# 8
# Screening Citizens

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We live in a country that produces virtually nothing anybody else wants to buy, apart from culture. The United States now mostly sells feelings, ideas, money, health, movies, laws, games, religion, and risk—niche forms of collective identity, otherwise known as culture. In 2000, U.S. services exported US$295 billion, and 86 million private-sector service jobs generated an US$80 billion surplus in balance of payments (Office of the US Trade Representative, 2001). The significance of this for the nation's image elsewhere is of course immense, whereas the domestic correlatives are important in terms of wealth, job creation, and ideology.

This chapter is directed toward people who are preparing to work as cultural producers in the audiovisual sector of the United States. It is meant to help them think through how the culture industries are perceived and what is at stake in citizenship terms. I address three issues in particular. The first is the nature of culture and how it blends ideas about custom and society with ideas of meaning and textuality. This sets the scene for the remainder of the chapter. The second issue is the way the debate about the audiovisual industries within the United States has been about discipline and about seeking to control residents—in other words, the impact on the social order and everyday conduct of the culture industries, most notably film and television. I explain the history to this pattern, noting that it is a distinctly U.S. phenomenon of social control, whereby issues of inequality are displaced onto notions of behavior and popular culture is said to pervert audiences. Entering minds hypodermically, these texts can enable and imperil learning, driving viewers to violence through aggressive and misogynistic images and narratives. We can see this discourse at work in a variety of sites, including laboratories, clinics, prisons, schools, newspapers, psychology journals, television stations' research and publicity departments, everyday talk, program-classification regulations, conference papers, parliamentary debates, and state-of-our-youth or state-of-our-civil-society moral panics. It is spectacularly embodied in the U.S. media's theatricality after school shootings, when violent images (not hyper-Protestantism, straight white masculinity, a risk society, or easy access to firearms) are held responsible for creating violent people. There is minimal address of issues

beyond behavior that should be on the agenda, such as the operation and representation of capitalism, of gender, of race, and of sexuality. Instead, the focus is on a psychological model of media effects.

The third issue concerns the work the U.S. government does to support the film and television industry and how this brings into question the idea that these sectors are genuinely laissez-faire zones of consumer choice as opposed to big government. The dominant discourse maintains that there is no state responsibility for popular culture, because it is the outcome of a pure market, where the desires of consumers drive the output of producers. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is said to keep government away from screen drama, whereas the entrepreneurial abilities of the culture industries make them successful. Again, this is monumentally misleading: The state is a major participant in that success. I demonstrate that the invisible hand of government is massively implicated in the funding, the politics, and the ideology of U.S. film drama to stimulate the industry and to create domestic and international habits of mind that will direct audiences toward particular forms of citizenship and consumption.

Young artists enter a world of misleading discussions about the citizenship implications of what they do, all the way from the psychological blame placed on the popular—and displaced from social unrest and inequality—on to the role of the state in U.S. entertainment. My aim, then, is to disclose the real conditions of existence of moral panics about the culture industries and the real conditions of existence of Hollywood success. The first section of the chapter alerts future cultural producers to what *culture* signifies, both historically and today. The second section explains how their work is perceived in dominant critical discourse, and the third section disabuses them of a foundational myth of popular culture. These last two sections engage crucial citizenship questions: One addresses the behavioral-effects debate found in households, legislatures, and newspapers, and the other addresses how the industry and the state obfuscate the basis for Hollywood's hegemony. Thinking through these issues will make new cultural professionals more aware and alive to the vital cultural-justice questions that surround their chosen field.

## Culture

It should come as no surprise that cultural texts lead to questions of social control and the role of government. Consider the history of the very word *culture*. It derives from the Latin *colare,* which implied tending and developing agriculture as part of subsistence. With the emergence of capitalism's division of labor, culture came both to embody instrumentalism and to abjure it, via the industrialization of farming on the one hand and the cultivation of individual taste on the other. In keeping with this distinction, culture has usually been understood in two registers: via the social sciences and the humanities—truth versus beauty. This was a heuristic distinction in the sixteenth

century, but it became substantive over time. Eighteenth-century German, French, and Spanish dictionaries bear witness to a metaphorical shift into spiritual cultivation. The spread of literacy and printing saw customs and laws passed on, governed, and adjudicated through the written word. Cultural texts supplemented and supplanted physical force as a guarantor of authority. With the Industrial Revolution, populations became urban dwellers—food was imported, and cultures developed textual forms that could be exchanged. Consumer society developed through horse racing, opera, art exhibits, masquerades, and balls. The impact was indexed in cultural labor: the *poligrafi* of fifteenth-century Venice and the hacks of eighteenth-century London generated immensely popular and influential conduct books, works of instruction on everyday life that marked the textualization of custom and the emergence of new occupational identities (Williams 1983: 38; Benhabib 2002: 2; de Pedro 1999: 61-62, 78 n. 1; Briggs and Burke 2003: 10, 38, 60, 57).

Culture became a marker of differences and similarities in taste and status within groups, as explored interpretatively and methodically. In the humanities, theater, film, television, radio, art, craft, writing, music, dance, and games are judged by criteria of quality and meaning, as practiced critically and historically. For their part, the social sciences focus on the languages, religions, customs, times, and spaces of different groups, as explored ethnographically or statistically. So whereas the humanities articulate differences within populations through symbolic norms—for example, which class has the cultural capital to appreciate high culture and which does not—the social sciences articulate differences between populations through social norms—for example, which people cultivate agriculture in keeping with spirituality and which do not (Wallerstein, 1989). This bifurcation also has a representational impact, whereby the "cultural component of the capitalist economy" is "its socio-psychological superstructure" (Schumpeter 1975: 121).

But the canons of judgment and analysis that once flowed from the humanities–social sciences distinction—and kept aesthetic tropes somewhat distinct from social norms—have collapsed in on each other: "Whoever speaks of culture speaks of administration as well, whether this is his intention or not" (Adorno 1996: 93). Art and custom have become resources for markets and nations: reactions to the crisis of belonging and to economic necessity. As a consequence, culture is more than textual signs or everyday practices. It also provides the legitimizing ground on which particular groups—such as African Americans, gays and lesbians, the hearing impaired, or evangelical Protestants—claim resources and seek inclusion in national narratives. And culture is crucial to both advanced and developing economies (Yúdice 2002: 40 and 1990; Martín-Barbero 2003: 40).

This intermingling has implications for both aesthetic and social hierarchies. Culture comes to "regulate and structure … individual and collective lives" (Parekh 2000: 143) in competitive ways that harness art and collective

meaning for governmental and commercial purposes. Culture is understood as a means to growth via cultural citizenship, through a paradox—that universal, and marketable, value is placed on the specificity of different cultural backgrounds. For example, the Spanish minister for culture addressed Sao Paolo's 2004 World Cultural Forum with a message that was equally about economic development and the preservation of aesthetic and customary identity. And Taiwan's premier brokered an administrative reorganization of government that same year as a mix of economic efficiency and cultural citizenship (quoted in "Foro Cultural," 2004 and "Yu," 2004). This simultaneously instrumental and moral tendency is especially important in the United States, albeit in a rather different way. For the United States is virtually alone among wealthy countries in the widespread view of its citizens that their culture is superior to others and in the successful sale of that culture around the world (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2003; Miller *et al.*, 2001 and 2005). The United States has blended preeminence in the two cultural registers, exporting both popular prescriptions for entertainment—the humanities side—and economic prescriptions for labor—the social sciences side. The rest of this chapter focuses on two aspects of that cultural register: anxieties about social control and state support for screen drama.

## The Audiovisual As a Site of Discipline

Concerns about how the public reacts to the arts can be traced back a very long way indeed. There was concern about public stimulation of the passions by popular romances and plays (i.e., the liturgy of the devil) in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Western Europe about and the capacity of typography to disrupt ecclesiastical authority via heresy, sedition, or immorality. When books proliferated across Western Europe in the mid-eighteenth century, people began to skim through them, generating anxious critiques that a plenitude of text was producing a surface form of reading that lacked profundity and erudition (Briggs and Burke 2003: 2-3, 18, 49, 64). In their modern form, such preoccupations derive most directly from the emergent social sciences from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which sought to understand and control the crowd in a suddenly urbanized and educated Western Europe and the United States that raised the prospect of a long-feared "ochlocracy" of "the worthless mob" (Pufendorf 2000: 144). Elite theorists from both right and left, notably Vilfredo Pareto (1976), Gaetano Mosca (1939), Gustave Le Bon (1899), and Robert Michels (1915), argued that newly literate publics were vulnerable to manipulation by demagogues. Irrationality en masse was seen as the antithesis of citizenship (Murdock 2005: 177). In the United States, these concerns were manifest at the heart of numerous campaigns against public sex and its representation, most notably the nineteenth-century Comstock Law. The law was named after the noted post office moralist Anthony Comstock, who ran the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and was especially exercised

by "evil reading." Throughout the history of media regulation since that time, both governments and courts have policed sexual material based on its alleged impact on audiences, all the way from the uptake of Britain's 1868 *Regina v. Hicklin* decision about vulnerable youth through to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1978 *Federal Communication Commission v. Pacifica* decision (Heins 2002: 9, 29-32). In the early twentieth century, opera, plays by William Shakespeare, and romance fiction were censored for their immodest impact on the young. Such tendencies moved into high gear with the Payne Fund Studies of the 1930s, which inaugurated mass social science panic about young Yanquis at the cinema (May and Shuttleworth, 1933; Dale, 1933; Blumer, 1933; Blumer and Hauser, 1933; Forman, 1933; Mitchell, 1929). These pioneering scholars boldly set out to gauge emotional reactions by assessing "galvanic skin response" (Wartella 1996: 173). Their example has led to seven more decades of obsessive attempts to correlate youthful consumption of popular culture with antisocial conduct.

Essentially, academic experts across the United States have decreed media audiences to be passive consumers (Butsch 2000: 3), thanks to the missions of literary criticism—distinguishing the cultivated from others—and psychology—distinguishing the socially competent from others. Tests of beauty and truth found popular culture wanting. The notion of the suddenly enfranchised being bamboozled by the unscrupulously fluent has recurred ever since. It inevitably leads to an emphasis on the number and conduct of audiences to audiovisual entertainment: where they came from, how many there were, and what they did as a consequence of being present. These audiences are conceived as empirical entities that can be known via research instruments derived from sociology, demography, psychology, communication studies, and marketing. Such concerns are coupled with a secondary concentration on content: What were audiences watching when they …? And so texts, too, are conceived as empirical entities that can be known via research instruments derived from these disciplines. Massive public funding, miles of newspaper columns, and hours of ecclesiastical rhetoric have been devoted to such questions instead of to gun laws, gun technology, masculinity, poverty, and state violence.

Although the media play a part in the theory of democracy, as sources of public knowledge of political–economic processes and expressive sites of public opinion, this is overdetermined by powerful processes of professorial negativity. These worries draw on academic, religious, governmental, and familial iconophobia and the sense that large groups of people lie beyond the control of the state and the ruling class and may be led astray. Even that brief moment of supposed social cohesion in the 1950s was clouded by the media—congressional hearings into juvenile delinquency heard again and again from social scientists, police, parents, and others that the emergent mass media were dividing families, were diverting offspring from their elders' values (Gilbert 1986: 3), or were mindlessly creating what ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel called

a "cultural dope" who "produces the stable features of the society by acting in compliance with pre-established and legitimate alternatives of action that the common culture provides" (1992: 68). Bob Dylan recalls that during the early '60s in Greenwich Village, "sociologists were saying that TV had deadly intentions and was destroying the minds and imaginations of the young—that their attention span was being dragged down." The other dominant site of knowledge was the "psychology professor, a good performer, but originality not his long suit" (2004: 55, 67).

Why this anxiety? Because new communication technologies and genres offer forms of mastery that threaten, however peripherally, the established order. Each such innovation has brought with it a raft of marketing techniques and concerns about supposedly unprecedented and unholy new risks that, often unwittingly, reference earlier panics: silent and then sound film from the 1920s, radio in the 1930s, comic books of the 1940s and '50s, pop music and television from the 1950s and '60s, satanic rock and video cassette recorders during the 1970s and '80s, and rap music, video games, and the Internet since the 1990s (Kline 1993: 57; Mazzarella 2003: 228). Whenever new communications technologies emerge, their audiences, or consumers, are identified as both pioneers and victims, simultaneously endowed by manufacturers and critics with immense power and immense vulnerability. This was true of 1920s "Radio Boys," seeking out signals from afar, and 1990s "Girl-Power" avatars, seeking out subjectivities from afar. They are held to be the first to know and the last to understand the media—the grand paradox of youth, latterly on display in the "digital sublime" of technological determinism but as always with the super-added valence of a future citizenship in peril (Mosco 2004: 80). The satirical paper the *Onion* cleverly criticized the interdependent phenomena of academic panic and commodification via its faux 2005 study of the impact on U.S. children of seeing Janet Jackson's breast in a Super Bowl broadcast the year before ("U.S. Children," 2005).

The moral panic over *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* in 2005, because of its hidden sexual material, is just the latest in a long line of such inquiries. As politicians, grant givers, and jeremiad-wielding pundits call for more and more research to prove that the screen makes people stupid, violent, unpatriotic, and apathetic—or the opposite—academics line up at the trough to indulge their contempt for popular culture and ordinary life and their rent-seeking urge for public money—hence the reliably cliché-laden Senator Hilary Clinton announcing that games are "stealing the innocence of our children" (quoted in "Chasing" 2005: 53), and communications and psychology faculty duly seeking the research funds made available in response. Each massively costly laboratory test of media effects, based on, as the refrain goes, "a large university in the mid-West," is countered by a similar experiment with conflicting results. When the *Economist* magazine asks of video gaming, "Is it a new medium on a par with film and music, a valuable educational tool, a form

of harmless fun or a digital menace that turns children into violent zombies?" ("Chasing," 2005) it is using the same binary oppositions as critics of theater centuries earlier.

For young workers entering the field of cultural production, knowing how these forms of social control are exercised—how the media themselves, religion, and government focus on popular texts rather than material inequality—is vital. In addition to dealing with this powerful world of media-effects rhetoric, young workers in the culture industries must engage a second dominant discourse: the canard that our popular culture succeeds because it is entirely separate from state influences. Consider this history.

### Hollywood Citizens

The United States has a vast array of state, regional, and city film commissions coordinated by Film U.S., hidden subsidies to the film industry via reduced local taxes, free provision of police services, and the blocking of public wayfares, Small Business Administration financing through loans and support of independents, and State and Commerce Department briefings and plenipotentiary representation. Having originated in the late 1940s, by 2000 the number of publicly funded U.S. film and television commissions stood at 205, although some have been defunded with the budgetary crises of the second George W. Bush era. In 2002 there were fifty-six municipal film offices across California alone (Wasko 2003: 38; Stevens 2000: 797-804; Center for Entertainment Industry Data and Research, 2002; Jones 2002: 41). Their work represents a major subsidy. For example, hotel and sales tax rebates are almost universal across the country, and such services even extend in some cases to constructing studio sites, as in North Carolina. The New York City Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting (2000) offers exemption from sales tax on production consumables, rentals, and purchases. The Minnesota Film Board (2000) has a Minnesota Film Jobs Fund that gives a 5 percent rebate on wages, not to mention paying producers' first-class airfares and providing free accommodation for them and tax-free accommodation for their workers as well as tax-avoidance schemes. The California Film Commission (2000) reimburses public personnel costs and permit and equipment fees. The Californian State Government offers a Film California First Program that covers everything from free services to a major wage tax credit and was due to begin a new tax credit in 2004, until this was overturned at the appropriations stage due to the state's deficit (Hozic, 1999; Directors Guild of America, 2000; "Americans," 2001; Wicker 2003: 493; Pietrolungo and Tinkham, 2002-03; Rettig, 1998; Ross and Walker, 2000).

Miami is a stunning example of such public subvention. It has become the third-largest audiovisual production hub in the United States after Los Angeles and New York. This was achieved not by happenstance but through very deliberate policy. The Miami Beach Enterprise Zone offers incentives to

businesses expanding or relocating there that include property tax credits, tax credits on wages paid to enterprise zone residents, and sales tax refunds. The Façade Renovation Grant program provides matching grants to qualifying businesses for the rehabilitation of storefronts and the correction of interior code violations. As a consequence of this promotional activity, the Miami culture industries generated about US$2 billion in 1997 and boasted a workforce of 10,000 employees (García, 1998; Martín, 1998). By 2000, volume had increased to US$2.5 billion. Other Miami counties are also renewing their initiatives to woo the audiovisual sector. To diminish the difficulties that producers and film companies encounter with the complicated bureaucracy of the numerous municipalities in the area, which have their own regulations, Miami-Dade's Film Commission led an initiative to draw more film and television business to South Florida (Miller and Yúdice 2002: 80).

Away from these local initiatives, the story of public assistance is even more profound, from infrastructural to textual interventions. Federally, Congress considered legislation in 1991 to limit foreign ownership of the culture industries to 50 percent, a xenophobia that retreated along with the Japanese economy. The House of Representatives continues to contemplate a bill from 2000 to provide subvention to low-budget films; new production-wage tax investments incentives and research-and-development tax credits regularly come before Congress; and there is now a Congressional Entertainment Industry Taskforce dedicated to retaining cultural industry jobs in the United States. The domestic Export-Import Bank Film Production Guarantee Program of 2001 is only the latest incarnation of the state off screen (Steinbock 1995: 21; Blankstein, 2001; Goldman, 2000; "Congress to Address," 2001; Boryskavich and Bowler 2002: 35).

Internationally, negotiations on so-called video piracy have seen Chinese offenders face beheading, even as the United States claims to be watching human rights there as part of most-favored nation treatment. Protests by Indonesian filmmakers against Hollywood that draw the support of their government see Washington threaten retaliation via a vast array of industrial sanctions. The delegation to Hanoi in the mid-1990s of members of Congress who had fought in the American War in Vietnam ushered in film scouts, multiplex salespeople, and Hollywood films on television. And the United States pressured South Korea to drop its screen quotas as part of 1998–99 negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty ("Commerce Secretary," 2001; Robinson 2000: 51; Devine 1999: xvii; Kim 2000: 362). Copyright limitations prevent the free flow of information, and foreign funds have often been raised through overseas tax shelters (Acheson and Maule, 1991; Guback, 1984, 1985, and 1987). Nearly 20 percent of the US$15 billion expended on Hollywood production in 2000 was, for example, German, based on tax subsidies and lax listing rules on its high-technology Neuer Markt—in 2001, the figure amounted to US$2 billion (Zwick, 2000; Kirschbaum, 2001; European Audiovisual Observatory

2003: 5; Crayford, 2002). In 2005, U.S. cable television companies might have politely received callers from U.S. film commissions seeking their business, but they were planning production in Canada, based on funds derived from annual rebate incentives for "the dentists of Hamburg." Once more, we find public funding at the heart of this putatively private endeavor.

No wonder *Canadian Business* magazine refers to "Hollywood's welfare bums" (Chidley, 2000). Even *Time*'s European business correspondent (Ledbetter, 2002) acknowledges the world-historical extent of cultural protectionism in the United States, which applies across the entertainment spectrum—what William I. Greenwald half a century ago memorably named "the virtual embargo'" (1952: 48; also see Slotin, 2002). Unions and leftist groups doubt the efficacy of additional, local corporate welfare as a counter to foreign corporate welfare, since the media giants that utilized such subsidies are international in their operation. Activists favor rooting out all such policies (Cooper, 2000)—almost a link to the neoclassical ideal—in the name of saving Hollywood from "rustbelt" status thanks to the North American Free Trade Agreement (Bacon, 1999; see also Talcin, n.d.). For their employers, competition is an end rather than a means, as in other forms of capitalism.

As for propaganda, in the embarrassingly macho language of U.S. political science the media represent "soft power" to match the "hard power" of the military and the economy (Nye, 2002-03). The state has a long history of direct participation in production (Hearon, 1938) and control, starting with screening Hollywood films on ships bringing migrants through to sending "films to leper colonies in the Canal Zone and in the Philippines" (Hays 1927: 50). During the First World War, films from the Central Powers were banned across the United States. Immediately afterward, the Department of the Interior recruited the industry to its policy of "Americanization" of immigrants (Walsh 1997: 10) and Paramount-Famous-Lasky executive Sidney R. Kent proudly referred to films as "silent propaganda" (1927: 208). In 1927, the fan magazine *Film Fun* printed an unsigned article by someone who had migrated from Paraguay:

> Hizzoner, Uncle Sam, tells us it takes five years for a furriner [sic] to become Americanized. Hizzoner is looking up the wrong street; any furriner [sic] who goes to the movies in Europe can become an American in almost no time …

> … When I got to America they told us we would have to go to Ellis Island the next day. I wanted to get into the swim right away …

> … They turned me loose. I knew just what to do. The movies I had seen had taught me all about America. I bought a gun the second day, a horse

the third, and the Woolworth building the fourth; the man who sold it to me was such a nice fellow, I'd like to meet him again some day.

So you see, it really doesn't take long to become Yankeeized when one has seen the cinema.

("A Yank," 1927)

In the 1920s and '30s, Hollywood lobbyists regarded the U.S. Departments of State and Commerce as its message boys. The State Department undertook market research and shared business intelligence. The Commerce Department pressured other countries to permit cinema free access and favorable terms of trade. The Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA) referred to itself as the little State Department in the 1940s, so isomorphic were its methods and ideology with U.S. policy and politics. This was also the era when the industry's self-regulating production code appended to its bizarre litany of sexual anxieties two items requested by the "other" State Department: selling the American way of life around the world and, as we have seen, avoiding negative representations of "a foreign country with which we have cordial relations" (Powdermaker 1950: 36).

During the Second World War, the United States opened an Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Its most visible program was the Motion Picture Division, headed by John Hay Whitney, former coproducer of *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939) and future secret agent and front man for the Central Intelligence Agency's news service, Forum World Features (Stonor Saunders 1999: 311-12), who brought in public relations specialists and noted filmmakers like Luis Buñuel to analyze the propaganda value of German and Japanese films. Whitney was especially interested in their construction of ethnic stereotypes. He sought to formulate a program for revising Hollywood movies, which were obstacles to gaining solidarity from Latin Americans for the U.S. war efforts, and was responsible for getting Hollywood to distribute *Simón Bolívar* (Miguel Contreras Torres, 1942) and to produce *Saludos Amigos* (Norman Ferguson and Wilfred Jackson, 1943) and *The Three Caballeros* (Norman Ferguson, 1944). Some production costs were borne by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in exchange for free prints to be distributed in U.S. embassies and consulates in Latin America. Whitney even accompanied Walt Disney and the star of his film, Donald Duck, who made a guest appearance in Rio de Janeiro, and the office had a film reshot because it showed Mexican children shoeless in the street, while the successful integration of Brazilian comic-book and cartoon characters into Disney products at this time paved the way for post-war success in opening the Brazilian market to extensive Disney merchandise (Kahn 1981: 145; Powdermaker 1950: 71; Reis 2001: 89-90).

When the U.S. military invaded Europe in 1944 and 1945, they closed Axis films, shuttered their industry, and insisted on the release of U.S. movies. The quid pro quo for the Marshall Plan was the abolition of customs restrictions, among which were limits on film imports (Trumpbour 2002: 63, 3-4, 62, 98; Pauwels and Losien 2003: 293). In the case of Japan, the occupation immediately changed the face of cinema. When theaters reopened for the first time after the United States dropped its atomic bombs, all films and posters with war themes were removed. Previously censored Hollywood texts were on screens. The occupying troops immediately established the Information Dissemination Section, which soon after became the Civilian Information and Education Section, in its Psychological Warfare Branch to imbue the local population with guilt and to "teach American values" through movies (High 2003: 503-04).

Meanwhile, with the cold war under way, the Central Intelligence Agency's Psychological Warfare Workshop employed future Watergate criminal E. Howard Hunt, who clandestinely funded the rights purchase and production of *Animal Farm* (Joy Batchelor and John Halas, 1954) and *1984* (Michael Anderson, 1956) (Cohen, 2003). On a more routine basis, the U.S. Information Service, located all over the world as part of cold-war expansion, had a lending library of films as a key part of its public diplomacy (Lazarsfeld 1950: xi).

Film producer Walter Wanger (1950) trumpeted the meshing of what he called "Donald Duck and Diplomacy" as "a Marshall Plan for ideas … a veritable celluloid Athens" (444) that meant the state needed Hollywood "more than … the H bomb" (446)—this from the man who had hailed Mussolini as "a marvelous man" in 1936 (Trumpbour 2002: 37). Motion Picture Association of America/Motion Picture Export Association of America head Eric Johnston, fresh from his prior post as secretary of commerce, sought to dispatch "messengers from a free country." President Harry Truman agreed, referring to movies as "ambassadors of goodwill" (quoted in Johnston, 1950; also see Hozic 2001: 77). And when the advent of a new international division of cultural labor threatened Hollywood jobs because production moved offshore, union official H. O'Neil Shanks spoke in these terms to the 1961 Congress House Education and Labor Subcommittee on the Impact of Imports and Exports on American Employment:

Apart from the fact that thousands of job opportunities for motion picture technicians, musicians, and players are being "exported" to other countries at the expense of American citizens residing in the State of California, the State of New York, and in other States because of **runaway production** this unfortunate trend … threatens to destroy a valuable national asset in the field of world-wide mass communications, which is vital to our national interest and security. If **Hollywood** is thus permitted to become "obsolete as a production center" and the United States

voluntarily surrenders its position of world leadership in the field of theatrical motion pictures, the chance to present a more favorable American image on the movie screens of non-Communist countries in reply to the cold war attacks of our Soviet adversaries will be lost forever.

(Ulich and Simmons 2001: 359-60)

The Legislative Research Service prepared a report for the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1964 with a title that made the point bluntly: *The U.S. Ideological Effort: Government Agencies and Programs.* It explained that "the U.S. ideological effort has become more important than ever" because "the Communist movement is working actively to bring … underdeveloped lands under Communist control" (1964: 1). The report included John F. Kennedy's instruction that the U.S. Information Agency use film and television inter alia to propagandize (9) and noted that at that date, the government paid for 226 film centers in 106 countries with 7,541 projectors (19). Four decades later, union officials soberly intoned, "Although the Cold War is no longer a reason to protect cultural identity, today U.S.-produced pictures are still a conduit through which our values, such as democracy and freedom, are promoted" (Ulich and Simmers 2001: 365). The U.S. Department of Commerce produces materials today on media globalization for Congress that run lines about both economic development and ideological influence, problematizing claims that Hollywood is pure free enterprise and that the U.S. government is uninterested in blending trade with cultural change. This is laissez-faire?

Most pertinently, the new hybrid of SiliWood blends together northern Californian technology, Hollywood methods, and military funding. The interactivity underpinning this hybrid has evolved through the articulation since the mid-1980s of southern and northern California semiconductor and computer manufacture and systems and software development, which was a massively military-inflected and -supported industry until after the cold war, to Hollywood screen content. Disused aircraft-production hangars were symbolically converted into entertainment sites (Aksoy and Robins, 1992; Scott 1998a and 1998b: 31; Porter, 1998; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2000: 205; Vogel 1998: 33; International Labour Office, 2000; Sedgwick, 2002; Raco, 1999; Waters, 1999; Goodman, 2001).

The links are ongoing. Steven Spielberg is a recipient of the Defense Department's Medal for Distinguished Public Service; Silicon Graphics feverishly designs material for use by the empire in both its military and cultural aspects; and virtual-reality research veers between soldierly and audience applications, much of it subsidized by the Federal Technology Reinvestment Project and Advanced Technology Program. This has further submerged killing machines from public scrutiny, even as they surface superficially, doubling

as Hollywood props. This link was clearly evident in the way the film industry sprang into militaristic action in concert with Pentagon preferences after September 11, 2001, and even became a consultant on possible terrorist attacks (Directors Guild of America, 2000; Hozic 2001: 140-41, 148-51; Grover, 2001; McClintock, 2002; Gorman, 2002; Calvo and Welkos, 2002; "Americans," 2001). The University of Southern California's Institute for Creative Technologies uses military money and Hollywood directors to test out homicidal technologies and narrative scenarios. And with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration struggling to renovate its image, who better to invite to lunch than Hollywood producers, so they would script new texts featuring the agency as a benign, exciting entity? Why not form a White House–Hollywood Committee while you are at it to ensure coordination between the nations we bomb and the messages we export? The Motion Picture Association of America even argues before Congress that this is a key initiative against terrorism, since copying funds transnational extrapolitical violence ("Hollywood Reaches," 2002; Chambers, 2002; Valenti, 2003).

Lastly, with the Republican Party effectively owned by minerals and manufacturing and mistrustful of film's putative liberalism, the culture industries have their bidding done by purchasing Democrat lobbyists. In return for campaign funds, the Democratic Party obeys the will of the studios via protectionist legislation such as the Consumer Broadband and Digital Television Promotion Act and various anticounterfeiting amendments to attack file sharing and the use of multiple platforms for watching films (Koerner, 2003). Caught amid conflicting pressures of expansion, stability, and political legitimacy (Streeter 1996: 264), Hollywood studios have poured donations into the campaign coffers of politicians who support copyright extensions, ratification of the World Intellectual Property Organization Treaty, and antipiracy technologies (see Table 8.1).

**Table 8.1** Cinema, Television, and Music Industry Contributions to U.S. Political Parties

| Year | Total | Individuals | PACs | Soft Money | Democrat | Republican |
|------|-------|-------------|------|------------|----------|------------|
| 2002 | $39,910,667 | $7,923,442 | $4,327,202 | $27,660,023 | 78% | 22% |
| 2000 | $37,936,084 | $15,228,134 | $3,976,294 | $18,731,656 | 64% | 36% |
| 1998 | $16,430,185 | $6,921,670 | $3,398,946 | $6,109,569 | 62% | 38% |
| 1996 | $19,597,100 | $7,778,591 | $3,195,514 | $8,622,995 | 62% | 37% |
| 1994 | $9,744,657 | $4,804,969 | $2,604,878 | $2,334,810 | 71% | 29% |
| 1992 | $13,722,121 | $7,880,176 | $2,809,985 | $3,031,960 | 74% | 26% |
| 1990 | $5,755,469 | $3,381,999 | $2,373,470 | N/A | 74% | 26% |

*Source:* Adapted from opensecrets.org.

In summary, for all its rhetoric of pure competition, the U.S. government has devoted massive resources to generate and to sustain private-sector film in the interests of ideology and money, and the audiovisual sector has responded in commercial and ideological kind.

## Conclusion

The U.S. public sector is deeply implicated in both the ideological and the monetary workings of film and television, even as the critical apparatus of U.S. lobby groups, academia, and the state is obsessed with behavioral and laissez-faire shibboleths. While the real politics is operating at the level of massive subsidies and propaganda, the symbolic politics is deflecting attention from the violence and selfishness unleashed by U.S. capitalism by embarking on endless, unresolvable, financially rewarding debates about media audiences. If we are to encourage a truly active cultural citizenship, then cultural producers need to know where the money is made and where the deals are done in audiovisual popular culture; they need to be able to question the obsessive chronicling of behavior in the face of popular culture; and they need to contest the hidden role of the state in promulgating the domination of U.S. entertainment. Otherwise, what is a film school for?

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