
AP[®] Research Academic Paper

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] RESEARCH — ACADEMIC PAPER

2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

The Response...				
Score of 1 Report on Existing Knowledge	Score of 2 Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method	Score of 3 Ineffectual Argument for a New Understanding	Score of 4 Well-Supported, Articulate Argument Conveying a New Understanding	Score of 5 Rich Analysis of a New Understanding Addressing a Gap in the Research Base
Presents an overly broad topic of inquiry.	Presents a topic of inquiry with narrowing scope or focus, that is NOT carried through either in the method or in the overall line of reasoning.	Carries the focus or scope of a topic of inquiry through the method AND overall line of reasoning, even though the focus or scope might still be narrowing.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.
Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives, although connections to some works may be unclear.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.
Describes a search and report process.	Describes a nonreplicable research method OR provides an oversimplified description of a method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Describes a reasonably replicable research method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.
Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Conveys a new understanding or conclusion, with an underdeveloped line of reasoning OR insufficient evidence.	Supports a new understanding or conclusion through a logically organized line of reasoning AND sufficient evidence. The limitations and/or implications, if present, of the new understanding or conclusion are oversimplified.	Justifies a new understanding or conclusion through a logical progression of inquiry choices, sufficient evidence, explanation of the limitations of the conclusion, and an explanation of the implications to the community of practice.
Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Enhances the communication of the student’s ideas through organization, use of design elements, conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and word precision, with few to no errors.
Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND attributes sources, using a discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few errors or inconsistencies.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.

AP[®] RESEARCH 2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Academic Paper

Overview

This performance task was intended to assess students' ability to conduct scholarly and responsible research and articulate an evidence-based argument that clearly communicates the conclusion, solution, or answer to their stated research question. More specifically, this performance task was intended to assess students' ability to:

- Generate a focused research question that is situated within or connected to a larger scholarly context or community;
- Explore relationships between and among multiple works representing multiple perspectives within the scholarly literature related to the topic of inquiry;
- Articulate what approach, method, or process they have chosen to use to address their research question, why they have chosen that approach to answering their question, and how they employed it;
- Develop and present their own argument, conclusion, or new understanding while acknowledging its limitations and discussing implications;
- Support their conclusion through the compilation, use, and synthesis of relevant and significant evidence generated by their research;
- Use organizational and design elements to effectively convey the paper's message;
- Consistently and accurately cite, attribute, and integrate the knowledge and work of others, while distinguishing between the student's voice and that of others;
- Generate a paper in which word choice and syntax enhance communication by adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

The Swiss Film Industry

To what extent do Swiss filmmakers' perspectives on Hollywood's media imperialism and the cultural discount theory hinder their potential for producing international box office successes?

Word Count: 4996

Introduction

Despite Europe’s innovative history with cinema, inspiring, and even shaping the present day Hollywood studio system, Europe’s extraordinary fall from filmic grace continues to be witnessed throughout the continent. It is therefore no surprise that Switzerland, a country with a relatively young film industry, has yet to make a name for itself internationally. The prevailing literature suggests that this anomaly can be traced back to the origins of European cinema, effectively proving how a flourishing industry can transition from “economic dominance to insignificance” (Bakker 310). Economic historian Dr. Gerben Bakker accredits this transformation specifically to the period between 1890-1927, before the great influx of Hollywood films screening in Europe, and thus before Hollywood controlled the global motion picture market. Due to rising sunk costs and “suboptimal market growth”, Bakker argues, it became clear that the once revolutionary European feature film and newsreel sectors had a new competitor vying for an international audience: the Hollywood studio system (Bakker 343). The subsequent “quality race” that occurred (the incentive by film studios to improve production quality to increase audience size) essentially left Europe in the dark, enabling Hollywood to dismantle small national film industries, including Switzerland’s, before the Swiss even had the opportunity to compete (Bakker 311). Historically, market size is key to box office gross, therefore Europe’s smaller populace was handicapped from the start. In addition to market size, however, it is thought that European cinema also suffered during this quality race due to “cultural hybridization” (Bergfelder 329). Sharing a similar perspective to that of Bakker, Tim Bergfelder challenges conventional academic theory by entirely redefining European film studies, essentially questioning whether film historians should continue to describe European cinema as

one separate “supranational” entity, or instead be defined as a group of separate “national” industries (315). It becomes obvious, when investigating the plethora of individualized cinema cultures, that European productions are not a mix of many different film styles that create one distinct European style, but in fact are a “cultural hybridization” of many divided filmic voices. This realization insinuates that unlike the United States, Europe does not have a single large homogeneous market, but the exact opposite through “economic diversification” (Bergfelder 329).

Simultaneously, the classical Hollywood studio system, initially considered a “wildcat proposition”, quickly rid its undesired nickname with the creation of the exhibition contract (Maltby 144). Providing a powerful symbiotic stability between distributors and exhibitors, the exhibition contract was critical in enabling American productions to reach a wider national audience by “imposing a ‘play and pay’ regime on exhibitors” (Maltby 144). This agreement between content creators and theaters led to Hollywood’s later international success, thus initiating the ‘quality race’. Marco Cucco (PhD and professor at the University of Lugano) believes that in conjunction with the exhibition contract, Hollywood’s complex release process and “maximization of the theatres on the opening weekend” enables the big budget pictures to thrive (“The Promise” 228). Contrary to popular belief, it’s not the Hollywood blockbuster effects that drive international box office revenue, but the opening weekend theater run. After conducting an in depth analysis on high grossing feature films (starting with Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*), Cucco concludes that “the opening weekend has become the central moment of the [film’s] life-cycle” (“The Promise” 228). Unlike European distribution methods, Hollywood’s theatrical release process has become distilled to a replicable methodology that, more often than

not, gains international attention. To understand this phenomenon, it is imperative to illustrate how Hollywood has historically reached global audiences to comprehend why Europe (and more specifically Switzerland) remains dismally handicapped in filmic creation.

Today, Hollywood has undoubtedly achieved unprecedented “economic dominance” as audience sizes have increased exponentially due to online media distribution platforms like Amazon, Google, and Netflix (Garon 1). With the advent of digital distribution methods, the exhibition contract has been further bolstered as the viewing experience is no longer limited to movie theaters. As living rooms become a second venue for newly released films, the result is extraordinary with “the seven largest U.S. motion picture distributors control[ing] as much as ninety percent of the U.S. domestic (and the majority of the global) box office” (Garon 1). This domination of the entertainment industry is typically described by experts like John Garon as ‘media imperialism’. Media imperialism is the idea that the “content of the media in any one country [is] subject to substantial pressure from the media interests of any other [larger] country”, thus resulting in a lessened national identity within smaller countries due to media homogeneity (Gasher 101). The over-concentration of media from Hollywood is thought to fall in direct line with this phenomena, and Garon believes that it could be affecting smaller countries’ abilities, like Switzerland’s, to produce box office successes. Professors Colin Hoskins and Rolf Mirus, however, refute the media imperialism theory and believe “cultural discount” is what makes smaller nations suffer and Hollywood thrive (500). Cultural discount is when a “feature film - rooted in one culture will have less of an appeal in other countries as viewers find it difficult to identify with it culturally” (Hoskins and Mirus 500). Paradoxically, because of Hollywood’s established economic dominance, international viewers have acclimated to

“American shows and stars”, thus rendering Hollywood studios unaffected by cultural discount (Hoskins and Mirus 504). Contrastly, smaller countries are very much affected by cultural discount’s negative ramifications. While their domestic markets may craft films that thrive internally (as the majority of audience members identify with the cultural themes), expecting these films to thrive internationally is a completely different story. Thus, it’s no wonder international distribution highly favors U.S. productions while drastically minimizing the viewership possibilities for European filmmakers (Prince 3).

When analyzing Switzerland’s unique film industry, its unparalleled circumstance becomes evident. Unlike other European countries such as France and Germany (each having single homogeneous domestic markets similar to Hollywood’s), Switzerland’s own cultural diversity further hinders its ability to create mainstream content. Specifically, Switzerland’s domestic market and populace of eight million is divided into three linguistic regions (German, French, and Italian) which, in turn, maintains a “heterogeneous composition” (Cucco, “The Borders” 154). Despite this market divide, when comparing Swiss annual film production to that of neighboring countries, researchers like Marco Cucco have found that Switzerland produces the same amount of pictures, and sometimes even more than its competitors (“The Borders” 160). That being said, Switzerland maintains low domestic box office returns and international play even with its high production rate (Cucco, “The Borders” 161). From an internal perspective, this notion is thought to be due to Swiss audiences preferring to watch films from neighboring countries (that align themselves via language) even though there is “perfect harmony in terms of the [Swiss] audiences’ preferences” and its Swiss filmmaking community producing pictures (Cucco, “The Borders” 165). Cucco’s research leaves one to question: does

the reason Swiss productions fail both domestically and internationally also have to do with circumstance, or is it the quality of the films themselves? Board member of the Solothurn Film Festival, Christoph Graber is unsure, however he believes, holistically, that Europe views film as the “seventh art” (874). He expands, explaining that European filmmakers, including those in Switzerland, utilize state funding to satisfy domestic audiences, and are, in fact, “trying to defend the diversity of [its] film culture” (Graber 875).

Though some scholars have analyzed the Swiss film industry from an internal perspective utilizing quantitative box office statistics, no work has been published on how external factors affect Swiss filmmakers’ abilities to produce high grossing content. This paper will identify the significant reasons for the country’s failure to reach international audiences by addressing Swiss filmmakers’ perspectives. More personally, as a Los Angeles-born Swiss-American filmmaker currently producing content within Switzerland, I am interested in further investigating the unique opportunities for U.S. productions that utilize Swiss actors and Swiss locations. Might there be an untapped market here, both domestically and internationally, that has yet to be leveraged? Whatever the case, the lack of research in this field begs the question: to what extent do Swiss filmmakers’ perspectives on Hollywood’s media imperialism and the cultural discount theory hinder their potential, and perhaps their motivation, for producing international box office successes?

Methodology

In order to answer my research question effectively I conducted semi-structured narrative interviews with seven Swiss film industry professionals, collectively representing all critical roles in film production. From director, producer, and cinematographer to writer, editor, actor and actress, each interviewee was processed through thematic analysis. For this type of research, a semi-structured narrative interview format is preferred in that it enables interviewees to describe specific aspects of their work via unfiltered anecdotes (Nohl 196). Because I am addressing Swiss filmmakers' perspectives on both domestic and Hollywood productions, their personal qualitative data was utilized to identify how media imperialism and the cultural discount theory hinder Switzerland's inherent ability to produce box office successes. Enforcing a stratified sampling method (the process of sampling individuals who are proportionally representative of a specific group within a target population), this collective of Swiss professionals aptly highlights a cross section of the fundamental occupations within the filmmaking process (Marshall 522). In addition, because filmmaking is recognized as an extremely collaborative process, I was sure to select professionals who work in both pre and post production. To contact unbiased interviewees (folks I didn't know), I pursued snowball sampling in conjunction with the stratified methodology. Thus, my network of Swiss filmmaker friends attempted to recommend 'friends of friends'; filmmakers who had no previous relationship with me or any of my work. Further, to acquire the widest range of perspectives, I diversified my sample group by interviewing individuals with varied work experiences to ensure adequate representation. Lastly, I interviewed one non-Swiss individual whose numerous international co-productions provided another

important and necessary vantage point. This stratified sampling thus allowed me to accurately characterize a wider Swiss filmmaking perspective with a limited number of professionals.

My semi-structured narrative interviews were guided by seven questions as shown in the appendix. The first two questions investigated Hollywood's media imperialism and its direct and indirect effect on interviewees. The next two questions posed focused on cultural discount's effect on the Swiss filmmakers' abilities to reach international audiences. The final three questions centered on the Swiss creative mentality, and the perceived lack of risk taking in Swiss cinema. These individualized questions were then condensed into three exploratory questions, each designed to be expanded upon by interviewees, depending on the area he or she felt most passionate about. The three exploratory questions were:

1. Do you think Hollywood's theatrical presence in Switzerland influences the Swiss film industry directly?
2. Do you think Swiss cinema has less of an appeal internationally for any specific reason?
3. Have you ever contemplated making an English speaking film for the global market?

As opposed to using written questionnaires or fully structured interviews, the semi-structured methodology allowed for these film professionals to explain via anecdotal evidence specific areas they believed to be crucial when analyzing Swiss cinema's inability to create high grossing content. Because I addressed Swiss filmmakers' perspectives, personal anecdotes were invaluable in helping understand the reasoning behind their opinions, and I further leveraged the effectiveness of impromptu conversation by allowing interviewees ample time to develop their views.

Prior to conducting my interviews, the ethicalities of my method were evaluated and approved by an institutional review board. The interviews were conducted via Skype and

recorded, with permission, via an external microphone. The length of each call fluctuated, with conversations ranging from ten to twenty minutes. In circumstances where interviewees were not fluent in English, an onsite translator was utilized. Lastly, once receiving an informed consent, participants were briefed on their right to withdraw from the interview, at any point, if they were uncomfortable. The participants' names have not been included in this study to ensure anonymity.

The second half of my methodology consisted of my qualitative thematic analysis on my semi-structured narrative interviews. A qualitative thematic analysis is a method in which “identifiable themes and patterns” are coded and divided into subcategories, thus formulating a response to the research question (Aronson 3). This form of analysis was instrumental in highlighting specific similarities and contradictions amongst industry professionals, especially concerning how media imperialism and cultural discount affect the Swiss creative mentality. My thematic analysis not only separated commonalities between interviewees' perspectives, but also revealed unique observations and trends. In other words, this form of analysis was incredibly helpful in that it effectively compartmentalized Swiss filmmakers' anecdotal experiences.

Prior to conducting my thematic analysis, all interviews were transcribed and codified. Any responses with a primary focus on Switzerland's divided domestic market and linguistic regions were omitted, as they reiterated themes common in prevailing literature. Therefore, the primary goal when analyzing transcriptions was to realize and deduce the interviewees' opinionated reasoning as to why Swiss productions continue to fail on the international stage. This was achieved by firstly noting all significant commonalities between interviewees through recording keywords and then formulating six underlying categories, which were refined to three

recurring themes. These commonalities were subsequently broken down into their constituent anecdotes, and finally examined to determine how an individual's experience within Switzerland influenced their unique point of view. Lastly, I investigated each interviewee's anecdote as its own separate data point. This allowed me to determine why each believes that the Swiss film industry will continue to lack international box office returns and theatrical play.

With a primary focus on evaluating Swiss filmmakers' perspectives, my thematic analysis was vital in conveying and translating the narrative interviews. Because of my utilization of thematic analysis, the unfiltered anecdotes from my stratified target group was thoroughly synthesized. The end result - the impassioned belief that both media imperialism and cultural discount affect Swiss cinema - was overwhelmingly apparent.

Results

My interview questions focused on three main concepts: media imperialism, cultural discount and the Swiss creative mentality. My narrative interviews were divided into six underlying themes. Each theme, as well as its definition, is exhibited in the table below.

Table 1: Defining Underlying Themes

Theme	Definition
Hollywood's Theatrical Presence	The perspective that Hollywood's international theatrical dominance directly results in a lack of Swiss films in Swiss theaters. Thus Swiss productions are often relegated to domestic television, never making it to the big screen.
Maintaining Cultural Identity	In response to Hollywood's media imperialism, many industry professionals attribute Swiss cinema's inability to reach international audiences to the notion that filmmakers wish to maintain a deeply rooted Swiss cultural identity at the heart of their pictures. This is the producing of locally

	relevant stories in an attempt to preserve Swiss culture and history.
Inferior Content	The films created within Switzerland lack originality, imaginative story concepts, and substantive quality. This is the belief that inferior content will never compete with superior content.
Lack of Risk Taking	The idea that Swiss filmmakers continuously doubt their ability to produce content that will be appreciated internationally. Thus, no creative risks are taken. Instead, uninspired, domestic films are made to appeal to multi-generational Swiss audiences.
Conservative Funding Agencies	The perspective that Swiss filmmakers are not at fault for creating derivative, nationally relevant, and internationally irrelevant stories. What's literally a very small and appointed group of Swiss individuals at conservative funding agencies (at the local and national level) are what stifle creative content.
Generational Divide	The perspective that the omnipresent division in Switzerland between young, ambitious digital native filmmakers and the older, more conservative Swiss filmmaking population, is what divides the entire Swiss film industry.

The Swiss filmmakers' perspectives, summarized below, highlight the extent media imperialism and cultural discount hinder Switzerland's ability to produce international box office hits. Each interview has been divided into three sections (reflecting the three question types mentioned in the methodology) and the specific themes in responses are noted in the 'themes present' column.

Table 2: A Summary of the Narrative Interviews

Industry Professional	Perspectives on (1) Hollywood Media Imperialism, (2) Cultural Discount, and (3) the Swiss Mentality	Themes Present
Director	Hollywood is disliked by conservative members of the Swiss film industry and thus older Swiss filmmakers push to maintain a Swiss style that is not similar to Hollywood pictures. <hr/> Swiss funding agencies are demanding and want films to be tailored to Swiss audiences by only telling Swiss stories.	Maintaining Cultural Identity <hr/> Conservative Funding Agencies

	<p>Younger Swiss filmmakers want to create content for a global market, but perhaps due to Hollywood’s intimidation, a lack of innovative stories and imagination makes this impossible.</p>	Inferior Content
Producer	<p>Hollywood’s overarching influence negatively affects Swiss cinema, making it harder for local filmmakers to get their films screened in Swiss theaters, let alone international theaters.</p> <p>Swiss filmmakers address topics that are locally relevant, typically only screening films in the linguistic region of Switzerland it was created for.</p> <p>There is no motivation for Swiss filmmakers to produce international box office successes due to a complete lack of confidence and courage.</p>	<p>Hollywood’s Theatrical Presence</p> <p>Maintaining Cultural Identity</p> <p>Lack of Risk Taking</p>
Writer	<p>To differentiate from Hollywood, Swiss funding agencies have the final edit on all screenplays and push to preserve a ‘Swissness’ in all film projects.</p> <p>It is extremely hard to secure funding from Swiss agencies while maintaining one’s initial creative vision.</p> <p>Due to the points above, as well as a personal, creative insecurity, this writer has never contemplated writing for the international market.</p>	<p>Maintaining Cultural Identity</p> <p>Conservative Funding Agencies</p> <p>Lack of Risk Taking</p>
Cinematographer	<p>Hollywood’s excessive marketing techniques online (and dominance in Swiss theaters) pushes Swiss audiences away from local productions, thus making it difficult to even succeed within Switzerland.</p> <p>Cultural discount is not relevant to young Swiss filmmakers as quality films will undoubtedly be seen. The problem is quality content isn’t being produced in Switzerland.</p> <p>Though this Cinematographer has not contemplated making an English speaking film for the global market, he believes that his younger Swiss generation is more ambitious than the older generation.</p>	<p>Hollywood’s Theatrical Presence</p> <p>Inferior Content</p> <p>Generational Divide</p>
Editor	<p>Hollywood does not have a large influence on Swiss filmmakers in that Switzerland continues to produce its own</p>	Maintaining Cultural Identity

	<p>individualized content.</p> <hr/> <p>Swiss films seem stagnant from a content standpoint (lack of VFX heavy productions and genre films) due to funding agencies demand for Swiss culture and history.</p> <hr/> <p>Most Swiss filmmakers are not looking internationally due to the fact that the Swiss industry is already a difficult market to succeed in.</p>	<hr/> <p>Conservative Funding Agencies</p> <hr/> <p>Inferior Content</p>
Actor	<p>Switzerland is influenced by Hollywood because its theatrical dominance pushes Swiss filmmakers to preserve cultural identity by creating pictures specifically for a Swiss audience on Swiss topics.</p> <hr/> <p>Swiss filmmakers make and remake iconic Swiss films (like Heidi) which are only relevant to a domestic market.</p> <hr/> <p>In attempt to preserve deep rooted traditions and a fear of risk taking, inauthentic content is produced.</p>	<p>Hollywood's Theatrical Presence</p> <hr/> <p>Maintaining Cultural Identity</p> <hr/> <p>Maintaining Cultural Identity</p>

External Perspective

Actress	<p>Small Swiss films don't land in theaters due to overbearing Hollywood influence. This is also witnessed by other European countries that shy away from producing mainstream content.</p> <hr/> <p>The divided domestic market within Switzerland defines the creativity of projects and the amount of cultural identity in films.</p> <hr/> <p>Though Swiss risk takers can actually be found, there is no goal of going abroad due to the lack of financing.</p>	<p>Hollywood's Theatrical Presence</p> <hr/> <p>Maintaining Cultural Identity</p> <hr/> <p>Conservative Funding Agencies</p>
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In sum, the table above compresses the narrative interviews into the main perspectives held by the Swiss industry professionals. By noting the three most prevalent themes, I was able to evaluate the extent in which external Hollywood's media imperialism and cultural discount hinder the industry professional's ability to produce international box office successes.

Analysis

Recurring Theme 1: Maintaining Cultural Identity

The recurring theme that had most prevalence amongst the Swiss industry professionals' perspectives was the idea of maintaining a sense of cultural identity in Swiss productions. This theme, as illustrated in Table 1, encapsulates the interviewees' beliefs that Swiss cinema is unable to produce international box office successes due the filmmakers' desire to maintain Swiss cultural identity at the heart of each picture. Of the seven interviews, six industry professionals believed this notion significantly stifled their ability to create high grossing content for an international market.

Truly highlighting this point of view, the Swiss producer stated that “people here believe that they are more likely to be funded by local and national authorities if they address topics that are locally relevant, and this local relevance is often internationally irrelevant”. Because Swiss filmmakers are pressured by financial circumstance, they feel forced to tell Swiss stories that are only appreciated by Swiss audiences, hence maintaining cultural identity. Because the vast majority of international audiences do not identify with Swiss culture, the vast majority of Swiss productions receive little, if any, international play. This concept underscores the very essence of the cultural discount theory. The Swiss actor also shared a similar perspective, and he accredits his thoughts to Hollywood's overbearing influence and control of the European market. The actor explained that Hollywood's theatrical presence in Switzerland pushes filmmakers to preserve cultural identity by creating pictures specifically for Swiss audiences on Swiss topics. Described as a “focus on the Swissness” in film, the actor further explained that this perspective makes Swiss filmmakers create content that is only watched by the Swiss. Lastly, underscoring

cultural discount's profound effect on Swiss filmmakers, the director explained that because the older Swiss filmmakers and funders have a "hostile [attitude] towards Hollywood", they condemn people who replicate an American filmic style. Calling from past experience, the director (whose dream is to create Hollywood-inspired content) furthered his point by stating that the derogatory term "Hollywoodie" is used by traditional Swiss filmmakers when describing those who veer away from conventional Swiss storytelling. As a by-product of this antagonization, traditional Swiss filmmakers overcompensate, creating films with themes that are only locally relevant. Once again, this anecdotal evidence provides further proof that cultural discount is a significant factor in hindering Swiss filmmakers' abilities to produce international box office successes.

Recurring Theme 2: Hollywood's Negative Swiss Theatrical Presence

Another recurring theme that was significant in my thematic analysis was Hollywood's presence in Switzerland: how its dominance in Swiss theaters literally results in a lack of screens for Swiss films to be seen. It is this perspective that emphasizes Hollywood's control over the domestic market, that makes it exceedingly difficult for Swiss productions to see the light of day. However, it is not just Hollywood's physical presence, it's the audience demand that drives it. Simply, Swiss audiences prefer Hollywood pictures. Of the seven interviewees, five thought Hollywood's media imperialism was a major factor in thwarting Switzerland's desire and drive to reach international audiences.

The Swiss cinematographer believed that it's Hollywood's excessive marketing techniques online that push audiences away from local productions. He explained that he has to

“force [himself] to search out and watch films from Europe” because they are simply hard to find. The cinematographer furthered his perspective by describing how “the American movies are everywhere”, both online and in theaters, and how its dominance over the Swiss market allows international pictures to thrive and local productions to fail. Reiterating this shared perspective and highlighting media imperialism’s prominence, the Swiss producer explained that Hollywood’s influence makes it harder for local filmmakers to get their films in Swiss theaters, let alone international theaters. It’s this dilemma, the producer stated, that motivates Swiss filmmakers to create films with strong cultural themes. He further illustrated his point by describing a time when he went to several high profile Zurich theaters with his original, self-funded feature film. Quite bluntly, theater manager after theater manager refused to screen his picture since it was considered a local release. The producer expressed his frustration stating, “I’m from Zurich, I grew up here, and I know I can fill the room”. It’s because of Hollywood’s draw, its all encompassing aura of ever-present media, that makes it nearly impossible for Swiss filmmakers to succeed even within their own city walls. The actress wholeheartedly agreed. Providing a wider context, she explained that it’s not only the Swiss films that fold to overbearing Hollywood influence, other European countries are also forced to make self-serving, culturally relevant content. Understandably, these domestic pictures fail in the global market. Without an audience and without revenue, there’s absolutely no way to compete with Hollywood’s sustained theatrical presence - a presence that claims its dominance every single week, in every single major European theater.

Recurring Theme 3: Conservative Funding Agencies

Lastly, the perspective that Swiss funding agencies are crucial in hindering filmmakers' abilities to produce international box office successes was a prominent and unexpected theme in my analysis. Again, this is the belief that Swiss filmmakers are not at fault for creating internationally irrelevant stories, but instead, it's the work of a select group of appointed individuals at conservative funding agencies. Four of the seven interviewees believed this was a critical factor, and the astonishing anecdotes these professionals utilized to support their views were pointed.

Vocalized with deep emotion, the Swiss writer explained how tricky it is to receive funding from agencies while maintaining one's initial creative vision because they "always have the last word". When funding is received, it is typically after many screenplay rewrites and creative 'fixes' by the agency. These required changes are often made to instill cultural identity in projects in an effort to make films more 'digestible' for Swiss audiences. As illustrated by cultural discount, this precondition renders the picture insignificant in the global market. The writer described an anecdote about a screenplay she had written, which addressed controversial and "taboo" topics including sexual assault and abortion. The script, she dryly stated, was "deemed not interesting for Switzerland" by the funding agencies because "it was too original".

From a funding standpoint, because Switzerland has a small domestic market, it is nearly impossible to independently fund projects as it would be a doomed opportunity for any would-be investor. Thus filmmakers are either forced to compromise their initial creative vision, or do what the writer did and bring the script to the theater stage instead of the screen. Sharing the same point of view, the editor expanded upon this, clarifying how funding agencies continue to

propagate questionably salable content due to cultural discount. He believes it's this blatant 'dumbing-down' of original concepts by "the same 5 people [on the board of funding agencies]" with "the same opinion" that makes Swiss cinema uninspired and inferior. He concludes that because the stories become inauthentic, they do not resonate with a wide audience. This point unabashedly accentuates cultural discount's influence on Swiss filmmakers' abilities to produce for international box offices.

Limitations

After analyzing these themes, but before presenting my conclusion, it is imperative to address potential variables that may have skewed my results. Though my stratified sampling methodology was effective in proportionally representing a cross section of the Swiss film industry, it is important to note that a small group of individuals could not possibly characterize the entire Swiss filmmaking population. In addition, though snowball sampling was also utilized, several of my interviewees were filmmakers who I had directed in past projects. One of my short films received a significant amount of international attention, so it's possible that an interviewee's response was biased due to this personal connection. Lastly, as a director who has attempted to pitch projects to Swiss funding agencies in the past, my own unconscious bias may have led to human error in accurately depicting certain perspectives.

Conclusion

In direct response to my research question, a variety of internal and external factors undeniably play divisive roles in hindering Swiss filmmakers' abilities to produce international

box office successes. Though this circumstance is primarily due to both media imperialism and cultural discount, it is also due to the diminutive Swiss funding agencies who oppress risk taking in an effort to maintain Swiss cultural identity. Broken down into its constituent recurring themes via the individual perspectives, it's Hollywood's theatrical omnipresence (media imperialism) and the conservative funding agencies that fight it, that together force Swiss filmmakers to maintain cultural identity at the heart of their films. Consequently, watered-down Swiss cinema is left to resonate only within its small divided market, rarely playing to European, let alone international audiences (cultural discount). The result is an ongoing self-fulfilling prophecy as the utter lack of creative risk taking continuously churns out inferior content. Ultimately, it's not the Swiss filmmakers' inability to tell meaningful stories, it's the dim environment in which they are asked to operate.

The implications of my findings are critical as they could help Swiss filmmakers better understand their circumstance, which, with any luck, might spark the beginnings of change. In addition, it's my hope that my conclusion might also educate investors, distributors, and studios in Europe, the U.S., Asia, and beyond, to take full advantage of Switzerland's untapped film industry. By providing outside financial, distribution, and marketing support, Swiss filmmakers could finally follow their true creative visions, telling authentic Swiss stories, free of outside judgement and partiality. Lastly, my research could assist other small national film industries by providing them with anecdotal data that might mirror many of the problems they too are facing. Empowering storytellers worldwide, ones whose filmic voices have yet to be heard, would change the landscape of film forever, and for the better.

Having built upon the works of researchers like Cucco and Graber, who solely focused on the internal ramifications that burden Swiss cinema internationally, my work examines Switzerland's unique circumstance from the perspective of the Swiss filmmaker. However, one area that I feel requires further research and evaluation are the roles of the specific local and national Swiss funding agencies. Lumped together, perhaps unfairly due to the length limitations of this paper, a deeper understanding of their policies and strategies would be helpful in offering potential win/win scenarios for both Swiss agency and Swiss filmmaker. For example, if a Swiss agency was offered its own global channel on Netflix, might it think differently about its ability to offer the world an authentic, and perhaps protected, Swiss voice?

Appendix

Transcribed Interviews

Do you think the majority of Swiss filmmakers attempt to produce international box office successes?

Director:

I don't know if they are planning it from the beginning of a film idea or trying directly with this intention. Sure the desire will be always there, I mean who does not want that? But in Switzerland there is a lack of very good stories, or enough budget and the feeling for something mainstream that is well received by a very wide audience. The other problem is the Swiss Film industry is too small. that's why I decided to specialise only in commercial (advertising) productions and not entertainment, also because it gives me financial security. But the desire to do something the other way is still there.

Editor:

I think that most of the Swiss filmmakers - especially when they are young - are not looking towards the international market because the Swiss film industry itself is already a difficult market and they try to produce something for that first. After some successes of course they are going to look abroad for different opportunities but I think what they aim at is either festivals - starting at Swiss festivals and then going international after that - or theaters - attempting to create a commercial success which is really difficult in Switzerland as there are only 2 or 3 films per year that are considered commercial successes. Some shorts/features are internationally acclaimed, but not successful at the box office. So I don't think Swiss filmmakers have a big vision of the international market - only festival wise - they try to get into Sundance, Venice, and Cannes but they don't know what american audiences want to see. They don't produce anything for that.

Producer:

Clearly no. The majority doesn't. People here believe that they are more likely to be funded by local and national authorities if they address topics that are locally relevant. And this local relevance is often internationally irrelevant, so they start to believe that they are doing it for their own people which is divided - the Swiss Germans to the Swiss French etc. - So the movies that are successful in Zurich might not be elsewhere - even within Switzerland. It's a cultural problem - because of course local problems like bank/finance problems - not liking to spend money - a typical Swiss attitude - can be something very interesting internationally. It's a true problem.

Writer:

I think they would like to but it is hardly possible because the market is so limited in Switzerland. And I think that when a Swiss screenwriter is writing a screenplay they are not thinking about an international audience. And I think on one side it is due to tradition - thinking 'oh we are too small' - the mentality - and the other thing is the dialect. And when you work with a Swiss actor that is speaking German [in the film] you can hear that they are a Swiss actor. Dialect imposes a regional topic - but I can imagine that now young filmmakers are learning to change this mentality. Starting now it seems that [this young new generation of Swiss filmmakers] are building an international network and are beginning to think global. When I was young - at film school - there were only Swiss film teachers. Nowadays there are more international teachers [that provide an international perspective]. I think that this [young] generation is different.

Actor:

It depends on which kind of production company you produce for and whether you produce a movie or a tv film. I think Swiss filmmakers definitely want their films to be seen internationally. They try to find combinations in co-productions and to open up. One big issue is the language - Swiss German - and Swiss German is really hard to dub. Swiss filmmakers are definitely looking at the international European market.

Actress:

No. Switzerland has the problem of languages because of its dominating French and German. I think the French side of Switzerland has a larger chance of being international because the Swiss Germans often focus on their Swiss German - because it is a very big part of their identity. It seems like they often focus too much on that - and then the

problem is that telling a story from Zurich is not the same story as someone in Bern and they are often very critical of actors who don't speak the right dialect. And the stories that they tell - it depends I find that sometimes they could be telling a story that has absolute legitimacy to be told and then seen by people outside of Switzerland. But I think that one of its dilemmas is that it doesn't happen. I don't know if it is actually the goal to go abroad. It feels like a lot of the productions are dominated by a sort of fear of not even being successful within Switzerland. It's not on set that I feel it. I've been on a German TV show and I have noticed early on in the process - before anything gets filmed or produced - there are so many projects that don't see the light of day because very quickly it is told that it won't work. For example in France I know that making your first film is almost easier than making your second because of support for first born projects - and I feel like in Switzerland they fight for a very long time to get finance - even though there is so much money. The fear that people won't go and see it is what, in the end, dominates so much of creativity.

Cinematographer:

I can't really speak for the older generation - I'm not really in the feature film industry here in Switzerland - I don't know the older guys or the people that are able to live from doing feature films - because that's a hard thing here. But I can speak for the younger generation who are currently doing short films and are looking to do feature films in the future - I tried with my short film to put it out there and go to Cannes and Venice - that was the goal - I know many other people who have the same ambition - the younger generation at least is looking to get their stuff seen internationally.

Why do you think Swiss productions rarely reach an international audience? Do you think there a motivation to try and reach this audience? If so why do they fail and if not why not?

Director:

Here you focus almost exclusively on drama or on more real and tangible stories that can often only be emotional in a way that convey a sadness, anger and compassion. However, there is often a lack of a positive feeling, a feeling that you often get in international films, where you can cheer up, has tension and even something "kitsch" can be, you know what I mean? Maybe we see the whole thing too serious, because life is really serious and you can have some fun or fantasy etc... and too little abstract. Maybe it's also that the industry is risk-averse. The funding agencies also have too many hurdles and always demand a lot of Swissness. Whatever this Swissness means. Possibly, every time you take a shot you have to see a cow or a mountain in the background...

Editor:

The films that don't reach an international audience can sometimes become local successes here in Switzerland - they can have an audience of 200,000 - 300,000 and this is their only success is Switzerland - they measure it by the number of people who see it not the box office revenue. They are not international successes because the market here is so small and if they do not reach the international audience the film stays small and they can never reach other countries. This is in part due to the 'language problem'. There are no films here produced in English and they have to dub it or put subtitles and then is no longer a success overseas - (it's seen as a foreign picture- cultural discount) - in English speaking countries. Switzerland's market is divided. Swiss German in films is weird for Swiss people. Because we never hear it in the theaters. It's a language we speak every day but we don't associate it with art and cinema. That's why Swiss German filmmakers tend to make films in French - they don't associate it with the small language they speak everyday. Swiss German films can be successful but only in Switzerland. English is further away for Swiss filmmakers - unlike French, German and Italian, - and making a film in English would make the film no longer a Swiss original and more of a mix between Swiss culture and English - the people don't like it - they think it is weird - because France only produces films in French. French is an excuse to not use Swiss German and I don't think it works well. I'm actually talking about "La femme et le TGV" - an Academy Award nominated short film made in Switzerland - both the director and producer were Swiss German but they did it in French because they thought it would appeal more to international audiences because french is more of an 'artsy' language. It was quite successful and I think that it would have been less if it was done in Swiss German.

Producer:

I think that it is the courage that is missing and of course the language barrier. I grew up studying at the National Science of Biochemistry - so I did movies as a hobby - which became more and more serious. I say this because

when I studied biochemistry, I was 20-25 and you end up in the laboratory of a Nobel Prize winner - and he said if you want to do biochemistry then you should do it for real - and become a Nobel Prize winner. This attitude - this courage is totally missing in filmmaking. There is no attitude of “I can get an Oscar”. And the problem is not that the young filmmakers don’t have it, but the teachers in this country are not having it because they themselves often don’t believe it - there are only a few producers and filmmakers who really can give the flame on - to say that it is doable and that you can have an attitude that is worldwide here. This attitude - but that being said there is no Swiss filmmaking history here - we are a farming and a banking country - we are not Los Angeles - so it’s much more difficult to be successful than in other countries.

Actor:

Most Swiss films are co-produced with TV stations. They have a lot of influence - they are determined to bring their influence into the films - and there are 3-5 people talking about the script - and everybody has an opinion - and the most powerful person makes it to the end. The scripts get weaker and weaker - and their topics become washy - not clear anymore. Swiss TV has to have their audience in mind - and this is a lot of people from the countryside - and the mountains. So they are saying - you can do this in this way, even if it’s a very good story, it’s too hard. And they give a lot of money - so then you need to compromise. And that’s one reason I find Swiss films turn out boring. They are not interesting enough for the international audience. That’s why people from the outside think - this is a different taste - that Swiss films are a bit flat. Especially with Germany - they want them to be original - so they have Swiss German actors flown to Berlin to sync the films in high German - but it doesn’t sound good - and the German audience is not ready to watch these films. The other reason is quite political. There was an initiative that Swiss citizens voted for that limited immigration. And Switzerland has very close contact with Europe. And one of the most important pillars of Europe is immigration. And Switzerland - wants the European advantages of an open market but do not want the immigration. And Europe responded immediately with that by cutting down the Swiss film industry. So Swiss production companies are not allowed to use European funds to make their films. So Swiss films from that point of view limited - they don’t have the money. They do coproductions but they have to show exactly how many people from Germany - how many people from Switzerland are working - and the majority have to be Swiss for it to be a Swiss film.

Actress:

Well I think there are films that reach it internationally. These certain films that make it outside are ones that are honest about the country. Switzerland has a lot of stories to tell - dark stories. The last film that I can think of is the one about Swiss women’s right to vote. That film - it did have - from its birth - potential for international audiences - and they were aware of that and used that. When you start a film with the fear of - what accent do we use - then that has a negative impact. The French Swiss - the French see it - because those projects land in cinemas abroad much more than German speaking countries. It’s all about distribution too. How is it that we always have more big budget productions in theaters more than smaller productions. A lot of very artsy films are made here - and they do there festival rounds very successfully but somehow they don’t land in theaters - lots of productions are like that. One of the films I was in - had quite a bit of success - it did well in festivals - but it disappear very quickly from cinemas however I still get notified when it is receiving an honor somewhere at a festival.

Cinematographer:

Switzerland is a very small country - there are not a lot of feature films made. I think it is a mix between the older generation - they did not have access to the news that much - like with the internet you have a bigger perspective. As a young filmmaker now a days as opposed to 30 years ago - 30 years ago Swiss filmmakers were comparing themselves to people around them or people that were in the same industry - Swiss filmmakers. The quality level of Swiss films back then was not of how it is in Hollywood. It’s so easy for us to watch movies - we see a lot of them. It’s been a year maybe that I’ve seen the last Swiss movie - I don’t watch Swiss movies because I am interested in other movies - like from France, Denmark, Germany and of course the U.S. - and they are better. I think that Swiss films are not of the same quality but also as a young filmmaker I compare myself to those filmmakers. Maybe that’s the difference to how it was back then. They didn’t have the chance to compare themselves. They didn’t have access to all the content we have now - like on Vimeo and Instagram - that’s what I’m doing all the time - I’m networking and watching work and comparing myself to them. Of course I want to make my work look like their work - not like Swiss filmmakers.

Can you comment on the fact that Switzerland produces the same amount of pictures, and sometimes even more than France and Germany, yet still has low domestic box office returns and international play? Disregarding Switzerland's divided domestic market what could this be accredited to?

Director:

Okay, I did not know that - astonishing. I don't know why. Possibly because it is only tailored to Switzerland.

Do you think Swiss cinema has less of an appeal in Hollywood for any specific reason?

Director:

Yes, too little courage, emotionless, too focused to Switzerland not particularly imaginative. It lacks the fantastic. But that's just my point of view... The language can also be a problem... there must be more reasons.

Editor:

Films here are produced in a totally different way than in America. There are no big studios here in Switzerland - they can't finance a whole film and if it's a financial success make a sequel or something like this - it's totally different. All the big films that want to go to theaters have to be funded by the government and also by associations that support cultural projects - but all of the big films have been supported by the government. This means that some people in the government can decide what the films look like and what films are produced - and this comes down to five people. It's been the same 5 people for the last 4-6 years - always the same opinion. It has to go through them - there are no other studios to look to for financing. It's a shame that there are no studios here - it's a problem. It's quite hard to fund pictures independently here. Even for a budget of 200,000-300,000 CHF. You need sponsors but you still need support from the government. The Swiss government - if they decide to fund your project - can influence the script. What happened to my short film is that I just got a denial of Swiss television - and they mentioned script problems - a list of stuff they didn't like in the script. And now we could update the script and ask again for money - but the problem with that is they can decide what the content is.

Cinematographer:

No. If there is quality work out there it gets seen. If you do something great here in Switzerland there are a lot of people helping you to put it out there. If there is quality work being made and you're a Swiss filmmaker you will notice that work - people start to speak about it. Also it will get accepted to festivals and a lot of the time there are producers who distribute it so they get higher viewage. If there is a good film you can be sure that all of the Swiss filmmakers know about it - because there is not that much going on.

Have you ever contemplated making an English speaking film for the global market? If so, what happened? If not, why not?

Director:

The thought is always there. But I think I did not have the necessary know-how or drive. And it could have strapped me financially because it is too risky in my situation, Unfortunately, as a creative person, you do not earn much to live and you have to get what you get. Also a great team would have to join in as well. Maybe my expectations are too high. But if I should ever make one, then it has to be done all right.

Writer:

No. I've never wrote for the global market. It's just not in my mind. You have to get the funding from the Swiss foundations. But I think now things are changing - they are becoming more curious of new ideas and what's coming from this younger generation. But they still want Swiss aspects.

Cinematographer:

No never. It depends who the director is and what their mother tongue is but I believe you can always make better films in your own language. You have a higher chance of producing a more authentic film in this way. I notice that Swiss people don't like their own language in film - it's a problem we have here. They are looking to do films in high German for the larger audience and they feel like it sounds better. But I like our language actually. When it is done right it can be very authentic. A lot of people are doing films in different languages - I don't understand why.

Do you think Hollywood's theatrical presence in Switzerland influences the Swiss film industry directly?

Director:

Switzerland is very hostile to Hollywood productions, I have made this experience by myself. Even people in the industry call us "the Hollywoodies" amusing because we tend to make our films or cinematography that way. It is not liked. I really don't know why and that sometimes annoys especially if you're an absolute movie nerd like me.

Editor:

I think it doesn't affect the Swiss filmmaker a lot. I haven't seen a development towards [a more] Hollywood [system], there is no commercialization/bigger budgets/sequels. Switzerland is unaffected by this and continues to do its own thing. The filmmakers that are affected by Hollywood simply leave Switzerland. This can be seen with Swiss German director Marc Forster. He turned his back to Switzerland because he didn't see progress. I'm thinking the same. There is no progress in Swiss cinema. It's the same as 20 years ago. In Hollywood it is changing a lot. We don't see heavy VFX films. We don't produce any science fiction. It's really not affected by Hollywood. The Swiss government and these organizations want to preserve Swiss culture and history.

Producer:

There is influence. It's hard to generalize because of course there is a lot of European influence. Storytelling wise I think that it is mixed - yes and no both - and production wise clearly no. When I wanted to show [movie title] here in cinemas - it's quite hard- they say you need a distributor etc. - they always want the formal and official way. I'm like - hey - I'm from Zurich I grew up here - I can fill the room - don't you want to support local filmmakers - it's not only the people giving the funding but also the professionalisation of showing in cinemas.

Writer:

No not at all. It's such a completely different thing to European and Swiss film. It is not seen as something that fits together. It's a completely different entity.

Actor:

The Swiss film industry - despite Hollywood's influence - tries to do it their own way. Blockbusters [from Hollywood] do have success here. In cinemas they are all American movies - so it certainly has a large influence on the Swiss industry. But they try to make their point on unique Swiss films - like Heidi - and make remakes of it. So they put their focus on the 'Swissness' of topics in films - not trying to imitate American films. I don't know if it is the influence of Hollywood that creates this affect or more Swiss habit. The Swiss people love their traditions and they love their history - their farming/the mountains etc. - and their figures. They have their own stories - these are traditions - that have been told from one farmer to another on a stormy night - when there was no other way to communicate. And these stories - there is a lot of interest to preserve them on one hand, and on the other hand I have the impression that Swiss filmmakers are anxious about their audience.

Actress:

A lot of Swiss people end up working in Hollywood because they have an excellent technical foundation - the schools technically are excellent. I guess from my perspective one of its weaknesses are script. Hollywood dominates in every country. It creates a bit of a complex - Germany can't tell action movies for some reason. It's also a question of what your cultural heritage is - why is it that American productions have this sort of lightness to them? The Germans - much more - think that oohh it needs to be heavy and dark. Every country tells their stories because that is what feels more natural to them.

Cinematographer:

I'm not an expert - but I'd say that it seems that around 75% of the films that are being watched in Switzerland are from America - 20% European films - and 5% Swiss. I can only speak for myself - but I don't really like the blockbuster movies - most of them are not quality films with a story that moves me. There are a lot of good films being made in America but most of them are independent films or movies that were produced with less money. But the blockbusters are what is being watched here - not these independent pictures. So when you go to the cinema you have only blockbusters to choose from. This is what negatively affects the Swiss audience - they are influenced by

these films. As a filmmaker, if you are interested in good films you have to know where to watch them (and this can be tricky when derivative Hollywood cinema dominates Swiss theaters) and the names of the good directors and writers - they are not being thrown at you. All you see when you walk through the city are movie posters for superhero franchises. I have to force myself to watch/search out directors from Europe and most of the time I enjoy these films more than American films. I have to force myself because the American movies are everywhere - they are in my Facebook and Instagram feeds - they pop up everywhere. And I notice them because of Hollywood's extensive marketing. Also of course there are less European films being made.

Would you say that Switzerland has a lack of risk taking versus its fear of losing its cultural identity. Or are both present here?

Director:

Yeah I think a little bit of both, like I said before.

Producer:

Yes. It's a fear of risk taking - and 100% of the money comes from non risk taking agencies. That's a fact. It's the taxpayers money which comes from the left and right wing and this money has to be spent in a non risk taking way. It is a political game. In [movie title] we used 3 languages - German, French, Italian - which of course reflects Switzerland - our risk was can we make the Swiss language fit into a real [authentic] movie. When we were pitching the movie people didn't get this. For me it's one of the most European part of Swiss Culture - because we are multi-ethnics. We are in the middle of Europe. But here it's like - no - it's either German or either French or either Italian. There is no playing around with this language issue. We funded the film independently with crowdfunding and the rest was self paid - with some small sponsorships.

Writer:

Yes definitely. It's the fear that you won't get the money and on the other hand it's the mentality.

Actor:

I think that they could be much braver. I think it's both and I think it has to do with a very Swiss mentality - to please everybody and to be liked by everybody. This mentality does a lot of things to Swiss films - because filmmaking mirrors the attitude of a society. I think a huge audience would be ready for that [more authentic and 'edgy' content] - people ask - why do they present us with these films - they have nothing to do with us. On TV they had this big series - Gotthard - about building the tunnel - and being all heroic about it. But it's done in such an over the top way. That's not how we want to see it. They sort of fake history - being all nostalgic about the 50s and 60s, and as you can imagine - like in the U.S - the 50s and 60s were dreadful! I think you have to divide between Swiss German filmmakers and the Swiss French filmmakers. The Swiss French are very connected to the French market and have a lot of French movie tradition and have a different way of telling stories. They are much braver - straightforward - and the stories are really unique. The more innovative films definitely come from the French speaking part. One more thing - Swiss documentary films are really really good most of the time. All the things I talked about as negatives for the fiction part are actually a huge advantage for Swiss documentaries - being precise - taking things seriously- and do a really fine film with fine editing.

Actress:

A lot of really creative people make movies here. You can see it in the short films coming out of the schools - original stuff. Maybe the risk taking should be by certain production companies - in taking on projects and helping distribute them - so they get seen. Risk could also mean - lets do it - and not - let's wait 10 years and do it. I feel sometimes a super slowness - but what can I say - it's hard.

Cinematographer:

I do yes. I have the feeling that Swiss filmmakers are comparing themselves too much as opposed to just doing something. They don't listen to their hearts most of the time - they just compare to what is out there. They think that is the only way they can make it. They feel like the film has to fit into a category. It can't be too dark or too sad otherwise it won't be seen in Swiss cinemas anyway. I believe that the primary group of people who go to Swiss

cinemas are older people - so only the films that have a typical Swiss history/topic - they get seen (cultural identity). So they are taking less risks - they are trying to make it fit.

Follow up question: Have you ever been in the writing room and have had a project dismantled by a higher authority in order maintain a family friendly ‘Swissness’.

Writer:

Yeah - the TV stations always have the last word. I’ve had moments when a project I was working on was [deemed] not interesting for the regions in Switzerland. It was too original. It has to do with my generation and older - the people who run the TV stations since 20 years. They want to show exactly what they’ve always showed. I wrote something that I was only able to do through theater and not film. I was working with a Swiss author - we wrote this piece together for film - and we pitched it to a Swiss TV station and they developed it quite far. The script was worked on for 3 years. And in the end they decided to have it shot in the canton of Jura - a French speaking part. And that was one thing - they thought it was too far away from Swiss TV - too special having it in this little canton - and the other thing was the content - a story about a young man who rapes a young woman and he gets sentenced for four years and the woman has the baby - he gets out of prison being 24 - and he wants to meet this young woman and see his kid. That’s the drama around it. And that’s what Swiss TV thought was too heavy. [They thought] we can’t have the Swiss audience go through this story. So they said it’s too tough - we can’t show it. It’s sort of a taboo or a moral thing. It’s interesting. I wrote a story about a couple who is divorced and no one wants to keep the child - they hope the other will take it - the opposite of what is normal. And it’s also a taboo. So we made a theater piece of it - that’s possible - there is not so much money in [Swiss] theater.

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AP[®] RESEARCH 2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Academic Paper

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Sample: D

Score: 4

This paper scored a 4 because there is a narrow gap (page 6: “Though some scholars have analyzed the Swiss film industry”), well-defended method (page 7 and page 9), and justified conclusions. The paper comes to a new understanding on page 10: “The end result - the impassioned belief that both media imperialism and cultural discount affect Swiss cinema - was overwhelmingly apparent.” Limitations are presented (page 18) but are constrained to addressing the circumstances of data collection and sample rather than limitations of the inferences drawn from the data. This paper did not earn a score of 3 because there is a detailed, logically defended method (pages 7–9). The lit review is aligned with the topic (pages 8–9). The paper defends the gap and uses a variety of scholarly perspectives and credible sources.

This paper did not earn a score of 5 because its conclusions are too big (page 19) and slightly misaligned from the formal question. The limitations and implications are oversimplified. As an organization component, the tables appear to be used to stay within the word count and not to enhance the presentation; the paper does not present numbers to support the thematic analysis. The conclusion overstates what can be discerned from the evidence: “I was able to evaluate the extent in which external Hollywood’s media imperialism and cultural discount hinder the industry professional’s ability to produce international box office successes.”