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Abstracts

Special Issue: Educational Films

The German Colonies in the Educational Film *Die Weltgeschichte als Kolonialgeschichte* (1926): An Exemplar of the Use of Film Techniques in Colonial Revisionism

Michael Annegarn-Gläß

Academic history has begun only relatively recently to study film as a historical source, and has thus far focused principally on the value of feature films in this regard, largely excluding non-fictional film from work in this area despite the fact that educational films, as the example discussed here demonstrates, have been used as early as the interwar period for propaganda purposes. This essay examines the extent to which educational films of the period employed a range of techniques to reach their viewers and encourage them to take the film's argumentation on board. Categorising these techniques as either narrative strategies or visual effects, we contextualise their use by taking the film *Die Weltgeschichte als Kolonialgeschichte* (World History as Colonial History, 1926) as an example.

Indoctrination or Innovation? Educational Films as a New Medium of Learning under National Socialism

Verena Niethammer

From 1934 onwards, black and white silent films were produced in the Third Reich by an official institution, the Reich Office for Educational Film (Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm, RfdU) and its successor the Reich Institute for Films in Science and Education (Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, RWU), as a teaching medium for use in elementary and secondary schools. Accompanied by a discussion about film as a pedagogical tool, this film genre soon developed specific and innovative narrative methods and techniques of representation. Having been made between 1934 and 1944, RWU films are generally still assumed to have been made primarily in order to indoctrinate pupils. By examining selected educational films in the context of film production at that time, this article argues that these examples of filmic educational media require closer scrutiny, for they do not display obvious ideological traces on a first viewing. However, film analysis enables us to identify recurring topics and visual stereotypes which were meant to influence the attitudes of target groups.

Eulalia Guzmán and Walt Disney's Educational Films. A Pedagogical Proposal for *Literacy for the Americas in Mexico* (1942-1944)

María Rosa Gudiño Cejudo

Literacy for the Americas was an audiovisual educational programme implemented in Mexico and other Latin American countries in the early 1940s by the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA). Walt Disney Studios made four short films that were designed to teach illiterate Latin Americans how to read and write. In Mexico, this project was initially backed by the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) under Jaime Torres Bodet, who appointed Eulalia Guzmán to be the SEP's representative and thus to support the programme. Walt Disney asked her to work out a pedagogical proposal for the educational films. This article analyses the proposal, the development and production of these shorts, and their reception in Mexico. It foregrounds Guzmán's criticisms of these educational materials, which led the OIAA representatives to withdraw them from circulation.

***Meglio di ieri.* Educational Films, National Identity and Citizenship in Italy from 1948 to 1968**

Anne Bruch

This article examines a series of educational films and documentaries produced between 1948 and 1968 that document the activities of the Italian state. These films, which record the dedicated and arduous work of the Italian government and administration, had two functions. First, they informed students and the general public about the structures, democratic institutions and aims of the new republic and promoted a fresh and convincing vision of national identity. They also served to obscure and rewrite the Italian collective memory of Fascism and of Italian involvement in the Second World War. These films thus reveal the fine line between public information, political propaganda and civic education.

The Use of RAF Feature Films in History Lessons

Sophia Gerber

Originally a part of the early student protest movement of West Germany, a small group of radical left-wing exponents (established by Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Horst Mahler, and Ulrike Meinhof) established the 'Red Army Faction' (*Rote Armee Fraktion*, RAF) in 1970. From the early 1970s until 1998 this militant group committed numerous terrorist acts, especially in late 1977, which led to a national crisis that became known as the 'German autumn'. Over a period of almost thirty years, it was held responsible for thirty-four deaths, including many secondary targets including chauffeurs and bodyguards, and many injuries. Although the RAF triggered considerable political conflict and developed links abroad, the left-wing terrorism of the RAF is commonly dealt with in history classes. This article investigates ways in which this subject may be taught with films in light of the fact that film directors were meticulous observers of political events from the early 1970s onwards.