as a term was not mentioned in regards to films, but the film section was discussed in the chapter on “art purposes”, grouped in with music and theatre.<sup>71</sup> Thus, there was certain recognition that film belonged within the art category, but was never discussed as an art form. Cultural arguments for why Norwegian film production was important were not raised either. The proposal shows that there was political will for state engagement in film that had not been present before, but the main orientation of it was in terms of economic arguments for supporting the Norwegian cinema production.<sup>72</sup>

One of the reasons for the focus on economy might have been the economic troubles filmmakers faced. Because of the relatively small population in Norway, ticket sales were limited regardless of the popularity of a film. With massive competition from imported movies, the Norwegian films struggled to be competitive. In addition to a small market, both cinema and filmmakers had to contend with the luxury tax. The tariff for luxury tax on films differentiated between international films, which were taxed 40%, and Norwegian films, which

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<sup>68</sup> Helseth, «Kinoloven under okkupasjon», 174; Evensmo, *Det Store Tivoli*, 253; Espen Seip Blystad and Lene Løken, «Publikums kinovaner: Bevegelser og trender», In *Film og kino: Den norske modellen*, edited by Dag Asbjørnsen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Unipub, 2008), 124.

<sup>69</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», 1946–1947, 25–26.

<sup>70</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», 1946–1947, 25–26.

Transl: «Filmen er blitt en av de mest betydningsfulle faktorer både til godt og ondt i det alminnelige kulturliv (...) Det er ikke nok å føre en viss kontroll med den film som bys fram av filmindustrien, en må aktivt støtte produksjonen av film som har kulturell verdi. Ved siden av dette vil det også alltid være en oppgave av nasjonale og valutamessige grunner å stimulere produksjonen av norsk underholdningsfilm som en motvekt mot det overveldende antall av utenlandske filmer»

<sup>71</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», 1946–1947, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om løyving til vitenskaps- og kunstformål», 1946–1947, 25–28.

received a reduction to 25%. However, the signing of the 1947 GATT-agreement meant that the state could no longer differentiate the taxes on international and domestic films.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Norwegian films also had to be taxed at 40%. However, there was a loophole. If a cinema showed an educational film before the main film, the tax was reduced to 27%, as the educational film was not taxed.<sup>74</sup> This bears witness to the ideal of enlightening the people, and that film could be a part of this. But film in general was not seen as educational. As mentioned, the key idea behind the luxury tax was that “lighter” or even “sinful” entertainment should contribute economically to more serious “highbrow” cultural or artistic production.<sup>75</sup> Thus the continuation and increase of the luxury tax was an expression of state devaluation of film.

The film field itself had several agents whom were highly critical of the system. The manager of Oslo Kinematografer (the cinemas in Oslo) Kristoffer Aamot argued in *Arbeiderbladet*, that the luxury tax made the Norwegian film industry unsustainable. This was unfortunate, he contended, because it was important to offer Norwegian film as a counterbalance to foreign films in order to preserve national ideals and values.<sup>76</sup> Aamot’s claim of the unsustainability of the film industry was elaborated by Elsa Brita Marcussen, who claimed the luxury tax created a situation where sixty percent of all total cinemagoers in Norway had to attend each Norwegian-produced film if the producer was to avoid deficits.<sup>77</sup>

The result of the new taxation was that it was harder for filmmakers to earn back what they had spent on the production of a movie. With heavier taxation and competition from international film, filmmakers faced hard conditions of production.

In order to support the domestic production of film, the state introduced a film subsidies system in 1950. There was a growing realisation that the film industry was not only a source of income for cinemas and local governments, but that it could impact the economy on a national level too. The import of film to Norway was decidedly larger than the export. With the popularity of imported movies and few domestic productions, most of the profits for film rent went to foreign producers and distributors, thus creating a deficit in the export-import balance

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<sup>73</sup> Iversen, «Fra Kontroll til Næringsutvikling», 17; Iversen, *Norsk Filmhistorie*, 137–138; Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilrådning om stønadsordning for norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, (Drammen: Kai Møller, 1954), 6; Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Kap. 228: Kunstforemål», St.prp. nr. 1, Del 1.A (1950), (Oslo: Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1950) 47.

<sup>74</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilrådning om stønadsordning for norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 6–7.

<sup>75</sup> Per Mangset, *Kulturliv og forvaltning: Innføring i kulturpolitikk* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1992), 44–45.

<sup>76</sup> *Arbeiderbladet*, 08.06.1946, 7.

<sup>77</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Vekk fra hjemmestrikket opplysningsfilm og fastlåst spillefilm!», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Mai 1953): 5.

in film.<sup>78</sup> This emphasis on economic reasons for state subsidised film was evident in the parliamentary proposition for the first official subsidies system in 1950:

“The Ministry emphasises production of as much good Norwegian film as possible both for cultural reasons and economic. For every Norwegian film exhibited, one saves currency for film rent to foreign films which to a large extent comes from states with a hard currency.”<sup>79</sup>

Here, “good film” is valued because it contributes positively to both culture and economy. But cultural arguments were not elaborated, as opposed to the economic justifications that refer to currency and the import-export balance. One explanation for this is that they were harder to define and express. Another would be that the importance of Norwegian film on culture was implicitly understood or taken for granted. In the context of general cultural policy, the Norwegian state had since the 1930s subscribed to a general ideal of “enlightenment of the people”, regarding culture as a welfare good that should be made available to the mass public as part of building a moral and democratic society.<sup>80</sup> Some developments, for example the instatement of ambulatory cinemas in 1950 to bring film to the more remote areas of Norway without access to cinema, suggests that film was seen in this way as a public good.<sup>81</sup>

The subsidies instated in 1950 covered the production costs of a film to the upper limit of 300 000 Norwegian kroner, refunded to the producers after the film was produced, on the condition that the film had to meet a minimum criteria of production quality. In essence the system was designed to secure the producers from deficits, but did not incentivise filmmakers in any other way besides making sure they did not have to risk bankruptcy.<sup>82</sup> Interestingly, the proposal made no mention of what a sufficient “production quality” was or which criteria were used to evaluate this. A council called Statens Filmråd was established to evaluate the quality of films, but the concrete definition of “production quality” seem to be either implicit or, similarly to the censorship, left up to individual inclinations. Furthermore, the council approved all films in the first years, as they were aware that many producers would go bankrupt without the subsidies, and they saw the subsidies as a way to counterbalance the taxation after the GATT agreement.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Iversen, «Fra Kontroll til næringsutvikling», 17.

<sup>79</sup> Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Kap. 228: Kunstforemål», 1950, 47. Transl: «Departementet legg vekt på at det blir produsert så mykje god norsk film som råd både av kulturelle grunnar og økonomiske. For kvar norsk film som blir framsynt, sparar ein valuta til filmleige for utanlandske filmar som for ein stor del kjem frå land med hard valuta.»

<sup>80</sup> Dahl and Helseth, *To knurrende løver*, 219, 161; Kevin V. Mulcahy, «Cultural policy: Definitions and Theoretical Approaches», *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* Vol. 35, No. 4 (2006), 323–324.

<sup>81</sup> Dahl and Helseth, *To knurrende løver*, 209; Iversen, «Fra Kontroll til næringsutvikling», 16. Asbjørnsen and Solum «Public service-kino» have also argued that cinemas were seen as part of a public-service project until the 1960s.

<sup>82</sup> Jan Erik Holst, «Norsk filmpolitikk», 153–154; Iversen, «Fra kontroll til næringsutvikling», 17.

<sup>83</sup> Iversen, «Fra kontroll til næringsutvikling», 18.

This notion of balance was key in the state's practice towards film. The 1950 proposal, while an improvement because it signalled state support for filmmaking, was also reluctant to spend more on film production than what would be regained by the taxations. It stated that "the allocations for Statens Filmfond should be equal to what is paid in taxes for exhibition of Norwegian film",<sup>84</sup> in consequence asserting that only the "extra" taxes on Norwegian films after the GATT-agreement should be disposable for the film producers. The balance also figures in the 1954 recommendation, which will be presented below. It mentioned that "It has since 1946–47 been the condition that the funds the Parliament every year grants to film purposes, should equal the sum that comes in to the Treasury as taxes of Norwegian film".<sup>85</sup> This idea of balance suggests there was no political will to invest in the cinema industry more than what the state earned on it, signalling that economic concerns were more important than the cultural value of film. Thus, the 1950-arrangement can be seen as an effort to keep the film production alive, but not as an effort aimed at increasing the quality. In effect the subsidies functioned as a tax refund and not an effort to support culture.<sup>86</sup> The proposal mentions both support for production of film and increased support for the most "culturally valuable" films, thus implying a wish for increased quality of production altogether,<sup>87</sup> but the emphasis was on securing the Norwegian film from the consequences of the tax increase.

The state called for a revision of the system in 1954. One reason was that the upper limit of subsidies had to be increased since the costs of producing film had increased in the years since 1950. But the precipitating factor was the Film Council's refusal of subsidies for the film *Selkvinnen*. Since the start of the 1950-system, the Film Council had approved the quality of every film it had evaluated, but *Selkvinnen* could not pass.<sup>88</sup> The refusal of subsidies for this film revealed the weaknesses of the 1950-arrangement:

"The quality evaluation that has been a necessary outcome of the guaranteesystem, has turned out to be a crucial disadvantage for the producer. The case «Selkvinnen», when the Ministry of Church and Education on recommendation from the Film Council denied subsidies, clearly illustrates the weaknesses

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<sup>84</sup> Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet. «Kap. 228: Kunstfremål», 1950, 47. Transl: «det blir løyvt til Statens Filmfond like mykje som kjem inn i avgift på framsyning av norsk film».

<sup>85</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilrådding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 7. Transl: «Det har siden 1946–47 vært forutsetningen at de midler som Stortinget hvert år bevilger til filmformål, skulle svare til de beløp som kommer inn i statskassen som skatt av norsk film».

<sup>86</sup> Holst, «Norsk filmpolitikk», 154.

<sup>87</sup> Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet. «Kap. 228: Kunstfremål», 1950, 47.

<sup>88</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilrådding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 8.

of a quality evaluation that can only be conducted after the film is finished. It poses a genuine risk for the producer”.<sup>89</sup>

Quality evaluations equalled a chance that the film could be denied state subsidies and was therefore a disadvantage for the producers since they had to invest in the film before they were certain they had state funding. Furthermore, the committee argued that the quality evaluation was problematic from a societal stance as the principle of it was “unfortunate”.<sup>90</sup> To favour some producers over others was unfair. It was also argued that the system opened up for unqualified filmmakers as it reduced risk, and that the system was unfair because movies with low ticket sales got more subsidies relative to what had been levied in taxes than those that drew a larger audience.<sup>91</sup> This argument is even more confusing seeing as the main motivation for changing the system was to avoid the risk. The economic nature of the arguments are striking as it only pages earlier was highlighted that the goal of subsidies was “to stimulate and secure a responsible Norwegian film production, which should not due to economic factors be forced to aim for great audience success”,<sup>92</sup> and that it was a positive development that a range of new filmmakers were able to participate in film production as a consequence of the 1950 arrangement.<sup>93</sup>

Another contradiction is that, similarly to the proposal of 1950, the 1955 proposal also mentions that film is important culture but does not explain why.

“From the knowledge of the film’s exceedingly great importance as a cultural factor, it should be obvious that it is a societal and cultural undertaking to grant Norwegian film the necessary subsidies, so that the cinematographs in the nation can show films with Norwegian language and with Norwegian environments and attitudes. The Committee finds no reason to elaborate the cultural significance of having a Norwegian production of feature film.”<sup>94</sup>

While the cultural impact of film is significant, there is “no reason” to explain why, according to the quote. However, references were made to the importance of film in regards to national

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<sup>89</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 12. Transl: «Den kvalitetsvurdering som har vært en nødvendig følge av garantiordningen, har vist seg å ha avgjørende ulemper for produsenten. Tilfellet ‘Selkvinnen’, da Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet etter tilråding av Filmrådet avsto stønad, illustrerer tydelig svakhetene ved en kvalitetsvurdering, som nødvendigvis først kan foretas når filmen er ferdig. Den fører til en reell risiko for produsenten».

<sup>90</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 12.

<sup>91</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 12.

<sup>92</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 11. Transl: «å stimulere og sikre en ansvarsbevisst norsk filmproduksjon, som ikke skulle være økonomisk tvunget til å bare sikte på de store publikumssuksesser».

<sup>93</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 12.

<sup>94</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 13. Transl: «Ut i fra kjennskapet til filmens overmåte store betydning som kulturfaktor, skulle det være innlysende at det må være en samfunns- og kulturoppgave å gi norsk filmproduksjon den nødvendige støtte, slik at landets kinematografer kan vise filmer med norsk språk og med norsk miljø og lynne. Utvalget finner ikke grunn til å utdype nærmere den kulturelle betydning av å ha en norsk spillefilmproduksjon».



“perspectives”, language and ways of life, and the film’s ability to affect the audiences thoughts, which makes a national film production important.<sup>95</sup> Thus, cultural arguments are explicitly stated, as opposed to the system of 1950, but the arguments are not thoroughly explained. This might be evidence for a lack of real understanding or research into the cultural and societal impact of film. On the other hand, the economic arguments for supporting the film industry in Norway were also toned down compared to 1950.

The final recommendation was to remove the quality control and production guarantee, and determining the sum of the grant, not on production costs, but on how much it earned the state in taxes.<sup>96</sup> The new system of 1955 granted subsidies based on ticket sales (35% of the gross income), in order to “stimulate the industry” and “promote the films that the audience wished to see”.<sup>97</sup> The shift in the system signals that the state did not perceive films as important art and culture, as it turned the subsidies into a popularity contest. By emphasising popularity and ticket sales as the basis for state support, the state showed more concern with ensuring the future of popular productions, rather than pushing for more “culturally valuable” film. On the one hand, this might seem as a regression from the 1950-system (certainly some of the filmmakers and critics interpreted it that way), but it can also be perceived as evidence that the state did not really concern itself with the cultural value of film as much as it did the economic implications of a functioning film industry. On the other hand, “feature films that one has to recognise as particularly valuable or important for the society, but cannot be assumed to manage with the general subsidies, should be able to receive special subsidies”.<sup>98</sup> In general, however, there was a clear trend towards perceiving film as a matter of economy rather than culture.

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<sup>95</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 13.

<sup>96</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Tilråding om stønadsordning for Norsk spillefilmproduksjon m.v.», 1954, 15.

<sup>97</sup> Holst, «Norsk filmpolitikk», 154.

<sup>98</sup> Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Kap. 234: Tilskott til Statens Filmfond til filmformål», St.prp. Nr. 1, Del 1.A (1955), (Oslo: Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1955), 63. Transl: «Spelefilmar som ein må sjå som serleg verdfulle eller som har stort samfunnsverde, men som ein likevel ikkje kan rekna med kan greia seg med den vanlege stønaden, bør kunna få serskild stønad».

## Film as Education: The Norwegian Film Society and the idea of a democratisation of culture

”There will always be a need for daydreaming and entertainment. But (...) We cannot sit at the cinema and daydream until nuclear bombs rain over us. We have to actively fight for humanity and progress, and in that fight the film could play an important role.”<sup>99</sup>

While the state took a more active stance to support film production in the first half of the 1950s, albeit for economic reasons, there were also other efforts toward the film industry from a non-state level. This part of the chapter will explore one of the examples of such organisations, the Norwegian Film Society (Norsk Filmsamfunn). It will first provide a context for the Film Society, before examining the Film Society’s ideas on film through its film journal *Filmdebatt*. *Filmdebatt* was the first true Norwegian film journal, and thus provides an insight into the thinking on film in the first half on the 1950s. After establishing that the Film Society and *Filmdebatt* was founded on ideas of educational value similar to developments in the British Film Society movement, the chapter will then look into the reasoning behind the ideals of education, showing that they were rooted in a belief in democratisation of culture which was very much in line with the current thinking on culture in general. Arguing for the increase of good film in Norway through subsidies on the state level and education of the audience, the film society sought to promote film as culture and art. In this they drew upon transnational ideas, referring to film theorists such as Béla Balázs and Roger Manvell. They also drew upon ideas of an international hierarchy of film prestige to stress the importance of film education and proper, effective state subsidies. Lastly, this part of the chapter will examine the consequences of the Film Society’s efforts through the establishment of the Norwegian Film Institute, interpreting this state effort as recognition of film as worthy of preservation.

Among the initiators for a Film Society in Norway was the journalist Elsa Brita Marcussen. Daughter of the Swedish prime minister Per Albin Hansson of the Swedish Social-democratic Labour party, she had started her career working as a journalist for the Swedish newspaper *Morgon-Tidningen*, where she wrote about film. In the immediate post-war era, she continued her journalist career, now writing from the U.S.A., where she had relocated to. With her Norwegian husband, she then moved to Norway and acquired a position at the recently

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<sup>99</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Kinoen – kultursentrum?», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 1, No. 9-10 (Desember 1951): 3. Transl: «Det vil alltid være et behov for dagdrøm og underholdning. Men (...) Vi kan ikke sitte på kinoen og dagdrømme til atombomben faller over oss. Vi må aktivt kjempe for humanitet og framskritt, og i den kampen kunne filmen spille en viktig rolle.»

established office for Art- and Culture-work at the Department for Church and Education.<sup>100</sup> She had studied film through study trips to England and the U.S.A., and gained experience in film education through working as a secretary for Statens Filmråd. She had also participated in compiling a correspondence course on film during her time at Statens Filmråd, thus solidifying her interest for film education.<sup>101</sup>

In 1950, at Ruseløkka School in Oslo, Elsa Brita Marcussen met with several other initiators with the aim of establishing a Film Society. Among these were a member of the recently established Association of Film Technicians, Agnar Mykle of the Federation of Worker's Education (Arbeidernes Opplysningsforbund), representatives for the teacher's organisations, Gerda Wang of the Library Association, and representatives from three Women's groups: Female Academic Association (Kvinnelige Akademikeres Forening), The Women's League for Peace and Liberty (Kvinneligaen for fred og frihet), and the National Association for Women Professionals (Yrkeskvinner Landsforbund).<sup>102</sup> Together, they founded the Norwegian Film Society. Its central aim was work for film education and spread information about film.<sup>103</sup>

The film education the society sought to promote argued for film education for both children in schools, and for the general public, in line with an idea of "enlightening the people" (folkeopplysning). In a similar vein as the British Film Society Movement, the Norwegian Film Society was built on the idea of promoting education and film appreciation through "active consumption" of film, critical debates and spreading knowledge about film. The close ties to labour and teacher's organisations to establish courses and lectures of film is also witness to a similar idealistic orientation to the British Film Society Movement.<sup>104</sup> The Norwegian Film Society argued for a film museum in order to increase the quality of film criticism, and to better educate the public, critics and filmmakers. Furthermore, they sought to establish study circles where men and women with an interest in film could meet to debate content and analysis of films.<sup>105</sup>

As part of the efforts toward education, the film journal *Filmdebatt* (Film debate) was founded, with Marcussen as the chief editor. The journal was intended to be "an important chain

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<sup>100</sup> Clifford, *Film og samfunn*, 7–12; Dahl and Helseth, *To knurrende løver*, 203.

<sup>101</sup> Dahl, Gripsrud, Iversen, et.al, *Kinoens Mørke, Fjernsynets Lys*, 221.

<sup>102</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «10 års arbeid i norsk filmsamfunn», *Norsk filmsamfunn 10 år: Filmdebatt 1961*, 24.

<sup>103</sup> Dahl, Gripsrud, Iversen, et.al, *Kinoens Mørke, Fjernsynets Lys*, 221.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Lowell MacDonald, *The Appreciation of Film: The Postwar Film Society Movement and Film Culture in Britain* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2016); Clifford, *Film og samfunn*, 32–41.

<sup>105</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, "10 års arbeid i norsk filmsamfunn", *Norsk filmsamfunn 10 år: Filmdebatt 1961*, 24–25.

in the contact between the Film society and the organisations and as a medium for stimulating the interest for film studies among school-youths and members of various organisations”.<sup>106</sup> The educational aspect was thus highlighted from the beginning. Iversen has written about *Filmdebatt*’s project of educating the population on film, but does not elaborate on these ideas which are foundational for the understanding of *Filmdebatt* as an agent in the 1950s film discourse. Two key aspects of the educational approach are particularly important. Firstly, the belief that film was a form of culture and art that similarly to other arts should be part of a general project to “democratise culture”, an idea that culture should be made available for everyone as a way to create the “cultured man”. Secondly, the writers of *Filmdebatt* sought to establish the role of the film critic as an educator of the public to guide the film audience on how to appreciate film, and to appreciate the “right kind” of film.

The first aspect of the educational approach to film was educating the public about film. *Filmdebatt*, in the pen of Marcussen, argued for establishment of a Norwegian Film Institute, state support to academic research on film and society, and stipends to educate workers within the film industry.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, *Filmdebatt* and the Norwegian Film Society were instrumental for the establishment of the Norwegian Film Institute in 1955, an organisation with the aims of preserving film materials, and promoting education and information on film.<sup>108</sup> An entire issue was dedicated to education on film within the school system and promoting the idea of film as a course at the university.<sup>109</sup> In this, *Filmdebatt* drew upon articles on film education in England, as well as Germany.<sup>110</sup>

However, for the Film Society and *Filmdebatt* the most pressing issue was not furthering an intellectual debate on film within academia, but to initiate an intellectual debate by promoting greater knowledge about film to the general public. A part of this push was lectures at the cinemas initiated by the Film Society in order to encourage film study circles. They also held lectures for “film study leaders”, funded by the Ministry of Church and Education, and developed study-guides for smaller study circles.<sup>111</sup> The lectures were announced in several numbers of the magazine, and could be ordered by organisations or leagues. The topics ranged

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<sup>106</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, ”10 års arbeid i norsk filmsamfunn”, *Norsk filmsamfunn 10 år: Filmdebatt 1961*, 24–25. Transl: “et viktig ledd i kontakten mellom Filmsamfunnet og organisasjonene og som et middel til å stimulere interessen for filmstudier blant skoleungdommer og forskjellige organisasjoners medlemmer betrakter vi et filmtidsskrift”.

<sup>107</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Vårt smertensbarn!», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (December 1953): 5.

<sup>108</sup> Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 28.

<sup>109</sup> *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 1955).

<sup>110</sup> *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 1955).

<sup>111</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Vi setter igang», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 5–6 (September 1951): 3.

from “children and film”, “women in film”, “pioneers in filmmaking”, “film and paintings”, as well as “film as a school subject”.<sup>112</sup>

In Oslo, the Film Society in collaboration with the Labour Party’s Federation of Education (AOF), also fronted a series of lectures at Scala cinema in order to promote knowledge about film to the audience, with over 400 attendants. The following years, the lecturers in the society would travel to venues all over the country, even remote locations such as Odda, to spread education and appreciation for film.<sup>113</sup> In their eyes, this was the way to achieve progress: “A continued collaboration between the Norwegian Film Society, the educational organisations, our municipal cinemas and the broadcast to spread knowledge of the film as art and a social factor of power – that is a perspective with great promises”.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, the Norwegian Film Society also worked with organisations such as the municipal cinemas and the Norwegian broadcast company (NRK).<sup>115</sup> NRK launched a radio series on film and society in 1952, with several of the critics in *Filmdebatt* as contributors.<sup>116</sup> Thus, this idea about increasing the opportunities for film education and the intellectual interest among the general populace was a fundamental idea within the Film Society and *Filmdebatt*.

The second aspect of education in the Film Society and *Filmdebatt* is closely tied to the idea of educating the public, as it deals with the role of the film critic as the central educator of the masses. One major aspect was what the contents of a review should be – and what purpose they should serve. Should a review mainly instruct the readers on the contents of a film so they themselves could evaluate whether or not the film was for them? This was certainly not the opinion of *Filmdebatt*. They saw the film reviews as an opportunity to educate the public on good taste. In the editorial of the May 1951 issue, Elsa Brita Marcussen wrote that the film critic has special role that requires a range of classifications: “Film has a mass impact that surpasses the other art forms. This puts a social responsibility on the film reviewer that is hard

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<sup>112</sup> The courses were promoted in *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 5–6 (September 1951): 15; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March 1953): 20–21; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 4, (September 1953): 24; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (November 1953): 24; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (February 1954), 24. The later lecture series had another programme than the earlier ones, including among others the film as a new art form, film and television, film and the audience, Norwegian film, Hollywood.

<sup>113</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Det skjer noe», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (November 1951): 3. Clifford, *Film og samfunn*, 36–39.

<sup>114</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Det skjer noe», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (November 1951): 3. Transl: «Et fortsatt samarbeid mellom Norsk Filmsamfunn, opplysningsorganisasjonene, våre kommunale kinematografer og kringkastingen for å spre kunnskap om filmen som kunst og sosial maktfaktor – det er et perspektiv som gir rike løfter».

<sup>115</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Det skjer noe», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (November 1951), 3.

<sup>116</sup> The full list is found in *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1952): 8–10.

to bear, unless he besides being an all-knowing art expert, also is a combination of pedagogue and psychologist and knows politics”.<sup>117</sup>

Due to the nature of film as a medium, the film critic needed to embed a range of knowledge to be able to give a qualified review of the film, she argued. The demands posed on the critic were high – thus asserting the position of the critic as a specialist and professional, and not only a cultural journalist.

“It is evident that it is not easy to find people whom possess such qualifications. But I believe it is right to cast light on the demands on should pose for a film reviewer. Then it becomes evident that both the press and the broadcast still treats the film with way too little effort instead of granting it a central position in the cultural debate.”<sup>118</sup>

The key argument was that the film criticism in Norway at the time was inadequate because it ignored the importance of film as a medium and its position in culture.

In the same issue of *Filmdebatt*, two film critics were interviewed on how they perceived themselves and their readers, and what they sought to accomplish with their reviews. One of these critics was Aud Thagaard. She worked in the newspaper *Morgenposten* where she wrote as a film and theatre critic. She was also head of Norsk Filmkritikerlag (the Norwegian Film Critic’s Society) at this point, a position she held between 1947 and 1957.<sup>119</sup> On the question of the role of the film critic, Aud Thagaard proposed that a “film critics main task is to stimulate the interest for good and valuable film”, analysing film thoroughly so the audience would understand the film better, and to increase the interest for good films.<sup>120</sup>

Thagaards interpretation of the film critic was as an educator, believing the audience had less knowledge of what good and bad film was, and it was the task of the film critic to tell them. She draws parallels to the other arts, and claims that the “uninitiated” would not recognise the most valuable works.<sup>121</sup> The second critic whom was interviewed, Carl Keilhau, claimed that the taste of a critic should be “a role model for everyone”, and that critics should base their reviews on a subjective opinion. Furthermore, the reviews should not be “dumbed down” or

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<sup>117</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Filmkritikk», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 3. Transl: «Filmen har en massevirkning som overtreffer de andre kunstarternes. Dette legger et samfunnsmessig ansvar på filmanmelderen som han vanskelig kan bære, om han ikke foruten å være en allvitende kunstekspert, også er en kombinasjon av pedagog og psykolog og har politisk skjønn».

<sup>118</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Filmkritikk», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 3. Transl: «Det er åpenbart at det ikke er lett å finne folk med slike kvalifikasjoner. Men jeg tror at det kan være riktig å trekke fram i lyset de krav en burde kunne stille til en filmanmelder. Da blir det nemlig klart at både pressen og kringkastingen ennå behandler filmen altfor lettvinnt istedenfor å gi den en sentral plass i kulturdebatten».

<sup>119</sup> *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 2; Trond Olav Svendsen, «Aud Thagaard», Nordic Women in Film, URL: <http://www.nordicwomeninfilm.com/person/aud-thagaard/> (visited 08.03.19); Norsk Filmkritikerlag, «Styret og tidligere styremedlemmer», URL: <http://filmkritikerlaget.no/styret-og-tidligere-styremedlemmer/> (visited 08.03.19).

<sup>120</sup> «Hvordan ser filmanmelderne selv på sin oppgave?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 4. Transl: «Filmanmelderens viktigste oppgave er å stimulere interessen for god og verdifull film».

<sup>121</sup> «Hvordan ser filmanmelderne selv på sin oppgave?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 4.

written as a piece of entertainment in itself, but as serious reviews aimed at someone with a genuine interest in film.<sup>122</sup> By highlighting that the critic's taste should be a role model for the film audience he puts the critic's opinion over the mass opinion. He also establishes that the role of the film critic is above judging movies on a popular level.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, Keilhau reveals that he writes not for the people within the industry, but in an effort to guide the public, to "awaken the awareness for what film can and should give so that the demands of film increase and it with time becomes less profitable to produce flattening, false romantic and dulling works".<sup>124</sup>

Both of these interviews reveal the perception that the critics were to act as educators, and hints at the fundamental ideas behind their educational work. Anne Gjelsvik has proposed Elsa Brita Marcussen as a critic who "aimed at being a corrective for the artist".<sup>125</sup> However, the articles reveal Marcussen, Thagaard and Keilhau regard critics as educators, but the "students" were the audience rather than the filmmakers. While they saw critics as an influence on filmmaking, this link went through the audience – which needed to be educated to support quality film. Similar efforts toward establishing the notion of the critic as an educator – what Frey denotes as a pedagogue or a "mediator between great works and the uneducated mass public"<sup>126</sup> – occurred in French, British, German and U.S. critical discourses from the 1910s. The idea had roots in the art criticism from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, with critics as experts whom laid the foundations for public opinions and acted as "teachers of the public".<sup>127</sup> As part of teaching the public, *Filmdebatt* also published several articles on directors, such as for example René Clair, Vittorio de Sica, as well as the Danish director Carl Th. Dreyer, and Arne Skouen.<sup>128</sup> It also provided bibliographies on film-related articles from newspapers and journals.<sup>129</sup>

The motivation for the promotion of education on film is evident in the 1954 article "Norsk filmproduksjon – hva nå?" written by Elsa Brita Marcussen as a response to the debate

<sup>122</sup> «Hvordan ser filmanmelderne selv på sin oppgave?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 5.

<sup>123</sup> «Hvordan ser filmanmelderne selv på sin oppgave?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 5.

<sup>124</sup> «Hvordan ser filmanmelderne selv på sin oppgave?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Mai 1951): 14. Transl: «vekke sansen for hva film kan og bør gi slik at kravene til filmen øker og det etterhvert blir mindre lønnsomt å produsere forflatende, falsk romantiske og sløvende arbeider».

<sup>125</sup> Anne Gjelsvik, *Mørkets øyne: Filmkritikk, vurdering og analyse* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2002), 23. Transl: «hatt som mål å være et korrektiv for kunstneren».

<sup>126</sup> Mattias Frey, *The Permanent Crisis of Film Criticism: The Anxiety of Authority*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 51.

<sup>127</sup> Frey, *The Permanent Crisis of Film Criticism*, 51–52.

<sup>128</sup> *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (October 1951): 5–7; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (March 1952): 7; Børge Trolle, «Carl Th. Dreyer og hans kunst: Skaperen av 'Ordet' en ener i dansk film», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 1955): 5; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (March 1952): 11–15.

<sup>129</sup> *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1953): 14; *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March 1953): 22.

surrounding the 1955 state support system that surfaced after “Selkvinnen”. She argued that “Unfortunately the film study efforts by the Norwegian Film Society and the responsible film critics has not come so far, that one dares to count on that the artistically best or the experimental films to become the great audience films”.<sup>130</sup> Implicitly, the promotion of education about film was a way to increase audience appreciation for quality film: “More than within any other form of art it is the attitudes of the audience which are crucial. Because film is not only art, but – in mass producing states – also industry”.<sup>131</sup> The connotations of industry in this sense is that of producers “speculating” in mass entertainment and popular films.<sup>132</sup> Educating the audience to value more artistic films was believed to result in better choices of films, which would in turn, by the help of market forces, lead to increased quality of productions.

A similar notion of educating the masses through film is found in the works of the Hungarian film critic Béla Balázs. He argued that because the film had become so influential, it should be taken more seriously, and that knowledge of film is essential for the “cultured”. Furthermore, his belief was that “The collective and commercial nature of film-making means that it is impossible for a lone cinematic genius working in isolation to advance his or her art (...) To improve the quality of films, it is necessary to form a public taste that will demand higher quality cinema”.<sup>133</sup> These arguments are nearly identical to those featuring in *Filmdebatt*. Marcussen even made explicit references to Balázs, writing “The degree of film culture is a question of entire nation’s spiritual health, wrote the recently deceased film theoretician Bela Balaez. We also believe that knowledge of the instruments of film art, and increased understanding of its great potentials, are the only foundations for a production of more quality films”.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Norsk filmproduksjon – hva nå?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (June 1954): 19. Transl: «Dessverre har ikke filmstudiearbeidet til Norsk Filmsamfunn og de ansvarskjennede filmkritikers bestrebelser ført så langt, at man våger å regne med at de kunstnerisk beste eller de eksperimentelt betonte filmer også blir de store publikumsfilmene».

<sup>131</sup> «Hvordan ser filmanmelderne selv på sin oppgave?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (May 1951): 14. Transl: «Mer enn innen noen annen kunststart er det publikums holdning som spiller den avgjørende rollen. Fordi film ikke bare er kunst, men – i masseproduserende land – også industri»

<sup>132</sup> The term “speculation” was often used as an antonym to art films, and denoted superficial films that provided no cultural value, and even at times used violence and eroticism in the film solely for the purpose of drawing the attention of the audience.

<sup>133</sup> Nicholas Tredell, *Cinemas of the Mind: A Critical History of Film Theory* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2002), 29.

<sup>134</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Vi setter i gang», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1, No. 5–6 (September 1951): 3. Transl: «Graden av filmkultur er et spørsmål om hele nasjoners åndelige helse, skrev den nylig avdøde filmteoretiker Bela Balaez. Vi mener også at kjennskap til filmkunstens virkemidler, og økt forståelse for dens rike utviklingsmuligheter, utgjør det eneste grunnlaget for en produksjon av flere ‘kvalitets’-filmer».



Another idea Balázs promoted was the value of active participation and engagement of film, demonstrating “creative appreciation”, as opposed to passive consumption.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, *Filmdebatt* saw educating the audience was a way to promote active engagement with film as a cultural work, as opposed to the notion of film as passive entertainment.<sup>136</sup> And in order to achieve this, the audience needed training, both within and outside the school system, in how to “analyse and criticise” film as a medium.<sup>137</sup> Thus, the promotion of education on film was closely tied to the idea of film as equal to other cultural and artistic expressions such as literary works. These ideas were also tied to a larger ideal of democratisation of culture on a societal level, where culture was seen as a good that should be available to all.<sup>138</sup> In order to make the culture available to a larger public, they had to be taught how to consume it.

There is also evidence that *Filmdebatt* and the Film Society were oriented towards the thinking of Roger Manvell. Elsa Brita Marcussen praises Roger Manvell’s book *A Seat at the Cinema*, agreeing with his perceptions on motivating greater film appreciation among a larger audience and his perception of film criticism as an “analysis that helps people to learn to see a film, and teaches the film artists to see their own films in an impartial perspective”.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, for one of their educational programme series for the radio, Manvell’s *Film* was recommended literature.<sup>140</sup> In this book, Manvell stressed the concept of film as “recreation”, a concept which tied art film to ideas of constructive and uplifting ideas and good morals, as opposed to entertainment which promoted negative values and superficiality.<sup>141</sup> Recreation as the concept of appreciation was a way to distance the term art from something exclusive to the highbrow audience. Through education and film criticism the audience could be taught to appreciate film as recreation, to enjoy the “socially responsible film”.<sup>142</sup>

It is evident that the critics of *Filmdebatt* drew upon discourses that permeated both the international film field and the foundations of cultural policy in general. Finn Syvertsen pointed out the lack of prestige and tradition for film criticism in Norway compared to the Danish.<sup>143</sup> While it in his case was used to argue for the establishment of a film institute, the lack of a prestigious domestic tradition of film criticism and theory strengthens an argument that

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<sup>135</sup> Tredell, *Cinemas of the Mind*, 30, 33.

<sup>136</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Filmen blir skolefag?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 1955): 3.

<sup>137</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Filmen blir skolefag?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 1955): 3.

<sup>138</sup> Dahl and Helseth, *To Knurrende Løver*, 204.

<sup>139</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «En engelsk kinobillett», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (June 1954): 19.

<sup>140</sup> *Filmdebatt* Vol. 2, No.1 (January 1952): 10.

<sup>141</sup> Roger Manvell, *Film* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1950), 147–148; Richard Lowell MacDonald, “Film Appreciation and Cultural Leadership: Rudolf Arnheim, Roger Manvell and two books called film”, *Canadian Journal of film studies* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring 2014): 121.

<sup>142</sup> MacDonald, “Film Appreciation and Cultural Leadership”, 124.

<sup>143</sup> Finn Syvertsen, «Filmkritikk ute og hjemme», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 2, No.3 (April 1952): 22

*Filmdebatt* drew upon discourses found elsewhere, both internationally in regards to film, and domestic in terms of other art forms. The ideas of art as a political and societal good were already established in Norway,<sup>144</sup> and putting film on the map in such discussions lent legitimacy to the idea of film as a cultural product, and even a legitimate art. The discussions did not try to legitimate film as an art based on some inherent artistic value, but rather saw film as art because of the potential societal implications it could have. Since it was already a popular medium, educating the masses to appreciate the artistic film that would teach the audience the right morals and values instead of mere entertainment or what was denoted as “speculative” film made solely to appeal to the audience, was of utmost importance. If the audience learned to appreciate the right kind of film, they would also chose good film, thus impacting the market structure of the film field, making art films more profitable.

A consequence of the belief in the educational value of films was the notion of the state’s responsibility in the case of film. As mentioned in the section on the state subsidies for film, the idea of enlightenment was a factor in the cultural policy in Norway. *Filmdebatt* was thus founded on the same beliefs as the general state cultural policy, but the film critics were sceptical of the state of film. Marcussen pointed out that the evaluation system of 1950 was flawed because “it is complicated with an official evaluation on areas where subjective tastes matter so much”, and warned that since the domestic production was low, it may cause mediocre films receiving the rewards for good film.<sup>145</sup> However, she contended that an award-based system also could prove beneficial because “such awarding has a stimulating effect on producers and artists because it could become an important chain in the efforts to create a vivid and deep interest for Norwegian film in wider circles.”<sup>146</sup> What these wider circles were was not explained. Either, she referred to a wider domestic audience, but it is likely that she meant both a wider domestic audience and creating an international interest for Norwegian film. This ties into another thread that would connect the film critic efforts at pushing for recognition of film as art: the idea of an international hierarchy of international prestige.

*Filmdebatt*, held up the Italian example as the “most important development within the filmic art” after the second world war.<sup>147</sup> While praising a select few of the Norwegian film

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<sup>144</sup> Dahl and Helseth, *To Knurrende Løver*, 204.

<sup>145</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Filmpremier», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 4 (August 1951): 3. Transl: «Det er vanskelig med en offentlig vurdering på et område der subjektiv smak har så mye å si».

<sup>146</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Filmpremier», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 1 No. 4 (August 1951): 3. Transl: «For det annet virker en slik premiering ansporende på produsenter og kunstnere fordi den kan bli et viktig ledd i arbeidet for å skape en levende og fordypet interesse for norsk film i vide kretser.»

<sup>147</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Hvordan vant den italienske neo-realisme sin store seier?», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (November 1953), 15. Transl: «Den italienske filmens gjennombrudd etter krigen har uten tvil vært det viktigste som er skjedd innen filmkunsten i denne perioden».

directors, writers and producers, the journal often criticised the state of artistic value in Norwegian films. The film critic Finn Rohdin wrote: “Norwegian film is characterized by conventional unpoetic realism. I do not possess great conviction that our national film art by its own efforts will become free of this unimaginative straitjacket”.<sup>148</sup> He expressed a pessimistic view on the potential of Norwegian film and devaluated it in relation to foreign film. These types of arguments are reminiscent of the ideas circling in the British “better films movement” in the 1930s, where the devaluation of domestic films was seen as a filmic “backwardness” compared to the foreign progressiveness in film. A foundational idea of this movement was, similar to the ideas in *Filmdebatt*, that the key to improving cinema partly was convincing the audience to appreciate and demand better films.<sup>149</sup>

Particularly important in the international comparisons and the idea of Norwegian “backwardness” in the international hierarchy were the Scandinavian counterparts. In film, as in so many other aspects of state and society, the main significant others were the Danish and Swedish. Seeking to explain the “backwardness” of Norwegian film in comparison to Swedish and Danish, author and filmmaker Arne Skouen proposed that the lack of good scriptwriters and authors were the cause: “In Swedish and Danish film one has for 20–30 years drawn authors to the film (...) Here at home one has not had need for the authors until recently (...) Now these old sins are punished. It will be years before we can make up for this neglect”.<sup>150</sup> The lack of good authors in film had resulted in lower quality of the film narrative, he argued. In another issue of the magazine, it was argued that “Norwegian film unfortunately has no proud domestic traditions to build upon, in contrast to for example Swedish and Danish film. We are to a large extent dependent on foreign impulses”.<sup>151</sup> The idea was that Norwegian film had to seek inspiration not in a quality canon, but in international trends. By appealing to the higher prestige of foreign films, the critics sought to improve both Norwegian films and conditions of production. Other nations managed to produce film art, and so too should Norway.

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<sup>148</sup> Finn Rohdin, «Falsk romantikk – og ekte», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 1, No. 9-10 (Desember 1951): 20. Transl: «Norsk film er preget av konvensjonell poesiløs realisme. Jeg nærer ingen stor tro på at vår nasjonale filmkunst av egen kraft vil fri seg fra denne fantasiløshetens tvangstrøye»

<sup>149</sup> MacDonald, *The Appreciation of Film*, 21–23.

<sup>150</sup> Finn Rohdin, «Arne Skouen om norsk film», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Mars 1952): 14. Transl: «I svensk og dansk film har man allerede i 20–30 år trukket forfatterne til filmen (...) Her hjemme har man ikke hatt bruk for forfatterne før i de senere år (...) Nå straffer de gamle syndene seg. Det vil ta en del år før vi kan ta igjen det forsømte».

<sup>151</sup> Finn Rohdin, «Titus Vibe Müller», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 1, No. 7 (Oktober 1951): 19. Transl: «Norsk film har dessverre ingen stolte innenlandske tradisjoner å bygge på, slik som f.eks. svensk og dansk film. Vi er i stor monn avhengig av impulser utenifra».

## Worthy of Preservation? The establishment of a Norwegian Film Institute

An effort that can be partly ascribed to the efforts of the Norwegian Film Society was the founding of the Norwegian Film Institute in 1955. Already in their founding year, 1951, the Film Society started pushing for a Norwegian film museum built on the models of Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands.<sup>152</sup> In line with the Film Society's educational ideals, the film museum was envisioned as a way to further promote knowledge of film, through making film history available for a broader audience, and was seen as a prerequisite for the operation of film clubs.<sup>153</sup> In one of the 1951 issues, *Filmdebatt* contained an article by the Danish director Theodor Christensen, wherein he argued for the significance of a film museum. He argued that "Film is an art form, but despite all promises of the opposite the film is not recognized as an art",<sup>154</sup> because of the lack of knowledge about film history as a context for the understanding of film. He argues that while painters and musicians have access to the traditions and history of their own field, the filmmakers lack the sense of tradition because they work off the knowledge from their training in ateliers, instead of a common canon. Film museums could provide the canon through making the history of film available to both filmmakers and the general public and provide arenas for research on film.<sup>155</sup> By 1951, The Danish Filmmuseum had been operating for ten years, and the Danish article was provided as an argument for a Norwegian counterpart. The question of a Norwegian film museum was also brought forth through their educational series for the radio,<sup>156</sup> and it was promoted in a circular from the Film Society in 1951.<sup>157</sup> Finn Syvertsen also highlighted the importance of a film museum in order to improve film criticism, since it would provide a library where critics could study the history of film and gain access to film theories.<sup>158</sup>

Another member of the Norwegian Film Society that actively promoted the idea of a film museum was Bo Wingård. He was Swedish-born, the son of actress Harriet Bosse, and had spent the early years of his career working for the implementation of film in agricultural education. In 1948 he became consultant for the Film Central, working with the imports of film to Norway. While in the position of consultant, he also began collecting literature for a

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<sup>152</sup> Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 28.

<sup>153</sup> Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 28. Elsa Brita Marcussen, «10 års arbeid i Norsk Filmsamfunn», *Norsk Filmsamfunn 10 år: Filmdebatt 1961*, 28.

<sup>154</sup> Theodor Christensen, «Hvad er et filmmuseum?», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 1, No. 5–6 (1951): 11. Transl: «Film er en kunstart, men trods alle forsikringer om det modsatte er filmen ikke anerkendt som en kunstart».

<sup>155</sup> Theodor Christensen, «Hvad er et filmmuseum?», *Filmdebatt* Vol. 1, No. 5–6 (1951): 11–14.

<sup>156</sup> *Filmdebatt* Vol. 2, No.1 (January 1952): 10.

<sup>157</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «10 års arbeid i Norsk Filmsamfunn», *Norsk Filmsamfunn 10 år: Filmdebatt 1961*, 24–25, 28.

<sup>158</sup> Finn Syvertsen, «Filmkritikk ute og hjemme», *Filmdebatt*, Vol. 2, No.3 (April 1952): 22.

Norwegian film library.<sup>159</sup> In 1951 Wingård visited Sweden, Denmark, France and Great Britain to map out their film institutions and seek inspiration for how a Norwegian institute for film could be envisioned. In the following year he worked on a draft for the institute, which was sent to the State Film Council for further processing.<sup>160</sup> A committee led by film critic and Film Society member Olav Dalgard was in 1953 put to the task of preparing a proposal for a Norwegian state-run Film Institute. On the basis of opinions from the Film Society and KKL, the committee wrote a proposal for a Film Institute which would be both an archive for films, and an arena for film education. The proposal was approved in 1955, and the Norwegian Film Institute was founded, modelled after the fashion of the British Film Institute.<sup>161</sup>

The approval of the idea of a Norwegian Film Institute, as promoted by the Film Society and Bo Wingård, can be seen as a state recognition of film as worthy of preservation. The Film Institute was established the same year as the 1955 subsidies system, which as mentioned favoured popular films. This shows a somewhat ambivalent state perception of film. It was perhaps not yet recognised as an art worth investing more into than what was gained as returns, but the efforts of dedicated individuals within the Film Society had led to a certain recognition of film as something worth archiving.

## Summary

As the first true Norwegian film journal, *Filmdebatt* worked to increase the status of film as an art and culture. Inspired by international discourses on film the writers of *Filmdebatt* connected the idea of film as art to the project of democratisation of culture, which already underlined the general political beliefs about culture, thus providing arguments for legitimisation of film as culture. We can also see that the contributors in the magazine draw upon international repertoires when discussing Norwegian film. Comparisons to the Scandinavian countries were common, and the language of backwardness was used to argue for improvements in domestic productions.

While these ideas might have been present in the state proposals as the unexplained “cultural value”, the same proposals for state subsidies for film reveal a large tendency to focus on the economic benefits of supporting film. Rather than seeing it as a cultural benefit, or as an

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<sup>159</sup> Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 31–33; Bo Wingård, «Dagens og fremtidens oppgaver: Norsk Filminstitut», *Norsk Filmsamfunn 10 år: Filmdebatt 1961*, 38; *Arbeiderbladet*, 27.01.1951, 12.

<sup>160</sup> Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 35, 39–40.

<sup>161</sup> Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 40–41, 44–45; Tore Helseth, «Filmarkivene og filmhistorien: Om kvalitet og arkivpraksis», in *Kvalitet i praksis: Film, fjernsyn, foto*, edited by Eva Bakøy and Roel Puijk (Kristiansand: IJ Forlaget, 2012), 78.

art to be supported due to the inherent value in art for art's sake, film was presented as a case of supporting the import-balance, and not something to subsidise beyond a refund of taxes.

As critics and members of the Film Society, the writers of *Filmdebatt* saw it as their task to spread knowledge about film to the film audience. Inspired by the ideas of Bela Balázs, they saw educating the audience as the way to better the quality of film, and in line with contemporary ideas of cultural politics the education of the public was part of a larger project of democratisation of culture. One of the concrete effects of the ideas of educating the audience were the Film Society's efforts for establishing an institution that could function as a film museum. Particularly important in this regard were the efforts of Film Society member Bo Wingård. His promotion of the idea led to the State accepting film as something worth preserving evidenced by the establishment of the Norwegian Film Institute in 1955. The same year, *Filmdebatt* was discontinued, but the Film Institute would continue some of the educational ideas, and together with the Norwegian Film Society it would promote the Film Club Movement which would become a significant arena for studying film in the 1960s.

## Chapter 2.

### Promoting the Art Film Discourse Within and Outside the Industry: Film clubs and the revolt of filmmakers

On June 27<sup>th</sup> 1964, an open letter from forty-four workers within the Norwegian film industry addressed to the production company Norsk Film A/S was sent to the press. It read:

“The conflict that has arisen between the state- and municipality-run company Norsk Film A/S and Norwegian film people (...) is of a deep fundamental nature. It is not only concerned with the dismissal of Ulf Balle Røyem, but about a public production company’s attitude towards an artistic medium. The dismissal yet again reveals a failure in the company’s aims – an aim that evidently now more than ever is determined by narrow economic concerns to the detriment of the artistic obligations”.<sup>162</sup>

Often labelled as the “Revolt of the 44 (against Norsk Film A/S)”, the letter was a protest against power-structures in the film field, as well as the prioritisation of economy over art. The immediate cause for the revolt was the dismissal of Ulf Balle Røyem from his position as head of the short film department in Norsk Film A/S. He had held the position for 12 years, but was dismissed in December of 1963, on the grounds of rationalisation of production and the closing down of the short film series *Filmavisen*.<sup>163</sup> A reaction to the dismissal, the letter was a critique of the balance of power and the orientation of the film industry at large. According to the protesters, an external economic elite held the positions of power, residing over the distribution of grants and production resources, while the videographers, producers, directors and other workers on the set had little influence on the distribution of these resources. The “Revolt of the 44” can be seen as an expression of the desire to install people with experience from working in the field in gatekeeper positions. On a more abstract level, it can be regarded as the struggle between commerce and art within the field.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, during the 1950s the dichotomy of economy versus culture in film had come to the forefront, exemplified by the economically oriented state subsidies systems and the reactions they provoked. After 1955 Norsk Film A/S had experienced a crisis in production and struggled financially. They employed Otto Carlmar to improve the economic situation.<sup>164</sup> For the filmmakers, the employment of this business-savvy private producer became symbolic of the dominance of finance over quality and artistic merit. Meanwhile, a new self-perception for filmmakers themselves had also taken hold among some,

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<sup>162</sup> *Morgenposten*, 27.06.1964, 1–2. Transl: «Den strid som er oppstått mellom det statlig-kommunale selskap Norsk Film A/S og norske filmfolk (...) er av dyptgående prinsipiell natur. Den dreier seg ikke bare om oppsigelsen av Ulf Balle Røyem, men om et offentlig produksjonsselskaps innstilling til et kunstnerisk virkemiddel. Oppsigelsen avdekker enda en gang en svikt i selskapets målsetting – en målsetting som tydeligvis nå mer enn noen gang er betinget av snevre økonomiske hensyn til forenigelse for den kunstneriske forpliktelse».

<sup>163</sup> Tore Breda Thoresen, *Gjester i studio: Historien om de 44 og opprøret mot Norsk Film A.S.* (Oslo: Aventura, 1996), 24–25; Iversen, *Norsk filmhistorie*, 205.

<sup>164</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 23.

where they increasingly saw themselves as artists. This chapter will examine this trajectory in the example of Arne Skouen, and thus exploring where the notions that came to the forefront in the “Revolt of the 44” had originated. The institutionalisation of film was also an important factor, with the newly established Norwegian Film Association as a key player in the revolt.

Film and cinema were also affected by larger societal and media changes in the 1960s. With rising levels of wealth among the population, more leisure-time, holidays and availability of cars and television, film lost audiences to other forms of entertainment. Cinemas saw a drop in ticket sales as a result of the competition for audiences. This chapter will discuss the developments both within and outside the industry that affected the status of film and contributed to the rise of a discourse of film as art. The period began with the introduction of television in 1960, and this chapter will start with a short discussion of the television and its various impacts on the cinema and film. It will then pick up the thread of the organisational efforts from the last chapter, explaining how the Norwegian Film Institute took the initiative for film clubs, where youths and students regularly met to watch and discuss “alternative” films. As they engaged with the emerging international canon of “classics” and new cinematic experiments, the film clubs positioned themselves in opposition to commercial cinema and provided a forum where discussions and critical examination of films were encouraged. The chapter will then move on to discuss the prelude to “The Revolt of the 44”, in the development of filmmakers from craftsmen to artists. This leads up to the revolt where Otto Carlmar came to represent the epitome of economy and commercial interests in film. The reactions against Carlmar, and the commercial orientation of the state and municipalities in film, culminated in 1964 and brought the artistic orientation among film people to the foreground as filmmakers forcefully positioned themselves against film productions purely aimed at profitmaking.

### **The Television as a Competitor and the Revival of Film Clubs as an Alternative to Cinema**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 1960, NRK (Norwegian National Broadcasting) broadcast its first official television programme. After several years of preparation and debates surrounding “the TV craze”, cultural degradation and Americanisation of culture through television, the NRK was finally able to start its regular programming. Meanwhile, several consumers had been able to acquire receivers, and in 1960, 48.500 TV licences had been purchased by consumers eager to access the new medium. By 1965, the number of households with licences had increased to



488.500, thus multiplied more than tenfold.<sup>165</sup> 1960 was also the year where the Norwegian state decided to end the currency restrictions on automobiles, resulting in a large increase in car sales. The automobile became a “must” for many consumers and was not only used as a mode of transport, but also as a leisure-time activity in itself.<sup>166</sup> As both the television and the automobile were expensive goods, they were alternatives for consumer’s finances as well as their time. The decrease in cinema attendance was evident already the year after the official opening of the TV network, with 6,3 percent reduction in ticket sales in the largest cities. In 1962, the sales had dropped with further seven percent, in 1966 it was reduced by a third compared with what it was in 1960. By 1970, the ticket sales had been nearly halved from what it was a decade before.<sup>167</sup> Yet another factor that might be more specific to Norway was the popularity of leisure houses and cabins in the 1960s, which drained cinema attendance further.<sup>168</sup>

Consequences were similar to those seen internationally – the ticket sales dropped, cinemas faced economic challenges, and film producers struggled to keep up production. As the competition from television put the cinema under significant economic pressure, it can be argued that this competition was a factor in the shift of film from entertainment to art. The reduced profitability weakened the economic incentives for filmmaking, which left the film industry closer to an ideal of pure art for art sake. The competition forced the film industry to reposition itself in relation to television, which quickly became the dominant medium of entertainment. Film had to convince the audience that the experience of cinema was something different than what they could access through their televisions.<sup>169</sup> And the weakened economic potential and its replacement as entertainment no. 1 enabled claims of film as art.

This also opened up for alternative audiences to claim film as their medium of choice.<sup>170</sup> Similar developments can be seen for Norway, where a new audience that saw film as an art congregated around the film clubs, and the filmmakers began to promote art film. While the history of film clubs in Norway started around the 1930s, the film clubs in the interwar years mainly functioned as political and propaganda associations, resulting in their ban in 1931.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Dahl, Gripsrud, Iversen et.al., *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys*, 279–295. The statistics on television licences are presented on page 283.

<sup>166</sup> Dahl, Gripsrud, Iversen et.al., *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys*, 330.

<sup>167</sup> Blystad and Løken, «Publikums kinovaner», 126–127.

<sup>168</sup> Dahl, Gripsrud, Iversen et.al., *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys*, 330.

<sup>169</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 37, 46; Baumann, «Intellectuallization and Art World Development», 405–407.

<sup>170</sup> Baumann, «Intellectuallization and Art World Development», 405.

<sup>171</sup> Gunnar Iversen, «Politisk protest og brennende filminteresse: Filmklubber i Norge 1931–1952», in *Filmklubb for alltid: Glimt fra filmklubbenes historie*, by Norsk Filmklubbforbund (Oslo: Norsk Filmklubbforbund, 1993), 10–12.

From 1947 and onwards, film clubs experienced a revival. Oslo filmklubb (Oslo film club) and Avant-Garde, started by Olav Dalgard, were the most influential, but after the start of the Film Society these clubs gradually disappeared as the Society took over their activities.<sup>172</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Film Society pushed for the establishment of the Film Institute, which was granted in 1955. In 1958, the Film Institute started working on establishing film clubs nationwide, with the aim of “promoting the interest in film as an art form and as an educational- and entertainment medium”.<sup>173</sup>

The first of these film clubs was a new Oslo Film Club, which grew out of the students’ society work for film in 1960. After seeing the popularity of the student society’s screenings, the cinema manager in Oslo Arnljot Engh set down a group to work on establishing a film club, and with the help of among others Elsa Brita Marcussen and the student’s society Oslo Film Club was started in September 1960.<sup>174</sup> On the programme were classics such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Battleship Potemkin*, and *Citizen Kane*. The film clubs provided alternative programming than the cinemas, and the and the films were rented both from the Film Institute, the Danish Film Institute, and later from various film festivals, thus exposing its members to films that were different from what they could see at the regular cinema shows.<sup>175</sup> Memberships grew to 1700, many of whom attended meetings regularly and participated actively in discussions. Elsewhere in Norway too, the film clubs gained popularity after 1960, and by 1962 the movement had amassed over 5000 members, dispersed across 18 clubs. In 1965, members of the club board started a revolution within the club movement. Under the new leadership of among others, Sylvi Kalmar, who would become editor in chief of the film journal *Fant*, the tendency towards non-commercial film increased.<sup>176</sup>

Enthusiasm for the film clubs represent a stronger interest for film as art because the programming was a divergence from the regular cinema, and the clubs prioritised what they saw as artistic films. Furthermore, the amassing of students and youth at the clubs were evidence that a new generation with a strong interest for art film had developed. The clubs served to promote the interest in art film internally, but they could also contribute to increasing the status of film in general. According to Baumann, the increase in post-secondary education

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<sup>172</sup> Iversen, «Politisk protest og brennende filminteresse», 12–15.

<sup>173</sup> Jan H. Kortner, «Den organiserte filmklubbvirksomheten i Norge», in *Filmklubb for alltid: Glimt fra filmklubbenes historie*, by Norsk Filmklubbforbund (Oslo: Norsk Filmklubbforbund, 1993), 19. Transl: «fremme interessen for film som kunstart og som opplysnings- og underholdningsmedium».

<sup>174</sup> Pauline Aasarød, «Fra Oslo Filmklubbs historie», in *Filmklubb for alltid: Glimt fra filmklubbenes historie*, by Norsk Filmklubbforbund (Oslo: Norsk Filmklubbforbund, 1993), 26.

<sup>175</sup> Aasarød, «Fra Oslo Filmklubbs historie», 27–28.

<sup>176</sup> Aasarød, «Fra Oslo Filmklubbs historie», 27–29; Kortner, «Den organiserte filmklubbvirksomheten», 19.

resulted in a pool of students with high cultural capital, which could function as patrons for film as art.<sup>177</sup> Thus, the students also served to legitimise film as art through their participation in film clubs.

Continuing the work of the Film Society after it ended in 1962, the film clubs were the new arenas for exposure to international trends. Praising the works of the French New Wave and Godard, the film clubs in the latter half of the 1960s began to focus on new films that because of their limited audience were outside the regular cinema programming.<sup>178</sup> An alternative to commercial film had taken shape. Meanwhile there were also changes within the production of Norwegian films which favoured culture and art over commercial potential.

### **From Craftsmen to Artists: The changing self-perception of filmmakers**

While the film club movement had grown fourth to favour film as an art form, the filmmakers themselves also came to denote their craft as an art. Perhaps the most striking example of this is Arne Skouen, a director and filmmaker that has often been praised as one of the first and greatest *auteurs* in the Norwegian film history.<sup>179</sup>

Arne Skouen grew up in the working-class neighbourhood of Grünerløkka in Oslo and debuted as an author at the age of 19 with the book *Gymnasist* in 1932. In 1935 he began writing as a journalist for the newspaper *Dagbladet*, in a milieu of other up and coming writers such as Johan Borgen, Gunnar Larsen and Axel Kielland. The same year he published his second book, and by 1939 he had written his first dramatical piece.<sup>180</sup> During the occupation, he wrote articles for the Norwegian home front which were sent to Sweden and London. In 1943 he was forced to flee Norway to take up residence in Stockholm, where he was introduced to among others the would-be *auteur* Ingmar Bergman, whom at the time worked as an assistant prop maker at the Opera. During his stay, Skouen also discovered film through working as an assistant at the sets for documentary films and writing outlines for short and feature films.<sup>181</sup> He then went on,

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<sup>177</sup> Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow*, 32–35; Baumann, «Intellectuallization and Art World Development», 407–408.

<sup>178</sup> Aasarød, «Fra Oslo Filmklubbs historie», 29–30, 25

<sup>179</sup> Hanche, Aas and Iversen, *Bedre enn sitt rykte*, 58; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*.

<sup>180</sup> Simen Skjønsberg, «Arne Skouen sett utenfra», in *Hverdag og Visjon: En antologi om Arne Skouen*, edited by Simen Skjønsberg, (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1983), 10–13.

<sup>181</sup> Skjønsberg, «Arne Skouen sett utenfra», 15; André Bjerke, «En dikter med kamera», in *Hverdag og Visjon: En antologi om Arne Skouen*, edited by Simen Skjønsberg, (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1983), 92; Linn Ullmann, *Yrke: Regissør: Om Arne Skouen og hans filmer* (Oslo: Norsk Filminstitutt, 1998), 21.

first to London, then to the U.S.A. where he in 1946 was taught by German theatre director Erwin Piscator at the New School for Social Research.<sup>182</sup>

Upon his return to Norway, Skouen continued his career as a writer and journalist, working as a cultural journalist for *Verdens Gang*. In 1949, he was contacted by Kristoffer Aamot, the cinema manager in Oslo, who approached Skouen to propose a film adaptation for his book *Gategutter*. The film was produced through Norsk Film A/S, and Skouen himself was the director, thus began his career as a filmmaker.<sup>183</sup> The film *Gategutter* had clear parallels to the Italian neorealism, portraying the working-class boy Karsten and his group of friends as they make their way through life in poverty.<sup>184</sup> What set Skouen apart as a filmmaker was his thematic orientations, and the commonality between his films was the focus on portraying social and political problems. As a filmmaker Skouen built on his foundation as a cultural journalist with enthusiasm for social questions and his reputation as an established writer. His background provided him with a legitimacy that he brought with him into film, a legitimacy that was strengthened by adherence to the idea of using film as a medium to debate social issues.<sup>185</sup> This ties Skouen's works to both the Italian neorealism, as emphasised by Iversen, but also to the Norwegian literary canon. He represented the established modernist ideal of the artist as a social and political commentator, thus situating himself in the tradition of Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, and his films received both praise in the press and were popular at the cinemas.<sup>186</sup> These neorealist and literary modernist ties combined with his background as an acclaimed author made his path towards being seen as an artist in filmmaking easier. Servoll has shown how Skouen struck a balance between being both popular and highly acclaimed for his social commentary. This led him to occupy a role she demotes as the "popularly grounded poet", which unified the notions of art and popularity.<sup>187</sup> The essence is that the combination of popular favour and adherence to the already established discourses of "good literature" put Skouen in a position where he could be recognised as an artist according both to traditional standards for acclaimed art in other fields and to the cultural democratisation ideal that was evident in *Filmdebatt*.

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<sup>182</sup> Skjønberg, «Arne Skouen sett utenfra», 15–17; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 106. According to Servoll, the influence from Piscator was not too evident in Skouen's works, but Piscator also laid particular stress on political and social issues, which is evident in Skouen's work.

<sup>183</sup> Skjønberg, «Arne Skouen sett utenfra», 17; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 104; Iversen, «Oslo – åpen by», 74; Ullmann, *Yrke: Regissør*, 31.

<sup>184</sup> Iversen, «Oslo – åpen by», 84–85.

<sup>185</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 104–105.

<sup>186</sup> Iversen, «Oslo – åpen by»; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 104–108.

<sup>187</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 112.

The real turn towards actively inhabiting the position of film artist came around the time of his film *Kalde Spor* in 1962, when Skouen's way to portray himself and film in the media changed. While his film drew inspiration from Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni, he adapted the international discourse of film as a form of self-expression.<sup>188</sup> According to Bjerke, "what makes Arne Skouen's efforts in the history of Norwegian film unique is that he has always been grounded in the respect for film as an independent art form".<sup>189</sup> With a background that had already legitimised him as an artist, and a belief in the artistic nature of film Skouen opened the way for other filmmakers to see themselves as artists. The belief in film as an art form and the filmmaker as an artist would be key in the "Revolt of the 44", where Skouen had a key role as one of the two authors of the letter that sparked the boycott.

Another example of the path to a self-understanding as an artist among the filmmakers came with the director Rolf Clemens. He had studied at the French film academy IDHEC, and later at the Université du Théâtre des Nations in 1961, thus finding himself in Paris at the centre of the French New Wave.<sup>190</sup> In the Norwegian film field, there was clear anticipation for him to bring the modernistic rebellion to Norway. When he debuted in 1963 with his first film "Episode", he was praised as the first Norwegian "New wave" director in the media. There was a clear idea that Clemens and his generation would create an artistic wave in Norway too.<sup>191</sup> This praise in the media of the coming directors and the anticipation of a new wave also created a belief among the filmmakers that they could be artists, and that their voices deserved to be heard.

The filmmakers demand to be heard was also fuelled through the Norwegian Film Association. It had started in 1946 as the Norwegian Association of Film Technicians, partly inspired by the English Association of Cine Technicians. It was to function as a trade union for those working within film, and aimed at providing increased leverage for tradesmen against the production companies.<sup>192</sup> In 1954 the association was reformed into the Norwegian Film Association, and expanded its goals to include working for the interests of all film people in Norway and promote the production of film. It became more oriented towards being a voice for the film tradesmen in matters of state policy and protested heavily against the subsidies system of 1955. The proposal for state budgets in 1955 reveals that they argued the system "would lead

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<sup>188</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 113–117.

<sup>189</sup> Bjerke, «En dikter med kamera», 117. Transl: «Det som gjør Arne Skouens innsats i norsk filmhistorie unik er at han hele tiden har bygget på respekten for filmen som en selvstendig kunstart».

<sup>190</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 139.

<sup>191</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 139–143.

<sup>192</sup> Ivar Hartviksen, «Om norsk filmforbund», *Norsk Filmforbund* URL: <https://filmforbundet.no/Om-NFF/Om-Norsk-filmforbund/Historie> (Visited: 07.10.19).

to a one-sided popularity-contest on to the detriment of real content and fine artistic form”.<sup>193</sup> The association was not yet influential enough to impact state policies, but had amassed sixty members by 1952, among these central agents in film such as the film critic Sigurd Evensmo and Arne Skouen.<sup>194</sup> The development of a trade association for film is evidence of a consolidation of the film field, and an increased wish for a voice among filmmakers and technicians. The arguments against the state subsidies of 1955 also reveal a burgeoning interest for quality among the tradesmen, as they formulated their arguments in terms of a promotion of quality content and form as opposed to vulgarity. During the late 1950s and early 1960s the Film Association continued to grow, and it would become an influential organisation in the “Revolt” that was to come.

### **Promoting an Art Film Discourse Within the Industry: The “Revolt of the 44”**

Otto Carlmar had been an important figure within the Norwegian film industry already in the 1950s. He owed his success to the private owned film production company Carlmar Film A/S, which he ran with his wife Edith Carlmar. Carlmar Film A/S was established in 1949, and in the years between 1949–1963 the couple produced nine films that had financial success, an accomplishment that was astounding as the other contemporary production companies struggled to keep up consistent production.<sup>195</sup> Edith Carlmar was the first female feature film director in Norway, she had been trained in England (Denham Studios), Sweden and Denmark.<sup>196</sup> Otto Carlmar had an educational background in law and business, and a career-background in theatre as both a writer and CFO that provided him with experience and business contacts, among these Bøndernes Bank.<sup>197</sup> Carlmar was also engaged in the committee that developed the proposal for a new state subsidies system in 1954, resulting in the 1955 system where production subsidies were based on ticket sales.<sup>198</sup> He was known as an extremely frugal producer, and his reputation was not improved by his role in the 1955 system. He even furthered his penny-pinching image by promoting stories of how he straightened the nails of earlier sets

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<sup>193</sup> Kirke- og undervisningskomitéen, «Innstilling fra kirke- og undervisningskomitéen om tilskott til filmformål», Budsjett-innst. S. nr. 30 (1955), (Oslo: O. Fredr. Arnesen Bok- og Akcidenstrykkeri, 1956), 2. Transl: «vil føre til en ensidig popularitetsjakt på bekostning av lødig innhold og kresen kunstnerisk form».

<sup>194</sup> Ivar Hartviksen, «Om norsk filmforbund», *Norsk Filmforbund* URL: <https://filmforbundet.no/Om-NFF/Om-Norsk-filmforbund/Historie> (Visited: 07.10.19).

<sup>195</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 3. It was put on ice in 1963, when Carlmar was employed by Norsk Film, according to *Aftenposten* 18.05.1963, 2.

<sup>196</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 3–4; Ingrid Dokka, «Edith Carlmar: Norges første kvinnelige spillefilmregissør», *Nordic Women in Film* (Jan 2018), URL: <http://www.nordicwomeninfilm.com/edith-carlmar-norges-forste-kvinnelige-spillefilmregissor/?lang=no> (visited 03.06.19).

<sup>197</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 3–4. He had for example been a CFO of both Det Nye Teater and Chat Noir.

<sup>198</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 7.

and reused them. In the film *Ung Flukt* he had allegedly recycled one lamb throughout the entire film, both living and dead, before preparing it as dinner for the production team.<sup>199</sup> As a result, many in the industry regarded Carlmar the embodiment of financial interests in film, a perception that shaped how he would be seen by film historians. According to Iversen, “Otto was the businessman whom did not perceive production of film as a goal in itself, but as a means to earn money”.<sup>200</sup>

While Carlmar’s company had continuous production and ran with surpluses, the production company Norsk Film A/S was in a dire economic situation. Already in 1948 the state had gone in as a B-stakeholder alongside the municipal cinemas, but that had not solved the crisis. During the second half of the 1950s Norsk Film A/S had struggled to keep the production going. By the early 1960s, production nearly halted, producing only one film between 1960 and 1963. After years of financial struggle, worsened by the decline in cinema audience, the board of Norsk Film A/S decided in the spring of 1963 to hire Otto Carlmar as a Director of production to improve the economy.<sup>201</sup> The newspaper VG celebrated the decision, asking “Will there be life in Norsk Film A/S again?”, portraying an optimistic future for the company under the leadership of Carlmar, while adding that “His movies might not belong amongst the artistically most valuable in the nation, but Carlmar is at least the only Norwegian film producer who has never made a film with a deficit”.<sup>202</sup>

There were only a few immediate responses to Carlmar’s appointment. One example is the reaction of Olav Dalgard, a respected literary critic and film director. During the meeting in Norsk Film A/S where Carlmar’s appointment was finalised, he allegedly said he “assumed Carlmar was not supposed to be so-called artistic leader of the company”.<sup>203</sup> Kåre Bergstrøm, a film director employed as a regular director for Norsk Film A/S, reacted by resigning from his position after having worked under the new leadership of Carlmar in the autumn of 1963.<sup>204</sup> The resignation was a direct result of Carlmar’s intervening in Bergstrøm’s work. In *Arbeiderbladet* he elaborated on the reasons for his resignation, writing that he was forced to rewrite his script for the film “Klokker i måneskinn”, and “he demanded regularly a reorientation of the film’s expression form in a more clear and precise way, to make it

<sup>199</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 11.

<sup>200</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 7. Transl: «Otto var forretningsmannen som ikke så filmproduksjon som et mål i seg selv, men som et middel til å tjene penger».

<sup>201</sup> Iversen, *Norsk Filmhistorie*, 204–205; Evensmo, *Det store Tivoli*, 341–342; Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 23.

<sup>202</sup> *Verdens Gang*, 18.05.1963, 3. Transl: «Hans filmer hører kanskje ikke til de kunstnerisk mest verdifulle her i landet, men Carlmar er i hvert fall den eneste norske filmprodusent som aldri har laget noen underskuddsfilm»

<sup>203</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 24. I have not been able to verify this claim elsewhere, and since Thoresen himself was part of the revolt and the book is written in hindsight the statement should be taken with a pinch of salt.

<sup>204</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 21; Evensmo, *Det store tivoli*, 344; Iversen, *Norsk filmhistorie*, 205.

understandable for the mass audience and film critics”.<sup>205</sup> While these examples were signs of the discontent towards Carlmar and Norsk Film’s leadership, the real conflict was regarded as a result of Carlmar’s influence over the dismissal of Røyem.

In order to understand some of the immediate causes for the revolt that unfolded in 1964, a look at the new subsidies system that was implemented the same year is necessary. Against a backdrop of falling attendances, Norwegian film production was in trouble, similarly to other European nations at the time. Like the governments in these other countries, the Norwegian state saw the need to extend the subsidies, particularly after receiving requests for revision of the 1955 system from The Association of Film Producers (Norske filmprodusenters forening), the Norwegian Film Association (Norsk filmforbund) and Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund.<sup>206</sup> Among the problems were not only decreased ticket sales and diminished production, but also lack of production continuity, as evident by the many production companies that ended up producing few films.<sup>207</sup>

In this situation, the institutions representing the film industry reached out to the state and demanded revisions of the 1955 subsidies system. In 1961, the cabinet assembled a committee to examine the current system, assess the possible challenges that the film industry would face in the future, and prepare a draft for a new organisation of film subsidies. In addition to state officials, the committee included three representatives from the film industry; Gunnar Germeten from KKL (married to the film critic Else Germeten), the director Ivo Caprino, and Otto Carlmar.<sup>208</sup> The committee estimated that cinemas would see a decrease in tickets of 70% compared to 1952. To set the developments in perspective, the committee compiled an overview of how the state had dealt with the cinema issues in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries as well as France, Italy, Great Britain and West Germany.<sup>209</sup> In particular, the recommendation emphasised recent policy-changes in Sweden.<sup>210</sup> This evidences that the state compared itself and modelled itself after other film nations, and particularly the Scandinavian countries. This shows that the state was situated in an international discourse on film policy.

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<sup>205</sup> *Arbeiderbladet*, 06.07.1964, 4. Transl: «han krevet stadig en omlegging av filmens formspråk i mer ‘klar og tydelig’ retning, så den skulle bli ‘forståelig’ for det brede publikum og filmanmelderne».

<sup>206</sup> Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, *Tilråddning om statsstønad til norsk filmproduksjon m.v.*, (Oslo: Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, 1963), 1.

<sup>207</sup> Iversen, «Men det blir dyrt», 9.

<sup>208</sup> Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, *Tilråddning om statsstønad til norsk filmproduksjon m.v.*, 1–2.

<sup>209</sup> Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, *Tilråddning om statsstønad til norsk filmproduksjon m.v.*, 6–12.

<sup>210</sup> Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, *Tilråddning om statsstønad til norsk filmproduksjon m.v.*, 9–12.



The recommendation from the committee contained something that had been missing in the earlier proposals – it offered an explanation for *why* a national film production was necessary:

“[F]ilm is something way beyond an industrial product. It is an artistic medium with distinctive possibilities (...) To give film artists working conditions has to be as obvious a national task as supporting pictorial art or writing (...) What we gain in return is a production grounded both in our own traditions and our own national context, a production that can interpret us for our own sake and for the rest of the world”.<sup>211</sup>

The recognition of film as more than an industry, and even denoting it as an art made by artists whom should be recognised as such, was a leap towards legitimisation of film as an art. The use of arguments for the cultural value of film was also an improvement to the earlier proposals, which were mainly concerned with the economic benefits of domestic production.

The concrete changes in the policy from 1964 onwards represented a synthesis of the two systems, with the reintroduction of quality criteria through advance assessment of manuscripts and budgets.<sup>212</sup> As opposed to the 1950-system, where the producers could risk a loss if they did not fulfil the quality criteria which was evaluated after the premier, the new system set up the quality evaluation for the film before it was made. The maximum limit for financial subsidies was also removed, and the category of fictional short film was included for the first time. In addition to advance support as a quality control, ticket-based subsidies were also granted, and the rates were increased to 35 percent.<sup>213</sup>

While the new organisation of state subsidies was a great step toward recognition of film as an art form, particularly the reintroduction of quality assessment, another part of the new system became controversial as it impacted the situation with Norsk Film A/S. An important sub-division within Norsk Film A/S had been *Filmavisen*, a short film series that was shown at the cinema before the films started. *Filmavisen* provided an overview of significant news and other current information. However, as television was expected to provide ample news coverage, the committee reckoned that the production of *Filmavisen* would become superfluous, and the subsidies for this division should be discontinued.<sup>214</sup> Scholars have emphasised that while Carlmar was blamed for the dismissal of Røyem, it was the board of Norsk Film A/S who made the final decision to discontinue *Filmavisen* and dismiss Røyem.

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<sup>211</sup> Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, *Tilråddning om statsstønad til norsk filmproduksjon m.v.*, 21. Transl: «film er noe langt mer enn en industrivare. Den er et kunstnerisk medium med særegne muligheter (...) Å gi filmkunstnere arbeidsvilkår må være en like selvfølgelig nasjonal oppgave som å støtte bildende kunst eller diktning (...) Det vi får igjen er en produksjon med røtter både i vår egen tradisjon og vår egne nasjonale situasjon, en produksjon som kan tolke oss for oss selv og for omverdenen».

<sup>212</sup> Iversen, «Fra kontroll til næringsutvikling», 18.

<sup>213</sup> Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet, «Kapittel 358: Tilskott til filmformål», St.Prp. Nr. 1: Tillegg nr. 2 (1963–64), (Oslo: Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet, 1963–64), 2.

<sup>214</sup> Filmstønadskomiteen av 1961, *Tilråddning om statsstønad til norsk filmproduksjon m.v.*, 51.

But as Carlmar was part of the committee decision he had been involved in sealing the fate of *Filmavisen* even before the question was raised in Norsk Film A/S.<sup>215</sup> The media portrayed Carlmar as the main proponent of the new system.<sup>216</sup> Røyem became unemployed, and film workers interpreted this as an example where economic interest and gains were more important than the people involved and the cultural interests.

After the dismissal of Røyem, a conflict over the situation began between the Norwegian Film Association and Norsk Film A/S. The involvement of the Film Association was a clear signal that institutions in the field were growing stronger, and even began intervening on behalf of its members. After a series of negotiations that came to a standstill in June 1964, the Association started taking stronger measures, preparing for a possible boycott of the production company.<sup>217</sup>

In the meantime, the Bergstrøm's discontent gained traction in the press, amplifying the critique of Norsk Film A/S for neglecting artistic film production.<sup>218</sup> On the 23 of June, the director and chief of the Television-theatre,<sup>219</sup> Arild Brinchmann, entered the press with a sharp critique of Carlmar. He perceived the appointment of Carlmar as a sign that "the exponent for speculative B-films" had been approved by a public company, resulting in a legitimisation of quasi-art in "the name of 'rational production'".<sup>220</sup> The large coverage Bergstrøm's and Brinchmann's positions received signals a strong media attention to the debates within the film industry. The ensuing conflict was no longer a conflict between individuals, but had become a matter of principle for the industry at large. The same can be said for the case of Røyem. Through the involvement of the Film Association, his dismissal became more than a personal issue because there was a larger institution backing him. Furthermore, his dismissal was used as an example of larger problems, and the attention it received was used to voice further grievances for the filmmakers.

On the 25/26 of June, Carsten E. Munch and Arne Skouen met to formulate an open letter to Norsk Film A/S on behalf of film workers. With 44 signatures from film workers in the industry, the letter was sent to the press on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June.<sup>221</sup> The letter appeared in several of the largest newspapers in Oslo, claiming:

"The conflict that has arisen between (...) Norsk Film A/S and the Norwegian filmmakers (...) is of a deep principal nature. It is not only concerned with the dismissal of Ulf Balle Røyem, but with a public

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<sup>215</sup> See Evensmo, *Det store tivoli*, 344. He claims it was interpreted as a result of Carlmar's policies.

<sup>216</sup> *Dagbladet*, 19.04.1963, 2.

<sup>217</sup> *Dagbladet*, 22.06.1964, 13; *Arbeiderbladet*, 22.06.1964, 1, 16.

<sup>218</sup> *Verdens Gang*, 20.06.1964, 6; *Aftenposten* 22.06.1964, 2; *Verdens Gang* 22.06.1964, 11.

<sup>219</sup> The television theatre was a programme at the NRK where a theatre play was filmed and broadcasted.

<sup>220</sup> *Verdens Gang* 23.06.1964, 5.

<sup>221</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 31–33.

production company's attitude towards an artistic instrument. The dismissal reveals yet again a failure in the company's objective – an objective that evidently is now more than ever conditioned by narrow economic considerations to the detriment of the artistic commitment which is vested in the publicly subsidised company Norsk Film A/S".<sup>222</sup>

The open letter continued outlining two principal demands of the company, namely a solution to the Røyem issue as well as a change in the way the company was run. Until the demands were met, the co-signing film workers refused to work for the company.<sup>223</sup> "The 44", as the signatures were named in the press, was a collective formed by individuals on the basis of the principal ideas of the conflict between Røyem backed by the Film Association on the one hand, and Norsk Film A/S on the other hand. But more than just acting as a response to the treatment of Røyem they also acted on behalf of their own grievances with the company and the film industry at large.<sup>224</sup>

The press coverage did not end with printing the letter. In the days that followed, *Morgenbladet* elaborated on the root cause of the uproar, claiming that the core question was that of whether Norsk Film A/S was to produce simple entertainment for profits, or to focus on experimental and serious film.<sup>225</sup> In the ensuing media debate conflict was extended to a question of profitable "lowbrow culture" versus artistically merited quality film. The newspaper *Dagbladet* wrote:

"The task of Norsk Film A/S is not to make pop-movies which are certain to please a large audience. It is not tasked with creating movies with pop-elements that are not soundly motivated by artistry. Altogether Norsk Film A/S should have one sole task: to support a film production that aspires to create the artistically valuable".<sup>226</sup>

The emphasis on quality film and film as art became a focus, and at the centre was the idea that Norsk Film A/S, because it had the state and municipalities as stakeholders, should be at the core of the quality productions. It was to "act out of artistically justifiable motives and (...) economic redevelopment should not mean that one gives larger or smaller concessions to the

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<sup>222</sup> *Morgenposten*, 27.06.1964, 1–2. Transl: "Den strid som er oppstått mellom (...) Norsk Film A/S og norske filmfolk (...) er av dyptgående prinsipiell natur. Den dreier seg ikke bare om oppsigelsen av Ulf Balle Røyem, men om et offentlig produksjonsselskaps instilling til et kunstnerisk virkemiddel. Oppsigelsen avdekker enda en gang en svikt i selskapets målsetting – en målsetting som tydeligvis nå mer enn noen gang er betinget av snevre økonomiske hensyn til fortrenghet for den kunstneriske forpliktelse som tilligger det offentlig subsidierte selskap Norsk Film A/S".

<sup>223</sup> *Morgenposten*, 27.06.1964, 1–2; *Aftenposten*, 27.06.1964, 28; *Friheten*, 27.06.1964, 2; *Verdens Gang*, 27.06.1964, 2; *Morgenbladet*, 27.06.1964, 1; *Dagbladet*, 27.06.1964, 1–2.

<sup>224</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 42.

<sup>225</sup> *Morgenbladet*, 29.06.1964, 3.

<sup>226</sup> *Dagbladet*, 30.06.1964, 3. Transl: "Norsk Film A/S har ikke til oppgave å lage pop-filmer som man er sikker på vil tekkes et bredt publikum. Det har heller ikke til oppgave å skape filmer med pop-innslag som ikke er solid kunstnerisk motivert. I det hele tatt må Norsk Film A/S ha en eneste oppgave: Å støtte opp om en filmproduksjon som har til mål å skape det kunstnerisk verdifulle".

bad taste in order to earn profit”.<sup>227</sup> The dichotomy between film as business and culture, as entertainment and art, were clearly evident in these debates. The leadership of Norsk Film A/S was portrayed as the white collar enemies – or in the words of Verdens Gang: “It can’t be right (...) that an artistic company like Norsk Film A/S is run by Chief Financial Officers. There is a range of outstanding filmmakers in Norway that could run the company on the basis of artistic intentions”.<sup>228</sup>

The emphasis on culture and art over business within Norsk Film A/S was seen as an expression of the general underestimation of the potential of film as an art form. Under the header “Boikott for kunstens skyld” (“Boycott for the sake of art”), Dagbladet emphasised the issues of film as a medium between two blocks:

“No art form has struggled more than film to become recognised as serious art. This is not due to lack of genuine artists, it is caused by the mercantilisation of film we experience each day. Film after film is produced with one central aim: To please the audience”.<sup>229</sup>

The article went on to claim that the entire future of Norwegian film as art was at stake.<sup>230</sup>

The larger issues that Dagbladet were proposing were evident also in the renegotiations between representatives from the Film Association and Norsk Film A/S regarding the Røyem-case. While the two parts came to a satisfactory solution including economic compensations to Røyem on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the boycott of the 44 continued.<sup>231</sup> According to Tore Breda Thoresen, who was a part of the 44, the solution to the Røyem-case more than anything strengthened the resolve of the boycotters, as they saw that their pressure had an impact.<sup>232</sup>

Almost a full week later, Norsk Film A/S issued a formal statement in the press regarding the situation, attempting to ensure that the board did everything they could to keep productions running, that the productions of the company were of artistic and cultural high quality, and that they did not meddle in the artistic decisions of directors.<sup>233</sup> However, the 44 were not appeased by this response, and the following day the press could report that they were to meet to strategize and form a committee to represent them in negotiations with the board of

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<sup>227</sup> *Dagbladet*, 30.06.1964, 3. Transl: «selskapet (...) må handle ut fra kunstnerisk forsvarlige motiver og at ikke den økonomiske sanering skal bety at man gir større eller mindre konsesjoner til den dårlige smak for å tjene penger».

<sup>228</sup> *Verdens Gang*, 01.07.1964, 7. Transl: «Det kan ikke være riktig (...) at et kunstnerisk selskap som Norsk Film A/S skal ledes av økonomidirektører. Det finnes en rekke utmerkede filmfolk i Norge som kunne lede selskapet ut fra kunstneriske motiver».

<sup>229</sup> *Dagbladet*, 03.07.1964, 3. Transl: «Ingen kunstart har hatt vanskeligere enn filmen for å bli anerkjent som seriøs kunst. Det skyldes ikke mangel på redelige kunstnere, det skyldes den merkantilisering av filmen vi opplever hver eneste dag. Film etter film produseres med det ene mål for øye: Tekkes publikum»

<sup>230</sup> *Dagbladet*, 03.07.1964, 3.

<sup>231</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 38–39; *Dagbladet*, 02.07.1964, 10.

<sup>232</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 40.

<sup>233</sup> *Friheten*, 06.07.1964, 6; *Arbeiderbladet*, 06.07.1964, 4; *Morgenposten*, 06.07.1964, 5.

Norsk Film A/S.<sup>234</sup> Carsten E. Munch, who was at the time employed as a filmmaker for NRK was elected as leader.<sup>235</sup> The debates continued in the newspapers throughout the summer, concerning representation for filmmakers in the board of Norsk Film and for increased focus on quality productions.<sup>236</sup> After months of conflict, the resolution finally came in October, when the board of Norsk Film A/S agreed to include filmmakers as representatives and change their statutes according to the pressures. The following year several filmmakers were included in the board, and Erik Borge replaced as Carlmar as artistic chief.<sup>237</sup>

The conflict had a major role in the Norwegian film industry, and was defining as a revolt against capital interests overtaking the artistry of the medium. As the first revolt within the industry, the events were highly important for the narrative of artistic and cultural status within the Norwegian film industry. This is also the reasoning behind the emphasis of the events; while several important developments occurred in the sixties, the revolt is a striking example of how individuals within the industry established a discourse change in the media to serve their goals, and with that to put focus on film as an artistic medium. It also exemplifies the interchanges between discourse, opportunity spaces and institutionalisation in a clear display, and due to the collective action of several actors in the industry working together, amplified by press coverage, it reached far beyond the earlier efforts.

## Summary

The main argument in this chapter is that the role of film in society changed during the 1960s, shifting from 'mere' entertainment and a tool for cultural democratisation to an autonomous art form. The rise of television played a role in this transformation by altering the leisure ecology, but also through opening opportunity spaces. Some filmmakers felt they were less bound by economic concerns— if a film project did not receive support from the state, they could get jobs within television instead. More importantly, filmmakers used this opportunity to protest against what they perceived as unfair organisation of labour and the preference of profit over cultural value and artistic expression. They started a debate on the responsibilities of the state in

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<sup>234</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 50–51; *Dagbladet*, 07.07.1964, 14.

<sup>235</sup> Thoresen, *Gjester i studio*, 51; *Dagbladet*, 08.07.1964, 11.

<sup>236</sup> Some interesting examples can be found in *Dagbladet*, 09.07.1964, 4; *Dagbladet*, 11.07.1964, 5; *Verdens Gang*, 11.07.1964, 22–23; *Verdens Gang*, 13.07.1964, 15; *Verdens Gang*, 24.08.1964, 19; *Dagbladet*, 26.08.1964, 16; *Dagbladet*, 06.10.1964, 10. A collection of articles detailing the newspaper debates in the early summer can be found in De 44s aksjonsutvalg, *Avisdebatten om Norsk Film A/S: Hva Oslo-avisene har skrevet frem til 15. juli 1964* (Oslo: De 44s aksjonsutvalg, 1964).

<sup>237</sup> Iversen, *Norsk Filmhistorie*, 207–208.

preserving and supporting film and used the media attention to establish a discourse of film as a valuable art form.

The protests led to reorganisation of the industry, where the filmmakers gained increased representation and a voice in the state-owned Norsk Film A/S. As part of the 1964 subsidies regime, quality control for film support was established, which signifies that quality again was seen as important by the state, and not only popularity. Outside the sphere of production, film clubs furthered the concern with film as art, focussing on classics and non-commercial films, often created by directors from abroad. The numerous students and youths in the clubs were patrons of film as an art form, providing yet another area in which the cultural and artistic side of film came to the forefront.

Changes both within and outside the film industry lead to a greater appreciation of film as culture and art rather than economic gains. The next chapter will further discuss the critical discourse that arose around the magazine FANT from 1965, which continued the threads from the “Revolt of the 44” and had an overlap between its editors and the members in the Film Club.

### **Chapter 3.**

## **The Consolidation of Film as Art: Transnational influences on Norwegian film criticism and cultural policy in the 1960s**

While the earlier chapters have shown parallels between transnational trends and the developments in state policies, organization of the industry and film criticism, *Fant* is perhaps the journal in the Norwegian film history that embodies the transnationalism in film criticism to the largest extent. Drawing upon trends from the French *Cahiers du Cinema*, *Fant* became a controversial and outspoken journal that focused strongly on portraying auteurs. The central project that can be detected in *Fant* was to continue the debate after the “Revolt of the 44” and ensure that the belief in film as art took root in the Norwegian context. In the early years of the journal, the writers approached film through an art-lens inspired by the *Cahiers* and auteurism, oriented towards long interviews with international directors. At the same time, it had a critical stance towards Norwegian filmmakers in the beginning but tried to prepare the ground for a “Norwegian” new wave by showing off international filmmakers. Another way to promote film as art was also to increase the seriousness of film, a strategy that is evident in the debate on censorship.

The second half of the chapter will pick up the thread from the state debates of the early sixties and examine the state discourse on film. In 1969 a Norwegian Film Council was set to advise the state on matters of film. Within the council the filmmakers and other agents in the field had the majority representation, in line with the precedent set by the “Revolt of the 44”. The Norwegian Film Council immediately set to work on a proposal for additions to the state subsidies systems, and the proposal reveals a strong tendency towards prioritization of art film. Meanwhile, other measures towards supporting film as art were also instated. Drawing upon changes in tax regulations in Sweden and Denmark, Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund argued for alleviation for the luxury tax, which was granted by the state in 1969. The same year, subsidies for import of “valuable film” was also instated. Together, these measures signal that the state had started taking film seriously as art.

### **French Connections and the Discourse of Film as Serious Art**

After the discontinuation of *Filmdebatt* in 1955, there had been no film journals that had a critical approach to the film industry. However, in the wake of the uproar in Norsk Film A/S, a handful of ambitious film enthusiasts started a film journal that catered to a new audience,

promoting new criteria for the appreciation of film.<sup>238</sup> The film journal would be named *Fant*, alluding both to the acclaimed film “Fant” by Norwegian filmmaker Tancred Ibsen, and the word “Fant” which denotes a “vagabond”, claiming an underdog rebelliousness and bohemian freedom for the new journal.<sup>239</sup> As the editor, Sylvi Kalmar was one of the key figures of *Fant*. Originally, she had an educational background as a telegraphist, but had started working as a proofreader, journalist and editor for a Norwegian women’s magazine.<sup>240</sup> She had a great interest for film, and particularly the French “New Wave” films that she had discovered while in France in 1959, and had in 1965 gained a position on the board of Oslo Film Club.<sup>241</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, the film clubs were an arena for films outside the cinema programme where films were discussed as art. Kalmar’s film club background and the strong interest for New Wave film was evident already from the start of *Fant*. With her on the editorial board, she also had her colleague from the board of the film club, director Pål Bang-Hansen, and another director, Rolf Clemens, both of whom had their education from internationally recognised film schools. Clemens had studied at “IDHEC”, and later at the “Université du Théâtre des Nations” in Paris, while Bang-Hansen had studied at “Centro Sperimentale” in Rome, and both were anticipated as initiators of a new wave in Norway.<sup>242</sup>

Seeing themselves as a continuation of the “Revolt of the 44” and filling the gap of a serious film journal after the discontinuation of Filmdebatt, the writers of *Fant* positioned themselves as promoters of art and in opposition to commerce.<sup>243</sup> The first issue explicitly shows this alignment, stating that *Fant* had “only (...) one demand: that where the two perspectives film as business and film as art are opposed, it is the latter that should be applied here”.<sup>244</sup> In this first issue, Rolf Clemens also stated that “[a] film is a film is a film, is a medium which a film artist uses to express something”.<sup>245</sup> Drawing upon Gertrude Stein’s famous quote, he emphasised that the true nature of the film is an art form. If film is seen or used in another

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<sup>238</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «FANT-asteri?», *Fant* No. 1, 5; Servoll, «Den norske auteuren», 160.

<sup>239</sup> Iversen, «Fra Arkivet: Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge», Rushprint. The film «Fant» (1937) by Tancred Ibsen is the tale of a young girl who runs away and joins a group of Romany wanderers. Tancred Ibsen himself was the grandchild of the famous writer Henrik Ibsen. The film was by this time regarded as a true “Norwegian classic”.

<sup>240</sup> Nilsen, «Provokasjon og propaganda», 30; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 160.

<sup>241</sup> Nilsen, «Provokasjon og propaganda», 30; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 160.

<sup>242</sup> Nilsen, «Provokasjon og propaganda», 33; Iversen, «Fra Arkivet: Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge»; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 139–144, 146–149.

<sup>243</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «FANT-asteri?» *Fant* No. 1, 5; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 165; Iversen, «Fra Arkivet: Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge».

<sup>244</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «FANT-asteri?» *Fant* No. 1, 5. Transl: «Vi stiller bare ett krav: at hvor de to synsvinkler film som forretning og film som kunst blir motsattrettet, er det den siste som skal gjøres gjeldende her».

<sup>245</sup> Rolf Clemens, «en film er en film er en film», *Fant* No. 1, 26. Transl: «En film er en film er en film, er en uttrykksform en filmkunstner sier noe med».



way it was not a true film, but a mere mass entertainment.<sup>246</sup> *Fant* saw itself as a journal for a new generation of film enthusiasts, with a more serious appreciation of film.<sup>247</sup>

In an editorial Sylvi Kalmar criticised the position of cinema manager as being one of politics and not art, with the cinema programming devoting too little space for artistic films.<sup>248</sup> Arguing that managers focused on the economy and not on artistry, Kalmar applied the dichotomy between art and commerce. The same argument informs the editorial “Våre formyndere” (“Our legal guardians”), where Kalmar attacks the cinemas on their alleged principles: “In all other fields we are prepared to subsidise culture, but cinemas should as far as possible be economically self-sustained”.<sup>249</sup> The central question was still why film was treated differently than other forms of art. This was clearly a continuation of the discourses in the “Revolt of the 44”, with cinema directors as the targets this time. Continuing this discourse from the “Revolt” was both a way to connect the *Fant* to the film field in Norway, and an effort to consolidate it, making the perception of film that had risen with the revolt permanent. In this effort, they also drew upon international inspiration. In its early years, the journal continued to elaborate on the discourse established in the revolt but adding to it the theory of auteurism.

The concept of auteurism in film was promoted most influentially in France.<sup>250</sup> Its roots are often attributed to Alexandre Astruc who in a 1948 essay launched the idea that the film director writes with “the camera as a pen” (*Le Caméra-Stylo*).<sup>251</sup> He contended that a new cinema was on the rise, one where film was its own “language”, a medium for true artistic expression.<sup>252</sup> In this new type of film, “the distinction between author and director loses all meaning. Direction is no longer a means of illustrating or presenting a scene, but a true act of writing”.<sup>253</sup> The director is proposed as the artist, the writer, behind a film. This view was further developed among the circle of film critics in the French journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*. The *Cahiers* were started by André Bazin, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Joseph-Marie Lo Duca in

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<sup>246</sup> Rolf Clemens, «En film er en film er en film», *Fant* No. 1, 26.

<sup>247</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «FANT-asteri?» *Fant* No. 1, 5.

<sup>248</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Vaktpostene og utpostene og om en ny post på budsjettet», *Fant* No.3, (1965), 5.

<sup>249</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Våre formyndere», *Fant* No. 4-5, 5. Transl: “På alle andre felter er vi innstilt på at kulturen må subsidieres, men kinoene skal såvidt mulig bære seg økonomisk»

<sup>250</sup> The term “auteur theory” was coined by the American film critic Andrew Sarris in his article «Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962», while the “politiques de auteur” is usually accredited to *Cahiers du Cinema*. The term “auteur” had been employed in earlier French magazines, but the *Cahiers* popularized the term. Tredell, *Cinemas of the Mind*, 101.

<sup>251</sup> Alexandre Astruc, «The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Stylo», In *The French New Wave: Critical Landmarks*, edited by Peter Graham and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). The article was originally printed as «Naissance d’une nouvelle avant-garde» *L’Ecran Français*, no. 144, 1948.

<sup>252</sup> Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), 141. Richard Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 47–48.

<sup>253</sup> Alexandre Astruc, «The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Stylo», 35.

1951.<sup>254</sup> *Cahiers du Cinéma* was doubtlessly one of the most renowned film journals, both in France and abroad, getting acclaim in the 1950s for its discourse and mode of film criticism. One example which is often put forth by scholars is François Truffaut's 1954 essay "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" (A certain tendency of French cinema), where he criticises the French "Tradition of Quality" that had dominated French cinema since 1945.<sup>255</sup> Building on Astruc's ideas, Truffaut was sceptical of the mode of literary adaptations, and the dependence upon manuscripts instead of artistic expression through direction, which reduced the director to "a stager" without personal style.<sup>256</sup> This distinction between an auteur and a stager is fundamental for auteur criticism, as its task was to analyse the film as an expression of the director's style, form and signature.<sup>257</sup> In this perspective, there is a central artist behind a film, namely the director or the "auteur", whose artistic vision comes to life through the medium. Not all of *Cahiers'* articles and critics followed the theory,<sup>258</sup> but due to the core of younger auteur critics such as Truffaut, Eric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol and Jean-Luc Godard, and the popularity of the journal, the idea spread quickly. In the USA, Andrew Sarris promoted it as "auteur theory"; in Britain, the journal *Movie and Sight and Sound* also clearly drew upon the ideas of the French auteur critics.<sup>259</sup> The use of auteurism associated film with established forms of art, most importantly literature, borrowing terms used in those artistic fields to describe films as art works and their creators as artists. It aligns film with the already legitimised art fields where a single creator makes art works, such as for example fine art and literature. The use of the auteur theory can also be seen as a strategy for establishing films as art works and their creators as artists.<sup>260</sup>

In Norway too, film critics looked to the *Cahiers* for inspiration. Johanne Servoll has studied how the term auteur was adopted and used in Norway and came to the conclusion that the understanding of a film as a product of an artist with a personal style was present in some Norwegian reviews even before the arrival of French auteurism.<sup>261</sup> It is correct to say that film was labelled art in Norway already in the 1950s, but the understanding underpinning this label was not the idea of art for art's sake. Rather, it was the idea that certain films were of cultural

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<sup>254</sup> Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave*, 26; Gunnar Iversen, *Den franske nye bølge: En introduksjon*, (Oslo: Norsk Filmklubbforbund, 1988); Hayward, *French National Cinema*, 141.

<sup>255</sup> François Truffaut, «A Certain Tendency in French Cinema», In *The French New Wave: Critical Landmarks*, edited by Peter Graham and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>256</sup> Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave*, 31; Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 382.

<sup>257</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 44–45.

<sup>258</sup> Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave*, 28–29.

<sup>259</sup> Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 382; O'Brien, *The Rise of Art Cinema in Post-War Film Culture*, 111.

<sup>260</sup> Regev, «Producing Artistic Value», 86.

<sup>261</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 83–84.

importance, either by reflecting something worth preserving, or as a tool for mass education. In contrast to this idea where film expresses the way of life of the people and serves to educate the many, auteurism privileges a chosen few to express their personal vision, irrespective of what an audience wants or needs.

*Fant* very clearly modelled itself on the French film journal and its auteurism. While Nilsen claims that the journal in its early years served the function of enlightenment through education the people on international film based on these interviews and articles,<sup>262</sup> it is evident *Fant* did not have the same approach as the 1950s educational approach to film criticism. Rather, it focused on the director as a visionary figure, thus importing a new form of criticism in the Norwegian context.

Already from the very first issue, it was clear that *Fant* would prioritise the directors. The journal contains interviews with directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni (No. 1), Carl Th. Dreyer (no. 2), Bo Widerberg (no. 3), Bergman (no. 4-5 and no. 7-8), Vilgot Sjöman (no. 4-5), and Pål Løkkeberg (no. 9-10), as well as others such as Fellini (no. 6) and Jonas Mekas (no. 11). The interviews were supplemented with a complete filmography of the director. The large extent of coverage dedicated to presenting these directors implies the emphasis on the director as a single creative force already from the start of the journal. It also stressed the stylistic voice of the director. An example of this is Lasse H. Gloms review of Bo Widerberg's *Elvira Madigan*, a film about the life of the Danish circus artist Elvira Madigan:

“Cinematically it is a film one can hardly find weaknesses in. It is an experience, a fervently beautiful experience of the love between two humans. But based on Widerberg and his own statements about his film, I miss the carrying social aspect, and last, but not least, I miss Widerberg.”<sup>263</sup>

Another parallel to the *Cahiers* auteurism is Rolf Løvaas' scepticism to adaptations. The film critic and film censor Sigurd Evensmo had attempted to convince Norsk Film A/S to assess the entire Norwegian literary canon in order to create a registry of all novels which could be adapted as films. Løvaas argued this could hamper the evolution of Norwegian film:

“In order for the result to have film-artistic value, the adaptation from novel to film has to unfold as an artistic creative process (...). (T)he film creator must have had a strong personal experience of the novel he is to adapt, a commitment so intense that he cannot imagine another film design than precisely this novel”.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Nilsen, «Provokasjon og propaganda», 37–38.

<sup>263</sup> Lasse H. Glom, «Elvira Madigan», *Fant* No. 9-10, 59. Transl: «Rent filmisk er det en film man vanskelig kan finne svakhetspunkter ved. Den er en opplevelse, en inderlig skjønn opplevelse av to menneskers kjærlighet. Men med utgangspunkt i Widerberg og hans egne uttalelser om sin film, så savner jeg det bærende sosiale aspekt, og sist, men ikke minst, jeg savner Widerberg.»

<sup>264</sup> Rolf Løvaas, «Skal vi bli et folk av fikse filmskreddere?», *Fant* no. 4–5, 51. Transl: «Forat resultatet skal ha filmkunstnerisk verdi, må overføringen fra roman til film forløpe som en artistisk skapende prosess (...) filmskaperen må ha hatt en sterk personlig opplevelse av den romanen han skal filmatisere, et sjelelig engasjement så intenst at han ikke kan tenke seg noe annet filmsusjett enn nettopp denne romanen».

This statement shows a similar hesitation towards literary adaptations than Truffaut's "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" and reveals a close connection to the understanding of an auteur as the driving creative force. Tellingly, Norwegian critics used the term "auteur" in its French original, like American and British critics did, too.<sup>265</sup> This strengthens the argument that the understanding of auteurism in Norway was an adaptation of international trends, not an original invention.

Traces of the *Cahiers* can also be found in the interview style of *Fant*, which was similar in its focus on the auteur in choice of interviewees and thematic orientation as well as the interviewer interpreting and openly admiring the director.<sup>266</sup> The interviews in *Fant* also had a strong presence of the interviewer in the dialogues, demonstrating knowledge of film history and analysing the film, similar to *Cahiers*. An example of this is Sylvi Kalmar's interview with Ingmar Bergman in *Fant* no. 4–5, where she asked Bergman about his relation to Godard and analyses his answers to the question.<sup>267</sup> The journal not only appropriated the *Cahiers*' approach, attitude, and terminology, but in some instances went as far as to reprint *Cahiers* texts translated into Norwegian. Among these are interviews with Agnes Varda and Federico Fellini.<sup>268</sup> The translations are accredited to the interviewer, and it is evident that it was originally a *Cahiers* article. For example, the Varda-interview was structured so the interview questions are marked with *Cahiers* or later in the text just a C, while Varda's answers are marked with *Varda* or V.<sup>269</sup> Translations show how important the *Cahiers* were for the editors of *Fant*. When announcing the opening of a position as an editorial secretary in the journal, it was even a criterium that the applicant knew French, the only foreign-language skill mentioned as a requirement.<sup>270</sup> All in all, *Fant* represents the most apparent and explicit connection between trends in the Norwegian film journalism and larger transnational movements.

The adaptation of auteurism in the Norwegian context raises an important question of how this impacted the filmmakers. As noted in the last chapter, Arne Skouen had already earned the status as an artist. However, much of the focus on the director in *Fant* was tied to international auteurs, as evidenced by the list above. One reason for this is that the Norwegian modernism in film did not have its breakthrough in film until the very end of the 1960s and the

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<sup>265</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 80.

<sup>266</sup> This has been observed by Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 161.

<sup>267</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Ingmar Bergman: När verklighetens gränser viker undan», *Fant* No. 4–5, 12–13.

<sup>268</sup> *Fant*, No. 3, 28; *Fant*, No. 4–5, 38; *Fant* No. 6, 6–9.

<sup>269</sup> Jean-André Fieschi and Claude Ollier, «Den jordiske nåde: Samtale med Varda», *Fant* No. 3, 28–32.

<sup>270</sup> *Fant*, no. 7–8, 71.

start of the 1970s, and before this such films were experimental deviations.<sup>271</sup> Thus, the modernist films that *Fant* promoted were seldom found among the Norwegian directors, and a part of the journal's project was to create an environment that would stimulate a new wave. Notable is also the focus on Scandinavian auteurs, such as the Swedish directors Bo Widerberg, Ingmar Bergman, Vilgot Sjöman and the Danish director Carl Th. Dreyer. Similarly to *Filmdebatt*, *Fant* used the Scandinavian comparisons as a way to highlight the need for Norwegian counterparts. In Sweden the modernist breakthrough had come already at the start of the 1960s with Widerberg, Bergman, Sjöman, Jörn Donner and Mai Zetterling among others.<sup>272</sup> Particularly the publishing of Bo Widerberg's pamphlet "Visjonen i Svensk Film" in 1962 is often regarded as the start of the Swedish new wave. Denmark also had its modernist breakthrough around 1961–1963.<sup>273</sup>

It was clear *Fant* wished to give voice to a new wave of directors in Norway, and the focus on international directors should be seen in the context of this. The journal was anticipating the new wave and attempted to prepare the ground for it through bringing in the international discourses.<sup>274</sup> The translation of *Cahiers du Cinema* and the focus on international auteurs seem to suggest a wish to bring these trends to Norway.

At the very end of the 1960s, Pål Løkkeberg got his breakthrough as a modernist director with the films "Liv" in 1967 and "Exit" in 1970. Both these films were studies of the gender roles for women, and positioned Løkkeberg as a spearhead for Norwegian modernism.<sup>275</sup> In 1968, the production group Vampyrfilm (Vampire film) with among others Anja Breien, whom received international acclaim for her films,<sup>276</sup> Oddvar Bull Tuhus, Espen Thorstenson and Per Blom, was started. The group collaborated with Norsk Film A/S and began to receive praise as the new generation of Norwegian film.<sup>277</sup> Pål Løkkeberg had already received support from the

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<sup>271</sup> Gunnar Iversen, «Identitet og modernitet: Modernistiske avvik i etterkrigsfilmen», *Nærbilder: Artikler om norsk filmhistorie*, edited by Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), 147–148.

<sup>272</sup> Anders Marklund, "The New Generation of the 1960s", in *Swedish Film: An Introduction and Reader*, edited by Maria Larsson & Anders Marklund (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2010), 239.

<sup>273</sup> Ib Bondebjerg, «Film and Modernity: Realism and the Aesthetics of Scandinavian New Wave Cinema», In *Moving Images, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Ib Bondebjerg (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2002), 128.

<sup>274</sup> Iversen, «Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge: Del 2».

<sup>275</sup> Iversen, «Identitet og modernitet: Modernistiske avvik i etterkrigsfilmen», 147–148. For more about Pål Løkkeberg and his films see Johanne Servoll, «Fra Liv til Exit: En studie av Pål Løkkebergs filmforfatterskap» (Master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2008).

<sup>276</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 229. Anja Breien produced two short films that won awards, "17.mai: En film om ritualer" (1969) about the rituals of the Norwegian constitution day won an award at the Oberhausen film festival, and "Ansikter" (1970), which won a prize at the Venice festival. Furthermore, she received acclaim for her film "Voldtekt" ("Sexual Assault") at the Cannes festival in 1971.

<sup>277</sup> Holst, *Det Lille Sirkus*, 36.

critics in *Fant*,<sup>278</sup> and the rest of the group would also receive praise from the journal in the following years.<sup>279</sup> *Fant* thus positioned itself both as a promoter of modernism and film as art, taking part in initiating new film waves in Norway.

### **Legitimation in the Fight Against Censorship**

An expression of the belief in film as an art is also evident in the Norwegian debate on censorship, which mobilised not only film journals and critics, but also cultural personalities, filmmakers and the media. Already the second issue of *Fant* dedicated several articles to criticising censorship, beginning with the editorial “Film som provokasjon” (film as provocation). “It is our assertion that film is art, when it is true it is moving, and then not in a sentimental sense. We have recently experienced two serious attacks on the freedom of art; the cutting of the intercourse in Bergman’s «Tystnaden» and the absolute ban on «491»”.<sup>280</sup> With this, Kalmar argued the censorship of film should be relaxed in cases of art film. The continued censorship was a sign that the state still saw film as “cheap mass entertainment” and did not see films as works of art – you would not cut out parts of a painting, or pre-censor a piece of literature or theatre.<sup>281</sup> While the state had already implemented efforts for improving the conditions for quality film, censorship was interpreted as an inequality between film and other arts.

The debate on censorship involved a number of Scandinavian and Norwegian cultural personalities who were participating in the issue of *Fant* that was dedicated the topic. Among these were Vilgot Sjöman, the Swedish director of the film “491” which had sparked the debate, the Danish modernist writer and director Klaus Rifbjerg, Norwegian author and literature critic Johan Borgen, Elsa Brita Marcussen of *Filmdebatt* and the Norwegian Film Society, the child psychologist Per Olav Tiller, as well as Erik Pierstorff from Oslo Film Club.<sup>282</sup> Erik Pierstorff’s article emphasised the art in Sjöman’s film, while recognising that his focus on societal challenges lead to censorship because it discussed taboos such as prostitution, sexual abuse and trafficking.<sup>283</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, on the other hand, pointed out that censorship should be a

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<sup>278</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Er vi blitt et folk av engangsregissører: Samtale med Pål Løkkeberg», *Fant* No. 9–10, 30–32, 43–47.

<sup>279</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 211.

<sup>280</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Film som provokasjon», *Fant* No. 2, 5. Transl: «Det er vår påstand at film er kunst, når den er sann er bevegende, og da ikke i sentimental forstand. Vi har i den senere tid opplevd to alvorlige anslag mot kunstens frihet; klippingen av samleiet i Bergmans Tystnaden og totalforbudet mot 491.»

<sup>281</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Film som provokasjon», *Fant* No. 2, 5.

<sup>282</sup> *Fant* No. 2; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 168.

<sup>283</sup> Erik Pierstorff, «Filmen som sensuren forbød», *Fant* No. 2, 12.

matter of “cultural politics, and not an economic or juridical concern”.<sup>284</sup> Claiming that “a large part of our democratic elite simply does not know how great the film art has become”,<sup>285</sup> she thought that “maybe we best could promote the understanding of film as a factor of culture, that deserves freedom, if we could get the leaders of public opinion in Norway (authors, teachers, academia and professionals) to become familiar with the collected works of de Sica, Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman, Bunuel, Godard, Truffaut, Resnais, Munk, Wajda, Trnka, Kubrick, Looset, Richardson, Staudte, Kurosawa...”.<sup>286</sup> The central argument of the debate claimed that the politicians and leaders did not see the difference between the increased amount of entertainment films which used violence and sex as spectacle, and art film which critically investigated societal problems. This was summed up in Sylvi Kalmar’s statement: “FANT’s position towards censorship is limited to our demand of including in our laws a paragraph which exempts our censors from shearing works of art”.<sup>287</sup> The argumentation implied a clear distinction between the artworks which should not be touched by censorship, and the less valuable entertainment films which may deserve to be censored. The engagement in the debate on censorship in *Fant* among the wider film field, and even other art fields also signal an increased respect for film as an art worth preserving.

It is important to stress that *Fant* was not the only publication to take a stance against censorship. Several film critics in the large newspapers Dagbladet and Arbeiderbladet spoke against censorship, with film critics such as Arne Hestenes in the front. Others, such as Oslo Film Club’s Tore Erlandsen, claimed arguments about the potential of film as a negative effect on the minds of the audience and society in general lacked scientific proof. Many films were prohibited or censored in Norway but deemed acceptable in Sweden and Denmark. In Denmark, the fight against censorship had resulted in an abolishment of censorship of films aimed at adults.<sup>288</sup> Since Sweden and Denmark were generally regarded as reference points for Norwegians who gauged their relative position in the world largely in comparison to their Nordic neighbours, achievements in the fight against film censorship in Scandinavia both inspired reactions in Norway and could be used by Norwegian campaigners against censorship

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<sup>284</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Sten til byrden», *Fant* No. 2, 21.

<sup>285</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Sten til byrden», *Fant*, No. 2, 22. Transl: «en stor del av vår demokratiske elite simpelthen ikke vet hvor høyt filmkunsten er nådd».

<sup>286</sup> Elsa Brita Marcussen, «Sten til byrden», *Fant* No. 2, 21–22. Transl: «Kanskje vi best kunne fremme forståelsen av at filmen er en kulturfaktor, som fortjener friheten, om vi greidde å få de opinionsdannende skikt i Norge (forfattere, lærere, universitetsfolk og faglige ledere) til å stifte bekjentskap med den samlede produksjonen til de Sica, Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman, Bunuel, Godard, Truffaut, Resnais, Munk, Wajda, Trnka, Kubrick, Looset, Richardson, Staudte, Kurosawa...».

<sup>287</sup> Sylvi Kalmar, «Mer fanteri», *Fant* No. 6, 39. Transl: «FANT’s holdning til sensuren innskrenker seg til vårt krav om å få inn i vårt lovverk en paragraf som fritar våre sensorer for å klippe i kunstverk».

<sup>288</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 94–95; Dahl, Gripsrud, Iversen, et.al, *Kinoens mørke: Fjernsynets lys*, 347.

as leverage to push for their domestic judges and politicians to catch up with their seemingly more progressive neighbours. This dynamic of the inner-Nordic competition also played a major role in the development of Norwegian film funding and will be taken up in the second part of this chapter.

The censorship debate culminated in 1968 after the prohibition of *Bonnie and Clyde*, which by that point in time had already sparked controversy internationally, where opinions ranged from seeing it as violent entertainment to praising it as a piece of art. The debate was mirrored in the Norwegian case.<sup>289</sup> While censors regarded the violence as a problem and forbade screening of the film, the anti-censorship spokesmen saw it as a work of art that deserved to be shown in cinemas. Around the time the ban on *Bonnie and Clyde* was decided, a new film club was established by Bjørn Bjørnsen and Tore Erlandsen. It was called Fri Film (Free Film), and its main goal was to put the censorship-decisions to debate through showing prohibited or un-cut versions of the films to highlight the problems of censoring.<sup>290</sup>

Fri Film took the fight against censorship to new levels. Four hundred people showed up to the constituting meeting in April, and the club gained even more press attention and new members because the police was sent to stop the first scheduled show.<sup>291</sup> Sylvi Kalmar was also engaged in the club, in the company of about 1000 other film enthusiasts. In the late summer of 1968, Fri Film went as far as deciding to take the state and the department of justice, which regulated censorship, to court in order to combat their decisions. More specifically, they wanted to protest pre-censorship, for the state to allow “svartsladd” (censor bars), and to contest the censoring of specific films.<sup>292</sup> However, the lawsuit was postponed when it became known that the state was planning to assess a revision of the censorship law in early 1969. The revision brought, in the eyes of many film enthusiasts, relatively minor changes. A new PG rating category of 18 was allowed for particularly artistically valuable films, and the board of censors was extended to include more film experts.<sup>293</sup> Thus in September of 1969, the lawsuit continued. The process was slow, with many rounds in the court, and after several years with economic trouble, as well as the rise of politicized film that created internal polarization in the film club. In 1975 the lawsuit was abandoned, and Fri Film was discontinued two months

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<sup>289</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 95–99.

<sup>290</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 99.

<sup>291</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 99.

<sup>292</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 99; Nilsen, «En fri film: Filmsensur i møte med ytringsfrihet, politikk og samfunnsmoral», *Arr Idéhistorisk tidsskrift*, No. 3–4 (2014), 159–160. The films were Stefan Jarl’s documentary *Dom kallar oss mods* (They Call Us Misfits), *Jag er nyfiken – Gul* (I Am Curious – Yellow) by Vilgot Sjöman and *Vredens Dag* (The Day of Wrath) by Dreyer.

<sup>293</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 101, 103; Nilsen, «En fri film», 159–160.



later.<sup>294</sup> Fri Film never reached its declared aim; the complete abolishment of censorship of films (for adults) was still years in the future. However, for the present study of film's transformation from entertainment to art, the debate is still of relevance, since it brought the new perception of cinematography to the forefront. It shows how the fight against censorship mobilized support for the view that certain films had so much artistic value that their content could not be judged against the norms of decency.

### **State Regulations and Municipal Efforts: Acceptance of film as an art**

It was not only in *Fant* that a different orientation towards cinema came to the foreground. The earlier chapters of this thesis have argued that there was a gradual process in which the state came to accept cinema as a cultural value and an artistic medium. The 1964 subsidies system, and the way the arguments for supporting film were constructed were evidence of increased legitimacy of film, as opposed to the 1950 and 1955 systems where the main arguments were in terms of economy. The trend continued and accelerated in the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s.

The first signs of a shift in political perceptions, however, came from the municipalities rather than the state. The decrease in the profitability of cinema as a result of fewer ticket sales made it harder for municipal governments to use the cinema as a way to fuel their budgets. The municipal cinema's, through their organisation *Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund*, proposed to alleviate the luxury tax on cinema. Inspired by the Danish and Swedish systems, they sought to replace the luxury tax with a system where a percentage of their earnings went into a fund for production of film instead.<sup>295</sup> In 1963 Sweden reformed their taxation of film, and Denmark followed in 1964. KKL argued that the quality of Swedish film had increased dramatically after the reforms, and that the Danish reform had given more room for artistic films.<sup>296</sup> The proposal from KKL did not go through, but the luxury tax on film was abandoned in 1969. The arguments from the committee that prepared the case were centered both around the economic conditions of the municipalities and the quality of films.

“The committee believes that the economic condition for the municipal cinemas is such that the real fee to the state (...) should be relinquished. The committee expects that the improvement of the economy this will result in, will enable the municipal cinemas to exhibit quality films in a greater extent than earlier and to participate actively in strengthening the foundations for Norwegian film production and film-cultural activities”.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Higræff, *Sensurert*, 107, 110–111; Nilsen, «En fri film», 160.

<sup>295</sup> Solum and Asbjørnsen, «Den norske kinomodellen», 22; Holst, «Norsk filmpolitikk», 156.

<sup>296</sup> Stortingstidende, «Avgift på inngangspenger og avg. på honorarer til utenl. kunstnere m.m.», Stortingsforhandlinger 7.B (1967/68), (Oslo: Centraltrykkeriet, 1968), 1827.

<sup>297</sup> Stortingstidende, «Kap. 2563: Avgift på inngangspenger og på honorar til utenlandske kunstnere m.v.», stortingsforhandlinger 6.A (1968/69), (Oslo: O. Fredr. Arnesen Bok- og Akcidenstrykkeri, 1969), 22. Transl: «Komitéen er av den oppfatning at den økonomiske situasjonen for de kommunale kinoer nå er blitt slik at den

This shows that the economic arguments were no longer at the forefront, but seen in the context of culture. Arguments for economic relief for cinemas were constructed as a cultural measure, focused on the quality outcome. Compared to the 1950 and 1955 systems, in which the arguments for support were stated in economic terms, there is a striking change in the framing of the arguments. The reduced profitability lead to a shift in the perception of film, because the arguments for film had to be reoriented towards the cultural aspects, since both the film production and the cinema were no longer commercially viable.<sup>298</sup> This argument is in line with Baumann's claim that the role of film had to be reconceived in the 1960s because of the competition from television and other leisure-time activities. The proposition shows that the way the arguments were framed had shifted, thus strengthening a theory of a change in the discourse. Abandoning the luxury tax was also a departure from the idea of balance between what the state conceded to film and what it earned on it, because the taxations no longer equalled the subsidies.

In a letter to the parliament, KKL further asked for exemptions for sale and renting of film from the new VAT implementations for 1969.<sup>299</sup> In it, they commented on the luxury tax abandonment, writing that it was evident that the abandonment of the luxury tax on film was a measure to "improve the economy of cinemas and to enable cinemas to actively participate in film-cultural activities".<sup>300</sup> They continue that the new VAT implementation will put cinemas in the same position as under the luxury tax, and this will leave less of their budgets for "film-cultural purposes", making their establishment of a fund for cinema and film harder, if not impossible.<sup>301</sup> Since books, magazines and journals were exempt from the new rules, KKL argued that the same should be the rule for cinema. Furthermore, Sweden excluded film from VAT, so Norway should do the same.<sup>302</sup> In another letter to the parliament, sent less than a month later, they wrote that "It would be a great loss for film to be inflicted upon a fee on the film rent which will stop KKL's and the municipal government's efforts to increase the

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reelle avgiften til staten (...) bør falle bort. Komiteén forutsetter at den bedring i økonomien som dette vil føre til, vil sette de kommunale kinematografene i stand til å vise kvalitetsfilmer i større utstrekning enn tidligere og til å delta aktivt i en styrking av grunnlaget for norsk filmproduksjon og filmkulturell virksomhet».

<sup>298</sup> Hanche, Iversen and Aas, *Bedre enn sitt rykte*, 66.

<sup>299</sup> The exhibition of film was exempt from this already, so the letter was only concerned with sales of films and filmrent. *Film & Kino* Vol. 37, No. 1–11 (1969), 127.

<sup>300</sup> Innstillinger og beslutninger til stortinget, «Uttalelser til finanskomiteen: 56 Fra Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund 28.03.69», Stortingsforhandlinger 6.B (1968/69), (Oslo: Aas & Wahls boktrykkeri, 1969), 78.

Transl: «for å bedre kinoenes økonomi og for å sette kinoene istand til å delta mer aktivt i filmkulturell virksomhet».

<sup>301</sup> Innstillinger og beslutninger til stortinget, «Uttalelser til finanskomiteen: 56 Fra Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund 28.03.69», Stortingsforhandlinger 6.B (1968/69), 78.

<sup>302</sup> Innstillinger og beslutninger til stortinget, «Uttalelser til finanskomiteen: 56 Fra Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund 28.03.69», Stortingsforhandlinger 6.B (1968/69), 78.

standards in this most influential mass medium”.<sup>303</sup> The exempt from VAT was passed in June 1969,<sup>304</sup> and celebrated in KKL’s film magazine *Film & Kino* where they honoured “both the Department of Finances and the Parliament for the positive attitude to the tasks and responsibilities of the cinemas”.<sup>305</sup> KKL thereafter established a Norsk Kino- og Filmfond (Norwegian Cinema- and Film Fund) in 1970, to which large and medium-sized cinemas were to concede 2.6 percent of their profits. While the fund was mainly aimed at cinema purposes, it also dedicated some of its funds to supporting film, for example concessions to Norsk Film A/S.<sup>306</sup>

In 1973, the Cinema and Film Fund was used to fund the first Norwegian film festival, the “Drøbak film festival”. On the initiative of Kåre J. Grøtta, Bjørn Bjørnsen and Øystein Øysto, the planning and preparations for the festival was started.<sup>307</sup> On the opening day, the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, Bjørn Bjørnsen could proudly declare: “Our main guest is a humble little French director called Francois [Truffaut]!”.<sup>308</sup> The festival was a large success, and would become a yearly Norwegian film festival that in its first decade was held in a new city each year, and later settled in Haugesund as the “Haugesund film festival”.

Another matter that signalled state legitimisation of film was the implementation of state support for imports of “quality film”, also in 1969. Its aims were to provide subsidies for importing 8–10 films of “great artistic and filmatic value”.<sup>309</sup> The import subsidies were meant to incentivise the film distributors to buy more foreign art films which were aimed at the art audience. A few years later, in 1971, KKL also decided to use the Cinema and Film Fund to support the releases of artistic films. While this was not a guarantee that art films would be shown more often at the cinemas,<sup>310</sup> it nonetheless signalled a will to invest in art film, and that both the state and the municipalities regarded it as an important task to support.

In the debate about tax changes, campaigners for tax reductions pointed to Sweden and Danmark to lend their demands authority, showing clear signs that Norwegian film policy developed in view to what happened in other Nordic countries. These inner-Nordic references

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<sup>303</sup> Innstillinger og beslutninger til stortinget, «Uttalelser til finanskomiteen: 79 Fra Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund 18.04.69», Stortingsforhandlinger 6.B (1968/69), (Oslo: Aas & Wahls boktrykkeri, 1969), 123.

<sup>304</sup> Norsk Lovtidend 1. afdeling 1969, «Lov om merverdiavgift §5». (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1969), 783.

<sup>305</sup> *Film & Kino* Vol. 37, No. 1–11 (1969), 127. Transl: «både Finansdepartementet og Storting for den positive holdning til kinoenes oppgaver og ansvar».

<sup>306</sup> *Film & Kino*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (July 1970): 116–117; Nymo, *Under forvandlingens lov*, 88–89.

<sup>307</sup> Sigurd Moe Hetland, *Fra Drøbak til Haugesund: Den norske filmfestivalen 20 år*, (Oslo: Den Norske filmfestivalen, 1992), 6, 8.

<sup>308</sup> *Arbeiderbladet* 17.09.1973, 1. The original paper writes Trussaut, but this is a mistake, as it was Francois Truffaut who was the main guest, there to witness the Norwegian premier of his film “La Nuit américaine”.

<sup>309</sup> With, «Kvalitetsfilm og Norsk kinopolitikk», 95.

<sup>310</sup> With, «Kvalitetsfilm og Norsk kinopolitikk», 95–96.

became particularly apparent when looking at the establishment of the Norsk Filmråd (Norwegian Film Council) which was a major step in the state's acknowledgement of film as art.<sup>311</sup> Founded in May 1969, the council was composed of seven standing members as well as seven deputy members. Among the standing members were the attorney Vera Holmøy, magistrate Leif Fjeld, and Odd Grann, which were appointed by the Department of Church and Education, as well as four representatives for the film organisations; Gunnar Germeten for KKL, Øyvind Vennerød for the Association of Film Producers, Jan Erik Düring for the Norwegian Film Association and Stein Sælen for the film producers.<sup>312</sup> Among the deputies were both Sylvi Kalmar and Carsten E. Munch. The composition of the Film Council testifies that organised film interests had gained a greater standing since the "Revolt of the 44". It now made up the majority of the members in a council that was intended to be advisors for the state in matters of film. Declaring that the council was to "promote great film art" and "work towards strengthening and promoting Norwegian film, both domestically and internationally", the council's preamble shows commitment to film as art and a concern with the international standing of Norwegian film.<sup>313</sup>

The aim of promoting film art was evident in its first proposal for changes in the subsidies system, where significant importance was laid on art film and quality measures. According to the council, "a main goal of a revision of the subsidies system is that the economic risk for the artistically ambitious film is reduced".<sup>314</sup> While it was still a goal to increase the overall production to "counterbalance" the influence from foreign languages on the Norwegian audience,<sup>315</sup> the main focus for the proposal was to improve conditions for creating art films. The council wished to keep the existing system but make further additions to it that would benefit the artistically ambitious film, through measures such as state guarantees against losses for artistic film, incentives for continuous productions for producers that had made particularly "valuable" films, special awards for artistic films, and establishment of independent

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<sup>311</sup> Not to be confused with the State Film Council of 1947 which was aimed at giving advice to the state in matters of film policy.

<sup>312</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», (Sarpsborg: Frank Vardings trykkeri, 1971), 5.

<sup>313</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 5.

<sup>314</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 13. Transl: «et hovedformål ved en revisjon av stønadsordningen at den økonomiske risiko ved den kunstnerisk ærgjerrige film reduseres».

<sup>315</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 12.

production groups.<sup>316</sup> These production groups would receive yearly subsidies from the state independent of the regular subsidies system, and would thus be able to work without pre-assessments. They were defined as “centres which active film people can turn to with their ideas and plans, get them evaluated on a professional foundation and possibly realised”.<sup>317</sup> The groups would function as a place where individual filmmakers could gain temporary positions tied to their projects. This would minimise the risks connected to artistic productions. Film projects were relieved from making profit when they were fully state financed through the group.<sup>318</sup>

The measure of state guarantees against losses for artistically ambitious films was also intended to minimise the financial risks of producing films that were unlikely to attract a big enough audience to cover production-costs even with the regular state subsidies. Respective projects could receive 50 percent, 75 percent or 100 percent guarantees against losses, depending on the “artistic and cinematographic quality”.<sup>319</sup> The guarantees were seen as highly important among the members of the council, thus revealing a strong tendency for not only seeing film as art, but to emphasise film art above other films.<sup>320</sup>

The production groups were instated, but it would take a few years until they would be up and running in 1978. A similar system to the production groups was also launched for Norsk Film A/S in 1973, enabling production teams at Norsk Film A/S to start projects without pre-assessment.<sup>321</sup> The same year, the state had also increased its stakes in Norsk Film to owning two-thirds of the company, and refinanced the company’s loans in order to give it an economic boost.<sup>322</sup> These developments show that the interest in film as a cultural expression and a form of art had changed since 1945. Whereas the economic arguments for supporting film had weighed heavily in the proposals for 1948, 1950 and 1955, the proposals from 1964 and 1969 show a clear tendency towards supporting artistic films. Some of this might be explained by the increased inclusion of filmmakers and critics in state committees and councils. However, this

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<sup>316</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 14–15.

<sup>317</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 16.

<sup>318</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 16.

<sup>319</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 14.

<sup>320</sup> Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Innstilling om ny stønadsordning for spillefilmproduksjon avgitt av Norsk Filmråd», 1971, 14, 22.

<sup>321</sup> Holst, *Det lille sirkus*, 32.

<sup>322</sup> Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, «Om organisering og finansiering av kulturarbeid» St.mld. nr. 8: (1973/74), (Oslo: Kyrkje- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1973), 25.

thesis has attempted to show the multi-faceted field of film in Norway, and how contributions to the discourse came from critics, filmmakers and institutions. While the state did not endorse completely the auteurist notion of film as art, it is evident that it had come to the belief that film could, and should, be art. The references to international systems, and particularly the Nordic neighbours, suggest that the state had now also come to see film as a way to gain international prestige. Similarly to *Fant*, they had perhaps seen the *Nordic auteurs* rise to fame, and sought a similar development in Norway.

Servoll found that the idea of the auteur had taken root in the official discourse in the second half of the 1960s – it was “evidently universally accepted to the degree that it lacked polemical sting”.<sup>323</sup> She concluded her chapter on auteurs in the 1960s with an arguing that *Fant*’s provocations were deflected by the state acceptance of film as an art. While she has interpreted the legitimisation of film in state circles as a sign that the generational revolt and *Fant*’s attempts at rebellion failed,<sup>324</sup> the implementation of the auteur discourse in the Norwegian film field had succeeded in consolidating the idea film as art, and there were even outright state efforts to help Norwegian filmmakers to produce art .

In the following years, the art discourse in *Fant* turned to a political discourse on how the art form should be used. With the transnational upheavals of 1968, many of the prestigious international film journals took a turn towards the left. In the years after 1968, the *Fant* too would become highly politicised, and its orientation shifted from focusing on promoting film as an art form and discussing the political measures for film, to discussing film as a form of political argument and the implicit ideological foundations of films.<sup>325</sup> While the politization was largely kept within the frames of film, it was also a debate on how film could be used as a tool to tackle societal and political issues. The parallels to the politization of Cahiers were clear. An important question in relation to this strong politization is whether *Fant* lost sight of the promotion of film as art in the process. While it still featured directors and mentioned film as art, the articles seem to suggest that film as politics became more important than the politics of film.<sup>326</sup> An interpretation of this is that the notion of film as art had become established, and thus to keep its radical position in the field, *Fant* post-1968 had to promote the politization of film instead. Or in other words, the discussions shifted from whether film was an art, to how

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<sup>323</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 192.

<sup>324</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 192.

<sup>325</sup> Iversen, «Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge: Del 2»; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 205–211.

<sup>326</sup> Iversen, «Kritikerne som ville revolusjonere film-Norge: Del 2»; Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 209.

the art should be used. Accompanying the politization of the film discourse the filmmakers also turned to outright political film, evidenced for example by the film *Streik!* (1975) by Oddvar Bull Tuhus, which details a worker's strike in Sauda in 1970.<sup>327</sup> Filmmakers began to identify as workers over artists, and over the course of the 1970s the film critics lost interest in the Norwegian films again, ending the decade with the so-called "Septembermordet" (The September murder) in 1980, where the critics in unison claimed Norwegian film had completely lost its audience.<sup>328</sup> Debates about the quality and artistic merit of film would continue on, but the precedent that film is an art form had consolidated.

## Summary

The societal changes in the 1960s were also reflected within the critical discourse. The critic's, whom in the fifties had been concerned with increasing the status of film and the general knowledge and education in film, with the role of the critic as an educator, were replaced by a new generation of critics that were more radical. The new generation of critics opposed the same elites as the film workers, pushing for less influence of economic concerns on the production of film. The most prevalent expression of this shifting trend was the establishment of the film journal *Fant*.

Building on inspiration from the auteur theory found in French *Cahiers du Cinema*, *Fant* promoted film as an art form exercised by the artist director, who with his personal style used film as an artistic expression. As mentioned in the chapter 2, the belief in the filmmaker as an artist had already begun to surface among those in the field and cumulated in the "Revolt of the 44". *Fant* continued the debate from the revolt and consolidated the debates of film as art through the use of auteurism. They promoted the styles of international auteurs in an attempt to prepare the ground for a "Norwegian new wave". The debate against censorship mobilized both critics, culture personalities and the media in a belief that film was an art that deserved to be protected against "violations" from the state. While the fight against censorship did not succeed, it showed that the belief in film as art had taken root.

The state did not abolish censorship, but it did implement a new PG rating of 18, so that artistic films which were deemed inappropriate still had the opportunity of being shown at the cinema. The municipalities had also begun pushing for art film through the establishment of a

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<sup>327</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 237; Kathrine Skretting, «Streik: Norsk film og radikaliseringsen på 70-tallet», in *Nærbilder: Artikler om norsk filmhistorie*, edited by Gunnar Iversen and Ove Solum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), 154.

<sup>328</sup> Servoll, *Den norske auteuren*, 201, 237, 245; Iversen, *Norsk filmhistorie*, 250–253.

fund that partly went to Norsk Film A/S and was also used to establish the first Norwegian film festival in 1973. The true acceptance of film as art however, came in the appointment of the Film Council. Firstly, the Film Council followed the precedent set by the “Revolt of the 44” as the majority of the councilmembers represented the film field itself. Secondly, the Film Council proposed an addition to the 1964 subsidies system, which was oriented towards securing the conditions for art film production. In 1969, the luxury tax that had been regarded as state devaluation of film was abandoned. The Norwegian state had also come to recognise, partly through international comparisons, that film in Norway was an art.



## Conclusion

Focusing on Norway, this thesis has analysed the development of film into art as a collaborative process shaped by the efforts of individual agents and the transnational repertoires they drew upon. In this way, it has traced the creation of an art field. The story this thesis has told begins with the state committing to a more active support of film following the Second World War. Though this policy was largely based on economic considerations, it played an important part in the transformation of film into art because it established a cultural policy that film critics and producers would subsequently take as a frame of reference. In a next step, members of the Norwegian Film Society gave voice to a discourse of film as valuable culture in *Filmdebatt*. The position formulated in that journal claimed that educating the audience on ‘good’ films would both serve to strengthen “moral” values in the population, and lead to popular support for the most valuable films. This discourse was founded on principles formulated from international film theorists, who had proposed film as part of a project to enlighten the people. It resonated with the domestic cultural policy in general and provided a backdrop against which the idea of film as an art form was promoted.

Meanwhile, cultural policymakers struggled to formulate a consistent position in regards to film. While in principle the financial support of the domestic film industry was seen as highly important, both for economic reasons and a somewhat vague belief in films ‘cultural value’, policymakers in the 1950s were reluctant to subsidise film more than what the state earned in taxes from the luxury tax. Regardless, partly through the efforts of the Film Society and film consultant Bo Wingård, the state agreed to support the establishment of a Norwegian Film Institute. The NFI preserved film and thereby gave it value that was not monetary. It would also be instrumental in the formation of a more artistically minded audience through its promotion of the film club movement at the turn of the 1960s.

Film makers also contributed to the consolidation of film as an art field. They did this partly through establishing their own interest organisations. Particularly important among these was the Norwegian Film Association, which helped filmmakers to assert their interests with more weight against their employers and the state. Another element filmmakers added to making film into art – and which this thesis has shown by the example of director Arne Skouen – was their growing perception that their work was not only a craft, but an art. Skouen based this self-understanding from his background as an established writer and his ideas of what constituted a Norwegian artist. Filmmakers’ belief that they were indeed artists as well as their strength in numbers culminated in 1964 in the “Revolt of the 44”, that saw filmmakers rebel

against the partly state-owned production company Norsk Film A/S. The revolt escalated what was initially a dispute about personnel into a bigger conflict about the state's and Norsk Film's attitude to film as an art form. The discussions about the relationship between art and commerce which the revolt sparked received ample press coverage, which in turn put the case of film as art on the public agenda.

The promotion of film as art was also affected by changes in the media and leisure ecology. As television and cars drained viewers and resources away from cinemas, film production became less lucrative, thus making obsolete some of the economic incentives for subsidising a Norwegian film industry as a purveyor of mass entertainment. Television's rise to a household "must" also forced the cinema to redefine its role in society. As it was no longer the number-one choice of family entertainment, film could address new audiences with more specific interests.

Building on the debates sparked by the "Revolt of the 44", the film journal FANT was established in 1965. It aimed at being a medium for film as an art form and continue what the revolt had started. FANT drew inspiration from the French *Cahiers du Cinema* and its belief in auteurism, promoting film as a form of artistic expression for the director. This intellectualisation of the film debate further contributed to the consolidation of an art field for film.

The efforts of FANT to promote film as art and the belief in film as an art form had also led to a greater acceptance of film as art on the state level. The luxury tax that had long been seen as a devaluation of film was abandoned in 1969, and a system of state subsidies for the import of 'quality' film was instated. The proposals for a reorganisation of state subsidies for film strongly favoured art film, with measures such as independent production groups and incentives for production which would relieve economic considerations for producers aiming at creating films that were unlikely to entertain bigger audiences.

The thesis has been situated within three fields of research: Norwegian film history, transnational film studies, and the sociological research on art world development. To the Norwegian film history, it has contributed an understanding of how the national cinema in Norway was positioned within an international context. It has also contributed a narrative that explores the evolution of film into art, a process which has been often mentioned in bypassing, but not been critically investigated. To the topic of transnational film, which has often been dominated by globalisation and diasporic cinema studies, this thesis contributes to the understanding of how art discourse travel and are transferred to a national context. Lastly, the contribution to the understanding of art world formation has been a narrative that follows the

process of creating an art world focusing on individual agents in the case of a small nation. This is important because the “small nation” context has provided a story in which the state as a legitimator has a large role.

The development of film from ‘mere’ industry and entertainment fare into a form of art has, as shown by this thesis, been a complex, multi-faceted process that involved many agents and led to far-ranging consequences. This thesis has been an attempt at tracing how the many interrelated forces in the field contributed to establishing film as an art form. While trying to get the breadth of actors into focus, this thesis has been more limited in its temporal scope. Choosing 1945 as a point of departure, it has left out significant developments for the status of film such as the realisation of film’s potential as propaganda or the impacts of the transition to sound film. Earlier discussions of film as art that date back as far as the advent of film have not featured in this thesis either. As it decided to concentrate on the 1950s and 1960s as the two pivotal decades in the transformation of film from entertainment into art, the thesis has also left out subsequent discussions on the quality and status of film as art which continued after the period covered in this thesis, both internationally and in Norway. Scholarly attention has been dedicated to the so-called “Septembermordet”, and arguments on the “low quality” of Norwegian films have resurfaced again and again. Master’s theses have been written on the discourses of film quality and art in the years after 1969.<sup>329</sup>

However, the fact that the debate about the artistic status of film did not end in 1969 should not weaken the arguments developed in this thesis. On the contrary, it may illustrate the point that the struggle for position in art field, no matter how mature they are, is never finite; new events open opportunities for position-taking, new agents keep redefining the field. The thesis has tried to cast light on these processes and add to the established narrative of Norwegian film history a transnational art world dimension by using new theoretical lenses, and exploring how Norwegian events and agents were situated in an international film discourse.

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<sup>329</sup> With, «Kvalitetsfilm og norsk kinopolitikk»; Randi Østvold, «Tidsskriftet Filmavisa 1977 – 1981».

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