Siting Futurity
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“Safety is an illusion […] What’s the point of prolonging a life you don’t enjoy when you can create a life that you love.”
— Sammon (2019)

“Cinema by all means has to be dangerous!”

The scenario has in the meantime become well known: a pair of young anti-capitalist activists spend their nights “educating” the wealthy by breaking into their houses, moving their furniture around, and leaving behind messages that say “die fetten Jahre sind vorbei” [“the days of plenty are over”] — the film’s German title, or “Sie haben zu viel Geld” [“you have too much money”] and are signed by “die Erziehungsberechtigten” [“the guardians”]. When one becomes involved with the other’s girlfriend, the new pair undertakes an educative action that goes off the rails: the villa owner comes back unexpectedly, and “the Edukators” (the translated title under which the film gained international recognition) find themselves involved in a kidnapping of
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a former ’68er turned corporate shill, who puts their revolutionary principles to a test. Released in the year the EU enlarged by ten countries, most from behind what had been the Iron Curtain, Hans Weingartner’s smash hit was celebrated as a welcome repoliticization of German filmmaking for a new generation and part of a larger turn in German cinema towards social and political issues. Sabine Hake spoke of “an emerging cinema of dissent” in the “new Germany” that found itself in a “unified Europe” (Hake 2008, 192; italics added) and listed Weingartner among several socially conscious directors — some of them trained or born in the GDR — [who] have enlisted the social and cultural topographies of post-unification Berlin in diagnosing the failures of reunification [... and the] affinities between established subcultures and the new urban underclass. (Hake 2008, 220)

For his part Eric Rentschler, who included Weingartner in a group with Angela Schanelec, Almut Getto Moore, Benjamin Quabeck, Hans Christian Schmidt, Andreas Kleinert, Andreas Dresen, Oskar Roehler, Fatih Akin, and Tom Tykwer, was also very positive about German cinema’s prospects in the new millennium, writing that: “Contemporary German films, at long last, once again manifest an ability to take risks, to dare to be spontaneous and tentative. By illuminating obscured spaces and respecting marginal perspectives, they seek to expand our regard both for what is real and what might be possible” (Rentschler 2002, 5; italics added). It is difficult to capture Weingartner’s goals as a filmmaker more precisely. Yet whenever scholars compare his work to others, they invariably end up noting that he “sets himself apart not only from other contemporary Ger-

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1 This trend has received attention in a number of survey works, such as Cooke (2012) and the second edition of Hake (2008), and edited collections: Fisher and Prager (2010), Cooke and Homewood (2011), Mueller and Skidmore (2012), and Nagib and Jerslev (2013).
man filmmakers but also from his generation of fellow Germans in general” (Cook 2010, 310; italics added) and that his early hit “represents something of a departure from some of the other related films” and has “a somewhat different attitude to its critical reckoning with German society” (Palfreyman 2011, 172; italics added) as it “suggests that resistance might be possible in the real world rather than only within the framework of the kind of countercultural discourses cinema can construct” (Leal 2012, 129).

By this point in the book, not to mention the italics in the previous paragraph, astute readers will suspect, if they don’t already know, that Weingartner is not German. Indeed, he is from Feldkirch in the westernmost part of Vorarlberg on the border to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Yet typically this fact is relegated to the category of “I know but all the same,” as in Roger Cook’s comment that “Although Austrian by birth, the director Hans Weingartner belongs to this genus of recent German filmmakers” that have shifted towards the mainstream of representational narrative cinema as it has been propagated globally by the Hollywood film industry (Cook 2010, 310). In paying attention to Weingartner’s political sensitivity to location, this chapter situates him among those who have absorbed the spatial lessons Vienna’s fraught cultural historical landscape makes available, something that could well have happened during his time studying at the University of Vienna.² I am not contesting the fact that The Edukators “engages with the history of the Federal Republic, and indeed with German film history” (Palfreyman 2011, 171). Rather, I seek to locate the coordinates of

² According to Roger Cook, “After studying physics and computer science and conducting brain research at the University of Vienna, he studied film and television at the Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln (1997–2001)” (Cook 2010, 310). Weingartner himself described what he studied in Vienna as “Neuwissenschaften” [neurological studies] (Weingartner 2012). He also earned a diploma as a camera assistant from the Austrian Association of Cinematography. No doubt his time living in a squat in Berlin in the 1990s also had something to do with his politicization, especially in conjunction with his studies in a Vienna in which Jörg Haider’s presence was starting to make itself felt (see Fiddler 2018).
Weingartner’s political critique, which is, indeed, very much in the spirit of Guy Debord’s society of the spectacle, as Palfreyman establishes in connection with generational conflict and Cooke and Stone do in connection with American hobos, slackers à la Linklater, and idiots à la von Trier. His chapter probes how Weingartner makes use of locations to mix and reversion genres in his work, particularly that most German of genres, the mountain film, a favoured form under the Nazis made famous in the 1930s by the likes of Leni Riefenstahl and Arnold Fanck, when the nation’s spectacular countryside provided a dramatic backdrop to their melodramatic stories of rural folk negotiating a new sense of belonging in the face of modernity. (Cooke and Stone 2013, 96)

Its goal is to establish how attention to the specificity of location has contributed to whatever optimism Weingartner’s oeuvre has been able to maintain.

Between Capitalism and Schizophrenia: The Problematic Place of Collectivities

“Jedes Herz ist eine revolutionäre Zelle” [“Every heart is a revolutionary cell”]

— The Edukators (2004)

“live your life as if dread has not changed you.”

— Hummel

Not only an influential, two-volume tome by French theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, capitalism and schizophrenia mark the poles between which the five feature films Weingart-
ner has made to date have shuttled.\(^3\) His successful 2001 debut, *Das weiße Rauschen* [*The White Sound*, lit. *White Noise*], starred Daniel Brühl as a young man diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, who struggles to deal with his condition. It was followed by the 2004 *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* [*The Edukators*], which, as noted above, tackled the problem three young people, played by Daniel Brühl, Julia Jentsch, and Stipe Erceg, face in finding effective ways to challenge contemporary capitalism in light of the failures of the ’68 generation, represented by Burghard Klaußner. Based on its success, Weingartner raised the level and specificity of critique in his next film, the 2007 *Free Rainer — Dein Fernseher lügt* [*Reclaim Your Brain*, lit. *Free Rainer, Your Television Lies*], in which another star of the German screen, Moritz Bleibtreu of *Lola rennt* [*Run Lola Run, 1998, dir. Tom Tykwer*] fame, plays a fast-living TV station-manager who, after a Fatih Akin-like car accident, realizes the error of his ways and assembles a motley gang to hack television ratings and, in manipulating them, improve the level of television programming. However, the film did not resonate with audiences the way his previous films had, revealing the indifference of audiences, and especially the youthful ones who had propelled *The

\(^3\) He has also made a number of shorts, most notably an episode in *Deutschland 09* (2009), a collection of 13 shorts on the state of the nation by leading German filmmakers initiated by Tom Tykwer. “Gefährder” [“Potential Threat”] was based on the hair-raising story of the 2007 arrest and jailing of Andrej Holm, a sociologist who was accused of conspiring with “terrorists” to firebomb a German military base, kept in solitary confinement for a month and then under surveillance until his case was formally dismissed in 2010 due to lack of evidence. The episode presents Germany as a police state and ends with three admonishing screens that inform audiences that: “Andrej Holm, auf dessen Geschichte dieser Film basiert, wurde noch ein Jahr nach seiner Freilassung überwacht. / Die ‘Antiterrordatenbank’ enthält mittlerweile 334 Datenbanken von Polizei und Geheimdiensten. Darin sind 112 Millionen Datensätze gespeichert. / Sie können davon ausgehen, dass auch Ihre Daten darin gespeichert sind” [“Andrej Holm, whose story this film is based on, was surveilled for a year after his release. / The ’Antiterror database’ already contains 334 police and secret service databases containing 112 million pieces of data. / You should presume that your data too are stored there”].
Edukators to international renown, to what figured imaginatively, if not in reality, as an outdated medium.⁴ For his next film, the 2011 Die Summe meiner einzelnen Teile [Hut in the Woods, lit. The Sum of My Individual Parts], Weingartner returned to the realm of psychiatry in depicting the plight of a man with hallucinations, played by a little-known actor from the former GDR, Peter Schneider, who is released from a psychiatric clinic, makes a home for himself in the forest and befriends a young Russian boy there before again being institutionalized. His latest film, the 2018 303, is a romantic road movie that takes its inspiration from Linklater’s Before Sunrise (on which Weingartner had worked as a production assistant and in which he had a cameo appearance) and has its picture-perfect blonde leads (played by Mala Emde and Anton Spieker) engage in intricate, well-informed debate on issues such as the “Vereinzelungsstrategie des Kapitalismus” [“capitalism’s strategy of individualizing”] and free love (Taylor 2018).⁵

⁴ Sabine Hake offers a good overview of the realities of German film financing in the “film-making in the new Germany and a unified Europe” section of the second edition of German National Cinema, in which she explicitly mentions the growing influence of television channels: “In addition to the public television channels such as WDR [Westdeutscher Rundfunk], MDR [Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk], and NDR [Norddeutscher Rundfunk], the Franco-German cultural channel Arte, founded in 1992, plays an ever more important role in the financing of European co-productions” (193). One notes that both Die fetten Jahre and Free Rainer are German-Austrian co-productions, while his two more recent films were strictly German productions. In an interview about Free Rainer’s lack of box-office success, Weingartner commented on the irony that more viewers will see his critique of television on television than in the cinema (“Der Tod des Kinos” n.d.).

⁵ The seven-year gap between 303 and Hut in the Woods speaks to the difficulty Weingartner had in making his latest venture as a German television company withdrew its financing at the last minute and others proved, perhaps unsurprisingly, less than keen to support him. As he put it, he had to “wieder Klinken putzen gehen und das Geld zusammennähen. Ich konnte das selbst nicht glauben. Die Fernsehsender und Filmförderungen wollten den Film einfach nicht” [“go door-to-door and cobble the money together again. I myself could not believe it. The television channels and film boards simply didn’t want the film”] (B. Reiter 2018).
In shifting back and forth between capitalism and schizophrenia, Weingartner’s growing oeuvre makes their similarities increasingly clear by depicting how both function to isolate individuals and make it difficult for them to communicate revolutionary ideas and work together to realize them. While he may share Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of normative structures, what Weingartner promulgates is—as can be seen in the tagline for The Edukators, “Jedes Herz ist eine revolutionäre Zelle” [“Every heart is a revolutionary cell”—the opposite of a body without organs. Rather than reject “those aspects of subjectivity which constitute the liberal individual (such as agency, self-knowledge, consistency, coherence, and the ability to effect change rather than be affected by it)” (Stark 2012, 102), all he wants is those individuals to become more critical of the capitalist waters in which they tread and the capitalist air they breathe, which is why he imparts their natural counterparts with the value he does. He may have started out his career believing that if he only explained things properly so that people could understand them, they would be less afraid and able to see things as he does; as he put it in an interview, “das, was man versteht, davor hat man weniger Angst” [“one is less afraid of things one understands”] (Delius 2011). However, when asked

ner has found the German film industry a challenging environment and one in which he remains an outsider can also be seen in the fact that 303 was his first film to be accepted by the Berlinale, and even then it was not selected for the main competition but rather for the “Berlinale-Sektion Generation für Kinder und Jugendliche,” the section for children and teenagers. In an interview about Hut in the Woods he had commented “Inzwischen ärgert mich das nicht mehr. Das Konkurrenz-Denken in diesen Festival-Wettbewerben ist doch genau das, wogegen sich mein neuer Film wendet” [“in the meantime it doesn’t even make me angry anymore. The competitive spirit of festival competition is precisely what my new film attacks”] (Weingartner 2012). While it might seem puzzling from the position of the German film industry that Weingartner expects it to support radical work highly critical of its workings, if that industry worked the way the production of academic knowledge traditionally has, that is, in a not-for-profit, state-supported mode with the aim of fostering an informed, critical citizenry, he would not have found it as difficult to find funding.
about *Hut in the Woods* and whether his politics had changed since *The Edukators*, he replied, “Es scheint so. Der Kapitalismus ist ein Zug, der auf den Abgrund zurast. Ich glaube nicht mehr so recht daran, dass man ihn aufhalten kann, indem man sich auf die Schienen setzt. Vielleicht ist es sinnvoller, runterspringen“ [“It would seem so. Capitalism is a train speeding towards the abyss. I no longer believe in the same way that we can stop it by sitting on the tracks. Maybe it makes more sense to jump off”] (Weingartner 2012). However, it is not that the protagonists in 303 are any less rebellious or critical than his earlier ones. As one critic noted, his protagonists always react against a capitalist society they experience as repressive and in which those who either do not want to or cannot participate in the hunt for money, a career or power sink; they all rebel in their own way against the system (Taylor 2018).

Important in this observation is that his characters are depicted as not only experiencing but recognizing the world they live in as repressive. That one can experience repression without recognizing it is the point of Lauren Berlant’s work on cruel optimism, something Vegso and Abel refer to in their biopolitical reading of *The Edukators*, in which they identify that:

> [t]he pressing political problem, in other words, is neither that people somehow “want” to be repressed nor that they are tricked by ideological lure into passive submission to power. Rather, as Daniel W. Smith argues, the problem is that people invest serious stakes in social systems (such as neoliberal capitalism) — despite the fact that these systems thwart their interests — because our desires (drives, affects), far from being owned by us as subjects, are part of the capitalist infrastructure itself. (Vegso and Abel 2016, 5)

Weingartner’s contribution is to show that such a fate is not inevitable and that it is possible to make alternate forms of investment that claw back one’s desires from the capitalist infrastructure by taking one’s life into one’s own hands, whether in the
more radical mode of setting off to disrupt signal towers in the Mediterranean that supply television programming to Western Europe or simply by removing oneself from society to watch waves crash on a beach or to build a hut in the forest with an imaginary friend.

Nature Calls

_The Edukators_ established Weingartner’s reputation as one of the chroniclers of the growing urban hipness of Berlin in the early naughts. That the non-urban in the film nonetheless received academic attention speaks to its significance. Rachel Palfreyman identified _The Edukators_ as “a generically hybrid film which might be described as a love triangle, a Heimatfilm, a heist film, a family melodrama, a mountain film, or an anti-capitalist fable” (Palfreyman 2011, 169), but it soon becomes clear which of these genres captures her imagination. While noting that the film’s “love triangle recalls the mountain films _The Holy Mountain (Der heilige Berg, 1926)_ and _The White Hell of Piz Palü_ in which rivalry over a woman leads to disaster” (ibid., 179), she prefers to read the mountains as a “Heimat locale” (ibid., 169), a “Heimat setting” (ibid., 181) “in the middle of a Heimatfilm” (ibid., 184), in which a “Heimat intermezzo” (ibid., 169) takes place that features “a kind of Heimat commune” (ibid., 182). For their part, Paul Cooke and Rob Stone pick up the question of genre Palfreyman raises in reading the film as part of a longer politicized cultural tradition about drifters, noting that _The Edukators_ even “seems to drift across genres” (Cooke and Stone 2013, 95), including that of the mountain film. They see Weingartner as having averted “the potential problems of invoking the mountain film” (ibid., 97) because the mountain locale “that recalls the films of Riefenstahl and National Socialism […] provides a space for the Edukators to learn about the ghosts of Germany’s activist past” at the same time as it “gestures to earlier generational conflicts and the anger the 68ers felt towards their parents for failing to accept their culpability for the crimes of the Third Reich” (ibid., 96). Positioning the 68er as a representative of the
generation being rebelled against “offers a moment of reflection on the trajectory of West German political activism since the 1960s, the zeal of the younger generation, the so-called 89ers who have come of age since unification, being countered by the tired pragmatism of this 68er” (ibid., 96).

What both Palfreyman and Cooke and Stone are sensitive to is what Weingartner’s shift in The Edukators to the mountains makes possible. Time there is slowed down by shifting from movement-images to time-images (Cooke and Stone 2013, 96), and a different kind of relation is called forth by “the one sleeping area in the hut,” a relation “which emphasises kinship, the kinship of the mountains” (Palfreyman 2011, 182). What kind of kinship is this? Palfreyman describes the foursome as somewhere between a family group and a commune (ibid., 182), which gets at the fundamental exploration driving Weingartner’s oeuvre: how to form a collectivity that is good for both its members and their larger society and frees everyone from the curse of property and feelings of possessiveness. That urban development contributes to this curse is made clear both in The Edukators and in his contribution to Deutschland 09, “Gefährder” [“Potential Threat”], in which the sociologist Andrey Holm, the eponymous threat of the title, is shown lecturing on gentrification. But what about Weingartner’s own relation to the non-urban?

Generally, in his films such spaces are those of freedom and exploration. The psychically damaged male protagonists in his schizophrenia films seek out the solace of the sea and the forest, while for those in his capitalism films, the road, and the mountains and coasts it invariably leads to, provides a space to probe the limits of monogamous relationships. The Edukators and 303 undermine the German romantic tradition of solitary Byronic wanderers on mountaintops by translating it into the contemporary idiom of online dating: it is not conquering they are interested in but in connecting. With 303 Weingartner set out to make a film in which his protagonists try not to fall in love, but like their namesakes in The Edukators, they find it is not to be avoided and so needs to be accommodated into their
individual, biologically based quests (for the father of her baby and his biological father) in such a way that can transcend the individuation capitalism has proven so capable of exploiting.

To claim, therefore, that Weingartner’s films have “Bergfilm” or “Heimatfilm” components simply because they take place in the mountains or the forest diverts attention from the structural purpose that the nature settings in his films serve. The white noise of Weingartner’s first feature (Das weiße Rauschen), which ends with a long take of the protagonist staring out at breaking waves, could not be more different than Der weiße Rausch [The White Ecstasy, 1931], which Riefenstahl is depicted deriving from skiing exploits on death-defyingly high craggy slopes. It is not snowy mountain peaks such as those in what was already then the famous ski resort of Sankt Anton am Arlberg, where Der weiße Rausch was filmed, that feature in The Edukators, but rather a 2.0 version of Fanck’s alpine hut: a cozy vacation cabin on a verdant Tirolean hillside northeast of Innsbruck. More specifically, it is near Jenbach overlooking Tirol’s largest lake, the Achensee, which the Tirolean Tourist Board noted is “lovingly dubbed ‘Fiord of the Alps,’” when they hired Daniel Brühl to promote it over a decade after the film was shot there (“Set Jetting: Achensee Lake Area Starring Daniel Brühl in “The Edukators”” 2017). The mountains are not hell for Weingartner, but rather something that can still provide a bulwark against hell while at the same time needing protection from the growing tourist industry and the Airbnb-ification of accommodation.

The question of “Heimat” is more complicated. Since it emerged as a modern concept in the late eighteenth century “as ‘a feminized space of identity and origin’” (Eigler and Kugele 2012, 7), understandings have tended to shift generationally and to gain a welcome critical edge in the process, at least since the 1980s, leading to its having lost “much of its cringe factor for Germans” (Ludewig 2014, 435). The concept’s “rich set of cultural and ideological connotations that combine notions of belonging and identity with affective attachment to a specific place or region” (Eigler 2012, 27) are now “more likely to question what Heimat could be than to provide answers or to define
it” (Ludewig 2014, 389). As Ludewig notes, since 1988 there has been a film festival held annually in Freistadt, Austria, dedicated to “Der neue Heimatfilm” [the new Heimatfilm], which includes films from around the world “in a variety of contexts, genres, and styles” and conceptualizes Heimat as “a lifelong personal quest that unites people from all parts of the globe” (Ludewig 2014, 389). There can be no mistaking Weingartner’s answer to the question of “where one feels at home with oneself and the world” (ibid., 436). His distain of affective attachments to property rather than people radiates from the image of the pyramidal furniture construction that one of the families the edukators have visited returns home to find, which contrasts with the simple construction the protagonist of Die Summe meiner einzelnen Teile erects for himself and his young friend in the woods and with the campervan the pair share in 303. Weingartner has made clear in interviews how highly he values the ability to share any kind of space:


[One began preaching individualism as a consequence of two shocks. Cooperation got a bad rap in the last 70 years through national socialism, which was a kind of mass movement of evil, and then again through communism, which also got completely out of hand. Now we’re slowly starting to realize that a human society consisting of eight billion individualists doesn’t work. As one knows from research, the
number one factor for happiness is social proximity. ‘Happiness is only real when shared.’ That is a sentence from the film *Into the Wild*, which was one of the models for my film.\(^\text{1}\) (B. Reiter 2018)

He has his edukators invade well-appointed bourgeois dwellings in Berlin-Zehlendorf in the city’s posh south-west to draw attention to the fact that the relations such spaces encourage are mediated by commodities and work not only to increase social distance, particularly between the generations usually housed in such structures, but to pit them against each other as well as against those in neighboring dwellings, to wit—keeping up with the Joneses by having higher quality possessions, going on vacation to more exotic destinations, and having one’s offspring go to more prestigious schools, all of which, of course, are not merely more expensive but work to limit value to its monetary meaning.

As cliched as it sounds, Weingartner’s films suggest that, for him, home is where the heart is, which, given the provision that the heart is a revolutionary cell, implies that the bourgeoisie are heartless. Home, in this understanding, can be anywhere, as long as it remains open to one’s fellow travelers. The way Weingartner has come to realize the value of his own upbringing in Feldkirch has no doubt contributed to the contempt with which he depicts institutionalized forces in his films. Having grown up with seven siblings, Weingartner became accustomed early on to finding his own way: “An meinem ersten Schultag, das weiß ich noch genau, sagte mir keiner aus der Familie, wo die Schule ist, ich wusste nicht einmal, ob ich schon im richtigen Alter bin” [“On my first day of school, I still remember it exactly, no one in my family told me where the school was and I didn’t even know if I was the right age”] (B. Reiter 2018). Moreover, that upbringing took place on the edge of a forest he could escape into whenever adults caused him stress:

Ich bin in Vorarlberg in einem Dorf am Waldrand aufgewachsen. Wenn ich als Kind mit Erwachsenen Stress hatte,
bin ich oft stundenlang durch den Wald gelaufen und stark wieder herausgekommen. Im Wald merkst du erst, was für ein starkes wildes Tier in dir steckt. Und wie sehr dieses Tier die Freiheit braucht.

[I grew up in Vorarlberg in a village on the edge of a forest. When, as a child, adults caused me stress, I would often walk in the woods for hours and come out strong. In the forest you notice for the first time what kind of strong, wild animal is in you. And how much this animal needs freedom.] (Weingartner 2012)

Weingartner’s films draw attention to the ways in which the incursion of control society into the bourgeois family, which the unholy combination of new technologies and old fears has encouraged, has robbed its members, and particularly the children, of access to such spaces.

It is not only bourgeois social institutions that Weingartner rejects in his films. When asked in an interview conducted in conjunction with a screening of 303 in Vienna about what kind of building in Berlin he lived in, an apartment or a house, he surprised the self-declared Tirolean interviewer by telling her that he lived in the Mercedes camper that features in the film because he found he could sleep in it the best. Having suffered from problems sleeping, he had tried the camper and soon realized that he didn’t have to drive out into the forest but could rent a small dacha and park in the garden (B. Reiter 2018). This is neither the lifestyle kind of van living celebrated on Twitter with hashtags such as #vanlife, #vanlifeuk, #vanlifediaries, #vanliving, #vanlifers, #vanlifer, and #vanlifecommunity, nor the #sad trend in the United States of the working poor having to live in their vehicles because they cannot afford anywhere else.6 In choosing not to invest in the property on which he sleeps, Weingartner is taking a principled stand against participating in

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6 For a good account of the relation between the two and the extent of and reasons for these phenomena, see Sammon (2019).
the gentrification he has watched overtake Berlin over his past fifteen years in the city.

To conclude, I would like to question whether, or in how far, this stance can properly be described as nostalgic. It seems quite a commonplace in German film scholarship to categorize *The Edukators* as “another quirky, *nostalgic*, social satire” (Cliffe 2005; italics added) and to include it as part of the cycle of *Ost- and Westalgie* films produced at the beginning of the new millennium (H. Farr 2011), of which *Goodbye Lenin!* (2003, dir. Wolfgang Becker), which also featured Daniel Brühl and Burghard Klaußner, has come to be seen as paradigmatic. According to Alexandra Ludewig, “in the wake of the fundamental social and psychological changes affecting German citizens east and west of the disappearing Wall since 1989 — which has given rise to a sense of crisis that has provoked a sense of nostalgia of sorts for the disappearing GDR as well as the old FRG — a longing for Heimat has found expression in German film production” (Ludewig 2014, 435). If anything, Weingartner’s films are more appropriately classed as Ostalgie rather than Westalgie, as Sabine Hake implicitly perceived, which only serves to draw attention to the problems with the lives that actually existed on both sides of the Wall. Rather than nostalgia what the film engages in is *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, coming to terms with the past so that one can move on: “In a bid to move beyond legacies left by older generations, the film shows the characters negotiating feelings of guilt and perpetration during a journey into the Austrian Alps” (H. Farr 2011). Weingartner’s type of return to the past is not nostalgic but a very rational *Auseinandersetzung*, a real engagement, with it.7

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7 To include Weingartner in those that “responded to the erosion of old patterns of understanding and the ideological restructuring of Central Europe through the use of narratives which — beyond science and rationality — centre of the mythical to explain the new German order” as Ludewig does (2014, 435) would seem to indicate that she sees Marxism as a myth. It is a pity she does not explore this point in more detail.
Where a stronger case for nostalgia can be made is in the realm of style.⁸ Noting the “[d]ope, long hair and idealism” of the trio in *The Edukators*, Cliffe characterizes them as “radical hippies” (Cliffe 2005). What this comment gestures towards is the way the accoutrements of the drop-out lifestyle of the ’60s seem to lend themselves to the making of commodified comebacks, most recently the campervan. The desires they kindle can indeed be described as nostalgic—for a time when there were still parts of the world that unreflectively privileged, middle class young people from both sides of the Atlantic could set out for to escape the stifling, standardizing propriety of their upbringings. If one looks into *The Edukators*’s soundtrack, one sees Weingartner commenting on this theme in two tracks in particular. When Jan and Peter are kicking back on their narrow balcony in a side street in gentrifying Prenzlauerberg, they listen to “Heimweh” (“Homesickness”), the 1956 German version of Dean Martin’s “Memories Are Made of This” that launched Austrian singer Freddie Quinn’s mercurial career as a Schlager singer.⁹ Second is setting Jan and Jule’s growing feelings for each other to Jeff Buckley’s pluckily distinctive version of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah.” In both cases, the reversionings underscore the film’s theme of needing to update and learn from aspects of the past that one feels drawn towards, to explore the nature of the attraction, to interrogate how it might work in the present to make possible the kind of future one would prefer to inhabit, and to have fun in the process. As Weingartner declared about *The Edukators*, “The main reason why I wanted this film to have an optimistic tone and to reproduce the comedy of life

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⁸ While Weingartner’s style may diverge somewhat from Helmut Lang’s, they share a cognizance of the workings of style and a rejection of institutional authorities, not to mention shared experiences of the Austrian Alps as a refuge and Vienna as a springboard. For a locational reading of Lang, see Ingram (2018b).

⁹ Schlager music is nicely described on *Wikipedia* as “a style of popular music which is generally a catchy instrumental accompaniment to vocal pieces of pop music with simple, happy-go-lucky, and often sentimental lyrics” (“Schlager Music”).
was that I didn’t want to make a classic political film. I wanted to break with that tradition a little bit” (Weingartner qtd. in Leal 2012, 124).

The problem with Heimweh, and the way nostalgia is too often conceptualized, is that the personal does not tend to be political but rather remains individual. Memories tend to be one’s own personal memories, of the house one grew up in, the school one went to, etc. It is here that the post-memory of visual culture has made an impact, especially via social media. The privileged generations born in the aftermath of the summer of love may not have any personal memories of it, but not only are they well aware of its style, they seem happy to have at least the chance to buy into it. Weingartner’s oeuvre encourages us to ask what kind of futures that forecloses, and what kinds it makes possible.